

**THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA:
THE CHALLENGE OF INTERSECTORAL
COLLABORATION**

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ABSTRACT

The role of school psychologists in school development in South Africa: The challenge of intersectoral collaboration

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School psychologists in South Africa are employed by the state to provide psychological services to schools. The role of school psychologists has been debated and contested nationally and internationally for many decades, with the need for a paradigm shift in school psychology practice and redefining the role of school psychologists being highlighted.

In this study, the roles and practices of school psychologists are explored, with a focus on the nature of collaborative work engaged in when facilitating school development. In particular, challenges that emerge when school psychologists work with other sectors to facilitate school development are investigated. The overall research question was: What are the challenges that face school psychologists who facilitate school development through intersectoral collaboration and how can these challenges be addressed?

The research objectives were:

1. To ascertain the key roles played by school psychologists in South Africa.
2. To investigate the practices of school psychologists who are involved in school development.
3. To determine whether and how school psychologists work with other role players to facilitate school development.
- 4. To explore the challenges faced by school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development.**
- 5. To ascertain how these challenges are currently being addressed, and how they can be overcome in the future.**

6. To formulate recommendations for the training of school psychologists in relation to school development and intersectoral collaboration in particular.

A mixed method approach that employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques was adopted in an attempt to construct a rich and meaningful picture of school psychology practice in South Africa. Participants included 17 key informants in education and psychology in South Africa as well as 47 school psychologists employed in circuit teams in the Western Cape Education Department. The data collection process encompassed four phases, including a literature review and document analysis, email interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires. Content analysis was employed in the analysis of documents and interviews. The Software Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed in the analysis of the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire.

Six categories of challenges facing school psychologists when they collaborate with other sectors to facilitate school development emerged during this study. These were the roles and boundaries, personal and interpersonal factors, organisational challenges, training and development, discourse and worldviews, and the wider education system. The recommendations are presented as practical, well-grounded responses to the challenges that emerged in the study and are expounded as suggestions for consideration at various levels in the system, from micro (level of the individual) to macro (level of the state).

This research contributes to the development of school psychology as an educational field and a profession in South Africa. The findings illuminate the challenges of grappling with personal and professional expectations of roles and practices, and also provide guidelines regarding how school psychologists can work with schools as systems and how the collaborative nature of school psychology practice in relation to school development can be improved.

May 2011

DECLARATION

I declare that *The role of school psychologists in school development: The challenge of intersectoral collaboration* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Nadeen Moolla

May 2011

Signed.....



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To Sandy Lazarus, my friend, mentor, supervisor and ‘comleague’ always. A guardian angel on this PhD journey. Your therapeutic approach to supervision is what makes for your achievement with your students.

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RABBI ZIDNI 'ILMA (My Lord! Increase me in knowledge) [Quran: Surah Taha: Verse 114]

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ELSEN	- Education of Learners with Special Educational Needs
EMDC	- Education Management and Development Centre
EST	- Education Support Team
FET	- Further Education and Training
IEDP	- Individualised Education and Development Programme
IEP	- Individualised Education Programme
ILST	- Institution Level Support Team
IMG	- Institutional Management and Governance
OT	- Occupational Therapist
SAPS	- South African Police Services
SBST	- School Based Support Team
SGB	- School Governing Body
SIAS	- Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SIP	- School Improvement Plan
SLES	- Specialised Learner and Educator Support
SMT	- School Management Team
SNE	- Special Needs Education
TST	- Teacher Support Team
DBST	- District Based Support Team
WCED	- Western Cape Education Department

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, the main idea of the thesis is presented, and in it an argument is made for the study's relevance and contribution to scholarly work in the field of school psychology and educational psychology. Background to the research study is provided, followed by a presentation of the aspects that are addressed as issues of focus in this investigation. The research problem is articulated, with its concomitant aims, objectives and questions. A broad overview of the research paradigm, research design and methodology that was employed is then put forward. The chapter concludes by providing an overview of the thesis.

1.1. Background

Many titles have been used to describe professionals who provide psychological services within educational facilities (Jimerson, Oakland, & Farrell, 2007). In South Africa, the term *school psychologist* is used in the Department of Education to refer to those who provide psychological services to schools. Some of these individuals are trained as educational psychologists and are registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), while others may be registered as counselling or clinical psychologists. The minimum qualification to work as a school psychologist in South Africa is a 4-year degree (e.g. Honours) which allows one to register as a counsellor or psychometrist (Daniels, Collair, Moolla, & Lazarus, 2007). The term *educational psychologist* refers specifically to those who have completed a Master's degree and are registered with the HPCSA. Such individuals may choose to work in, amongst other contexts, private practice, higher education, the corporate sector, non-government organisations or community-based structures.

The anomaly that currently exists within formal education with regard to the training and qualifications of those providing psychological services to learners and educators in schools is acknowledged in this thesis. The term *school psychologist* is the primary term used in this research study since it highlights the work engaged in by individuals employed in the post of 'school psychologist', irrespective of their training and qualification background.

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED), in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, constitutes the main focus for this study. The WCED comprises eight education

districts, which were divided into 49 circuits following a major redesign process that took place in 2007. The provincial structure includes three key levels of management and service provision: (a) the circuits, which are responsible for bringing professional support closer to schools via strong circuit teams; (b) the districts, which are mainly responsible for education management; and (c) the head office, which is mainly responsible for research, policy development, strategic planning, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation.

The WCED established eight education districts based on the local government boundaries to facilitate a collaborative and integrated approach to service delivery by all levels of government. These districts include four rural districts (West Coast, Cape Winelands, Eden and Central Karoo, and Overberg), and four urban districts (Metro North, Metro South, Metro East and Metro Central). The boundaries, it is argued, allow for equitable distribution of schools and resources across districts and circuits. Although this may have been the intention, it must be noted that South Africa, and the Western Cape in particular, is marked by geographical privilege. It is evident that certain areas are characterised by schools which are generally better resourced and consequently less demanding in terms of the needs for support from circuit and district personnel. The vast distances that those in the rural areas are expected to cover also place enormous strain on the delivery of services and place the notion of “equitable distribution” under serious question.

School psychologists in South Africa are employed by the education department to ensure the provision of psychological services to learners, educators and schools. In the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), some school psychology posts have been created in special schools which cater for learners with special education needs. Other posts have been established at district level, where support to schools is co-ordinated and managed. School psychologists in South Africa are expected to facilitate school development in collaboration with other professionals and sectors, as outlined in their job description, but their role is often misunderstood or understated. In the WCED, officials employed in district offices are expected to work collaboratively, and thus school psychologists form part of a circuit team. Circuit teams are multifunctional teams, which are interdisciplinary and interprofessional, and are grounded in a collaborative approach to development and support. The team is comprised of a school psychologist, a curriculum advisor, a learning support advisor, a social worker, an institution management and governance advisor, and an administrator. The composition and structure of the circuit team are illustrated in Figure 1.1 below.

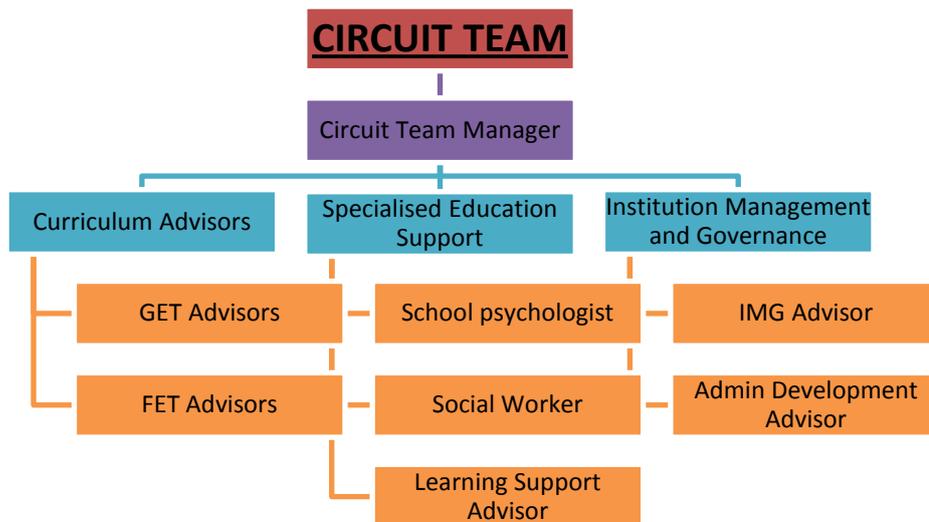


Figure 1.1. Composition of the circuit team

This multidisciplinary circuit team was established in order to facilitate collaboration between individuals on the team and schools and other sectors providing support to schools. This team works collaboratively to provide support to schools in a designated geographical area. The number of schools may vary from 20 to 60, depending on the area. *Collaboration* here refers to working together as a team in order to support and develop schools in their endeavour to provide quality education. The experience of collaboration and the challenges that emerge are focused on in this study.

Many schools in South Africa have been described as ineffective, underperforming and even dysfunctional (Chisholm, 2005; Taylor, Muller, & Vinjevoid, 2003). Individuals and organisations from various sectors are reflecting critically on the contribution they can make to improving schools, schooling and education, more broadly, in South Africa. School psychologists, similarly, have a responsibility to reflect critically on their engagement with schools, and the nature of their contribution, with a view to adjusting their practices in order to support the development of schools and, consequently, the quality of teaching and learning provided (Albers, Glover, & Kratochwill, 2007; Brown & Bolen, 2003; Reschly, 2004). The role of school psychologists has been debated and contested nationally and internationally, and the need for a paradigm shift in the practice of school psychology has been recognised (Burden & Brown, 1987, Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 2000; Sharratt, 1995).

Given this context, it is necessary to understand the roles played by school psychologists in the South African context. Engelbrecht (2001, 2004a, 2004b) has described the challenges facing educational psychologists as they negotiate a changing role, particularly in the context of working collaboratively. More specifically, the nature of school development engaged in and how intersectoral collaboration has been facilitated or hindered in practice needs to be determined.

1.2. Problem Statement

School psychologists have an important role to play in supporting and developing schools as systems (Burden, 1978; Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 2000; Engelbrecht, 2004a; Figg & Ross, 1981). Psychologists working in and with schools are expected to collaborate with other professionals and sectors to ensure the effectiveness of the assessment and intervention processes in which they engage (Western Cape Education Department, 2008).

In this study, the roles and practices of school psychologists are explored, with a focus on the nature of collaborative work engaged in when facilitating school development. The research is aimed at understanding the challenges that emerge when school psychologists work with other sectors to facilitate school development. The findings resulting from the study highlight the struggles of practice and help in formulating recommendations for ways in which these challenges can be addressed.

The research investigates school psychology as it is practiced in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. This study provides a national picture of school psychology in South Africa, but essentially focuses on the challenges faced in the Western Cape Province when school psychologists work with other sectors to facilitate school development.

1.3. Research Aim, Objectives and Questions

This study is focused on the roles and practices of school psychologists who support the development of schools in South Africa. In particular, challenges that emerge when school psychologists work with other sectors to facilitate school development are investigated. The struggles of practice are highlighted and ways in which these challenges can be addressed are recommended. This study is a Western Cape study that was conducted within a national South African framework. The document analysis and email interviews accessed data that

allowed for the presentation of a national framework within which school psychology in the Western Cape could be understood.

The research objectives were:

1. To ascertain the key roles played by school psychologists in South Africa.
2. To investigate the practices of school psychologists who are involved in school development.
3. To determine whether and how school psychologists work with other role players to facilitate school development.
4. **To explore the challenges faced by school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development.**
5. **To ascertain how these challenges are currently being addressed, and how they can be overcome in the future.**
6. To formulate recommendations for the training of school psychologists in relation to school development and intersectoral collaboration in particular.

The aim and objectives of the research gave rise to a number of questions, which framed and focused the research process. The main research question was as follows:

What are the challenges that face school psychologists who facilitate school development through intersectoral collaboration and how can these challenges be addressed?

The following sub-questions needed to be answered in order to address the main research question. Questions five and six were central in this regard.

1. What are the key roles played by school psychologists in South Africa?
2. In what ways are school psychologists involved in school development?
3. Do school psychologists work with other sectors or professionals when facilitating school development? If so, with whom?
4. How do school psychologists work with others in the process of school development?
5. **What challenges face school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development?**
6. **How can these challenges be addressed?**
7. How can the training of school psychologists in relation to school development and intersectoral collaboration be transformed?

This thesis is based on the assumption that school psychologists have a central part to play in school development. Drawing on the theory that frames this study, the assertion is that school psychologists ought to be working systemically, and therefore intervening at the level of the school. The assumption underlying this piece of work is that school psychologists have something meaningful to contribute in the development of schools and systems. This assumption is supported by the theory that frames the study and the literature on school psychology.

1.4. Significance

This research is significant in that it will contribute to the understanding of the roles of school psychologists and their practices in relation to supporting the development of schools. Its findings will illuminate the challenges of grappling with personal and professional expectations of roles and practices in this context. The findings will also provide guidelines regarding how school psychologists can work and how the collaborative nature of school psychology practice can be improved.

As highlighted by Jimerson, Oakland, and Farrell (2007), there is a dearth of research in this area. Furthermore, this study will contribute to the development of school psychology as an educational field and a profession in South Africa. It presents a picture of what roles are fulfilled by school psychologists at present and explores the possibilities for change within the new scope of practice (Department of Health, 2010). The need to address challenges faced by school psychologists is emphasised and ideas for a way forward are presented. This research also provides clearer direction for collaborative work at all levels, namely at the school, district, province and national levels. It contributes to the understanding and development of the practice of school development internationally and, more specifically, in South African schools, as an aspect of school psychology practice.

This study is also significant in that it provides clarity concerning the practice of school psychology for a number of sectors. Employers, in particular, national and provincial education departments, will be better informed and clients, including schools, teachers and learners, will be able to set realistic expectations regarding the nature of the services which can be provided by school psychologists. Other relevant sectors will have a clearer sense of the form that collaboration with school psychologists could take and how it could be best

facilitated. Finally, institutions involved in the preparation and training of psychologists who will work in schools will be guided by the findings from this investigation.

The National Department of Education recently announced the establishment of the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) in an effort to begin to support schools more effectively in their attempt to provide quality education. At present, in the Department of Education a strong focus is placed on evaluation, with little being said about the nature and quality of support and development work to be offered to schools. This research will, it is hoped, provide a framework within which school psychology can be mapped as a major contributor to the development of schools in South Africa.

In summary, the current study contributes to the development of school psychology in South Africa by highlighting the challenges experienced by school psychologists who work collaboratively to develop schools. Its findings also help to identify systemic factors that have to be considered in order to optimise school development through intersectoral collaboration.

1.5. Rationale

The *role of school psychologists* has been debated and contested nationally and internationally for many decades (Burden & Brown, 1987; Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 1996; De Jong, 2000b; Donald, 1996; Engelbrecht, 2004a; Jimerson et al., 2007; Nichols, Parfrey, & Burden, 1989; Sharratt, 1995; Sheridan & Conoley, 2001). The school psychologists' work may include assessment of children, development and implementation of intervention programmes, consultation with teachers, parents and other relevant professionals, programme development, and research. Engelbrecht (2004a) explained that contextual realities have demanded a shift from the traditional child-deficit, medical model towards an ecological and multi-systems paradigm, suggesting a wider scope of analysis and action. Traditional roles of the psychologist as therapist and psychometrist working with individual children and their families have been challenged internationally and in the South African context. Their roles are therefore broadening to include more consultative and preventative services. School psychologists have been challenged to redefine their role and engage with the challenges facing learners, educators and schools in a more systemic way (Burden & Brown, 1987; Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 1996; De Jong, 2000b; Donald, 1996; Engelbrecht, 2004a, 2009; Jimerson et al., 2007; Nichols, Parfrey, & Burden, 1989). This

implies the provision of an indirect service and support to the school as an organisation within which teaching, learning and development of individuals and groups is facilitated. There is a lack of understanding around how this shift has been experienced by school psychologists in practice. Directives to change have come through research and policy but little exploration of the implications on the ground has been conducted. The objective of this study is to highlight these challenges. The literature on the topic of the study, and all relevant policies, has been consulted, but focus has been placed on the experiences of school psychologists in their attempt to redefine their roles within a shifting paradigm.

Working as psychologists have done in the past, with the emphasis on direct, curative service delivery, is not feasible as a long-term option in South Africa because of the dire lack of appropriately trained and qualified professionals. The educational psychology symposium at a conference of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) in 2008 confirmed this with many practitioners registering their concern around the provision of school psychological services in the country as a whole. There was a clear message: Things have to change. What worked in the past, when services were provided to some, and not all, certainly cannot apply any longer because of limited human resources. It is still crucial to administer individualised assessments and engage in psychotherapeutic interventions with individual learners, but beyond this, some serious thought must be given to the role school psychologists can play in the provision of quality education for all.

School development aims to ensure that all aspects of school life are geared towards fostering effective teaching and learning so that learners develop optimally as individuals and make a positive contribution to society (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010). In South Africa, whole school development initiatives have tended to be driven by the commitment and expertise of non-government organizations (Christie & Potterton, 1997), although recent government initiatives have supported this approach (Department of Education, 2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c). As a whole school development approach is being adopted in education in South Africa, the work of the non-government organisations should by now to have become the work of government structures and employees. However, this has not been an easy transition. Lack of expertise, relationship dynamics and capacity challenges have left personnel at district level feeling challenged in terms of their ability to respond to the needs of schools holistically and in a co-ordinated, collaborative way.

The multifunctional team needs to employ *intersectoral collaboration* as a means to facilitate school development. The role of the school psychologists in this structure, and the procedures which guide and govern their work, is what is under review in this study. Moloi (2004), in her discussion of the value and application of systems thinking in school development, argued that practitioners working with schools face a huge challenge to “move away from functioning as individuals in competition with one another. We should rather collaborate more often, because our problems cannot be solved in isolation” (p. 66).

As a school psychologist, it is important to work holistically and systemically in healing, developing and supporting individuals and the systems within which they find themselves. Given the strain on human resources, it is impossible to work with and develop schools without co-operating and collaborating with various role players.

The education policy on building an inclusive education and training system (Department of Education, 2001) emphasised the importance of inclusive education and addressing barriers to learning and development in the endeavour to transform education in South Africa. The authors of the policy describe educational support in inclusive education and training as support for all learners within a systemic and developmental approach. Strategies to be employed within such a system include a focus on collaboration at the level of the school and district in particular. School psychologists are expected to provide support to schools through their position on the district-based support team. These teams are expected to evaluate and support teaching, build capacity of schools and other education institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties, and to accommodate for a range of learning needs (Department of Education, 2001).

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) pre-empted the formal implementation of the policy by introducing multifunctional teams at district level. These teams have thus been fulfilling a similar function to the district-based support team. Such a team usually includes a school psychologist, circuit manager, curriculum advisor, and an administrator. A key aspect of the work of this team is to respond to the needs of the school as an organisation, and in so doing, address the needs of the various role players therein. The effectiveness of these structures within education districts has not been formally evaluated, although Robinson, Langan, Lazarus and Moolla (2002) explored the restructuring of support provision to schools in the Western Cape and found that the issue of collaboration is a major challenge

that needs to be addressed at many levels. The current doctoral study extends the work of these authors by exploring the nature of these challenges as experienced by school psychologists.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework which underpins this study is systems thinking. Within this paradigm, the interdependence, interrelationships and connectedness between parts of a system are highlighted. The whole is essentially regarded as more than the sum of the parts (Bateson, 1973; Capra, 1983; Flood & Jackson, 1991; Plas, 1986; Reynolds & Holwell, 2010; Von Bertalanffy, 1968). When the parts are analysed separately as compared with when they are understood in context, the emerging insights differ. Systems thinking argues that a more comprehensive, complex, and holistic understanding of situations, issues and experiences is obtained when exploring the interrelationship between the parts of a system.

At a macro level the education system is under investigation in this study. Education support and school psychological services are parts of this system (subsystems), and within these, teams, groups and individuals work to ensure that that the system functions. Although the focus of this study is on school psychology (which may be regarded as one part), within a systems framework, it is crucial to examine the relationships between different parts since they impact on one another. In this study it was important to explore and understand the ways in which school psychologists reflect on their own practices in relation to the teams within which they work, the schools they engage with, and the district and provincial offices which provide the structure for the delivery of support to too schools. These multiple levels of systems and the relationships between them are focused upon in this study and so provide the systemic lens through which school psychology, school development and intersectoral collaboration are investigated and understood.

1.7. Research Design and Methodology

The *research paradigm* which frames this study is constructivist interpretivism, which is a worldview that argues that reality is constructed through human interaction. It is accepted that multiple subjective realities are constructed, interpreted and observed by the researcher. In the activity of research, events are constructed through human interaction. Multiple subjective realities are constructed, interpreted and observed by the researcher. Events are understood

through interpretation and are influenced by interactions within a social context. An interpretivist paradigm assumes multiple realities and thereby acknowledges the subjectivity of knowledge and understandings. Within this paradigm, it is understood that the researcher and the participants are able to construct understandings separately and together (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Interpretivism therefore accepts that realities are subjective and that, consequently, multiple interpretations may be evident.

The *research approach* adopted in this study may be regarded as a mixed-methods approach since multiple techniques are employed, although it is primarily qualitative in its design and implementation. This is congruent with a constructivist-interpretive paradigm. Mixed methods were employed to triangulate, thereby ensuring greater confidence in the findings and facilitating an enriched explanation of the research problem (De Vos, 2005a). This is supported by Brannen (2005) who described a trend in social research towards merging of paradigms and acknowledgement of the value of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

The study encompassed four phases of data collection wherein four different *methods of data collection* were employed. Document analysis was conducted in the first phase wherein policy documents, research reports, job descriptions and organograms were studied and analysed. In phase two, key informants in psychology and education around the country were interviewed electronically. In all, 17 email interviews were conducted. In phase three, all school psychologists based in posts at district level in the Western Cape Province were invited to participate in a focus group discussion in their district. Finally, phase four constituted the completion of a questionnaire by those who had participated in the focus group discussions. The questionnaire was composed of both open- and closed-ended questions, which generated quantitative data to triangulate, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the data.

The *research participants*, nationally, included 17 key informants in education and psychology, who were purposively selected based on leadership roles they play in research, training, professional organisation and the co-ordination and management of school psychology in the various provinces in South Africa. In the Western Cape Province, 47 school psychologists, based in education districts, participated in eight focus groups. Of these, 39, responded to a follow-up questionnaire.

Since both qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed, a combination of varied approaches to *data analysis* was used in this study. Qualitative data that emerged from all four phases of data collection were analysed, employing systematic organising, storing, and coding processes. The content analysis focused on identifying broad categories and, within these, key themes. This analysis aided in interpretation of the raw data to formulate an insightful, meaningful and comprehensive response to the research questions.

The closed-ended questions in the questionnaire provided biographical data and feedback regarding roles of school psychologists, school development practices, involvement in intersectoral collaboration, and challenges experienced in engaging in school development and intersectoral collaboration. The Software Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed in the analysis of the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. This quantitative analysis facilitated the presentation of descriptive, quantitative findings, with frequencies and percentages being used in the presentation.

Trustworthiness of the research was ensured through triangulation, which incorporated the inclusion of multiple sources and multiple methods. Ethical aspects were considered and built into the study to ensure the credibility of the study. Details of the research methodology are provided in Chapter 6.

1.8. Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the thesis and presents a rationale for the study, presenting an argument for its relevance and contribution to scholarly work in the field of school psychology and educational psychology. The background to this study is shared to inform and familiarise the reader with the contextual realities and key debates in the area of focus in this research. A statement of the problem is then articulated, with its related research aim, objectives and questions. The rationale and significance of the study is followed by a presentation of the research paradigm, research design and methodology that were employed.

Chapter 2 introduces a conceptual framework which frames the literature review. The key objects of the study are identified and clarified and the ways in which they are interconnected in this study are explored. An overview of the theory which frames the study is then

discussed. Systems theory as it applies in the social sciences, in psychology, and more specifically within school psychology, is discussed in relation to the investigation.

Chapter 3 is the first of the three chapters of literature review and is focused on the nature of school psychology as it is practised around the world. This chapter presents an overview of school psychology practice internationally, with a particular focus on efforts to engage in school development and employ intersectoral collaboration as a means of enhancing service delivery. In it, particular challenges that are faced with regard to school psychology practice and how practitioners around the world are attempting to overcome these challenges are highlighted.

Chapter 4 covers literature that is concentrated on school development as a second key concept framing this study. The emphasis is on understanding the school as a *system* in order to facilitate development and change effectively. School effectiveness and school improvement are presented as bodies of knowledge and frames of reference for the position taken in this study. Various approaches to school development, employed nationally and internationally, are described and summarised to illustrate key similarities in the underpinning philosophies and actual practices. The chapter includes a description of key challenges facing school psychologists who facilitate school development.

Chapter 5 immerses the reader in the literature on intersectoral collaboration, so that this chapter may be seen as exploring *how* school psychologists work, as opposed to describing *what* school psychologists do. Definitions of the concept are presented, followed by a summary of the literature, describing its application in the context of education support in South Africa. The benefits and challenges that emerge from working in a collaborative way with other sectors are emphasised.

Chapter 6 frames the approach and design of this study. In it, the paradigm within which the research was conducted is outlined and the primarily qualitative approach adopted in this study is explained. The research aim, objectives and questions are reiterated and the details of the design portrayed. The research context is described and an explanation is given of the criteria used in the selection of participants for the sample in each phase of data collection. Research methods and instruments employed are described in detail and their appropriateness

for the study justified. The plan for data analysis is outlined and issues related to the trustworthiness and ethics of the research are discussed.

Chapter 7 presents the findings that emerged from multiple sources and methods of data collection. The findings presented in this chapter are focused on presenting a picture of school psychology practice. Particular emphasis is placed on understanding the roles played by school psychologists in South Africa in relation to school development and intersectoral collaboration. Participants' perceptions of each of these two key concepts of this study are presented. This is followed by a representation of the nature of school development activities in which participants are engaged and an analysis of their collaboration with other sectors when facilitating school development.

Chapter 8 presents the findings relating to the challenges that school psychologists face as they work with other sectors to facilitate school development. The findings suggest that school psychologists face a number of challenges in their attempt to facilitate school development through intersectoral collaboration. Lack of clarity around roles, personal and interpersonal dynamics, organisational factors, differing discourses and worldviews, professional training and development, and wider systemic issues within education all impact on school psychologists' ability to offer an efficient and effective indirect service to schools in collaboration with others. In this chapter, these challenges are explored and participants' suggestions for how these challenges could be addressed are presented. The chapter concludes with specific recommendations that were put forward regarding the professional training of school psychologists who are expected to facilitate school development in collaboration with other sectors.

Chapter 9 presents a comprehensive response to the main research question: What are the challenges that face school psychologists who facilitate school development through intersectoral collaboration and how can these challenges be addressed? It highlights six categories that emerged in the data analysis, namely, roles and boundaries, personal and interpersonal factors, organisational challenges, training and development, discourse and worldviews and the wider education system. In this chapter, the main issues in the literature (chapters 3, 4, and 5) and how they link with these categories, as presented in chapters 7 and 8, are explored. Aspects that concur with previous research and literature are noted and contradictions, gaps and deviations are discussed.

Chapter 10, as the closing chapter, provides an overview of the theoretical and empirical aspects of this doctoral study. A summary of the key findings is presented, highlighting significant aspects. Recommendations that emerge from the study are put forward to mark this research as a scholarly contribution to the fields of educational psychology and school psychology. The limitations of the study are outlined, followed by suggestions for further research.



CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the various frameworks which have guided understandings and analyses of ideas and data as these have emerged in the literature and in the study. It introduces a conceptual framework which grounds the three chapters of the literature review which follow, identifying the objects of the study and clarifying these as key concepts. An overview of the theory which frames the study is then discussed. Systems theory, as it applies in the social sciences, in psychology and, more specifically, within school psychology, is discussed in relation to the study. The interpretivist meta-theoretical framework, which directs the methodology employed in the study, will be expanded upon in Chapter 6, which is focused on research design and methodology.

2.1. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is important for situating a study. Rocco and Plakhotnik (2009) explained that authors must demonstrate the importance of their work by defining the main ideas in a study and the network of relationships between them. The conceptual framework links literature, core concepts and the research question, so that the researcher enters the study with an orientating framework that clarifies what will be studied and how it will be studied (Cresswell, 2003). A conceptual framework therefore grounds the study in the relevant knowledge bases that lay the foundation for the importance of the problem statement and research questions. The conceptual framework also provides a broad structure for data collection and analysis because it sensitises the researcher to what to look for within the broad scope of the study.

The concept map below (Fig. 2.1) identifies key ideas, highlighting the areas of focus in this study, and indicates relationships between these areas. Such mapping facilitates seeing and thinking about information and relationships in different ways, indicating the relative importance of the objects of study and highlighting connections, gaps and contradictions in understanding the interrelationships between these key concepts. Figure 2.1 illustrates the conceptual framework that shapes this study. It presents a conceptual model that organises the phenomena to be investigated and a framework that has determined the questions being asked in the research. This framework identifies the key concepts being investigated, namely,

school psychology, school development and intersectoral collaboration, and depicts the interrelationships between them.

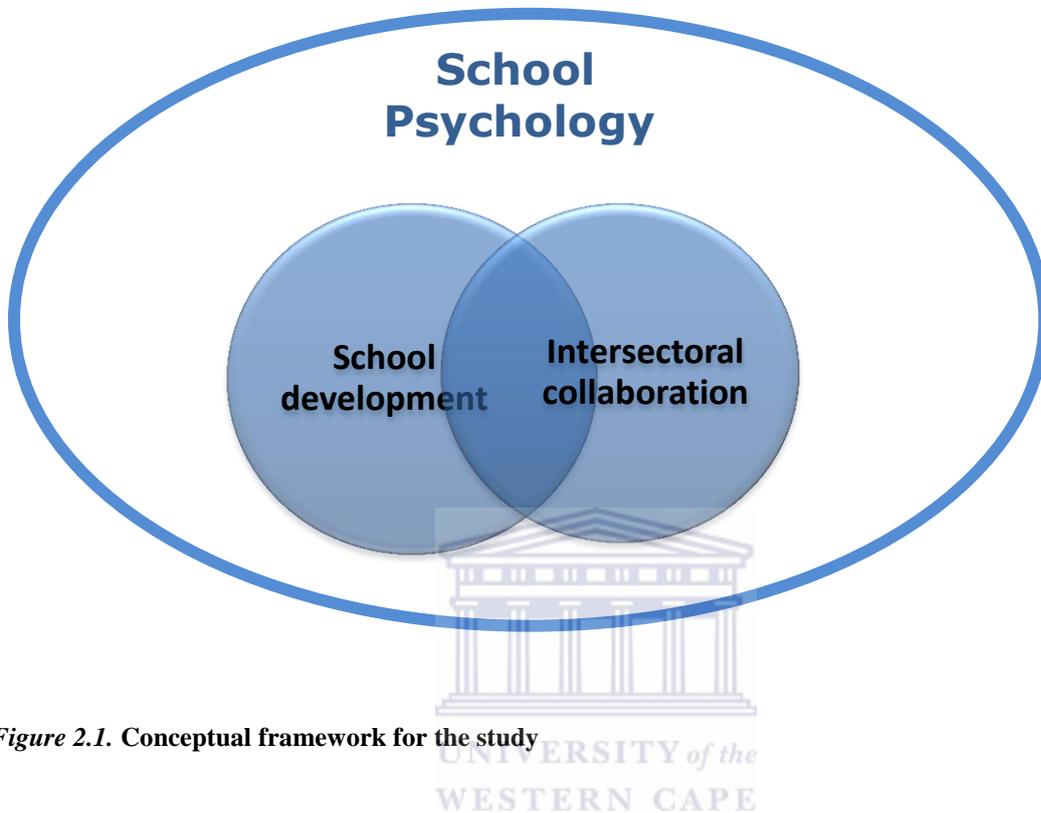


Figure 2.1. Conceptual framework for the study

The conceptual framework provides a base for the chapters of the literature review. The conceptual framework that guides this study incorporates some experiential knowledge but is largely drawn from a review of the literature in the three key areas which are the foundation of this study, namely, *school psychology*, *school development* and *intersectoral collaboration*. These key concepts are defined here briefly but are expanded upon in the three chapters that follow, in which key issues and debates around each of the concepts that are central to this study are explored in some depth.

2.1.1. School Psychology

The term *school psychology* refers to a field where professionals are prepared in psychology and education and are recognised as specialists in the provision of psychological services to children and youth within the contexts of schools, families, and other settings that impact on their growth and development (Burden, 1994). The term *educational psychology* is often used synonymously with the term *school psychology*; however a distinction between the two is made in this study. This distinction is important in the South African context and is discussed

in the chapter that follows, which explores definitions, history and current debates and issues in the field of school psychology internationally and in the South African context. Jimerson, Oakland and Farrell (2007) refer to school psychology as a “speciality devoted to the provision of services to children and youth, their teachers, and parents” (p. 1). School psychology practice is described in *The Handbook of International School Psychology* as including direct and indirect interventions to support children, assessment and programme planning, in-service training, consultation with teachers, parents and other professionals, organisation development and supervision (Jimerson et al., 2007).

2.1.2. School Development

Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) contended that schools ought to be ‘learning organisations’, constantly reflecting on their own practice and shifting and changing, where necessary, as a consequence of the insights gained through this systematic reflection. School development aims at ensuring that all aspects of school life are geared towards fostering effective teaching and learning so that learners develop optimally as individuals and make a positive contribution to society (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010). Schmuck and Runckel (1994) described school development as encompassing systematically planned and sustained efforts at school self-study and improvement. This activity focuses on changing formal and informal procedures, processes and norms, or structures within the school as an organisation. The goal of school development, they argued, should focus both on improving the quality of life of the individual as well as the organisation, whose focus must directly and indirectly be on educational issues. Other terms employed, which are essentially geared towards achieving a similar goal, include *school organisation development*, *whole school development* and *school improvement*. These terms and the literature relating to them are discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

2.1.3. Intersectoral Collaboration

Intersectoral collaboration refers to the ‘working together’ of, or partnerships developed between, professionals and other role players, both in and outside of schools and other educational institutions (Robinson, Langhan, Lazarus, & Moolla, 2002). Such collaboration involves drawing together different sectors, disciplines and professions, which, in working together, cross boundaries to work within a common conceptual framework (Mostert, 1996). Intersectoral collaboration is experienced as an interactive process that brings together that

which is diverse, to execute plans for common goals as well as to generate solutions for complex problems (Dettmer, Dyck, & Thurston, 1996; Gronski & Pigg, 2000). Other terms used to refer to intersectoral collaboration in the literature include *interdisciplinary*, *transdisciplinary*, *multidisciplinary*, *interprofessional* and *partnerships*. In Chapter 5, the definition and practice of intersectoral collaboration will be explored in greater depth.

2.2. Theoretical Framework for this Study

Creswell (2003) explained that in qualitative (and quantitative) studies, a theoretical framework involves the presentation of a specific theory as well as empirical and conceptual work about that theory. Merriam (2001) described a theoretical framework as “the structure, the scaffolding, the frame of your study” (p. 45). This structure often comes from the author’s disciplinary orientation and the literature related to the topic and theory under investigation.

The social science theory which provides a frame of reference for understanding phenomena and perceptions of reality in this study is systems thinking. It is the lens through which observations and experiences are organised and understood in this piece of research.

2.2.1. Systems Thinking

Systems thinking can be described as an epistemology, a particular way of thinking that shapes an approach to understanding the world in particular ways. It draws from the physical and biological sciences as a base and has been applied to the social sciences in very meaningful ways (Flood & Jackson, 1991; Plas, 1986), essentially referring to thinking in terms of relationships, interconnectedness and context.

One branch of systems theory deals with living systems, which are best defined as integrated wholes whose general properties cannot be reduced to an understanding of the parts (Bateson, 1973; Checkland, 1981; Capra, 1983; Reynolds & Holwell, 2010). The decontextualised parts do not necessarily behave in the same way as they do when in context. Transactional processes are therefore the focus, with emphasis placed on understanding relationships and the principles of organisation, not the component parts in isolation. The system rather than the individual is therefore the primary target for change because the focus of the psychological context is shifted from only the individual to include the context in which the individual functions.

Von Bertalanffy (1968) explained that a system is a set of objects marked by relationships between them. These systems exist in time and space and within environments that are shaped by structures and elements larger and smaller than themselves. Paterson, Lea, and Donald (1988) explained that these elements are interdependent and that the subsystems often interact within a hierarchy, to achieve a goal which is often influenced by the larger systems within which these interactions are embedded. A system's functioning is influenced by both the organisation and structure of the system. *Organisation* is what defines a system as an entity, while *structure* refers to its composition, the particular configuration of its components (Maturana, cited in Moore, 2008). The structure determines how a system is able to operate. In living systems, the organisation generally remains unchanged, while the structure of systems tends to change constantly. Some of the key principles that underpin systems thinking will be discussed below.

2.2.1.1. Interdependence and interconnectedness

According to Flood and Jackson (1991), "The whole is always greater than the sum of its parts" (p. 4). Advocates of systems thinking argue that the functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction between the parts. Change in one component influences other components, so what happens in one part impacts on other parts (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002; Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010; French & Bell, 1999; Plas, 1986; Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger, Wandersman, & D'Aunno, 1984). Events, questions and debates cannot therefore be completely understood in isolation. It is clear then that *relationships and interactions* between individuals and systems are central to systems theory because the functioning of the whole is seen to be dependent on the interactions of the various parts. The quality of education-support provision is therefore not determined by the appointment of professionals from different disciplines but rather on the way in which these players work together to deliver relevant services to schools.

2.2.1.2. Adaptation

Within systems theory, it is understood that survival is determined by the organism's (individual and/or organisation) capacity to cope with change (Heller et al., 1984). How individuals, groups and organisations respond to change and, in so doing, determine their own survival, is an aspect of particular emphasis when adopting a systems approach to understanding phenomena. Education has been the focus of immense change in South Africa

and this has had major implications for school psychological services. For example, the responses of school psychologists, as individuals and groups, within a system that has been challenged by transformation were explored in the course of this study.

2.2.1.3. Patterns

It was emphasised earlier that interactions within and between systems are important; the patterns that these interactions create are as important. Systems are characterised by patterns: repetitive interactions which are formed through the relationships between the parts of the system and which preserve their own functioning (Moore, 2008; Plas, 1986). These patterns become apparent as characteristic ways of engaging within and between systems and may be developmental and functional, but may also be dysfunctional and toxic. These patterns become the written and often unwritten rules in the system and consequently shape the culture and ethos of groups and organisations. A systems perspective therefore examines the patterns that emerge in relation to school psychology practice.

2.2.1.4. Cycles of cause and effect

Advocates of systems thinking emphasise that interactions are not merely one-directional. The issue is not whether causality exists but rather to be cautious in deciding when a causal view is helpful and when another perspective may be more productive. In systems thinking, causality is not regarded as very helpful because it insists on focusing on the parts and not on the whole. Causality is also often multiple rather than singular and often occurs as cycles, which then become norms within systems, and these norms then become the focus of systems work (Plas, 1986; Frederickson, 1990; Heller et al., 1984). For example, learners at a school may have very low literacy levels, and this may be related to the skills, knowledge and qualifications of the teacher, the language curriculum of the school, lack of resources to teach reading, illiterate parents and/or a community that undervalues education. Assuming the cause to be singular and absolute oversimplifies what is required as a solution.

2.2.1.5. Role definition

How roles are defined is deemed within systems theory to influence how the system functions as a whole. When adopting a systems approach, one needs to acknowledge the individual parts, although the emphasis is on understanding the nature of the interaction between them (Moloi, 2004). The roles played by these individual parts are of fundamental importance to the overall functioning of the system. Systems thinking, applied in a school context, implies

working as a collective, in a team; however it remains crucial that each team member is clear about his or her role and function and how this contributes to the collective. If roles are not well-defined, the functioning of the system is similarly affected either positively or negatively. Therefore, when a multi-disciplinary team works within a school, it is crucial that the role of each member is clarified within the team and communicated to the school. Such clarity enhances the nature and quality of the service being provided.

2.2.1.6. Boundaries

Systems are composed of subsystems which interact with one another. The boundaries between these may be formally established or emerge naturally and are often semipermeable, allowing information to flow across the boundaries and between subsystems (French & Bell, 1999; Moore, 2008). How closed and rigid, or open and flexible, these boundaries are often affects the system's functioning. Understanding the nature of these boundaries and how they are organised provides interesting insights into the ways in which systems operate. This understanding illuminates communication patterns, information flow and the nature of relationships. The findings of this research indicate that if boundaries between school psychologists and those who manage them are too rigid, communication and decision making are adversely affected and consequently impact on the way in which the school psychologist is able to work with and within the school.

2.2.1.7. Time and development

Since all systems change over time, aspects of time and development are crucial to understanding how systems function (Donald et al., 2010). Change and development in one part of a system is seen to influence the system as a whole. Learning, Moloi (2004) argued, is necessary for, and consequently drives, the change and development process. Therefore, learning results in change which, in turn, necessitates further learning. Therefore to understand how school psychology has developed over time in the South African context is crucial. Transformation of school psychological services in South Africa since the mid 1990s has had a significant impact on the perceptions of those in the service regarding what is deemed to be relevant and appropriate psychological practice in schools.

2.2.1.8. Stability and change

Feedback loops allow for information to be fed back into the system through interaction with other systems or subsystems. The flow of information is circular in that "information about

the system comes back into the system” (Moore, 2008, p. 476). When the feedback loop is positive, it gives rise to change in the system, and when it is negative, no change is apparent. In this way, negative and positive feedback influence stability and change within the system but work in complementary ways to hold the system intact and also allow for some flexibility in its functioning. Moore explained that negative feedback keeps a system stable, while positive feedback sets change in motion in a system. An example of this effect is reflected in the way information flows from schools to district offices, often resulting in positive feedback in that some change or action is initiated on the part of the support team. Information flows from schools to the district offices, often resulting in positive feedback in that some change or action is initiated on the part of the support team. When feedback loops between district and head office, result in negative feedback, little change is apparent, suggesting the need to review patterns of information flow.

Moloi (2004) argued that systems thinking is employed by people who view their role in the team, the role of teams in organisations, and the organisation’s relationship to the broader environment, as crucial. Central to systems thinking, she explained, is the awareness of the interconnectedness and interdependency of individuals, teams, organisations and the larger environment. A systems thinking approach allows one to view the entire system as it functions and to understand how different elements thereof interact with and impact on others. The discipline of systems thinking has as its central tenet the argument that understanding of a phenomenon or object is deepened if one looks at the whole picture, since all aspects of a phenomenon are seen to be in continuous action and interplay (Moore, 2008). These intersections and interrelations consequently bind the different parts together in such a way that they become coherent in relation to one another. The parts, therefore, cannot be completely understood unless in relation to the whole.

Moloi (2004) challenged school psychologists to acquire a clearer picture of the political, economic, social, technological and cultural world outside schools and to realise how this impacts on their work with these organisations. School psychologists, in their individual capacity, and the field of school psychology, more broadly, must take up this challenge if relevant and appropriate services are to be provided to schools (Daniels et al., 2010; Nel, Lazarus & Daniels, 2010). This research study epitomises a response to this challenge.

The constructivist paradigm that framed this study provided a helpful meta-theoretical frame within which systems thinking can be employed. Moore (2008) argued that constructivist thinking is encountered in systems approaches. She explained that ecosystemic research based on an interpretive-constructivist paradigm works with certain assumptions:

- The notion of one, objective reality is rejected, an understanding that multiple realities can exist side by side.
- The researcher is a participant in the processes within the system being investigated.
- The interrelationships between and within systems and the patterns that connect are more important than the separate parts.
- The research process must be transparent to the reader who has access to the original dialogue and the process of analysis.
- Qualitative research is prioritised, although quantitative data can be used to inform understandings of the system.

This set of assumptions provided a helpful guide in the shaping of the research design and methodologies employed in the current study.

Moore (2005) suggested that there is a good fit between social constructionism and systems thinking as the latter is applied in educational psychology. The practitioner or researcher seeks to gain a systemic understanding of phenomena and relationships and assumes that she or he will learn and create alongside ‘clients’ or ‘participants’. This however demands that the practitioner is able to step back and be reflexive about his or her engagement in and with the system. Social constructionism, he argued, offers possibilities for understanding and developing educational psychology practice more broadly.

2.2.2. Systems Thinking in Psychology

Von Bertalanffy's (1968) general systems theory played a crucial role in the move within psychology away from a reductionist view towards a more holistic view, which consequently influenced the development of educational psychology practice in the United States and the United Kingdom (Burden, 1994), and since the mid 1990s, in South Africa (Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 2000; Donald, 1996; Donald et al., 2010; Engelbrecht, 2004a, 2009). This theory views different levels and groupings of the social context as systems in which the functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction between all parts (Bateson, 1973;

Capra, 1983; Donald et al., 2010; Frederickson, 1990). Systems are therefore understood as a hierarchy of related subsystems, and human and organisational functioning is studied in terms of the interactional patterns within and between these systems.

In systems psychology the emphasis is on the relationship between people and their environments rather than examining characteristics of either in isolation. The work of Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) is often referred to in order to highlight the importance of understanding the influence of systems on an individual's development. The systems perspective in this study, however, moves beyond the focus on the individual. Its emphasis is on the school and on the field of school psychology. It underpins an exploration into how a systems approach can be employed in facilitating the development of the school as an organisation and draws on systems thinking to understand the dynamics within the field of school psychology.

Systems psychology is geared towards gaining an interactional perspective and investigating the relationship between the individual and the context (Plas, 1991). This focus is approached in the current study at two levels. First, school development and intersectoral collaboration are foregrounded as key aspects in the field of school psychology, which demands an exploration and understanding of the relationship between people and context. Second, the relationship between school psychologists and the contexts or systems within which they work is explored, emphasising the challenges they face.

System thinking has been applied by psychologists working in schools since the 1970s (Burden, 1978). This means that the clients have been located and understood in relation to the complex environment within which they are situated. Understanding the systems within which individuals and groups function is regarded as crucial in exploring assessment and intervention possibilities. Organisational functioning is therefore studied in terms of the interactional patterns between and within the systems. Emphasis is placed on understanding information flow, that is, how information enters a system, creates feedback loops and communicates within the system and between itself and other systems. The notion of reciprocity is also important. This is the belief that the environment affects individuals and individuals are active agents in influencing the environment. Understanding how individuals adapt to the environment and how the environment adapts to the individuals within it deepens one's perspectives on how change is initiated, facilitated and responded to.

Frederickson (1990) stated that systems thinking has long been paid lip-service, with some psychologists having been keen to proclaim themselves as systems thinkers. She argued that many practitioners do not internalise systems thinking in their practice. This remains a challenge within the South African context, where, although practitioners often make public declarations of acceptance of this approach, a review of their practice reveals that systems thinking does not frame the assessments and interventions engaged in. It is important to note, however, as Frederickson (1990) stressed, that it is only legitimate for a psychologist to describe his or her work as *systems work* if such work is informed by or derived from systems thinking or theory. The challenge to draw on a particular theory and discourse to inform one's practice is foregrounded in this study.

2.2.3. Systems Psychology in Schools

The theory of community psychology, which is a base that school psychologists often draw upon, holds that psychology must include an observation of systems, of the physical environment and of individual perceptions of these environments (Nel, 2010). The practitioner assesses the environment within which the individual exists, focusing on the relationship between the individual and the social context (Seedat, Duncan, & Lazarus, 2001; Rappaport, 1977). Understanding the person in context is imperative. For school psychologists, understanding the learner in the school context is of paramount importance. Psychologists need to have an understanding of how schools affect learners and also how learners affect schools. Psychologists also need to understand the unique way in which the school as a system influences educators and learners. Such an understanding is based on the premise that the problems of individuals need to be understood within the context of the systems within which they live, and that social systems have a vital role to play in the behaviour and lives of the individual (Plas, 1986). Often, the system rather than the individual needs changing, or more likely, both. Following from this contextual understanding, interventions need to focus on all relevant aspects of the system, including system transformation as well as individual change.

Fox (2009) traced the development of systems work and systems thinking in the field of educational psychology and argued that educational psychologists have gone through phases during which systems perspectives have been incorporated into educational psychology practice in different ways. Essentially, he described how systems thinking has been adopted

within educational psychology and consequently broadened its scope from a focus on *the child in the family* to *consultation as practice* and, over the last few decades, to focusing on the change and development of the school as an organisation. Thus, when systems thinking is applied by psychologists to systems like schools, the focus is not only on the learner since understanding the context within which the learner is expected to learn and develop is as important. This includes knowing what, within the system, supports and facilitates learning and development and what hinders it.

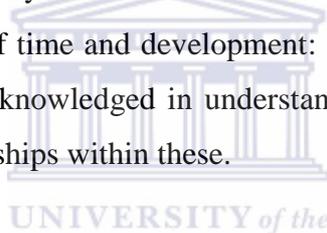
When applying a systems approach to working in schools, Burden (1994) claimed that various dimensions of the school system need to be understood. These dimensions, according to Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) could include the following:

- The *size of the organisation*, whether it is a big school or a small school, because young people learn different things and in different ways in each context.
- The *distribution of power*, because when power is shared equally, environmental demands on members are different from when power is held by an individual or small group.
- *Vision, mission and goals* and how values are set to facilitate the establishment of goals which may be shared or belong to a particular individual or group.
- *Leadership and management* and an analysis of leadership and management positions, roles, functions and styles adopted within the system and subsystems. Who leads and how this plays itself out is therefore under focus.
- What *resources* are available and how they are procured, managed and controlled, and the impact thereof on the quality of teaching and learning in the school, and the nature of learning and development experienced by learners and educators in particular.

Donald et al. (2010) identified key areas of investigation when attempting to understand a school as a system:

- Gaining an understanding of the goals and values of the system, whether obvious or hidden: Understanding and identifying both the openly stated and the underlying goals and values that characterise a system are crucial if interventions need to be implemented. These may emerge from within the system or from outside of the system (the suprasystem).

- Ascertaining what subsystems exist within the broader system: This refers to the different groupings that exist within a system and may exist alongside or overlap with one another.
- Revealing patterns of communication: The patterns of communication between subsystems are crucial to understand. How communication occurs, what is communicated, but more importantly, whether this is clearly communicated and to whom, is crucial.
- Clarifying how roles are defined and played out to achieve goals: How roles are defined and enacted upon within a system influences the goals and values that emerge, whether open or hidden.
- Examining the boundaries: Boundaries exist within systems, between subsystems and between the system and those outside of it. How flexible or rigid these boundaries are impacts on the relationships between subsystems and the ways in which the system and the individuals and subsystems within it function.
- Reflecting on the effect of time and development: Systems change and develop over time, and this must be acknowledged in understanding the nature of the system, its structures and the relationships within these.



Applying systems psychology in schools would require assessment of and interventions in the organisational climate, relationships, and structures and would necessitate openness to change (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002). The organisational climate involves understanding people's behaviour, characteristics, attitudes and perceptions. These authors liken the assessment of the organisational climate to assessing personality, suggesting that environments have personalities just as individuals do. Relationships would encompass the extent to which individuals help and support one another, the levels of involvement, affiliation, peer support and communication. System maintenance and systems change imply a focus on defining roles and understanding how these roles are expressed and examining what boundaries exist and how these impact on the organisation's functioning.

Fox (2009) argued that the term *systems work* is often used ambiguously in educational psychology contexts. He was concerned that systemic interventions encompass varied assessment and intervention processes and emphasised how important it is that practitioners understand what *systems work* means. Fox explained that although systems thinking and

systems work are not the same thing, they are intricately linked. Educational psychologists, he proposed, should incorporate systems thinking carefully and appropriately in their systems work.

The implications of a systems approach for school psychology practice would include organisational development, policy development at school level, consultation with teachers, parents and principals, programme development and implementation, professional and personal development of educators, group interventions with learners, curriculum development and adaptation, leadership and management coaching, and facilitating the development of community partnerships. All of these interventions involve systems work and all require systems thinking because understanding and influencing all levels of the system make for effective educational psychology practice.

2.2.4. A Critique of Systems Thinking

Ecosystemic thinking has developed as an epistemology. Moore (2008) explained that criticisms of this approach tended to focus on earlier representations of systems work where followers' interpretations and applications of systems thinking were regarded as extreme. One example noted by Moore, was the role of researcher as 'participant', where the researcher/therapist became a dominant and even domineering force in the system; then, in a bid to be perceived as neutral, the researcher became a cold and distant entity who did not engage in the system at all. Striking a balance in this regard is a challenge when employing and applying systems thinking in psychological work.

Another concern noted by Moore (2008) was that with the emphasis on the larger system and the interactions within them, the individual would be overlooked. Emphasis would be placed on relationship dynamics, and the intrapersonal factors within individuals would be neglected.

Fox (2009) cautions practitioners in their application of systemic thinking. His critique was leveled at those who are not able to distinguish between systems work and systems thinking. He argued that using these terms interchangeably has been problematic because these traditions have become intertwined and understandings of theory and practice cannot then be clarified.

2.2.5. Systems Thinking as a Framework for Analysis for this Study

The social context under investigation in this study is education and, within this, education support to schools, in particular school psychological services. In order to understand the system as a whole, it is crucial to examine the relationship between the different parts, since whatever happens in one part will have an effect on other parts. One cannot therefore understand the practice of school psychologists (as one grouping) without understanding the broader system within which they work (education districts, provincial and national education), as well as the other individuals and sectors with which they interact (schools, educators, institution management and governance managers, curriculum advisors and parents, to mention a few). Beyond this is the societal context of South Africa, and global developments and trends, and the impact thereof on all the systems within it. These multiple levels of systems and the relationships between them are depicted in Figure 2.2.

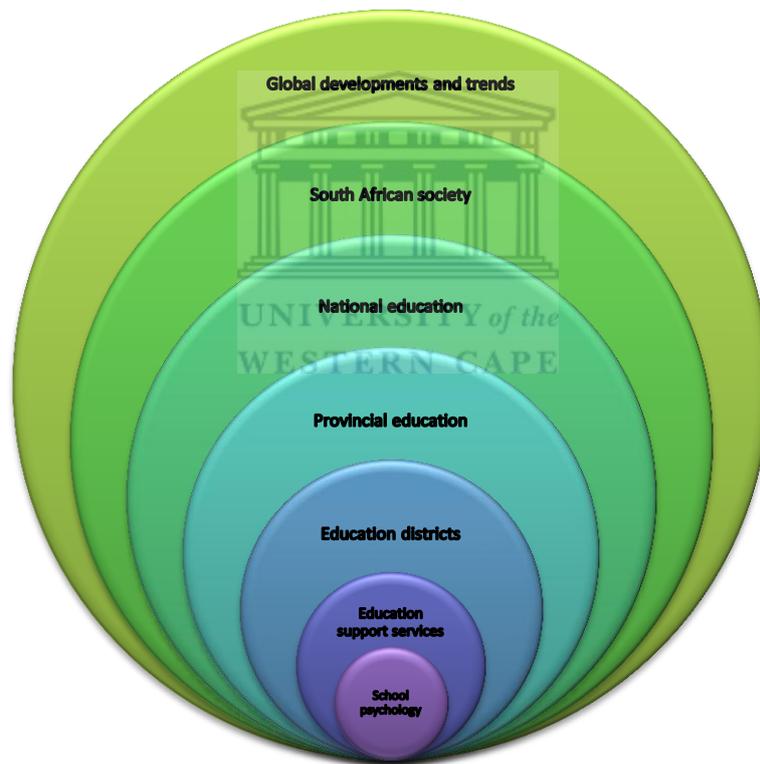
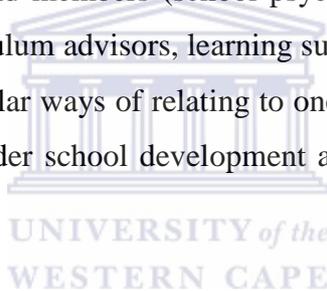


Figure 2.2. Systems that frame school psychology

Systems theory provides a meaningful and relevant frame of reference to guide this study because it assists in answering questions which are guided by key systemic principles. Such questions relate to the relationships and interactions between role players engaging in school development. The purpose of the study is to seek to understand how roles have been defined and boundaries have been established to shape the culture and functioning of various sectors

within the field of education and in particular within school psychology. This investigation brings to light patterns in the system and identifies cycles which have become norms in the system within which school psychologists work. Experiences of change were analysed, as were reflections on ways in which individuals and groups have adapted over time through the system's growth and development, as school psychology practice has shifted. School development and intersectoral collaboration were prioritised as intervention options.

Systems are characterised by patterns that preserve their own functioning (Bateson, 1973). These patterns interact and create feedback loops which allow information to be fed back to the system through interaction with other subsystems and systems. In this study, the patterns that shape the practices of school psychologists in relation to their developmental work with schools are explored. Analysis uncovers the patterns that are often experienced as unwritten rules that govern subsystems (communities, district offices, circuits, schools) and the system as a whole, in the ways they bind members (school psychologists, institution management and governance managers, curriculum advisors, learning support teachers, parents, principals, educators and learners) to particular ways of relating to one another. The extent to which the existing patterns facilitate or hinder school development and intersectoral collaboration is a key focus of the study.



It is crucial to note that each of the concepts that frame this study, namely, school psychology, school development and intersectoral collaboration, are all informed by systems thinking. Each of these areas of focus emphasises the interaction between parts of the whole, a holistic view, relationships and patterns of communication and the importance of structures and process.

2.3. Summary and Conclusion

Two frameworks within which this research can be best understood are presented. The theoretical framework, which is grounded in systems thinking clarifies the worldview of the researcher and provides a lens through which the research has been conducted and the findings analysed and understood. The conceptual framework highlights the key concepts being investigated and the interdependent way in which these concepts have been perceived and understood in this study. The conceptual framework, in placing emphasis on the relationship between the objects of the study, draws on systems thinking, thereby creating a

synergy between the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, which is deepened in various other aspects of the study. The three chapters that follow encompass an extensive literature review which draws from and extends the conceptual framework presented herein. The literature review focuses on the three key objects of this study, namely school psychology, school development and intersectoral collaboration, and charts related research and traditions in each of these areas.



CHAPTER 3

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

A literature review is both process and product (Delpont & Fouché, 2005). It entails learning about what is known and what is not known to the researcher at the beginning of the study and continues throughout the study, revealing how knowledge in the field has developed over time. The literature review is presented as a product in a thesis or report wherein the researcher demonstrates his or her understanding of the field under investigation. Once this product is presented, it allows readers to confirm that the research is in fact worthwhile and justified and makes a contribution to the field.

Rocco and Plakhotnik (2009) stated that the purpose of the literature review is to determine if a topic is researchable, to report the results of closely related studies, and to establish the importance of the current study in relationship to previous studies (Creswell, 2003). “It serves to refine and redefine the research questions by embedding these within larger empirical traditions” (Delpont & Fouché, 2005, p. 263) and also identifies gaps in previous research, thereby highlighting the relevance and significance of this study.

The literature review conducted for this study, as presented in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, serves the multiple functions suggested by Delpont & Fouché, (2005), including presenting the assumptions underlying the broad research question, demonstrating the researcher’s knowledge of the field of study, and identifying key debates and gaps in previous research.

An understanding of the nature of school psychology as it is practised around the world is crucial. Psychologists need to place their own practices and paradigms within the global arena. Such a comparison allows them to learn from experiences elsewhere and also to shape school psychology practice so that it meets the needs of South Africa. This chapter therefore presents an overview of school psychology practice internationally, with a particular focus on efforts to engage in school development. This is an important base for achieving the primary aim of the research, which is to investigate challenges that emerge when school psychologists work with other sectors to facilitate school development.

Particular challenges that are faced with regard to school psychology practice and how practitioners around the world are attempting to overcome these challenges will be highlighted in this chapter. To this end, a definition of school psychology is provided, a perspective of school psychology as it is practiced in South Africa is presented, and the roles and functions of school psychologists internationally are outlined. An attempt will be made to chart the changes and shifts in school psychology concerning the approaches and practices adopted by practitioners. The role of school psychologists in facilitating school development will be emphasised, given the focus of this study.

3.1. Defining School Psychology

The terminology which is employed in the study must be clarified before proceeding. School psychology and educational psychology are often used synonymously; however, these concepts are employed with some differentiation within the scope of this research.

Educational psychology generally refers to the study of psychology and its applications within the field of education (Burden, 1994). It is a body of research and knowledge in the areas of pedagogy and human development, specifically as it pertains to the teaching and learning process. This knowledge is often developed and shaped within academic spaces, including lecture theatres, books and journals. *School psychology*, on the other hand, emphasises the improvement of children's lives and the importance of developmental experience and is particularly concerned with school learning and behaviour problems (Beutler & Fisher, 1994). Merrell, Ervin and Gimpel (2006) stated that with specialised training in education and psychology, school psychologists work with educators, parents, and other mental health professionals to ensure that children learn in safe, healthy, and supportive environments. School psychology, Burden (1994) explains, focuses on the practical application of psychological knowledge in schools and classrooms.

School psychologists are prepared to intervene at the individual and systems level, and develop, implement, and evaluate preventive programs. In these efforts, they conduct ecologically valid assessments and intervene to promote positive learning environments within which children and youth from diverse backgrounds have equal access to effective educational and psychological services to promote healthy development. (APA Division of School psychology, cited in Merrell, Ervin and Gimpel, 2006, p. 3)

This is often the domain of those employed by the state, rather than those in private practice. Psychologists working in private practice often focus on providing direct services to children and youth, while those employed by the state are expected to support educators and schools in addressing the needs of learners within the school context.

These definitions capture school psychology as a profession that is concerned with the development, mental health and education of children and youth, emphasising the provision of services to children, youth, their families and other professionals who work with them within educational and other settings. This concurs with the scope of practice for educational psychologists as promulgated by the Health Professions Council in South Africa.

Educational psychologists are involved in assessment, diagnosis and intervention in order to optimise functioning in the broad context of learning and development. (Health Professions Council of South Africa, 2008, p. 1)

The anomaly that currently exists within formal training and the qualifications of those providing psychological services to learners and educators in schools in South Africa is acknowledged in this study. That is, although an individual may hold the post of school psychologist, he or she may not be a qualified psychologist. The term *school psychologist* is, however, employed throughout this thesis to emphasise a particular aspect of work that such practitioners engage in. The emphasis is on the *context* within which practitioners work, namely, the school. School development work, which arguably is a form of community-based practice within educational psychology, is what is being highlighted in this study. The research is focused on those individuals who are employed in education posts, where the provision of psychological services is their main brief. Emphasis is on the work engaged in by individuals who work in schools providing psychological services. The focus is not on the debates around the professional qualifications or status of these individuals.

For the purposes of the study, the terms *school psychology* and *school psychologist* are used primarily, but in the literature review, the terms *school psychology* and *educational psychology* will both be employed, since these terms are used fairly interchangeably in the literature.

Understanding the context within which this study was conducted is important. The section that follows, therefore, is focused on school psychology in South Africa, providing an overview of the history, outlining training options, and expounding on the current status and

practice of school psychology in the country. Particular attention is paid to roles and functions of school psychologists and how these have shifted and changed. School psychologists' involvement in school development is emphasised, given the focus of this study.

3.2. School Psychology in South Africa

A review of the development of the field and profession over the past century is needed in order to understand school psychology in South Africa. Training within the fields of psychology and educational psychology is also an important area of focus. The current status and practice of psychology in South Africa and the challenges faced are also presented in the section that follows.

3.2.1. History of School Psychology in South Africa

Education became the first field of practice for psychological intervention via psychometry (Louw, 1986). Schools were introduced to psychological testing in 1912, given the need to determine the extent of mental retardation in schools and to assess and diagnose children who required special classes and schools. In 1937, the first psychologist was appointed in what is now the Western Cape Province (Normand, 1993). Until the 1960s, the focus within the field of educational psychology in schools was on testing, with a particular emphasis on the development of instruments that would measure intelligence.

Alongside these developments, vocational guidance developed as an important school psychology service. The development and application of test batteries for vocational guidance began in 1922. In 1927, programmes for vocational guidance in primary and secondary schools were established. In 1936, the first education guidance officer was appointed in what is now Gauteng province. Personal issues, educational decisions, career choices, and remedial and therapeutic interventions were emphasised (Daniels et al., 2007; Louw, 1986).

From 1948, with the coming to power of the Nationalist government and its apartheid ideology, the country's education system began to be divided along racial lines. Education for Coloured, Indian, and Black¹ learners was controlled nationally, whereas education for White learners was managed by provincial departments of education. Each White provincial

¹ This racial classification was used within the Apartheid education system.

department had its own system for allocating school psychologists. For example, in the early 1990s, there was about one school psychologist for every 5 to 10 schools in the Cape Province. Other education departments had much lower ratios. For example, in the early 1990s, two school psychologists covered more than 100 Black schools in Cape Town. Service provision was therefore marked by inequality and discrimination. School psychology services, particularly vocational guidance, were strongly influenced by ideology, such as job reservation and the intention to maintain the existing socio-economic order (Normand, 1993).

Early in 1990, immediately preceding the radical change of government and the beginning of the dismantling of apartheid, the different threads of school psychology, including the focus on special needs and guidance and counselling, were investigated as part of the National Education Policy Investigation, which included a focus on support services. Policy proposals covering the various areas of school psychology were presented in this report (National Education Policy Investigation, 1992).

After 1994, school psychologists from the former segregated education departments who had worked at school clinics, child guidance clinics, education aid centres, area offices, and head offices were brought together into non-racial provincial education departments, within circuit-, district-based or provincial teams. The qualifications, experience, and previous workload of the school psychologists differed widely. From the more advantaged ex-departments, there were often highly qualified school psychologists who had time for individual work and diagnostic, curative interventions. At the other end of the scale were school psychologists who often were less qualified and focused mainly on group interventions, for example, group intelligence testing (Daniels et al., 2007; Engelbrecht, 2009; Normand, 1993).

In 1997, the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee for Education Support Services report estimated that about 50% of learners could be considered to experience barriers to learning and development (Department of Education, 1997). The report stated that special needs often arise as a result of barriers within the curriculum, the institution, the system of education, and the broader social context. Therefore, it was considered more appropriate in the South African context to use the term *barriers to learning and development* rather than *special needs*. Barriers identified in this report include socioeconomic factors and disabilities, as well as language and

communication, emotional, behavioural, and learning difficulties. With such a high prevalence of barriers and a shortage of specialists (particularly in disadvantaged and rural areas), models focusing on individualised specialised support for learners were no longer considered to be appropriate. Systemic barriers, it was argued, need to be identified and addressed as well.

In 1998, the National Commission for Special Needs in Education and Training and National Committee for Education Support Services presented the Minister of Education with a combined report outlining policy guidelines for these interconnected areas (Department of Education, 1997). Most of the recommendations in this report were embraced in the Education Policy White Paper 6, Special Education: Building an inclusive education and training system (Department of Education, 2001). As a result of these developments, school psychologists have had to change their roles and responsibilities, and this change has presented major challenges for those who had primarily provided individually-based services. Since the late 1990s school psychologists have attempted to redefine their roles and functions within a transformed education support system. This effort is supported by various national and provincial programmes aimed at facilitating the implementation of the new policy outlined in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001).

3.2.2. Policy Influencing School Psychology in South Africa

In Education White Paper 6 on building an inclusive education and training system (Department of Education, 2001) emphasis is placed on the importance of inclusive education and addressing barriers to learning and development in the endeavour to transform education in South Africa. Within the context of developing an inclusive education system, this policy describes education support as support for all learners within a systemic and developmental approach. Education support services are to have, as their core, district-based support teams, whose primary function is to support teaching, learning, and management by building the capacity of schools and other learning institutions to recognise and address learning difficulties and accommodate a range of learning needs (Department of Education, 2005a). These teams are intended to facilitate the utilisation of resources within communities and to address the needs of schools. District-based support teams are expected to evaluate and support teaching and learning, and to build the capacity of schools and other educational institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs. One of the key threads in such work is the development of human

resources through training and support. Strategies to be employed within such a system would include a focus on collaboration at the level of the school and the district (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001).

Institutional-level support teams, also called *School-based Support Teams* or *Teacher Support Teams* or *Education Support Teams* in South Africa, are established at the level of the school to identify and address barriers and facilitate learner, educator and school development (Department of Education, 2001, 2005a). The primary function of this team is to ensure that support services are properly co-ordinated and offered to the school. These teams are supposed to receive support from the district-based support teams, other government departments, those in the community who have skills, and other sources. In this context, the roles of the school psychologists have had to shift from being reactive, problem-oriented, and deficit-based to being preventative, developmental, and asset-based, providing assistance to support and develop capacity to address barriers to learning in schools.

3.2.3. Training in School Psychology in South Africa

Students wanting to specialise in educational psychology in South Africa can do an honours degree in psychology or education. They are also required to have a professional teacher's qualification before being admitted to a master's programme. To qualify as educational psychologists, students must complete an accredited master's programme in educational psychology, or psychology with a specialisation in educational psychology, and an approved 1-year internship.

The master's programmes offered in various universities in South Africa align competencies with those prescribed by the Health Professions Council of South Africa for educational psychologists. These competencies include the identification, assessment, diagnosis, planning, and implementation of services in relation to the learning and developmental needs of students, schools, families, and communities (Department of Health, 2010). The content of the programme may vary in focus and emphasis from one institution to another, but generally includes

- psychopathology in children and adults;
- psychological assessment (e.g., intellectual, academic, personality, behavioural, systemic);

- learning support;
- approaches to psychotherapy and counselling;
- facilitating development in school and community contexts;
- research methods (i.e., theoretical and methodological traditions, developing research proposals, qualitative and quantitative approaches to research, data collection and analysis, writing the thesis);
- fieldwork to develop skills related to core competencies; and
- special educational needs (i.e., inclusive education, understanding educational psychology as a profession, understanding special needs).

(Faculty of Community and Health Sciences, University of the Western Cape, 2008; Stellenbosch University, 2011)

The preparation of educational psychologists is labour intensive and underscores a lack of human and material resources to prepare sufficient numbers of professionals to service the needs of an already undersupplied school population (Kassiem, 2008). As far back as the 1990s, training institutions were challenged to review degree structures as well as the content and process of training (Donald, 1991). Donald recommended shorter programmes that focused strongly on basic and accessible mental health services in schools, with a strong emphasis on community and family interventions, intersectoral collaboration, and proactive, preventative, and consultative work with teachers and schools. Suffla and Seedat (2004) and Nel (2010) advocated the adoption of a community psychology orientation in the training and practice of psychology, particularly in schools where there are high client-practitioner ratios. As is evident from the summary of course content presented above, training institutions have begun to make such shifts, but the extent to which this is meeting the needs on the ground is an area that remains under-researched.

3.2.4. Current Status and Practice of School Psychology in South Africa

The most recent job description for school psychologists in the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) contains the proposal that school psychologists render psychological services within a consultative model to learners, educators and parents (WCED, 2008). This entails supporting the design and implementation of development programmes within a multifunctional context, engaging in psycho-educational assessment and therapeutic interventions, building the capacity of those who work with learners (e.g. educators and

parents), collaborating with members of the district-based support team, and establishing partnerships between the school and the community in addressing barriers to learning and development.

This job description highlights the fact that the shift in practice expected in the South African context does not imply an eradication of individualised assessment and intervention. It is not intended to de-skill school psychologists who are currently able to understand and work effectively with individual learners (Moolla, 1996). The emphasis is on how school psychologists can use their existing expertise and expand their practice by working systemically within schools and with other sectors and subsystems involved in supporting the development of schools.

In many South African schools, the psychological services provided have generally prioritised assessment of and intervention with individual learners, often involving the identification of learners (by educators or parents) who experience barriers to their learning and/or development. These barriers may be physical, emotional, social, intellectual or contextual. Learners are then referred by educators, often through the school's Institution Level Support Team (ILST), to the school psychologists based at the district office. The learner is then placed on a waiting list and further assessment and/or intervention is usually conducted when convenient. With this model of practice, time taken to see a learner is often problematic, given the large number of schools that each school psychologist is expected to service. This approach to service delivery is therefore unrealistic in most provinces in the country.

As early as 1998, some school clinics that were responsible for psychological services were already beginning to look at ways in which they could offer education support services to schools through intersectoral collaboration. However, this was implemented as a practice approach in only one school clinic in the Western Cape and was not developed as a framework within which all clinics in the province should be working. The emphasis was on multidisciplinary consultation as an approach to service delivery. Service provision was on a continuum: indirect services to the learner focusing on prevention and promotive interventions and direct services with a predominantly curative approach (Figure 3.1).

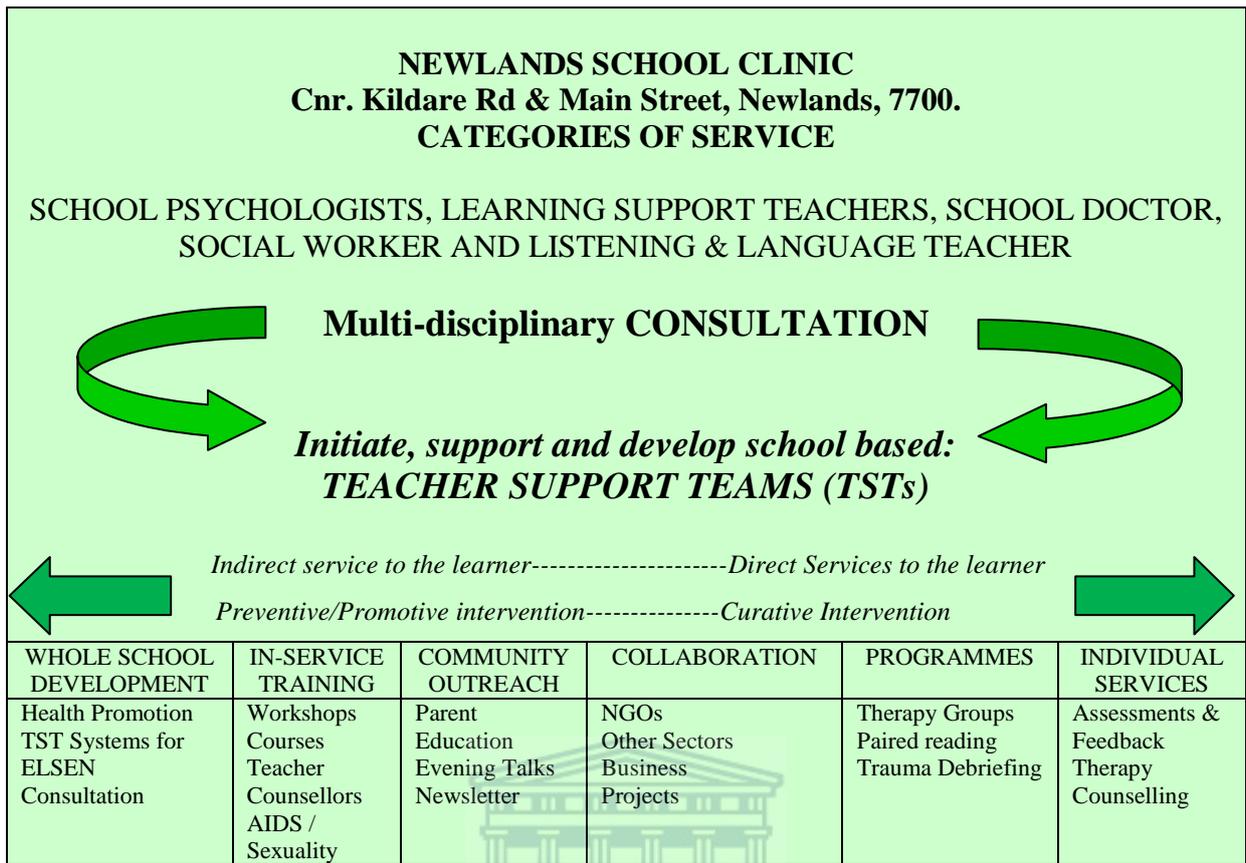


Figure 3.1. Newlands school clinic education support services, 1998 (adapted from poster produced by clinic staff)

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3.3. School Psychology Internationally

Having provided a synopsis of school psychology in South Africa, the overview is now widened to allow for some comparison and reflection on developments in the profession around the world. The sections that follow are presented to clarify the roles and functions of school psychologists in a variety of contexts and are followed by an exploration of the ways in which these roles may have shifted since the 1970s. Particular emphasis is placed on the ways in which school psychologists facilitate school development. Finally, the key challenges that face school psychology as a profession are discussed.

3.3.1. Roles and Functions of School Psychologists

The Handbook of International School Psychology (Jimerson, Oakland, & Farrell, 2007) provides an overview of the typical activities, roles and responsibilities that school psychologists are involved in. School psychology, internationally, has tended historically to

focus on the provision of services to learners in schools. The school psychologist's work could include

- assessment of children;
- development and implementation of intervention programmes to assist learners;
- consultation with teachers, parents and other relevant professionals to obtain a holistic understanding of a learner's difficulties and to intervene accordingly;
- programme development; and
- research.

Despite this broad range of possibilities, the emphasis in most countries, including South Africa, has tended to be on assessment of and intervention with individual learners.

Farrell, Jimerson, and Oakland (2007), in their synthesis of the observations made by the various authors included in their handbook, concluded that core services provided by school psychologists include direct and indirect services to children, indirect services to teachers and parents, and programmes at schools to foster system change. A comprehensive analysis of the text, which includes chapters written by authors from around the world, was conducted. In total, 48 countries, including developed and under-developed contexts are included in the book. Table 3.1 provides an analysis of the roles and functions of school psychologists internationally.

LEARNERS	EDUCATORS	PARENTS	SCHOOLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and assessment • Developing IEPs • Training • Counselling/therapy • Crisis intervention • Referrals • Academic support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Counselling/therapy • Consultation • Crisis intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy development • Prevention programmes

Table 3.1. Roles played by school psychologists

It is evident that school psychologists' roles and functions centre on learners. Assessment and interventions are varied and target emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties that they may experience. Services offered to learners, teachers and parents may be at an individual level or in groups, direct or indirect, and curative or preventative. Although work done at the level of the school is included in the table, this is dealt with in greater depth later in the chapter when the role of school psychologists in school development is discussed.

3.3.2. Changing Role of School Psychologists

As far back as 1999, Burden wrote a rather humorous piece entitled “We’re on the road to nowhere: Twenty-one years of reconstructing psychology”, in which he described educational psychology’s ongoing quest for change over many decades. He acknowledged the efforts of various writers and practitioners who have indeed done things differently, but lamented the fact that authors were saying the same things over and over again (in innovative and creative ways), while the challenge to change and reconstruct the profession remained (Burden, 1999). The extracts that follow reflect his concern:

education and mental health professionals historically have been reactive, rather than proactive, in the use of prevention early identification, and remediation practices in assisting those with academic and behavioural difficulties. (Albers, Glover, & Kratochwill, 2007, p. 258)

These authors’ call for school psychologists to critically reflect on their roles is supported by Reschly (2004) and Brown and Bolen (2003), who contended that school psychologists must move beyond the traditional roles they have played, focusing on assessment for placement if they are to meet the mental health needs of children and their families.

Many of the role changes that have been promoted for school psychology—emphasising indirect services, focusing on prevention programmes, utilising systematic programme evaluation, expanding involvement with stakeholder, and incorporating the consideration of diversity into practice—will be required for effective health care services (Brown & Bolen, 2003, p. 245).

In the South African context, Engelbrecht (2004a) argued that contextual demands

require a shift from the traditional child-deficit, medical approach towards an ecological and multi-level systems approach, suggesting a wider scope of analysis and action within an inclusive educational approach (p. 23).

Although this discussion may fall into Burden’s (1999, p. 231) category of writings that do not “move forward much beyond good ideas expressed”, it is an attempt to provide direction in three specific areas of school psychology practice that warrant reflection. The sections that follow cover three key areas of change that emerge in the literature, namely, the need to focus on systems and contexts and intervene at this level; to find a balance between engaging in direct and indirect service delivery by incorporating more of the latter; and employing a community psychology approach to school psychology practice.

3.3.2.1. The importance of systems and contexts

Hatzichristou (2002) explained that school psychology in most countries around the world is continually grappling with changing roles and evolving professional identities. Stobie, Gemmell, Moran, and Randall (2002) and Ehrhardt-Padgett, Hatzichristou, Kitson, and Meyers (2004) maintained that the traditional practice of school psychology tends to be child-focused, with minimal engagement and investigation of the contexts within which the child functions. Problems are understood and interventions proposed by focusing on the child and not considering the contributions to the problem or the solution of the systems of which the child is a part. In contrast, a systemic approach acknowledges the child, but extends beyond the individual, consciously attempting to understand factors in the environments within which children exist to improve and intervene at multiple levels.

School psychology has tended historically to be focused on the provision of services to individuals in schools. Engelbrecht (2004a, 2009) pointed out that contextual realities have demanded a shift from the traditional child-deficit, medical model towards an ecological and multi-systems paradigm, suggesting a wider scope of analysis and action. Traditional roles of the psychologist as therapist and psychometrist working with individual children and their families have also been challenged by others (Burden & Brown, 1987; Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 1996; De Jong, 2000b; Donald, 1996; Ehrhardt-Padgett et al., 2004; Engelbrecht, 2004a; Hunter, 2003; Jimerson et al., 2007; Lomofsky & Green, 2004; Nichols, Parfrey, & Burden, 1989, Pillay, 2003, Sharratt, 1995). Numerous calls for a shift towards a more preventative, consultative and ecosystemic perspective in the practice of school psychology are evident in the literature (Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 2000a; Donald, 1996; Donald et al., 2010; Engelbrecht, 2004a, 2009; Jimerson et al., 2007).

The challenge since the 1970s has been for school psychologists to adopt a systems perspective and thus look beyond the individual and incorporate a more broad-based practice which focuses on the support and development of the contexts within which learners function, with the school being a major focus (Burden, 1978; Coxon, 1991; Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 2000b; Engelbrecht, 2004a; Figg & Ross, 1981; Lown et al., 2001). This shift implies that school psychologists need to understand how schools work as complex organisations.

Stobie et al. (2002) summarised the changes taking place within school psychology, particularly with regard to what is believed to facilitate change that would benefit children. These authors highlighted the role played by school psychologists in developing organisational structures in schools, facilitating staff development and promoting the management and support of learning and behaviour. Facilitating shifts in attitudes, values and beliefs of those in the school system and encouraging parental involvement is also deemed part of the school psychologist's brief.

Bradley-Johnson and Dean (2000) have similarly called for a broader application of such a changed role, with stronger emphasis on the following:

- Indirect service.
- Application of psychology in the definition of problems and design of programmes.
- Prevention.
- Employment of systemic evaluation.
- Involvement of various stakeholders.
- Acknowledgement of and addressing issues of diversity.

Human behaviour ought to be understood in relation to the complexities of the context within which it presents, and intervention strategies should be based on a systems analysis and encompass systems change. To this end, De Jong (2000b) proposed that school psychologists could contribute to

- the development of the school as an organisation;
- building a supportive psycho-social learning environment;
- staff development; and
- mediating relationships between a school's internal and external worlds.

Roles that could be embraced could include those of organisational consultant, special needs consultant, human resource developer, and curriculum consultant, with assessment and therapy also being an important element (Lomofsky & Green, 2004).

From another point of view, Strein, Hoagwood and Cohn (2003) have argued that school psychology would do well to apply a public health model to its practice. This implies seeing the classroom and school as the "client"; working at the level of the system; extending the

focus to school-wide interventions; and increasing collaboration within school-community partnerships. A wider scope of analysis and action is what is called for. This would require that the psychologist understands the school as a complex organisation and becomes a change agent for the benefit of both adults and children. It implies the psychologist devoting his or her psychological expertise to dynamic processes involved in change and development (Bradley-Johnson & Dean, 2000; Nichols, Palfrey, & Burden, 1989).

In the view of Sheridan and Conoley (2000),

Educational psychology must be reflective of, responsive to, and proactive towards the multiple and changing systems within which we operate (e.g. school, family, societal and legislative systems), including the increasingly diverse populations whom we serve (e.g. children, families, educators, administrators, community leaders) and the settings in which they function (e.g. homes, schools, education support services) (p. 489).

Farrell et al. (2007) stated that although some school psychologists view this challenge to change with optimism and as an opportunity to broaden their roles and discard the stereotype that portrays their main activity as testing children, there is a concern that practitioners may not have sufficient skill and expertise to embrace these new roles. Lomofsky and Green (2004) argued that a compromise is necessary. There needs to be some balance between traditional and emerging roles. As a profession, however, care must be taken not to 'throw the baby out with the bath water'!

3.3.2.2. Direct and indirect service delivery

An important distinction exists between direct and indirect service delivery.

When educational psychologists personally provide psychological services to clients, they are operating within a direct service delivery framework. Counselling and psychotherapy are good examples of direct services. When educational psychologists work with third parties who implement psychological services for clients, the psychologists are functioning within an indirect service delivery mode. Consultation exemplifies this indirect method (Conoley & Conoley, 1990, p. 85).

School psychologists who engage in consultation would interact with teachers, parents, principals and administrators in a school to develop knowledge and skills that would benefit learners at the school. The capacity of the consultees is developed so that they may adjust their own methods of practice, they may intervene with individuals or groups of learners in the classroom and they may even develop broad-based developmental programmes for learners.

Conoley and Conoley (1990) illustrated the difference between direct and indirect service delivery by way of example, as depicted in Figure 3.2.

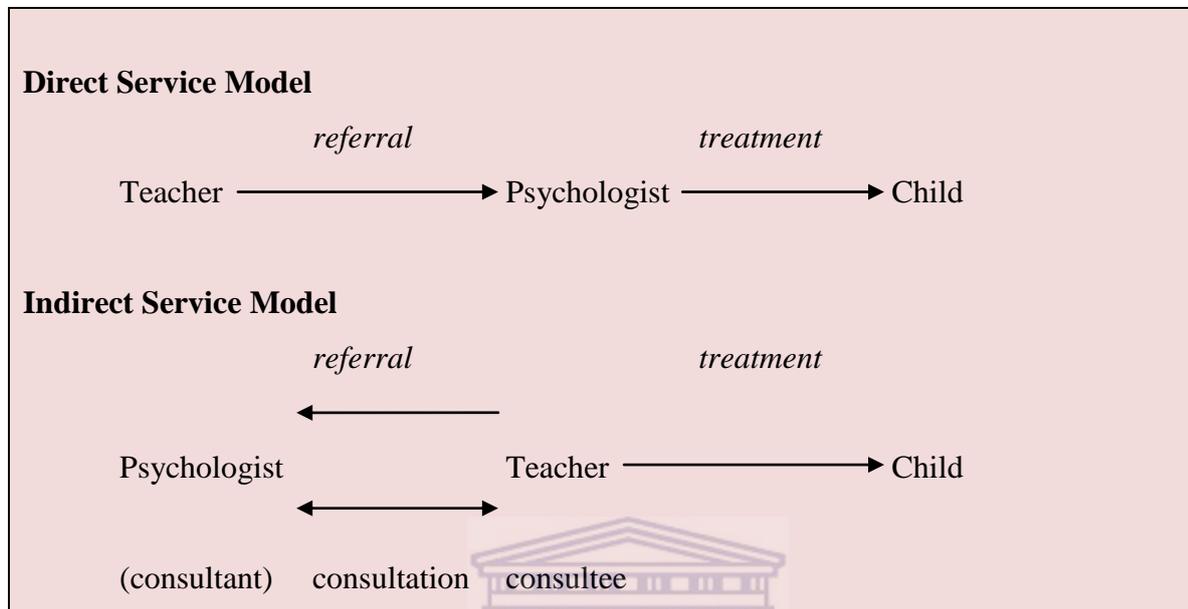


Figure 3.2. Direct and indirect service delivery models

The emphasis in psychology and educational psychology in the past has been on direct, curative service delivery. This is, however, not feasible in South Africa because there are insufficient numbers of psychologists working with schools to be able to reach all the learners who require support, and it incorrectly assumes that the problem and the solution lies in the learner. The educational psychology symposium held at the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) conference in 2007 confirmed this point of view, with many practitioners registering their concern regarding the provision of school psychological services in the country as a whole. There was a clear message that the situation needs to change because what may have worked in the past, when services were provided to some privileged citizens, cannot apply any longer. Conference delegates were struck by the reality that redress and equity remain major challenges within education support services, even now, almost two decades into democracy. Although it was acknowledged that there should be some room for individualised assessment and intervention, it was argued that there is a dire need to reconsider the role of school psychologists in the education system.

Watkins, Crosby, and Pearson (2001) cautioned, in a study of school staff perceptions of the role of the school psychologist, that while school psychologists report that they would like to reduce assessment activities and engage in more consultation, intervention and other services, school staff desire a continuation of assessment activities in addition to the provision of additional services. Hunter (2003) provided a meaningful response to this in her development of a model that does not neglect the need for direct support to be provided to address disruptive behaviour. She heeds a call for a “full continuum of prevention and corrective programs that are integrated with each other and with instruction” (Adelman & Taylor, cited in Hunter, 2003, p. 42) and proposes addressing problems presented by learners in both direct and indirect ways, depending on the nature of the presenting problem. This work is referred to later in the discussion on school development.

Education support internationally encompasses both preventative and curative services; however, the ratio of one to the other varies depending on the individual practitioner, the circuit, the district or the province. The medical model, which focuses on the deficits in the individual, often dominates, so problems continue to be identified in the individual rather than in the systems within which that individual functions (Ehrhardt-Padgett et al., 2004).

A consultative approach incorporates working with individuals, groups, whole organisations and communities, and involves describing, understanding and intervening in the nature of action and experience within and between individuals and groups within learning contexts like schools (Burden, 1994; Conoley & Conoley, 1990; Frederickson, 1990; Populous, 2003). This form of systems consultation is primarily indirect and an attempt to integrate curative and preventative approaches. It includes working with the individual and the “individual-in-context”, consequently employing one intervention which can have multiple impacts.

3.3.2.3. Are school psychologists community psychologists?

Proposing change in educational psychology practice requires concomitant shifts and clarity regarding the theoretical underpinnings of this “new” practice. Moore (2005) and Sharratt (1995) set the stage for this debate, arguing that a new broad-based type of practice must be supported by theoretical development. The shifts in school psychology practice described earlier imply that school psychologists need to understand how schools work as complex organisations because schools are the contexts within which teaching and learning occur. These are the “communities” that school psychologists engage with. It has been argued that a

community psychology approach provides an appropriate theoretical and value base (Nel, 2010).

What is community psychology? Community psychology centres on the individual's relationship with the environment. It is an approach that emphasises the intricate links between human behaviour and social, political, economic and cultural contexts. (Bojuwoye, 2006; Seedat, Duncan, & Lazarus, 2001; Nel, 2010; Rappaport & Seideman, 2000) Community-oriented approaches bring preventive, curative and rehabilitative psychological services to people and empower community members through sharing knowledge and encouraging independence. Pretorius-Heuchert and Ahmed (2001) and Lomofsky and Green (2004) stressed that the focus in community psychology is on whole communities rather than on individuals, that the promotion of health and well-being is central, and that social action is a key strategy to facilitate change at policy, systems, resource and other levels. Community psychology is grounded in a set of values and assumptions that centre on addressing oppression, empowering people and groups personally and/or politically, promoting health and preventing illness, encouraging intersectoral collaboration, developing a sense of community and valuing diversity (Lazarus, 2007).

The ecological and organisational models of community psychology are perhaps most appropriately aligned with school development. These models draw from various systems approaches which emphasise the interdependence between people, and between people and the environments within which they exist. These models of community psychology focus on facilitating organisational change, community mobilisation, appropriate resource utilisation and the provision of adequate support systems for individuals and groups within the broader system (Lazarus, Bojuwoye, Chireshe, Myambo, Akotia, Mogaji & Tchombe, 2006). The engagement of the psychologist is therefore multipronged, comprehensive and systemic in nature.

The school psychologist, as a community psychologist, would, as Lazarus et al. (2006) suggested, partner with schools and communities to enhance their development through the application of psychological theories, principles and research. This would entail extending services to all, and transforming the way in which psycho-social problems and solutions are understood. The school psychologist is a community psychologist in that she or he provides a

contextual analysis of issues and transforms psychological service delivery to include systemic and preventative interventions as a priority.

Strein et al. (2003) also highlighted the relationship between school psychology and community psychology, where the focus is on prevention and on groups or systems as clients, rather than individuals. They linked this to the field of public health, which is built on the same premise, arguing that some aspects of the public health model are particularly relevant to school psychology. These include applying evidence to the delivery of psychological services, strengthening positive behaviour rather than only decreasing problematic behaviour, focusing on both prevention and treatment, incorporating collaboration and networking with communities, and engaging in research that improves knowledge in the field and evaluates services provided.

Nel, Lazarus, and Daniels (2010) took a similar stance, claiming that the practice of educational psychology is intricately linked to community life and development. These authors argued that since formal educational settings like schools are part of communities, the services offered in these institutions should serve the needs of the communities within which the schools exist. School psychological services therefore should be engaging not only with schools, but also with the community that lies beyond their fences. They made a strong call for community-based educational psychology, explaining that the benefits to the practitioner and the clients are manifold. These include disadvantaged and previously oppressed communities having access to psychological services, psychologists' knowledge and skills being expanded, capacity being built so that individuals and institutions are empowered, encouraging shared responsibility through intersectoral collaboration, and developing a culture of acceptance and tolerance for diversity.

Peterson (2001) contended that since school psychology has its origins in community psychology, it ought to be oriented towards action and change at micro and macro levels. He explained that the environments within which school psychologists work are characterised by interactions between schools, families and the broader community. He argued that in engaging with the wider education system at district and even national levels, school psychologists may act as advocates at policy level too. Peterson acknowledged that adopting the role of change agent is not always easy for professionals, but nonetheless challenges school psychologists to serve the community in this way.

One way that the school psychology-community psychology relationship can be concretised in practice is through the development of schools as learning organisations. Although Chapter 4 is focused on this as a key object of study in this research, school development warrants a brief discussion as a form of school psychology practice.

3.3.3. School Psychologists Facilitating School Development

The challenge has been for school psychologists to look beyond the individual and to begin to incorporate a broad-based practice which focuses on the support and development of the contexts within which learners function, the school being one of these (Burden, 1978; Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 2000b; Engelbrecht, 2004a; Figg & Ross, 1981).

Whole school development indicates a consultative, systemic, indirect, holistic, preventative approach which proponents of change in the field of school psychology practice have lobbied for nationally and internationally. Such school development work can be understood to capture one aspect of the community-based practice of educational psychology. It entails taking psychological services to the (school) community and sharing knowledge of psychology with people so that they may be empowered to take responsibility for improving the quality of theirs and others lives and education (Ross & Deverell, 2004).

The call for change is focused on how educational psychologists can use their existing specialised knowledge of individual learning and development to adjust their methods of practice. This would require deeper levels of analysis of the challenges facing individuals and, consequently, demand intervention in the contexts within which individuals learn and develop. As Bojuwoye (2006) observed, the tendency to split mainstream and community psychology practice is counterproductive if psychologists wish to fulfil the needs of all sectors of society. Rather than viewing the call for school development as a call to discontinue working with individuals, the emphasis should be on *extending* the practice of school psychologists, that is, shifting the focus rather than eradicating existing knowledge, skills, and expertise and replacing them with something completely different. This centres on how school psychologists can use their existing expertise and findings from one set of practices to effect change in a systemic way.

3.3.3.1. Working with schools as systems

A whole school approach addresses the system in which children function (Ferreira, 2004). The school plays a crucial role in the development of children and in some cases may even supersede the role of the family, given the breakdown of family structures and relationships of many communities in South Africa. In order to facilitate optimal development of learners, schools must perform their function optimally and also interact with other microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). An effective school, therefore, connects with families, churches, clinics, non-government organisations and district offices in order to ensure that issues are understood holistically and are addressed systemically.

Many years ago, in his book, *Reconstructing Educational Psychology*, Gillham (1978) called for educational psychologists to become systemic thinkers and to be more active in improving the profession and the systems within which they work. Lazarus et al. (2006) also suggested that psychologists need to ensure that their practices respond to the mental health challenges in social contexts. For school psychologists, the primary context of focus is the school. School psychologists have a responsibility to reflect on their practice, to deepen understandings of the school context and to respond holistically to the challenges faced by people who function within these systems.

Schools are human organisations and, as such, are complex systems (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002; Donald et al. 2010; Moloi, 2004; Nichols et al., 1989). In order to work effectively with a school, psychologists need to understand the context which encompasses the subsystems within it, the patterns and relationships that characterise it, and the goals and values that govern it. Taylor and Adelman (2002) explained that schools often have personnel as well as resources and programmes in place, but when these are fragmented and marginalised, they are rendered ineffective. School psychologists' efforts could therefore be channelled towards helping schools to develop development strategies to formulate policy and put infrastructure in place to maximise the service being provided by those within the school. According to Taylor and Adelman (2002), school psychologists must therefore reach beyond individual assessment and intervention and consider ways in which the school system needs to change.

Farrell (2004) referred to the work of Burden, who wrote about how school psychologists should be working with schools at a systems level in order to be more effective. Farrell

asserted that by working at the systems level, school psychologists could facilitate school development through working with staff to reflect on their practice and to plan and implement change to benefit all learners. The school psychologist then would make a commitment to the school and to working for the benefit of all children and adults in that system.

Working with schools as systems implies assuming the role of organisational consultant. This form of consultation focuses on the working environment (the school), assessing this system and developing solutions to a broad range of issues affecting teachers, learners, and the school as a whole: “Educational psychologists are well placed to develop schools as organisations within a changing educational context and hence contribute towards the development of a healthy teaching and learning environment” (Engelbrecht, 2004a, p. 26).

3.3.3.2. School development activities

Parents often question whether psychological interventions should be targeting their children or the school (Taylor & Adelman, 2002). Parents and staff often feel that more emphasis should be placed on prevention and early intervention to minimise problems. Taylor and Adelman explained that because of the challenge to meet the needs of so many, and the similarity of reasons for which learners are referred, establishing school-based prevention interventions is crucial. They suggested consultation with teachers and parents, playground programmes, increased resources in the classroom and a general shift in emphasis to the system level, as opposed to individual-level interventions.

Hunter (2003) made a similar call for a whole school approach, with an increased emphasis on prevention. She described a 3-tiered model to manage disruptive behaviour in school that includes *universal* interventions that target all learners in a school, *selected* interventions for at-risk learners and *indicated* interventions for learners who present with intense behavioural problems. Universal interventions, she explained, have an impact on the overall climate of the school and require the support of the majority of school staff. This would be a school development initiative.

Burden (1994) posited that school psychologists have unique opportunities to help learners, teachers, families and schools, provided they have appropriate training, knowledge and skills. He argued that when engaging as consultants in schools, school psychologists have the

potential to be highly effective in making fundamental contributions at the level of the individual, classroom and school by

- providing information on recent psychological theory and research;
- indicating how such information can be of practical benefit;
- supporting teachers, students and parents faced with stressful situations;
- offering guidance and support in dealing with such situations;
- training teachers and parents in ways of enhancing children’s academic, social and emotional developments;
- counselling students on how they can take personal responsibility for their own academic and personal developments; and
- helping parents, teachers and administrators to identify and meet the specific needs of a comparatively small proportion of ‘exceptional’ children.

Burden (1994) believed that “The development and spread of such valuable support services could contribute significantly to the educational prospects of current and future generations of young people across the world. (p. 332)

An analysis of *The Handbook of School Psychology* (Jimerson et al., 2007) reveals the kinds of school development activities engaged in by school psychologists in 48 countries. Table 3.2 presents these in two categories, namely, activities engaged in at the level of the individual and those engaged in at the level of the organisation. Vital, however, is an understanding that those activities involving the personal and professional development of individuals are perceived as having an impact on the school as a system and not contributing solely to the individual’s growth.

AT THE LEVEL OF THE INDIVIDUAL	AT THE LEVEL OF THE ORGANISATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development of educators • Personal development of educators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation development • Systems consultation • Intervention with the system • Resource mobilisation • Educational programmes and projects • Monitoring and evaluation • Broad-based interventions with learners • Curriculum adaptation and development • Community outreach and partnerships • Modifications of social and educational environment • Implementing programmes focusing on prevention • Supporting and advocating for inclusion

Table 3.2. School psychologists’ involvement in school development

In the international analysis of school psychology (Jimerson et al., 2007), school development activities were reported as occurring at multiple levels of the system. Developmental spaces vary from the classroom and playground, to the staffroom and administration office within the school. True to systems thinking, interventions go beyond the school as well, in the local community, in the education system (district or regional offices), and even at the level of policy development and implementation at a macro level.

This analysis concurs with Ferreira (2004), who asserted that a whole school approach would include examining a school's ideology, adjusting procedures, reviewing curriculum, and altering classroom arrangements. This would incorporate work with parents, teachers, peers, the principal, the school governing body, policy-makers and various other role-players.

3.3.4. Challenges Facing School Psychology

Numerous challenges face school psychology internationally, some of which impact very specifically on education support provision in South Africa as well. These challenges include changing roles, limited resources, training, shifting worldviews, the status and perceptions of school psychology and intersectoral collaboration.

3.3.4.1. Changing roles of school psychologists

Stobie (2002) contended that individual educational psychologists are not able to grapple with the multitude of issues that emerge in education, including school improvement, teacher training, inclusion, the effect of poverty on educational achievement, teaching and learning, and schools as organisations. She asserted that educational psychologists remain in comfort zones, doing what they have always done, that is, intervening with individuals who have been referred, rather than addressing underlying systemic problems.

Farrell (2004) claimed that within the context of inclusive education, school psychologists have a crucial role to play as they continue to assess learners and schools and to advise, support, and train in the area of special needs and inclusion. Lomofsky and Green (2004) explored the implications for educational psychologists in the context of the development of inclusive education policy and expressed concern that, in attempting to address the assertion that the educational psychologist is no more than a psychometrician, practitioners may err on the side of neglecting individual needs and understandings of issues. Although these authors supported the need to adopt a systemic orientation to educational psychology practice, they

maintained that the major challenge for educational psychologists in South Africa is to adopt a systemic orientation with prevention and community work as central, without abandoning the traditional skills and expertise of the profession.

A move to a more broad-based style of psychological practice will be difficult unless changes occur in the demands and expectations set by parents, teachers, educational leaders and managers who employ school psychologists and even by school psychologists themselves (Lown, Fox, Gersch, Morris, & Stoker, 2001). To this end, the transition to a new service delivery model that incorporates a more consultative approach, the implementation of inclusive education, and advocacy on the part of educational psychologists as to what they have to offer in multidisciplinary settings are all crucial.

The changing role of school psychologists presents serious challenges at the level of training and practice. A call for a new service delivery model—one that is preventative, consultative and community-based—is clear, and training institutions must take cognisance of these approaches and adapt programmes accordingly (Donald, 1991; Pillay, 2003; Sharratt, 1995). The academic and professional preparation of educational psychologists requires shifts in perspective and focus. Serious consideration must be given to how professionals can be equipped to meet the vast educational, psychological, and social needs in the schools and homes of the majority of children.

Stobie (2002) proposed the diversification of practice and suggested that psychologists could explore ways in which they could develop specialised skills and knowledge in particular areas. In this way, they could practice as specialists rather than as generalists. She argued that there is room for development of specialist expertise in the work of educational psychologists, to work with families or with schools to enhance teaching and learning or training or advising on policy matters. Essentially, a clearer match is needed between the skills and knowledge of the practitioner, the presenting problem, and the service provided. This kind of change in the profession would have serious implications for pre- and in-service training, but would ensure quality service provision through increasing the clarity and definition of roles.

In their explication of barriers and opportunities facing school psychologists, Lown et al. (2001) raised the following concerns: policy structures and resourcing, position and profile of

school psychologists in relation to other service providers, expectations of those using the service, and attitudes towards and perceptions of educational psychology services held by schools. As regards the position and profile of school psychologists, Nel et al. (2010) claimed that this is the responsibility of the profession.

We need to affirm our profession, both for ourselves and for others ... we need to be able to confidently assert our role and function within that context. If we do not know what we have to offer in that context, and do not feel confident about that offering, we will not be able to convince our partners of the valuable contribution psychology can make to understanding and addressing the many barriers to learning and development facing schools today. (p. S28)

Notions of an appropriate and relevant psychology in South Africa have long been debated (Sharratt, 1995). Educational psychology, in particular, has been burdened with a historical legacy of marginalisation, disintegration, poor co-ordination of services, low status, discriminatory practice in resource allocation, inadequate training of personnel and dominance of state ideology (De Jong, Ganie, Lazarus, Naidoo, Naude, & Prinsloo, 1994, Lazarus & Donald, 1997). As a consequence of the historical separations that have characterised education, based on racial segregation, school psychology service delivery has tended to develop very unique and varied approaches, depending on which education department the practitioner was working in. Standardisation of school psychology practice and service delivery across districts and provinces in the 'new' South Africa is vital. This study represents an attempt to engage with this debate and to put forth some recommendations on how this goal may possibly be achieved. The first step is to reflect on the roles and functions fulfilled by psychologists, to understand what school psychologists can and are expected to offer schools, educators, learners and parents.

3.3.4.2. Resource challenges

Kassiem (2008, March 24) reported a serious shortage of qualified educational psychologists in the Western Cape, where many posts were not filled. However, national finances will not permit the extension of therapeutic services as they are presently conceptualised and practiced. This has resulted in a serious shortage of school psychologists, given the needs of learners, their families, educators, and schools.

Resource challenges and challenges relating to the changing role of school psychologists are at the forefront. The lack of human and financial resources at various levels within the education system has a negative impact on the practice of school psychology in South Africa

and elsewhere around the world. With the comparatively small number of students graduating, and fairly limited employment opportunities within state-supported institutions, it can be argued that there is a serious shortage of educational psychologists, given the needs of learners, their families, educators and schools in South Africa. The fact that a large number of under-qualified individuals are employed as schools psychologists adds to the complexity of the situation in terms of the capacity of existing human resources to deliver appropriate and relevant psychological services to schools (Daniels et al., 2007).

3.3.4.3. Training and qualifications

The lack of human and financial resources at various levels in the education system also negatively affects the preparation and training of educational psychologists at tertiary institutions (Daniels et al., 2007). The fact that a large number of individuals employed as school psychologists lack proper or sufficient professional qualifications presents an added complexity with regard to the capacity of these individuals to deliver psychological support of a varied nature within education.

School psychologists can, however, only help and work with teachers, parents, families and schools as organisations if they are appropriately trained and readily available. This highlights the provision of training and resources as key challenges in the delivery of effective and appropriate school psychological services. Continued professional development is crucial if challenges facing the profession are to be addressed and if change is to be effectively embraced. Coxon (1991) contended that educational psychologists need to develop and demonstrate the ability to use different kinds of skills to those that they may have been trained to use or that are expected of them. Psychologists are alerted to the fact that expertise to operate in these new frameworks is often very different from the expertise employed to diagnose and cure. The ongoing, appropriate training and development of school psychologists is therefore essential. “Without this vital ingredient services are likely to deteriorate into mediocrity, routinisation of practice and become unable to ‘reconstruct’ themselves in response to both external and internal ‘change’” (Stobie et al., 2002, p. 258)

Pillay (2003) supported this view but contended that a dire need exists for training in community psychology as a first step. He argued that such training should be integrated into modules currently being taught in a cohesive way and that although exposure to the theories is important, opportunities to gain practical experience through fieldwork, projects and case

studies are crucial. Such training should adopt an ecosystemic perspective, involve students in collaborative work with a range of stakeholders in community contexts, and should be preventative rather than curative in focus.

3.3.4.4. Changing worldviews

Moore (2005, p. 113) encouraged the profession of educational psychology to reflect critically on the theory that underpins practice, given the extent of change and transformation in society:

as psychologists we importantly need to begin to reflexively and reflectively question our own beliefs and knowledge regarding our practice and practice theories, and consider those aspects of our practice and models of intervention which legitimise certain ways of understanding, while also potentially subjugating others....This does not necessarily entail rejecting our own values and commitments as groundless, but it does require that we recognise their inevitable contingency and the ironic sense in which we continue to hold to them as the basis of our practice.

Druker and De Jong (1996) mentioned key issues which they argued have particular significance when engaging in development work with schools, particularly within an organisational development framework. Effective educational psychology practice needs to operate from an ecosystemic worldview, but such a shift, they acknowledge, is not easy or quick. Jensen, Malcolm, Phelps, and Stoker (2002) confirmed that since the call for a reconstruction of educational psychology includes effecting change across systems, changing patterns of thinking amongst practitioners is necessary, although challenging. Nel et al. (2010) contended that psychologists often struggle to adapt to a community psychology approach as their training has often prepared them, primarily, for one-to-one interventions. Many psychologists have become experts at this kind of traditional work. Breaking this mould is therefore often difficult because it demands flexibility in the actualisation of roles and job descriptions, as well as deeper self-image, identity and confidence.

Worldviews held by those with whom school psychologists work need to adjust as well. Just as it is necessary for school psychologists to adopt a mind-shift, schools need to view themselves as organisations with a need for change and the potential to develop within the scope of a shared vision. They also need to be convinced that psychologists can assist in this process. Given that change is a complex process, Druker and De Jong (1996) reiterated the importance of ensuring that schools develop an understanding of change, that they are ready for change, and are able to sustain change. The possible resistance to change, and the power

and authority issues that emerge in organisational development processes, need to be handled with sensitivity. This requires a high level of skill and competence on the part of the school psychologist as facilitator of change and development in the school.

3.3.4.5. Public perceptions of school psychologists

Another fundamental challenge, referred to briefly above, is the status of psychology in the eyes of the general public. Lazarus et al. (2006) underscored the lack of awareness of what psychologists can do and how they can help. They raised concern about the negative attitudes that exists towards psychology as their research indicates that the value of psychology is not well recognised and its relevance to solving community problems is not well understood by the lay person.

Farrell, Jimerson, Afroditi, Kalambouka, and Benoit (2005) suggested that other professionals need to know what school psychologists can do since this will clarify what can be expected from them. They emphasised that teachers in particular need to understand the role that can be played by school psychologists so that their expectations can be met and the school psychologists' contributions consequently valued. Interestingly, teachers who participated in their research called for a change in school psychology practice. They said that they would like to see a move away from routine individual assessment for placement towards more systemic, whole school approaches!

Mackay (2002) argued that psychologists must take responsibility for the status quo of educational psychology. He contended that psychologists cannot continue to *respond* to perceptions and expectations; they must *create* these perceptions and expectations. Educational psychology needs to *sell* itself as a profession, to write for wider audiences and to take the lead in matters related to its areas of expertise. Mackay (2002) challenged educational psychologists "to make the presence of educational psychology felt in government and in society" (p. 252).

3.3.4.6. Intersectoral collaboration

Despite all of the above challenges, school psychologists have been key practitioners in the area of whole school development in South Africa and internationally. (Burden & Brown, 1987; De Jong, 1996; De Jong, 2000a; Moolla, 1996). The reality, however, is that they cannot achieve success on their own. There is certainly a need for intersectoral efforts that

shift paradigms, acknowledge environmental factors, enhance strengths and promote mental health in schools (Weist, 2003). Consideration needs to be given to the role of the different sectors, with clarity around what each has to contribute (Engelbrecht, 2004a). Effective collaboration often implies shifting roles and responsibilities, but this needs to be negotiated and clarified. This is often one of the first challenges encountered when different professionals work together to provide support services (Lazarus & Moolla, 1995). Weist (2003) highlighted the importance of training in intersectoral collaboration, working closely with schools and community stakeholders, and understanding systems, as fundamental. He also cautioned practitioners not to ignore turf and disciplinary territoriality. It is clear then that within the context of *intersectoral collaboration*, school psychologists must assert their identity, and in so doing, clarify the role they have to play and the contribution they can make to the development of learners and schools. In Chapter 5, this area of focus of the study will be explored in greater depth.

3.4. Summary and Conclusion

School psychology is a primary object of study in this research. The literature review presented in this chapter portrays the debates and ideas espoused by writers in the field of educational psychology and school psychology. School psychology in South Africa is discussed and key issues and debates as they emerge in school psychology internationally are then presented, thereby establishing a reference point in the reflection on school psychology in South Africa. This overview sets the scene for the two chapters which follow, expounding school development and intersectoral collaboration respectively. These two concepts are linked to school psychology as was depicted in the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2 (Figure 2.1.).

CHAPTER 4

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

School development and the various ways in which it emerges, both in theory and practice, will be discussed in Chapter 4. As this study is grounded in systems thinking, the importance of needing to understand the school as a system, to analyse its functioning and to facilitate its development accordingly is emphasised. A background to school development is provided through an exploration of research on school effectiveness and school improvement, as its forerunners. Rather than pitting these two schools of thoughts against each other, school development is presented as an approach that emerged as a consequence of merging school effectiveness and school improvement theories and practice. Various approaches to school development, particularly as they have been employed in the South African context, are described. In view of the focus of this study, the chapter concludes with an overview of the challenges that emerge when facilitating school development.

4.1. Schools as Systems

Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2004) outlined a model of the ecology of human development and argued that human beings do not develop in isolation but in relation to their family, home, neighbourhood and school. These ever-changing environments he referred to as *microsystems*. The school is an important microsystem, a setting in which individuals live and engage. Children spend a great deal of time at school, and what they experience in the classroom, on the playground, on the sports field, in the school, as a whole, has an influence on them. The school is a microsystem within which direct interactions occur and consequently shape and facilitate the development of children. This implies that in order to facilitate positive development, it is imperative that the school, as a microsystem, is developed and supported too.

School development is understood, interpreted and practiced in a variety of ways, all of which engage with the school as a system or a subsystem thereof. Schools are human organisations and, as such, are complex systems. Schools are complex adaptive systems which are differentiated into a number of subsystems, all of which need to work together to maintain the adequate functioning of the whole (Moloi, 2004). In a system, many subsystems act in parallel, in an environment which is produced by interactions with other agents,

constantly acting and reacting. This sets up a dynamic tension which is maintained by internal changes, external demands and exchanges (Plas, 1986).

The structure of a school system is characterised by various boundaries (Donald et al., 2010). These may be generational, hierarchical, gender-based, or racial, or marked by other categorisations such as experience, qualification and subject expertise. These boundaries function like borders between subsystems, limiting the nature and extent of interaction between them. When planning school development, educationists need to determine the nature of these boundaries and the extent to which they are implicit or explicit and how they may promote or hinder the functionality of the school in its endeavour to provide quality teaching and learning. School development, therefore, often includes an examination of information flow, levels of cohesion, power dynamics, goals and values and the rigidity or flexibility of roles and leadership (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002).

School development requires a systems approach, precisely because schools are such complex systems and consequently experience complex problems. Applying systems thinking in school development efforts will enhance the understanding and management of complex situations in these organisations (Hunting & Tilbury, 2006). Hunting and Tilbury argued that a systems approach to school development would imply

- examining the larger context and the interactions between parts,
- exploring multiple influences and relationships,
- expanding worldviews and heightening awareness of boundaries and assumptions that define issues, and
- employing participatory, holistic approaches.

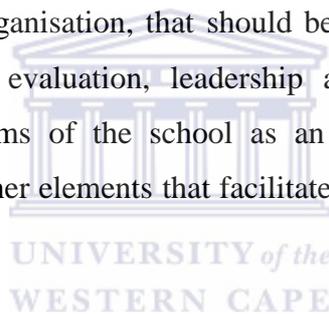
The Quality Learning Project is an excellent example of a school development programme that adopts a systemic approach. The project, which involved 524 high schools across all nine provinces in South Africa, was initiated and facilitated through a partnership between the national Department of Education, the corporate sector, and 10 non-government organisations. The project focused on developing teacher capacity and included interventions with principals and district officials as well. The Quality Learning Project therefore was geared towards building capacity at the level of the classroom, school and district. Multiple issues were acknowledged and addressed, including school management,

teaching and learning, and the development and management of the curriculum and teaching materials (Taylor & Prinsloo, 2005).

Sugai and Homer (2006) reported on "school-wide positive behaviours support" (p. 247), a comprehensive systems approach to addressing problem behaviour. They described the programme as an effective school-based intervention which is implemented at multiple levels within the school. Sugai and Homer (2006) explained that "(f)rom a systems perspective, the school is treated as the unit of analysis, and the collective actions of individuals within the school contributes to how the school, as a whole, characterised" (p. 247).

4.2. School Development and School Change

School development involves developing all aspects of the organisation as an environment where learning and development takes place. Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) identified key elements of the school, as an organisation, that should be targeted for development. These include strategic planning and evaluation, leadership and management, structures and procedures, the values and norms of the school as an organisation, staff development, technical support, and various other elements that facilitate a positive culture of teaching and learning.



School development refers to the transformation of the whole environment that surrounds and contains the school, encompassing the physical environment, the psychological and social climate or ethos, as well as the learners, educators, parents, management personnel and all others involved in learning and development in the school.

Dalin, Biazen, Dibaba, Jahan, Miles, and Rojas (1994), in a report entitled *How schools improve: An international report*, presented a description and analysis of change processes at national and local levels in three national education reform efforts in Colombia, Ethiopia and Bangladesh. Their findings on effective education reform dispel many myths about educational change and are summarised below.

- The school is the centre of change and therefore must play an active and creative role in school improvement processes.
- Regional and national support to schools, in their efforts to improve, is crucial.

- It is important to identify or establish effective linkages between national, district and local levels.
- The change process is a learning process which is developmental in nature and cannot be presented as a blueprint.
- Change is meaningful when it involves building structures and capabilities at all levels.
- There is a need to focus on the dynamics of the classroom and the individual school.
- Teacher development towards mastery is crucial if any impact is to be made on learners.
- Commitment at all levels is essential and begins within the school where personal mastery and empowerment are experienced.
- Parent and community involvement contribute to achievement of outcomes.

A central theme that emerges is the importance of development and engagement at all levels, from the individual learner, teacher and parent to the larger structures at national level. The establishment of strong and meaningful links between each of these levels, with effective lines of communication and accountability built in, is crucial. It is this ownership and commitment to development of all the parts of the system and the system as a whole that makes for meaningful change (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002).

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There are various approaches to the holistic development of schools, but the common thread is the focus on or, at the very least, the acknowledgement of all aspects of the school and their interrelatedness. These aspects would include

- physical environment,
- psycho-social ethos of the school,
- development of a vision and strategies to achieve that vision,
- structures and procedures,
- support provision,
- development of learners, staff, parents and governing bodies, and
- development of leadership and management.

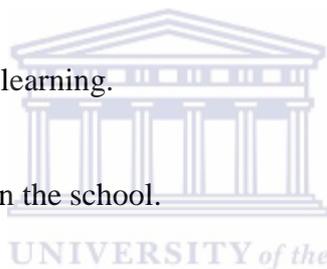
4.3. School Effectiveness

De Jong (1999), in a comprehensive review of the literature on school effectiveness, described how school effectiveness, as a body of knowledge, emerged in response to a

position, held in the 1970s, that families and not schools determine children's ability to achieve at school. Research into school effectiveness was focused on exemplary schools in an effort to demonstrate that schools did in fact make a difference. The results of the research revealed that some schools were more successful than others in offering quality education. A range of factors linked with effectiveness were identified, such as, that learner achievement could be closely correlated with school effectiveness.

De Jong's (1999) review referred to six examples of studies on school effectiveness to illustrate the consensus around what constitutes an effective school. From an analysis thereof, the following factors emerge as crucial:

- School environment as a learning environment.
- Parental involvement and support.
- Shared vision and goals.
- Professional leadership.
- High quality teaching and learning.
- High expectations.
- Sense of community within the school.



Essentially what this meant was that school authorities now knew what they needed in order to be successful--a recipe for success. The results of the studies on school effectiveness made it clear that high learner achievement was fundamental and that certain factors, if existing within a school, would be sufficient to "qualify" a school as an effective school.

Christie, Butler, and Potterton (2007) highlighted the fact that research into school effectiveness has thus far neglected the crucial factor of the impact of the social context, thereby missing a systems paradigm to frame such work. What happens beyond the school, in homes and communities, is not emphasised and therefore must be considered to be a serious limitation in the studies.

4.4. School Improvement

Theories on school improvement emerged from extensive research over many decades (De Jong, 1999; Westraad, 2006), which was focused, mainly, on understanding the processes of change in a school rather than on achievement outcomes. Hopkins, Ainscow, and West

(1994) defined the notion of school improvement as an approach to educational change which is focused on improving student achievement and strengthening the capacity of the school to manage change.

Research on school improvement has tended towards a more systemic understanding of the factors at play and “has come to stand for how schools are able to improve their effectiveness over a period of time and is particularly concerned with the activities that bring about this change” (Akyeampong, 2005, p.6). The acknowledgement of the dynamic and complex nature of change and the adoption of a holistic, systems framework to understanding the school is central to the approach and involves changing structures as well as organisational culture (Fullan, 1993). Harris (2002) reiterated this view by emphasising the importance of multilevel interventions in school improvement initiatives. Any initiatives towards improvement must be supported by those managing the school and must address various issues, including management of the school and classroom, culture, support systems, classroom practice and teacher development. The school, and all its subsystems, is therefore the object of study and can be seen as a unit of change.

School improvement involves changing the school to ensure an ongoing focus on enhancing what is happening in the school to ensure that educational objectives are met more effectively. Change must be planned and managed over time since schools are complex systems which require considerable support if change is to be sustained.

4.5. School Improvement to Achieve School Effectiveness

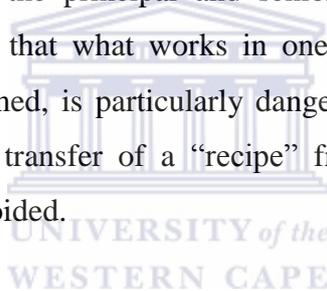
The studies on school effectiveness were focused on identifying the inputs and processes that were necessary to ensure positive outcomes in schools, especially in relation to learner performance. The question usually asked is "What makes a school effective?" Too little is being said about *how* schools could become more effective (Bertram, 1999; Christie et al., 2007; De Jong, 1999, 2000a). Over time, the debates and discussions have shifted from isolating the key factors to greater interest being expressed in how the factors develop or are established within school contexts and, furthermore, how they function to facilitate school improvement.

West and Hopkins (1996) stressed the recognition of a need to combine efforts based in the various traditions of school effectiveness and school improvement, and suggested that what is needed is a whole new approach rather than simply merging the two schools of thought. These authors presented critiques of each tradition by raising some concerns about each school of thought.

Research into *school effectiveness*, West and Hopkins (1996) acknowledged, has assisted in the identification and description of effective schools, provided some guidelines to increase effectiveness and emphasised the focus of the school as the centre of change, while noting the influence of the broader organisational context. They argued, however that establishing effectiveness correlates does not necessarily imply a cause-effect relationship. In fact, some correlates may be outcomes of effectiveness as opposed to determinants. In addition, they asserted that the definition of an effective school has tended towards the narrow focus on learner performance as a measure of school performance, without due consideration of the limitations of focusing on quantifiable measures such as test results as the sole indicator of effectiveness of the school as an organisation. West and Hopkins (1996) were concerned about the tendency for studies on school effectiveness to place emphasis on the importance of leadership and management structures and practices without strong, clear evidence that this is indeed what contributes to quality learning and teaching in the school. This approach, they contended, has resulted in a “market-place” ranking of schools, which has the possible consequence of “short term thinking, restricted goals for the school and its pupils and increased tension amongst teachers as they become increasingly afraid of ‘failure’”(West & Hopkins, 1996, p. 7).

Harris (2002) concurred with West and Hopkins in their critique of school effectiveness and adds that evaluations of school effectiveness often focus on learner achievement in the domain of academic performance when they should include outcomes related to the learners’ emotional and social domains of development as well. This focus on learner performance often neglects conditions beyond the school as well as organisational issues within the school that may influence these outcomes. The tendency in research into school effectiveness, therefore, according to Harris (2002), is to blame schools and teachers, to assume that educational success is adequately reflected in measurable factors such as pass rates, to employ a discourse of failure, to emphasise performance, and to hold a narrow view of the processes that are involved in education, failing to acknowledge the complexity thereof.

However, West and Hopkins (1996) explained that approaches to *school improvement* are not without their limitations. They challenged the notion that schools can continually improve themselves, explaining that external pressures and agendas often drain the energies of internal change agents. School improvement efforts also seem to be limited, to a large degree, to the provision of staff development and better materials to schools, with little emphasis on the actual impact on student learning. Another concern is that many schools are unable to effectively implement policy that is developed and “delivered” to schools. Such a rational-technical approach to school improvement is not always realistic. West and Hopkins (1996) also contested the focus on teachers’ views and values, arguing that insufficient effort is invested in drawing on the perspectives of other stakeholders and encouraging co-operation and discussion between the various sectors which may be interested and invested in the ongoing improvement of the school. A similar caution is expressed in relation to the influence of, and emphasis on, the principal and senior management teams in schools. Finally, the tendency to assume that what works in one school community will work in another, West and Hopkins claimed, is particularly dangerous. The context of each school must be acknowledged and the transfer of a “recipe” from one successful improvement experience to another must be avoided.



Bertram (1999) made a similar comparison and identified key similarities and differences between research on school effectiveness and research on school improvement, on a continuum. She claimed that researchers into school effectiveness emphasise *product* and so ask, “What does a good school look like?” Researchers on school improvement, in turn, emphasise *process* and ask, “How does a school become a good school?” While researchers on effectiveness make global generalisations about schools, research on improvement is focused on understanding the uniqueness of schools. Finally, research into effectiveness presents little need to understand educational change, while research on improvement has a strong focus on exploring educational change as a process.

On the basis of their critique of both school effectiveness and school improvement, West and Hopkins (1996) proposed a more comprehensive model for developing the effective school that would be comprised of four domains, which are captured in the table below.

DOMAIN	CRITERIA INVOLVED
1. Student experience related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of self-awareness and self-esteem • The ability to make relationships and to assume social responsibility • A concept of themselves as learners • An induction into a broad range of human experience (including cultural and sporting) • An awareness of citizenship and their own role within community and society
2. Student achievement related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a wide range of opportunities for study and accreditation, appropriate to the differing needs and interests of students • Promote high levels of individual achievement, relative to the abilities and interests of students • Reflect the expectations of employers and the further and higher education sectors in its curriculum and examination strategies, thereby increasing the utility value to the student of his/her own achievements
3. Staff and school development related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a high level of mastery of basic teaching skills, subject knowledge and a repertoire of teaching models and strategies • Form collaborative partnerships and have other opportunities for professional development • Work within a culture that promotes high levels of job satisfaction and motivation • Take responsibility for the outcomes and experiences of their students • Work in a structural/cultural environment able to respond innovatively and in empowering ways to the challenge of change
4. Community related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a record of and strategies for working in partnership with parents, governors, LEA employees and government departments for the benefit of students • Develop a rounded view of the educational market place and see “marketing” as an opportunity to research the students’ needs and preferences and to develop the school accordingly, rather than simply as a mechanism for attracting students and resources • Develop specific policies and programmes which draw on the wider resources of the community (including employers and community groups) and draw them in to the school • Develop the school itself as a community by concentrating efforts and energies on their conceptions of what students should be and should know.

Table 4.1. Domains and criteria for developing effective schools (West & Hopkins, 1996)

Westraad (2006) engaged in a similar analytical exercise, identifying key characteristics associated with effective schools and school improvement. These include

- leadership and management,
- organisational culture,
- relationships,
- individual development and commitment, and
- a primary focus on teaching and learning.

Calls for integration of the school effectiveness and school improvement approaches provided impetus for the “whole school development” movement, where the intention is to emphasise the importance of driving change, with a focus on improving the school as a whole, helping schools to shift practices in order to benefit the key beneficiaries within schools, namely the learners (Donald et al., 2010). Christie (2001), like Dalin (1998), asserted that schools are complex organisations and that change and development in schools is not straightforward and takes time. She suggested that efforts directed at school improvement are likely to be more successful if schools are central in the process and the core purposes of schools, namely, teaching and learning, are foregrounded in development and change initiatives.

4.6. Approaches to School Development

In this section, the various approaches to school development that have been adopted nationally and internationally are presented. An overview of each approach is provided, with an emphasis on the central tenets of the approach and some discussion of the practical implementation in school contexts. The approaches reviewed include whole school development, whole school evaluation, school systems consultation, school organisational development and change, developing the school as a learning organisation and developing health promoting schools.

4.6.1. Whole School Development

Whole school development aims at ensuring that all aspects of school life are geared towards fostering effective teaching and learning so that learners develop optimally as individuals and make a positive contribution to society (Donald et al., 2010). Whole school development involves a multilevel approach, incorporating various subsystems in an attempt to address all aspects of the school that work together to ensure the provision of high quality, innovative education. As Hopkins (2001) declared, in order to be effective, “individual initiatives have to be linked together into a whole school improvement strategy designed to meet the learning needs of students in a particular school” (p. 6).

Schmuck and Runkel (1994) described whole school development as

a coherent, systematically planned and sustained effort at school self-study and improvement, focusing explicitly on change in formal and informal procedures, processes and norms, or structures.... The goals of

organisational development include improving both the quality of life of the individual as well as organisational functioning and performance with a direct or indirect focus on educational issues. (p. 5)

Whole school development is therefore a comprehensive approach to developing schools, involving all stakeholders and all elements of the school as an organisation. It encompasses concepts such as school effectiveness, school improvement and organisational development in a process that facilitates change in schools and classrooms. It is aimed at building the capacity of the school as an organisation to manage change through the development of people, structures and procedures with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of teaching and learning and creating an enabling environment wherein barriers to effective teaching and learning are minimised (Department of Education, 2001; Hopkins, 1996).

In South Africa, whole school development initiatives in the 1990s, in particular, tended to be driven by the commitment and expertise of non-government organisations (Christie & Potterton, 1997). Such organisations have continued to work with and within schools, often under the pressure of financial insecurities and uncertainties in relation to their role in society. The work of the NGOs ought since then to have become the work of government structures and employees; however, this has not been an easy transition.

Bertram (1999) remarked that the term *whole school development*, at least until recently, seemed to be a uniquely South African label for much of what encompassed school improvement as it had been theorised and practiced internationally. Whole school development does, however, draw on bodies of knowledge published on school effectiveness and school improvement. Whole school development usually begins with a needs analysis, which may be seen to reflect school effectiveness approaches because this often takes the form of an evaluation that generates a checklist against which development initiatives and interventions can later be measured. The focus on understanding and facilitating change in the school is where the link with school improvement approaches is apparent.

Mehl, Gillespie, Foale, and Ashley (cited in Mouton, 2000) listed the fundamental principles that have guided whole school development experiences in the South African context. These include placing the school at the centre of activity, essentially adopting a “school-based” approach, focusing on leadership and management in the school, acknowledging the need for resource-based, learner-centred teaching, the inclusion of thinking skills as a focus in the

curriculum, ongoing evaluation, and the provision of in-service teacher education to promote staff development.

The work of the Teacher In-service Project in the Western Cape was framed within “whole school organisational development” (Bertram, 1999, De Jong, 1999). The strategies employed in facilitating school development encompassed a consultancy process, which included assessing the school’s current functioning and needs, designing and implementing appropriate interventions, providing ongoing support to the school during transformation, clustering schools to build links and maximise resources, developing partnerships and educator development through the provision of in-service training (De Jong, 1999).

Taylor and Prinsloo (2005) described a systemic model of school improvement that was employed in the Quality Learning Project in South Africa, with a focus on building capacity at district level to improve monitoring and support of school, at school level, to build more effective leadership and enhance monitoring and support of teachers, and finally, at classroom level, to ensure more effective teaching.

Westraad (2006) explained how critiques of whole school development interventions in South Africa necessitated a shift to include a focus on measurable outputs like learner performance. The tendency in the 1990s was to emphasise contextual and organisational issues, which, it was argued, were not sufficiently addressing the core purpose of schooling. This new focus signalled acknowledgement of the value of research into school effectiveness in efforts targeting the development of schools.

4.6.2. School Organisational Development

De Jong (2000a) believed that school organisational development is a potentially useful strategy in educational transformation processes. According to French and Bell (1999), “Organisational development is planned change in an organisational context” (p. 81).

In the view of Fullan et al. (cited in Dalin, 1998),

[o]rganisational development in schools is an interrelated, systematically planned, supportive effort for achieving self-analysis and renewal. The various schemes direct their attention in particular to changes in formal and informal procedures, processes, norms and structures by the application of behaviour-developing concepts and methods. The goal of organisational development is two-fold: meeting the needs of

the individual ('quality of life') *and* improving the way an organisation functions and the subsequent results. (p. 185)

Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) defined school organisation development as a

'normative re-educative' strategy for managing change, which is aimed at facilitating development of people and the organisation as a whole for the purposes of optimising human fulfilment and increasing organisational capacity. (p. 42)

Key elements of the organisation that are targeted in a development process are listed below.

- School culture
- Identity
- Strategy
- Structures and procedures
- Technical support
- Human resources
- Leadership, management and governance
- The context.

Although seemingly separated, Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) emphasised the interdependence of these elements and the dynamic relationship between the individual, the school, and the society and the recursive influence between them.

This systemic approach emphasises the development of both people and the context through reflection and the facilitation of change towards the achievement of stated goals and purpose. De Jong (2000a), in a case study of one school's development journey, identified the following key strategies which contributed to the success of organisational development work in the school:

- People development
- Relationships
- Critical entry points
- Workshops
- Strategic planning
- Quality facilitation
- Understanding how a school functions as an organisation.

Structural approaches to organisational development view organisations as rational systems that are focused on achieving set goals by developing highly effective structures and procedures (Dalin, 1998). Organisational development, in this instance, will therefore tend to concentrate on clarifying objectives, addressing relationship dynamics and developing structures that facilitate the achievement of desired outcomes (Bonner, Koch, & Langmeyer, 2004). This would include setting clear school goals, developing channels of communication and defining organisational frameworks and structures.

Bonner et al. (2004) presented three more orientations, as outlined by Bolman and Deal (1997), namely, the political, human resource and symbolic orientations. A political orientation to organisational development explores issues in relation to power and how people in an organisation use power to protect themselves and influence others. Dalin (1998) explained that the focus here is on understanding conflicts and resource demands and how they are shaped by the diverse values and interests of individuals and groups. The focus is on understanding how competition and co-operation are employed to meet individual and organisational goals.

The humanistic perspective usually underscores understanding individuals and their relationships with one another and their contributions in the organisation (Dalin, 1998). A human resource approach emphasises relationships between individuals and the interrelationships between change efforts and the individuals involved. The focus is on the growth and development of individuals in the organisation towards meaningful participation in and development of the organisation (Bonner et al., 2004).

The symbolic perspective of organisational development is employed in an attempt to understand not only what happens in organisations, but also what meaning and significance is attached to it by members of the organisation. This orientation highlights culture, tradition and customs and the ways in which they provide a means for understanding and grappling with change in an organisation (Bonner et al., 2004; Dalin, 1998).

Dalin (1998) maintained that certain functions have to be performed in all organisations. These are

- *production*, how work is done in order to meet organisational objectives;

- *management*, how the organisation is run;
- *development work*, how needs are understood, ideas developed and new discoveries made;
- *information treatment*, how information is gained, used, communicated and protected;
- *evaluation*, the relationship between what is desired and what is achieved and whether what emerges has value; and
- *legitimisation*, how mandates are given to individuals and groups in the organisation as well as working towards building an image of the organisation that can be promoted and maintained.

Dalin (1998) pointed out that organisations function and operate within five mutually dependent dimensions, namely, surroundings, values, structures, relations and strategies. *Surroundings* refers to both the local community and society at large; *school values* refers to basic values as evident in ideologies, philosophies, ceremonies and symbols within the organisation; *structure* refers to decision-making tasks and communication and how these are framed and organised in the school; *relations* refers to human relations as they emerge in the informal organisation in terms of such elements as power, influence, interaction, trust, collaboration and support; and *strategies* refers to the way the school is run with regard to decision-making processes, problem-solving mechanisms and reward systems.

Irrespective of the orientation or strategies employed, Bonner et al. (2004) noted that organisational change, within the context of school reform, is complex. They make a strong argument for the involvement of school psychologists in organisational development initiatives in schools by highlighting the depth of emotional investment in change as central to the efficacy of organisational development efforts. Bonner et al. (2004) cited Harrison, who argued for the importance of reflecting on personal and private aspects of individuals' experiences in the organisation as well as more external aspects such as roles and structures. They proposed a combination of deep and surface level interventions in order to achieve lasting change within the school organisation.

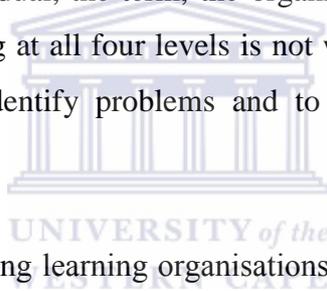
4.6.3. The School as a Learning Organisation

Organisational development involves the members of the organisation in identifying, understanding and evaluating their own system and working towards transformation. Such active participation in goal setting, problem solving and establishing structures and procedures is at the centre of meaningful development towards improvement.

Moloi (2004) used the term *learning organisation* when referring to

school-based efforts by individuals and groups to improve everyday teaching and learning activities, and communication, reflection and inquiry processes in the school ... [This] includes educators who are capable of thinking differently and are prepared to adopt new mindsets, so that they are competent to do their usual teaching and learning activities more effectively. The term refers to committed individuals and teams who share a common vision". (pp. 1-2)

Schools can be transformed into learning organisations by ensuring that learning is facilitated at four levels, namely, the individual, the term, the organisation and society (Moloi, 2004). She argued that although working at all four levels is not without its challenges, it is crucial to shift ways of thinking, to identify problems and to think holistically about possible solutions in differing contexts.



Senge's (1990) work on developing learning organisations frames the work of many change agents working in schools. He defined a learning organisation as one "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Senge, 1990 , p. 3).

Senge (1990) presented a model of interdependent disciplines, which he argued, are necessary for the ongoing development of an organisation. These include, *systems thinking*, where the interactions and impact of interrelated components are acknowledged; *personal mastery*, which encompasses individual commitment to vision, excellence and learning; *shared vision*, which emphasises the importance of the creation of a common, collective set of goals; *team learning*, which assumes that collective and co-operative engagement in the learning process reaps increased benefits; and *mental models*, that acknowledge that patterns and norms based on assumptions within the organisation impact on personal and organisational attitudes and behaviours.

The process of developing the school as a learning organisation involves challenging learners, educators and other stakeholders in the school community to apply their collective intelligence, their potential to learn, and their creativity in order to transform the existing system within which they find themselves. It is not a programme, but rather a process of guiding the school towards understanding in order to facilitate learning and, consequently, change.

4.6.4. Whole School Evaluation

The National Policy on Whole School Evaluation in South Africa (Department of Education, 2000) provides the legal basis for school evaluation and outlines its purposes, focus and procedure. The purpose of the policy is to improve the overall quality of education in South Africa and to ensure that school evaluation is based on a model that is applied nationally (Steyn, 2003). It offers guidelines to schools regarding the mechanisms of evaluation and is intended to be supportive and developmental. Schools are expected to engage in a self-reflection and evaluation process, identifying areas of success and limitation.

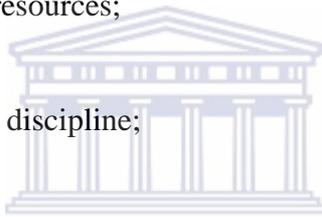
In September 2000, the Minister of Education officially launched the National Policy on Whole School Evaluation, which was to focus on monitoring and evaluating the performance of schools with a view to addressing the dysfunctionality which existed in many schools in South Africa. The purpose of the policy is not to look at individual aspects of the school but to look at the school as a unit, with the understanding that the framework provided serves as a tool that will facilitate accountability and improvement of the school system and its performance (Department of Education, 2000). *Whole School Evaluation, Developmental Appraisal* and *Performance Management* together form the Integrated Quality Management System, which is designed to facilitate the overall improvement of quality teaching and learning in South African schools. Westraad (2006) explained that the aim of the whole school evaluation policy is to provide a framework and a set of processes that can assist schools in the provision of quality teaching and learning despite historical challenges that may face them.

The evaluation is intended to focus on the following:

- *School*: setting, characteristics, policies, practices, and the general learning environment, including, ethos, culture, and so on.
- *Learners*: background, characteristics, attitudes, behaviour, and levels of achievement.
- *Educators*: background, characteristics, qualifications, experience, practices, attitudes and behaviour.

The key areas of evaluation include the

- basic functionality of the school;
- leadership, management and communication;
- governance and relationships;
- quality of teaching and educator development;
- curriculum provision and resources;
- learner achievement;
- school safety, security and discipline;
- school infrastructure; and
- parents and community.



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(Department of Education, 2002a, pp. 18-19)

The Minister of Basic Education recently launched the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) which was asked to provide an independent account of the state of schools and the developmental needs throughout the education system through monitoring and evaluation. This unit will be responsible for

- identifying those factors that inhibit or advance school improvement;
- making recommendations for redressing the problems that undermine school development; and
- proposing solutions to ensure that schools offer effective education for all learners.

A crucial issue that was raised by the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (2009) in response to the announcement and also at the National Conference on Whole School Evaluation in South Africa in September 2000 was the importance of following up evaluation and monitoring with development, support and redress. The district support services (within

which school psychologists are based) are responsible for supporting the school in carrying out recommendations that emerge out of the whole school evaluation. In the Western Cape, schools have access to a School Development Plan Process Document (Western Cape Education Department, 2003), which guides them through an analysis of where they are at present but provides little guidance in terms of the way forward.

Strategies recommended in a handbook (Department of Education, 2002a) introducing whole school evaluation policy to principals and educators encompassing implementation at provincial, district and local school level include the following guidelines:

- District-based support teams must link up with the senior management team, staff and SGB at schools to support the implementation of quality improvement strategies identified in the school's improvement plan.
- The district-based support team must support schools by helping them to produce a coherent, overall plan of action to address the improvement needs captured in the self-evaluation and external evaluation reports.
- The district-based support team is responsible for retrieving key information from the reports of different schools in a district in order to plan the support and professional development required. This should entail co-operation with other schools and other roleplayers, such as teacher centres; colleges of education; technikons; universities; teacher unions and NGOs.
- School evaluation reports and improvement plans should naturally lead to district, provincial, and national improvement plans that address areas needing improvement within specified time frames.
- Reports will include observations made regarding developmental appraisal strategies, professional growth plans and reports.
- District-based support teams will assist schools in implementing the recommendations of the evaluation reports.
- Since human capacity and development are the central aspects of whole school evaluation, pre-service and in-service training is an essential and integral component.

(Department of Education, 2002a)

Whole school evaluation and development is often employed as a framework within which particular aspects of learner, teacher and school development can be understood and

addressed. Promoting the health of individuals and systems at a bio-psycho-social level is the key focus of health promotion in school settings. The subject of health promoting schools is now discussed as another approach to school development.

4.6.5. Health Promoting Schools

According to a report from the World Health Organisation (1993),

The health promoting school aims at achieving healthy lifestyles for the total school population by developing supportive environments conducive to the promotion of health. It offers opportunities for and requires commitments to, the provision of a safe and health enhancing social and physical environment. (p.2)

One key strategy that is used to support the development of schools within the education support system is the health promoting schools' framework. In the year 2000, the national directorate for health promotion in the Department of Health developed *National Guidelines for the Development of Health Promoting Schools/Sites in South Africa* (Department of Health, 2000). The development of these guidelines commenced in 1994, when key stakeholders from health, education and social development sectors began to explore the relevance of this international framework for South Africa (Lazarus, 1994). This was followed up by various policy and practice developments within the country over the next six years (Johnson & Lazarus, 2003; Flisher, Cloete, Johnson, Wigton, Adams, & Joshua, 2000; Lazarus, Davidoff, & Daniels, 2000; Lazarus & Reddy, 1996; Vergnani, Flisher, Lazarus, Reddy, & James, 1998).

The health promoting school is a place where all members of the learning community work together to provide learners with integrated and positive experiences and structures which promote and protect their well-being. The focus is on addressing bio-psycho-social barriers to learning and development and, in so doing, to promote effective teaching and learning and the well-being of role players inside and outside the school.

Using the World Health Organisation's Ottawa Charter (1986) as a basis, the *National Guidelines for the Development of Health Promoting Schools/Sites in South Africa* highlight the following key strategies as a framework for school development:

- the development of healthy school policies;
- the development of a supportive teaching and learning environment, including both physical and psycho-social aspects;

- the promotion of strong school-community partnerships, within an empowerment ethos;
- the development of personal skills, including staff development and life skills education for learners and
- the development of accessible and appropriate education support services.

These strategies are located within a whole school development approach that takes all key elements of school life into account (Department of Health, 2000; Lazarus, Davidoff, & Daniels, 2000).

The development of health promoting schools across the country has been characterised by effective intersectoral collaboration, particularly in relation to developing a community-based approach which includes strong school-community partnerships (Flisher et al., 2000; Lazarus & Howell, 2002; Moolla, 2006). For this reason, this strategy for addressing bio-psycho-social barriers to learning and development is growing in importance (Collett, Lazarus, Mohamed, Sonn, & Struthers, 2006; Lazarus, 2006). This strategy promotes effective teaching and learning as well as the well-being of role-players both in and outside of the school. However, a narrow understanding of the concept of *health*—which tends to focus on the physical aspects, at the cost of the psychological, social, environmental and spiritual components—still tends to create a conceptual block to the integration of this strategy within some education institutions (Collett et al., 2006; Lazarus 2006).

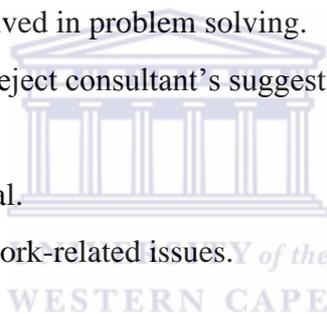
4.6.6. School Systems Consultation

The challenge has been for school psychologists to look beyond the individual, to incorporate a broad-based practice which focuses on the support and development of the contexts within which learners function, the school being one of these (Burden, 1978; Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 2000b; Engelbrecht, 2004a; Figg & Ross, 1981). This implies the provision of an indirect service and support to the school as an organisation within which teaching, learning and the development of individuals and groups is facilitated. School development captures a consultative, systemic, indirect, holistic, preventative approach to developing an effective teaching and learning environment.

School systems consultation is an approach that has become more popular as a service delivery option in educational psychology. Consultation is a voluntary, collaborative

approach to enhance the functioning of a system and its subsystems. It is marked by a non-supervisory relationship which may involve working with individuals, groups and/or the organisation (Larney, 2003; Tingstrom & Little, 1990). Conoley and Conoley (1990) likened consultation to therapy, where the relationship between consultant and consultee is characterised by acceptance, empathy and non-judgemental interaction. The purpose of consultation is to develop the problem-solving skills of the consultee. Therefore psychologists are advised to avoid giving too much advice and rather to mediate the search for solutions to the challenges faced. The goals of consultation are twofold, first, to remediate and second, to prevent (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999; Larney, 2003,). These goals are met through the application of key principles and characteristics which define consultation:

- Indirect service delivery.
- Trusting relationship between the consultant and consultee.
- Consultant and consultee have co-ordinate status (neither have power over the other).
- Consultee is actively involved in problem solving.
- Consultees can accept or reject consultant's suggestions.
- Voluntary relationship.
- Consultation is confidential.
- Consultation focuses on work-related issues.



Conoley and Conoley (1990) and Plas (1986) declared that the effective consultant must have good problem-solving skills and be patient, caring, committed, effective listeners who are able to track verbal and non-verbal feedback in a sensitive manner.

Key models of consultation that are employed in school psychology are mental health consultation, behavioural consultation, process consultation and organisational consultation. The latter two, which share many features, tend to be most appropriate when engaging in school development. Conoley and Conoley (1990) claimed that entry into schools in process consultation is often easier. The strategies employed include data collection, feedback, simulation, process analysis and coaching, where the target is interactions among consultees. In process and organisational or systems consultation, the client is often a group within the organisation, or the organisation as a whole. The focus is on heightening awareness of events and processes in the school's organisational environment and the ways in which this is

influencing people's work. The aim is essentially to change the school at an organisational level (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999).

School systems consultation is a whole school approach which involves empowering groups of people and developing their capacity to engage with the problems that face them. This approach is based on an underlying assumption that educators, learners, parents and other role-players within the school system actively construct their own meanings within the systems they live and work in. This approach to consultation as a practice shifts the focus from being only on the individual to investigating the role of various other players in the educational system (Burden, 1994). Systems thinking frames this approach, where there is a strong emphasis on trying to understand the context within which difficulties present and the relationships and interactions within the school system that may create and even exacerbate problems. The school psychologist who adopts this approach will need to understand and intervene at the level of the individual but must also be prepared to intervene with the staff and the school as a system.

Within a systems framework, human behaviour is understood in relation to the complexities of the context within which it is observed, and intervention strategies should be based on a systems analysis and encompass systems change. To this end, De Jong (2000b) proposed that school psychologists could contribute to

- developing the school as an organisation,
- engaging actively in building a supportive psycho-social learning environment,
- engaging actively in staff development, and
- mediating relationships between a school's internal and external worlds.

School psychologists would be able to draw on their knowledge of what facilitates optimal learning and development within individuals and groups and consequently facilitate the development of the school as an organisation by

- shaping policy at school level,
- engaging in systems consultation,
- developing and implementing programmes that work towards the achievement of goals set by the school,
- supporting the professional and personal development of educators,

- facilitating broad-based interventions with learners,
- assisting with curriculum development and adaptation,
- mentoring those in leadership and management positions, and
- facilitating school-community partnerships.

(Jimerson et al., 2007)

Consultation is regarded as an aspect or possible strategy to be employed by those engaging in school development. It is focused on empowering educators and schools through indirect service delivery. Dettmer, Dyck, and Thurston (1996) pointed out that consultation involves sharing expertise and that although the consultant is competent and has expertise, the consultees are often merely helped to discover what they already know. The power dynamics here are grounded in an expectation of equity and openness. As a strategy, school consultation requires content knowledge (materials, methods, strategies and alternatives in the classroom and school), process skills (meetings, training, communication, conversations) and sensitivity to school contexts (home, school, community and macro issues). The latter is particularly relevant in this study, which is grounded in systems theory and emphasises ecological factors and the influence of rules, hierarchy and subsystems.

Dettmer et al. (1996) reiterated that school consultation is not therapy or counselling; it focuses on issues as opposed to individuals. They explained that consultative work in schools may include any one or more of the following activities:

- Discussing students' needs;
- Listening to colleagues concerns about the teaching situation;
- Helping identify and define educational problems;
- Facilitating problem solving in the school setting;
- Promoting classroom alternatives as first interventions for students with special learning and behaviour needs;
- Serving as a medium for student referrals;
- Demonstrating instructional techniques;
- Providing direct assistance to teachers who have students with special learning and behaviour needs;
- Leading or participating in staff development activities;

- Assisting teachers in designing and implementing behaviour change programmes;
- Sharing resources, materials and ideas with colleagues;
- Participating in team teaching or demonstration teaching;
- Engaging in assessment and evaluation activities;
- Serving on curriculum committees, textbook committees; and school advisory councils;
- Following up on educational issues and concerns with colleagues;
- Easing colleagues' loads in matters involving students' social needs; and
- Networking with other professional and outside agencies. (Dettmer et al. 1996)

4.6.7. School Development is Community Involvement

Prew (2009) highlighted the importance of community involvement in school development. He argued that parents and communities play a significant role in developing the school; a role that goes beyond parental support of their children in matters of learning and academic achievement. Prew drew on experiences in a school development project involving 96 schools in Soshanguve, a township in Pretoria, South Africa. The project which was driven by a partnership between the education district office and a non-government organisation focused on the needs of local communities and schools and resulted in high levels of community participation.

Conceptualisations of school development, as these have developed in the West, are described by Prew as individualist (2009). The approaches described earlier in this section, some of which developed in the West, are however steeped in systems thinking and so acknowledge and emphasise the interrelationship between the school, family and the community. The context, and the ways in which communities influence school development, is, however, foregrounded in the literature referred to in earlier sections of this chapter. Prew argued that

...real community involvement is not about whether the community members are physically present, but about the way community members relate to the innovation and conceptualise it in relation to their normal lives. Full involvement and commitment only comes with willing action based on understanding (2009, p. 828).

The model of school development that he proposed reflects an enhanced role for the community, where the community defines the relationship between itself and the school. Such a relationship must be seen to be serving community interests. Much of the emphasis in Prew's descriptions of community involvement in school development is on the challenge of the lack of resources, with an emphasis on fund-raising and income generation as development interventions. It is acknowledged that this is important as a community development strategy, however, the core purpose of schools, namely, the provision of quality education, ought to be foregrounded in school development initiatives.

4.6.8. Key Themes in Approaches to School Development

In summary, the approaches to school development all entail the involvement of various role-players in the school system, including educators, learners, parents, professional support staff and community members to some degree. The approaches are underpinned by systems thinking and an obligation to facilitate holistic development. Change is aimed at both school and classroom levels and at organisational and individual levels, and includes the following:

- Human resource development in terms of knowledge, skills and values.
- Empowering people to change and to manage change.
- Policy development at school level.
- Creating an environment that supports effective teaching and learning.
- Access to appropriate support services.
- School-community partnerships.

An assumption that underlies each of the approaches described is that improving the organisation can improve the quality of teaching and learning and the development of learners in the school. These approaches presume that an impact can be made if the systems within which children live and learn are supported and developed.

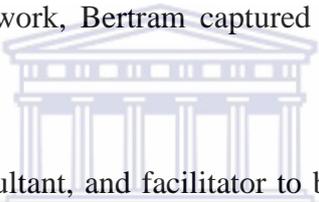
The strategies employed in the various school development approaches are steered towards the development of people and structures, policy development and implementation, partnerships, community involvement and the provision of resources. As far-reaching as these efforts may seem, they are not implemented without challenge. In the next section, key issues that emerge as hindrances in school development initiatives will be highlighted.

4.7. Challenges for School Psychologists Facilitating School Development

Irrespective of the approach to school development employed, that is, the framework that guides the practice of school psychology in developing schools, school psychologists may still have to contend with a number of issues. The challenges that face school psychologists in facilitating school development exist on multiple levels. These could be intrapersonal, relating to the attitude and skills of the practitioner, or could be challenges that may exist within the school. The process and strategy of school development may itself be challenging.

4.7.1. A New Role for School Psychologists

One of the key challenges of “going to scale” with school development is the need for external facilitators in the process. Although teachers often want to make a difference in their schools, moral purpose is insufficient and so many practical constraints inhibit teachers from being effective change agents (Bertram, 1999). In her study of selected NGOs in South Africa engaged in school development work, Bertram captured the organisations’ expressions of their role in schools as



counsellor, therapist, consultant, and facilitator to build the capacity of the school to become self-reliant (TIP); initiators and facilitators of change and to build the capacity of the school (St. Mary’s); to encourage, motivate and develop the confidence of the school staff and to provide resources and training that are needed (CIE); as collaborators and fellow traveller with the school (ESP). (pp. 74-75)

Bertram (1999) suggested that the Ministry of Education in South Africa ought to consider developing the skills, knowledge and values of staff who work with teachers and schools so that they are able to work as facilitators of school development. Although school psychologists are not always sufficiently skilled in the area of school development, some of the skills referred to above as key to facilitating school development are fundamental to the practice of psychology. School psychologists are counsellors and therapists, and they possess the core skills and capacity to encourage, motivate, and develop confidence in those with whom they work. This implies that the school psychologist is well placed to make a meaningful contribution as an internal change agent in schools, facilitating school development. However, Larney (2003) explained that even though the practice of consultation is becoming more popular amongst educational psychologists in the United Kingdom, there is a dire need for further research to validate this approach to working with schools.

4.7.2. Readiness for Change

Readiness of any system is crucial in determining the effectiveness of a developmental process. Schools need to demonstrate ownership and commitment to their own development early on. Where participants appear reluctant to engage in a change process or to forge a relationship with the change agent, this has to be addressed as a matter of priority. Burden, Green, and Petterson (1983), and Druker and De Jong (1996) identified some of the factors considered to be central to the readiness of a school to engage in a consultative process towards its own development:

- The extent to which the school is proactive rather than reactive.
- Evidence of motivation and commitment.
- Recognition of the need for change within the school system.
- Open communication.
- The school's capacity for ongoing, creative problem-solving strategies.
- The school environment is receptive to feedback and new input.

4.7.3. Sustainability

Innovations need to be sustained from within the system, where the system maintains the power to move or stand still (Hunting & Tilbury, 2006). Since many school development initiatives have been implanted as a consequence of partnership with donors and outside organisations, sustaining projects and the development work engaged in has been difficult to sustain in the long term. Members of the school organisation need to have developed the necessary capacity and competencies to maintain and persist with development processes once external facilitators have exited (Bertram, 1999).

Dual responsibility must be taken by the consultant, or change agent, and the school. This involves contracting and negotiating goals and joint exploration of the steps towards change. If the role players within the school system retain responsibility for the scope and focus of development initiatives, they are better able to assume control over any change that is effected and can then maintain and deepen these efforts over time (Moolla, 1996).

4.7.4. School Development is a Long-term Intervention

Another concern, raised at the National Conference on Whole School Evaluation in South Africa (Department of Education, 2002b), was that programmes of at least a five-year period are required in order to see evidence of real change at the level of the school. Most projects are short term and one or two years are insufficient to make a serious impact.

4.7.5. Dynamics of Change

Graham-Jolly and Peacock (2000) reflected on what was learned from the One Thousand Schools Project in South Africa, which was initiated to develop quality educational improvement, particularly in schools which had been disadvantaged under apartheid education. The authors emphasised the unpredictability of change within schools. They argued that even when visions are clear and goals are set with plans that follow, the expected outcomes that emerge do not always match the interventions. Various contextual and unforeseen factors impact on the change and development process in fundamental ways. These factors often will result in varying degrees of success in different organisations, where the vision and interventions may indeed have been very similar. This is supported by Fullan (1993) and Hunting and Tilbury (2006), who maintained that educational change is dynamic and complex and therefore is seldom predictable and often ambiguous.

4.7.6. Partnerships in School Development

Various stakeholders are often involved in school development initiatives, sometimes in large-scale efforts, sometimes in smaller activities (Prew, 2009). Hunting and Tilbury (2006) contended that working with other organisations is a strategy towards sustainability. They emphasised the importance of sharing information, issues and practices, but they warned that this often requires a significant investment of time and resources. Stakeholders ought to work in collaboration; however, this is often not without its difficulties. “Partnerships must be driven by mutual gains – mutual respect, mutual trust and common vision” (Department of Education, 2002b, p. 39). Also, the management, co-ordination and monitoring of these partnerships have been left wanting, often because of a lack of capacity in the Department of Education in South Africa. Where outside organisations have tried to collaborate in an effort to facilitate school development, this has been equally fraught with difficulties. For example, the Thousand Schools Project in South Africa was designed to bring NGOs together in the service of schools, and evaluations of the project indicate that engaging collaboratively with

schools was found to be sorely lacking, particularly in the Kwa-Zulu Natal area (Graham-Jolly & Peacock, 2000).

As regards school-community partnerships, Bertram (1999) cautioned against the assumption that community involvement in school development is necessary beneficial. There is clearly a strong thrust in policy imperatives towards establishing school-community partnerships, however, evidence of the impact, whether positive or negative, in the South African context, she argued, is lacking.

4.8. Summary and Conclusion

School development aims at ensuring that all aspects of the school system are geared towards fostering effective teaching and learning. In this chapter, the importance of understanding the school as a system in order to facilitate development and change effectively is emphasised. The theories on school effectiveness and school improvement are presented as bodies of knowledge, which, although they originated separately, have been merged in theory and practice. Various approaches to school development, employed nationally and internationally, are described and summarised to illustrate key similarities in the underpinning philosophies and actual practices. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the key challenges facing school psychologists who facilitate school development. These challenges point to individual, structural and process issues which must be considered when engaging with schools in a developmental process.

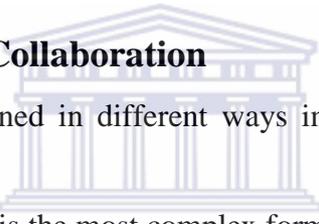
CHAPTER 5

INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION

The conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2 illustrates the key foci in this study and the way in which these are interrelated and understood within the context of this research. School psychology is the broad field of study and school development is one aspect of school psychology practice. Intersectoral collaboration, as opposed to describing *what* school psychologists do, encapsulates *how* they work. Intersectoral collaboration is one way of working and is presented in this chapter as an option for school psychologists. The discussion opens with definitions of the concept and follows with a summary of the literature, depicting its application in the context of education support in South Africa and the benefits and challenges that emerge from working in a collaborative way with other sectors in health and education contexts in particular.

5.1. Defining Intersectoral Collaboration

Intersectoral collaboration is defined in different ways in international and South African literature.


Intersectoral collaboration is the most complex form of collaboration, since it includes interprofessional as well as inter-organisation collaboration between different sectors of the society. It means that the organisations and professions involved arrange their different services to fulfil needs of integration, which may be through co-ordination and co-operation as well as collaboration.

(Ahgren, Axelsson, & Axelsson, 2009, p. 2)

Leurs, Mur-Veeman, van der Sar, Schaalma, and de Vries (2008) explained that intersectoral collaboration is where “people from different domains, cultures and jargon are expected to work together” (p. 2). In South Africa, this term generally refers to the “working together” of or partnerships developed between professionals and other role players (often called *stakeholders*), both in and outside of schools and other education institutions (Robinson, Lazarus, Langan, & Moolla, 2002). Engelbrecht (2004b) explained that collaboration is often used to describe interaction and discussions between professionals focusing on ways to support schools, teachers, children and their families.

Collaboration refers to two or more parties working in a co-operative way towards a common goal or shared purpose (Frey, Lohmeier, Lee, Tollefson, & Johanning, 2004; Gajda & Koliba, 2007). Dettmer, Dyck, and Thurston (1996) and Gronski and Pigg (2000) extended this and

defined collaboration as an interactive process that brings together that which is diverse, to execute plans for common goals as well as to generate solutions for complex problems. This process draws together different sectors, disciplines and professions which, in working together, cross boundaries to work within a common conceptual framework (Mostert, 1996). El Ansari and Phillips (2001) explained that collaboration occurs when sectors work jointly, where those collaborating take on specific tasks within a project and share responsibility for its ultimate success. Such partnerships are most successful when each member brings a different set of resources or skills to the collaborative effort, so recognition of the complementarity of skills and provisions is crucial.

Intriligator (1994) highlighted three aspects of intersectoral work: co-ordination, collaboration and co-operation, all of which are crucial to the success of any efforts to work across boundaries, professions, disciplines or sectors. She differentiates between these three aspects in the following way. *Collaboration* emphasises working together and problem solving with a common goal. *Co-ordination* focuses on the management and organisation of activities, including the systematic pulling together of different individuals and aspects of an activity. *Co-operation* draws in the important relationship dynamic that is essentially about people talking to and understanding one other. She argued that, although the most effective way of working is to incorporate all three facets, as depicted in Figure 5.1, it is crucial to ensure that these processes are indeed well co-ordinated because although collaboration often includes co-operation, it may not necessarily be well co-ordinated. Furthermore, co-ordination may not necessarily include collaboration since processes can be strictly focused on management and organisation and not emphasise the collective, as is often the case in many government departments.

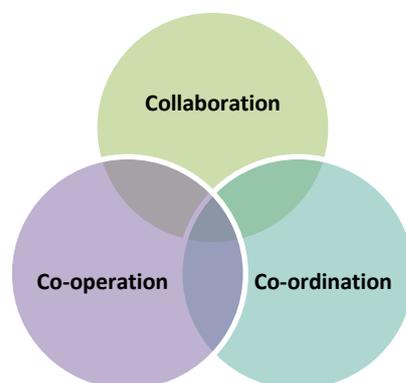


Figure 5.1. Three aspects of intersectoral work

Himmelman (cited in Goldman & Schmalz, 2008) provided a different perspective on these aspects and described them instead as a continuum of ways of working together with networking, being the least complex, followed by co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration (Fig 5.2).

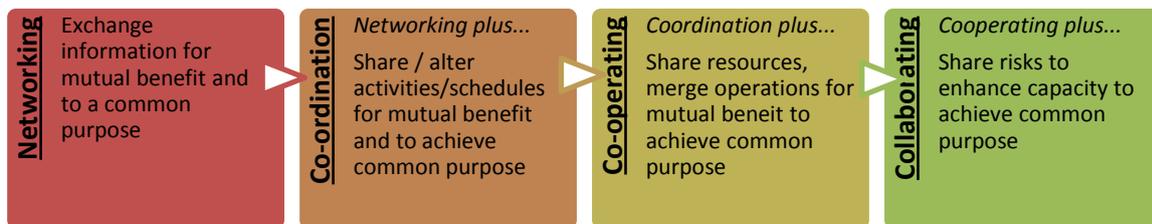


Figure 5.2. Four types of partnerships (adapted from Himmelman, cited in Goldman & Schmalz, 2008)

Nutbeam and Harris (2004) cited the work of O’Neill and colleagues and presented a similar continuum reflecting varying levels of formality in the agreements made between individuals and organisations that work together (Fig. 5.3).

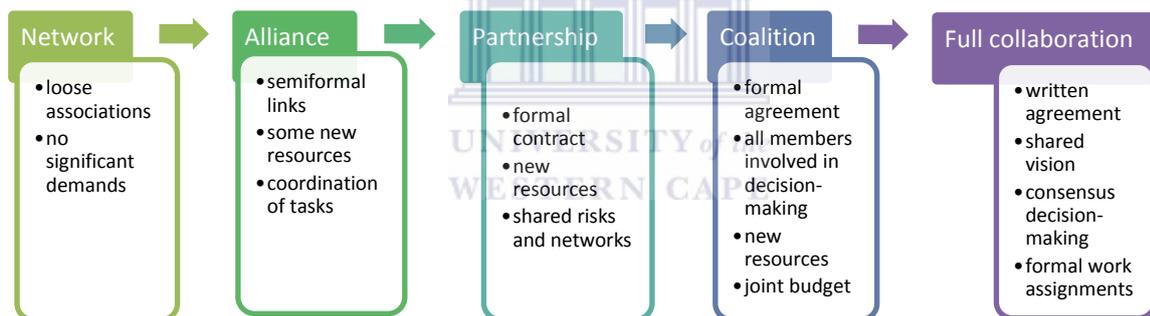


Figure 5.3. Continuum of ways of working together (adapted from O’Neill et al., cited in Nutbeam & Harris, 2004)

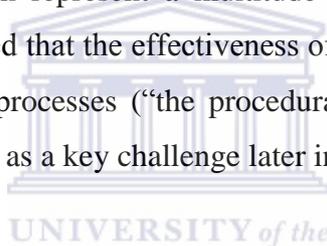
In each of the three proposed frameworks, collaboration is regarded as the most complex, formal and structured mode of working with others.

The authors of *Quality education for all: Report of the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training and the National Committee Education Support Services* (Department of Education, 1997) made a strong recommendation for intersectoral collaboration within education support services but highlights the importance of effective and efficient co-ordination of such processes to ensure maximum impact of interventions.

Where more than one department is involved in collaborative service delivery, one department needs to be identified and take responsibility as the ‘lead’ department. This may need to be flexible or a fixed arrangement depending on the circumstances. Statutory provision (e.g. organograms, material/financial resources, lines of communication, secondment arrangements) will need to be put in place by provincial departments/sectors in order to secure intersectoral collaboration. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 121)

Although Engelbrecht (2004b) distinguished between transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary collaboration, the essence of the definitions provided by each emphasises the unique contribution made by the professionals and role-players involved.

Gajda (2004) observed that “collaboration is known by many names” (p. 68) and emphasised the need for collective and shared understandings of the nature of collaboration between those engaged in such ventures. She argued that collaboration should be presented as a “theory of how multiple individuals or entities work together to develop a relationship ... collaboration is complex and can represent a multitude of intra- and inter-organisational alliances” (p. 68). Gajda reiterated that the effectiveness of collaboration is often determined by people (“the personal”) *and* processes (“the procedural”) (Gajda, 2004, p. 70). This is noted and explored in some depth as a key challenge later in this chapter.



5.2. Why is Intersectoral Collaboration Important in Education Support?

Engel (2000) maintained that the challenge for all professions is to collaborate with each other in order to establish cause-and-effect relationships and to then participate in developing and sustaining long-term interventions in various contexts. He asserted that various professionals “will need to be able to accept proactive, interprofessional and intersectoral responsibilities for the benefit of society at large” (p. 41). In practical terms, intersectoral collaboration has not in the past been the primary approach to support provision in education in South Africa or internationally, so the question may be asked: “Why do this now?”

The potential positive influence of collaboration regarding support to schools is widely acknowledged (Dyson, 2005; Engelbrecht, 2004b; Gerschel, 2005; Swart & Pettipher, 2001). Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001) emphasised the need for intersectoral collaboration of key role-players in the development and provision of an integrated and community-based support system that responds to the diverse needs of all learners. In the section that follows, various

responses to the question of why relevant disciplines, professions and sectors ought to work together when providing support within schools and other education institutions is presented.

Amongst the potential benefits of an intersectoral collaborative approach are that it can: maintain a holistic approach to service planning and delivery; prevent duplication; prevent unnecessary competition; encourage efficient use of human and material resources; strengthen service delivery; enable the community to readily gain access to all the resources available; maximise resources; bring together people from different backgrounds; help in cross-fertilisation of ideas and experiences; keep the community informed and involved; and commit each department (sector) to play its role. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 121)

The complex nature of the challenges facing education institutions demands a *holistic understanding and comprehensive response*, drawing from various perspectives, expertise and experiences (Gronski & Pigg, 2000; Intriligator, 1994; Manley-Casimir & Hall, 1994; Mostert, 1996; Walsh, Howard, & Buckley, 1999). Collaboration provides an opportunity to draw from different knowledge bases, experiences and perspectives, weaving together multiple and diverse viewpoints and insights. Goldman and Schmalz (2008) argued that when there is a lack of consensus on goals and solutions, it is often helpful to come together to search for “best solutions” especially when there is shared understanding of the problems and willingness to see them addressed.



Schools and other educational institutions experience *enhanced provision of support services* through intersectoral collaboration (Deschesnes, Martin, & Hill, 2003; El Ansari & Phillips, 2004; Intriligator, 1994; Kolbe, Kann, & Brener, 2001; Manley-Casimir et al., 1994; Mostert, 1996; Papa, Rector, & Stone, 1998; Walsh et al., 1999). Working together across disciplines, professions and sectors addresses the current fragmentation of services and supports the implementation of co-ordinated, system-wide change. This facilitates better access to services and provides a more effective service. El Ansari and Phillips (2001) reasoned that since collaborative efforts involve the advancement of a shared vision, complex problems can be solved and value added through collective influence and power. Nutbeam and Harris (2004) contended that “(b)y working together organisations may be able to ensure that their services are more relevant and co-ordinated, and have access to sufficient resources to make a difference” (p. 54).

Working together to provide support to education institutions also provides *benefits for the service providers*. In particular, it provides opportunities for the various role players to share ideas, mentor each other, and, in so doing, encourage professional development (Gronski & Pigg, 2000; Intriligator, 1994; Manley-Casimir et al., 1994; Mostert, 1996; Walsh et al., 1999). Through this cross-pollination, support providers can develop problem-solving capabilities that go beyond their own traditional disciplinary boundaries. Besides the personal professional benefits highlighted above, intersectoral collaboration creates and strengthens relationships between the different sectors, increasing communication and therefore understanding between and across historical divides. If pursued sensitively, all can feel valued and respected, thereby confirming and affirming both personal self-esteem and professional effectiveness (El Ansari & Phillips, 2004; Mostert, 1996; Walsh et al., 1999).

Intersectoral collaboration within education support also results in *organizational gains* (Mostert, 1996; Walsh et al., 1999). In particular, the pooling of resources, more efficient use of resources, and a decreased duplication of services are all benefits to institutions and the education system as a whole (Deschesnes et al., 2003; El Ansari & Phillips, 2004; Gadja, 2004; Goldman & Schmalz, 2008). In addition to resource gains, working together in a reflective way can create an organizational environment that is flexible and responsive, creating opportunities for more open approaches to support provision and change management in education contexts. Goldman and Schmalz (2008) added that working in partnership with others then improves community contact, minimises duplication of services and, in so doing, often increases the credibility of the sectors involved.

In addition to the gains for schools and the broader education system, local communities also benefit from working together with school communities and support providers from the various professions. In particular, Sanders (2001) and Wyatt and Novak (2000) stressed the *community empowerment* gains arising from positive school-community partnerships. Lazarus and Donald (1997) claimed that collaboration and interdisciplinary co-ordination are crucial in promoting ownership and effective implementation of policy, services and programmes. They pointed out that working collaboratively has the effect of rationalising resources and empowering communities through engaging all stakeholders in a process where planning, development and evaluation are co-ordinated.

5.3. School Psychologists Engaging in Intersectoral Collaboration

Working in a synergistic partnership with school personnel, families, and communities, school psychologists successfully can implement systems-level change to better address the needs of children. The future of our profession is resting on each of us. We have been provided with the opportunity to respond, and we must act. (Ehrhardt-Padgett et al., 2004, p. 110)

The challenge to school psychologists is to acknowledge the value of collaboration and to embrace this approach in an effort to enhance the quality of services provided. In delineating the various roles that educational psychologists can and do play, Lomofsky and Green (2004) highlighted the role of educational psychologists as members and co-ordinators of multidisciplinary teams (2004). Within this challenge to collaborate, Lown et al. (2001) reiterated the importance of providing information to stakeholders and other agencies about what educational psychologists can offer. Marking clearer boundaries when working with other professionals will be crucial as well.

In their exploration of the barriers to development, growth and expansion of school mental health programmes, wherein psychologists play a crucial role, Prodent, Sander, and Weist (2002) outlined specific strategies for enhancing support programmes. They contended that

[u]nderlying all of the strategies presented is the importance of establishing collaborative partnerships with stakeholders (e.g. educators, families, community leaders, funding agencies, mental health providers) characterised by mutual respect and effective communication (p. 173)

Formal partnerships and connections with community-based services are of crucial importance in the development of effective mental health services in schools (Adelman, 2002). Such partnerships are strengthened because of a shared goal and vision, but also as a consequence of structural arrangements (like sharing office space at a school) and binding financial agreements or contracts.

The analysis of *The Handbook of International School Psychology* (Jimerson et al., 2007) revealed that authors depicting school psychology in their own countries do not always mention the nature of collaborative work taking place, although some reference is made to this aspect of work in some countries, and this is reflected below. This lack of emphasis in their descriptions of school psychology practice, however, points to the need to deepen understandings of the importance of engaging in collaboration since it appears to be a

neglected aspect in the work of school psychologists. In those countries where collaboration is highlighted, the sectors with which school psychologists collaborate include the following:

- Teachers
- Principals
- Specialist teachers
- Members of the ‘school team’
- Parents
- Medical practitioners
- Other professionals in multi-disciplinary team
- Community-based services
- Police
- Other government departments.

The literature analysis conducted in this study explored intersectoral collaboration with specific reference to what the collaboration focuses on as well as how this collaboration is facilitated. Table 3.3 depicts what emerged from the analysis of *The Handbook of International School Psychology* (Jimerson et al., 2007).

The aims, goals and purpose of the collaboration	The structures and processes which facilitate collaboration	
	Structures	Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of programmes and projects • Assessment of learners • Placement of learners • Publicising and awareness raising • Curriculum planning • Organisation development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-disciplinary teams • School-based teams • Special education committees • Child guidance centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination • Community outreach • Consultation • Networking • Community outreach programmes • Regular meetings • Liaison • Referral

Table 3.3. School psychologists engaging in intersectoral collaboration

There appears to be a good balance between focus on the individual and the system regarding the aims, goals and purpose of collaboration. The focus on the learner is not lost but the importance of intervening at broader more contextual levels is noted. Structures also exist on multiple levels, ranging from the school to the district to the government.

5.4. Intersectoral Collaboration within the Context of Education Support in South Africa

South Africa’s first post-1994 *Education White Paper on Education and Training* committed the country to the development of

a holistic and integrated approach to Education Support Services, in collaboration with the provincial Ministries of Education and in consultation with the Ministries of Health, Welfare and Population Development, and Labour. The inclusive, integrated approach recognizes that issues of health, social, psychological, academic and vocational development, and support services for learners with special education needs are inter-related. (Department of Education, 1995, p. 28)

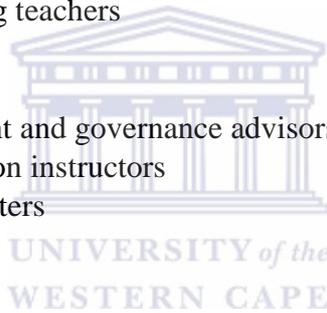
Within the context of the above, the *Education White Paper 6* on building an inclusive education system (Department of Education, 2001) commits the South African government to strengthening education support services in the country in order to address barriers to learning and development. These support services are provided at different levels of government. At national and provincial levels, the key support functions are to provide a policy and management framework to enable direct and indirect support services to be provided to schools and other education institutions. The delivery of these support services occurs through district-based support structures and institutional-level support teams. The main function of the district support teams is to build the capacity of institutional-level support teams to understand and address needs and barriers to learning and development in the local context (Department of Education, 2005a). It is therefore apparent that collaboration is required at multiple levels, namely, within each of these teams, between them and then also in relation to the broader school community.

Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) and the *Conceptual and Operational Guidelines* developed from that policy (Department of Education, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2008) clearly indicate that schools and district-based support teams need to work together to develop effective teaching and learning environments. This “working together” involves the collaboration of all the professionals who are trained to work within the district support teams. This includes all specialised educator and learner support providers who address various bio-psycho-social problems (namely psychologists, counsellors, social workers, school nurses and doctors, therapists, learning support facilitators, and language and communication teachers), as well as curriculum advisors, administrative support personnel, institutional management and governance consultants. For school psychologists, the implication is that collaboration with other professionals (within district-based support teams) as well as those sectors based in and around the school community becomes imperative. This collaboration at various levels may entail direct or indirect service delivery, with the core

purpose being to understand and address barriers to learning and development in an effort to support teaching and learning.

The Report of the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training and the National Committee for Education Support Services (Department of Education, 1997) identified a pool of potential service providers who could be involved in education support provision to schools in various ways. The emphasis in the report is, however, on how these role-players could work together to improve support provided to schools.

- Educators
- Learning support educators
- Psychologists
- Orthopedagogues
- Curriculum advisors
- Community based rehabilitation workers
- Therapists (speech, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, etc)
- Language and listening teachers
- Social workers
- Health workers
- Institution management and governance advisors
- Mobility and orientation instructors
- Sign language interpreters
- Nutritionists
- Traditional healers
- Peer counsellors
- Youth workers
- Child and youth care workers
- University/college lecturers and researchers
- Representatives from parent organisations
- Community based organisations and NGOs.



A further implication of this policy and approach is that the members of local school communities need to work together to understand and address the barriers to learning in their schools. It is crucial to note that in attempting to understand and address the barriers to learning in schools, the institutional-level support team is also expected to draw on the knowledge and expertise of those outside the education system. This includes individuals, groups and organisations in their community, as well as members of other government departments and agencies. This emphasis on drawing in and on the school community (teachers, learners and parents) and the local community for the purposes of understanding and addressing barriers to learning is the crux of the development of a “community-based” support system (Moolla, 2006). Christie (2001) explained that schools should network with

each other and district personnel ought to develop relationships with schools that are supportive and reciprocal and establish links with higher levels in education departments. She referred to international and local literature which supports the idea that co-ordination and planning could provide an opportunity to bring stakeholders together to develop visions, goals and plans of action for schools.

A fundamental principle of a systems approach to working with schools is the bringing together of various sectors to solve problems and facilitate development collaboratively. Intersectoral collaboration is therefore a major goal of the transformation of education support services. This approach is, however, not without its challenges, and unless these are addressed, efforts to work collaboratively if poorly understood and actualised could impact negatively on support provided to schools and on teaching and learning more broadly.

5.5. Challenges within Intersectoral Collaboration

Intersectoral collaboration has been found to be particularly important in the context of mental health promotion in a variety of settings, including schools. Although intersectoral collaboration is fundamental, it requires serious consideration since it is challenging to bring sectors together to work towards a common goal (Herrman, Saxena, & Moodie, 2005; Leurs et al., 2008). Establishing clear, common goals, a collective understanding of roles and responsibilities, negotiating diverse cultural and organisational imperatives and securing time and necessary resources are all crucial in ensuring effective collaboration.

It is thus acknowledged that intersectoral collaboration remains a fundamental challenge particularly in the context of working within a whole school development approach (Engelbrecht, 2004b; Lazarus & Moolla, 1995; Lazarus, Moolla, & Reddy 1996; Robinson et al., 2002). Different sectors need to co-operate and collaborate and these efforts need to be co-ordinated if they are to be at all successful. Graham-Jolly and Peacock (2000) explained how the Thousand Schools Project in South Africa attempted to promote educational change and development on a national scale by harnessing the expertise of NGOs in partnership with one another, with schools and with provincial departments of education. The project aimed at whole school development through intersectoral collaboration; however, NGOs and departments of education found this aspect of its framework to be the most challenging and in some provinces even to be its failing.

In the section that follows, an analysis of the literature that examines the challenges within intersectoral collaboration is presented. Bronstein (2003) noted the following as influencing interdisciplinary collaboration: professional role, structural characteristics, personal characteristics and a history of collaboration. These factors and other challenges are explored further in the sections that follow. The following key themes emerged from a review of the literature: the need for common understanding and shared goals, personal and interpersonal dynamics, differing discourses and worldviews, organisational aspects, resources, and training. In this study, ways in which these challenges could be overcome are explored, with particular emphasis on the efforts of school psychologists to contribute to school development by collaborating with other professionals, organisations and sectors.

5.5.1. Common Understandings and Shared Goals

Effective intersectoral collaboration is dependent on the attainment of common understandings of the challenges facing learners, educators and schools. Kvalsig, Taylor, Jinabhai, and Coovadia (2004), in a colloquium report entitled *Improving the health of school age children in an era of HIV/AIDS*, suggested that in addition to being difficult to manage, intersectoral collaboration is challenging if the goal set by service providers is not shared and prioritised by all involved. Leurs et al. (2008) developed a model to monitor collaboration in health promotion settings and emphasised the importance of consensus seeking in order to ensure maximum success and sustainability in the collaborative process. Therefore, opportunities must be provided for developing a common vision and shared goals for the task at hand. Linked to this is the need for all role players to see how they can benefit from the collaboration, that is, how their own specific professional agenda can be strengthened as a result of the partnership proposed (Green & Tones, 2000; Juszczak et al., 1998; Nutbeam & Harris, 2004).

An example of the challenge to reaching common understandings is related to the link between health and education. The American Academy of Paediatrics Committee on School Health (2001), Juszczak et al. (1998), Papa et al. (1998), and Wyatt & Novak. (2000) all described the difficulties experienced in trying to convince schools that they need to, and have a responsibility to, understand and address the many threats to health that act as barriers to learning and teaching. One of the barriers to reaching consensus on this matter lies in the concept of *health*, which is still construed as being linked to physical aspects of health rather

than the broader understanding espoused by the World Health Organisation, and adopted by South Africa, which sees health as being a holistic concept including physical, psychological, social, environmental and spiritual aspects of well-being (Department of Health, 2000). This is reflected in an ongoing debate about the role of health in education (Collett et al., 2006; Lazarus, 2006).

A need exists to provide opportunities for more communication between the relevant sectors, with a particular focus on identifying how health issues act as barriers to learning and development, and how addressing these can contribute to more effective teaching and learning: the core purpose of schooling. Education support interventions must therefore be seen to be linked to the core purpose of schooling and education (Moolla, 2006). It is important that the different role players reach a common understanding of the challenges facing them, and, on the basis of that, identify how their different perspectives can together address the barriers to learning concerned.

5.5.2. Personal and Interpersonal Dynamics

Personal and interpersonal dynamics emerge as another set of challenges when trying to work collaboratively within education support services. Fears regarding personal competency and value, issues of personal and professional power, and “turf” or “territoriality” struggles must be acknowledged (American Academy of Paediatrics Committee on School Health, 2001; Brown & Bolen, 2003; Dettmer et al., 1996; Engelbrecht, 2006, 2004b; Goldman & Schmalz, 2008; Lazarus & Donald, 1997; Manley-Casimir et al., 1994; Mostert, 1996; Papa et al., 1998; Sanders, 2001).

On an intrapersonal level, developing respect for oneself and others involved is vital. This highlights a need to change attitudes to genuinely believe that everyone concerned has something valuable to contribute. Anything less than a genuine feeling of respect will not work. This suggests that self-awareness within the context of self-development is a fundamental requirement to make this work.

On an interpersonal level, there is a general communication challenge. El Ansari and Phillips (2001) and Green and Tones (2000) argued that regular and effective communication at personal and organisational level is vital to ensuring effective collaboration. Learning to listen to one another, feeling free to express views, sharing knowledge, skills and expertise,

and reaching consensus and compromise in decision-making procedures constitute personal and interpersonal communication challenges for all involved. Successful collaboration is dependent on effective communication that results in optimal levels of trust. Nutbeam and Harris (2004) claimed that trust is a fundamental factor that influences the nature and success of intersectoral collaboration. It must be acknowledged that building trust is often quite challenging and takes time. Interpersonal challenges relating to developing team effectiveness therefore emerges as crucial. This includes developing trust through group contracts or ground rules, facilitating open communication and optimal participation of all concerned, obtaining clarity of and commitment to goals and the process, knowing about and appreciating different roles and functions to pursue these goals, and providing effective leadership and management (Gadja, 2004; Lazarus & Donald, 1997; Moolla, 2006).

Clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities of each sector is essential in order to attain stated objectives and facilitate collaboration (Green & Tones, 2000). The question of roles and responsibilities is important in building collaborative relationships and often impacts on perceptions of job security, so needs to be addressed by clarifying roles, delineating tasks and defining boundaries, and yet being able to be flexible about them. (Altshuler, 2003; Dettmer et al., 1996; El Ansari & Phillips, 2001; Intriligator, 1994; Manley-Casimir et al., 1994; Nutbeam & Harris, 2004).

Some effort therefore has to go into relationship building amongst team members involved in collaborative support provision (Gronski et al., 2000; Intriligator, 1994; Manley-Casimir et al., 1994; Mostert, 1996; Papa et al., 1998). All this relates particularly to the co-ordinating role highlighted by Intriligator (1994). The role of effective leadership and management in facilitating the development of healthy, effective personal and interpersonal dynamics cannot therefore be over emphasized.

5.5.3. Discourse and Worldview Challenges

Related to the issue highlighted above is the challenge of developing a common discourse that can facilitate both understanding of, and commitment to, the challenges concerned. This includes facilitating access to the language of conversation itself (a central issue in the South African context where there are 12 national languages), facilitating communication across disciplinary terminology and jargon to ensure a common understanding of the issues at hand, and, linked to this, identifying and linking the different professional discourses in order to

identify common goals and approaches. The American Academy of Paediatrics Committee on School Health (2001), Dettmer et al. (1996), Intriligator (1994), Juszczak et al. (1998), Manley-Casimir et al. (1994), Mostert (1996), Papa et al. (1998), and Sanders (2001) also stressed the importance of developing a common understanding across disciplinary and professional “languages”.

Within this formal discourse challenge exist different worldviews and paradigms, where competition between value systems and differing perspectives can emerge as a key challenge (Dettmer et al., 1996; Lazarus, 2006; Manley-Casimir et al., 1994). According to Lazarus et al. (2006), “(P)sychologists are required to be open to engaging with and being transformed by worldviews that are different from their own (p. 155). To ensure that all voices are heard, particularly those that are not usually valued within professional frameworks (for example, the “community” voice, the voice of the poor, and so on) is crucial, and, linked to this, to acknowledge marginalised views on what constitutes health and well-being and how the many challenges facing schools at present can be addressed. This includes worldviews not usually favoured within Western orthodox views and approaches to health and education support (Collett et al., 2006; Lazarus, 2004; Lazarus, 2006). While differences need to be recognised and valued, it is crucial to foreground compatibility across the different perspectives for the purposes of developing and addressing common goals. Finding the commonality that facilitates effective support provision and school development across and between sectors must be the focus.

5.5.4. Organizational Challenges

Directly linked to the personal and interpersonal challenges described above are organizational challenges that need to be addressed for effective intersectoral collaboration to occur (American Academy of Paediatrics Committee on School Health, 2001; Dettmer et al., 1996; Gronski & Pigg, 2000; Intriligator, 1994; Juszczak et al., 1998; Kolbe et al., 2001; Lazarus & Donald, 1997; Manley-Casimir et al., 1994; Mostert, 1996; Papa et al., 1998; Sanders, 2001; Walsh et al., 1999). In particular, the need for institutionalisation of collaborative processes into organisational cultures and structures needs to be pursued. Many of the abovementioned authors stress the importance of establishing procedures and structures, within and between organisations, to facilitate co-ordination and collaboration. This includes providing informal support and formal opportunities and incentives for planning, implementing and evaluating intersectoral programmes and collaborative work.

This requires good management policies and effective implementation of these policies throughout the system.

Institutional policies therefore need to reflect a commitment to intersectoral collaboration, and these policies need to be implementable. This includes ensuring that budgets support the commitments espoused. These budgets need to address the often complex challenge of identifying who is responsible for what and, therefore, who should be taking care of finances. This is a critical matter in relation to how different government departments and other agencies work together (Collett et al., 2006; Lazarus, 2006). The need for institutionalisation of intersectoral collaboration, and co-operative governance within the health and education arena in the provision of education support, is therefore essential (Moolla, 2006).

The need for leadership and management support and sound leadership skills at all levels, within the relevant institutions, is crucial in collaborative efforts (Deschesnes et al., 2003; El Ansari & Phillips, 2001). An effective leader can facilitate the development of a common vision and shared goals and mediate a common understanding and commitment amongst the various role-players (American Academy of Paediatrics Committee on School Health, 2001; Intriligator, 1994). All of these processes require effective management but also need to be free of bureaucratic “red tape” which, if not controlled, can bring additional administrative tensions, difficulties and overload.

5.5.5. Human and Material Resources

Related to organisational issues are human and material resource challenges. Particular resource issues highlighted in the literature include management of time, finances and human resources (American Academy of Paediatrics Committee on School Health, 2001; Dettmer et al., 1996; El Ansari & Phillips, 2004; Gronski & Pigg, 2000; Intriligator, 1994; Juszczak et al., 1998; Kolbe et al., 2001; Kvalsig et al., 2004; Mostert 1996; Nutbeam & Harris, 2004; Papa et al., 1998). Intersectoral collaboration can be labour intensive and therefore relies on more human resources. Furthermore, time needs to be allocated to co-ordinating collaborative tasks such as collective planning and team work. This requires agreed-upon procedures for procuring, sharing and managing time, facilities, funding and human resources to support the collaboration. Acknowledgement of the cost of collaboration in fiscal terms is crucial and must therefore be incorporated into budgets. Kvalsig et al. (2004) emphasised the need for political support in this regard.

5.5.6. Training and Development in Intersectoral Collaboration

Lastly, but underlying all of the above, is the challenge of providing opportunities for all relevant role-players involved in support provision to obtain the necessary training and development to support collaborative work. Intersectoral collaboration challenges the roles of professionals (Brown & Bolen, 2003) and unless they are equipped to face this challenge, they will resist it.

Papa et al. (1998) concurred and argued for interdisciplinary collaborative training for all school-based health professionals. The challenge for higher education institutions is to train professionals by developing the competencies required for interprofessional and intersectoral collaboration in order to facilitate the implementation of appropriate educational and health interventions (Engel, 2000; Waggie, Gordon, & Brijlal, 2004). Such programmes should be aimed at preparing professionals and other sectors to work effectively together. The Faculty of Community and Health Sciences at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa has developed one such module called "Inter-professional community-based practice". The module is designed to equip health professionals with a deeper understanding of professional relationships and interactions with other professionals. Together with pre-requisite modules that are offered in first, second and third year, it allows students to share disciplinary knowledge and skills and to develop an ethos of collaborative and interprofessional practice in order to provide more effective, quality health care (Faculty of Community and Health Sciences, 2008). The Master in Educational Psychology degree, offered in the Faculty of Education similarly includes a module on intersectoral collaboration which exposes students to the definitions, debates, practices and challenges in adopting this strategy when working with and within schools (Faculty of Education, 2008). Such training provides opportunities for self-reflection and development of all concerned, including opportunities for deep learning that touches on attitudes as well as overt behaviour.

5.6. Summary and Conclusion

Intersectoral collaboration involves professionals and other role-players working together in a team. It entails the establishment of partnerships and an acknowledgement of the value of diversity in achieving common goals and generating solutions to problems. Intersectoral collaboration may also be referred to as partnerships which are interdisciplinary,

multidisciplinary, interprofessional, multifunctional and transdisciplinary. Irrespective of the use of terminology, what is central is an emphasis on understanding problems holistically, developing comprehensive responses to problems, and co-ordination of support provision by pooling resources and minimising duplication. Intersectoral collaboration requires and facilitates improved communication and relationships between role players who learn from one another.

The effectiveness of intersectoral collaboration, however, therefore depends on a number of factors. Although the benefits of collaboration are clear, the complexities thereof should not be underestimated. A sense of ownership and commitment to a shared goal is essential and central to this is shared decision making and strong leadership. Sectors need to be willing to acknowledge their similarities and differences and, within this the complementarity, of their skills and expertise. Issues of power and status must be addressed and structures and procedures to facilitate effective communication need to be established. Both humanistic and structural matters are therefore of crucial importance.

This chapter concludes the overview of the literature that has framed this study. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 have focused on the key concepts on which the study draws, clarifying the way in which these concepts are understood and engaged with in the study. They highlight trends in the development of these concepts and academic debates in the field, thereby facilitating the integration of the findings in later chapters. The next chapter outlines the means by which the research aims were achieved. It presents in some detail, the research paradigm employed, the research context, sources of data, data collection methods. Data analysis procedures and issues of trustworthiness and ethics are discussed as well.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter opens with a reiteration of the research aims, after which follows a detailed discussion of and justification for the research approach that was employed. The research context is described and an explanation is given of the criteria used in the selection of participants for the sample in each phase of data collection. The chapter provides an overview of the data collection process, describing in detail the particular research methods employed. An exploration of why these were regarded as appropriate for the study, how the instruments were developed and applied in the data collection process, and what challenges and limitations emerged in the application thereof, then follows. The plan for data analysis, describing the data-editing and data-coding procedures is expounded. Data verification measures are outlined in an attempt to explain how the risk of error was reduced and the trustworthiness of the data enhanced. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations that were applied in the study.

6.1. Research Aims and Questions

School psychologists have an important role to play in supporting and developing schools as systems. Psychologists working in and with schools are expected to collaborate with other professionals and sectors to ensure the effectiveness of the assessment and intervention processes they engage in. Their role, however, is often misunderstood or understated, and yet school psychologists in South Africa are expected to facilitate school development in collaboration with other professionals and sectors, as outlined in their job description. In the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), officials employed in district offices are expected to work collaboratively. School psychologists form part of a circuit team, which includes a curriculum advisor, a learning support advisor, a social worker, an institution management and governance advisor, and an administrator. The circuit team was established in order to facilitate collaboration between individuals on the team and schools, and other sectors providing support to schools.

In this study, the roles and practices of school psychologists are explored, with a focus on the nature of collaborative work engaged in when facilitating school development. The aim of the research is to understand the challenges that emerge when school psychologists work with other sectors to facilitate school development. The struggles of practice are highlighted and

ways in which these challenges can be addressed are recommended. Although this study presents a detailed picture of school psychology in the Western Cape, it is located within a national South African framework. The first two phases of data collection, namely the document analysis and email interviews epitomise an attempt to present school psychology in South Africa, while phases three and four concentrate on the experiences in the Western Cape.

The *research objectives* are as follow:

1. To ascertain the key roles played by school psychologists in South Africa.
2. To investigate the practices of school psychologists who are involved in school development.
3. To determine whether and how school psychologists work with other role-players to facilitate school development.
4. **To explore the challenges faced by school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development.**
5. **To ascertain how these challenges are currently being addressed and how they can be overcome in the future.**
6. To formulate recommendations for the training of school psychologists in relation to school development and intersectoral collaboration in particular.

The main *research question* is ***What are the challenges that face school psychologists who facilitate school development through intersectoral collaboration and how can these challenges be addressed?***

The following sub-questions needed to be answered in order to address the main research question. Questions five and six were central in this regard.

1. What are the key roles played by school psychologists in South Africa?
2. In what ways are school psychologists involved in school development?
3. Do school psychologists work with other sectors or professionals when facilitating school development? If so, with whom?
4. How do school psychologists work with others in the process of school development?
5. **What challenges face school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development?**
6. **How can these challenges be addressed?**
7. How can the training of school psychologists in relation to school development and intersectoral collaboration be transformed?

6.2. Research Approach and Design

In the section that follows, the broad framework which guided this study is outlined. The paradigm within which the study is embedded is explained and the design features of the study are described in detail. Figure 6.1 is a graphic representation of the way in which the study was conceptualised in terms of its process. A constructivist interpretive paradigm supported the design, from which emerged a selection of methods which were deemed to be relevant and appropriate for this study.

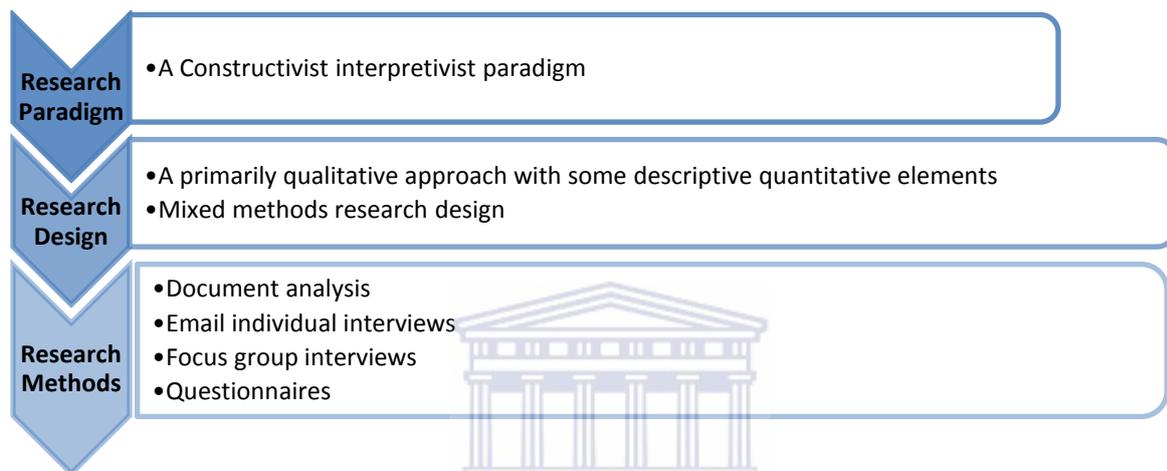


Figure 6.1. Overview of research approach and design

6.2.1. Research Paradigm

The methodological framework is grounded within a research paradigm. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explained that a paradigm is a set of beliefs and assumptions that guide thinking and inquiry. It is a frame of reference that is employed to organise observations, experiences and ways of thinking in order to make sense of the world and phenomena within it. The paradigm that underpins a study captures the researcher's point of view or frame of reference for understanding life, the world and reality. Paradigms help researchers to organise their observations and shape the way in which they gain knowledge about the world and are based on beliefs and assumptions about reality, values in society, the relationship between the researcher and that which is being researched and the process of research itself (De Vos, 2005b). The research paradigm is what guides the questions asked and indicates where to look for the answers.

This study is framed within an interpretivist paradigm, which is based on a conception of reality (ontology) as constructed through human interaction. Multiple subjective realities are

constructed, interpreted and observed by the researcher. Events are understood through interpretation and are influenced by interactions within a social context. An interpretivist paradigm assumes multiple realities and thereby acknowledges the subjectivity of knowledge and understanding. Within this paradigm, it is understood that the researcher and the participants are able to construct understandings separately and together (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Interpretivism therefore accepts that realities are subjective and that, consequently, multiple interpretations may be evident. Within the exercise of inquiry, therefore, interpretivists accept the interactive process that the researcher and participants are engaged in as they influence each other in making sense of the phenomena being studied. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) outline four major interpretive paradigms that structure qualitative research: positivist and post-positivist, constructivist-interpretive, critical, and feminist post-structural. The paradigm which is most congruent with the basic beliefs and assumption held by the researcher in this study is the constructivist.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) observed that the outcome of an interpretivist study is a broad description of a phenomenon as seen through the eyes of the people who have experienced it firsthand. This study falls within this paradigm in that it constitutes an attempt to understand psychologists' perceptions, perspectives and understandings of particular situations and experiences (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Mertens, 2005). Even though the study includes quantitative methods, the emphasis in the questions posed in all data collection procedures is on understanding and describing the situation from the point of view of the participants. Their subjective experience, how they understand and interpret the context within which they work, and the challenges that face them, is the core of the investigation. The findings were then related to an existing body of theory and research, which encompasses the conceptual framework outlined earlier in Chapter 2.

An interpretivist approach has, as its intention, "to discover the meaning of the world as it is experienced by the individual" (Mertens, 2005, p. 240), to understand actions and behaviours, to learn to know why things are seen as they are seen; it is a search for explanations for phenomena. It seeks to understand a phenomenon in all its complexity by moving beyond the micro experience into the realm of the macro level, where possible reasons for the situation and experience can be found. This is congruent with a systems approach, which acknowledges the individual experience (the micro), but argues for its interconnectedness and interdependence with individuals and systems alongside and beyond it (the macro). In

linking with the systems approach, an interpretivist framework provides a means of exploring issues within a broader context. Interpretivist social scientists are interested in the intentions of the individual, but have a fundamental interest in the social element that is inherent in all descriptions, explanations and understandings. The researcher can then interpret a complex set of events and elements in terms of their interconnectedness by emphasising how these relationships are experienced, observed and understood by both the participants and the researcher.

The researcher, then, is not an objective observer but is seen as a participant in the interactions within the system being studied, even if momentarily so. The researcher therefore moves between experience, description and explanation of interactions, relationships and patterns and not in disconnected entities. The researcher enters the field with a clear sense of what will be studied and how it will be studied. This then allows the researcher to make clear connections between the findings and an existing body of theory and research which, in this study, were presented in the chapters preceding this one.

Moore (2008) noted that systems approaches draw considerably from constructivism, where “reality” is presented by the observer. Constructivists believe that perceptions of reality may differ and that there is no single, correct, objective reality. Realities are multiple and often parallel. Within a constructivist framework, realities can be seen to exist alongside one another. One reality is not regarded as more valid than another. Research within this paradigm is focused, therefore, not on revealing the truth about a single objective reality but on an exploration of different realities. Employing multiple methods which facilitate multiple voices to be heard is necessary within the framework of the study.

Flick (2004) maintained that data or facts become meaningful and relevant when interpreted either in isolation or within a particular context. Constructivism emphasises context as crucial since true meaning can only be obtained when facts are interpreted and understood within the contexts in which they emerge. Within this paradigm, knowledge is assumed to be socially constructed through interactions with others and within historical and cultural boundaries. The constructivist-interpretive paradigm is therefore employed to gain meaning from particular perspectives and within particular contexts. The perspective of the school psychologist is foregrounded in this study, with the focus on the context of school development and the collaborative contexts that these individuals engage in.

6.2.2. Research Design

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), research design encompasses a research question, the purposes of a study, clarification of what information is required to answer the research questions, and what strategies will be employed to gather this data most effectively.

A research design situates a researcher in the empirical world and connects him or her to specific sites, persons, groups, institutions, and bodies of relevant interpretive material, including documents and archives. A research design also specifies how the investigator will address the two critical issues of representation and legitimation. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 25)

The remainder of this chapter will present an elaboration of each of the aspects mentioned above.

Given the overarching constructivist-interpretive paradigm adopted in the study, it is important to clarify that although a mixed methods approach was applied in this study, it is primarily qualitative, drawing on quantitative techniques in one phase of the study as a triangulation strategy. A mixed method design involves the mixing of methodologies (Brannen, 2005; Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Mertens, 2005; Patton, 2002). Mixed methods research is defined as

the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study. (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17)

In their exploration of qualitative research on practice, Higgs and Cherry (2009) emphasised that the vast range of qualitative research approaches is a key strength. Researchers are encouraged to adopt multidisciplinary perspectives and varied methods in the study of situations involving complex individual and collaborative practice. To this end, a mixed methods approach was infused in this study.

Mixed methods were employed to triangulate findings, thereby ensuring greater confidence in the findings and facilitating an enriched explanation of the research problem, with the aim of conducting higher quality research (Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; De Vos, 2005a). Qualitative methods allow for a deeper exploration of key theoretical issues and matters of practice in relation to the phenomenon being studied, in this case, school psychology. The quantitative methods allow for some aspects of the study to be extrapolated to the population

of school psychologists in the Western Cape, but essentially serve the purpose of triangulation to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings and the study as a whole.

Brannen (2005) described a trend in social research towards convergence between traditional positivist/post-positivist and constructivist research paradigms. This has culminated in an important acknowledgement of the value of working both qualitatively and quantitatively. Guba and Lincoln (2005) used the term *bricolage* to refer to this blending of paradigms. Brannen (2005) therefore supported the use of a mixed methods approach which employs a range of methods that facilitate the exploration of a variety of questions. Mertens (2005) concurred that mixed methods enhances the ability of the researcher to not only gather data in varied ways, but to, through this, draw deeper and perhaps more meaningful conclusions about the problem being investigated.

Mixed methods research attempts to legitimise the use of multiple approaches to answering research questions; it is expansive, creative, inclusive and delimiting as it encourages researchers to employ an eclectic approach when considering how to conduct research (Burke Johnson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) noted that qualitative research is often multi-method in its focus, reflecting a commitment to in-depth understanding of the phenomena being studied.

The predominantly qualitative aspect of the study provides an in-depth description of the school psychology practice and challenges. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explained, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world.

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3)

Qualitative research emphasises comprehensive, interdependent, dynamic structures. It allows for the collection of rich data that can explore the “why” and “how” of the problem and not just the “what”. Qualitative methods are characterised by their complexity; the emphasis is on the contextual, as an exploratory, discovery and inductive approach is adopted (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Mertens, 2005). This study was conducted in an attempt to

understand and interpret people's experiences of the phenomena of school development and intersectoral collaboration and the meanings ascribed by psychologists to these experiences.

Higgs and Cherry (2009) outlined certain essentials for qualitative research. This was structured as a checklist and provided a helpful guide within which this study was framed:

- Respect for the participants.
- Recognition of research as a powerful tool for shaping social change.
- Contribution of new knowledge.
- Location of research strategy within an articulated and congruent research paradigm.
- Recognition of research as an interpretive act and a journey of learning.
- Quality through credibility, rigour and ethical conduct.
- Simplicity in presenting the findings.

An overview of the research process in this study reveals a mixed method design, with the predominantly qualitative first three phases of the study being followed by the quantitative questionnaire in the final phase. In the fourth phase of data collection, both open-ended and closed-ended questions are included in the questionnaire, demanding both qualitative and quantitative engagement with the data. The quantitative methods were included in the study primarily as a “confirmatory” technique, to triangulate findings from the earlier phases of data collection, to qualify and deepen descriptions.

The phases of data collection and the sources of data drawn upon are depicted in Figure 6.2. An understanding of the chronological order of the phases and the way in which these fed into each other is crucial, especially in relation to the mixed methods approach that was employed.

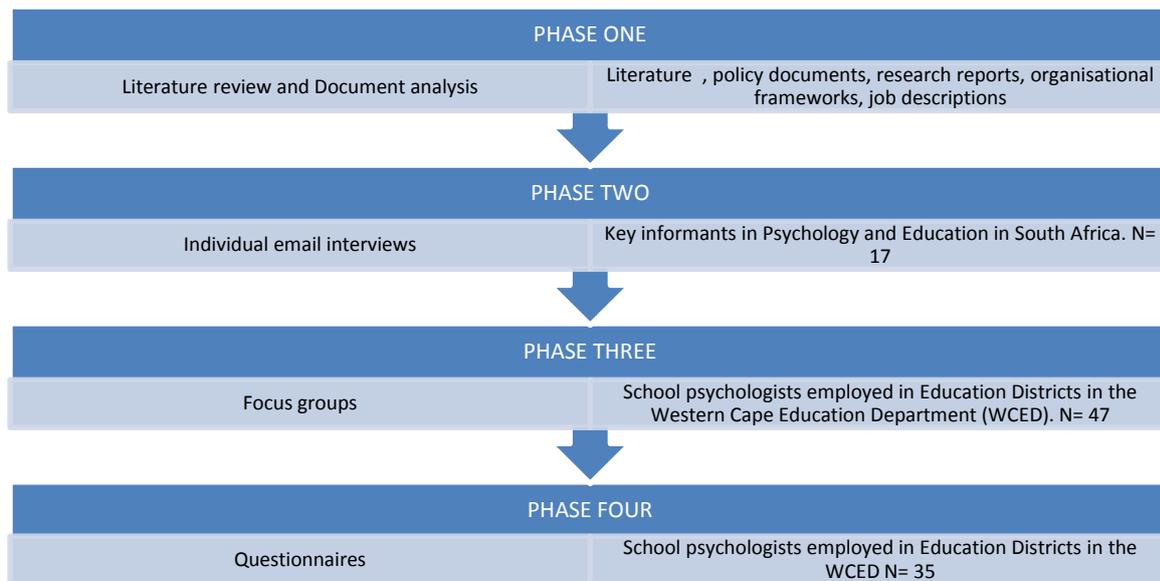


Figure 6.2. Phases of data collection: Methods and sources

Mixed methods research presents benefits in terms of the research process and its findings. As Sieber (1973) suggested, the focus group interviews which preceded the questionnaire yielded valuable information about the receptivity of participants and their frames of reference. This knowledge of the participants and their context heightened the sophistication of the questionnaire. It facilitated improvements on the questionnaire and improved rapport, thereby reducing the number of non-returns of the mailed questionnaires. Information gathered in the email interviews and the focus group interviews assisted in the analysis and interpretation of the quantitative data as well (Sieber, 1973). Findings on the questionnaire could be validated and statistical relationships could be interpreted by reference to qualitative data.

Employing a mixed methods approach enabled the researcher to triangulate data which was generated by varied methods and from varied sources. The inclusion of quantitative methods will allow for the findings to be generalised to the population of school psychologists in the Western Cape, thereby providing meaningful insights for consideration in provinces across the country.

6.3. Research Context and Participants

The *research context* in this study is school psychological services. Although some data was generated to provide a sense of the status quo of school psychological services nationally, the primary research context is school psychological services in the Western Cape Province (See Fig. 6.3).

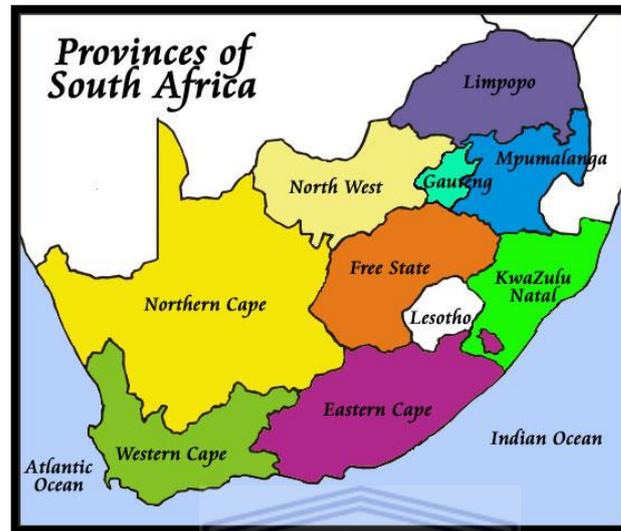


Figure 6.3. Provinces of South Africa

The Western Cape province is divided into eight education districts, as depicted in Figure 6.4. All eight districts were included in the study.

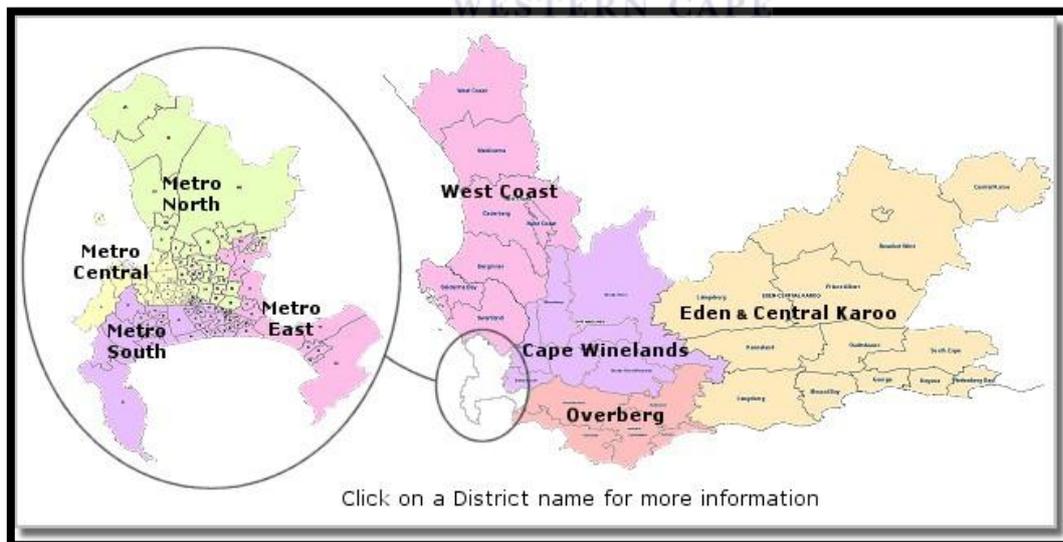


Figure 6.4. Education districts in the Western Cape

Although the education districts within this province may be regarded as a convenient site, given that this is the province within which the researcher is based and has had the most experience, a more important factor justifies the selection of this province as the research context. The Western Cape is characterised by superior resources in terms of both quality and

quantity within the education support services sector, as compared with other provincial education departments in the country. The Western Cape has often been described as amongst the “more privileged” of the nine provinces. Given this context, it is arguably more meaningful to investigate school psychology in a context where resources exist, services are provided and where processes are unfolding and can therefore be explored. Most other provinces, given the lack of resources, have not been able to engage with the debates being put forward in this study because the practice of school psychology, generally, is often limited. The Western Cape provides an opportunity to understand what school psychologists do, how and why they do it, and what can be done to enhance their practice. Such an understanding could shape a way forward for school psychology, not only in the Western Cape but across the country, assuming that there will in future be more resources available in other provinces!

Purposive sampling, according to Neumann (2003), entails *selecting participants* with specific purposes in mind. This implies the researcher employing expert judgment in the selection of participants in the study based on their ability to be informative about the issues under investigation. Bless, Higson-Smith, and Kagee (2006) explained that sampling is intended to duplicate the characteristics of the population as closely as possible; however, three types of sampling error may occur. These include the possibility that one characteristic and not another has been included, bias in selection, and non-responsive error. The latter was an important factor in this study, particularly in phase two, which involved email interviews to key informants nationally. The reasons for the non-responsive error may include unavailability of the identified participant, absence during the time of data collection and a reluctance to co-operate and participate in the research process.

In all, 28 key informants in psychology and education were identified and invited to participate in an email interview. The 28 individuals were selected on the basis of their involvement in school psychology practice, relevant policy development and debates, the training of educational psychologists, and/or participation in professional organisations. Of the 28 individuals, who were approached, 17 chose to participate in the study and responded to the questions in the email interview. This group of informants provided a picture of school psychology practice nationally, with a focus on challenges faced in facilitating school development through intersectoral collaboration. The sectors from which they were drawn are represented in Table 6.1.

SECTOR REPRESENTED	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Education departments	8
Universities	8
Private sector	1

Table 6.1. Key informants in Email Interviews (N = 17)

Table 6.2. depicts the ways in which the participants are involved in the field of educational and school psychology. Some of the participants represent more than one sector because of their varied involvement in the field.

NATURE OF INVOLVEMENT	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Registered educational psychologist (private practice)	4
Researcher	4
Academic training in the field of educational psychology	8
Clinical and research supervision	4
Co-ordination and management of school psychology in province or district	8
Involved in organised psychology	2

Table 6.2. Key informants' involvement in educational and school psychology (N=17)

Table 6.3. illustrates the geographical area where the key informants were based. Although every effort was made to include representation from each of the nine provinces in South Africa in order to obtain a clear “national picture”, all participants were not forthcoming in their responses to emails or to follow-up telephone calls that were made. This accounts for the lack of balance in representation across provinces, as depicted in Table 6.3 that follows.

PROVINCE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Eastern Cape	0
Free State	1
Gauteng	3
Kwa-Zulu Natal	1
Limpopo	1
Mpumalanga	1
North West	3
Northern Cape	2
Western Cape	5

Table 6.3. Provinces within which key informants were based (N=17)

The third phase of the study comprised focus group interviews in eight education districts in the Western Cape province. This involved 47 school psychologists who were employed by the Western Cape Education Department.

EDUCATION DISTRICT	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Cape Winelands	1
Eden and Central Karoo	7
Metropole North	8
Metropole Central	6
Metropole East	6
Metropole South	8
Overberg	5
West Coast	6

Table 6.4. *Districts within which focus group participants were based (N=47)*

It is important to note that not all practitioners who are employed in the post of “school psychologist” are registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). Individuals may therefore be employed in the post of “school psychologist”, but not have a master’s degree or be registered as an “educational psychologist”. The reality in the South African context is that many individuals who are qualified educational psychologists do not work directly with schools. Many are engaged in private practice, where the emphasis tends to be on individual or family level interventions. Since this study is focused on interventions with schools as systems, it required the identification of participants engaged in psychological work with and within schools. Most practitioners working with schools and engaging in school development tend to be those who are in the employ of the state rather than those working in private practice. Registration with the HPCSA is a recommendation and not a requirement to hold the post of “school psychologist”. Registration with the HPCSA is therefore not prioritised in this study; it is their *practice* and not their professional registration that is under scrutiny in the study.

The 47 school psychologists across the eight education districts in the Western Cape who participated in the focus group interviews were also requested to respond to a questionnaire. The focus groups were important in facilitating more in-depth exploration relating to school psychologists’ roles and functions and the challenges experienced in relation to working with others in the process of school development. The questionnaire, which was administered in the final phase of the study, then served to triangulate the data and provide a statistical picture of school psychology practice in the Western Cape.

Biographical data obtained from the questionnaires were analysed and these results are presented in the figures below to provide clarity regarding some of the key characteristics of the participants involved in phases three and four of the study (focus group interviews and

questionnaires). Figures 6.5 and 6.6 illustrate the composition of the sample in terms of age and gender.

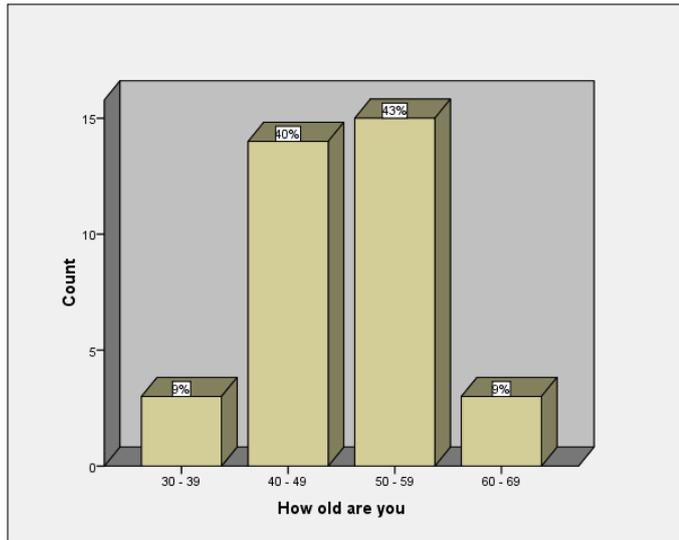


Figure 6.5. Age of respondents

It is interesting to note that only 9% of the sample of school psychologists is below the age of 39. Over 50% are over the age of 50. This will have serious implications over the next decade when more than 50% of the current cohort of employees will have reached retirement age. This also raises questions about the training received by the large majority of school psychologists and the extent to which programmes offered at universities a few decades ago were preparing practitioners for the contexts and challenges they engage with in the field today.

Although the research did not focus on or explore the issue of gender in relation to school psychology practice, noteworthy was that the large majority of participants who responded to the questionnaire and who are based in school psychological services within the Western Cape province are women.

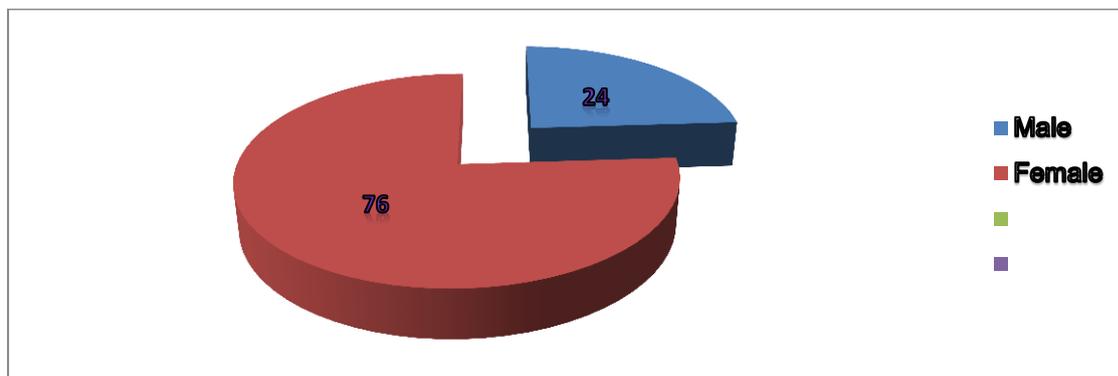


Figure 6.6. Gender of participants in focus group interviews

Participants in the questionnaire were expected to indicate by way of choosing a descriptive category, which geographical area they worked in. The results thereof are depicted in Figure 6.7.

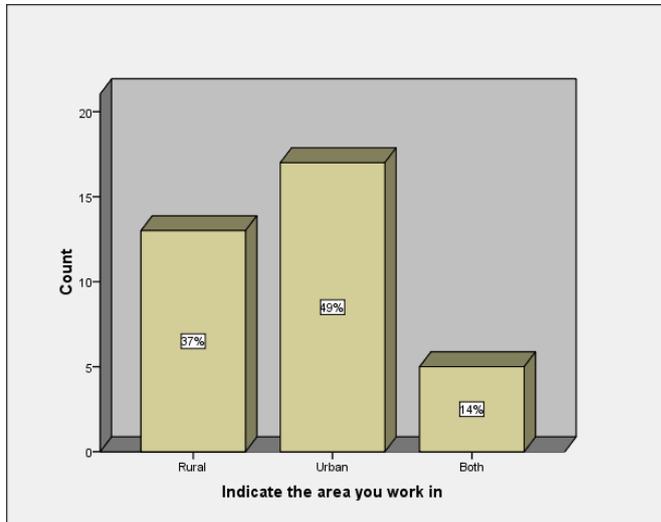


Figure 6.7. Area that respondents work in

Of the respondents, 63% are employed in districts that serve schools in urban areas. Various factors, including distances travelled, may have a significant impact on the nature of practice and the role played by school psychologists in these areas. The context within which school psychologists practice did emerge as a relevant factor in the exploration of the challenges faced. This is explored further in Chapter 8.

The questionnaire also included a section requiring the respondents to indicate their highest qualification. These results are captured in Figure 6.8 below.

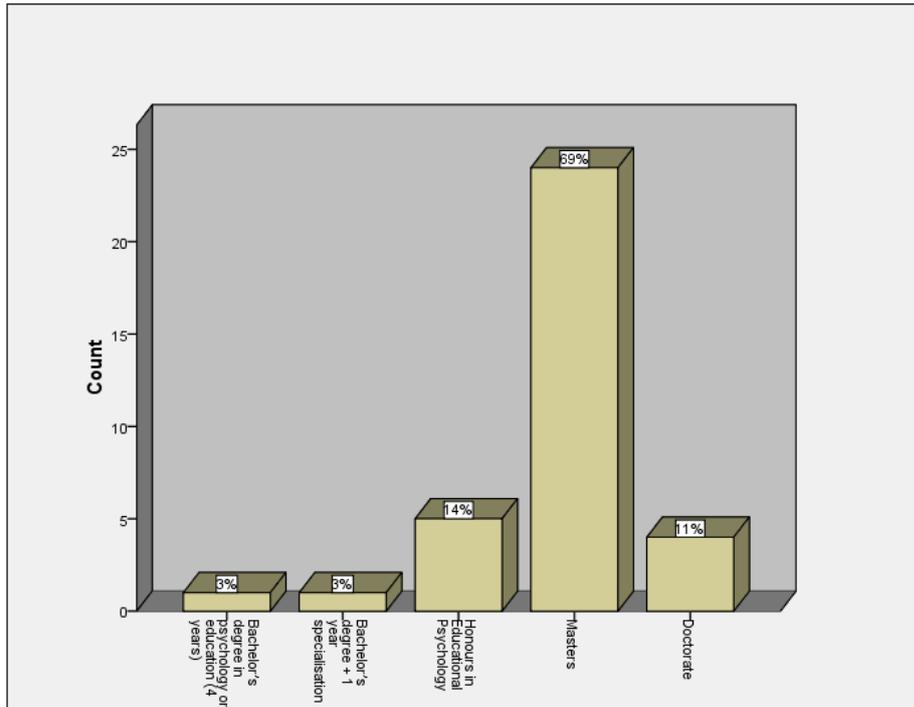


Figure 6.8. Highest qualification of respondents

Figure 6.6 indicates a high level of knowledge and skill amongst those who responded to the questionnaire. The analysis reveals that 80% of the respondents have a master's or doctoral degree in psychology or education. Seventeen (53%) participants reported being registered as educational psychologists (Table 6.4). This bodes well as a measure of capacity within the education department to engage in school development since more recent training programmes in educational psychology include school development as a key area in the training. Clinical and counselling training programmes, however, do not focus on developing knowledge and skills in this area.

A factor that was not pursued in this study was whether or not the participants were paid-up members of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). This has serious implications for the individual's ability to practice within legal limits. The Western Cape Education Department currently does not monitor employees' registration status with the HPCSA Professional Board for Psychology.

REGISTRATION CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Educational Psychology	17	53.1
Counselling Psychology	5	15.6
Clinical Psychology	1	3.1
Registered Counsellor	4	12.5
Other category	5	15.6
TOTAL	32	100.0

Table 6.5. Registration with Health Professions Council of South Africa

NUMBER OF YEARS	FREQUENCY
Not yet registered as a psychologist	3
Less than a year	1
1 -2	1
3 – 5	3
6 – 10	8
11 – 19	9
20 – 30	5
More than 30	3

Table 6.6. Number of years respondents have been practicing as psychologists

Of 34 school psychologists, 25 have been practicing for longer than six years, indicating relatively good experience in the field.

NUMBER OF YEARS	FREQUENCY
Less than a year	1
1 -2	3
3 – 5	4
6 – 10	6
11 – 19	14
20 – 30	3
More than 30	3

Table 6.7. Number of years respondents employed by the WCED as a school psychologist

Of the 34, 26 have been employed by the WCED as school psychologists for longer than six years, confirming that these individuals are experienced and have intricate knowledge of the education system and its functioning.

In summary, the biographical data obtained from the questionnaires indicates that participants (school psychologists in the WCED) are highly experienced and have been in service of the department for a long time and probably intend leaving the service soon. The majority are women who work in urban and semi-urban settings. A large majority of participants employed at district level are highly qualified, in possession of master's and doctoral degrees.

Their levels of experience are concomitant with most participants practising as school psychologists employed in the WCED for a period in excess of six years—many up to 19 years in practice.

6.4. The Researcher as Instrument

In studies employing a qualitative approach, the researcher is an instrument for the collection of data (Mertens, 2005). The researcher determines what questions are asked, what observations are made, what is noted and what is given preference. It is therefore crucial to acknowledge the values, beliefs, assumptions, opinions and experiences that I, as the researcher, brought to the study.

I am an educational psychologist by profession and have worked in the area of school development for 18 years. I teach at a university in a Faculty of Education, where much of my teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate level has included a focus on school development and intersectoral collaboration, particularly within the context of education support provision. I have facilitated development processes in schools, and in so doing have collaborated with various other role players. I have worked as a consultant to the National Department of Education, the Western Cape Education Department and various nongovernment organisations engaging in school development interventions. This work has included policy development and implementation, supporting school-based support teams, developing and implementing preventative programmes, consulting with educators and principals and providing training to teachers, parents and learners. My work as a psychologist has focused on assisting schools to translate whole school evaluation into school development through empowerment and the provision of support.

The systems perspective framing this study is one to which I subscribe as a practitioner as well. I adopt a particular approach in my work with schools which draws on systems thinking. This perspective has clearly influenced my choice of analysis, interpretation and understanding of the data and the phenomena under study.

I regard myself as an “activist” in the field of educational psychology, advocating for a more systemic approach to the practice of psychology in schools and more broadly in education. Although I understand and acknowledge the need for direct support to be provided to

individual learners, I believe that, in many contexts, indirect support provided by psychologists working with and within schools would make a more positive and meaningful impact at various levels of the system than working primarily with individual learners engaging in one-to-one assessments and interventions.

Given my personal and professional background, it was crucial for me to be extremely reflective in the process of engaging in the research, not only in the data collection but in the analysis and synthesis of the findings as well. I found it important to remain critically self-reflective, constantly questioning my own biases and influences in the study. I kept a research journal and used opportunities to debrief regularly with peers and my supervisor in order to maximise my objectivity and limit the impact of my perspectives on the generalisability of the data design, collection and analysis within the study.

6.5. Data Generation Methods and Instruments

The data generation process, as outlined earlier, encompassed four phases, including a literature review and document analysis, email interviews, focus group interviews and questionnaires. These four phases are illustrated graphically in Figure 6.2.

The research questions were central in the development of the research instruments. The questions which guided the document study and framed the interview schedules and questionnaire were therefore specific and not arbitrary. They included open-ended and exploratory questions as well as more confirmatory ones, and were all framed by the research aim and objectives, as outlined earlier in the thesis and at the beginning of this chapter. Appendices D, E and F present the research instruments which were employed in phases two, three and four respectively, the development and application of which are discussed in the sections that follow.

6.5.1. Literature Review and Document Analysis

Documents and records created and left by organisations help one to trace their history and current status and are valuable sources of data, often providing insights into the functioning of organisations (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). Document analysis as a research method involves the in-depth examination and understanding of written material that includes information on the key issues being researched (Strydom & Delport, 2005). These may

include personal documents, official documents, policies, media and archival material and other “paper products” such as memos, plans, reports and minutes; they may also include electronic artefacts like tapes and computer files. Documents are often used to support evidence gathered through other instruments and procedures, such as questionnaires and interviews. It is crucial to ensure that the documents under scrutiny are authentic and that the researcher is clear about the purpose for which they were and will be used (Chilisa & Preece, 2005). Mertens (2005) stressed that it is important when accessing documents for use in a research study, that they are used in an informed way, taking account of the time, context and intended use for which the document was originally created, but nonetheless interpreted for the purposes of the study.

Advantages of document study include the fact that it is relatively low in cost and its contents are not affected by the researcher. The disadvantages are that documents are sometimes incomplete; they reflect the biases of the authors, are sometimes unavailable, rely on the linguistic skill of the writers, may not have a standard format and are bulky (Strydom & Delport, 2005). Most of these were not evident in this study since the document analysis focused on policies rather than personal documents.

Phase one of the study entailed a review of national and international literature as well as an analysis of relevant documents pertaining to the study. The literature review focused on accessing books, articles, research reports and theses, using the following key words in clusters: *intersectoral, interdisciplinary, interprofessional, multidisciplinary, collaboration, whole school development, school development, school psychologists, educational psychologists, roles, practices* and *South Africa*.

The document analysis was focused on provincial and national policy documents and research reports relating to school psychology, school development and intersectoral collaboration within education support in particular. The analysis also included a review of organisational frameworks and job descriptions within school psychology from various provinces. Appendix B provides a listing of the documents that were examined and analysed in this phase of data collection.

The literature review and document analysis provided a clearer understanding of the issues under focus and facilitated the building of an appropriate, logical and sufficient data

collection framework. Together with the literature review, the document analysis informed the development of all the research instruments, including the email interview schedule, the focus group interview process and the questionnaires which were employed in phases two, three and four of the study. The document analysis interrogated many policy documents thereby clarifying expectations of school psychologists and other sectors in education regarding school development and intersectoral collaboration in particular. It confirmed that these aspects of practice within education support are prioritised and consequently worthy of investigation in terms of how they are being applied in practice.

6.5.2. Email Interviews

Data gathering is no longer limited to face-to-face contact with participants. Researchers have recently been generating data electronically by relying on technology such as faxes, electronic mail and websites (Fontana & Frey, 2005). These authors point out that electronic interviewing is a low-cost and speedy approach to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. Although face-to-face interaction is eliminated, and responses may be more cryptic and less in-depth, the interviewer is able to phrase follow-up questions and probe carefully in the “electronic conversation” if necessary.

In this study, *phase two* encompassed individual email interviews which were conducted with 17 key informants in psychology and education nationally. This included a range of individuals based in departments of education across the country and in various higher education institutions involved in the training and development of educational psychologists and registered counsellors. Of the 28 emails that were initially sent out, 17 responses were received. The sample includes representation across all nine provinces and from various sectors, including government departments, higher education institutions, the private sector and professional organisations, as was mentioned earlier.

The data obtained in this process provided a national picture of the roles and practices of school psychologists in South Africa, highlighting some of the disparities between and within provinces. Levels of awareness and engagement in school development and intersectoral collaboration within school psychology were also gleaned with a focus on the challenges facing school psychologists “on the ground”.

The email interview schedule (Appendix D) was developed using the research aims and questions as the key frame. The issues covered in the schedule were determined by the research questions. The literature on school development, school psychology and intersectoral collaboration guided the phrasing of questions and the selection of terminology with which participants were familiar. Once drafted, this electronic instrument was reviewed by skilled researchers and was then piloted with individuals who held relevant positions within education and psychology but had not been identified as participants. Once the pilot email interviews were analysed, minor editorial and formatting adjustments in the phrasing of questions were made before the final version emerged.

The email interviews were first sent out to participants in February 2009. Reminders were sent out on five subsequent occasions to those participants who had not responded. Where necessary, these email reminders were followed up with telephone calls in an attempt to maximise the response rate and obtain as representative a picture across sectors and provinces as possible. In total, 28 key informants were emailed over a period of five months and 17 responses were received. Replies were saved as Word documents to facilitate data analysis.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) explain that although long-distance qualitative interviews can be conducted through email, it remains crucial to still adhere to ethical standards by obtaining informed consent and protecting privacy. Every email that was sent out was therefore accompanied by an information sheet and included a section in which the informed consent was obtained (see Appendix C).

This method of data collection worked extremely well in that it allowed participants to engage with the researcher. It created opportunities to build credibility by emphasising the significance of the research and their participation in it. The email interview creates a space where one can engage as if in an individual interview with the “Reply” option allowing for probing and deepening the interaction, which differs from the questionnaire, which is a one-way interaction that does not allow for conversation and clarification. This was evident in three interviews where the participants sought clarity around the key concepts in the study and the researcher was able to define and discuss the issues further.

The disadvantage of the email interview is that it is difficult to elicit motivation to participate in the study. The participants are under no obligation to participate and may choose not to

engage with the researcher. No resolution to this problem is possible since the two then remain strangers to each other. This disadvantage applies to many other data collection methods as well, but remained a frustration in this study in that it curtailed the breadth of evidence that was needed.

The purpose of the electronic interviews with key informants was to develop a picture of school psychology practice in South Africa. Engaging with individuals in key positions in education, psychology and education, supporting each of the provinces, provided a national perspective. The purpose was not to make comparisons between provinces but to ascertain, in particular, whether school development and intersectoral collaboration, the two key objects of study, hold priority status within the field of educational and school psychology across the country.

6.5.3. Focus Group Interviews

In the words of Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005), “Focus groups are collective conversations or group interviews. They can be small or large, directed or non-directed” (p. 887). Group interviews stimulate discussion around specific events or experiences shared by participants in the group. They are able to generate large quantities of material in fairly short periods of time, and produce data that cannot be obtained in an individual interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). Mertens (2005) and Greeff (2005) described the focus group as a group interview that essentially relies not on a question-and-answer format but on the interaction between participants. It is through this interaction that participants’ perceptions and opinions are elicited. Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) contended that it is for this reason that focus groups can be regarded as problem-solving spaces: “‘Real-world’ problems cannot be solved by individuals alone; instead, they require rich and complex funds of communal knowledge and practice” (p. 903). The focus group is deemed appropriate when the researcher is interested in how individuals form perspectives of a problem and interpret their lived experiences. Mertens (2005) argued that the focus group interaction facilitates the exhibition of a struggle for understanding how others interpret key terms. It creates a space where agreements and disagreements with issues are raised. This characterisation is congruent with the interpretivist approach adopted in this study. Focus groups allow for multiple voices to be heard and for participants to construct and reconstruct meanings through their interaction with one another and the researcher. Since the role of the researcher is minimised, the role of focus groups may be described as a more democratic

process which encourages ownership by the participants “promoting dialogic interactions and the joint construction of more polyvocal contexts” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 904). This is congruent with the constructivist-interpretive paradigm adopted in this study.

Focus group interviews are fairly inexpensive, produce rich data, are stimulating, and so encourage participation and are flexible (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Greeff, 2005). Greeff (2005) explained that focus groups are meaningful when trying to take a new topic to a population and to explore thoughts and feelings and not just behaviour. The group dynamic allows information to come to the fore as participants share and compare perceptions, positions, experiences, desires and concerns. The focus groups in this study allowed for a deeper exploration and understanding of the key concepts under investigation. This was especially valuable given that the concepts of school development and intersectoral collaboration are defined in various ways. Once these concepts were clarified, the focus in the group interview would shift the research questions, where the discussion was framed, around particular areas of interest in the study. The focus group interviews allowed for flexibility in scope and depth, consequently revealing data that were comprehensive.

Greeff (2005) and Fontana and Frey (2005) mentioned that focus groups require facilitation by a researcher who is skilled and is able to ensure maximum participation of all members, avoid domination by one or two members and have a heightened awareness of the group dynamics and interactions. This apparent disadvantage was obviated in this study by the researcher’s extensive knowledge of group process and skill in group facilitation.

Phase three of this study involved the facilitation of focus group interviews in each of the education districts in the Western Cape, with 47 school psychologists in total. The size of groups varied from five to nine members and included school psychologists working in circuit teams as well as senior psychologists and heads of Specialised Learner and Educator Support (SLES), all of whom are based at district level. Focus groups were conducted in seven education districts. An individual interview was conducted with one school psychologist employed in the eighth district, as the individuals in that district were not able to meet as a group and hence requested that a representative be interviewed on their behalf. To cover all the education districts was crucial since a sample of one or two would not have provided a composite picture, given the great diversity in terms of roles and practices between education districts in the Western Cape province.

The focus group interview was designed as a workshop process, which was framed by the research questions (Appendix E). Key themes which were explored included

- key roles played by school psychologists,
- main activities that involve school development,
- main activities that encompass intersectoral collaboration,
- identifying of key collaborators,
- the nature of the collaboration,
- challenges faced when engaging in school development through intersectoral collaboration and
- addressing the challenges.

Care was taken to facilitate the focus groups, with priority given to participants' views as opposed to the researcher sharing information. Focus group interviews were generally conducted in English, although Afrikaans was also used where participants expressed this language as a preference. Given that different languages seem to dominate in different geographical areas, where quotes are referred to in the presentation of the findings in Chapters 7 and 8, both the English and Afrikaans texts are provided to ensure that anonymity is maintained.

The focus group interviews served as a valuable tool that created opportunities for debate and negotiation. They provided a space where school psychologists could reflect on their understandings and engagement with the key concepts under study, namely, school development and intersectoral collaboration. In this data collection process, participants were able to talk to one another and to the researcher, making the discussion richer and allowing participants to learn from one another. The focus groups facilitated introspection and interaction, which encouraged debate and reflection on practices and, more importantly, on participants' experiences of the challenges that have emerged in their collaborative engagement with other sectors in efforts to work with schools in a developmental way. The focus groups ensured that discussions were deepened as participants shared their individual experiences and perceptions and challenged one another to clarify these in order to heighten the awareness of how challenges emerge in their work contexts and how these can be addressed. Participants were enlightened about others' practices and experiences and encouraged to effect small changes in their work contexts where possible. The research process had an unexpectedly enabling effect on the participants. In informal post-interview reflections, participants remarked about the value of the focus group interviews as they were

given an opportunity to engage with each other and share experiences and perceptions. It became apparent that school psychologists, as a sector, seldom have opportunities to come together because of the recent structures and procedures that had been put in place in the Western Cape Education Department.

Challenges relating to the focus group interviews included constraints for negotiating “entry”. The following steps were taken in order to follow the protocol of the Western Cape Education Department so as not to elicit unnecessary resistance:

- Permission was obtained from the WCED research office to embark on the study.
- Contact was made with the eight district directors, informing them of the study and requesting permission to contact heads of Specialised Learner and Educator Support (SLES) to proceed with establishing dates for when focus group interviews could take place.
- All heads of SLES were contacted via email or telephone again, informing them of the study and requesting an opportunity to set dates for the focus groups, which would involve school psychologists in their district.
- The process from here differed from one district to another. Some SLES heads agreed to be the liaison person for the district, while others handed over to the senior psychologist, who then negotiated with the school psychologists and organised times and dates for meetings to take place.
- Finding a date that suited all the school psychologists, when all were willing and able to come together, was extremely challenging. The vast distances covered in some districts, and the physical distance between individuals who were on the same team of school psychologists within a district, was a challenge. So too was the fact that, given limited capacity in rural and outlying areas, practitioners in these circuits have heavier workloads, and were consequently far less amenable to giving up their work time to participate in research. Interestingly, the option to conduct the focus groups on Saturdays was not taken up at all.

This negotiation was tedious and extremely time-consuming but was crucial because it provided an opportunity to build rapport through a demonstration of understanding and empathy towards a group of individuals who are working under trying circumstances. It also allowed the participants to communicate something about the challenges that they face before

the focus group interview had even begun. These signified first steps in encouraging cooperation with individuals crucial to the research.

The focus group interviews took place at a venue identified by the participants to ensure this was convenient for them. Therefore, the researcher sometimes needed to travel to distant locations. Focus groups were facilitated in Caledon, Durbanville, George, Kuilsriver, Newlands, Ottery, Paarl and Piketberg. The duration of the focus groups varied from one district to another and ranged from one-and-a-half hours to four hours. Refreshments were provided with a lunch or snack break built into the process.

6.5.4. Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be self-administered, where the respondent is requested to complete an instrument in his or her own time, or may take the form of a structured interview, where the researcher writes down the responses of the participant in a face-to-face or telephonic interview (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). Irrespective of the method used, the structure of the questionnaire and the formulation of the questions are crucial to the success of the data collection process.

In *phase four* of this study, a self-administered questionnaire was posted and/or emailed to participants, who were expected to complete and return it via post or email. The questionnaire was sent to all school psychologists who had participated in the focus groups. Of the 47 school psychologists who were involved in the focus group interviews, six hold managerial and other positions at the district level and so are not always directly involved in schools. These individuals recused themselves from completing the questionnaire. Of the remaining 41 participants, 35 completed the questionnaire, constituting an 85% response rate.

The questionnaire, which may be regarded as a quantitative technique, comprised both closed-ended and open-ended questions to confirm and deepen data gathered through the qualitative methods employed in the earlier phases of the study. The questionnaire developed a quantitatively grounded picture of school psychology practice, with particular emphasis on the roles and practices within school psychology and the challenge of working collaboratively in the process of school development.

Care was taken, in the development of the questionnaire, to link the questions to specific research questions to ensure that the focus of the study was maintained and that all the questions posed were relevant to the research. The International School Psychological Association survey of school psychology practice was used as a base from which to work. This resource, together with the research questions, provided the frame around which the questionnaire was developed. No unnecessary questions were included, even those on biographical information; only relevant information that would contribute to deepening the picture of school psychology practice and the challenges experienced when engaging in school development through intersectoral collaboration was included.

The questionnaire, which consisted of a combination of factual, opinion-related, open-ended and closed-ended questions, went through successive revisions. Experts in the field were consulted to ensure that all the relevant issues had been addressed and that questions had been formulated in a clear and unambiguous way. After the feedback received had been incorporated, the questionnaire was reworked and then piloted. Identifying participants with whom to pilot the questionnaire was challenging, given that the sample included all employees within the province. Seven individuals who were previously employed in the system or had a keen understanding of education support provision within districts and circuits were therefore approached to assist with piloting the questionnaire. The pilot study allowed me to identify and rectify problems prior to sending the questionnaires out. Adjustments involved framing questions more clearly and altering the layout and structure of the questionnaire to ensure that it was measuring what it was intended to measure and that it was reader-friendly. Once the refined pilot questionnaires were analysed, the instrument went through a last review by another researcher who had recently employed a mixed methods approach in a study she had conducted. A statistician was then approached to review the content and format of the questionnaire to ensure its compatibility with the SPSS programme, after which the instrument was finalised.

The questionnaire was structured to elicit data in the following key categories (See Appendix F):

- Biographical/background information
- Assessment procedures employed by school psychologists
- Intervention strategies employed by school psychologists
- School development interventions employed by school psychologists
- Who school psychologists work with

- Challenges facing school psychologists
- Professional training needs

The questionnaires were subsequently sent to participants via post and email. Respondents had the option to reply via email or to complete the hard copy and return by post in an enclosed, postage pre-paid, self-addressed envelope. Two reminders were sent to all respondents via email and short message service (sms), culminating in an 85% response rate.

The variation in the design of the questionnaire meant it served a dual purpose. The questionnaire comprised both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The closed-ended questions generated quantitative data which assisted in clarifying, statistically, those findings that had emerged in the focus group interviews. Both the open- and closed-ended questions served to confirm and deepen the findings from the phase of data collection that had preceded them. This represented a form of triangulation which enhanced the trustworthiness of the research as a whole.

6.6. Data Analysis

De Vos (2005b) explained that analysis transforms data into findings. It is a process that involves reducing the volume of raw information, ordering and structuring a mass of data, identifying significant patterns and thereby constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal. It allows the researcher to make sense of the data by perusing, organising, reducing and interpreting information.

Cognisance must be taken of the intricate relationship between data collection and data analysis processes. Within qualitative research, the research begins with a foregrounded problem that encompasses the exploration of significant issues. There is a clear focus therefore to begin with, and this focus is continuously refined as data is gathered, processed and analysed, thereby influencing the next steps in the research and refocusing or fine-tuning the focus. The process of data collection and analysis in qualitative research is often therefore dynamic and recursive, occurring almost simultaneously since the analysis of one phase feeds into the data collection process in another (Struwig & Stead, 2001; Terreblanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). This is depicted in Figure 6.9 as it applied in the study.

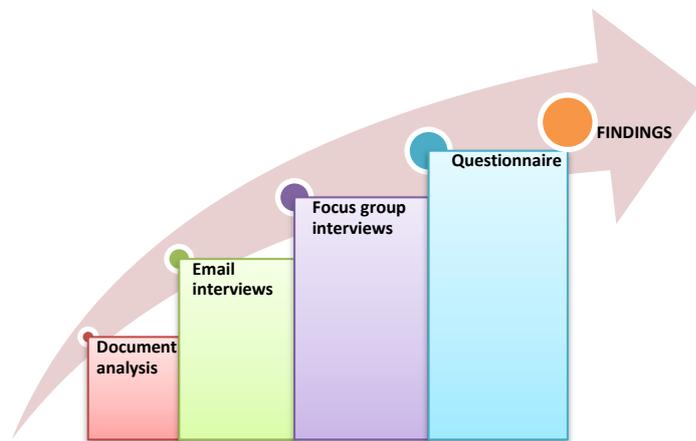


Figure 6.9. Relationship between different phases of data collection and data analysis

Figure 6.9 illustrates the relationship between the different phases of data collection and how the analysis in each phase fed into that which followed, finally culminating in the overall findings. This recursive process deepened both the data collection and data analysis processes in each phase. De Vos (2005b) maintained that overlapping data collection and data analysis improves the quality of data and of the analysis as long as the researcher is open to new interpretations and does not close off other analytical possibilities. As both qualitative and quantitative techniques are applied in this study, an outline of the strategies of analysis that were applied to qualitative and quantitative data respectively needs to be provided.

6.6.1. Qualitative Analysis

Babbie and Mouton (2004) stated that content analysis can be divided into conceptual analysis and relational analysis. Conceptual analysis, which is sometimes referred to as thematic analysis, was utilised in this study. Conceptual analysis was employed in the analysis of documents, email interviews, focus groups and the open-ended questions in the questionnaire. This entailed a systematic examination of the data, with the purpose of identifying patterns, salient themes, recurring ideas and biases (De Vos, 2005b; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Struwig & Stead, 2001). The document analysis process involved a detailed examination of various policy and institutional texts, searching for connections with the research questions and examining patterns and inconsistencies that emerged in this regard. Participants' responses in the email interviews, questionnaires and transcripts of focus groups were coded and analysed with the research questions and literature providing the broad framework for first-level analysis. Deeper analysis focused on emerging patterns and themes within the broader categories that had been identified earlier.

Analysis of qualitative data involved examining, sorting, categorising, evaluating and comparing information, with the main focus being on the identification of trends and patterns. The process engaged in draws on the work of Terreblanche et al. (2006), who identified familiarisation and immersion, inducing themes, coding, elaboration, and interpretation and checking as key steps in interpretive data analysis. The data analysis process employed in this study mirrors Creswell’s “data analysis spiral”, described by Leedy and Ormrod (2005). These steps are captured in the diagram that follows.



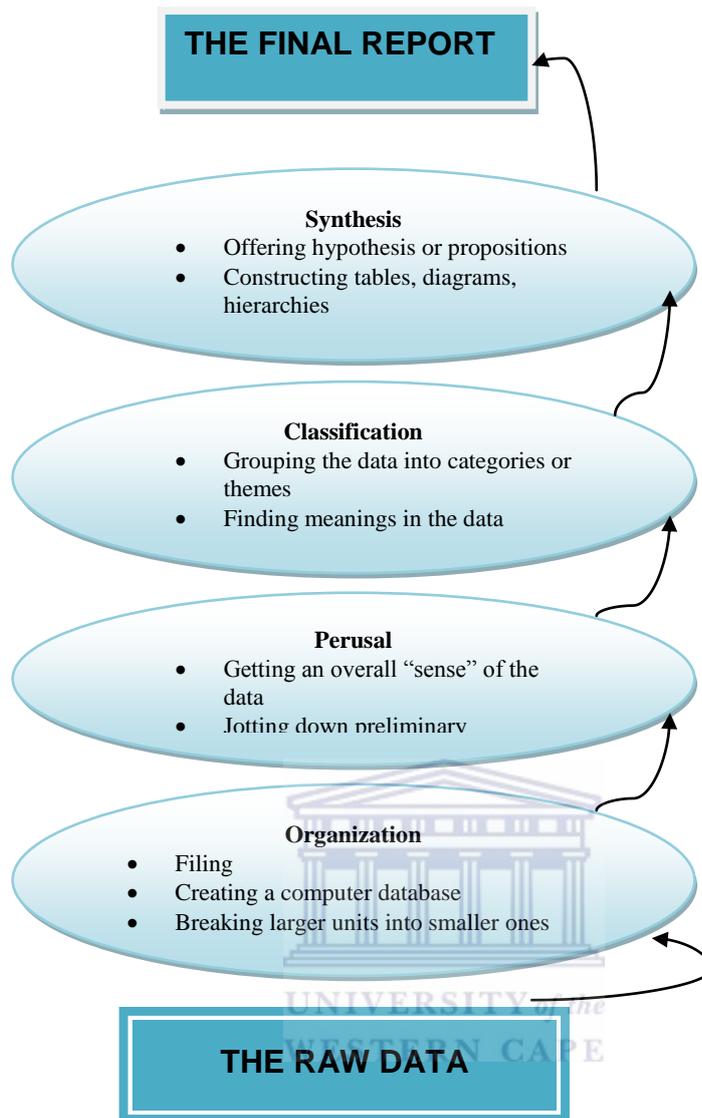


Figure 6.10. The data analysis spiral (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 151)

The data analysis process employed in the current study encompassed the four steps below:

Step 1—Organising the data by sorting, filing, and breaking down into smaller segments.

Step 2—Perusing the data several times, noting reflections and indicating possible categories.

Step 3—Identifying broad categories and themes within these categories so that patterns began to emerge.

Step 4—Integrating, summarising and synthesising the data.

Qualitative data were therefore analysed, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), Leedy and Ormrod (2005) and Struwig and Stead (2001), by clustering data, noting patterns, themes and relations and developing categories through this process. This detailed analysis facilitated the development of a logical chain of evidence across the phases of data collection.

Terreblanche et al. (2006) recommended that researchers include an audit trail in the reports compiled since this allows readers an insider's view. What follows is an account of the qualitative data analysis that was conducted.

The central task in the analysis of data obtained through qualitative methods was to identify common themes in participants' descriptions of their experiences. After transcribing and coding interviews, the following tasks were performed:

1. Statements relating to particular research questions were identified. Here, irrelevant information was sifted out and the relevant information sorted according to categories that matched the broad research questions.
2. Statements were coded with a category indicator and then grouped into clusters that reflected a common category of perceptions or meanings of the phenomena as experienced by the participants.
3. Patterns and themes within categories were then observed. Themes emerging within each of the categories were identified, thereby deepening the understanding of the experiences as initially categorised.
4. Divergent perspectives were noted. Careful attention was paid to the ways in which different individuals experience the same phenomena in an attempt to understand and interpret their experience and the complexities within the situation.
5. This process contributed to developing an overall description where a comprehensive picture of people's experience was constructed.

The idea, as Leedy and Ormrod (2005) explained, is to provide a description of the phenomenon as perceived by those who experience it firsthand, by focusing on common themes in the experience, notwithstanding diversity in the individuals and settings. This is the essence of the constructivist-interpretive paradigm as praxis.

6.6.2. Quantitative Analysis

In this study, the questionnaire data were captured and coded and the SPSS software programme was employed to analyse the data, with specific emphasis on the emerging descriptive statistics.

Minimal statistical procedures were applied in the analysis of the closed-ended questions in the questionnaires. Particular factors relating to intersectoral collaboration and school

development in the school psychologists' practice were tabulated, thereby allowing quantitative summaries to be made. Where it was appropriate, statistical analyses were performed to obtain frequencies and percentages, in order to determine quantitative findings that are relevant to the research questions.

SPSS was used to summarise the data and compile tables and graphs that would facilitate data analysis and the presentation of key findings.

6.7. Trustworthiness

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) noted that a constructivist-interpretive paradigm replaces the positivist notions of reliability and validity with "trustworthiness". The issue that is emphasised in conducting research within this paradigm is to grapple with the credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity of the data (Mertens, 2005). In qualitative studies, the interpretation of data is inevitably influenced by the researcher's biases and values (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). There is strong reliance on the personal integrity, skill, competence and rigour of the researcher. Patton (2002) insisted that detailed recording and checking of data are crucial in ensuring the trustworthiness of the data.

When employing qualitative approaches in a study, various methodological strategies are employed to enhance the credibility and rigour of the research. Some of these strategies include careful purposive sampling, standardisation of recording and transcribing procedures, triangulation, member-checking, analysing alternative explanations and reflexivity (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). The authors capture the issues succinctly:

The basic issue of trustworthiness is simple: How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including him or herself) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to or worth taking account of? (Babbie & Mouton, 2004, p. 276)

In order to minimise the extent to which personal values, beliefs, experiences and opinions entered into the analysis of data, the following strategies, as suggested by Mertens (2005), were employed to enhance the quality of this predominantly qualitative study.

Purposive sampling

The purposive sampling technique employed facilitated the exploration of specific issues and questions that emerged. This process has been described in detail in Section 6.3.

Triangulation

One of the best ways to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative studies is through triangulation. Various forms of triangulation were employed in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the data. Data triangulation implies accessing various forms and sources of data to eliminate bias by employing multiple methods (De Vos, 2005a). Methods included document analysis, email interviews, focus group interviews and questionnaires. Respondent triangulation was achieved since a number of respondents from various sectors were consulted to provide descriptions, perceptions and accounts of the same phenomena and in response to the same questions. Multiple and varying perspectives on the issues under investigation were obtained from a wide range of participants based in different settings.

The data collection plan depicted in Table 6.7 illustrates the multiple methods employed in the data generation process. The triangulation by method contributes significantly to the rigour and trustworthiness of the data.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS	DATA GENERATION METHODS	DATA SOURCE
What are the key roles played by school psychologists in South Africa?	Document analysis Email Interviews Focus group interviews Questionnaires	National and provincial policy documents; job descriptions; other relevant documents Key informants based nationally School psychologists in Western Cape
In what ways are school psychologists involved in school development in South Africa?	Document analysis Email Interviews Focus group interviews Questionnaires	National and provincial policy documents; job descriptions; other relevant documents Key informants based nationally School psychologists in Western Cape
Do school psychologists work with other sectors or professionals when facilitating school development? If so, who?	Document analysis Email Interviews Focus group interviews Questionnaires	National and provincial policy documents; job descriptions; other relevant documents Key informants based nationally School psychologists in Western Cape
How do school psychologists work with others in the process of school development?	Document analysis Email Interviews Focus group interviews Questionnaires	National and provincial policy documents; job descriptions; other relevant documents Key informants based nationally School psychologists in Western Cape
What challenges face school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development?	Email Interviews Focus group interviews Questionnaires	Key informants based nationally School psychologists in Western Cape
How are these challenges currently being addressed and how can these challenges be overcome in the future?	Email Interviews Focus group interviews Questionnaires	Key informants based nationally School psychologists in Western Cape
What recommendations can be made to inform the training and practice of school psychologists in relation to intersectoral collaboration and school development in particular?	Email Interviews Focus group interviews Questionnaires	Key informants based nationally School psychologists in Western Cape

Table 6.8. Data collection triangulation plan

The data sources were varied in that they included “paper products”, key informants in education and psychology across the country and school psychologists employed in education districts in the Western Cape. Although this comparison of sources assisted with confirming the consistency of data, it also allowed for multiple realities to emerge and so deepened the understanding of school psychology practice and the challenges faced in differing contexts.

Peer review and audit trial

A co-coder engaged in an audit trail and review of the findings. All the theoretical frames, notes, raw data and interpretations were made available for scrutiny and examined for accuracy and thoroughness. The co-coder searched for cohesion between the document analysis, email interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires. He was tasked with ascertaining if patterns were emerging in the same way as the researcher had deemed them to and point out weaknesses and limitations in the data analysis process and findings that emerged. The peer review found the data analysis process to be thorough and comprehensive and found the categories and themes that had emerged from this process to be an accurate reflection of patterns in the raw data. In this way, the authenticity of the data analysis was confirmed.

Peer debriefing and supervision

Consultation with peers to test growing insights, to receive counsel about the evolving design, to debrief and share personal anxieties and impressions marked the research process. This involved extended discussions with peers and my formal supervisor, who were otherwise unconnected with the study but nonetheless skilled researchers and informed practitioners in the field. These discussions facilitated critical reflection on data collection processes, hypotheses that were developing, proposed methods of analysis and the emerging findings and conclusions. Peers and the supervisor posed questions that heightened awareness of the dynamics emerging in the research; they encouraged me to confront biases and so facilitated greater awareness of objectivity. This strategy served to clarify meanings ascribed to the processes in which I was engaged and the basis for the interpretations that had emerged. New insights materialised and consequently guided the way forward.

Unexpected case analysis

Although not many, there were indeed some participants who described their contexts as functional and not challenging. These situations were not sufficient in number to revise the hypothesis that school psychologists face challenges in facilitating school development through intersectoral collaboration. These instances did, however, assist in answering the question “How are these challenges currently being addressed?” Such insights also served as an important contribution to the study and are included in the presentation of the findings in Chapter 6.

Member checks

This involves verification of information through consultation with participants. The interviews, both electronic and with focus groups, were interactive and consequently allowed for verification of perceptions, understandings and interpretations of participants' responses. These checks were generally informal and occurred during and at the end of interviews, where summaries were presented and participants were expected to confirm the accuracy of the researcher's reflections on the content. Participants also had an opportunity to review the transcripts if they so wished. However, none of them took up this offer.

Piloting instruments

All data collection instruments were piloted, as has been described earlier in this chapter. This helped to increase the clarity and so minimise the ambiguity of the questions posed and therefore of the tools employed. This consequently reinforced the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the instruments employed in the data generation process.

Quantitative research tends to be less prone to queries around the validity and reliability of the data because of the objective nature of the methods employed. Numerical measurements and statistics are "protective factors" in the research context. Patton (2002) observed that the validity of quantitative research largely depends on careful construction of the research instrument, where the emphasis is on ensuring that the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Employing rigorous revision and piloting processes in the development of the questionnaire enhanced the reliability and validity of the instruments employed to collect the quantitative data.

6.8. Ethics

Ethical issues are brought to the fore and are often more complex when human beings are the objects of study. Researchers therefore have ethical responsibility to those in the project and to the discipline to be accurate and honest (Strydom, 2005). Fontana and Frey (2005) and Babbie and Mouton (2004) emphasised the importance of grounding research in ethical practice. They included informed consent, right to privacy and protection from harm as key concerns that must be addressed. Researchers ought to enter a research process with heightened awareness of their ethical responsibility to those who participate in the study, and to the discipline and field.

Informed Consent

Participants were provided with all the necessary information pertaining to the goals of the investigation, the procedures which were to be followed, and the extent of their involvement. Consent was therefore informed and participation voluntary. Those individuals who chose not to participate simply absented themselves from focus group interviews or did not reply to the email interview or the questionnaire.

Integrity

The researcher protected the integrity and reputation of the research by ensuring that the research was conducted to the highest standards. There was no discrimination involved in choosing participants based on sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.

Right to Withdraw

Participants had the right to withdraw at any time and no explanation for withdrawal was necessary. The researcher exercised respect and reflexivity in the exercise of this right, informing participants thereof. However, none of the participants who joined the study opted to withdraw from the processes.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Participants' rights to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were respected and assured. Confidentiality was particularly critical and complex to achieve in the focus group. This issue was discussed and negotiated with participants before proceeding with the focus group interview. Special attention was given to assuring confidentiality in these instances with ground rules for participation being set at the beginning. Focus group interviews were conducted within each district so confidentiality was ensured across districts. Participants' identities were kept confidential. Findings from the focus group interview are reported and the sources listed under the group title and not as an individual participant in the group. This was negotiated with and agreed upon by focus group participants.

Recording

Permission was obtained to record the focus group interviews and participants were alerted to the fact that the recording could be paused at any point during the interview should they

request such an action. Any discomfort with audio recording was taken into account and negotiated when the need arose. Tapes and files will be erased after completion of the research.

Storage and Security

All forms of data relating to the study were organised, stored and managed in ways that prevent loss, unauthorised access or divulgence of confidential information.

Reporting

The findings of the study will be introduced to the public in written form. Participants will be informed of the findings of the research through a summary report, which will be made available to all participants via the district office and individually via email. Such reporting is an exercise in accountability by the researcher to the participants, but also serves to deepen participation as a learning experience.

Preliminary findings were presented at a symposium organised by the Tertiary Task Team (a forum including membership from the University of the Western Cape, University of Stellenbosch and the Western Cape Education Department) for school psychologists in the Western Cape in October 2009. This provided opportunities for the participants to reflect on the preliminary findings and to respond or comment so that these reflections could be captured in the final presentation of the thesis. The research process and findings were also presented at the Education Students' Regional Research Conference in October 2010. Feedback received from the conference participants assisted in identifying aspects of the findings that required deeper discussion and critical comment in the final report.

Once the thesis has been passed, a brief summary report will be sent to all districts and copies emailed to each of the participants. Formal presentations of the findings and recommendations will also be made in relevant education and psychology forums, including conferences, newsletters of professional organisations and the popular media, as well as on radio and in newspapers.

6.9. Summary and Conclusion

Within an interpretivist approach, it is understood that the researcher is involved in the co-construction of ideas within the systems and objects being studied. The researcher presents one possible construction of reality and presents the data in such a way that those who read it are able to construct their own realities too. Such an approach necessitates a transparent research process. To this end, this chapter outlined the research paradigm and design that framed this study and described the research context and the participants who engaged in the different phases of data collection. In an endeavour to hold true to the interpretive paradigm, the researcher acknowledged the role played in shaping the research and its process. Data generation sources and methods as well as the analysis processes engaged in to allow the findings to emerge are explored in some depth. Justification for the trustworthiness of the research and ethical concerns that were considered are presented in the latter part of the chapter. The chapter that follows presents the first set of findings that emerged from the research process presented above.



CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS:

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION

In this chapter, the findings that emerged from multiple sources and methods of data collection, as outlined in the previous chapter, are presented. The focus herein is on the roles played by school psychologists in South Africa, a broad picture of the nature of school psychological services. Phases one and two of this study encompassed an effort to obtain data that would provide a sense of what is in place nationally, therefore providing a picture of school psychology in South Africa. Phases three and four, which involved focus group interviews and questionnaires with school psychologists, focus on service provision in the Western Cape.

The findings were concentrated on school psychology practice in relation to school development and intersectoral collaboration in particular. Participants' perceptions of each of the key concepts are presented. This is followed by a representation of the nature of school development activities engaged in and an analysis of their collaboration with other sectors when facilitating school development.

The research questions which guided the investigation were as follows:

1. What are the key roles played by school psychologists in South Africa?
2. In what ways are school psychologists involved in school development?
3. Do school psychologists work with other sectors or professionals when facilitating school development? If so, with whom?
4. How do school psychologists work with others in the process of school development?
5. **What challenges face school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development?**
6. **How can these challenges be addressed?**
7. How can the training of school psychologists in relation to school development and intersectoral collaboration be transformed?

This chapter is focused on the findings related to the first four questions and portrays the current picture of school psychology in relation to school development and intersectoral collaboration.

Quotes followed by a job descriptor indicated data obtained from participants who are based in other provinces around the country, and consequently assist in framing the Western Cape findings within a national framework. Quotes from the focus groups conducted in the Western Cape are coded according to the district focus group from which they were drawn. Codes, therefore, are numerically referenced, for example, the focus group conducted in district eight is coded as “fg8”. A number was randomly allocated to each district. The questionnaires were administered to school psychologists based in circuit teams. Questionnaires were randomly numerically coded before they were sent out to participants. The numbers that are cited at the end of quotes are codes that were attached to particular respondents, all of whom are school psychologists based in circuit teams in the Western Cape province.

7.1. Key Roles Played by School Psychologists in South Africa

Roles played by school psychologists were explored in the documents analysed and with participants in the email interviews, focus groups and questionnaires. The focus was on the nature of the collaborative relationships that school psychologists engage in and the ways in which support is provided to schools. Five categories emerged in the analysis of the data. These include school psychologists’ involvement in

- learner development and support,
- educator development and support,
- parent development and support,
- school system level intervention, and
- education system level intervention.

Focus will be placed on the first three categories in this section since the latter two are explored in greater depth in the section that follows. The focus for now is on providing an overview of the roles played by school psychologists in South Africa.

Participants and authors of documents alike discussed roles played by school psychologists with reference to two broad categories which serve as a frame of reference within the profession, namely assessment and intervention. Whatever the specifics of the activities and engagements may be, the authors of the literature, policies and other documents, as well as participants themselves, referred to these categories as helpful ways to frame the practice of school psychologists. The roles are, however, varied and consequently were spoken of in generalities in all four phases of data collection.

To co-ordinate, facilitate and render Psycho-educational Services in a specific circuit within the context of Whole School Evaluation, Education Support Team functioning and District referral system. (Western Cape Education Department, 2007c, p. 1)

School psychologists provide the following services: an assessment and intervention of barriers to learning, crisis intervention and therapeutic role for trauma, therapeutic interventions for emotional problems, teacher development, parent guidance, whole school development. [*Skool sielkundiges verskaf die volgende dienste: 'n assessering en intervensie van leerstoornisse, krisis intervensie en terapeutiese rol vir trauma, terapeutiese intervensies vir emosionele probleme, opvoeder ontwikkeling, ouer leiding, heel skool ontwikkeling*]. (Trainer/private practitioner)

To my knowledge, they are involved with traditional psychological work as well as school development work. This means that they are providing services to schools as per their needs assessments. This often involves working with TSTs (or whatever they are called) to address the behavioural, emotional, learning needs of learners; training teachers in counselling skills, discipline management, stress management, etc., and (these days) much administration work. [*Na gelang van my kennis is hulle betrokke by tradisionele sielkundige werk sowel as skool ontwikkelingswerk. Dit beteken dat hulle dienste aan skole verskaf na gelang van hul behoefte assessering. Dit sluit dikwels in werk met Opvoeder Hulpspanne om aan te spreek die gedrag, emosionele, leer behoeftes van leerders; opleiding van opvoeders in beradingsvaardighede, dissiplinêre bestuur, spanningsbestuur, ens. en baie administratiewe werk*]. (Lecturer/trainer)

They provide psychological support to schools as well as related services. Assessment of and support to learners or referral of learners for support, positive behaviour development, HIV/AIDS programmes, establishment of ILSTs, substance abuse programmes, guidance, trauma debriefing, etc. [*Hulle voorsien sielkundige ondersteuning aan skole sowel as soortgelyke dienste. Assessering van en ondersteuning aan leerders of verwysing van leerders vir ondersteuning, positiewe gedragsontwikkeling, HIV/VIGS programme, instelling van ILST's, dwelmmisbruik programme, voorligting, trauma berading, ens.*]. (Manager: school psychological services)

Although the roles were described in general terms, it was possible to extract key themes that emerged in order to develop the five categories mentioned above, which include both assessment and intervention activities.

KEY ROLES PLAYED BY SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS	DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES WHERE THESE EMERGED AS KEY THEMES/CATEGORIES			
	Document analysis	Email interviews	Focus groups	Questionnaires
Learner development and support	✓	✓	✓	✓
Educator development and support	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parent development and support	✓	✓	✓	✓
School system level intervention	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education system level intervention	✓	-	✓	-

Table 7.1. Triangulation of data

Analysis of data from all four sources revealed the following examples of key roles played by school psychologists in South Africa, noted under the five key themes mentioned above.

KEY ROLES PLAYED BY SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES ENGAGED IN
Learner development and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment • Therapy/counselling • Crisis intervention (trauma debriefing) • Promotion and progression • Case discussions and/or presentations • Referrals to special schools
Educator development and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with teachers • Consultations with principals • Training of teachers • Crisis intervention (trauma debriefing) • Therapy, counselling (individual and/or group)
Parent development and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with parents
School system level intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, support & monitor ILSTs • Monitoring schools (readiness at start of terms, buildings, structures, attendance of educators, etc) • Development of programmes and projects
Education system level intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations with NGOs and other agencies • Consultations with colleagues in SLES • Circuit-related activities

Table 7.2. Key roles played by school psychologists

The findings reflected in Table 7.2 are presented in greater detail in the sections that follow. Each theme is discussed, with evidence from various sources presented to illustrate the ways

in which the roles are enacted (practical experience) or expected to be carried out (policy directives).

7.1.1. Learner Development and Support

The provision of direct support to learners was regarded as the most significant role played by school psychologists, as reflected in the email and focus group interviews and questionnaires alike. Such support most often took the form of individual assessments that assist in the early identification of learners' needs or to verify needs expressed by educators. These assessments tend to include interviews with various stakeholders, including learners, educators and parents, which are followed up by an assessment process employing a range of standardised assessment instruments and techniques. As one person in focus group 8 said,

In terms of support for learners and identification of learners with learning difficulties and so on—I feel I have a particular responsibility there. But then the gun is put to your head and you are told, 'this cannot take up 90% of your time'. [*In terme van ondersteuning aan kinders en die identifisering van kinders met leerprobleme en goed—ek voel ek het 'n sekere verantwoordelikheid daarso. Maar dan word die pistool baie vinnig teen jou kop gedruk en sê 'dit kan nie 90% van jou tyd opneem nie'*]. (fg8)

Policy documents are equally clear in the emphasis on learner support, and on assessment in particular. Included in the job descriptions for school psychologists are the following activities:

Providing direct support to learners in terms of special interventions. (Department of Education, 2008, p. 25)

Psychological, diagnostic and educational assessments. (Northern Cape Department of Education, 2009)

Managing and controlling the use of psychometric evaluation instruments. (Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education, 2009)

Psychologists will be expected to use their expertise to "address needs such as those relating to social and emotional issues, in ways which will potentially impact positively on the learning experience of many more learners. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 108)

A secondary focus of DBST is to provide direct support to learners when SBSTs are unable to respond to particular learner needs (Department of Education, 2005b, p. 13)

When asked to indicate the extent to which they employ particular *assessment* procedures with learners, educators and parents, participants responded to the question in the questionnaire as reflected below. The top five responses indicate assessment procedures that are engaged in most often, while the bottom four responses are those which are employed least often. It is important to note that these procedures centre on the assessment of learners who have been referred for concerns relating to their emotional, behavioural and/or academic development.

Question 11: Please indicate the extent to which you employ the following assessment procedures in your work with learners, educators and schools by placing an X in the appropriate box.		Percentages			
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
11.3	Interviews with educators	0	0	9	91
11.1	Interviews with learners	0	0	11	89
11.10	Standardised assessment instruments	0	0	15	85
11.2	Interviews with parents	0	3	14	83
11.9	Diagnostic psycho-educational assessment	0	7	26	67
11.11	Informal assessment	3	15	30	52
11.7	Learner portfolio	0	6	51	43
11.4	Interviews with SMT	9	11	54	26
11.12	Needs analysis / Situation Analysis / SWOT (Strengths /Weaknesses / Opportunities /Threats) analysis	6	21	50	23
11.13	Dynamic assessment	27	32	20	20
11.14	Whole school evaluation	6	24	58	12
11.5	Classroom observation	15	50	27	9
11.8	Educator portfolio	18	44	29	9
11.6	Observation of learners on the playground	15	49	33	3

Table 7.3. Assessment procedures employed by school psychologists

It is evident that the individual is the focus of assessment in the work of school psychologists. Analysis of the contexts of the procedures reported to be employed least often, namely, whole school evaluation, classroom observation, educator portfolios and observation in the playground, would provide insight into the systems that support or may be influencing a learner's development and achievement.

As regards *interventions* with learners, referrals to special schools for placement and other agencies for support were highlighted as key roles. Responses to a question regarding

intervention procedures yielded similar results, with a strong focus on individual work with learners. These findings are depicted in Table 7.4 below.

Question 12: Please indicate the extent to which you employ the following intervention strategies in your work with learners, educators and schools by placing an X in the appropriate box		Percentages			
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
INTERVENTION STRATEGIES		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
12.11	Referral to special schools and other support structures and agencies	0	0	3	97
12.1	Individual counselling / therapy with learners	0	6	23	71
12.16	Learner progression and promotion	3	6	27	65
12.12	Crisis intervention, e.g. trauma debriefing	0	0	51	49
12.8	Parent education	9	15	38	38
12.14	Providing assistance to learning support educators	3	20	43	34
12.10	Learning support, e.g. developing learners' basic academic skills	15	27	27	32
12.3	Individual counselling / therapy with parents	11	20	40	29
12.9	Development of Individual Educational Development Plans (IEDP)	3	12	59	27
12.4	Group counselling / therapy with learners	0	36	39	24
12.2	Individual counselling / therapy with educators	0	31	46	23
12.17	Moderation	43	18	21	18
12.13	Providing assistance to Life Orientation educators	17	34	34	14
12.5	Group counselling / therapy with educators	15	41	35	9
12.15	Supervising intern psychologists	46	17	27	9
12.6	Group counselling / therapy with parents	38	27	29	6
12.7	Family therapy	27	35	32	6

Table 7.4. Intervention strategies employed by school psychologists

As is indicated above, individual therapy and counselling emerged as most important. Many participants in the focus group interviews expressed grave concern about what would be lost to the system if school psychologists were no longer able to provide this form of direct support to learners.

I spoke with this child and, just towards the end, she said to me, 'There is something I need to tell you now'. I said to her, 'What?' She said, 'God has sent you to me today'. I asked, 'What do you mean?' 'I was going to throw myself in front of a train after school today. Because of you talking to me, I have changed my mind. In fact, last Friday, my brother hanged himself'. I said, 'If you promise me that you will be here tomorrow with your mother, I will see you again'. Obviously, I went back. That sort of thing where, actually, it may sound fairly melodramatic, but I think, in a sense, you saved a life.... If you have to measure that in terms of attending a workshop or a meeting ... now how do you quantify that? Because that was emotionally quite tough for me. Okay, you have only seen one person, but that one person, the impact is much more profound than the 10 that you tested or the 10 meetings you had for that week.

[Ek het met die kind gepraat en aan die einde het sy vir my gesê, 'Daar is iets wat ek nou vir u moet sê'. Ek het vir haar gesê, 'Wat?' Sy het gesê, 'Die Here het vir meneer vandag vir my gestuur'. Ek sê, "Wat meen jy met dit?" 'Ek sou my vandag na skool voor die trein gaan gooi. Omdat jy met my gepraat het, het ek anders besluit. Om die waarheid te sê, verlede Vrydag het my broer homself opgehang'. Ek het gesê, 'Belowe my dat jy met jou ma hier sal wees en dat ek jou weer sal sien'. Natuurlik het ek teruggegaan. Hierdie soort ding was werklikheid, dit mag ietwat melodramaties klink, maar op 'n manier het jy 'n lewe gered. As jy dit moet meet in terme van die bywoning van 'n werkswinkel of 'n vergadering ... nou hoe bepaal jy dit? Want dit was emosioneel baie moeilik vir my. Goed so, jy het egter net een persoon gesien, maar daardie een persoon se impak is baie meer diepgaande as die 10 wat jy getoets het of die 10 vergaderings wat jy vir daardie week gehad het]. (fg1)

Participants in every focus group interview emphasised that direct support services offered by school psychologists is what appears to be valued most by other sectors.

When there is a crisis, then you must run and do trauma debriefing or you must run to solve the problem. If it lands in the press, then you must write a report. *[Tensy daar 'n krisis is, dan moet jy hardloop en jy moet trauma debriefing gaan doen, of jy moet hardloop en die probleem gaan oplos. As dit in die pers beland, moet jy 'n verslag gaan skryf]. (fg8)*

School psychologists in the Western Cape are involved in a process called “progression and promotion”. This process entails reviews of mark schedules and of portfolios presented by educators and includes discussions about learners’ academic progress and performance. These discussions take place at the school and focus on making decisions about such learners’ advancement into the next grade. The nature of this process differs from one district to another, as does the nature and extent of the involvement of school psychologists. It was nonetheless noted by many as a key aspect of their work, as is illustrated by one person’s comment below. When asked by the interviewer whether she felt she was able to contribute something meaningful from a school psychology point of view in those spaces provided by “promotion and progression” processes, she replied,

I think so, although I don’t say we must be 100% involved. You know what is supposed to happen when the team goes out for promotion and progression. They must come back and talk within the circuit and they will give us what we are supposed to do as our own intervention for psychologists and social workers. Unlike being involved and looking at the registers schedules and things. There is definitely a place for school psychologists there. If a learner is struggling, the learner is in that red zone, so when you go for promotion and progression—those are kind of cases you need to be given and look at them and assess them according to their performances and draw some sort of intervention plan for them. But it is not happening like that. *[Ek dink so, alhoewel ek nie sê dat ons*

100% betrokke moet raak. Jy weet wat is veronderstel om te gebeur wanneer die span uit gaan vir promosie en progressie. Hulle moet terug kom en gesels binne die omtrek en sal ons gee wat ons veronderstel is om te doen as ons eie intervensie vir sielkundiges and maatskaplike werkers. Anders as om betrokke te wees en te kyk na die registers, skedules en goed. Daar is definitief 'n plek vir skoolsielkundiges daar. As 'n leerder sukkel, die leerder is in daardie rooi sone, so wanneer daar gegaan word vir promosie en progressie—dit is die soort van gevalle wat jy gegee moet work en na moet kyk, dit assesseer na gelang van hulle prestasie en stel 'n soort van intervensie plan op vir hulle. Maar dit gebeur nie so nie]. (fg3)

One participant highlighted the role of the school psychologist in learner support, but expressed some disappointment that school psychologists are not really involved in school development work:

I do not believe that they function in this capacity in Gauteng. At the moment we have 37 000 learners in special schools and 1, 9 million learners in mainstream schools. So they are mainly used for determining placement and dealing with emergency cases. Their role is very much underrated in the current system! [*Ek glo nie hulle funksioneer in hierdie kapasiteit in Gauteng nie. Op die oomblik het ons 37 000 leerders in spesiale skole and 1,9 miljoen leerders in hoofstroom skole. Dus word hulle hoofsaaklik gebruik vir plekbepaling en hantering van nood gevalle. Hulle rol word baie onderskat in die huidige stelsel!*] (Director of psychological and social services)

7.1.2. Educator Development and Support

The emphasis in the findings of this study is on the importance of supporting teachers to support learners more effectively. In the discussion of a framework for the future, *Quality education for all: Report of the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training and the National Committee Education Support Services*, it is argued that “support services should move away from only supporting individual learners to supporting educators and the system so that they can recognise and respond appropriately to the needs of all learners and thereby promote effective learning” (Department of Education, 1997, p. 72).

The second theme concerning key roles played by school psychologists is that of educator development and support. The abovementioned report places a great deal of emphasis on this kind of work, highlighting the need to focus on “service delivery to educators, parents and other caregivers and the development of preventative and developmental programmes” (Department of Education, 1997, p. 108). This represents a clear shift in emphasis towards the provision of indirect support.

Consultation with teachers is regarded as central to the work of school psychologists and includes support in curriculum adaptation and the development of flexible teaching and assessment methods.

One of the tasks of DBST will be to assist educators in institutions in creating greater flexibility in their teaching methods and in the assessment of learning ... provide illustrative learning programmes, learning support materials and assessment instruments. (Department of Education, 2001, p. 20)

Consultation with teachers with a focus on individual learners, and assisting with the development of intervention options for individual learners, is regarded as a core aspect of a school psychologist's work by the authors of the documents analysed. Providing support to teachers in the form of training, often delivered in the form of workshops designed as professional development opportunities to build capacity of teachers and empower them to provide quality education, is described as crucial by participants and in policy documents alike. This training is intended to deepen the educators' knowledge and skills so that they are able to understand and intervene directly in those cases that would previously have been referred to school psychologists (Department of Education, 1997). School psychologists reported in the focus group interviews and in the questionnaires that they also provide individual counselling and therapy to educators.

School psychologists questioned in the focus group interviews considered that supporting teaching, learning and management to build capacity are fundamental. Consultation with principals was described as a meaningful intervention that was often initiated by heads of schools.

Principals that I have a good relationship with will always phone and say, 'I've this problem; don't you want to come by?' And they don't ask me for advice; they just want me to listen. Then I say, 'Option 1, 2 3, now what do you think?' Then I leave him and he makes up his own mind. [*Skoolhoofde met wie ek 'n goeie verhouding het sal altyd skakel en sê, 'Ek het hierdie probleem; wil jy nie om kom nie?' En hulle vra dan nie vir raad, hulle wil net hê ek moet luister. Dan sê ek, 'Moontlikheid 1, 2, 3; nou wat dink jy?' Ek los hom dan en hy besluit hy self*]. (fg1)

7.1.3. Parent Development

Participants in the focus groups explained that service delivery to parents mostly entails involving and supporting parents in assessment of their children. This would include at least an initial interview and sharing findings and recommendations with parents. As one participant said,

Before assessments, you interview parents [*Voor die assesering voer jy 'n onderhoud met die ouers*] (fg3):

When I did the appeals one of the parents we saw was a mom that was dying of cancer and she was desperate that her son—he was beginning to act out at school. He was failing grade 9; he needed to be placed somewhere. She sat there in tears [*Toe ek in beroep gaan, een van die ouers wat ons gesien het was 'n ma met kanker en sy was radeloos oor haar seun – sy gedrag was besig om agteruit te gaan. Hy was besig om graad nege te druipe; hy moes iewers geplaas word. Sy sit toe daar met trane in haar oë.*] (fg7)

This is supported by the policy directive to involve parents:

The onus will be on those involved in assessment to ensure that the contents of reports, as well as any implications of assessment findings, are shared with and explained to parents. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 109)

This was typically described as “parent guidance” by school psychologists in the focus group interviews. Some school psychologists explained that such guidance was sometimes extended and deepened and then also included building the capacity of parents through training and workshops:

We play an important role in parent guidance. [*Ons speel 'n belangrike rol in ouerleiding*]. (fg4)

Maybe training parents as well ... Meetings and workshops with parents and learners regarding any crisis issues in the school [*Miskien die opleiding van ouers ... Vergaderings and werksinkels met ouers en leerders as daar 'n krisis in die skool is*]. (fg3)

Addressing parents as guest speakers [*Spreek ouers aan as gas*].(fg5)

7.1.4. School System Level Intervention

School psychologists were asked, in the focus group interviews, to list the activities they engage in and then to identify those activities they would regard as “school development”. Interventions which in some way involved working with the school as a system were included in all the focus groups where participants described the various roles they play in delivery of education support. This was further elaborated upon when they were asked specifically about the school development activities in which they were involved. In general terms, school psychologists explained that their role included engaging with the school as an organisation. The activity they described most often as a school development activity was

the development, support and monitoring of institution level support teams (ILSTs). This included analysing the assessments and intervention plans submitted by ILSTs.

We play a key role in ILST development and support [*Ons speel 'n belangrike rol in ILST ontwikkeling en ondersteuning*]. (fg7)

As part of the circuit team, school psychologists in the Western Cape reported, in the focus group interviews, that monitoring and evaluation of the school, its infrastructure, policies, support provision, structures and procedures, was an essential aspect of their work. Many school psychologists explained that they were expected to evaluate the effectiveness of various programmes that are initiated within the school. This is in accordance with findings in the document analysis.

The primary function of these district support teams will be to evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness and suggest modifications (Department of Education, 2001, p. 29)

The provision of indirect support is highlighted as a key aspect of school system level interventions in documents *and* by school psychologists and key informants. School psychologists explained, in the focus groups, that they intervene with those who work with the learners, namely, principals and educators, as well as within the organisation, in order to facilitate the provision of quality teaching and learning. This concurs with what is outlined in policy.

The main aim of DBST is therefore to provide indirect support to learners through supporting educators and school management with particular focus on curriculum and institutional development. (Department of Education, 2005b, p. 13)

Organisational support, e.g. staff development, training and support of parents, organisation development (policy formulation, vision-building, etc). (Department of Education, 2005b, p. 20)

This broad intervention at the level of the system, as mentioned in all focus groups, includes the development and support of programmes and projects within the school to support top quality education. School psychologists provided examples of such programmes in the questionnaire responses, where they referred to HIV/AIDS programmes, behaviour management programmes, prevention of substance abuse and teenage pregnancy. These intervention programmes, they explained, are designed to provide support to one or more sectors within the school. This is supported by the document analysis.

Education support personnel would focus a great deal of their work on the development of preventive programmes aimed at reducing or overcoming barriers to learning and development. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 85)

Education support personnel should focus increasingly on involving and supporting educators and parents in assessment, building their capacity and where appropriate, should participate in developing appropriate interventions as well as preventative and promotive programmes. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 109)

Responses to the questionnaires highlighted training provided to staff members on structures within the school such as the ILST, life orientation teams or phase committees. School psychologists explained, in the focus group interviews, that such training is designed to build the capacity of these structures to impact positively on the school's functioning and especially on its ability to provide support in teaching and learning and overcoming barriers to these processes.

Individual support, applying skills in the class, with learners as well as staff training. And has to do with development of the TST. Training for them, support, and everything [*Individuele ondersteuning, toepassing van vaardighede in die klaskamer met leerders sowel as personeel ontwikkeling. En het te doene met ontwikkeling van die TST. Training vir hulle, support, ondersteuning en alles*]. (fg8)

7.1.5. Education System Level Intervention

School psychologists are involved in interventions beyond the school, particularly in networking and collaborating with outside agencies and structures. The circuit team is one structure that was reported to be foregrounded in the Western Cape. The emphasis in the collaboration, however, remains on addressing emotional and behavioural barriers to learning and development, co-ordinating the services of an extended network, facilitating support provision to schools and managing various components of intervention by networking with relevant stakeholders.

We network with NGO's, social workers, other professionals [*Ons netwerk met NGO's, maatskaplikewerkers en ander profesionele*]. (fg7)

7.2. School psychologists Engaging in School Development

A vital part of the process of data collection was to explore, in particular, participants' involvement in school development since this is central to answering the research question. Although this was referred to in the discussions of their role in general, questions were posed to participants in the email interviews, focus groups and questionnaires, focusing specifically on their perception or understanding of school development and their engagement therein.

The sections that follow present school psychologists' understanding of school development and activities engaged in that they regarded as school development interventions.

7.2.1. School psychologists' Definitions or Understanding of School Development

In the final phase of data collection in this study, 35 school psychologists based in the Western Cape completed questionnaires wherein they were asked to provide a definition or explanation of what they understood school development to encompass. Their understanding of school development was framed in two ways. The first tended to focus on what they regard as the purpose or aim of school development; the second encompassed various strategies that they employed in school development initiatives. Essentially, participants defined school development with reference to *why* school development is important (its purpose) as well as *what* school development entails (strategies). Table 7.5 captures the key themes that emerged in each category.

DEFINITIONS OR UNDERSTANDINGS OF SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT	
Purpose	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop school as a whole • Improve functioning of school as system • Ensure effective teaching and learning • Develop school to develop the learner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the system • Support provision • Capacity building and empowerment to various sectors • Collaborative engagement • Monitoring and evaluation

Table 7.5. School psychologists' definitions or understanding of school development

Each of the categories, *purpose* and *strategies*, is expounded in the sections that follow and is supported with evidence from the questionnaires. All the quotes are coded to preserve the anonymity of the respondent, all of whom are holding positions as school psychologists at an education district office in the Western Cape Province.

7.2.1.1. The purpose of school development

Most participants, in their responses in the questionnaire, argued that school development is aimed at developing the school as a whole, impacting on various aspects of the school as a system in order to enhance its overall functioning. The goal of school development, they explained, is to improve service delivery to learners by ensuring effective learning and teaching is taking place:

Improving and developing systems at school level to promote optimal functioning [*Verbetering en ontwikkeling van stelsels op skool vlak om optimale funksionering te bevorder*]. (17)

I see school development as a method to ensure that the school is a place where effective learning and teaching takes place. For me it is all about school actualisation (as in self actualisation)–becoming the best school they can be in their particular [*Ek sien skool ontwikkeling as 'n metode om te verseker dat die skool 'n plek is waar effektiewe leer en onderrig plaasvind. Vir my gaan dit alles oor skool verwesenliking (soos in self verwesenliking)–word die beste skool wat hulle kan word in hulle besonderheid*]. (9)

The development of the school holistically to empower each aspect and component of the system to ensure the full functionality of the school as a teaching and learning organisation. [*Die ontwikkeling van die skool holisties om elke aspek en komponent van die stelsel te bemagtig om te verseker die volle funksionering van die skool as 'n onderrig en leer organisasie*]. (1)

School development is the holistic development of a school in providing the best teaching and learning environment. [*Skool ontwikkeling is die holistiese ontwikkeling van 'n skool in voorsiening van die beste onderrig en leer omgewing*]. (37)

To develop all the facets of the school to function together as one whole [*Om alle fasette van die skool te ontwikkel om saam te fungeer as een geheel*]. (33)

The purpose of developing the school is to develop the learner. Many participants emphasised that, whatever the overall aim, the specific outcome of school development is to have a positive impact on learner well-being, learner development and academic performance. The learner, it was argued, must remain the central concern even if the system is the medium through which change is effected.

Whole school development refers to creating or reclaiming school systems towards enabling positive learner development [*Heel skool ontwikkeling verwys na skepping van terugwinning van skoolstelsels tot in staat stelling van positiewe leerder ontwikkeling*]. (25)

To empower the school, including learners, to be able to help themselves and to shift the locus of control to an internal one instead of an external one [*Om die skool te bemagtig, om leerders in te sluit om hulle self te help en die klem van beheer te verskuif van 'n interne een in plaas van na 'n eksterne een*]. (40)

That whatever intervention strategies are employed, they should have an ultimate impact on the school as a whole to improve learning environment for the children [*Watter intervensie strategieë ookal aangeneem is, hulle behoort 'n totale impak op die skool as 'n geheel te maak om die leer omgewing vir die kinders te verbeter*]. (34)

It is the will to create a learning environment that strives to promote the self actualisation of every learner [*Dit is die wil om 'n leer omgewing te skep wat daarna strewes om die self verwesenliking van elke leerder te bevorder*]. (37)

Improving the capacity of the school to provide quality education in a safe and nurturing environment in which a child can develop to the full [*Verbetering van die kapasiteit van die skool vir die voorsiening van kwaliteit opvoeding in 'n veilige en gekoesterde omgewing waarin 'n kind kan ontwikkel tot sy volheid*]. (44)

7.2.1.2. Strategies employed to facilitate school development

Most of the responses regarding defining school development, in email and focus group interviews as well as in the questionnaires, focused on how school development is being operationalised in various contexts. Key informants and school psychologists in the Western Cape highlighted the strategies they employ when they facilitate school development.

One key theme that emerged in the responses to the questionnaires was that school development entailed working with the system as opposed to working only with individuals:

Streamlining and developing of the organisation as opposed to working with individuals. I'm quite sure that from time to time, you will work with the organisation **and** with individuals [*Verfyning en ontwikkeling van die organisasie teenoor die werking met individue. Ek is baie seker dat van tyd tot tyd sal jy werk met die organisasie **en** met individue*]. (fg6)

A few school psychologists were far less specific and regarded any form of support, assistance or help provided to the school and the role players in the school system as a strategy that would facilitate the development of the school.

School development entails the assistance given to the school with intention of improving the school to be self-reliant. This pertains to all aspects of the school that need to receive the necessary attention [*Skool ontwikkeling sluit in die hulpverlening gegee aan die skool met die oog op verbetering van die skool om selfonderhoudend te wees. Dit het betrekking op al die aspekte van die skool wat die nodige aandag moet ontvang*]. (32)

Helping learners in their academic challenges, help the school to support educators in various activities that can help to develop the school. Help the community, governing body to assist the school in their needs, e.g. learner development and school development [*Om leerders te help in hulle akademiese uitdagings, om die skool te help om ondersteuning te gee aan opvoeders in verskeie aktiwiteite wat kan help om die skool te ontwikkel. Help die gemeenskap en beheerliggaam om die skool te ondersteun in hulle behoeftes, bv. leerder ontwikkeling en skool ontwikkeling*]. (36)

My role in the school is to provide support in schools so that they are able to address challenges within the school for quality education [*My rol in die skool is die voorsiening van ondersteuning in skole so dat hulle bemagtig kan wees om uitdagings te kan hanteer binne die skool vir kwaliteit opvoeding*]. (31)

Empowering individuals and groups was a key strategy noted by many school psychologists. The provision of support through capacity building of role players within the school was regarded as a key strategy in this regard.

Empowering teachers to help learners to develop to their full potential. [*Bemagtiging van opvoeders om leerders se volle potensiaal te laat ontwikkel*]. (10)

Building capacity of management and educators as opposed to providing specialist (once-off) service [*Opbou van kapasiteit van bestuur en opvoeders gestel teenoor die voorsiening van vakkundige (eenmalige) diens*]. (9)

Empowering educators and learners to make optimum use of daily opportunities to grow [*Opbou van kapasiteit van bestuur en opvoeders gestel teenoor die voorsiening van vakkundige (eenmalige) diens*]. (46)

To empower the school, including learners to be able to help themselves and to shift the locus of control to an internal one instead of an external one [*To empower the school, including learners to be able to help themselves and to shift the locus of control to an internal one instead of an external one*]. (40)

You will recall in the ‘clinic days’ when you worked as a group, moving as a group into a school in an area. Get all the parents in and organise an evening with the parents. Empower them and talk to them, give them advice, and from that discussion you then have to deal with many phone calls the next day, follow-up work as such [*Jy sal goed onthou in die kliniek dae was dit dat jy beweeg as ‘n groep uit vir ‘n aand na ‘n skool toe in ‘n omgewing. Kry al die ouers in en jy hou ‘n lekker aand met die ouers. Bemagtig hulle en spreek hulle toe deur gee advies en uit daardie gesprek uit het jy die volgende dag ‘n klomp oproepe gehad van opvolgwerk as sulks*]. (fg8)

Collaboration was also viewed by many key informants and school psychologists as an important element of school development work, based on the understanding that its complexity requires a multipronged approach.

Working collaboratively in a team approach to capacitate the school community to address challenges. [*Heel skool funksionering word verbeter deur intervensie van verskeie vakmanne wat saamwerk (losweg), elkeen met sy eie area van vakkundigheid*]. (6)

Whole school functioning being improved by interventions from various professionals working (loosely) together, each with their area of expertise. [

Heel skool funksionering word verbeter deur intervensie van verskeie vakmanne wat saamwerk (losweg), elkeen met sy eie area van vakkundigheid] . (5)

Whole school evaluation was highlighted in most focus group interviews as an important first step towards school development. The whole school evaluation framework (Department of Education, 2006) was referred to by many participants in the focus group interviews who regarded this as an important set of lenses which could be employed to assist in deciding where the focus of the development and support to a school needed to be. Evaluation, therefore, emerged as an important initial strategy in the school development process.

Whole school evaluation as basis of this should result in an IQMS report regarding the development of a SIP (school improvement plan) followed by a DIP (district improvement plan) to enable all role players to contribute school development. [*Heel skool evaluering as basis van dit behoort tot gevolg te hê 'n IQMS verslag betreffende die ontwikkeling van 'n SIP gevolg deur 'n DIP om alle rolspelers in staat te stel om by te dra tot skool ontwikkeling*]. (42)

School development is interpreted as whole school development with the nine focus areas as framework. [*Skool ontwikkeling word geïnterpreteer as heel skool ontwikkeling met die nege fokus areas as raamwerk*]. (43)

Schools are labelled as 'problem schools', or the teachers in those schools ... and then those schools are targeted for all sorts of interventions and things. Now you are taken away from your work—like yesterday—to moderate mark schedules, to gather ammunition, to reprimand and punish the school [*Skole word gelabel as probleem skole of onderwysers in daardie skole en nou word daardie skole getarget vir allerhande tipe van intervensies en goed. Nou word jy weggevat van jou werk af—soos gister—om nou punte schedules te gaan modereer, om skietgoed bymekaar te kry, om die pak te gee*]. (fg8)

Having gained insight into how participants understand and define school development, it was necessary to gain a good grasp of the activities that school psychologists engage in that translate these definitions into practice. The focus therefore now shifts from perceptions of school development to the practice of school development.

7.2.2. School Psychologists' Involvement in School Development Activities

The question of the nature of school development activities in which school psychologists are involved was explored in all four phases of data collection. Drawing on the document analysis and responses in the email and focus group interviews, as well as the questionnaires, two broad categories of school development activity emerged. These are depicted in Table 7.6.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	
At the level of the individual	At the level of the organisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with educators • Consultation with principals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and group interventions with teachers • Development and support of the ILST • Special programmes and projects • Monitoring and evaluation of schools • Supporting teaching, learning and management

Table 7.6. School psychologists' involvement in school development activities

It is important to note that these categories and the key themes within these emerged in all four phases of data collection.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES		DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES WHERE THESE EMERGED AS KEY THEMES/CATEGORIES			
		Document analysis	Email interviews	Focus groups	Questionnaires
At the level of the individual	Consultation with educators	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Consultation with principals	✓	✓	✓	✓
At the level of the organisation	Training and group interventions with teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Development and support of the ILST	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Special programmes and projects	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Monitoring and evaluation of schools	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Supporting teaching, learning and management	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 7.7. Triangulation of data on school development activities that school psychologists engage in

School development activities were explored as interventions that involved and impacted upon individuals or interventions that were aimed at the organisation. It was understood though, that even if an intervention was at the level of the individual, it was argued to have an impact on the school as an organisation.

7.2.2.1. School development at the level of the individual

Participants acknowledged that school development focuses on the system and entails working holistically. Most key informants and school psychologists argued that engaging

with individuals who are regarded as central players in the school was of fundamental importance. Such engagement was described as being characterised by a consultative approach which involves developing individuals in order for them to influence other individuals, groups and structures within the school system.

Consultation was highlighted as a key mode of practice employed by school psychologists in their engagement in school development. This was reflected in the document study and by participants in the email and focus group interviews. Consultation was viewed as a form of indirect service delivery, which had multiple impacts, as it was described as affecting the individuals involved in the consultation process as well as other individuals, groups and systems within the school. This is highlighted in the following extracts from the document analysis.

Consultant-supporter: Able to address a wide range of problems in the education system using his/her psychological knowledge; able to communicate guidance/support effectively; able to provide practical and applicable advice and guidance; able to motivate and encourage educators (Free State Department of Education, 2009)

Monitor support provision in a mentoring and consultative way. (Department of Education, 2008, p. 22)

Mode of service delivery would largely be indirect and consultative, with the focus on the system rather than only the learner (Department of Education, 1997, p. 114)

Consulting with teachers who are important role players in the school was emphasised by many school psychologists in the focus group interviews and questionnaire. Educators were regarded by participants as an important focal point of consultative interventions.

They play a consultative role and assist with training educators in different areas which are necessary for the support of learners with difficulties. They develop educators in issues around crisis management, so that educators can do something before the specialist arrives if a crisis arises. [*Hulle speel 'n konsulerende rol and verleen hulp met opleiding van opvoeders in verskillende areas wat noodsaaklik is vir ondersteuning van leerders met struikelblokke. Hulle ontwikkel opvoeders in kwessies rondom krisis bestuur, sodat opvoeders iets kan doen as 'n krisis ontstaan voordat die spesialis opdaag*]. (Private practitioner)

I think one of the things would be the focus on teachers specifically, trying to get them to have a more sort of a strength-based approach when it comes to the children, because I think much of the problems that we have in schools can be related to the perceptions that teachers have of children. In other words they are

so hell-bent on focusing on things they can't do. I think shifting those sorts of paradigms is important [Ek dink een van die dinge sou wees die fokus op opvoeders spesifiek, probeer om hulle te kry om 'n soort van meer sterkte-gebaseerde benadering rakende kinders te hê, want ek dink baie van die probleme wat ons in skole het hou verband met die persepsies wat opvoeders van kinders het. Met ander woorde hulle is so vas gefokus op dinge wat hulle nie kan doen nie. Ek dink verskuiwing van hierdie soort van paradigma is belangrik]. (fg1)

7.2.2.2. School development at the level of the organisation

In response to a question focusing on the kinds of school development activities they are engaged in, school psychologists based in the Western Cape indicated in the questionnaire that they were involved in the following school development activities.

Question 14: Please indicate the extent to which you are involved in the following school development activities by placing an X in the appropriate box. Please add any that have not been listed here.		Percentages			
		Never	Rarely	Sometim	Often
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS		Never	Rarely	Sometim	Often
14.5	Consultation with educators (discussions that assist in dealing with challenges faced in the classroom)	0	11	17	71
14.18	Consultation with colleagues at circuit /district level	0	3	31	66
14.16	Consultation with Education Support Teams (ESTs / ILSTs)	0	0	35	64
14.15	Support and develop ILSTs / ESTs (Education Support Teams)	3	11	26	60
14.13	Group psycho-educational-social interventions with learners e.g. workshops on life skills, study skills, career guidance, etc	6	9	34	51
14.9	Contribute to professional development of educators e.g. conduct workshops for educators, teaching positive behaviour strategies.	3	0	47	50
14.4	Consultation with Senior Management Team and/or Principal (discussions that assist in addressing challenges faced at the school)	3	9	43	46
14.1	Organisation development, e.g. developing and supporting systems and structures that enhance the quality of education provided by the school	3	11	46	40
14.14	Programme development and implementation within the school e.g. drug abuse, discipline, behaviour management, HIV/AIDS, sexuality, etc.	3	17	40	40
14.7	Assist in the development of classroom management strategies	9	14	43	34
14.10	Contribute to personal development of educators, e.g. support, counselling, mentoring.	6	17	43	34
14.2	Assist with development of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)	15	26	35	27
14.12	Parental guidance and education, e.g. workshops, talks, seminars	3	24	45	27
14.11	Facilitate conflict management with learners and/or educators	6	9	60	25
14.17	Facilitate development of school-community partnerships	3	53	24	21
14.3	Policy development and implementation at school level	18	30	36	15
14.6	Support educators with curriculum adaptation, curriculum development and/or curriculum delivery	12	32	44	12
14.8	Leadership training with SMT, SGB, educators and/or learners	18	33	43	6

Table 7.8. School psychologists' involvement in school development activities

School psychologists' responses to the questionnaire indicated an interesting divide at the top end of the scale, with the school development interventions most often engaged in

encompassing activities at the level of the individual (educators), at the level of the organisation (ILST) and at a level beyond the school (circuit and district-based teams). This is an interesting finding in that it supports the earlier definition of school development as working with various levels and aspects of the system. This is also reiterated in the *Quality education for all* report, which stated that “education support personnel will need to be skilled in the systems approach and be able to develop partnerships with other agencies in order to take (schools) through a process of organisational development” (Department of Education, 1997, p. 126).

The role of the school psychologist as trainer, involved in developing the capacity of various stakeholders in the school community, emerged as a theme in all methods and phases of data collection. Training as a school development activity or intervention is also foregrounded in national and provincial documents and by key informants and school psychologists in the Western Cape as well. Although educators are identified as the primary target audience of training and capacity-building initiatives, other groups and structures within the school and beyond are mentioned as well. This is reflected in the findings in the document analysis as reflected below.

Trainer: able to pinpoint problem areas and develop training and prevention programmes according to educators needs; able to conduct training sessions efficiently; able to develop appropriate training / prevention programmes (Free State Department of Education, 2009)

Capacity building of teachers, fellow officials and community members by workshops and presentations (Northern Cape Department of Education, 2009, p. 1)

Training on focused specialised skills and knowledge for ILST, DBST, School based staff with minimal follow up support, (Department of Education, 2008, p. 15)

Training on specialised skills and knowledge for sectors at school level (SMT/ILST, educator, specialist support staff, learner and parent level), circuit level (LSE, School Counsellor), and DBST. (Department of Education, 2008, p. 15)

Education support personnel will in future not be primarily working with the learner as was the norm previously, but also with parents, with educators, with other staff or with the centre of learning as a whole. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 126)

Psychologists are instrumental in Human Resource development (e.g. educators, learners, parents, and SGBs. (Free State Department of Education, 2009)

Having acknowledged the holistic approach to human resource development within school development, targeting various sectors and systems, it is important to note that educators nonetheless emerge as a primary sector on which school psychologists focus in their attempts to facilitate school development. Educators are identified as key role players in the school system and therefore regarded as the focal point of school development initiatives. School development interventions with educators occur at the level of the individual, in the form of consultation and therapeutic support, as discussed above. Interventions also include training of teachers and other group interventions such as conflict resolution, which are intended to facilitate development at the level of the organisation. As one respondent in an email interview explained

Strengthening of educators to support learners experiencing barriers to learning and development; e.g. staff development workshops, learner discussions, discussions with parents, consultant to educators, guidance to colleagues, form part of the site-based support team. [*Versterking van opvoeders om leerders wat leer- en ontwikkelingstoornisse ervaar te ondersteun; bv. personeel ontwikkelingswerkswinkels, leerder besprekings, besprekings met ouers, konsultant aan opvoeders, leiding aan kollegas, vorm deel van die site-based support team*]. (Director of therapeutic services)

This is supported by the document analysis:

The District-based Support Team (DBST) can also become a provider of support programmes. This means that interventions which require skilled personnel can be organised from the District by, for instance, providing consultative support/training to teachers by specialist staff based at the District office or Special School/Resource Centre. (Department of Education, 2008, p. 27)

DBST would provide indirect support to all learners through the process of training and supporting the educators within the teams based at the centres (Department of Education, 1997, p. 85)

Education support personnel with district support services will be orientated and trained in their new roles of providing support to all teachers and other educators. Training will focus on supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so the full range of learning needs can be met. (Department of Education, 2001, p. 19)

Development of staff empowerment programmes for educators in the field of psychological and educational support (Western Cape Education Department, 2007c, p. 2)

Team effectiveness and conflict management training. (Department of Education, 2005a, p. 23)

A key structure within the school which school psychologists engage with is the institution level support team (ILST). In all, 47 school psychologists across all eight districts and the majority of the key informants across the country indicated development, support and monitoring of ILSTs as a core function of school psychologists, which contributes significantly to the development of the school as a whole. As a key informant in the email interview mentions:

They (school psychologists) are pivotal role players in the district-based support teams. They work together with members of the Inclusive Education Support Unit and also form part of the more comprehensive and collaborative district-based teams ... Setting up of and support to the institutional-level support teams (ILST). [*Hulle is deurslaggewende rolspelers in die distrik gebaseerde ondersteuning spanne. Hulle werk tesame met lede van die Inclusive Education Support Unit en vorm ook deel van 'n meer omvattende en medewerkende district-based teams ... Opstelling van en ondersteuning aan die institutional level support teams (ILST)*]. (Manager of School Psychological Services)

The support provided by school psychologists to the ILST, which is also referred to as the education support team (EST), is also highlighted in the document analysis:

Provide consultative service to schools and Education Support Teams. (Western Cape Education Department, 2007c, p. 2)

Another aspect of school development described by participants in the interviews and questionnaires, and outlined in the policy documents and job descriptions, is the development, implementation and support of school level programmes and projects focusing on key areas of need or concern as identified by the school. The authors of the relevant documents and the school psychologists have explained that this may include such issues as substance abuse, violence and gangsterism, HIV and AIDS, teen pregnancy, health promotion, career guidance and study skills. Such programmes, it was explained by participants in the focus group interviews, tend to involve learners directly and often draw on the resources of the broader school community in collaboration with the school psychologist. These school development interventions are often psycho-educational with a strong life skills focus. This was highlighted in the document analysis as reflected below:

Contribute to the development of preventative, curative and developmental support programmes to learners to reduce psychological barriers to learning (Western Cape Education Department, 2007c, p. 2)

One participant in the email interview reiterated this:

Development of our whole school behaviour management programme (psychologists' collaborative efforts) was an attempt to move towards whole school development. [*Ontwikkeling van ons heel skool gedragbestuur programme (sielkundiges se gemeenskaplike pogings) was 'n poging om te beweeg na heel skool ontwikkeling*]. (18)

Systemic assessment, monitoring and evaluation are fundamental activities engaged in by school psychologists to accomplish school development. The evaluation includes a review of structures and procedures within the school that promote learning and development and address barriers in the system. The document analysis, in particular, reflects a strong emphasis on a contextual approach to such assessment and evaluation, which, it is argued, must be ongoing.

Their (DBST) primary function will be to evaluate, and through supporting teaching, build the capacity of schools ... to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs (Department of Education, 2001, p. 47)

Assessment needs to be multi-dimensional or systemic in nature, located within the framework of barriers at the individual (learner and educator), curriculum, institution, and family, community and social contextual levels. (Department of Education, 2008, p. 23)

The shift away from a predominantly 'individualistic' approach to a 'systemic' approach to understanding and responding to learner difficulties and disabilities would result in the *assessment* of learning and other problems, including an analysis of factors in the context of the learner which contribute to the problems experienced by her/him. This would include factors relating to the learner her/himself, family life, classroom and school dynamics and conditions, education-related factors, community processes, and social factors. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 67)

System assessment therefore becomes an integral part of a broader assessment process... System analysis would include an evaluation of the ethos of a school, its management systems, its educator development strategies, the attitudes of its staff, parental involvement, networking with service providers, teaching practices, and so on. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 110)

It has been asserted that barriers can be located within the learner, within the site of learning, within the education system (Department of Education, 2005c, p. 8)

It (assessment) needs to be multi-dimensional or systemic in nature, located within the framework of barriers at the individual (learner and educator), curriculum, institution, and family, community and social contextual levels. (Department of Education, 2005a, p. 25)

All aspects of the system need to be evaluated when trying to understand and respond to a particular challenge. (Department of Education, 2005a, p. 29)

Support also takes place when schools review their culture, policies and practices in terms of the extent to which they meet individual educator, parent and learner needs. (Department of Education, 2008, p. 6)

Overcoming barriers to learning in the system by focusing on those structures and processes, at all levels of the system that prevent learners from achieving success. (Department of Education, 2005a, p. 13)

Circuit Team: Ensure the application of integrated Whole School Evaluation system in the circuit; ensure development, execution and regular review of SIP (school improvement plan) and CIP (circuit improvement plan). (Western Cape Education Department, 2008b)

One key informant captured the way in which policy was implemented in his district:

At the time that I was employed by DoE we were intricately involved. There were very few aspects of the broad development of school that we were not involved in. We attended meetings concerning issues that were not strictly 'psychological', we took part in training sessions, we received training, we assisted with schools' development programmes that included academic planning and budgeting [*Gedurende die tyd wat ek in diens was by die DoE was ons op 'n ingewikkelde manier betrokke. Daar was baie min aspekte van die breë ontwikkeling van die skool waar ons nie by betrokke was nie. Ons het vergaderings rakende kwessies wat streng gesproke nie 'sielkundig' was nie bygewoon, ons het deelgeneem aan opleiding sessies, ons het opleiding ontvang, ons het gehelp met skool ontwikkelingsprogramme wat ingesluit het akademiese beplanning en begroting*]. (Manager of School Psychological Services)

In most of the focus group interviews, school psychologists described the nature of school development activity at the level of the organisation as emphasising school evaluation.

We monitor for 3 days and then we come together as a circuit team—we do analysis and then thereafter we bring some recommendation.... We go there and look at the late coming of teachers. We look at the register and then we come together. We calculate what our findings were and then we go there and inform them--These were the things. [*Ons monitor vir 3 dae en dan kom ons bymekaar as 'n omtrek span—ons analiseer en daarna bring ons verskeie aanbevelings. Ons besoek daar en kyk na die laatkom van opvoeders. Ons kyk na die register en dan kom ons bymekaar. Ons bereken wat ons bevindings was en gaan dan daar en lig hulle in--Hierdie was die dinge*]. (fg3)

School psychologists in the focus groups explained that supporting schools in the whole school evaluation process, which culminates in the development of a school improvement plan, is an important activity towards facilitating school development.

We are, for example, involved in the school improvement plan. We formed teams which are generalised. You can't say this is exactly school psychology work. It has a purpose and function and I feel I am learning a lot in the process, because you actually gain many new insights. That was also something that I was not unwilling to be a part of evaluating the school improvement plan. The problem just arose—the schools were not properly prepared and coached as to how to do it. [*Ons is byvoorbeeld betrokke by die skole se skoolverbeteringsplan. Ons het spanne deurgaans opgedeel. Jy kan nie sê dit is heeltemal skool sielkundige werk nie. Dit het 'n funksie en ek voel ek leer baie daarby, want jy begin nogal 'n klomp insig te kry. Daai was vir my ook nie iets wat ek onwillig by betrokke te wees nie--evaluering van die skool verbeteringsplanne nie. Die probleem het net gekom—die skole is nie ordentlik voorberei en gecoach hoe om dit te doen nie*]. (fg8)

School development is generally understood by school psychologists to involve supporting teaching, learning and management in schools. The work of school psychologists is therefore aimed at a macro level but incorporates micro-level interventions. This is highlighted in the document analysis.

Through supporting teaching, learning and management, they will build the capacity of schools ... to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs. (Department of Education, 2001, p. 29)

Education support personnel within district support services will be orientated to and trained in their new roles of providing support to all teachers and other educators. Training will focus on supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. (Department of Education, 2001, p. 19)

Support services should move away from only supporting individual learners to supporting educators and the system so that they can recognise and respond appropriately to the needs of all learners and thereby promote effective learning. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 72)

Support the school to learn and grow. Educators and their institutions need constantly to learn and grow, and must have ongoing support to achieve this. (Department of Education, 2005a, p. 8)

Support all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. (Free State Department of Education, 2009)

The focus will be on indirect and direct intervention programmes to learners in a range of settings and or serve as consultant-mentors to school management teams, teachers, parents or other child care workers and school governing bodies. (Free State Department of Education, 2009)

Participants who were involved in the email interviews were asked whether school psychologists are expected to engage in school development work. Most of the respondents answered in the affirmative.

In the questionnaire, school psychologists based in the Western Cape were asked to indicate how much time they dedicated to school development activities. The findings show that a significant amount of time is in fact spent facilitating school development in the ways in which it was understood and defined by the participants in the study.

The graph below depicts the percentage of time spent on school development activities, as reflected in questionnaire responses.

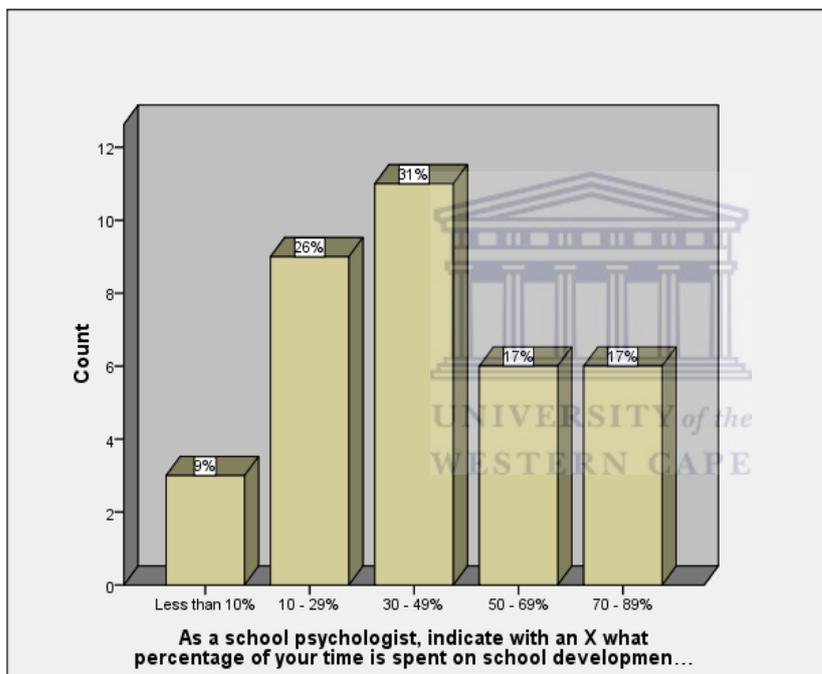


Figure 7.1. Percentage of time spent on school development activities

It is interesting to note that the responses from participants in the Western Cape, in the focus groups and questionnaires, indicated that job descriptions stated that school psychologists needed to facilitate school development. However, the form that this took and the extent to which individuals initiated such activities varied considerably from district to district, and even from one individual to the next.

7.3. School Psychologists Engaging in Intersectoral Collaboration

This section builds a picture of the ways in which school psychologists work with others in order to facilitate school development. Some preliminary comments about participants' attitudes towards collaborative work will first be offered. *Teamwork*, which is how

intersectoral collaboration was often referred to in the focus group interviews, was generally described in negative terms. Many participants shared their frustration with how teamwork was understood, co-ordinated and implemented in districts and circuits, and expressed their dissatisfaction with expectations set by circuit team managers, based on what they understood collaborative work to entail. This issue is picked up in a later section that focuses on the challenges experienced when working collaboratively in school development initiatives.

Intersectoral collaboration was discussed in relation to varying contexts. Experiences of collaboration in the circuit team were differentiated from collaboration with sectors outside of the education system and beyond the district. Experiences in the latter contexts tended to be perceived much more positively. One of the reasons for this was linked to how school psychologists perceived themselves to be valued and respected by other partners, something that they believe does not characterise relationships with colleagues in their circuit or district. This too will be further explored later.

7.3.1. School Psychologists' Definitions of Intersectoral Collaboration

School psychologists based in the Western Cape were asked to explain what they understood by intersectoral collaboration. Two categories emerged in the analysis of the responses. The first focused on the aims and purpose of intersectoral collaboration and the second category elaborated on the nature of collaboration.

7.3.1.1. The purpose of intersectoral collaboration

Intersectoral collaboration, as a form of practice, was discussed and defined in the focus group interviews in phase three of the study. In phase four, which focused on the completion of the questionnaire, school psychologists were once again asked to define this term or to explain how it applied in their work. Definitions and understandings of intersectoral collaboration provided by school psychologists in the Western Cape captured the purpose, aims or goals of this approach to school development. In sharing their perceptions of intersectoral collaboration, many school psychologists emphasised the reason why collaboration was regarded as an important or valuable way of working. Intersectoral collaboration was regarded as necessary because it allows for more effective intervention with schools. Participants felt that, in order to facilitate the development of the school and learners, intersectoral collaboration was an important strategy to employ.

Working with or helping all groups that have an interest in some kind of development in schools. [*Werk met of behulpsaam wees met alle groepe wat 'n belangstelling het in 'n vorm van skool ontwikkeling*]. (45)

Being a team member with professionals that are from other sectors e.g. Health, NGOs, Police, Judiciary, etc. and working in developing and development at school level. [*As lid van 'n span opgeleides van ander sektore soos bv. Gesondheid, NGOs, Polisie, Justisie ens. en werk in die ontwikkel en ontwikkeling op skool vlak*]. (8)

Working with other professionals such as LSEN, social workers, therapists and educators to support the school for learner development. [*Werk met ander opgeleides soos LSEN, maatskaplike werkers, terapeute en opvoeders om die skool te ondersteun met leerder ontwikkeling*]. (36)

7.3.1.2. The nature of intersectoral collaboration

Drawing from the focus group interviews and the questionnaire, this section will capture participants' assumptions that underlie the practice of intersectoral collaboration. It will provide examples of strategies and interventions employed when school psychologists engage in intersectoral collaboration. In sharing their understanding of intersectoral collaboration, participants described what they perceived as the main characteristics of such work. One theme that emerged in the focus groups and questionnaires was the importance of interaction, sharing and the notion of "coming together" to work together.

My perception is that it involves all parties acknowledging that they do not have all the solutions for all the problems and that we need different role players to get involved. It's probably because of the complexity of problems that intersectoral collaboration is needed. As a psychologist, I can identify a problem or delay, but the challenge is to identify the sectors that can contribute to solving the problem. [*My waarneming is dat dit alle partye betrek in erkenning dat hulle nie al die oplossings het vir probleme en dat ons verskillende rolspelers nodig het, om betrokke te raak. Dit is waarskynlik as gevolg van die ingewikkeldheid van probleme waarom samewerking nodig is. As 'n sielkundige kan ek 'n probleem identifiseer of vertraag, maar die uitdaging is om die sektore te identifiseer wat kan bydra om die probleem op te los*]. (9)

Empowerment--Drawing on all role players to develop the school to its full potential. [*Bemagtiging--deur van alle rolspelers gebruik te maak om die skool tot sy volle potensiaal te laat ontwikkel*]. (10)

Working in a group of different disciplines (as the resident psychologist) to attend to crises, routine and developmental work in schools with learners, parents, educators and staff. [*Werk in 'n groep met verskillende vakrigtings (as die inwonende sielkundige) om aandag te gee aan krisisse, roetine en ontwikkelings werk in skole met leerders, ouers, opvoeders en personeel*]. (47)

Networking and joint collaboration with various educational disciplines and community structures. Respecting the wisdom that each partner brings to facilitate school development. [*Netwerking en gesamentlike medewerking met verskeie opvoedkundige vakrigtings en gemeenskap strukture. Respektering van die wysheid wat elke vennoot bring om skool ontwikkeling te fasiliteer*]. (6)

When individuals from different departments with different expertise come together and assist one another in tackling a challenge. [*Wanneer individue van verskillende departemente met verskillende deskundigheid bymekaar kom en mekaar bystaan in die aanpak van 'n uitdaging*]. (32)

Working together with other agencies, such as NGO's, and health and social services officials, to offer an integrated holistic service to the learner via community structures. [*Samewerking met ander partye soos NGO's, gesondheid en maatskaplike diens amptenare om 'n saamgestelde holistiese diens via gemeenskap strukture aan die leerder aan te bied*]. (37)

Working as a team—involving ALL role players—in providing expertise at all levels and co-ordinating these contributions in order to provide quality education at a high level. [*Samewerking as 'n span—insluiting van ALLE rolspelers—in voorsiening van deskundigheid op alle vlakke en koördinering van hierdie bydraes om kwaliteit opvoeding op 'n hoë vlak te voorsien*] (44)

It was really for me going to be like a team with specialists in – that goes into a situation and where your expertise is needed—you sort of deal with it. [*Vir my was dit regtig om te gaan soos met 'n span spesialiste—om binne 'n situasie in te gaan en waar jou vakkundigheid benodig word—jy soort van hanteer dit*]. (fg3)

I am not against the circuit, because I don't know anything different. Now—it works very well. It is good to work in a team like this. We support one another. It is really nice. [*Ek is nie teen die kring nie, want ek ken nie iets anders nie. Nou--dit werk baie goed. Dit werk baie lekker om so in 'n span te werk. Ons steun mekaar. Dit is baie nice*]. (fg4)

I see teamwork as working side by side doing something different to the person sitting next to me, but I am still part of that team. [*Ek sien spanwerk as sy aan sy werk deur iets verskillend te doen as die persoon wat langs aan my sit, maar ek is steeds deel van die span*]. (fg7)

The second theme that emerged emphasised the importance of working together towards a common goal.

The collaboration of different sectors towards achieving a common or shared goal, each sector bringing its expertise, knowledge and experience to the table. [*Die samewerking van verskillende sektore tot die bereiking van 'n gemeenskaplike of gedeelde doelwit, elke sektor bring sy deskundigheid, kennis en ondervinding na die tafel*]. (1)

Working together with all other role players (other government departments, NGO's, private sectors) towards a common goal (bringing very specific skills

and expertise to the table). [*Samewerking met alle ander rolspelers (ander staatsdepartemente, NGO's, privaat sektore) tot 'n gemeenskaplike doel (bring van baie spesifieke vaardighede en deskundighede na die tafel).*] (46)

Working in partnership with SAPS, Health, Justice, etc. Not duplicating services, working on a common or joint strategy. [*Werk in vennootskap met SAPD, Gesondheid, Justisie, ens. Nie duplisering van dienste, werk aan 'n gemeenskaplike of gesamentlike strategie.*] (19)

Merging resources to achieve the common goal. [*Samesmelting van bronne om die gemeenskaplike doel te bereik.*] (25)

Different sectors working together in understanding the problems/issues within the school context. [*Verskillende sektore werk tesaam in die verstaan van die probleme/kwessies binne die skool konteks.*] (34)

I think there is positivity about this redesign because especially if you as a team you work together and each and every person within the team is given the opportunity to show their expertise. For instance in our team, literacy has improved in grade 3, because our curriculum, the IMG for primary school and LSA—they were working like this to encourage the primary schools in LITNUM. They have worked and it has paid. So in a way there is something positive about it. [*Ek dink daar is 'n positiwiteit oor hierdie herontwerp veral in die besonder as julle as 'n span saamwerk en een en elke persoon binne in die span word die geleentheid gegee om hulle vaardigheid te bewys. Byvoorbeeld in ons span—geletterdheid het verbeter in graad 3, omdat ons kurrikulum, die IMG vir primêre skool en LSA—hulle het so gewerk om die primêre skole in LITNUM aan te moedig. Hulle het gewerk en dit het geslaag. So, op 'n manier is daar iets positiefs omtrent dit.*] (fg3)

The understandings and perceptions expressed by school psychologists in the focus groups tended to be rather negative. As mentioned earlier, this will be explored in greater depth in the section that illuminates the challenges that emerge in working with other sectors to facilitate school development.

... this whole notion that we need to work in a team. In other words forcing a team idea where you in a sense your whole role becomes so diluted. Because, within teams, a different dynamic operates. [*... hierdie hele idee dat ons in 'n span moet werk. Met ander woorde forsering 'n span idee waar jy in 'n gevoel jou hele rol so afgewater word. Omdat binne in spanne daar 'n verskillende dinamiek aan werk is.*] (fg1)

I had a different expectation of view of what this multidisciplinary circuit team was going to look like. It was really for me going to be like a team with specialists in – that goes into a situation and where your expertise is needed – you sort of deal with it. And it is not like that – they are saying you are expected to become a generalist. It is not just even us. I am looking at some of the admin people that is in the circuit – that sometimes also are involved with promotion and stuff like that. For me I think we missed the boat with this multi

disciplinary thing. [*Ek het 'n verskillende verwagting of siening gehad oor hoe hierdie multidisiplinêre omtrek span sou lyk. Dit sou werklik vir my wees 'n span met spesialiste in-dit gaan oor in 'n situasie waar jou deskundigheid benodig word-jy soort van pak dit aan. En dit is nie so nie-hulle sê daar word van jou verwag om veelsydig te word. Dit is nie net ons nie. Ek kyk na sommige van die administrasie personeel binne die omtrek-wat somtyds ook betrokke is met promosies en dinge soos dit. Vir my, ek dink ons slaan die bal mis met hierdie multidisiplinêre ding*]. (fg3)

One participant in a focus group interview commented with a heavy dose of sarcasm:

This is the wonder of teamwork! You just drive together. Even if you are just going to sit there for an hour and wait-you drive together. Get in the car and you all drive together. [*Dit is die wonderlikheid van team work. Jy ry net saam. Of jy nou daar vir 'n uur gaan sit en wag-jy ry net saam. Klim in 'n kar en jy ry net saam*]. (fg4)

What do we understand *team approach* to imply? Effective team approach. In sport, you know, each guy has his position. Everyone has a role that they must play and they can also use their own initiative. But in this framework that we are now discussing, you go out as a multifunctional team-which the grand vision! The teacher-There come the little white cars around the corner again. Something that I neglected to do this morning-when I go to a school on my own, I seldom, if ever, have a room where I can conduct confidential interviews. How on earth do you do it if six or seven of you land there? How does confidentiality come in then? I think this is an issue that people should discuss. I am certain that multifunctional teams began with how many can you fit into a car and get to a school so that we can save. I don't know if they ever thought further than that. [*Wat verstaan ons onder span benadering?--Effektiewe span benadering. In sport weet jy elke ou het sy posisie. Elkeen het sy rol wat hy moet speel en hy kan ook nog sy eie initiatief gebruik. Maar hierdie opset wat ons nou praat en jy gaan uit as multi funksionele span wat nou die 'grand' siening is! Die onderwyser-daar kom die klomp wit karretjies alweer om die draai. 'n Ding wat ek vanoggend nagelaat het om te doen - as ek alleen gaan na 'n skool toe het ek selde, indien ooit 'n vertrek waar ek 'n konfidensiele onderhoud kan voer. Hoe de duivel doen julle dit as julle 6 of 7 op 'n skool afstuur? Waar gaan konfidensialiteit dan ter sprake kom? Ek dink dit is miskien 'n aspek wat mens moet deur gesels. Ek is seker dat multi funksionele spanne het begin by hoeveel kan jy in een kar kry en na 'n skool toe vat sodat jy kan bespaar. Ek weet nie of hulle al ooit verder gedink het nie*]. (fg8)

7.3.2. School Psychologists Collaborating with Others to Facilitate School Development

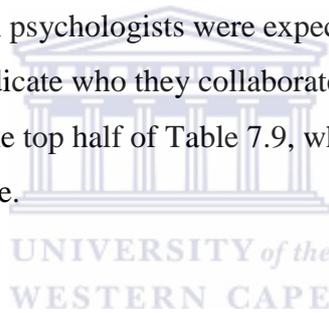
Most of the participants indicated that they are expected to work collaboratively with other sectors. What follows is a summary of the nature of this collaboration, detailing which sectors are engaged with most, the intended goals of the collaboration, as well as the processes that are engaged in by the various players.

7.3.2.1. Who do school psychologists collaborate with?

In the focus group interviews, all school psychologists reported that they collaborate with a large number of individuals and organisations. It emerged that the sectors (individuals and organisations) that school psychologists collaborate with most include the following:

- Colleagues in the circuit team (IMG manager, social worker, curriculum advisor, administration, LSEN teachers)
- Clinics and hospitals
- Doctors
- SAPS
- Private practitioners
- Universities and colleges
- Other government departments.

In order to verify this data, school psychologists were expected, in the individually administered questionnaire, to indicate who they collaborate with. Those sectors engaged with most often are reflected in the top half of Table 7.9, while those they interact with least are listed at the bottom of the table.



Question 18: If yes, which individuals, groups and/or organisations do you collaborate with?		Percentages			
WHO WE COLLABORATE WITH		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
18.6	Social workers	0	0	11	89
18.7	Learning support educators	0	9	14	77
18.8	Educators	3	0	21	77
18.1	Circuit team manager	0	3	29	69
18.3	IMG advisors	0	3	31	66
18.2	Curriculum advisors	0	6	34	60
18.11	Parents	6	9	29	57
18.14	Hospitals and clinics	0	20	43	37
18.13	Community organisations (including NGOs and religious organisations)	3	11	57	29
18.5	Therapists (OT, Physio, Speech and Language, etc.)	0	34	40	26
18.17	Pre-schools	9	29	40	23
18.4	School nurses	12	44	24	21
18.15	SAPS	14	31	37	17
18.16	Other state departments (e.g. Labour, Justice, etc)	20	40	25	14
18.9	Representative Council of Learners (RCLs)	35	44	12	9
18.10	School governing bodies	20	57	14	9
18.12	Lay counsellors	14	31	46	9
18.19	FET Colleges	9	44	38	9
18.18	Universities	12	60	29	3

Table 7.9. Sectors that school psychologists collaborate with

The data from the questionnaires confirmed what emerged from the focus group interviews. It is evident that whatever the challenges may be, the circuit team structure, comprised of the school psychologists, social worker, curriculum advisor, institution management and governance advisor and learning support educators clearly facilitates collaboration. Sectors represented in the circuit team are working together.

School psychologists based in the Western Cape were asked, in the questionnaire, to indicate what percentage of their time they spent working collaboratively with other role players to facilitate school development. The results suggest a fair amount of time is spent working in collaboration with others in facilitating school development. In all, 22 participants spend more than 50% of their time working with other sectors to develop schools.

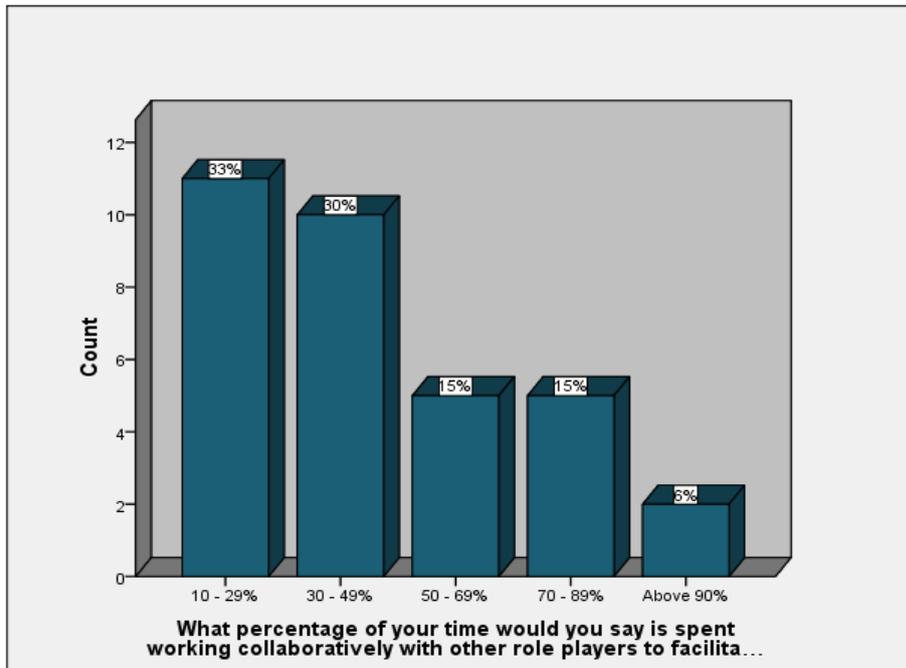


Figure 7.2. Percentage of time spent working collaboratively on school development activities

In exploring the nature of school development activities engaged in by school psychologists, I, as the researcher, was able to draw on data generated in all four data collection procedures. This triangulation by method enhances the trustworthiness of the data significantly.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES WHERE THESE EMERGED AS KEY THEMES/CATEGORIES			
	Document analysis	Email interviews	Focus groups	Questionnaires
Aims, goals and purpose	✓	✓	-	✓
Structures	✓	✓	✓	✓
Processes/Procedures	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 7.10. Triangulation of data: School psychologists' involvement in school development activities

As mentioned earlier, key informants interviewed from around the country, and school psychologists based in the Western Cape, were asked to explain how school psychologists work with others in facilitating school development. The aim was to understand what collaborative work school psychologists are engaged in. In analysing the responses, the nature of collaboration when they engage in teamwork was categorised in terms of what the collaboration was aimed at, what structures facilitated intersectoral collaboration and what processes facilitated intersectoral collaboration towards school development. A summary of these findings is presented in Table 7.11 below.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS COLLABORATING WITH OTHERS TO FACILITATE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT: AREAS OF FOCUS		
Aims, goals and purpose	Structures	Processes/Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Academic skills development ○ Progression and promotion • Educator development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training ○ Conflict resolution ○ Curriculum development • Parent development • School level intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support ○ Review of SIP ○ Establishing and developing structures ○ Policy development and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures at provincial level • District-based support teams (DBSTs) • Circuit teams • Institution-level support teams (ILSTs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinated professional support • Meetings • Case discussions • Jamborees • Programme development • School visits

Table 7.11. School psychologists' collaboration with other sectors to facilitate school development

What follows is a presentation of evidence to expound the categories and themes presented above.

7.3.2.2. The aims, goals and purpose of the collaboration

The *Quality education for all* report states clearly that

Education support services organised within a district or regional structure should play a pivotal role in identifying, organising and facilitating partnerships involving all the human resources available to the community whether from other govt depts., the private sector, community organisations or individuals who are able to provide support to learners or centres of learning. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 122)

One of the aims of collaboration towards school development, as articulated by key informants and the school psychologists alike, centres on learner development in the form of consultation, guidance and support to learners. School psychologists collaborate with others to influence the development of academic skills that learners require in order to achieve at school.

Much current work is still learner case specific (assessment, therapy, counselling, ILST consultations, processing of LSEN applications. [*Baie huidige werk is steeds leerder geval spesifiek (assessering, terapie, berading, ILST konsultasies, prosessering van LSEN aansoeke)*]). (18)

Collaboration with educators and support staff on the development of Individual Educational Development Plans (IEDP) for learners with barriers to learning (Western Cape Education Department, 2007c, p. 1)

Progression and promotion is a process which entails advising educators and schools about the performance or lack thereof of particular learners with a view to planning interventions that can assist with addressing barriers to learning. Job descriptions state this as a key role played by school psychologists:

Assist the multi-functional team with the process of learner progression and promotion within the NCS framework (Western Cape Education Department, 2007c, p. 2)

However, most school psychologists in the focus group interviews argued that they are not being employed optimally in such situations. Only a few school psychologists described, with confidence, the meaningful ways in which they are able to influence the proceedings in these collaborative spaces.

Intervention at school level as a team is at present once a year (November) when we moderate processes for progression and promotion. [*Intervensie op skool vlak as 'n span is huidiglik een maal per jaar (November) wanneer ons prosesse modureer vir promosie en progressie*]. (43)

One participant shared his/her experience in the focus group interview:

Can I give you an example of good practice that I experienced? It was within a team which I was on at the beginning of the year and I really did not want to be, but the good thing was in this senior position, I haven't been doing promotion and progressions, at this point I cannot look at a schedule. I do not have a clue what it looks like. Then there were two curriculum advisers involved, who understood that, and that was their function. Mine was—I was just part of conversations around the child all the time. I was a consultant. When it came to interviewing the parents I set the tone. How do you listen, how do you treat parents. So we worked like a dream team. We had parents who were highly distressed hugging us. Some people were ready to sue the department. There was a humane approach, because there was a psychologist. The curriculum person knew everything about ILSTs. She just hammered ILSTs, 'Show us what you have done!' Everything was covered, but each person was doing his/her own bit. It was like an orchestra with a cello, violin. We each played our part and it made the melody. I walked away from that feeling it was a really valuable practice. [*Kan ek jou 'n voorbeeld gee van goeie praktyk wat ek ervaar he?. Dit was binne 'n span waarmee ek besig was aan die begin van die jaar en nie regtig wou wees nie, maar die goeie ding in die senior posisie was, dat ek nie promosie en progressie gedoen het nie, op hierdie oomblik kan ek nie na 'n skedule kyk nie. Ek het geen idee hoe dit lyk nie. Dan was daar twee kurrikulum adverteurs betrokke, wie het dit verstaan, en wat was hulle funksie. Myne was – ek was net deel van die besprekings rondom die kind al die tyd. Ek was 'n konsultant. Ek het die toon aangegee wanneer dit gekom het by die onderhoud voering van ouers. Hoe luister jy, hoe behandel jy ouers? Ons het soos 'n droom span gewerk. Ouers wat hoog gestres was het ons omarm.*

Mense was gereed om die departement te dagvaar. Daar was 'n mensliewende benadering, omdat daar 'n sielkundige was. Die kurrikulum persoon het alles geweet rondom ILSTs. Sy het net ILSTs in gehammer. Wys ons wat jy gedoen het. Alles was gedek, maar elke persoon het sy eie deel gedoen. Dit was soos 'n orkes met 'n tjello, viool. Ons het elkeen ons part gespeel en dit het tot die melodie gelei. Ek het weggeloop daarvandaan met die gevoel dat dit regtig 'n waardevolle oefening was]. (fg7)

A second category that emerged in the analysis of email interviews and questionnaires was collaboration between sectors to facilitate educator development, the purpose of which was fundamentally to empower educators within the school system.

They need to work with teachers to assist the latter in better understanding of the learners and in helping to develop curriculum and learning materials. [*Hulle het nodig om met opvoeders te werk om laasgenoemde te help met 'n beter begrip van die leerder en hulpverlening met die ontwikkeling van kurrikulum en leermateriaal]. (Lecturer/trainer)*

We focus largely on the empowerment and upskilling of educators through workshops, talks etc. [*Ons fokus grootliks op die bemagtiging en verhoging van vaardigheid van opvoeders deur werksinkels, besprekings ens.]. (1)*

Sometimes psychologists work together with some sectors in terms of training together and facilitating together. [*Somtyds werk sielkundiges saam met sommige sektore in terme van opleiding en fasilitering]. (8)*

Working with educators to resolve conflicts at the level of the school was mentioned as an important collaborative goal.

Done conflict resolution intervention in schools on numerous occasions. All these have worked best when involving a broad range of support personnel. [*Het konflik resolusie intervensie in skole gedoen op verskeie geleenthede. Dit alles het die beste gewerk wanneer 'n wye reeks van ondersteuningspersoneel betrek was]. (5)*

Another aim of collaboration identified by school psychologists and key informants was the support and development of parents. This development work was described as often taking the form of workshops and group interventions that were planned and facilitated by a group of stakeholders including school psychologists.

They need to work with parents and assist the latter to acquire skills to provide needed support to schools, learners and teachers. [*Hulle het nodig om met ouers te werk en om laasgenoemde by te staan om vaardighede te bekom om die nodige ondersteuning aan skole, leerders en opvoeders te voorsien]. (Lecturer/trainer)*

A final category in terms of the purpose of collaboration was a desire to intervene at the level of the school. This included a general aim which was to provide support to the system as a whole.

The district-based support team needs to ensure that it provides well-coordinated and collaborative support to the institution (Department of Education, 2005a, p. 37)

Services need to 'fit together' in such a way that the schools experience a well-managed support for their work (Department of Education, 2005a, p. 43)

More specifically, collaboration focused on support in the development and review of school improvement plans.

Teams assist schools with the school improvement plans and support schools with development programmes. [*Spanne staan skole by met die Skool Verbeteringsplanne en ondersteun skole met ontwikkelingsprogramme*]. (Manager: school psychological services)

Another central aim of collaboration, as depicted in the policy documents and job descriptions, involved the establishment and development of structures in the school that would facilitate quality teaching and learning. Such structures include ILSTs, school management teams, and phase or learning-area teams.

These teams (ILSTs) should be strengthened by expertise from the local community, district-based support teams and higher education institutions. (Department of Education, 2001, p. 29)

Providing a consultative service to schools and Education Support Teams. (Western Cape Education Department, 2007c, p. 2)

Providing professional support to the District Based Support Team and the Institution Based Support Team (Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education, 2005a, 2009)

A final aim that emerges in the document analysis is the provision of assistance in the development of policies and procedures within schools.

Structures would be developed at all levels of education governance (national, provincial, district, and centre-of-learning) to facilitate co-operative governance between relevant government departments where needed, and to bring relevant professionals and stakeholders together for the purposes of policy planning and, at local level, practice. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 80-81)

This policy directive was captured and confirmed in the email interviews and questionnaires.

We did not exclude ourselves from discussions about school development, e.g. planning for improved discipline, parental involvement, community links,

budget imperatives. [*Ons het nie ons self uitgesluit van besprekings oor skool ontwikkeling, bv. beplanning van verbeterde dissipline, ouer betrokkenheid, gemeenskapsverbintenesse, begroting noodsaaklikhede*]. (Manager of School Psychological Services)

Adding depth and value to the circuit team approach to school development. Informing policies and procedures in terms of a positive behaviour ethos. [*Byvoeging van diepte en waarde aan die omtrek span benadering tot skool ontwikkeling. In die formulering van beleid en prosedures in terme van 'n positiewe gedrag etos*]. (25)

7.3.2.3. The structures and procedures/processes which facilitate collaboration

The aims, goals and purpose of collaboration, as presented in the documents analysed and the interviews and questionnaires conducted have been discussed in the previous section; the structures and processes which exist to facilitate collaboration will be explained in the sections that follow. The structures focus on what is in place that holds or frames the collaboration, while the processes can be seen to be how collaboration is engaged in.

7.3.2.3.1 Structures that facilitate collaboration

The document analysis, questionnaires and email and focus group interviews refer to a number of structures that exist in the education system at various levels and which facilitate intersectoral collaboration around school development. These structures are established as a consequence of policy directives in some instances and in others have been set up by those involved in school development initiatives.

Structures at provincial level are recommended because it is argued that these will ensure intersectoral collaboration.

Intersectoral collaboration would be ensured through appropriate structures, procedures and processes. This would occur at national, provincial, district and centre-of-learning (school) level. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 85)

Specialised Education Support sub-directorate facilitates peer learning exchanges for ELSEN educators and SNE professionals within and between circuits and districts (Western Cape Education Department, 2009a)

The document analysis revealed that staff from provincial, district, and regional offices, from different government departments and sectors, are expected to work together to provide comprehensive support to learners and schools. The Head of Specialised Learner and Educator Support in the Western Cape Education Department is tasked with managing the

co-ordination of services where sectors work collaboratively in the provision of specialised support or addressing barriers to learning. This includes collaboration with provincial government departments, private sector organisations and NGOs. Individuals in these posts are also expected to manage collaboration within circuits, across circuits, across districts and with Head Office, as and when it concerns SLES matters (Western Cape Education Department, 2007a)

This collaborative nature of school psychology service provision was reinforced in the email and focus group interviews.

Work with Department of Health, Department of Social Development, Home affairs, NGOS, FBOS to access services for learners. [*Werk met die Departement van Gesondheid, Departement van Sosiale Ontwikkeling, Binnelandse Sake, NGOs, FBOs vir toegang tot dienste vir leerders*]. (Provincial co-ordinator: school psychological services)

As with clinics there is a very close relationship that we have, because all of us fall under—we have health promoting schools. They come here on a monthly basis where we have some workshops and then we arm one another with what to do when we go to schools. All of us try to improve the schools. Our relationship is so very close, it is tight [*Soos met klinieke is daar 'n baie hegte verhouding wat ons het, omdat almal van ons val onder—ons het gesondheidsbevordering skole. Hulle kom hier op 'n maandelikse basis waar ons dan werkswinkels het en mekaar dan bewapen met wat om te doen as ons skole toe gaan. Amal van ons probeer om skole te verbeter. Ons het 'n baie hegte verhouding, dit is baie heg*]. (fg3)

District-based support teams are regarded as a key structure that facilitates collaboration between various sectors. *Education White Paper 6* contained the statement that

This strengthened education support service will have, at its centre, new district based support teams that will comprise staff from provincial district, regional and head offices and from special schools. (Department of Education, 2001, p. 29)

District support is provided through a district centre that integrates the various kinds of support. (Department of Education, 2005a, p. 10)

Key informants in the email interviews described the ways in which they are able to work at district level.

In the districts the units work in teams. First the multi-disciplinary teams co-facilitates training and development workshops for educators and district personnel...cascading of training with other units such as curriculum adaptations training and programmes on reading and other developmental programmes involving ECD and ABET Units. [*In die distrikte werk die eenhede*

in spanne. Eerstens mede-fasiliteer die multi-disiplinêre spanne opleiding en ontwikkeling van werkswinkels vir opvoeders en distrikspersoneel ... stroom van opleiding met ander eenhede soos kurrikulum variasie opleiding en programme vir lees en ander ontwikkelings programme wat ECD en ABET Eenhede betrek]. (Manager of School Psychological Services)

The school psychologists questioned in the focus group interviews explained how the system functions at the next level, which is the circuit. Circuit teams were created and formalised in the Western Cape after the last redesign process took place in 2008. These teams are headed by a circuit team manager.

We work as a team consists of curriculum advisors, IMG's, learning support and school-based Admin staff in schools. We have regular meetings where we as a team reflect on our practices and plan more appropriate intervention strategies. Schools also have their own development plan (school improvement plans) We then formulate our circuit intervention plan based on the SIP's for each school. [*Ons werk as 'n span wat bestaan uit Kurrikulum Adviseurs, IMG's, onderrig ondersteuning en skool-gebaseerde Admin personeel in skole. Ons het gereelde vergaderings waar ons as 'n span reflekteer op ons praktyke en beplanning van meer geskikte intervensie strategieë. Skole het ook hulle eie ontwikkelingsplan (skool verbeteringsplanne). Dan formuleer ons, ons omtrek intervensie plan gebaseer op die SIPs vir elke skool]. (6)*

School development is a shared responsibility. The school psychologist ought to work as part of a team that focuses on development. Even the therapeutic work of a psychologist needs to feed into the developmental framework since health promotion is a key aspect in school development. [*Skool ontwikkeling is 'n gesamentlike verantwoordelikheid. Die skool sielkundige behoort te werk as deel van 'n span wat fokus op ontwikkeling. Selfs die terapeutiese werk van die sielkundiges behoort te voed binne in die ontwikkelingsraamwerk aangesien gesondheidsbevordering 'n sleutel aspek in skool ontwikkeling is]. (Lecturer/trainer)*

They work in circuit development teams at circuit offices. [*Hulle werk in omtrek ontwikkelings spanne by die omtrek kantore]* (Manager: school psychological services)

When I did the appeals one of the parents we saw was a mom that was dying of cancer and she was desperate that her son—he was beginning to act out at school. He was failing grade 9, he needed to be based somewhere. She sat there in tears. The two curriculum people for the first time saw what we are confronted with all the time. Their hearts were ... and they sat ... Mitchell's Plain is full of skills. What do we do? We got to fill in these forms. They drove me around to get the forms to the school. They went with me to the Mitchell's Plain school of skills, because Benny knows the principal well, they sat with us. What is this place—what do you do? They walked out there so educated about everything. A first time they were part of the SLES process and saw what goes into all of that... the heart ache. The hope that this child is going to be placed, and which doesn't always happen. But those two people definitely understand today what

we do. [Toe ek die appèl van een van die ouers hanteer het, het ons 'n ma gesien wat besig was om te sterf aan kanker en sy was desperaat dat haar seun – hy het begin probleme gee op skool. Hy was besig om graad 9 te druip, en moes iewers geplaas word. Sy het daar in trane gesit. Die twee kurrikulum persone het vir die eerste keer gesien waarmee ons al die tyd gekonfronteer word. Hulle harte het ... en hulle het gesit ... Mitchell's Plain is vol vaardighede. Wat kan ons doen? Ons moet hierdie vorms voltooi. Hulle het my rond gery om die vorms by die skool te kry. Hulle het saam met my gegaan na die Mitchell's Plain School of Skills, omdat Benny die skoolhoof goed ken, het hulle met ons gesit. Watter plek is dit–wat doen jy hier? Hulle loop daar uit so volleerd omtrent alles. 'n Eerste keer dat hulle deel was van die SLES proses en gesien het wat alles daarmee saam gaan ... die hartseer. Die hoop dat hierdie kind geplaas gaan word, en dat dit nie altyd gebeur nie. Maar daardie twee persone verstaan vandag wat ons doen]. (fg7)

This circuit-level structure is designed as a multifunctional team as is underscored in the document study.

The present support structures: (circuit managers, subject advisors, school clinics, etc.) will need to be re-organised within the educational development centres into inter-disciplinary teams to ensure that the support they offer to schools is holistic and appropriate (Western Cape Education Department, 1999, p. 11)

Multi-disciplinary/intersectoral teams should be established in all districts/regions of provinces and be accessible to all centres of learning. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 122)

Function as an integral member of a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) at the District-Based Support Team (based at EMDC). (Western Cape Education Department, 2007c, p. 2)

Member of a multi-functional team involved in the early identification of learners with barriers to learning. (Western Cape Education Department, 2007c, p.1)

Assist the multi-functional team with the process of learner progression and promotion within the NCS framework. (Western Cape Education Department, 2007c, p. 2)

Work as part of a multidisciplinary team (e.g. social worker, speech therapist, remedial and special education advisor, Physio- and occupational therapist, medical officials, etc.) to address barriers effectively. (Free State Department of Education, 2009)

Service delivery to implement inclusive education policies as a member of the multidisciplinary district-based support team. (Northern Cape Department of Education, 2009)

The multifunctional role emphasised in the documents was reiterated in the focus group interviews and questionnaires, highlighted by many school psychologists as an important feature of their work. It was argued that this could potentially ensure heightened benefits for those who were targeted for support, whether learners, educators or schools.

We are multifunctional/multiskilled. We work in circuit teams and interact when necessary. It is also all about networking. [*Ons is multifunksionierend/multigeskoold. Ons werk in omtrek spanne en skakel met mekaar wanneer nodig. Dit is ook alles omtrent networking*]. (28)

The current organisational structure at district level compels different professionals to work together in multifunctional teams. [*Die huidige organisasie strukture op distriksvlak verplig verskillende vakkundiges om in multifunksionele spanne saam te werk*]. (37)

In terms of multifunctional team – we are at the moment persuaded to do many things that we may not feel we possibly have a role in but for the sake of making new teams work, we do it. [*In terme van multi-funksionele spanne – ons is op die oomblik oorreed om baie dinge te doen wat ons voel ons moontlik nie 'n rol in het nie, maar ter wille van nuwe spanne te maak werk, doen ons dit*] (fg7)

Finally, it is at the level of the school that the structures are established to facilitate collaboration to sustain school development initiatives. Policy documents highlight the importance of support teams at the level of the institution.

These institution-level support teams consist of educators and members of school management as well as individuals with relevant expertise who are based in “the local community, district support teams and higher education institutions. (Department of Education, 2001, p. 49)

In summary, the structures that facilitate collaboration between sectors when engaging in school development include posts at provincial level, the district-based support team, circuit teams and institution-level support teams. These structures are established to develop schools and do so by engaging in various procedures and processes that facilitate collaboration. These are expounded in the section that follows.

7.3.2.3.2 Procedures / processes that facilitate collaboration

Within the structures described in the previous section, the document analysis revealed a number of processes and procedures or activities which are designed to facilitate school development and employ intersectoral collaboration in an attempt to intensify efforts and maximise success.

The different levels of the system that are involved in the assessment process (e.g. institution-level support teams and District-based Support Teams) need to work closely together, ensuring that assessment processes are smoothly pursued (Department of Education, 2008, p. 23)

Leader of the support team should focus on co-ordination and collaboration to ensure holistic and integrated support provision. (Department of Education, 2005a, p. 13)

Manage the co-ordination of services where intersectoral partnerships for the provision of specialised support or the addressing of barriers to learning occur, e.g. with provincial government departments, private sector organisations, NGOs; Manage SLES collaboration within circuits, across circuits, across districts and with Head Office SLES Head (Western Cape Education Department, 2008d)

Work in collaboration with officials from other State departments rendering support services in learning institutions (e.g. remedial, special education, school management development and learning facilitation, welfare, educators and principals) to provide a well co-ordinated service (Free State Department of Education, 2009)

These processes were described by key informants in the email interviews and expanded upon by school psychologists in the focus group interviews. Participants explained that the support provided includes involvement in assessment processes, holistic development of the school and addressing barriers to learning with a strong emphasis on the importance and need for co-ordination of professional support.

We combine our effort in bringing about a holistic development of the school. In so doing, one does what one specialises in. [*Ons kombineer ons poging om teweeg te bring 'n holistiese ontwikkeling van die skool. Sodoende doen jy waarin jy spesialiseer*]. (32)

Providing the team with the knowledge and insight into psycho-educational issues affecting learners and their development. Adding depth and value to the circuit team approach to school development. [*Voorsien die span met die kennis en insig in psigologiese-opvoedkundige kwessies wat leerders en hul ontwikkeling affekteer. Bydra van diepte en waarde tot die omtrek span se benadering tot skool ontwikkeling*] (25)

On a daily basis we work with learning support advisors, curriculum advisors, IMG advisors for better management and support in school to enhance quality education. [*Op 'n daaglikse basis werk ons met leer ondersteunings adviseurs, kurrikulum adviseurs, IMG adviseurs vir 'n beter bestuur en ondersteuning in skole om kwaliteit opvoeding te verhoog*]. (31)

Another procedure which ensures intersectoral collaboration, referred to in the focus group interviews and questionnaires, is meetings. Participants explained that meetings provide a meaningful space for collaborative engagement between different sectors. Without these spaces, communication is minimised and consequently impacts negatively on what can be achieved.

The nature of the teamwork and collaboration is mostly on the level of discussions; planning; reflections; monitoring and revisiting the strategies after it has been implemented. [*Die aard van die spanwerk en samewerking is meestal op die vlak van besprekings; beplanning; refleksies; kontrolering en herinspektering van strategieë nadat dit geïmplimenteer was*]. (43)

This concurs with what the planners of the policy expect, as emerged in the document analysis.

The support team gets together to brainstorm, problem-solve, exchange ideas and experiences in order to assist educators and learners to successfully address the barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2005b, p. 21)

Case discussions, although often focused on a single learner, were claimed to produce meaningful discussions between different sectors, which, in turn, generated learnings for the school system, as one key informant highlighted in an email interview:

Case conferences when admitting learners in special schools and other relevant institutions. [*Gevalliestudie konferensies wanneer leerders toegelaat word in spesiale skole en ander relevante instellings*]. (private practitioner)

School psychologists in the focus group interviews mentioned that development programmes that include workshops for various stakeholders are often designed, planned and facilitated in collaboration with other sectors and are aimed at impacting on the school as an organisation. Such programmes, they explained, often take the form of the provision of life-skills education to learners and even educators, where needed. This is in line with their job description, as illustrated in the document analysis.

Develop learning and support programmes in collaboration with relevant role players. (Western Cape Education Department, 2007c, p. 2)

Circuit teams were described as a key structure in all focus groups. School psychologists explained that these teams engage in regular school visits, which are designed to ensure that sectors work collaboratively and are able to hold their focus on the school as a system.

In our circuit we have allocated two days during which we all zoom into a school together as a team, but each of us does his own core work and during that period you will discover issues that need the IMG's attention; then you are able

to refer them to the IMG to address it immediately—when we are together. Sometimes when you pick up these things and the IMG is not there—we feed back during the meetings—the Friday meetings [*In ons omtrek het ons twee dae toegeken waartydens ons almal neersak op 'n skool as 'n span, maar elkeen van ons doen sy eie kern werk en gedurende hierdie periode sal jy kwessies ontdek wat die die IMG's se aandag nodig het, jy is dan by magte om hulle na die IMG te verwys om dit onmiddellik te adresseer—wanneer ons bymekaar is. Somtyds wanneer jy hierdie dinge teëkom en die IMG is nie beskikbaar nie—weergee ons dit gedurende vergaderings—die Vrydag vergaderings*]. (fg2)

Last year I worked in a circuit—we worked in a circuit team context where we went to a school, we had all our roles, we worked together. This year the circuit team doesn't function as a circuit team. I do my core work at schools and I don't do things that are requested like pre-progression and exam monitoring and all those things. I don't do that. I don't see the value in doing that—I prefer the working as a team. It was great to have that support. This year – we're not working like that, so I have adjusted to working on my little island [*Verlede jaar het ek in 'n omtrek gewerk—ons het in 'n omtrek span konteks gewerk waar ons na 'n skool gegaan het, ons het al ons rolle gehad, ons het saam gewerk. Die omtrek span hierdie jaar—fungeer nie as 'n omtrek span nie. Ek doen my kern werk by die skole en ek doen nie dinge wat gevra is soos pre-progressie en eksamen monitering en al hierdie dinge. Dit doen ek nie. Ek sien nie die waarde om dit te doen ... Ek verkies die werking van 'n span. Dit was goed om daardie ondersteuning te hê. Hierdie jaar, werk ons nie so nie, so het ek dus aangepas om te werk op my klein eiland*]. (fg2)

Jamborees are organised at district level in at least two provinces:

KZN district offices co-ordinate what we call "Jamborees", to which all government Departments. are invited, to bring services to the people often in deep rural areas. We facilitate access for ID, grants, food parcels and medical care. [*KZN distrik kantore koördineer wat ons noem "Jamborees". Hier is alle regerings departemente genooi om dienste na die mense, gewoonlik in plattelandse areas, te bring. Ons fasiliteer toegang vir ID, toelaes, kospakkies en mediese sorg.*] (D)

A Jamboree is a situation where all different departments come together to that particular location or area and then the members of the community will come and then if I am a social worker or psychologist I have to explain to them what it is we do exactly. how we can help them. Social work does that. Home Affairs gives them ID's— everything is done here. [*'n Jamboree ... is 'n situasie waar alle verskillende departemente bymekaar kom by daardie spesifieke gebied of area en die lede van die gemeenskap sal dan kom en as ek 'n maatskaplike werker of sielkundige is, sal ek aan hulle verduidelik wat dit is wat ons eintlik doen. Hoe ons hulle kan help. Maatskaplike werkers doen dit. Binnelandse Sake verskaf ID's—alles word hier gedoen*]. (fg3)

7.4. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has provided the basis upon which Chapter 8 is grounded. A broad description of the key roles played by school psychologists within the South African context was provided. The findings related to the key concepts of school development and intersectoral collaboration were followed with an emphasis on how these concepts were understood or defined by the participants as well as how they are involved in the practice of each. School development activities were described at the level of the individual and the organisation. Collaboration was explored through an identification of the sectors school psychologists engage with, the time spent on these activities, the aims, goals and purpose thereof and, finally, the structures, procedures and processes that facilitate collaboration. The chapter that follows depicts the challenges that school psychologists face when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development and the efforts engaged in to address these challenges.



CHAPTER 8

FINDINGS:

CHALLENGES IN FACILITATING SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION

In this chapter, the core findings of the study, linked to the problem statement presented in Chapter 1, are captured. It portrays the challenges that school psychologists face as they work with other sectors who engage in school development. The findings herein are drawn partly from data generated in the email interviews with 17 key informants but primarily from the focus group discussions (47 school psychologists) and the questionnaires in which school psychologists (N=35) in the Western Cape participated.

The document analysis revealed little regarding challenges that face school psychologists, although this is not surprising given the nature of the document sources that were selected for study. These included policy documents and job descriptions, as well as organograms depicting the structure of the education system and education support, in particular, in the various provinces.

The following categories emerged as challenges facing school psychologists when collaborating with others to facilitate school development. The way in which this data was triangulated is depicted in the table that follows.

CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS WHEN COLLABORATING WITH OTHER SECTORS TO FACILITATE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT	DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES WHERE THESE EMERGED AS KEY THEMES/CATEGORIES			
	Document analysis	Email interviews	Focus groups	Questionnaires
Role definition	-	✓	✓	✓
Personal and interpersonal dynamics	-	✓	✓	✓
Organisational challenges	-	✓	✓	✓
Discourse and worldviews	-	-	✓	✓
Training and development	-	✓	-	-
Wider education system/Macro context	-	-	✓	✓

Table 8.1. *Triangulation of data: Challenges facing school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development*

The data generated from the email interviews, focus group interviews and questionnaires were analysed, and key themes emerged within each of the categories listed in Table 8.1. These themes are illustrated in Table 8.2 and are discussed in greater depth in the section that follows.

CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS WHEN COLLABORATING WITH OTHER SECTORS TO FACILITATE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT	
Category	Key themes
Role definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles overlap, lack of clarity re roles and functions of various stakeholders • Roles unclear, lack of clarity regarding the job description of school psychologists • Potential school psychologist role understated, generally • Blurring of professional boundaries , boundaries are unclear • Perceptions that collaboration implies “equality” and therefore little opportunity to assert specialisation or expertise • Limited understanding of the role school psychologists can play in school development in particular <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job description is too wide • Made to assume responsibilities unrelated to training and expertise as psychologists
Personal and interpersonal dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor communication • Power dynamics • Marginalisation
Organisational challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor co-ordination (and management) • Communication and decision making • Human and material resources
Discourse and worldviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of school development • Understanding of intersectoral collaboration • Nature of relationships with schools
Training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate skills and knowledge • Paradigm shift necessitated
Wider education system/Macro context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No school psychologist voice • Education support not a priority • Poor change management

Table 8.2. Challenges facing school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development

The following two tables depict the challenges faced by school psychologists when facilitating school development and when engaging in intersectoral collaboration. The questionnaire included a question that asked school psychologists to indicate what challenges they face when facilitating school development.

Question 21: What challenges have you faced as a school psychologist when <i>facilitating school development</i> ? (Indicate the extent to which the following issues constitute a challenge for you by placing an X in the appropriate box)		Percentages			
CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS WHO FACILITATE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
21.7	Too few school psychologists	3	3	3	91
21.10	Office space impacts negatively on ability to provide service effectively e.g. confidentiality	9	6	6	79
21.15	Schools lacking motivation to engage in school development	0	0	27	78
21.9	Insufficient time to conduct assigned responsibilities	0	0	24	77
21.12	Lack of stability in the educational system, e.g. too many education reforms	0	0	24	77
21.14	School development a long term process	0	6	18	77
21.1	Stereotyped views of what school psychologists have to offer (e.g. schools expect medical model approach)	0	3	27	71
21.11	Lack of financial resources to properly fund services to be delivered	0	6	24	71
21.5	Limited understanding of the role school psychologists can play in school development	3	6	24	68
21.3	Job description is too wide	3	12	21	65
21.2	Lack of clarity regarding the job description of school psychologists	0	3	35	62
21.13	Education policy challenges e.g. lack of common understanding of policy interpretation by schools, district and province	0	9	29	62
21.4	Made to assume responsibilities unrelated to training and expertise as psychologists	3	15	29	53
21.6	Low acceptance/status of school psychology as a profession	6	24	18	53
21.8	Insufficient training, expertise and experience to facilitate school development	9	24	30	36

Table 8.3. Questionnaire responses: Challenges facing school psychologists who facilitate school development

Analysis of Table 8.3 indicates that those challenges experienced most often are organisational, referring to resource constraints, both human and physical. The other challenges noted as impacting significantly appear to exist on a macro level and relate to systems functions and processes, including transformation in education and its impact on stability, motivation and morale.

Table 8.4 below captures the analysis of a question put to school psychologists wherein they were expected to reflect specifically on the challenges they face when working collaboratively with other sectors.

Question 22: What challenges have you experienced when you have worked collaboratively with other sectors and professionals in the development of schools?		Percentages			
CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN WORKING WITH OTHERS/IN A TEAM CONTEXT TO FACILITATE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
22.4	School psychologists do not have a voice in the transformation process in the province or district	0	0	6	94
22.12	Perceptions that collaboration implies “equality” and therefore little opportunity to assert specialisation or expertise (teamwork="generalist" work)	0	6	14	80
22.11	Blurring of professional boundaries	0	6	20	74
22.6	Senior management attitude towards school psychologists and services they have to offer	0	6	29	66
22.7	Work of school psychologists not appreciated and valued	0	11	26	63
22.10	Lack of clarity re roles and functions of various stakeholders	0	6	34	60
22.5	Interpersonal dynamics (e.g. trust, communication, conflict, power relations, etc.)	0	6	38	56
22.9	Collaboration within circuit teams not co-ordinated and managed effectively (control as opposed to management)	0	14	31	54
22.16	Lack of common understanding of what teamwork or collaboration entails in terms of maximising benefit for schools	0	6	40	54
22.17	Financial and other resource challenges	0	15	32	53
22.2	Education support not seen as a priority within the education system	3	14	40	43
22.8	Poor co-ordination and management of support provided to schools	0	6	53	41
22.15	Little feedback after referral, quality of service provided by other sectors uncertain	0	26	34	40
22.3	Personal dynamics (e.g. confidence, competence, assertiveness, self-esteem of the individuals involved, etc.)	0	14	51	34
22.1	Goals for school development not common or shared	0	11	57	31
22.14	Few opportunities to confer with SNE/SLES colleagues within the district	6	20	43	31
22.13	Few opportunities to confer with colleagues within the circuit team	0	41	29	21

Table 8.4. Questionnaire responses: Challenges facing school psychologists in working with others

The challenges faced most often link to personal and interpersonal dynamics (attitudes, assertiveness and communication) and role definition (lack of clarity regarding the role of school psychologists and blurred boundaries between sectors). This is expanded upon in the section that follows as data from document analysis are presented and evidence from the email and focus group interviews is drawn upon to support or refute the findings from the document study. Quotations from the focus group interviews are referenced with a numerical code (e.g., focus group 4 [fg4]). The coded numbers reflect the code that was randomly allocated to the respondents on the questionnaire, all of whom are school psychologists based in circuit teams in the Western Cape province.

8.1. Role Definition

Intersectoral collaboration is not well supported in contexts where the roles played by different sectors are unclear and consequently overlap. The authors of the policy documents consulted have all stated clearly that role definition is important:

Different role definitions will have to be devised and made known to stakeholders (Western Cape Education Department, 1999, p.11)

The writers of the *Quality education for all* report caution that where there is a lack of clarity regarding roles, professional boundaries are often blurred, leading to unease and even conflict in collaborative spaces.

Data emerging from the focus group interviews suggest that participants' experiences do not concur with the policy directive:

The only time we work together is if we go in for pre-promotion and progression. And when we are asked to do other peoples' work. [*Die enigste tyd wanneer ons saamwerk is as ons in gaan vir pre-promosie en progressie. En wanneer ons gevra word om ander mense se werk te doen*] (fg2)

So people are not told, '1st July the redesign kicks in'. Everyone has a clear idea of what does—what is the CTM's role. The CTM now will—in the past you were managed by the senior school psychologist. You were managed by the Head of SLES, but now ... the senior psychologist's role will just be this and this. Head of SLES will now be this and this. [*So daar is nie gesê 'mense 1st of July gaan die re-design intree'. Het almal 'n presiese idêe van wat doen—wat is die CTM se rol. Die CTM gaan nou—voorheen was julle bestuur deur 'n senior school psychologist. Julle was bestuur deur die hoof van SLES, maar nou gaan...die senior psychologist se rol gaan nou net dit en dit wees. Head of SLES se rol gaan nou dit en dit*]. (fg4)

One participant reflected on the experience of school psychologists with regard to this blurring of boundaries:

Boundaries are very vague. 'Redesign' expects that everyone in the circuit should be able to do everything. Apart from the fact that the psychologists must still do his/her professional work, like, for example, write up reports and make referrals. [*Grense is baie vaag. 'Redesign' verwag dat almal in die kring behoort alles te kan doen. Behalwe dat die sielkundige nog sy professionele werk ook nog moet doen soos, bv. verslae opstel en verwysings doen*]. (10)

School psychologists were vocal in the focus groups about the lack of clarity around the role of school psychologists within districts and circuits and the potential to strain collaborative engagements. This is illustrated in the quotes below:

They may be misused to do work that is not directly linked to school psychological support. [*Hulle mag misbruik word om werk te doen wat nie direk gekoppel is aan sielkundige ondersteuning*]. (Manager of School Psychological Services)

Circuit team managers are ‘clueless’ about what a psychologist can and cannot be expected to do. [*Omtrek span bestuurders is ‘oningelig’ oor wat ‘n sielkundige kan doen en nie verwag kan word om te doen*]. (18)

... but the role of the psychologist had to change to some extent. Many people—some people would call it comfort zones. Many psychologists had to change their rhythm ... how they do their jobs. Because they were not allowed to render the service like we believe the service should be rendered. We had to rethink our practice and we had to adapt our practice. Whether that is good or bad—that is not the issue now. The issue is that the psychologists had to change their service. [*... maar die rol van die sielkundige het verander tot ‘n seker mate. Baie mense—sommige mense sou dit gemak sones noem. Baie sielkundiges moes hulle ritme verander ... hoe hulle hul werk doen. Want hulle was nie toegelaat om die diens te lewer soos hulle glo die diens behoort gelewer te word. Ons moes ons praktyk heroorweeg en aanpas. Hetsy dit goed of sleg is—dit is nie nou die kwessie nie. Die kwessie is dat die sielkundige hulle diens moes verander*]. (fg5)

Psychologists must move from the notion of ‘sitting in an office and assessing and counselling learners ,only’ ; their work must be more of a support role to educators, assisting in identification of learning and developmental difficulties, development of support programmes, development of learner profiles and the action, and support, in a classroom situation to both educators and learners. [*Sielkundiges moet weg beweeg van die idee ‘om net in ‘n kantoor te sit en leerders te assessee en te adviseer’, hulle werk moet meer ‘n rol van ondersteuning aan opvoeders wees, hulpverlening in identifisering van leer en ontwikkelings probleme, ontwikkeling van ondersteuningsprogramme, ontwikkeling van leerder profiele en die aksie, en ondersteuning in ‘n klaskamer situasie aan beide opvoeders en leerders*]. (Manager of School Psychological Services)

School psychologists in the Western Cape are concerned, in particular, about the job description attached to the posts they hold. It is described by many of them as impressive, in that it acknowledges how much school psychologists can, in fact, do but is lofty and too broad and, consequently, unrealistic in its expectations.

... there was a job description before, and there is a job description in progress at the moment. It was that—It was that long. So if you go and advocate, this is everything that I can do, you are actually setting yourself up to either burn out or stress. You don’t want to create an unrealistic expectation in terms of ‘this is what I can do’. So you kind of hold back a little bit as ... well I did, in terms of what I can do. [*... voorheen was daar ‘n pos beskrywing, en daar is ‘n pos*

beskrywing in aanvang op die oomblik. Dit was dat–Dit was so lank. So as jy sou gaan en verkondig, ‘dit is wat ek kan doen’, berei jy jouself voor om of uit te brand of te stres. Jy wil nie ‘n onrealistiese verwagting skep in terme van dit is wat ek kan doen. So jy hou ‘n bietjie terug soos ... wel ek het, in terme van wat ek kan doen.](fg2)

It is such a wide job description and most people who weren't trained previously weren't exposed to all aspects of the job description. So people will have a speciality, and will make the argument that, in the same way the Intersen (curriculum advisor) must work across circuits in order to cover all the learning areas, amongst us school psychologists, we have such specialist expertise. But often in a single person--not everybody can cover all the areas of the job description. [*Dit is so ‘n wye pos beskrywing en die meeste mense wat nie in die verlede opgelei was nie, was nie blootgestel aan alle aspekte van die pos beskrywing. So mense sal ‘n spesialiteit hê en maak dan die argument dat, op dieselfde manier dat die Intersen (kurrikulum adviseur)regoor omtrekke moet werk ten einde om alle leer areas te dek, onder ons skool sielkundiges, het ons deskundiges. Maar gereeld in ‘n enkel persoon--nie almal kan al die areas van die pos beskrywing dek nie]. (fg7)*

Many participants in the email interviews, and in the focus groups, mentioned that a consequence of the lack of clarity of the school psychologist's role, as explored above, is that the role of the school psychologist is often understated, leaving many school psychologists feeling marginalised and unacknowledged.

In my opinion, educational psychologists' possible role in schools is still sadly underrated. Likewise, there seems to be general ignorance about the skills that educational psychologists actually acquire during training. We seem to get the impression that educational psychologists are by and large regarded as a lesser breed of psychologists, mainly concerned with study methods, habits and the like. [*Na my mening is opvoedkundige sielkundiges se moontlike rol in skole steeds meewarig onderskat. Eweneens, daar is skynbaar ‘n algemene onkunde omtrent die vaardighede wat opvoedkundige sielkundiges werklik bekom tydens opleiding. Ons kry skynbaar die indruk dat opvoedkundige sielkundiges by verre beskou word as ‘n mindere geslag van sielkundiges, oorwegend betrokke met die studie metodes, gewoontes en dit]. (lecturer/supervisor)*

So the feeling of psychologists and people who feel we have a specialist function that we need to execute--felt our service will be diluted in doing what we are doing now, and that is exactly what happened. [*So die gevoel van sielkundiges en mense wat voel dat ons ‘n spesialiteits funksie het wat ons moet uitvoer--voel dat ons diens afgewater sal word in dit wat ons nou doen en dit wat werklik gebeur]. (fg5)*

Challenges in relation to job roles--convince sectors of the place of school psychologists and/or the roles and functions of school psychologists in school development and the need to clearly define the scope of practice of school psychologists [*Uitdagings met betrekking tot werk funksie--oortuig sektore van die plek van skool sielkundiges en/of die rol en funksie van skool sielkundiges in*

skool ontwikkeling en die behoefte om duidelik uit te spel die omvang van die praktyk van skool sielkundige].(Lecturer/trainer)

The stereotyped view of what psychologists do is a serious challenge. A perception exists that their work is limited to individual psycho-educational assessments and therapy, one that is held by many who engage with school psychologists as colleagues and clients and even by some school psychologists themselves. This limited understanding of the role school psychologists can play in school development presents as a major challenge to collaboration in relation to school development, as revealed in the following quotes from school psychologists in email and focus group interviews.

I think the notion of whole school development is not thoroughly understood in this province so the role of psychologists as change agents is minimal. I do not think that the current cadre of psychologists feel that this aspect of service delivery forms part of their responsibilities. SAD!!! [*Ek dink die gedagte van heel skool ontwikkeling word nie deeglik verstaan in hierdie provinsie, so die rol van sielkundiges as instrument in verandering is minimaal. Ek dink nie dat die huidige raamwerk van sielkundiges voel dat hierdie aspek van dienslewering deel vorm van hulle verantwoordelikheid. SAD!!!*]. (Director of Psychological and Social Services)

I do wish it was different. I know it sounds quite reactionary, but I quite prefer it the way it was before. I feel I can hardly take in the lack of understanding--no appreciation of what my job is about [*Ek wens dit was anders. Ek weet dit klink taamlik onversetlik, maar ten ene male verkies ek die manier hoe dit voorheen was. Ek voel ek kan skaars die gebrek van insig in asem, geen waardering van wat my werk behels*]. (fg2)

I think perhaps, many a time, it's ignorance ... people in the circuit are not aware of what you actually--what you actually do. It is the ignorance around what we actually do--our work on a deeper level [*Ek dink miskien is dit baie keer die onkunde wat die ouens in die kring nie altyd bewus is van wat jy eintlik--wat doen jy eintlik nie. Dit is die onkunde rondom dit wat ons eintlik doen--ons werk op 'n baie dieper flak*]. (fg4)

The ignorance with regard to our work! I realise they don't know--I don't want to generalise. They don't always know what we really do. That's why they avoid this section and involve us in all this other stuff. [*Die onkunde ten opsigte van ons werk! Ek kom agter hulle weet nie--ek wil nie veralgemeen nie. Hulle weet nie altyd wat ons werklik doen nie. Daarom vermy hulle hierdie afdeling en daarom betrek hulle ons by hierdie ander goed*]. (fg4)

With this new dispensation, it seems to me that our CTMs--they don't fully understand our core business. They will come in and tell you, 'Go to that school and sort out that'. Without sitting down and having the proper case discussion and finding out ... is it really--are you the right person? This morning we had a meeting and things about school readiness. I was overlooked and the school

social worker was told that she must speak to the parents about this and that. [*Met hierdie nuwe bedeling, dit wil vir my voorkom dat ons CTMs–hulle verstaan nie ten volle ons kern besigheid. Hulle sal kom en vir jou vertel–gaan na daardie skool en sorteer dit uit. Sonder om te gaan sit en die behoorlike gevalle bespreking te hê en uit te vind ... is dit regtig–is jy die regte persoon? Vanoggend het ons ‘n vergadering gehad oor skoolgereedheid. Ek was oor die hoof gesien en die maatskaplike werker was gevra om met die ouers te gaan praat oor dit en dat*]. (fg5)

The other thing is, do they understand what we do? [*Die ander ding is verstaan hulle wat ons doen?*]

Because I had to explain to my circuit team manager why I had to assess a child. Then he said to me, it was the first time that he actually understood, with PMDSs. The other day, when I sat with the SSAIS open ... then he said, ‘But sir, explain to me, why are you testing this child?’ I could not believe that he asked me this. So I gave him a speech about all the benefits of assessment, and for the first time.... And that is a circuit team manager, they don’t understand... [*Want ek moes vir my kringbestuurder verduidelik hoekom ek ‘n kind asseseer. Toe sé hy vir my, toe verstaan hy vir die eerste keer, met PMDSse. Toe ek nou die dag sit met die SSAIS oop ... toe sé hy, ‘Maar meneer verduidelik vir my, hoekom toets jy die kind?’ Ek kon net nie glo dat hy vir my gevra het. Toe het ek ‘n speech vir hom gegee oor al die voordele daarvan, en vir die eerste keer... En dis ‘n kringspan bestuurder, hulle verstaan nie...*]. (fg6)

This challenge of role definition has resulted in many school psychologists having to assume responsibilities that they regard as unrelated to their training and expertise as psychologists.

Quite a huge chunk of the work is where we have to be involved with progression and promotion—which I feel is inappropriate and it is a waste of experience. [*Taamlik ‘n groot deel van die werk is waar ons betrokke moet wees met progressie en promosie–wat ek dink is onnodig en ‘n vermorsing van ondervinding*]. (fg1)

When it comes to promotion and progression—it is more a look at the quality and the amount of work and whether the curriculum has being followed and those kind of stuff—that I don’t think I want to do because I am wasting my time. I want to come where they have a list where the people have already made some early identification—which I then can take further where there is certain proof already. That is where I think I would like to come in. Not with the other kind of stuff. [*Wanneer dit kom by promosie en progressie–is dit meer ‘n kyk na die kwaliteit en die hoeveelheid van werk en hetsy die kurrikulum gevolg was en die soort van dinge–wat ek nie dink ek wil doen nie, wat ek mors my tyd. Ek wil kom waar hulle lys het waar die mense alreeds etlike identifisering gedoen het–wat ek dan verder kan neem waar daar al reeds positiewe bewys is. Dit is waar ek sal lyk om in te kom. Nie met die ander soort van dinge*]. (fg3)

This, together with the misperception that collaboration implies “equality” and therefore a minimising of specialist intervention, has resulted in few opportunities for school

psychologists to assert themselves as professionals who have with meaningful contributions to make in terms of their area of expertise. School psychologists in the focus group interviews and questionnaires refer to their perception that there is an expectation, held by those who manage them, that school psychologists ought no longer to function as specialists. The notion of being a specialist was to be replaced by the idea that the team would be composed of “generalists” who would collaborate to facilitate school development.

At the moment the way the work is enforced is as a result of the redesign. Previously people worked together naturally, without feeling like ‘I am tramping on someone else’s toes’. Every team member knew where the boundaries were. New dispensation: I get pulled into first day of school visits, progression and promotion or in a project that the WCED or District regards as priority. I, as a school psychologist, then become an extension of the IMG. My role as a specialist changes to that of ‘generalist’ (must just join in). The disadvantage is, the developmental work that I used to do as a school psychologist is now replaced by something else. The schools are possibly confused about my role as a school psychologist [*Dis op die oomblik ‘n gedwonge werkswyse as gevolg van die ‘redesign’. Voorheen het mense op ‘n natuurlike wyse saamgewerk sonder om te voel ‘ek trap op iemand se tone’. Elke spanlid het geweet waar die ‘grense’ is. Nuwe bedeling : Ek word ingetrek by Iste skooldagbesoeke, progressie en promosie of by ‘n projek wat die WKOD of Distrik as prioriteit beskou. Ek as skoolsielkundige word dan ‘n verlengstuk van die IMG. My rol as spesialis verander dan na dié van ‘n ‘generalist’ (moet maar net inskakel). Die nadeel is, die ontwikkelingswerk wat ek voorheen as skoolsielkundige gedoen het, vervaag in iets anders. Die skole kan dalk verward word oor my rol as skoolsielkundige]. (13)*

... when redesign kicked off—one thing that was mentioned was when the psychologists felt ‘what about our expertise—our specialist service?’. One of the points that were made by the people in charge of the redesign process—‘you need to regard yourself as generalist’. Hence, our responsibilities as indicated on this paper speak of that. ‘You are that person, but you need to spread your expertise broader than your narrow focus of what you regard your service to be’. That is where this whole thing became complicated. [*... toe herontwerp afgeskop het—een ding wat genoem was wanneer die sielkundiges gevoel het soos ‘wat van ons deskundigheid—ons spesialiteits diens?’ Een van die punte wat gemaak was deur die mense in beheer van die herontwerp proses – “jy behoort jouself as veelsydig te beskou.” Derhalwe, ons verantwoordelikhede soos op hierdie papier aangedui spreek daarvan. ‘jy is daardie persoon, maar jy behoort jou vakkundigheid breër te versprei as jou beperkte fokus op wat jou diens behoort te wees’. Dit is waar hierdie hele ding gekompliseerd begin raak]. (fg5)*

I was losing my identity as a psychologist. I was becoming a generalist. I will be told to go and look at how many teachers are absent today or are late—the register, and why learners are late and my core business—I sort of ignored it. [*Ek het my identiteit as ‘n sielkundige begin verloor. Ek was besig om veelvuldig word. Ek sal gesê word om te gaan kyk hoe baie opvoeders vandag afwesig of*

laat is–die register, en waarom leerders is en my kern werkzaamheid–Ek soort van ignoreer dit]. (fg3)

All the CTM's have our job description—they were given one, but in spite of that, they insist that over and above your job description there is still something ... I remember when we were sensitised in these circuit teams, we were told that 'now you are not going to be psychologists anymore. You will be everything'. [Al die CTM's het ons pos beskrywings—hulle was een gegee, maar ten spyte daarvan dat bo en behalwe ons pos beskrywing is daar steeds iets ... Ek onthou toe ons vatbaar gemaak was in hierdie omtrek spanne was ons vertel dat 'nou gaan julle nie meer sielkundiges wees nie. Julle gaan alles wees']. (fg3)

8.2. Personal and Interpersonal Factors

The respondents to the email interviews, focus groups and questionnaires all mentioned the challenges related to mediating the dynamics of human relationships in an endeavour to get different individuals and organisations to work together to achieve the common goal of school development.

Poor communication emerged as an important factor influencing relationship dynamics. School psychologists referred, in the focus group interviews, to the lack of communication that sometimes led to misunderstandings in teams and the nature of communication procedures, which were not always conducive to sharing and building trust and openness. A theme that emerged as a significant challenge was power and the influence thereof on collaboration towards the achievement of common goals. Participants referred to power, in particular as it is exercised in post levels. Status and power are experienced as interconnected, with school psychologists perceiving the status of school psychologists as low, although they argue vociferously that this is grossly unfair.

I think certain people work easily in teams and other people are more sort of individualists. What we find with the team dynamics is quite interesting because you have a team leader who, er... whose got sometimes...they will listen to you but ultimately they call the shots. Your role is being sort of minimised to that of 'I will tell you what to do'. I think in a sense that has got positives, but it can also undermine professionalism on the other hand. [Ek dink sekere mense werk maklik in spanne en ander mense is meer van individualiste. Wat ons vind met die span dinamika is taamlik interessant, want jy het 'n span leier wie, er ... wie het somtyds ... hulle sal na jou luister, maar uiteindelik neem hulle die besluite. Jou rol is soort van verminder tot dit van 'ek sê vir jou wat om te doen'. Ek dink in 'n sin kan dit positief wees, maar aan die ander kant kan dit ook professionalisme ondermyn]. (fg1)

My experience is that in teams ... post level rules—if I can put it that way. So, I have a sense, despite all the nice talk around this--is that post level will

determine what decision goes through. And even the whole thing around democracy and all that sort of stuff. In other words the post level will determine the importance that is attached to you. That is a very strong bind. *[My ondervinding is dat in spanne ... posvlak regeer – as ek dit so kan stel. So, my gevoel is, ten spyte van al die mooi praat rondom dit--is dat posvlak sal bepaal watter besluit deurgaen. En selfs die hele ding rondom demokrasie en die soort van dinge. Met ander woorde die posvlak sal die belangrikheid wat aan jou gekoppel word bepaal. Dit is 'n baie sterk verpligting].* (fg1)

We are on a basic, flat, low post level--Post-level 3. Then a CTM, without a degree--just a 3-year teaching diploma, and does not even know what the inside of a university looks like. He sits up there and now he must make decisions about my work. *[Ons is op 'n simpel, plat, lae posvlak--Posvlak 3. Dan kan 'n CTM sonder 'n degree--net 'n 3 jarige onderwys diploma het en weet nie eers hoe lyk die binnekant van 'n universiteit nie. Hy sit daar bo en hy moet nou decisions neem oor my werk.]* (fg4)

The status of the school psychologist has disappeared. *[Die status van die skool sielkundige het verdwyn].* (28)

You can't have people with such a high skills level just sit there on such a fairly low post level and expect them to actually become enthusiastic and invest more. I think some of them--they probably have a lot more to offer and they are holding back ... So there is no proper acknowledgement and recognition of what people think, whether it's in monetary terms or some of the other stuff. *[Jy kan nie mense met so 'n hoë vlak van vaardigheid net daar laat sit op 'n betreklike lae posvlak en verwag dat hulle eintlik entoestiasies moet word en meer moet belê. Ek dink sommige van hulle--hulle het waarskynlik baie meer om te bied en is besig om terug te hou ... So daar is geen werklike erkenning en waardering van wat mense dink, hetsy dit in monetêre waarde of in sommige van die ander dinge].* (fg1)

... per capita we are the highest qualified pillar. If we look at what it costs to do our work--you must have at least two degrees and a teaching diploma. *[...per kapita is ons die hoogste gekwalifiseerde pillar. As ons kyk na wat kos dit om ons werk te doen--jy moet ten minste 2 grade het en 'n onderwys diploma].* (fg4)

All participants in the focus groups expressed, with some despair, how difficult it is to work collaboratively with sectors that do not respect them. School psychologists describe a feeling of marginalisation, which has a significant impact on levels of morale and motivation in the profession. Many participants felt that they were not being acknowledged and appreciated by a number of sectors within education and were consequently being marginalised. An opinion that was expressed in two focus groups was that this was not necessarily being played out consciously, and may have to do with individuals' ignorance and inexperience.

Of course the bigger challenge when it comes to managing schools, is not--it is about managing people, and the experts in that should be your psychologists, but

what we find, is their role is being undermined because it is the overemphasis on management and then... so I think to an extent if you look at the key elements within the re-design—the issue around management, curriculum delivery and support—there, psychologists are being marginalised and I think that sense of being marginalised is being played out in the way they are being managed and their inability to manage themselves [*Natuurlik die groter uitdaging wanneer dit by skole bestuur kom, is nie-- dit is omtrent die bestuur van mense en die deskundiges hierin behoort jou sielkundiges te wees, maar wat ons bevind is dat hulle rol word ondermyn omdat dit oorbeklemtoon word op bestuur en dan ... so ek dink tot 'n mate as jy kyk na die deurslaggewende beginsels binne in die herontwerp—die kwessie rondom bestuur, kurrikulum oordrag en ondersteuning—hier word sielkundiges gemarginaliseer en ek dink dat die sin van marginalisering word uitgespeel op die manier waarop hulle bestuur word en hulle onbekwaamheid om hulle self te bestuur*].(fg1)

People recognise your worth ... don't know how to utilise you [*Mense besef jou waarde ... weet nie hoe om jou aan te wend nie*]. (fg6)

Drawing on systems thinking, it becomes apparent from the findings of the study that challenges exist at various levels within the system. The personal and interpersonal are clearly fundamental since they touch individuals; however, these micro level factors are certainly influenced by the organisational context within which school psychologists are expected to function. The next section explores the challenges experienced at an organisational level further.

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8.3. Organisational Challenges

The document analysis highlights that the authors of policy documents recognise the challenge relating to co-ordination and management of the activities of different role players as they collaborate in providing support to schools.

Partnerships between schools and 'the community' (parents, community based organisations, business, specialist services - including traditional healers) form a crucial aspect of intersectoral collaboration that requires attention and development. School-NGO partnerships in particular need clarity and co-ordination. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 159)

Moving from a currently fragmented, unco-ordinated approach to an integrated one that brings together the different role players to understand and address barriers to learning. (Department of Education, 2005a, p. 15)

Most school psychologists in the Western Cape, in their deliberations in the focus group interviews, contended that the co-ordination and management of professional support to schools remains a serious challenge to effective collaboration between sectors wanting to

facilitate school development. Those responsible for managing and co-ordinating collaborative engagement are perceived by most school psychologists as incompetent and, at the very least, not fulfilling their roles adequately. School psychologists argued that such ineffective management is evident at all levels, including circuits, districts and the provincial head office.

My experience of managers was that my role wasn't understood within the team and she was busy finding her feet basically. Lack of vision, lack of direction. A very autocratic kind of approach and only now after many induction sessions have occurred, I find the penny is dropping, only now, regarding—'oh this is what you do ... I never realised that this is your role'. Only now I think we are finding our feet. [*My ondervinding met bestuurders was dat my rol binne in die span nie verstaan was nie en sy was besig om haar voete te vind. Gebrek aan visie, gebrek aan rigting. 'n Baie outokratiese manier van benadering en slegs nou na vele inlywing sessies plaasgevind het vind ek dat die realiteit nou eers ingesink het aangaande—'o is dit wat jy doen ... ek het nooit besef dat dit jou rol is nie'. Ek dink eindelijk nou is ons besig om ons voete te vind*]. (fg2)

I just want to mention the issue of the same department being divided into different pillars and each pillar doing its own planning separately. And then, when you come together, you find out that you are targeting the same people at the same time, which makes it very difficult for educators to have to choose where to go. There is no collaboration in the planning, to plan the bigger picture and then for the bigger picture we go to our individual team plans. So the collaboration is actually not agreed. It is not being managed well or co-ordinated. [*Ek wil net die kwessie noem van dieselfde departement wat verdeel is in verskillende pilare en elke pilaar doen sy eie beplanning afsonderlik. En wanneer julle bymekaar kom vind julle uit dat julle dieselfde mense op dieselfde tyd teiken, wat dit baie moeilik maak vir opvoeders om te kies waar om te gaan. Daar is geen samewerking in die beplanning, om die breë skets te beplan en dan vanaf die breë skets te beweeg na ons individuele span planne ... So die samewerking is eintlik nie ooreengekom. Dit word nie goed bestuur of gekoördineer*]. (fg2)

The big thing is the guys don't understand. They don't understand teamwork. They don't understand group dynamics. They don't understand human relationships. They don't understand the work of each person in the group. [*Die groot ding is die ouens verstaan nie. Hulle verstaan nie spanwerk nie. Hulle verstaan nie groep dinamiek nie. Hulle verstaan nie menslike verhoudings nie. Hulle verstaan nie die werk van elke persoon in die groep nie*]. (fg4)

That is where circuit team management lacks in the ability to manage teams. And I am saying this hesitantly because what they need to do is, they need to manage the expertise that they have in the team to address that problem. That is where the problem lies, because what happens now—the whole bunch goes out to fix that one toilet. The team is not managed according to the skills that the team has. [*Dit is waar die bestuur van die omtrek span tekort skiet in die vermoë om spanne te bestuur. En ek sê dit weifelend, want wat hulle behoort te doen is, hulle behoort die deskundigheid wat hulle in die span het te bestuur om hierdie*

probleem aan te spreek. Dit is waar die probleem lê, omdat wat nou gebeur—die hele span gaan uit om een toilet op te knap. Die span word nie bestuur na gelang van die vaardighede wat die span besit]. (fg5)

As we sit here, our current situations per circuit differ enormously [*Soos ons hiero sit verskil ons huidige situasies per kring geweldig] (fg8)*

There is a lot that one can say and it differs from circuit to circuit. I am a bit more senior. My circuit team manager is a more laid back guy. Anything goes in his team. Circuit 2 is the opposite, exact opposite. So we have differing experiences in the circuit. [*Daar is baie dinge wat mens kan sê en dit verskil van kring tot kring. Ek is 'n bietjie meer senior. My kringspan bestuurder is 'n meer 'laid back' ou. 'Anything goe' in sy span. Kring 2 is die opposite, exact opposite. So ons het verskillende ervarings binne die kring.]*

That is also a problem. He hit the nail on the head. That is one of the problems, that presently, we can have 49 different approaches. Forty-nine circuits with 49 approaches. So much depends on the personality of the circuit team leader [*Dit is ook 'n probleem. Hy slaan die spyker op die kop. Dit is een van die probleme tans dat ons 49 benaderings kan hê--49 kringspanne met 49 benaderings. So baie hang nou af van die persoonlikheid van daardie kringspanleier]. (fg4)*

While collaboration within circuit teams was regarded as not being co-ordinated and managed effectively, the issues of power emerged once more as a factor that negatively influenced possibilities for collaborative work between sectors. The style of management adopted by many in senior positions was described as authoritarian and controlling, as opposed to consultative.

We've got an autocrat who tends to micro-manage. So I have become a team with my social work colleague. [*Ons het 'n outokraat wat geneig is om te mikro-bestuur. Dus het ek 'n span gevorm met my maatskaplike werk kollega]. (fg2)*

To my mind there is a big difference between controlling people and managing. And because what I am hearing is control, when someone says, 'you are not going to schools; you must sit in your office', then that's controlling; that is not managing. [*Na my mening is daar 'n groot verskil tussen die beheer van mense en die bestuur van mense. En omdat wat ek hoor is beheer, wanneer iemand sê, 'jy gaan nie skole toe nie; jy moet in jou kantoor sit', dit is dan beheer, dit is nie bestuur nie].*

That is the global feeling that we get--somewhere the message was sent that we are now owned. You are the property of the circuit team manager to do with whatever they wish [*Dit is die globale gevoel wat ons kry--iewers is die boodskap gegee, dat ons word nou besit. Jy is die property van die circuit team manager to do with whatever they wish]. (fg6)*

School psychologists contended that procedures for communication and decision making are vague and not clarified at the level of the district and province as regards the expectations around communication procedures. They explained that this means that each circuit team

manager engages in decision making and facilitates communication in the way he or she sees fit. The expectations around who was allowed to communicate with whom about what and the fact the decision making seldom involved consultation impacted negatively on working together as a team. The lack of standardised guidelines around what communication and decision-making procedures would support and facilitate collaboration was regarded as a serious challenge.

Lack of time, communication and follow-through. [*Gebrek aan tyd, kommunikasie en opvolg*] (Lecturer/supervisor/private practitioner)

... the biggest of them all was the way we communicated. As if we couldn't communicate at the same level as colleagues. It was a servant and boss way of communication. [... *die grootste van alles was die manier waarop ons gekommunikeer het. Asof ons nie op dieselfde vlak as kollegas kon kommunikeer nie. Dit was 'n baas en klaas manier van kommunikasie*]. (fg3)

I take it we are all professional people and I have said it to them—we collaborate with other professionals outside, but we are not allowed here to communicate directly to a CTM. We have to go through our people so that the people on that level can talk to the people on that level and that to me is so ridiculous. [*Ek verstaan ons is almal professionele mense en ek het dit aan hulle gesê—ons werk buite saam met ander professionele mense, maar ons word hier nie toegelaat om direk met 'n CTM te kommunikeer nie. Ons moet deur ons mense gaan sodat die mense op dieselfde vlak met mekaar kan praat en dit vir my is so belaglik*]. (fg3)

People are never consulted on grassroots level. [*Mense word nooit op gewone vlak geraadpleeg nie*]. (6)

Challenges related to human and material resources were highlighted by all the participants in the email interviews, focus groups and questionnaires as major stumbling blocks to working with other sectors effectively in order to facilitate school development. It was argued that although collaboration has major benefits, it is a time-consuming process, which implies the need for careful time management on the part of all role-players involved. This is particularly difficult when school psychologists have particularly heavy workloads, often as a consequence of an insufficient number of practitioners being employed to provide an effective service to schools.

It is very difficult to arrange collaborative meetings because people are not available, don't see it as a priority, no one is assigned the specific role and because there is an element of needing to protect professional turf. [*Dit is baie moeilik om gemeenskaplike vergaderings te reël, want mense is nie beskikbaar nie, hulle sien dit nie as prioriteit nie, niemand is die spesifieke rol toegesê en omdat daar 'n element is van die nodigheid om die professionele speelveld te beskerm*]. (Lecturer/trainer/private practitioner)

School psychologists may struggle to extricate themselves from working mainly in an ameliorative fashion, given the weight of challenges in the field. [*Skool sielkundiges mag sukkel om hulleself los te maak van om hoofsaaklik in 'n verbeterde wyse te werk gegee die gewig van die uitdagings in die veld*] (Lecturer/trainer)

There is no way to expect me to deliver quality service to so many schools. [*Daar is geen manier waar daar van my verwag kan word om kwaliteit diens aan so baie skole te lewer*]. (fg2)

The argument is that funding of school psychology needs to be improved at national and provincial levels so that this can be felt at the level of the district and circuit in the form of more posts being allocated for school level support and for development work to be engaged in. This was identified in the document analysis:

The scarcity of specialist professionals in the country, especially in the rural areas (Department of Education, 2008, p.18)

Lack of funding commitment by authorities which usually results in wonderful plans on paper with little implementation taking place. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 253)

Participants in the focus groups however argued that little has been done to address resource and capacity constraints and inequities:

It was more pertaining to this situation, because what is happening with the re-design here is that we are about 60 000 odd learners in the 3 circuits, on the other side there is 50 000. They have five circuits and five psychologists. We are only three here. [*Dit was meer betrekking op hierdie situasie, want wat gebeur met die herontwerp hier is dat ons omtrent rondom 60 000 leerders in die 3 omtreke is, aan die ander kant is daar 50 000. Hulle het vyf omtreke en vyf sielkundiges. Ons is hier net drie*]. (fg1)

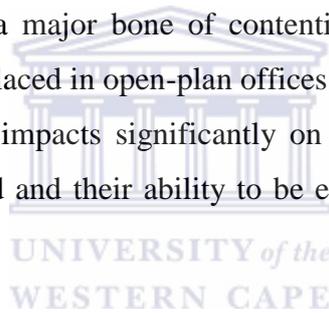
I think the demand is very great and we can't ... I simply can't manage what I have on my plate. [*Ek dink die aanvraag is baie groot en ons kan nie ... ek kan eenvoudig nie alles wat op my bord is hanteer nie*]. (fg2)

It is only 6 psychologists. It is one psychologist per circuit and a circuit has 40 schools. 48 schools and it is only one psychologist that must see to those schools. When the psychologists worked in 14 schools, they didn't reach all the schools and all the children. We know we have disadvantaged areas like Khayelitsha and you are the only psychologist. You can't give long term therapy for those children although they need it, because they have nowhere else to go. Only to you. [*Dit is net 6 sielkundiges. Dit is een sielkundige per omtrek en 'n omtrek het 40 skole. 48 Skole en dit is slegs een sielkundige wat na hierdie skole moet sien. Toe die sielkundige besig was met 14 skole het hulle nie al die skole en kinders bereik nie. Ons weet ons het agtergeblewe areas soos Khayelitsha en jy is die enigste sielkundige. Jy kan nie lang termyn terapie vir*

hierdie kinders gee nie al het hulle dit nodig, want daar is nêrens anders waar hulle kan gaan nie. Net na jou]. (fg3)

I think sometimes it is very difficult to reach all our clients, but for instance in my circuit we have got about 18 schools and then maybe the average of the schools are plus/minus 1000. So that means one psychologist has 18 000 learners. You can see it is a drop in the ocean. [*Ek dink somtyds is dit baie moeilik om al ons kliënte te bereik, maar byvoorbeeld in my omtrek het ons omtrent 18 skole en dan is die moontlike gemiddelde van die skole plus/minus 1 000. Dus beteken dit een sielkundige het 18 000 leerders. Jy kan sien dit is 'n druppel in die emmer*] (fg3)

The challenge in terms of human resources is matched when reflecting on physical resources available to role players such as school psychologists, who are working with other sectors. The challenge of the lack of availability of transport, and the complicated procedures that individuals and teams have to follow in order to procure vehicles in order to provide any kind of service, was raised as a major concern in the focus group interviews with school psychologists. Office space is a major bone of contention since in some districts where school psychologists have been placed in open-plan offices which they share with other “non-psychologists”. This obviously impacts significantly on the nature of the work in which school psychologists are engaged and their ability to be effective, especially with regard to the issue of confidentiality.



8.4. Discourse and Worldview

It was apparent in the responses of participants in email interviews, focus groups and questionnaires that understandings of school development are varied and therefore have serious implications for how these theoretical understandings are interpreted at the level of practice. It seems that attitudes towards school development as a form of school psychology practice is often dependent on how school psychologists understand school development. This was further complicated by differing understandings and perceptions of what school development entails on the part of other sectors collaborating with school psychologists.

The term school development is much too broad and that is where the problem arises [*Die term skoolontwikkeling is heeltemaal te breed en dis waar die problem inkom*]. (fg6)

I think there is also a mindset. People are looking for quick fixes. I think that the nature of the relationship—it needs to be a 50/50 thing. It is about me and them. It is not about them. [*Ek dink daar is ook 'n gedagtegang. Mense soek na vinnige oplossings. Ek dink die aard van die verhouding—dit behoort 'n 50/50 saak te wees. Dit gaan oor my en hulle. Dit gaan nie oor hulle nie*]. (fg1)).

In making the point about how school psychologists approach school development differently, not as evaluation and checking, one participant made the following comment:

We listen, we are trained to listen. We will never judge [*Ons luister, ons is opgelei om te luister. Ons sal nooit judge nie.*] (fg4).

A similar challenge emerged with regard to the second key concept being investigated in this study, namely, intersectoral collaboration. When asked for about their understanding of intersectoral collaboration, school psychologists drew on their practical experiences and defined it in a variety of different ways. Without a common understanding of what collaboration between sectors entails, it would be difficult to maximise the benefits which can be reaped from adopting such an approach to support provision to schools.

I had a different expectation or view of what this multi-disciplinary circuit team was going to look like. It was really for me going to be like a team with specialists in—that goes into a situation and where your expertise is needed—you sort of deal with it. And it is not like that—they are saying you are expected to become a generalist... It is not just even us. I am looking at some of the admin people that are in the circuit – that sometimes also are involved with promotion and stuff like that. For me I think we missed the boat with this multi-disciplinary thing. [*Ek het 'n verskillende verwagting of siening van hoe hierdie multi-dissiplinêre omtrek gaan lyk. Dit was regtig vir my soos 'n span met spesialiste—wat in 'n situasie in gaan en waar jou deskundigheid benodig word—jy soort van hanteer dit. En dit is nie so nie—hulle sê daar word van jou verwag om 'n veelsydig te wees ... Dit is nie net ons nie. Ek kyk ook na sommige van die admin mense in die omtrek—wat somtyds ook betrokke is met promosie en dinge soos dit. Vir my, dink ek slaan ons die bal mis met hierdie multi-dissiplinêre ding*]. (fg3)

It is only about understanding. Where do I fit in now?—the team is now everything. It is an obstacle—the team must now function. If I must go and count toilets, then it is about the team. If I must go and repair holes in school fences, then it is about the team. [*Dit gaan bloot oor die understanding. Waar pas ek nou in?—die team is nou alles. Dit is 'n behepthed—die team moet nou function. As ek moet gaan toilette tel dan gaan dit oor die team. As ek die draad se gat moet gaan regmaak dan gaan dit oor die team*]. (fg4)

... people's concept of a team. I think management has the concept, unfortunately, I am talking EMDC management. The team do the same thing as opposed to, I see teamwork as working side by side doing something different to the person sitting next to me, but I am still part of that team. I think that is where the whole misconception comes in. [*... mense se konsep van 'n span. Ek dink bestuur het die konsep, ongelukkig, ek praat van EMDC bestuur. Die span doen dieselfde hierteenoor, ek sien spanwerk as sy aan sy werk en die doen van*

iets verskillend as die persoon wat langs my sit, maar ek is steeds deel van daardie span. Ek dink dat dit is waar die hele wanbegrip in kom]. (fg7)

A third challenge around the differing worldviews or paradigms adopted by different sectors relates to the nature of the relationship that different sectors establish and develop with schools. School psychologists perceived that the nature of the relationship that they have with schools, principals and educators, is markedly different from the relationship other sectors have with these role players. School psychologists argued that the relationship with the client is a fundamental aspect of facilitating their development. The differences which characterise different sectors' relationships with schools, they contended, impacts negatively on the possibilities for success in collaboration towards development of the school and individuals within the school system.

The fact that we ... build relationships and we are dependent on those relationships to do our work. [*Die feit dat ons...bou verhoudings en ons is baie afhanklik van daardie verhoudings om ons werk te doen*]. (fg4)

That is not your relationship with them. You are not a policeman. You actually give them support [*Dit is nie jou verhouding met hulle nie. Jy is nie die polisieman nie. Jy gee eintlik vir hulle ondersteunings*]. (fg4)

Because they see with completely different eyes. This is really bad for us, given our training and our background. You can go to any of the districts. Everyone will tell you that the relationship that school psychologists have with schools is a different relationship. You will--can go around--you will hear, they will always say the school psychologist is welcome. We have built this image over many, many years--one that says 'we come to help'. You don't come to judge. You don't check up on anybody. You come to help with problems. It is awful for us to be in this team--which now comes--to check up on people and so on. It is a completely different atmosphere, and we are now, we are a part of it. [*Want hulle kyk met heeltemal ander oë. Dit is baie sleg vir ons, weens ons opleiding en ons agtergrond. Jy kan nou maar na enige van die O-bosse toe gaan. Al die mense sal vir jou sê dat die verhouding wat die skoolsielkundiges met die skole het is 'n anderste verhouding. Jy sal maar by al die skole kan jy omgaan, jy sal hoor, hulle sal altyd sê die skool sielkundige is welkom. Ons het die beeld oor baie, baie jare opgebou--een van jy kom om te help. Jy kom nie om te judge nie. Jy kom check op niemand nie. Jy kom om te help met probleme. Dit is nou sleg vir ons om in hierdie team te wees--van wat nou kom--te check op ouens en so aan. Dit is 'n heeltemal ander atmosfeer en ons is nou, we are part of it*]. (fg4).

In the sense that the schools get labelled as problem schools, or teachers in those schools, and then those schools are targeted for all sorts of interventions and things. Now you get taken away from your work--like yesterday--to moderate mark schedules, to gather ammunition, to reprimand and punish. This also messes up the relationship that you have built up over many years with the schools and the teachers--it will mess it up. There is no longer a trusting

relationship, because you actually come to sniff, to gather information that will be used to reprimand us. This will influence the way we work. [*In die sin dat skole word gelabel as probleem skole, of onderwysers in daardie skole, en nou word daardie skole getarget vir allerhande tipe van intervensies en goed. Nou word jy weggevat van jou werk af–soos gister–om nou punte schedules te gaan modereer, om skietgoed bymekaar te kry, om die pak te gee. Dit neuk ook die verhouding wat jy nou al oor jare met skole en onderwysers opgebou het–gaan dit opneuk. Daar is mos nou nie ‘n vertrouensverhouding nie, want jy kom eintlik snuffel om die inligting te gee waarmee ons pak gegee gaan word. Dit gaan ons hele werkswyse beïnvloed*]. (fg8)

The ability to employ appropriate discourses and worldviews that facilitate development are fundamental to both collaboration and school development. These discourses and worldviews often emerge from individuals’ exposure to them in the training context. The importance of the need to develop knowledge and skills through training and ongoing professional development is expounded in the next section.

8.5. Training and Development

Many of the policy documents raise a concern about the lack of skills and knowledge on the part of education support personnel to engage in systemic ways of working. *Education White Paper 6*, in particular, presents a major shift in the paradigm of support provision and consequently highlights the need for training and development of those tasked with providing support to schools; this includes the school psychologists. The document analysis revealed that

...the competencies required to support these learners in mainstream education would represent another barrier to learning for these learners. (Department of Education, 2001, p.54)

Personnel must be trained to provide services within a systems perspective which involves ‘whole school’ and community based approaches. Training programmes must shift away from a ‘deficit’ problem-oriented notion of intervention towards developing support services which aim to foster enabling learning environments through focusing on strengths, competencies and development. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 131)

Training courses should integrate components on: intersectoral work, empowerment, capacity building, diversity, human rights, community development and centre-of-learning based team building and support. (Department of Education, 1997, p. 131)

Develop networking skills and learn to ‘work together’ through team effectiveness training and ongoing support. (Department of Education, 2005a, p.33)

Key informants in the email interviews concurred with the policy prescriptions and argued for the need for training and professional development of school psychologists. It was acknowledged, however, that there may be some resistance to this. This was confirmed in the focus group interviews, where many of the school psychologists in the Western Cape were of the opinion that they were not necessarily the ones in need of training. They argued that other sectors with which they work would benefit from development opportunities. There was, therefore, some resistance to change through engaging in further training. School psychologists (who are registered with the HPCSA) contended that they are among the highest qualified sectors within provincial education departments and so many individuals present as complacent and are thus resistant to further education and training.

... you will have the people that see that since I am already trained, how can you train me now? That is the one thing. The other thing is—because we have been talking for how many years now about trying to shift from the psychometric model to a more consultative model or community based model and people see they can't—it is pretty much either black or white; they can't see the grey in-between. [... *jy sal die mense het wat kan sien dat aangesien ek alreeds opgelei is, hoe kan jy my nou oplei? Dit is die een ding. Die ander ding is—want ons praat nou al vir hoeveel jare om te probeer om te skuif van die psigometriese model na 'n meer konsulerende model of 'n gemeenskaps gebaseerde model en mense sien hulle kan nie—dit is min of meer of swart of wit; hulle kan nie die grys tussen in sien nie*]. (fg1)

The document analysis indicates the need for a shift in paradigm:

Members' capacity to move from seeing and responding to problems that focus on the learner only, towards one that tries to understand and respond to problems from a broader systems view. (Department of Education, 2005a, p. 15)

Some participants in the email interviews and focus groups supported the idea that there is indeed a need for a shift in the mindset or paradigm of school psychology practice in relation to school development. School psychologists' training and qualifications vary, especially since many are qualified as clinical and counselling psychologists and not educational psychologists. Training programmes have also changed to include many aspects that were not included in programmes a few decades ago, when many who are currently in posts were trained.

Lack of skills, lack of knowledge, inadequate preparation in psychologists' training, lack of exposure to intersectoral collaborative modes of work. [*Gebrek aan vaardighede, gebrek aan kennis, onvoldoende voorbereiding in sielkundiges*

se opleiding, gebrek aan blootstelling van intersektorale samewerking metode van werk]. (Manager of School Psychological Services)

Some school psychologists may not have the frame of mind suited for intersectoral collaboration, given the training model they were taught under. Lack of skills and practical tips may also be obstacles to intersectoral collaboration by school psychologists. *[Sommige skool sielkundiges mag nie die gemoedstemming het wat geskik is vir intersektorale samewerking gegee die opleidingsmodel waaronder hulle opgelei was. Gebrek aan vaardighede en praktiese wenke mag ook struikelblokke wees vir intersektorale samewerking by skool sielkundiges]. (Lecturer/trainer)*

I think some school psychologists are a bit reluctant to get involved, because I think it is about a confidence thing. It's about training and orientation, that my training has equipped me to do an assessment and write a report and that's the be all and end all. I think there is also a perception ... especially from Model C schools, that you are only doing your work if you do an assessment... There is still this sort of thing that you are not doing your work if you are not testing. *[Ek dink sommige skool sielkundiges is 'n bietjie huiwerig om betrokke te raak, want ek dink dit gaan oor 'n selfvertroue ding. Dit gaan oor opleiding en oriëntering, dat my opleiding my bekwaam het om 'n assessering te doen en 'n verslag te skryf en dit behoort al en einde alles te wees. Ek dink daar is ook 'n persepsie ... veral van Model C skole, dat jy eintlik net jou werk doen wanneer jy 'n assessesering doen ... Daar is steeds hierdie soort van ding dat as jy nie toets nie dan doen jy nie jou werk nie]. (fg1)*

Before you do any sort of intervention you need to realise ... readiness for change. I think that is not happening within the education. So we have a lot of training and training, and then it comes to nothing. So people feel that training is some sort of panacea for all the problems. I think you need to look first of all how ready people actually are for this sort of change. *[Voordat jy enige soort van intervensie doen behoort jy te beseef... gereedheid vir verandering. Ek dink dit is nie wat in opvoeding gebeur nie. So, ons het baie opleiding en opleiding, wat lei na nêrens. So voel mense dat opleiding 'n soort van wondermiddel is vir al die probleme. Ek dink jy behoort eerste te kyk na hoe gereed is mense eintlike vir hierdie soort verandering]. (fg1)*

Facilitating school development and engaging in intersectoral collaboration requires specialised knowledge and skills. The document analysis clearly supports this view and although the key informants concurred, there was, however some disagreement aired by school psychologists in the focus groups and questionnaires. Their concerns centred on the fact that most of them are already well qualified and therefore highly skilled. Also, although they acknowledge the importance of life-long learning, training was not regarded as the solution to the challenges faced. The issue of who requires the training was a strong focus in the debates with school psychologists, who argued that they ought not to be prioritised.

8.6. Wider Education System

Most school psychologists who participated in the focus groups spoke at length about a macro-level issue that affects them. They explained that a major challenge that affects their ability to work effectively with other sectors in developing schools is that they have little representation at provincial head office. In South Africa, transformation in the provinces is initiated and recommendations for change within education support and other sectors in education are made at this senior management level. All school psychologists claim that they have no voice in the transformation process, and their perceptions and ideas are consequently not considered because there is nobody at head office who represents school psychology as a constituency or sector. They maintain that this lack of “voice” is disempowering because the effect thereof is that school psychologists do not inform policy and change initiatives in the education department but are expected to implement such change. Lack of ownership therefore often results in feelings of marginalisation and consequent resistance to change. This is illustrated clearly in these quotations from the email and focus group interviews:

We don't have an activist or champion who, for our issues, acts as a leader. Decisions are made for and on behalf of us by people who are not school psychologists [*Ons het nie 'n activist of champion wat, vir ons sake, as leier optree nie. Besluite word vir en namens ons geneem deur mense wat nie skoolsielkundige's is nie*]. (13)

We are often caught in 'top-down' approaches which are more political and ideological and not educationally sound in practice. This is why the team approach is often authoritarian, with an external locus of control. [*Ons is dikwels vasgevang in 'top down' benaderings wat meer polities en ideologies van aard is en nie opvoedkundig verantwoordbaar in praktyk nie. Daarom is die spanbenadering dikwels outoriter met 'n externe lokus van kontrole*]. (40)

What this tells you is that the people that were supposed to fight against this, did not do it well enough, did not motivate, or the people they spoke to simply did not listen and totally ignored them. They basically gave in. Their directors did not take up their issues, own them and did not fight for them. [*Wat dit vir jou sê is dat die mense wat daarteen moes baklei het, het dit, of nie goed genoeg gedoen, gemotiveer nie, of die mense met wie hulle gepraat het, het basies net eenvoudig vir hulle totally geignore. Hulle het basies afgegee van die dinge. Hulle direkteure het nie hulle saak aangehoor of opgeneem en dit hul eie gemaak nie en het nie geveg daarvoor nie.*]

We worked through the committee or meeting of the senior school psychologists of each of the districts; before the redesign we spoke a lot about the redesign and we discussed everything and Bruce made notes. Nobody ever discussed this with him. He was not consulted. The feedback from our side was never discussed. Attempts he made to talk to ODA—nothing came of these. ODA said to him, they had spoken to us already and we had not spoken to them. [*Ons het deur ons komitee care of vergadering van senior skool sielkundiges van die*

distrikte het ons voor die redesign baie gepraat oor die re-design en ons het vir Bruce–ons het die goed bespreek en hy het notas gemaak–niemand het ooit met hom dit bespreek nie. Daar is nie met hom bespreek nie. Die terugvoer van ons kant wat deur hom gekom het is nie bespreek nie. Pogings wat hy aangewend het om met ODA te praat–daar het niks van gekom nie. ODA het vir hom gesê ‘ons het klaar met julle gepraat’ en hulle het nie met ons gepraat nie]. (fg4)

We don't have a champion. We don't have an activist at head office. [*Ons het nie 'n champion nie. Ons het nie 'n activist by head office nie*]. (fg4)

At district level there is no forum to deal with this. At head office, we all know there is no representation up there to be able to deal with this. So in terms of the 'no voice' issue that filters through all of these challenges that lies on this table, there is no forum that represents the voice of the school psychological service. That is where the dilemma lies. The moment you need to assert your voice–you become *gepeupel*. You become a rowdy bunch of rebelling masses. [*Op distriksvlak is daar geen forum wat dit hanteer nie. By hoofkantoor, al wat ons weet is dat daar geen verteenwoordiging is wat by magte is om dit te hanteer. So in terme van die 'geen stem' kwessie wat deursif deur al hierdie uitdagings wat op hierdie tafel lê, is daar geen forum wat die stem van skool sielkundige diens verteenwoordig. Dit is waar die dilemma lê. Die oomblik wanneer jy jou stem laat geld–word jy gepeupel*]. (fg5)

When we have a system that works and they just decide to change it. Without asking us. You've been working in this area since 1997, what is working; how do you manage to see these learners, how do you manage to deliver a service, over these massive distances? Nobody asked. [*Wanneer ons 'n stelsel het wat werk en hulle besluit sommer om dit te verander. Sonder om ons te raadpleeg. Jy is besig om in die area te werk sedert 1997, wat werk; hoe kry jy dit reg om hierdie leerders te sien, hoe kry jy dit reg om 'n diens te lewer, oor hierdie massiewe afstande? Niemen het gevra*]. (fg6)

Which brings us down to the fact that we aren't selling ourselves, in terms of what we could do. [*Dit bring ons tot die feit dat ons nie onself bemark in terme van wat ons kan doen*]. (fg7)

Many participants in the focus group interviews presented a strong perception that psychological services and specialised learner and educator support are not regarded as a priority at district, provincial and even national level in the education system. Without acknowledgement at all these levels in the education system of the value and importance of specialised support, which includes psychology, learning support and social work, the challenge of working with other sectors to facilitate school development becomes more serious.

If you look at the purpose of education with the curriculum delivery – that is the main thrust. SNE is like a... it's just support. If you think of in terms of if you take a draft now and you look at education – a large percentage will be going to

curriculum delivery. SNE will look at the fall-outs, the learners who are not accessing the curriculum because of a learning difficulty, because of emotional, psycho-social ... whatever. Maybe that is why curriculum gets more of a thrust and SNE is kind of side-lined. If you are looking at the WCED vision—what is it (the priority)? It is quality education as curriculum delivery. *[As jy kyk na die doel van opvoeding met die kurrikulum oordrag—dit is die hoof dryfkrag. SNE is soos 'n ... dit is net 'n ondersteuning. As jy dink in terme van, as jy nou 'n konsep neem en jy kyk na opvoeding—'n groot persentasie sal gaan kurrikulum oordrag. SNE sal kyk na die wat uit val, die leeders wat nie kontak het met die kurrikulum as gevolg van leer probleme, as gevolg van emosionele, sielkundig-sosiaal ... wat ook al. Miskien is dit waarom kurrikulum meer dryfkrag het en SNE soort van gesystap word. As jy na die visie van die WKOD kyk—wat is dit (die prioriteit)? Dit is kwaliteit opvoeding as kurrikulum oordrag].* (fg2)

The thing is, if one looks, all the actions and things—everything has an IMG flavour. There are now two IMG advisors. IMG has a higher priority. The circuit team manager, practically everyone ex IMG. If you move up, the chief director—all ex-directors, all ex-IMG. You go all the way to the top to the other deputy SGs—all ex-IMG. The flavour, the re-design has an IMG flavour. This has a real impact. *[Die ding is as mens nou kyk, al die aksies en goed—alles het 'n IMG flavour. Daar is nou twee IMG advisors. IMG het 'n hoer prioriteit. Die kringspan bestuurder, feitlik almal ex-IMG. As jy hoër op gaan die directors omtrent almal ex-IMG. As jy opgaan boontoe die chief director—almal ex-directors, almal ex-IMG. Jy gaan reg op tot boontoe by die ander deputy SGs—almal ex-IMG. Die hele flavour, die hele re-design het 'n IMG flavour. This has a real impact].* (fg4)

It is obvious from the strategic planning that I don't feature here. Neither do the school social workers. Our work obviously—we were not supposed to be here, because the people who design those strategic plans have got absolutely no idea what we are doing. Everything is sort of IMG based. Are there enough classrooms? *Is die skole omhein?* That kind of thing. It is so difficult for us to respond and to somehow fit ourselves into that *[Dit is vanselfsprekend van die strategiese beplanning dat ek nie hier gekenmerk word nie. Ewemin doen die skool maatskaplike werkers. Ons werk vanselfsprekend—ons was nie veronderstel om hier te wees, want die mense wat hierdie strategiese planne ontwerp het absoluut geen idee van wat ons doen. Alles is soort van IMG gebaseerd. Is daar genoeg klaskamers? Is die skole omhein? Hierdie soort van ding. Dit is so moeilik vir ons om te reageer en om op die een of ander manier onself hierin te pas].* (fg4)

Many participants contended that change in education is often not managed well at macro level. It was acknowledged that educational change is fraught with difficulties and that this is experienced by school psychologists at the level of the school. What is distressing to school psychologists in the Western Cape, however, is the way in which change is managed at provincial and district levels. Transformation is prioritised in the Western Cape Education Department, where restructuring and redesign processes are facilitated every three to five

years. This is mirrored, and may even be stimulated, by the ongoing changing political landscape in the province. The distress expressed by the school psychologists is not in relation to change in and of itself, but rather to the way in which such change is managed in the province and districts. The challenge of change management, or the lack thereof, is what impacts negatively on school psychologists' attempts to work collaboratively with other sectors towards school development.

I would still like to see the SG and so on, and other people, higher up, who designed this whole thing, to come up with ideas—what are the rules of the game? How do I engage with the circuit team manager? What is my role in terms of the school psychologists? How do I inform the circuit team manager? Is hy onder die verpligting om na my te kom en vir my te sê 'luister kan jy my net help met die mense? Ek moet hulle PMDS doen. Hulle moet ge-evalueer word'. There is no rules written so that we do the same here as the people in North and in South. There should be some kind of structure that determines what my role is. Where can I go to, and where can I not. When will I be tramping on toes? There is no such structure. So we could develop something here locally. Myself and these guys. What do they do in Worcester? They do something totally different. So you have different education departments running in different areas. It shouldn't be like that; if you design a grand structure, you must also look at the finer detail. Obviously, they didn't have time for that; they just rushed into this thing. But the thing is—it leads to real practical problems and makes the functioning of these people somewhat difficult and the worst of it is that you could have—in the seven circuits, seven different ways and you can have 49 little education departments running around and each doing their own thing. That is rather disturbing at this stage. It seems to be okay. They don't see a problem with that. I see a very, very big problem with that, because if X is not assertive, while Y is assertive, X could be working totally different to Y. He could run through the whole year doing not one single thing that has anything to do with school psychology. *[Ek sal steeds die SG wil sien, en so aan, en ander mense hoër op wat hierdie hele ding ontwerp het, om op te kom met idees—wat is die reëls van die spel? Hoe skakel ek met die omtrek span bestuurder? Wat is my rol in terme van die skool sielkundiges? Hoe stel ek my omtrek span bestuurder in kennis? Is hy onder verpligting om na my te kom en vir my te sê, 'luister kan jy my net help met die mense? Ek moet hulle PMDS doen. Hulle moet ge-evalueer word'. Daar is geen geskrewe reëls sodat ons hier dieselfde doen as die mense in die Noorde en Suid. Daar behoort 'n sekere soort van struktuur te wees wat bepaal wat my rol is. Tot waar ek gaan en waar kan ek nie gaan nie. Wanneer gaan ek op tone trap? Daar is geen so 'n struktuur. Dus kan ons iets hier plaaslik ontwikkel. Myself en hierdie mense. Wat maak hulle in Worcester? Hulle doen iets heeltemal verskillend. Dus het jy 'n verskillende onderwys departemente lopend in verskillende areas. Dit behoort nie so te wees nie. As jy 'n indrukwekkende struktuur ontwerp moet jy ook na die fyner detail kyk. Vanselfsprekend het hulle nie tyd vir dit gehad nie; hulle het net in hierdie ding ingestorm, maar die ding is—dit lei tot regte praktiese probleme en maak die funksionering van hierdie mense ietwat moeilik en die slegste van dit alles is dat jy kan hê – in sewe omtreke, sewe verskillende maniere en jy kan 49 klein onderwys departement*

hê wat rond hardloop en elkeen hulle eie ding doen. Dit is ietwat kommerwekkend op hierdie stadium. Dit lyk asof dit in die haak is. Hulle sien nie 'n probleem daarmee nie. Ek sien 'n baie, baie groot probleem hiermee, want as X nie vol selfvertroue is nie en Y is vol selfvertroue – X mag totaal verskillend werk as Y. Hy kan deur die hele jaar besig wees met nie 'n enkele ding wat betrekking het op skool sielkunde]. (fg4)

Challenges that emanate on a macro level in the wider education system were reported to include a lack of leadership and voice for school psychologists in the current structure of the education department. The status held by psychology and specialised education support in education was perceived as low. Another key concern was the experience of change and transformation in education, both provincially and nationally. The pace and extent of change has been experienced as a barrier to development in education support and psychological services in particular. All this consequently affects practitioners' ability to work effectively with other sectors as they facilitate school development.

The data generated in three of the four phases of data collection suggest that school psychologists face challenges on various levels in their attempt to facilitate school development through intersectoral collaboration. The lack of clarity around roles, intrapersonal issues, interpersonal dynamics, organisational challenges, differing discourses and worldviews, perspectives on training and development and the lack of support in the wider education system all have considerable impact.

8.7. Addressing the Challenges Faced by School Psychologists When Collaborating with Other Sectors to Facilitate School Development

Data from the email interviews, focus groups and questionnaires were analysed and the following categories and themes emerged in response to questions regarding participants' opinions around what could be done to address the challenges being experienced in relation to intersectoral collaboration and facilitating school development. Table 8.5 illustrates attempts to triangulate data in order to enhance the rigour of the study.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS WHEN COLLABORATING WITH OTHER SECTORS TO FACILITATE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT	DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES WHERE THESE EMERGED AS KEY THEMES/CATEGORIES			
	Document analysis	Email interviews	Focus groups	Questionnaires
Clarification of roles and boundaries	-	✓	✓	✓
Addressing personal and interpersonal dynamics	-	✓	✓	-
Organisational change	-	✓	✓	✓
Training in and orientation to school development and intersectoral collaboration	-	✓	-	✓
Advocacy with regard to what school psychologists can offer	-	✓	✓	✓

Table 8.5. Triangulation of data: Addressing the challenges facing school psychologists.

Table 8.5 reflects categories of data as they emerged in each of the data collection procedures. It is evident that the documents do not contribute ideas that relate to how to address the challenges faced by school psychologists as they collaborate with other sectors to facilitate school development. The three phases of interactive data generation that followed, however, all reflect positions taken on the matter. These findings are presented in the table and narrative discussions that follow. This table reflects categories and key themes that emerged in the analysis of questionnaires, email interviews and focus group interviews.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS WHEN COLLABORATING WITH OTHER SECTORS TO FACILITATE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT	
Category	Key themes
Clarification of roles and boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying roles • Focusing on area of specialist expertise • Specialising of school psychologists in direct or indirect service delivery
Addressing personal and interpersonal dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships • Improving communication • Shifting mindsets
Organisational change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing systems and procedures at all levels • Allocating resources • Reviewing structures
Training in and orientation to school development and intersectoral collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing common discourse through orientation and training • Training in management for circuit team managers
Advocacy with regard to what school psychologists can offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing an 'association' of school psychologists • Representing school psychologists at provincial level • Recognising and marketing of what school psychology has to offer education • Shaping identity of school psychology as a profession

Table 8.6. Addressing challenges facing school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development

Five broad categories emerged in the data analysis regarding ways in which the challenges faced by school psychologists could be addressed. Within each of the five categories listed in Table 8.6, key themes are presented. The themes point to particular actions that could be taken in the category of the challenge identified. Each of the categories, together with the corresponding themes, is expounded on in the sections that follow, with evidence from the raw data to support the propositions. Analysis of the themes also suggests key considerations that emerge in the recommendations of this study, outlined later in Chapter 10.

In the sections that follow, each of the categories will be discussed and evidence to confirm the findings will be presented.

8.7.1. Clarification of Roles and Boundaries

One of the most significant improvements that need to be made, most participants argued, is to clarify roles, not only of school psychologists but of all role players engaged in collaborative initiatives. This is especially important for those sectors employed within the education system, in particular at the level of the circuit team, but would apply to collaboration with other departments, NGOs and other role players beyond education per se. Such clarity would facilitate both collaboration and the effectiveness of school development processes. Respondents to the questionnaire shared the following opinions concerning a way forward:

I am expecting that the way everyone is now part of a circuit team in a very intimate working scenario, everyone will get to know everyone else's role and function intimately. [*Ek verwag dat die manier waarop almal nou deel is van 'n omtrek span in 'n baie intieme werk scenario, sal elkeen mekaar se rolle en funksie baie goed ken*]. (1)

All professionals to develop a clear understanding of the job descriptions and professional goals of each other. Planning together in terms of matching school development needs to the available expertise. Schools to be orientated and prepared in terms of expectations of both support services and the role the school is required to play. [*Alle vakkundiges behoort 'n deeglike begrip te hê van die pos beskrywings en professionele doelwitte van mekaar. Beplanning tesaam in terme van die meet van skool ontwikkelings behoeftes met die beskikbare deskundigheid. Skole moet georiënteerd en gereed gemaak word in terme van verwagtings van beide ondersteuningsdienste en die rol wat die skool verwag word om te speel*]. (25)

There has to be clear distinction of roles. Sometimes psychologists are pulled in all directions and everybody puts on pressure or having a feeling of ambivalence re priorities. [*Daar moet 'n duidelike onderskeid van rolle wees. Somtyds word*

sielkundiges in alle rigtings getrek en almal plaas druk of het 'n gevoel van teenstrydigheid aangaande prioriteite]. (34)

The role of the psychologist must be made clear to the management of the district and the circuit team managers. [*Die rol van die sielkundige moet duidelik gemaak word aan die bestuur van die distrik en aan die omtrek span bestuurders]. (36)*

The role of school psychologists need to be redefined as it is not known exactly what they ought to do. [*Die rol van skool sielkundige behoort heromskrywe te word omdat dit nie regtig duidelik is wat hulle behoort te doen nie]. (53)*

To inform the team. We got a pack explaining what each one in the team does. This was for me a meaningful exercise—I could see—because I had not as yet worked with curriculum; curriculum is responsible for this and IMG is responsible for that [*Om die span in te lig. Ons het 'n pakkie gekry van wat elkeen in die span doen. Dit was vir my 'n sinvolle praktyk in die sin van—ek kon sien—want ek het nog nie met kurrikulum gewerk nie; kurrikulum is verantwoordelik vir dit en IMG vir dit]. (fg4).*

It is just making the scope of what we are doing more manageable because right now it is too wide. [*Dit is net om die oorsig van wat ons doen meer hanteerbaar te maak want op die oomblik is dit heeltemal te breed]. (fg7)*

Maybe mutual understanding of what is in each other's job descriptions ... in the team. I don't know if we've looked at the curriculum advisors' job description or whether they've looked at ours. [*Moontlike wedersydse begrip van wat in mekaar se pos beskrywing is ... binne in die span. Ek weet nie of ons na die kurrikulum adviseurs se pos beskrywing gekyk het nie of hetsy hulle na ons s'n].*

Why do you think we should be looking at each others' job descriptions? [*Hoekom dink jy behoort ons na mekaar se pos beskrywings te kyk?*]

Because if you look at the circuit team manager's description and she looked at yours properly and asked you questions about it, and you looked at the foundation phase curriculum advisor's, then you start to get an idea—oh is this what.... [*Want as jy na die omtrek span bestuurder se beskrywing kyk en sy kyk deeglik na joune en vra vrae daaromtrent en jy kyk na die grondslag fase kurrikulum adviseur s'n, dan begin jy 'n idee kry – o dis wat...](fg7)*

If there is anything that I think needs to change, it is the employer—does not want to utilise us anymore—fine. Give us a package and we will leave. The point is though, that as long as we are here—how do they want to employ us? And (then they must) advertise it as such. Don't pretend as if we can do this, and we can do that ... but it is an untenable situation. [*As iets vir my moet verander moet die werkgewer—wil ons nie meer gebruik nie—fine. Gee ons 'n pakket, dan gaan ons. Die punt is net wanneer hulle ons het—hoe wil hulle ons aanwend? En (dan moet hulle dit) so adverteer. Moenie maak asof ons dit kan doen, en dit kan doen ... maar dit is 'n onhoudbare situasie]. (fg8)*

Many key informants and school psychologists argued that once roles were clarified, boundaries would be clearer and individuals would be better able to focus on their area of expertise in the collaborative process. Clarity in roles would facilitate working together by pooling skills and knowledge and highlighting the diversity in the team in order to maximise benefits for the school, educators and learners. The collaboration would shift away from the notion of sectors all doing the same thing to each contributing something different in order to achieve a common goal. The following comments from school psychologists in the focus group discussions and questionnaires illustrate this:

Specialists in the circuit must do what they were appointed to do. [*Spesialiste in kring moet gebruik word waarvoor hulle aangestel is*]. (10)

Emphasis should be on core function of school psychologist. Better understanding of psychologist's role. [*Klem behoort op die kern funksie van skool sielkundiges te wees. Beter begrip van die sielkundige se rol*]. (41)

... the team can work well, but it means that each one has something to offer. You can add value [... *die span kan lekker werk, maar dan beteken dit elkeen het mos 'n deel wat jy kan bydra. Jy kan mos waarde toevoeg*]. (fg4)

The way I am seeing the circuit operating, is that we have the different people fulfilling the function, and for me, as a psychologist doing my work, and you, as a CA doing your work, together then the schools get their service. [*Die manier hoe ek die omtrek sien funksioneer, is dat ons verskillende mense het wat die funksie vervul en vir my as 'n sielkundige besig om my werk te doen, en jy as 'n jong CA besig met jou werk, tesame kry die skool dan hulle diens*]. (fg6)

We believe that we are here for a purpose. Our purpose is based on our specialisation. [*Ons glo dat ons hier is met 'n doel. Ons doel is gebaseer op ons spesialisering*]. (fg2)

Some participants identified an important issue relating to varying levels of expertise in school development, which is an indirect service intervention. Two respondents in the focus groups proposed that school psychological services be restructured in order to accommodate the diversity within the profession with regard to levels and scope of training and practice. Such restructuring, it was suggested, would entail dividing the school psychology service into specialisations in direct and indirect service delivery. This implies that some school psychologists would occupy posts which would enable them to offer a more direct service, focusing on assessment and interventions with learners on a more individual basis, while others would be charged with more indirect support, targeting educators and the school as an organisation.

I think the model needs to be rethought... Not specifically, but the whole idea of having a school psychologist. I would think that there should be a school psychologist to do school development, but then there should be a consultant that will deal with the individual. The moment that you do, when you divide that--and Dr. Theron actually expressed that at that symposium, when he said that maybe that can be handed out on a contract basis. Because to marry the two into one person is not going to work; it is always going to lead to problems. [*Ek dink die model behoort oordink te word. Nie spesifiek nie, maar die hele idee van om 'n skoolsielkundige te hê. Ek sou dink dat daar 'n skoolsielkundige behoort te wees om skool ontwikkeling te doen, maar dan behoort daar 'n konsultant te wees wat die individu moet hanteer. Die oomblik wat jy dit doen, wanneer jy dit verdeel--en Dr. Theron het dit inderdaard te kenne gegee by daardie simposium, toe hy gesê het, dat dit moontlik uit gegee kan word op 'n kontrak basis. Want om die twee saam te smelt in een persoon gaan nie werk nie; dit sal altyd aanleiding gee tot probleme*]. (fg6)

The job scope is wide for one person, but for example we have spoken about the school psychologist. If there were two people, and the one person was focussing more on the whole school development and the other was doing the referrals or whatever--they work together. [*Die oorsig van werk is breed vir een persoon, maar ons het byvoorbeeld gepraat van die skool sielkundige. As daar twee persone was, en die een persoon fokus meer op die heelskool ontwikkeling en die ander een was besig met verwysings of watter ookal--hulle werk saam*] When we had two (school psychologists) in a circuit, you compare and between the two of them they cover. The one might have a preference for more whole school development than doing other work, but both would do--they each do, they stick to the job, but in different proportions. [*Toe ons twee (skool sielkundiges) in 'n omtrek gehad het, jy vergelyk en tussen die twee van hulle word dit gedek. Die een mag 'n voorkeur hê vir meer heel skool ontwikkeling as ander werk, maar beide sou doen--hulle al twee doen, hulle hou by die werk, maar in verskillende verhoudings*]. (fg7)

Participants felt that if roles and boundaries were clarified, this would facilitate school development and collaborative work. It would allow sectors to engage as experts in their discipline or area thereby enhancing the quality of the services provided to schools. One suggestion made to address the challenges faced, focused on delineating roles played by school psychologists by creating two different posts with differing job descriptions, emphasising either direct or indirect psychological services provided by individuals who hold these different, but connected, posts.

8.7.2. Addressing Personal and Interpersonal Dynamics

Most school psychologists in the Western Cape who participated in the focus group interviews felt that more effort needs to be invested in building and improving relationships between individuals and sectors within the education department at all levels. Relationships

with other sectors beyond the education department were described as positive and characterised by mutual respect and understanding. School psychologists acknowledged that work would need to be done by all to improve the relationship dynamics in the future. For example, one participant in a focus group interview said,

Yes, but sometimes your assertiveness can be misunderstood, it can be seen as-- you are--you have a chip on the shoulder or you are aggressive. [*Ja, maar somtyds kan jou selfvertroue misverstaan word, dit kan gesien word--jy is--jy is vol van jouself of jy is aggresief*]. (fg3)

How people communicate with one another and the communication procedures within circuits and districts need to be improved considerably. It was proposed that perhaps if people began to talk more to each other about the work they do, the challenges they face, and the expertise they bring, these newfound understandings would enhance collaboration and impact positively on the nature of development work engaged in at schools.

I think we need to talk to our circuit manager more... Perhaps there should be a meeting with the school psychologists, and not with 'X' (senior school psychologist) and 'Y' (Head of SLES), us and the circuit team managers together. So that they can understand, perhaps you submit a plan, that you will over the next six months get to all your schools, provide your service, that they then understand [*Ek dink ons moet meer met ons kringspan bestuurder bespreek.... Dalk moet daar 'n meeting wees met die sielkundiges, en nie net met 'X' en 'Y' nie, met ons en die CT managers together. Dat hulle kan verstaan, as jy dalk 'n plan ingee, dat jy gaan se maar oor ses maande by al jou skole uitkom, en jou diens gee, dat hulle dan verstaan*]. (fg6)

The relationship with other sectors and colleagues could serve as an important conduit for shifting mindsets and consequently school development practice. Once trust, respect and transparency became apparent in a team, it would be easier for individuals to begin to see the value of adopting different paradigms in working together to facilitate school development. One participant explained how school psychologists diverge from a circuit approach when working with schools

Actually you need to show some compassion for where they come from and what they have to deal with. Only once you get that and the teachers trust you—believe that you are really going to hold their hand—then only will they start to take on all the good advice. If you have gone there first of all with a big stick—you wouldn't have had that. So there was a lot of resistance when we said, 'that is not the way we want to go'. First we must be prepared to listen. [*Eintlik behoort jy empatie te toon vir waar hulle vandaan kom en dit waarmee hulle te doen het. Slegs wanneer jy dit het en die opvoeders vertrou dat jy regtig hulle hand gaan hou--slegs dan sal hulle begin om al die goeie advies aan te neem. As jy eers na hulle gegaan het met 'n groot stok--sou jy nooit dit gehad het nie. So, daar is baie weerstand wat ons gekry het toe ons gesê het dat dit is*

nie die rigting wat ons wil in slaan nie. Ons moet eers bereid wees om te luister]. (fg7)

8.7.3. Organisational Change

Many participants in the focus groups and questionnaires explained that many of the challenges would be addressed if systems and procedures were developed and systematised across circuit teams. It was argued that although decentralisation brought with it autonomy, the limitation thereof is a lack of standardised, consistent practice within the education system. Systems and procedures need to be developed and instituted so that in some way schools would have a clearer sense of what they could expect by way of education support and that this would be fairly consistent across circuits and districts. Such systems would need to include clear policy imperatives and protocols around the nature of collaboration and school development.

Key informants in the email interviews suggested the following:

I think if it is formalised in all sectors it will help. Policy should be operationalised regarding intersectoral collaboration and personnel across sectors trained to work collaboratively. [*Ek dink dit sal help as dit in alle sektore geformaliseer is. Beleid behoort bedryf te word aangaande intersektorale samewerking en personeel oor sektore opgelei om saam te werk*]. (Lecturer/trainer/private practitioner)

Proper policy, protocols, planning and monitoring. [*Behoorlike beleid, protokols, beplanning en waarneming*]. (Manager of School Psychological Services)

School psychologists participating in the questionnaire and focus groups were sometimes rather emotional:

Fire all the CTMs and bring back the EMDCs with a single reporting system. Get rid of all the 'bosses' and paper war and set officials free to visit schools. [*Dank af al die CTM's en bring terug die EMDC's met 'n enkele verslaggewing stelsel. Raak ontslae van die die 'base' en papier oorlog en maak amptenare vry om skole te besoek*]. (46)

In commenting on whether improved management will have an effect, psychologists said,

Yes. Then there will be greater—maybe people will feel less threatened [*Ja. Dan gaan daar ook 'n groter—minder gevoel van bedreiging miskien wees*]. (fg8)

Definite guidelines to CTM—now each CTM deals with each SLES team differently. [*Definitiewe riglyne aan CTM—nou hanteer elke CTM elke SLES span verskillend*]. (24)

There should be clear guidelines to what is—how things should be done. [*Daar behoort 'n duidelike riglyn te wees oor wat is—hoe dinge gedoen behoort te word*]. (fg4)

Challenges, participants claimed, could be significantly addressed if a careful review of resource allocation were to be initiated. Some made a general call for improving the funding of school psychology services to schools; others were more specific and suggested an increase in the number of school psychology posts nationwide, which would incorporate a review of the ratio of school psychologists to schools.

Unless the GDE understand that the emotional and psychological well being of the learners needs to receive as much attention (financial resourcing). the role of psychologists in effecting deep change in the system will not happen. Firstly, one would need to put in sufficient funding to get to a proper ratio of psychologists to learners, whether in a direct or indirect service delivery model. [*Tensy die GDE verstaan dat die emosionele en sielkundige welstand van die leerders net so baie aandag moet geniet (finansiële toevlugting), die rol van die sielkundige in die mee bring van diepe verandering in die stelsel, sal nie gebeur nie. Jy het nodig om eerstens voldoende fondse in te ploeg om 'n geskikte verhouding van sielkundiges tot leerders te kry, hetsy in 'n direkte of indirekte dienslewering model*]. (Director of Psychological and Social Services)

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As regards physical resources, the issue of office space, which is a serious concern in some districts in the Western Cape, was highlighted once again. It was argued that office space should be allocated based on the nature of the work people do and not on their post level.

Establishing clear structures and procedures, such as channels of communication to facilitate consultation within the WCED, was recommended. This was identified as vital in order to set clear common goals and plan together to facilitate school development.

Another recommendation for structural change was to remove school psychologists from circuit teams and to have these individuals based at the level of the district so that they could be used as a resource to the district and not to a single circuit.

I think they have to clearly define what the work of the school psychologist is. Stop trying to pull us in different directions doing all sorts of other things. Rather have fewer of us then, but let us at least focus on our main core business and then—leave out all the other stuff. Then take the school psychologists out and remove them from their teams—place them there as a resource for the teams

to make use of and—but they are there outside with a professional taking responsibility for them functioning under the SNE CES or under the director, and the same goes for the social workers. [*Ek dink hulle moet duidelik die werk van die skool sielkundige definieer. Hou op om ons in verskillende rigtings te trek om allerhande dinge te doen. Het liever minder van ons, maar laat ons fokus op ons kern besigheid en dan—laat weg al die ander dinge. Neem dan die skool sielkundiges uit en verwyder hulle van hul spanne—plaas hulle daar as 'n bron vir die spanne om te gebruik en—maar hulle is daar buite met 'n professionele persoon wat verantwoordelik is vir hulle funksionering onder die SNE CES of onder die direkteur, en dieselfde geld vir maatskaplike werkers*]. (fg4)

A suggestion that came from one of the circuit team managers was that maybe school psychologists shouldn't be in circuits. Maybe they should be district based, like the FET advisors, and then they are available to any school and the expertise can be used where it is needed. [*'n Voorstel wat van een van die omtrek span bestuurders gekom het was miskien behoort skool sielkundiges nie in omtreke. Miskien moet hulle distrik gebaseerd wees soos FET adviseurs en dan is hulle beskikbaar vir enige skool en die deskundiges kan gebruik word waar hulle nodig is*]. (fg7)

Organisational changes that would address the challenges faced when collaborating with others to develop schools include developing uniform systems and procedures to regularise service provision within the province, improving resource allocation and reviewing the structures within which school psychologists are currently based.

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8.7.4. Training in and Orientation to School Development and Intersectoral Collaboration

All participants in the email interviews highlighted the importance of training and re-orientation in overcoming challenges faced in working together to facilitate school development. Such training would need to target all sectors involved in school development initiatives, including school psychologists. Participants identified the following content areas as being the most crucial in which to begin: working systemically with schools, school development, and intersectoral collaboration.

Training, re-training and re-orientation [*Opleiding, heropleiding en heroriëntering*]. (Lecturer/trainer)

Adequate training and orientation and on-going research and or continuous assessment. [*Voldoende opleiding en oriëntering en voortgesette navorsing en of deurlopende assessering*]. (Lecturer/trainer)

I can just speak for myself in terms of when I did my training--there was nothing about organisational development in that. Maybe it is about identifying additional courses which would assist us in the execution of our new job

description. [*Ek kan net vir myself praat in terme van wanneer ek my opleiding gehad het--daar was niks omtrent organisatoriese ontwikkeling daar in nie. Miskien is dit omtrent die identifisering van addisionele kursusse wat ons kan by staan in die uitvoering van ons nuwe plig beskrywing*]. (fg7)

There needs to be clearer understanding of the fact that there is a plan, a way that one can manage effectively. People need to at least acknowledge that there is a manner in which these limited services, one can still deliver good service. [*Daar moet beter begrip wees van daar is 'n plan van hoe 'n mens die goed bestuur. Mense moet darem kennis neem dat daar is 'n manier om hierdie min dienste, kan 'n ou nogsteeds 'n diens lewer.*] (fg6)

As regards pre-service training of school psychologists in particular, many suggestions were made regarding curriculum insertions and methodologies that universities need to ensure are incorporated into the programmes offered. This is covered in more depth in the next section.

The training of psychologists must be based on an environmental-developmental approach. The course is often structured for the private practice.... The training must be geared to a more flexible approach to ensure that especially school/educational psychologists are trained to assume their role.... There must be a mindset change.... The training institutions should understand and know the milieu in which the person will be working and the expectation of the job description. [*Die opleiding van sielkundiges moet gebaseer wees op 'n omgewingsontwikkeling benadering. Die kursus is dikwels gestruktureerd vir die privaat praktyk.... Die opleiding moet ingeskakel wees vir 'n meer buigsame benadering om te verseker dat veral skool/opvoedkundige sielkundiges opgelei word om hulle rolle te aanvaar.... Daar moet 'n gedagtegang skuif plaasvind.... Die opleiding instellings behoort te weet en te verstaan in watter milieu die persoon gaan werk en die verwagting van die pos beskrywing*]. (Manager of School Psychological Services)

The need for training of those in management positions was underscored by all school psychologists in the focus groups. It was argued that if no structural changes were to be implemented and school psychologists were to remain as members of the circuit team, managed by a circuit team manager, then improving the knowledge skills and expertise of individuals in these posts would be crucial to ensure effective collaboration towards school development.

I don't know if these guys received training on how to drive this, the circuit, or if it was just thrown together, and each circuit must take things as they are. I think such individuals must be trained to know each individual in their position in the circuit [*Ek weet nie of hierdie ouens opleiding gekry het om hierdie ding te bedryf, die kring nie, of dit sommer net saamgeflans en elke kring moet nou dit hê nie. Ek dink sulke ouens moet opgelei word om elke ou in sy posisie en in sy kring te herken*]. (fg4)

In addition to that, I don't think there was any effort made to train the circuit team managers and to sensitise them as to how a circuit should work and how different individuals should function within the team. I think it is quite crucial that this is done in the future. [*Daarbenewens dink ek was daar geen poging om die kringspan bestuurders op te lei en te sensiteer oor hoe 'n kring moet werk, hoe 'n span moet werk en hoe verskillende individue binne die span moet funksioneer nie. Ek dink dit is nogal krities dat dit dalk in die toekoms gedoen moet word*]. (fg4).

... is to agitate at top management, that circuit team managers are trained and sensitised around the roles of the different players and certainly also on how teams work and so on. For now, immediately, I see *that* as an answer. [*... is om te gaan agiteer bo by bestuur dat ons die kringspanbestuurders gaan oplei en sensiteer oor rolle van verskillende mense en sekerlik ook oor hoe spanne werk en so aan. Vir die onmiddellike, sien ek dit as 'n antwoord*]. (fg4)

That is where circuit team management lacks in the ability to manage teams. And I am saying this hesitantly because what they need to do is, they need to manage the expertise that they have in the team to address that problem. That is where the problem lies, because what happens now—the whole bunch goes out to fix that one toilet. The team is not managed according to the skills that the team has. That is where the managers of that team—who were almost all old circuit managers or school principals. Where they now need to realise is, 'I have certain professional expertise or skills in this team; now how can I apply these to develop the whole school development within schools?' [*Dit is waar omtrek span bestuur tekort skiet in hulle vermoë om spanne te bestuur. En ek sê dit huiwerig want wat hulle behoort te doen is, hulle behoort die deskundiges wat hulle in die span het te bestuur om hierdie probleem te adresseer. Dit is waar die probleem lê, want wat nou gebeur—die hele span gaan uit om daardie een toilet te herstel. Die span word nie bestuur na gelang van die vaardighede wat die span besit. Dit is waar die bestuurders van hierdie span—wat bykans almal ou omtrek bestuurders of skoolhoofde is. Waar hulle nou behoort te beseef, 'ek het sekere professionele deskundighede of vaardighede in hierdie span, nou hoe kan ek dit aanwend om die heel skool ontwikkeling uit te bou binne in skole?*']. (fg5)

The job description—I don't know whether, because there are so many people on a team and the circuit team managers have actually looked at the job descriptions of all the people in the teams. [*Die pos beskrywing—ek weet nie hetsy, want daar is so baie mense in 'n span en die omtrek span bestuurders het eintlik gekyk na die pos beskrywings van al die mense in die spanne*]. (fg7)

Although some participants acknowledged that continuous professional development was crucial, the need for review of pre-service programmes, designed to train psychologists, was emphasised. Apart from exploring training for psychologists, participants stressed the importance of training for other professionals in other disciplines and sectors to facilitate collaboration and school development.

8.7.5. Advocacy with Regard to What School Psychologists Can Offer

Most school psychologists in the focus group interviews made a strong call for the establishment of an association of school psychologists that would represent a stronger, unified voice for those in the profession and employed within the education department. Such an association would provide an opportunity for school psychologists to strategise jointly and address the issues that impact on the roles they are expected to play.

More joint strategising by school psychologists. (5)

School psychologists should have a voice in the WCED that will be heard. We don't have an activist or champion who will act as a leader for our issues. Decisions are made for and on behalf of us by individuals who are not school psychologists. I feel that the HPCSA and the universities need to play a greater role in helping to overcome our challenges. Unity and teamwork amongst school psychologists is of utmost importance. As a collective, they should come together at least once a year to discuss their unique issues. *[School psychologists moet 'n eie stem in die WKOD hê na wie geluister word. Ons het nie 'n activist of champion wat, vir ons sake, as leier optree nie. Besluite word vir en namens ons geneem deur mense wat nie skoolsielkundige's is nie. Ek voel dat die HPCSA en universiteite 'n groter rol moet speel in ons uitdagings. Eensgesindheid en samewerking onder skoolsielkundiges is van kardinale belang. As 'n 'collective' moet hulle ten minste een keer per jaar bymekaarkom om oor hul unieke issues te konfereer].* (13)

School psychologist need to form a formal interest group that will represent them as an entity. *[Skool sielkundiges behoort 'n formele belangstellings groep te vorm wat hulle sal verteenwoordig as 'n entiteit].* (37)

I think that, first and foremost, they need to become—they need to take back their space. Part of that should be that they need to be properly organised and it shouldn't be done by someone at the head office or district. It needs to be an initiative from the ground where they really feel this is who we are and this is how we are defining ourselves. *[Ek dink allereers dat hulle behoort te bekom—hulle behoort hulle regmatige plek in te neem. 'n Gedeelte van dit behoort te wees dat hulle behoorlik georganiseer moet wees en dit moet nie gedoen deur iemand by hoofkantoor of die distrik nie. Dit behoort 'n inisiatief van die omgewing te wees waar hulle werklik voel dit is wie ons is en dit is hoe ons onself definieer].* (fg1)

The idea is basically to get a sort of association for school psychologists. Basically on the American sort of model and try and get some sort of international accreditation and then try—obviously I will probably have to have a proper constitution, have a proper launch and then have meaningful relationships with tertiary institutions see how we can then strengthen ourselves—first of all the profession itself. Take it from there. *[Die idee is basis om 'n soort van organisasie te kry vir skool sielkundiges. Basies op die Amerikaanse soort van model en probeer om soort van internasionale*

akkreditasie te kry en dan te probeer – natuurlik sal ek waarskynlik 'n behoorlike konstitusie moet hê, 'n behoorlike afskiet en dan betekenisvolle verhoudings met tersiêre instellings sluit om te sien hoe ons dan ons versterk – in die eerste plek die professie op sigself. Neem dit van hier]. (fg1)

The respondents to the questionnaire argued similarly that such an association would further the cause of school psychology within the formal education sector. It was noted, however, that school psychologists ought to have an individual in a senior position within the Department of Education, at provincial and national levels, who would act as a representative for the field.

School psychologists need to have a stronger and unified voice and representation. At the moment we only have strong bureaucratic structures of the past within the component. There have been no changes in the middle management within school psychology...There is no formal feedback from provincial meetings and decisions are being made for school psychologist without consulting at grassroots level. School psychologist asked for a more open referencing group within the component to secure a more transparent and open process. [*Skool sielkundiges behoort 'n sterker en verenigde stem en voorstelling te hê. Op die oomblik het ons net sterk burokratiese strukture van die verlede binne in die komponent. Daar was geen verandering in die middel bestuur binne in skool sielkunde ... Daar is geen formele terugvoering van provinsiale vergadering en besluite word vir skool sielkundiges gemaak sonder die raadpleging op grondvlak. Skool sielkundiges vra vir 'n meer ope verwysingsgroep binne in die komponent om 'n meer deursigtige en toeganklike proses te verseker*]. (6)

It was acknowledged by many school psychologists that a great deal of work has to be done to improve the understanding and recognition of school psychology practice within the education sector. Participants in the focus group interviews mentioned the possibility of engaging in a marketing strategy which focuses on what psychology has to offer education since it was felt that the perceptions around this, both in education and in the public sector, is often fraught with myth and misunderstandings.

There is also limited understanding that emotional and psychosocial factors impact on throughput rate. So my belief is that stronger advocacy on the role that psych services can play in reducing drop-out and low through-put rates needs to be prioritised. [*Daar is ook beperkte insig dat emosionele en sielkundige-sosiale faktore 'n impak het op die slaagsyfer. Dus is my oortuiging dat die sterker aanbevelings in die rol wat sielkundige dienste kan speel in die verlaging van die uitsak en lae slaagsyfer behoort voorkeur te geniet*]. (Director of Psychological and Social Services)

It might make a difference if role players and decisions makers have insight and background information on what psychology can offer to education. If the minister of education were a psychologist, we might have been valued for what

we can contribute to the system (which is currently in a major crisis). [*Dit mag 'n verskil maak as rol spelers en besluitnemers insig en agtergrond inligting het oor wat sielkunde vir opvoeding kan bied. As die minister van opvoeding 'n sielkundige was, mag ons meer na waarde geskat word vir wat ons kan bydra tot die stelsel (wat huidiglik in 'n groot krisis is)*]. (9)

First and foremost, psychologists need to get the recognition they deserve. [*Allereers behoort sielkundiges die erkenning te kry wat hulle verdien*]. (34)

Educational management needs vision into the world of psychology and the impact it has on development of schools. [*Opvoedingsbestuur behoort 'n visie te hê in die wêreld van sielkunde en die impak wat dit het op die ontwikkeling van skole*] (45)

Respect and post level recognition for the value added by psychologists through their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Promotion possibilities. [*Respek en posvlak erkenning vir die waarde bygedra deur sielkundiges deur hulle kennis, vaardighede en denkwyse. Bevorderingsmoontlikhede*]. (43)

I think it's important for people to look at what do they have control over. If you work in the constraints of the department, there are certain things you can't do and certain things you still can do. One of the things relates to alliances with tertiary institutions and to get more involved—to make themselves more relevant. Maybe people need to put on a marketing hat. They aren't noticed, because what are they actually doing to attract any sort of attention? If we have to be very critical and blunt about this, I am not saying they should try and brag about everything but at least you should say, 'how do I market myself? How do I market my profession?' and that is not happening. [*Ek dink dit is belangrik vir mense om te kyk waar oor hulle beheer het. As jy in die beperkings van die departement werk, is daar sekere dinge wat jy nie kan doen nie en sekere dinge wat jy steeds mag doen. Een van die dinge hou verband met die verbintnisse met tersiêre instellings en om meer betrokke te raak—om hulself meer relevant te maak. Miskien moet mense 'n bemarkings hoed op sit. Hulle word nie gesien nie, want wat doen hulle eintlik om enige aandag te trek? As ons baie krities en reguit hieromtrent wil wees, ek sê nie hulle moet probeer en spog oor alles nie, maar ten minste behoort jy te sê, 'Hoe bemark ek myself? Hoe bemark ek my beroep?' en dit is nie wat gebeur nie*]. (fg1)

... is there any way that psychologists can make themselves visible? Valuable? Until we also do something, expose ourselves positively or maybe we can be creative looking at this—do it more. Do presentations. Call this group, the ILST, make them know these are the things we do. Maybe even before the problem arises we can be proactive and as a team we can put up something together. Perhaps once a month just make ourselves visible—maybe if we can take what the policies and the vision of the WCED and pull out stuff that we think we can impact on in terms of development. I think people can start respecting—maybe it is ideal, only Utopia—I feel that is the way we can try and change--rather than 'sinking' and accepting the perception that exists. We are the people responsible for the management of our own perceptions and people's perception about us. [*... is daar enige manier waarop sielkundiges hulself sigbaar kan*

maak? Waardevol? ... Totdat ons ook iets doen, onself positief blootstel of miskien kan ons kreatief hierna kyk – dit meer doen. Doen aanbiedings. Nader die groep, die ILST, maak hulle bewus van dit is die dinge wat ons doen. Miskien selfs voor die probleem opduik ons kan proaktief wees en as 'n span kan ons iets bymekaar sit. Miskien eenmaal 'n maand net onself sigbaar te maak–miskien as ons die beleid en visie van die WKOD neem en daarvandaan uit trek dit wat ons dink kan impak in terme van ontwikkeling. Ek dink mense kan begin respekteer – miskien is dit ideaal, maar Utopia–ek voel dit is die manier waarop ons kan probeer om te verander—liewer as om te 'sak' en die waarneming wat bestaan te aanvaar. Ons is die mense wat verantwoordelik is vir die bestuur van ons eie waarneming en mense se waarneming van ons]. (fg3)

In the 9 focus areas there are some questions to get schools thinking about what basic functionality means. If we can develop questions from a school psychologist perspective.... If we are pro-active when they do the SIP for next year and introduce some leading questions—is your school culture ... we must think what the questions are—then we are going to get better SIPs from the school—which will ask for the things that we are able to give and we think will make a difference. [In die 9 fokus areas is daar sommige vrae om skole te laat dink wat basiese funksionaliteit beteken. As ons vrae kan ontwikkel vanaf 'n skool sielkundige se perspektief.... As ons pro-aktief is wanneer hulle die SIP vir volgende jaar doen en belangrike vrae aanvoer—is jou skool kultuur ... ons moet dink aan watter vrae—dan gaan ons beter SIPs van die skool kry—wie gaan vra vir die dinge wat ons by magte is om te gee en wat ons dink 'n verskil gaan maak]. (fg7)

In order to advocate for the profession, school psychologists need to first reflect, on an intrapersonal level, on who they are and what they have to offer. All school psychologists call for the recognition of their right to focus on the application of their specialist knowledge and expertise. Participants argued, however, that school psychologists need to shape and clarify their own identity as a first step in order to ensure the success of any advocacy initiatives. It was felt that the low morale of school psychologists must be lifted, confidence built, and clarity sought before other sectors and senior managers will be willing to listen.

We need to assert ourselves, where do we want to be? Are we consultants? Are we testers? We need to shape ourselves and that's not happening. [*Ons behoort onself te laat geld, waar wil ons wees? Is ons konsultante? Is ons eksaminators? Ons behoort vorm te kry en dit gebeur nie]. (fg2)*

I am just feeling there is a lack of activism in this psychological sphere now. Each one is just looking after his own space. Perhaps we are marginalised, but we are also 'lam' (weak), in the way that the system has sucked our life energy out of us. We need to get back that... We need to speak for ourselves and speak strongly and not to pull people down who are speaking strongly for themselves. [*Ek voel net daar is nou 'n tekort aan aktivisme in hierdie sielkundige werkkring. Elkeen is net besig om na homself om te sien. Miskien is ons gekortwiek, maar ons is ook verlam, op die manier soos wat die stelsel ons*

ligaams energie uit ons getap het. Ons moet dit terug kry... Ons behoort vir onself te praat en sterk uit te spreek en nie mense wat sterk vir hulself praat, neertrek nie]. (fg7)

I think that is why we have to do a lot of advocacy about our role, especially in the so-called dysfunctional schools, because often it is about the hard stuff that is not right. What you say is so true, about all the specialised support people being willing to work with the marginalised, being willing to work with the people that nobody else wants to work with. So we come with that mindset when we work with schools as well. *[Ek dink dit is hoekom ons baie voorspraak vir ons rol moet doen veral in wat genoem word die sogenaamde disfunksionele skole, want gewoonlik is dit omtrent die moeilike kwessies wat nie reg is nie. Wat jy sê is waar, omtrent al die gespesialiseerde ondersteunings mense wat gewillig is om te werk met die wat gekortwiek is, gewillig is om te werk met die mense wat niemand anders mee wil werk nie. So dan kom ons met daardie gedagtegang ook as ons met skole werk]. (fg7)*

It is really important that you all speak out and be assertive. At the moment, there is no structure that can speak on your behalf. At this point, there is no structure that facilitates engagement with the circuit team managers., They don't have to listen to me *[Dit is baie belangrik dat julle sal moet praat en assertive wees. Daar is tans nie eintlik 'n structure nie wat vir julle gaan praat nie. Daar is nie op die oomblik 'n structure wat ek kan inspraak hê by die kringspan bestuurders nie. Hulle het nie nodig om na my te luister nie]. (fg4).*

Representation and voice was a strong theme that emerged in the suggestions to address the advocacy challenge. School psychologists argued for representation nationally, as a profession, and provincially within the education department as employees. An additional issue was linked to the identity of the profession and the importance of marketing school psychology so that it is better understood by collaborators and clients alike.

8.8. Recommendations for the Training of School Psychologists

Participants in the email interviews and the questionnaires were asked to make recommendations for the training of school psychologists. Responses included reflections on both in-service and pre-service training, although the latter was foregrounded. The ideas proposed were categorised as follows:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TRAINING OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS	
Category	Key themes
Knowledge and attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersectoral collaboration • School development • Facilitating shifts in mind-set
Skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and management • Understanding and facilitating group processes
Curriculum planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum content • Collaboration in curriculum planning
Curriculum implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential learning • Collaboration in action

Table 8.7. Recommendations for the training of school psychologists.

In the sections that follow, the categories are elaborated on and the themes which emerged as significant in the analysis of the data are explored. The first category focuses on the knowledge and skills that should be focused upon in the training of school psychologists, whether pre-service or in-service.



8.8.1. Knowledge and Attitudes

Many participants in the email interviews emphasised the need to include relevant content in the training offerings. Students and qualified psychologists need to improve their knowledge and understanding of intersectoral collaboration if they are to implement it effectively.

More training in the development of collaborative partnerships. [*Meer opleiding in die ontwikkeling van samewerkende vennootskappe*]. (Researcher)

Training to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to work collaboratively. Learning in practice—in a collaborative team situation. [*Opleiding om hulle toe te rus met die nodige kennis en vaardighede om saam te werk. Leer in die prakryk—in 'n medewerkende span situasie*]. (Lecturer/trainer/researcher)

Modules can be included that deal specifically with the policy imperatives, theoretical frameworks and practical tips concerning intersectoral collaboration. [*Modules kan ingesluit word wat spesifiek handel met beleid noodsaaklikhede, teoretiese raamwerke en praktiese wenke rakende intersektorale samewerking*]. (Lecturer/trainer)

Please see to it that they know exactly how support to schools is structured, what the functions of each role-player are, what the protocols involved are, what collaboration entails, how it should take place, the benefits of collaboration as well as the pitfalls, how it should be monitored, etc. [*Sien asseblief daarna dat hulle presies weet hoe ondersteuning aan skole gestruktureerd is, wat die funksie van elke rolspeler is, watter protokols betrokke is, wat samewerking*

behels, hoe dit behoort plaas te vind, die voordele van samewerking sowel as die slaggate, hoe dit waargeneem behoort te word, ens.]. (Manager of school Psychological Services)

A similar plea was made by key informants in the email interviews to include school development as a knowledge area, a field that school psychologists need to understand well and be able to implement interventions systemically with competence and confidence.

School development also should be approached broadly and not left to educational managers/administrators only--it is evident from the situation in South Africa that this does not work. Educational psychologists--with a multi- and intra-disciplinary mindset can deliver an extremely valuable service. [*Skool ontwikkeling behoort ook in die breë benader te word en nie aan opvoeding bestuurders/administrateurs alleen oorgelaat te word nie--dit is duidelik soos die situasie in Suid Afrika dat dit nie werk nie. Opvoeding sielkundiges--met 'n multi- en intra dissiplinêre gedagtegang kan 'n besondere waardevolle diens lewer]. (Lecturer)*

Participants argued that the focus on knowledge in training programmes needs to be aimed at facilitating a shift in the mindset of school psychologists in training. The need for a community psychology approach to school psychology service delivery was highlighted and is captured in the following quote:

There are so few psychologists in the education system, their work must be directed into developing systems through which service delivery and interventions need to be more indirect. [*Daar is so min sielkundiges in die opvoeding stelsel hulle werk moet gerig word binne ontwikkeling stelsels deur wie dienslewering en intervensie meer indirek behoort te wees]. (Manager of Psychological Services)*

Participants responded to the questionnaire by identifying the following in-service training courses as ones that would enhance their work as school psychologists working with others to facilitate school development.

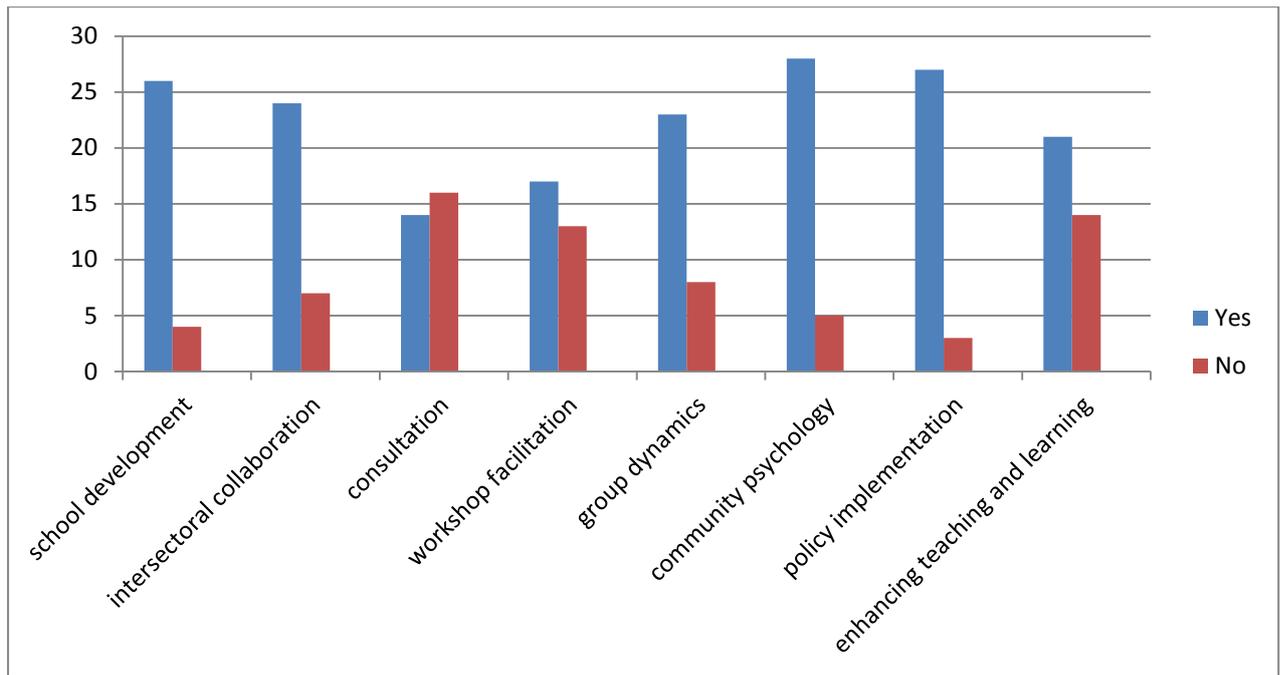


Figure 8.1. Professional training needs

It is evident that key concepts in this study have been identified by the participants in interviews and the questionnaire as gaps in the knowledge base of many practitioners. Participants express a need to improve their knowledge in the areas of school development, intersectoral collaboration and community psychology. It is important to note that each of these concepts is strongly embedded in policy directives in education and education support in South Africa, which explains the concomitant interest in enhancing understandings of the process of policy implementation. Linked to building knowledge in these areas is the need to develop core skills to enhance and extend the provision of psychological services to schools.

8.8.2. Skills Development

As regards skills development, it was argued that basic skills are crucial and, to this end, school psychologists ought to receive some input and support to develop good communication, leadership and management skills. Being able to understand and facilitate group processes, it was argued, would be necessary when working with schools, at the level of the school and within the team of role players at the level of the collaborative team.

School psychologists must possess good leadership skills, awareness of and respect for differing perspectives, good human relations and communication skills, and good management skills. [*Skool sielkundiges moet goeie leierskap vaardighede besit, bewus wees van en of respek vir verskillende perspektiewe, goeie menslike verhoudings en kommunikasie vaardighede en goeie bestuursvaardighede besit*]. (Lecturer/trainer)

Collaborative consultancy as a management tool for school change should be highlighted. [*Raadplegende samewerking as 'n bestuurswerktuig vir skole verandering behoort beklemtoon te word*] (Director of Psychological and Social Services).

8.8.3. Curriculum Planning Process

In the planning of curricula, participants argued strongly for the inclusion of intersectoral collaboration and school development as topics to be covered in courses and training programmes.

I would like to recommend that both intersectoral collaboration and school development form part of the pre- and in-service training of educational psychologists (and registered counsellors - we already do it at our university). I don't think it is a 'nice to have', I deem it as an imperative given the crisis that most South African schools are in with regard to their functioning and operation--or lack thereof--dysfunction. [*Ek sou graag wou aanbeveel dat beide intersektorale samewerking en skool ontwikkeling deel vorm van die pre- en in-diensopleiding van opvoedkundige sielkundiges (en geregistreerde beraders--ons doen dit alreeds by ons universiteit). Ek dink nie dit is 'n 'lekker om te hê' nie, ek sien dit as onontbeerlik gegee die krisis waarin die meeste Suid Afrikaanse skole is met betrekking tot hulle funksionering en werking--of tekort daaraan -- wanfunksie*]. (Lecturer)

The need for collaboration between different sectors in the planning of the curriculum through developing stronger links between training and practice spaces was noted as well.

Liaise with the job providers and obtain the new concepts in education support and the needs of the job providers. Work closely with the Department of Education at a National and Provincial level to keep abreast of changes, challenges, needs and programme development. The policies and practices are constantly changing and the Universities need to stay abreast and actually be the fore-runners of the change. [*Skakel met die diensverskaffers en bekom die nuwe konsepte in opvoedkundige ondersteuning en die behoeftes van die diensverskaffers. Werk nou met die Departement van Opvoeding op Nasionale en Provinsiale vlak om op hoogte te wees van veranderinge, uitdagings, behoeftes en program ontwikkeling. Die beleid en praktyke verander gedurig en die universiteite behoort op hoogte te bly en eintlik die voorlopers van verandering te wees*] (Manager of School Psychological Services)

This is an issue that needs to be discussed between relevant stakeholders, including University Departments of Psychology, LSEN Lecturers, Life Orientation Lecturers and, obviously, Departments of Education. [*Hierdie is 'n kwessie wat bespreek behoort te word tussen betrokke insethouers, ingesluit Universiteit Departemente van Sielkunde, LSEN Dosente, Lewensoriëntering Dosente en natuurlik Departement van Opvoedkunde*]. (Lecturer/supervisor)

8.8.4. Curriculum Implementation

Training institutions were advised to model collaboration within their sector so that students are able to experience the benefits of collaboration as recipients.

Institutions should start by modelling intersectoral collaboration by having students training in professions that transverse sectors work with each other on projects. Intersectoral collaboration should be curricularised. [*Tellings behoort te begin by modellering van intersektorale samewerking deur studente in opleiding te hê wat dwarsoor sektore met mekaar werk aan projekte. Intersektorale samewerking behoort volgens die kurrikulum aangepas te word*]. (Trainer/private practitioner)

Participants highlighted the importance of exposing students to these knowledge areas through practice. Engaging with these concepts theoretically was seen to be a good first step; however, learning through practice was emphasised as fundamental.

Practical exposure has to form an integral part of the training [*Praktiese blootstelling behoort 'n integrale deel van die opleiding te vorm*]. (Director of Therapeutic Services)

Recommendations made regarding in-service and pre-service training included the need to focus on shifting mindsets of practitioners that deepened knowledge and understanding of school development and intersectoral collaboration in particular. It was argued that communication, management and group facilitation skills should be prioritised. Collaboration in the curriculum planning and implementation process was highlighted.

8.9. Summary and Conclusion

Data generated from the email and focus group interviews as well as the questionnaires suggest that school psychologists face a number of challenges in their attempt to facilitate school development through intersectoral collaboration. Lack of clarity around roles, personal and interpersonal dynamics, organisational factors, differing discourses and worldviews, professional training and development and wider systemic issues within education all impact on school psychologists' ability to offer an efficient and effective indirect service to schools in collaboration with others. In this chapter, these challenges are explored and participants' suggestions for how these challenges could be addressed were presented. It concludes with specific recommendations made regarding the professional training of school psychologists who are expected to facilitate school development in collaboration with other sectors.

The next chapter explores how the main issues in the literature (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) link with the key findings presented in Chapters 7 and 8. Aspects that concur will be flagged and contradictions, gaps and deviations will be discussed.

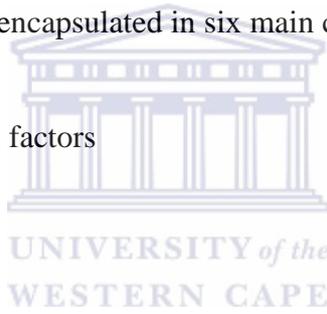


CHAPTER 9 DISCUSSION

This discussion chapter is focused on the challenges that emerge when school psychologists work with other sectors to facilitate school development, which was the main aim of the study. The emphasis is on those factors that make intersectoral collaboration difficult as they present as barriers to good practice. In this chapter, some of the suggestions put forward by participants in the email interviews, focus groups and questionnaires regarding how these challenges could be addressed are also explored. These possibilities are picked up in the final chapter as they are deepened and extended in the recommendations that emerge from the study as a whole.

The challenges facing school psychologists when they collaborate with other sectors to facilitate school development are encapsulated in six main categories. These are as follows:

- Roles and boundaries
- Personal and interpersonal factors
- Organisational challenges
- Training and development
- Discourse and worldviews
- Wider education system.



In the discussion that follows, the themes that emerged in each of these categories are explored, by illustrating how these relate to the significant issues that are present in the literature consulted on the topic under study.

9.1. Roles and Boundaries in Collaboration

A fundamental challenge that emerged in the findings was linked to the roles played by various sectors and the nature of the boundaries between them. Within this broad category, key informants and school psychologists emphasised the importance of *role definition*, of the need to clarify the difference between *direct* and *indirect support*, and what was indeed expected of school psychologists. The importance of incorporating the expertise of school psychologists in collaborative processes was noted. *Educator development and support* is a

core aspect of the work engaged in by school psychologists, but how this is seen to contribute to school development is not always well understood. This relates to the last theme, which concerns the role of school psychologists as *school development consultants* and the issue of acknowledgement of this role by school psychologists and the sectors with which they work.

9.1.1. Role Definition

One of the key concepts of the systems thinking approach is roles and boundaries. Donald et al. (2010) suggested that clarifying how roles are defined and played out to achieve goals within a system is crucial. Advocates of systems thinking assert that how roles are defined influences how the system functions as a whole. The argument is that if roles are not well defined, the functioning of the system is affected.

The findings reveal that roles of school psychologists are poorly defined and that even where these are stated, they are not communicated clearly in the system and, consequently, not implemented as they should be. A major challenge that was identified, across all phases of data collection, by all data sources, is the need for clarification of roles. This refers to the need for clarity about who should do what within the team, generally, but especially regarding the role of school psychologists (Albers et al., 2007; Brown & Bolen, 2003; Reschley, 2004). Many participants referred to a job description that is impressive, but so wide that it is unrealistic because it is expecting one individual to do “anything and everything”.

In addition to the above issue, another related challenge, which emerged in the questionnaires and focus groups, was that other sectors that school psychologists work with seem to have a very narrow idea of what it is that school psychologists can do. There is a sense that the school psychologists are primarily called upon to assist when an intellectual assessment needs to be conducted and when a crisis occurs at a school (Lazarus et al. 2006). Berger and Lazarus (1987) had also commented on this public view of psychologists. The ignorance and myths around what psychology can offer schools is a serious challenge that needs to be addressed. This is also linked to an advocacy challenge, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Developing a job description is often regarded as a clear attempt to clarify roles. However, in the case of school psychologists, the contention is that the job description is too wide. In

theory, a job description that is wide is helpful and even pleasing because it acknowledges, in a very affirming way, that school psychologists are multiskilled. In practice, however, the experience is that the workload of the school psychologists has consequently increased because there is a new understanding of the broad range of assessment and interventions that can be engaged in. This is the challenge of working with a systems frame. One is forced to look beyond the individual, which implies that one must intervene beyond the individual as well (Burden, 1978; Coxon, 1991; Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 2000b; Engelbrecht, 2004a; Figg & Ross, 1981).

Another problem emanating from a job description which is so wide is that it is then open to varied interpretation. Different individuals can, and often do, understand the boundaries of the job description differently. School psychologists are, for example, unsettled by expectations of their involvement in the process of promotion and progression in schools. They could, in fact, be involved by focusing on the particular learning difficulties experienced by learners and in the design of an intervention plan to address some of the barriers. Instead, in most cases, they perform a technical administrative function which often involves ticking off checklists and ‘marking schedules’ which require no psychological expertise at all. Clarity around the specifics of the job functions is therefore essential.

The same applies to systems level interventions, like school development, which are not effective if facilitated by individuals who do not understand clearly the part they should play in the development process. Defining roles produces clarity in terms of what each individual role player is able to contribute to the process by way of skill and expertise. It is this pooling of expertise and knowledge that heightens the potential impact of the intervention (Ahgren et al., 2009; Leurs et al. 2008). Role players therefore need to hold their area of specialisation, not as a means of protecting turf, but as a means of contributing something unique that, when combined with the contributions of others, results in a powerful and meaningful impact being made on the school. A psychologist being required to adopt the role of “generalist”, to lose their expertise and “specialisation”, reduces the potential impact of intersectoral collaboration to ineffectual weakness. It is in fact a gross misuse of the term *collaboration*.

School psychologists consulted in this study expressed their frustration at being expected to work as “generalists” and forsake or let go of their need to focus on their area of specialisation, which they see as the application of psychological knowledge and skills within

school settings, whether with groups, individuals or the system (Burden, 1994). Some individuals who manage and co-ordinate the services offered by school psychologists argue that because school psychologists are employed by the education department, they need to be prepared to be employed in whatever situations they may be most needed in at any particular point in time. School psychologists experience this as a misuse of their specialist skills and expertise. It is understood that the education departments are not optimally resourced, but resorting to the employment of highly qualified individuals, with sophisticated levels of training and complex sets of skills and expertise, to count toilets, check attendance registers, search for holes in fences bordering schools, and invigilate examinations, is highly questionable.

The findings highlight the importance of school psychologists needing to clarify for themselves, as professionals, what it is that they have to offer education and then to state clearly in public spaces what this is (Mackay, 2002). Without this clarity, it can be argued that what school psychologists do, many others can also do, for example, mentor and coach, facilitate workshops and even counsel individuals and groups. Many school psychologists regard the focus of their work to include psycho-educational assessments and assisting learners with emotional difficulties, in line with public thinking. A conversation needs to take place that debates the significant contribution to be made by school psychology within education. Clarity regarding who they believe they are, in terms of their knowledge, skills and expertise, is imperative. Once this is ascertained, the advocacy exercise which can dispel myths around what psychology is and what it can achieve, is the next step.

School psychologists need to foreground their expertise and explain in unambiguous terms why their contribution is regarded as unique and crucial. Schools and other sectors, including those in education management, need to have a clear understanding of this so that they can engage and collaborate with school psychologists by drawing on their expertise appropriately. As long as clients, whether schools or individuals, do not understand what school psychologists do, and can do, the potential for their expectations not to be met and consequently for them to feel that their needs are not being met will also exist. This can create a perception that school psychology is not relevant.

The lack of consistency in the type of support provided by school psychologists across circuits is also problematic. What schools can expect from a school psychologist in one

circuit may very well be different from what can be expected from a psychologist in another circuit or district. This lack of standardised practice is not unusual within the profession of psychology, where practitioners often select particular areas to focus on to deepen their knowledge thereof and improve their expertise therein. Stobie (2002) proposed deepening specialisation and expertise within the field. It must be noted, however, that within the education system, irrespective of the particular expertise of the practitioner, schools ought to be able to expect some level of consistency across the system, unlike what may be the case in private practice.

9.1.2. Direct and Indirect Support

Advocates of the systems thinking approach assert that the functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction between its parts (Flood & Jackson, 1991, Plas, 1986). Relationships and interactions between aspects of a system are fundamental in understanding how the larger system functions. From a “systems” view, therefore, direct support would be understood to involve interventions with individuals and the relationships between them. Indirect support would entail working with higher levels of the system in order to positively influence the functioning of the whole. Direct and indirect support are not set apart from one another; they are two interdependent and interconnected approaches to supporting service delivery and, if understood in this way, can together promote the optimal functioning of the system within which they exist (Conoley & Conoley, 1990).

Figure 9.1 illustrates how the support provided by school psychologists can incorporate both direct support and indirect support, which are inter-related approaches to school psychology service delivery. It depicts how providing both direct and indirect support facilitates the provision of support at all levels of the system. Such a holistic approach ensures comprehensive service delivery.

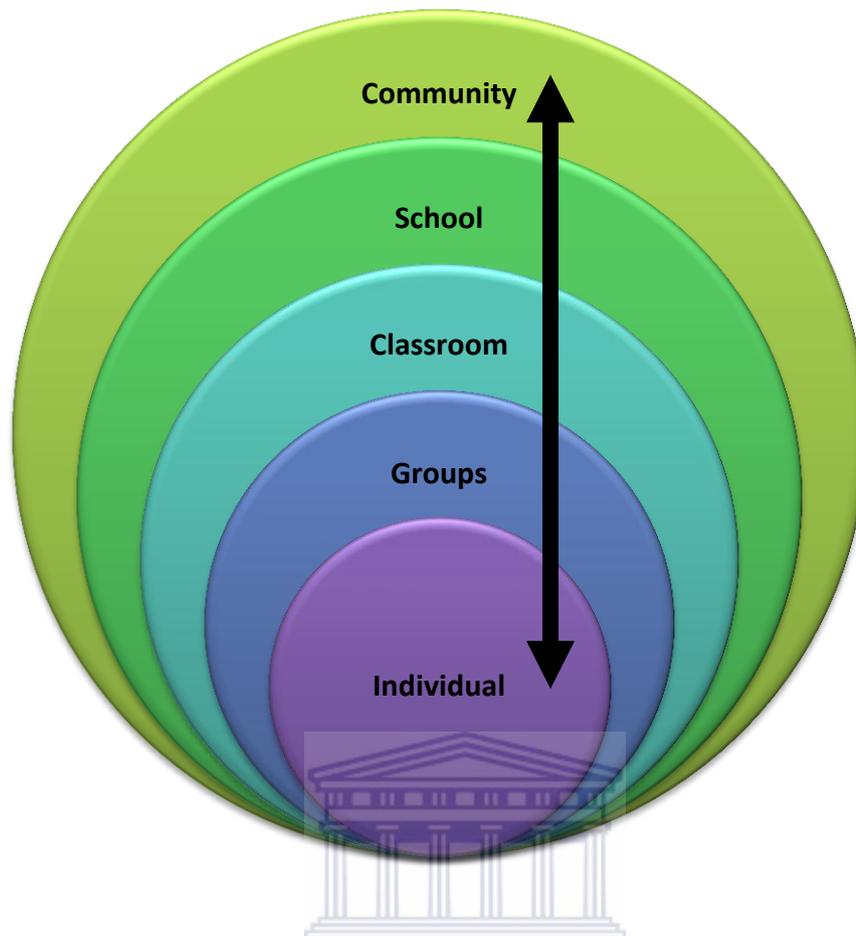


Figure 9.1. Direct and indirect support continuum

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The findings resulting from this study reveal that school psychologists play a vital role in providing direct support to learners. This tends to take the form of psycho-educational assessments and individual counselling and therapy. Participants assumed that working more systemically would necessitate reducing direct support provision. They expressed a great deal of concern about possibly not being able to offer direct services to individual learners if they have to facilitate school development and adopt a systems approach instead. They appeared to have felt threatened by the notion of indirect service delivery because they did not regard this as their strength. They also assumed that they would no longer be able to provide direct support, which is what they are used to and feel confident doing. The problem, however, is that direct support and indirect support are unfortunately assumed to be two *separate* forms of school psychology practice or service delivery. A discussion is needed on how direct and indirect support can be brought together to complement each other, not for the one to replace the other. The possibility exists that because practitioners are unable to see how the two can be complementary; the first response is to feel obliged to make a choice between the two.

A school psychologist may, for example, find that a number of learners in a school are being referred with learning difficulties. These learners receive direct support through psycho-educational assessments and the development of individualised education plans. If a pattern begins to emerge, for example, all psycho-educational assessments conducted indicate reading levels below the age or grade level expected, it is possible for the school psychologist to work with teachers to develop their skills in early identification of reading difficulties and to work with the staff to develop a school-wide reading support intervention programme. In this way, engaging in direct support often reveals the need for indirect support. Working with learners directly, as in the example above, often exposes the need for interventions with teachers, parents or the school system.

It is crucial that a paradigm shift that incorporates and values indirect support is not misinterpreted as “de-skilling” school psychologists who are able to understand and work well with individual learners (Moolla, 1996). Rather, the emphasis is on expanding the practice of school psychologists to work systemically within schools and with other subsystems involved in supporting the development of schools. Skills employed in the provision of direct services to learners would still be employed, but to provide indirect services. Direct support and indirect support need to be understood as existing on a continuum and, more importantly, as feeding into one another.

9.1.3. Incorporating Psychological Expertise

In order for school psychologists to continue to be valued, their specialist contribution in intersectoral collaborative processes is of vital importance. Other sectors need to experience the value of the contribution that school psychologists can make. School psychologists must therefore take responsibility for demonstrating their specialist knowledge and skills by incorporating their expertise into intersectoral processes of support services delivery.

Collaboration is an interactive process that draws together diverse sectors, disciplines and professions to plan towards the achievement of common goals (Dettmer et al., 1996; Gronski & Pigg, 2000; Mostert, 1996). Those who collaborate take on specific differentiated tasks, employing different skills, and share responsibility for the ultimate success of the projects embarked upon (El Ansari & Phillips, 2001).

The promotion and progression processes in which school psychologists participate involve teamwork. This is an important example of a process where the role of school psychologists is not clearly understood or articulated. Most participants in this study were dissatisfied about the suggestion that they might be expected to participate in the process of promotion and progression of learners, a quarterly exercise facilitated by the circuit team at each of its schools. The process involves visits to schools and focused discussions about teaching and learning and, more specifically, particular learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. Participants explained that in many instances this process is viewed, particularly by teachers, as an unconstructive evaluation of their work, which does not focus on the needs and support of learners and the teacher in addressing barriers to learning.

Most school psychologists interviewed in this study, however, felt that they were not being optimally included in these processes. They were expected to engage in administrative tasks to hasten the process because of a lack of human resource capacity at the level of the circuit, and sometimes because circuit team managers had decided to manage their teams in this way. These administrative tasks included checking registers and teachers' portfolios and registers and ticking off checklists. Figure 9.2 illustrates the pattern that has emerged in the circuit teams within which school psychologists function. As long as school psychologists do not apply their specialised knowledge and skills in collaborative processes, other sectors are not exposed to what school psychologists can contribute and therefore do not expect them to make specialist inputs but instead allocate generalist roles to them. This establishes a norm in the system.

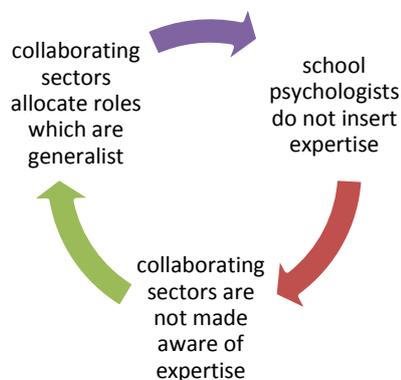


Figure 9.2. Cycle of cause and effect

Causality is understood in systems thinking to be multiple or cyclical and, consequently, results in the development of norms within a system (Frederickson, 1990; Heller et al., 1984; Plas, 1986). A positive feedback loop would imply that the school psychologists do something different. If they demonstrate their expertise, as described earlier, this informs other sectors of their skill and knowledge and new specialist roles can be allocated in the future.

An example of this emerged in this study when some participants described meaningful contributions they were able to make in teams, based on their specialist knowledge and expertise. One such intervention entailed consultation with a distraught parent whose son was at risk of failing. Another school psychologist described how her knowledge of reading difficulties assisted in the development of a plan for the learner and the classroom, where it emerged a number of learners were struggling academically.

School psychologists could make very meaningful contributions to the process of promotion and progression at the level of the school by drawing on their expertise in the areas of emotional, social and intellectual development. They ought to be able to provide valuable insights related to teaching and learning and, in particular, barriers to learning and development. The school psychologist is a consultant, with particular expertise, to the teacher and the circuit team, and should be engaging in collaborative processes by providing insights. The challenge is twofold, school psychologists need to assert themselves and exercise their expertise, and those sectors working with them or managing them need to draw on this expertise. Responding to this challenge would break the cycle of cause and effect depicted in Figure 9.2.

9.1.4. Educator Development and Support

The personal and professional development of educators is prioritised by school psychologists around the world in their descriptions of their roles and functions (Jimerson et al., 2007).

How children learn and produce knowledge is fundamental to how they perform. School psychologists therefore have an important role to play in promoting learner-centred teaching and developing teachers' skills and expertise in employing strategies that encourage the development of thinking skills. Consulting with teachers and interrogating their practice

helps them to focus on deepening understandings of barriers experienced by individual learners. It encourages teachers to reflect on teaching and learning in their own classrooms and to effect changes where these are deemed necessary (Conoley & Conoley, 1990; Dettmer et al., 1996, Gutkin & Curtis, 1999).

The role that school psychologists play in supporting educators and facilitating their development was emphasised in all phases of the study. Documents and research participants, both nationally and provincially, highlighted the key role played by school psychologists in supporting and developing teachers through individual and group consultation, as well as training in workshops. The impact that this has on the school and systems within it, is not, however, always understood and acknowledged. The challenge is to enlighten various sectors with whom the school psychologists work about the impact that is made on smaller *and* larger systems within the school through the support and development of educators.

9.1.5. School Psychologists as School Development Consultants

School development requires a particular frame and mindset on the part of the school psychologist. In order to work effectively with a school, psychologists need to understand its context, the subsystems within it, the patterns and relationships that characterise it and the goals and values that govern it. This implies the ability to work holistically and the willingness to work with the *school as a system*, and not only with a few individuals (Burden & Brown, 1987; Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 2000b; Ehrhardt-Padgett et al., 2004; Engelbrecht, 2004a; Harzichristou, 2002)

School development encapsulates a consultative, systemic, indirect, holistic and preventative approach, for which proponents of change in the field of school psychology practice have lobbied nationally and internationally for decades (Albers et al., 2007; Brown & Bolen, 2003; Burden, 1999; De Jong, 2000b; Engelbrecht, 2004a). This role of the school psychologist needs to be understood and acknowledged by all sectors. It is crucial to note, however, that not all school psychologists have the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to fulfil this role optimally. Furthermore, many may in fact choose not to, partly because of a lack of training and experience, but also because of a preference to focus on interventions at the level of the individual.

The findings of this study reveal that the majority of school psychologists who participated are involved in some form of school development. This supports the assumption underpinning this study which is that school psychologists do have a contribution to make and do play a central part in school development. Such work includes consultative work with educators and principals, training of teachers, development and support of ILSTs, initiation and facilitation of special programmes and projects, monitoring and evaluation of schools and providing support in general terms to the teaching, learning and management tasks within a school.

Participants who engage in school development generally employ a broad, systemic approach, or “whole school approach”, which involves empowering groups of people and developing their capacity to engage with the problems that face them (Bertram, 1999; Donald et al., 2010; Taylor & Prinsloo, 2005). Their work is grounded in the premise that those they work with, learners, educators, parents and principals, actively construct their own meanings within the school system in which they work and learn.

This role as school development consultant is, however, not perceived as significant by other sectors. School development is often regarded as the territory or turf of other colleagues based in the circuit or district. Despite this, key informants in this study noted the potential role of the school psychologist as a school development consultant.

An issue that has important implications here is the relationship which the school psychologist establishes with the school when facilitating development and how this may differ from the approach adopted by other sectors which do not have a psychological background. School psychologists in this study described their relationships with schools as characterised by equity, openness and non-judgement (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999; Larney, 2003). The relationship is not based on power and control, and the clients (teachers, principals, or the schools as a whole) are not *forced* to engage in development; they *choose* to engage in a developmental process. School psychologists explain that they begin their work with schools by enquiring about the school’s needs and what the goals are. This approach is not directive; it is consultative and centres on the school as the entity that directs the development process with the guidance of the school psychologist who is a consultant. Participants in the focus group interviews explained that this differs from the approach of other sectors who work with schools. According to the views expressed in this study, when institutional management and

governance (IMG) and curriculum advisors works with schools, schools are *informed* of what they should be working on and working towards. The goals are set by the external agents, who also direct the development process, often in an authoritarian way. This is contrary to the ways in which school psychologists report their work with schools which instead concurs with descriptions of school development processes and consultants outlined by Burden (1999), De Jong (2000b), Jimerson et al. (2007) and Larney (2003).

This difference in approach may result in schools experiencing developmental processes differently, depending on who the primary consultant is. This diversity in experience and implementation may indeed be unavoidable and simply be a reality that needs to be accepted in the field. School psychologists and schools do not have any control over who is appointed into a post in the circuit team or which sectors choose to facilitate school development processes. However, the empathy and listening skills developed in psychological training are invaluable in these kinds of interventions.

A noteworthy point to make is that, according to the findings of this study, some school psychologists are reluctant to work more systemically or at the level of the school as an organisation. This may be related to the paradigm within which they work, either a lack of understanding of what such work entails or inadequate knowledge and skills to engage in systemic interventions with confidence. The question is a complex one that may be linked to challenges relating to discourse, worldview or training, all of which are matters discussed in sections that follow later in this chapter.

9.2. Personal and Interpersonal Factors

Two themes emerged as most prominent in the findings of this study, namely power and marginalisation of school psychologists.

9.2.1. Power

Distribution of power is an important dimension of a system (Burden, 1999; Donald et al., 2010; Plas, 1986). Who holds power and the ways in which it is distributed impacts on the system and the individuals therein.

The Western Cape Education Department, like most state departments, is hierarchically structured. Post levels determine authority, decision-making power and lines of communication. This structure, and the decision-making processes and channels of communication that characterise it, was described by participants in focus groups and questionnaires as rigid and disempowering. Within the circuit team, the style of management adopted by many circuit team managers was perceived as authoritarian and controlling. Furthermore, school psychologists are expected to initiate progressive and creative practice within schools but complain that they are being constrained by circuit team managers who are not flexible and open in their styles of leadership and management.

When individuals work as a team, there ought to be some flexibility and willingness to allow for different people to lead at different times. It may at times, for example, be necessary for the psychologist to be the lead person in a particular intervention in a school, even ahead of a circuit team leader. The circuit team leader needs to be willing to step back and allow another member of the team to drive the process because it is acknowledged that the knowledge and expertise in that particular instance is held by the other.

The nature of these relationships and communication patterns directly affects intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics and, consequently, the ways in which sectors collaborate (El Ansari & Phillips, 2001; Gadja, 2004; Green & Tones, 2000).

9.2.2. School Psychologists Feel Marginalised

School psychologists used the opportunity in the focus group interviews to tell their stories and be heard. They engaged in vociferous debates about the profession, their role being misunderstood and, in many cases, understated and how this has left many school psychologists feeling marginalised and unacknowledged (Farrell et al., 2005; Lazarus, 2006). Analysis of the findings in this study indicate that in the transformation processes that have been facilitated within the Western Cape Education Department since 1994, school psychologists have not been adequately consulted. When they have made efforts to make inputs, they claimed, they were just not heard; that is, those in power did not take heed of what school psychologists had to say. Whether school psychologists were ignored in that they were not given an opportunity to speak, or whether they spoke and their inputs were not noted or agreed with, remains an issue for further research.

The findings of this study reveal that school psychologists are clearly disgruntled, but it appears that few of them are channelling their disenchantment in such a way that they are able to effect change. Some of them explain that they are disheartened by the situation they find themselves in and that they do not have the energy to “fight the cause” anymore. This apathy, it seems, is a consequence of feeling disempowered.

This apathy is typical of what in systems thinking is described as *a negative feedback loop* (Donald et al. 2010). Feedback loops allow for information to be fed back into the system through interaction with other systems or subsystems. The flow of information is circular in that “information about the system comes back into the system” (Moore, 2008, p. 476). When the feedback loop is positive, it gives rise to change in the system, and when it is negative, no change is apparent. In this way, negative and positive feedback influence stability and change within the system but work in complementary ways to hold the system intact and also allow for some flexibility in its functioning. In this instance, information is flowing, but no change is being effected as a consequence.

School psychologists interviewed in the course of the study argued that they are being marginalised and that this has resulted in the low morale, which they described, in the focus group interviews, as characterising the profession. They explained that they feel disempowered and so are often silent on issues. Many participants expressed a fear that the Western Cape Education Department may lose many highly qualified people with specialist expertise if they are expected to work in ways that they perceive as stunting their work. School psychologists are potentially highly competent, highly qualified individuals with many years of experience, who appear to have received very little acknowledgement within the system, particularly through the recent redesign process. They may not have been intentionally “marginalised”, but they have certainly felt ignored, as evidenced in this study. They are becoming invisible in the system and are feeling this lack of recognition.

9.3. Organisational Challenges

The perceived organisational challenges which emerged in this study include the quality of structures and procedures, poor management and co-ordination, inadequate communication and decision making, resource constraints and ineffective change management.

Proponents of systems thinking emphasise the importance of gaining an understanding of the goals and values of a system, whether obvious or hidden. The goals and values of the education department as an organisation appear to be, at best, vague at various levels within the system. Participants in this study maintained that, at national, provincial, district and circuit level, goals and values are seldom clarified and certainly not negotiated, so they cannot be assumed to be shared.

What exacerbates matters is that according to the views of the participants in this study, school psychologists are not able to engage with each other. This is completely contrary to the “systems” notion of interdependence and interconnectedness (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002; French & Bell, 1999; Plas, 1986). School psychologists function as individuals in their circuit team but form a subsystem of school psychologists in districts and in the province. The interdependence and interconnectedness of these school psychology subsystems is not acknowledged, and barriers in the current structure have been created, perhaps inadvertently, to prevent these subsystems from interacting with one another.

No structure or process exists which provides collegial support amongst school psychologists. The focus groups in this study provided a collegial space where school psychologists could connect and share with each other, since opportunities like this do not seem to exist anywhere else. School psychologists reported that they currently have no structural or procedural space that allows them to meet as a sector in their district. Many school psychologists described this lack of opportunity to engage with colleagues as a “divide and rule” strategy being employed by those in senior positions in the department.

9.3.1. Structures and Procedures

The redesign process in the WCED established a structure which is called the circuit team and is a substructure within the district. This was intended to be a collaborative space - a structure within which individuals worked by sharing and engaging as partners, each with their area of expertise (WCED, 2008). Participants felt that the redesign process in the Western Cape Education Department acknowledged the need for school psychology to exist as a service to schools by allocating to it a position in the circuit team (Western Cape Education Department, 2008b).

The policies and procedures (rules) that should govern the newly formed structures (subsystems) were not clarified. It appears that there was an assumption that in creating the structure, the process would follow. Circuit teams were implemented, but, it was argued by participants in this study, there was little clarity as to how these structures ought to function. This means that managers at various levels would be left to establish rules, norms and patterns of functioning. Circuit teams, consequently, are not consistent in their modes of functioning, so practices and protocols often differ from one circuit to another, resulting in multiple perceptions of reality being experienced by school psychologists, those with whom they collaborate, and the schools in which they work.

A matter that is of grave concern for school psychologists in this study is that the organisational structure of the Western Cape Education Department expects school psychologists to report to circuit team managers. Therefore, school psychologists are accountable to the circuit team managers, who are responsible for their performance evaluations, but none of these managers has formal training and expertise in school psychology and they are therefore regarded by school psychologists as inappropriate line managers. The lines of accountability are held within the circuit as if it were a closed system. The senior psychologists who are based at district level currently have no jurisdiction over school psychologists in circuits!

Systems thinking theorists emphasise the interrelationships between subsystems (Bateson, 1973; Capra, 1983; Flood & Jackson, 1991). This would imply that the link between school psychologists in circuit teams and senior psychologists should be acknowledged. This relationship would facilitate and ensure the provision of quality psychological services to schools.

9.3.2. Poor Co-ordination and Management

Although the study was aimed at investigating intersectoral collaboration in a variety of contexts, participants referred mostly to their experience of intersectoral collaboration in the circuit teams within which they are based, probably because their work predominantly takes place within these structures. A major challenge highlighted was the poor co-ordination and management of collaboration when facilitating school development (Goldman & Schmalz, 2008; Intriligator, 1994; Nutbeam & Harris, 2004). School psychologists expressed major dissatisfaction with the lack of proper co-ordination of collaboration at the level of the circuit

and district. Circuit team managers were described as lacking the ability to effectively manage teams and teamwork.

The creation of the post for a circuit team manager in the Western Cape Education Department is an acknowledgement of the importance of co-ordination in collaboration (Intriligator, 1994). Of concern, however, is the lack of clarity around the role that these individuals should play. This lack of clarity results in co-ordination being understood and implemented in various forms. If collaboration is misunderstood, then the co-ordination of such a process becomes equally misunderstood and often even mismanaged.

Obviously, something needs to change at the level of the circuit team manager. If people in these posts are to continue holding the responsibility for managing and co-ordinating psychological support services to schools, then clarity regarding their role and the way in which they work with the team they manage is crucial.

For collaboration to work optimally, the people who are working together need to take cognisance of the skills and expertise of those with whom they will be collaborating (Gronski & Pigg, 2000; Intriligator, 1994; Manley-Casimir & Hall, 1994; Mostert, 1996; Walsh, Howard, & Buckley, 1999). The circuit team manager has to know his or her team and what the individuals each have to offer. Managing a team without knowing what the team consists of and what people are capable of makes for ineffective teams and ineffective team management.

9.3.3. Communication and Decision Making

School psychologists questioned during this study expressed their frustration regarding how information flows and how decisions are made within the Western Cape Education Department. With the redesign process, the new organisational structure that was developed hindered, rather than facilitated, communication between different levels of school psychologists. This refers to school psychologists based in circuits, senior school psychologists who are based at the district office, and one or two individuals who are based in the provincial head office. The structures and procedures do not facilitate communication between these levels since school psychologists in circuits are accountable directly to circuit team managers. The circuit team managers are also responsible for the supervision and

evaluation of school psychologists even though they have no psychological expertise or training.

Regular and effective communication within organisations is vital to ensuring effective collaboration (El Ansari & Phillips, 2001; Green & Tones, 2000). Structures which facilitate communication impact considerably on the quality of relationships and the effectiveness of decision-making procedures between different sectors and within organisations.

It is clear that without logical channels of communication and meaningful lines of accountability, school psychologists at all levels of the system are not able to function optimally. Their effective participation in decision-making processes is undermined, which results in organisational and other changes being effected without due consultation and feedback from them as a sector.

9.3.4. Human and Material Resources

One of the key issues that emerged in the findings from key informants across the country was a major concern around human resources and, in particular, the number of “school psychologist” posts available in each of the provinces. The Western Cape picture is comparatively positive, when reviewed against most other provinces, but school psychologists based in the Western Cape remain concerned about their workload and the fact that they feel unable to provide sufficient and high quality services to all the schools allocated to them. Since intersectoral collaboration requires time to be allocated to it as a process in and of itself, this has implications for workload and, consequently, human resource capacity (American Academy of Paediatrics Committee on School Health, 2001; Dettmer et al., 1996; El Ansari & Phillips, 2004; Gronski & Pigg, 2000; Intriligator, 1994; Juszczak et al., 1998; Kolbe et al., 2001; Kvalsig et al., 2004; Mostert 1996; Nutbeam & Harris, 2004; Papa et al., 1998).

As a consequence of the lack of human resources in school psychology divisions, the message that schools often receive is that the school psychologist is overloaded, that waiting lists to see learners and visit schools are long, and that it is unlikely that school psychologists will be able to reach them.

Although the ratio of school psychologists to learner is comparable to many other countries around the world, the ratio of psychologist to learners and even schools remains a challenge in the South African context (Daniels et al., 2007; Farrell et al., 2005). The limited capacity within school psychological services causes some schools to employ the services of private psychologists, who are often paid by the school governing body. Where schools are not able to pay for these services themselves, they often advise parents to obtain support from private psychologists and cover the costs themselves. Since the majority of parents in South Africa are unable to afford the services of private practitioners, many schools and learners continue without any form of support from school psychologists at all. Many schools make a choice not to request the service of circuit and district-based school psychologists because they make the assumption that their efforts will be unsuccessful and their request will be rejected. Thus, they eventually forget that school psychological services exist or, worse, they have little faith that such a service can make any difference to their situation or the situation in which the teachers or learners find themselves. In essence, schools learn to cope, or not cope, without the school psychologist.

This study has revealed an incongruity between the job description for school psychologists, which calls for individuals to do more for schools, educators and learners, and the human resources available to engage in this work. The work seems to expand, given the paradigm within which the job description was conceived, but the number of posts allocated to deliver this broad range of psychological services diminishes.

Once again, a systemic challenge emerges here. The system expands in relation to what it needs to offer to schools while simultaneously shrinking the capacity of the organisation to deliver such services effectively. This is an example of how organisations and those who lead and manage them often lack a systemic analysis and therefore are not able to institute change in an effective way.

A serious resource challenge that affects the delivery of professional services, raised by school psychologists in the Western Cape, was the issue of office space. Office space is a limited resource in the Western Cape Education Department. It is allocated on the basis of seniority of positions in the district offices and provincial department. As a consequence, school psychologists in 5 of the 8 districts are currently based in open-plan office spaces, which are not conducive to effective service delivery on the part of school psychologists,

given the potential breach of confidentiality, which a key aspect of professional ethics (Health Professions Council of South Africa, 2010).

This resource issue relates to the importance of other sectors needing to understand the nature of the work that school psychologists engage in as well as the frameworks which guide their practice. Once this is clarified and understood, the reason for a request for private office spaces and privacy becomes obvious. At present, this resource challenge impacts on relationship dynamics and consequently on the effectiveness of collaborative interventions. Participants explained how their request for private office space was not understood. Colleagues assumed that they were demanding unwarranted privileges, since private offices are only allocated to those in more senior positions in the department.

Another challenge relating to resources is the distances that school psychologists have to travel in order to work with and in schools and the fact that access to motor vehicles is a major barrier. Procuring a vehicle is described as a “logistical nightmare”, and because not enough vehicles are available, people are expected to share. This does not always equate with efficiency of service since a school psychologist may sometimes need to be at a school for a short period of time but will need to wait for hours until the colleague she or he is driving with has completed his or her own work at the school. Although the matter is a technical one, it is an important one that has an impact on service delivery to schools.

9.3.5. Management of Change

Participants in the focus group discussions argued that change is not facilitated and managed effectively in the Western Cape Education Department. Although they argued that this is reflected at national levels as well, their experiences of change as encapsulated in provincial restructuring was often referred to in this study. School psychologists reported that they were not consulted sufficiently and that communication and information flow during change processes were thwarted because of various problems. They argued that those “on the ground” were not part of the process and that decisions were taken with little consultation. It appeared that questions regarding why change needs to take place, and then what change should be implemented, were not discussed widely and debated by all the role players in this context. According to participants in this study, individuals who work within the department, whether at provincial, district or circuit level, were expected to obey orders; to do simply what was expected of them, and to put new structures and new policies into practice. A

further complication was that understandings of what was “new” was not clearly explained, so many individuals will continue to function on the basis of what they hear by word of mouth, rather than through open, transparent and clear directives. The redesign of the WCED therefore represents a change process which the school psychologists do not perceive as having been managed well at all. Structural changes were made with few procedural guidelines, timing was rushed, and change was enforced as opposed to being facilitated.

This is contrary to the argument that effective change entails engagement of role payers at all levels within a system. Ownership of and commitment to development of parts and the whole is what makes for meaningful change (Dalin et al., 1994; Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002; Fullan, 1993; Senge, 1990)

9.4. Training and Development

Once the need for a new paradigm is accepted, it becomes crucial to identify the training needs of school psychologists who are currently employed and require “upskilling”. Training and development needs, it emerged in the findings of this study, are diverse. In addition, the possibility exists that those holding specific positions will resist ongoing professional development in the areas identified.

9.4.1. Need for a New Paradigm

A paradigm shift in school psychology has been called for since the 1970s. School psychologists have been challenged to work in different ways and to employ more consultative and systemic approaches in their work with schools (Albers et al., 2007; Bradley-Johnson & Dean, 2000; Brown & Bolen, 2003; Burden, 1978; Coxon, 1991; Daniels et al., 2007; De Jong, 2000b; Engelbrecht, 2009).

The authors of the documents and key informants consulted in this study argued strongly that the initial training of school psychologists is inadequate, given current policy and practice imperatives in South Africa. The findings highlight the need for school psychologists and other sectors to be trained to work collaboratively, particularly in the area of school development. The challenge may be that, in order to embrace change, individuals need to have the right attitude, but this must be followed by the development of relevant knowledge and expertise. Psychologists may want to do things differently, but if they do not have the

training and expertise, they will probably resort to the “fallback” option of doing what they are used to and probably are good at.

Universities need to take up this challenge. Some researchers report that the curriculum has been shifted in many universities (Donald, 1991; Pillay, 2003; Sharratt, 1995). There is, however, a need for further research into the theoretical and practical components of training programmes for educational psychologists in order to ascertain the extent to which psychologists are being adequately prepared to take on new roles in the public system.

The need for a review of what continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities exist is of equal importance. In South Africa, registered psychologists are expected to obtain points for continuing professional development, each year, to ensure that their registration remains current (Health Professions Council of South Africa, 2011). Although the form of CPD activities are prescribed by the Health Professions Council of South Africa, the content thereof is decided upon by the practitioner and is determined by what is available and advertised. The costs for attendance of these CPD activities as well registration with the Health Professions Council of South Africa must be covered by the individual psychologists. Provincial education departments do not assist with these financial costs and appear to be taking little responsibility for ensuring the ongoing professional development of their employees. In this regard, reference is made to school psychologists and all other role-players employed at circuit and district level who are expected to provide support to schools.

The challenge of *changing mindsets*, to embrace theoretical frameworks that emphasise understanding, engagement and interventions with systems that shape individuals, remains crucial. Such a change in mindset has the potential to shift the nature of school psychology practice (Druker & De Jong, 1996; Jensen et al., 2002; Moore, 2005; Nel et al., 2010). However, the mindset of the practitioner, as well as the recipients of the service, must be adjusted (Farrell et al., 2005; Lazarus et al., 2006). Educators, learners, parents and schools often have their own perceptions of who psychologists are, how they work, and what they have to offer the education sector. An assumption that school psychologists are primarily trained to conduct individual assessments and facilitate individual therapeutic interventions is often made. This narrow understanding of what school psychology entails must be challenged and expanded with the purpose of ensuring that the knowledge, skills and expertise of school psychologists are employed optimally in the support and development of

schools (De Jong, 1996; Larney, 2003). This can only be achieved once clarity regarding the role of school psychologists is established with all stakeholders so that expectations of learners, parents, educators and the broader school community can be met in a more meaningful way (Farrell, 2004; Lown et al., 2001; Stobie, 2002).

Simply rewriting the job description will not, however, ensure more effective and appropriate service delivery. One should not assume that all school psychologists will be able to enact a job description and its concomitant roles and functions with equal expertise. Levels of training, expertise and experience vary within the subsystem of school psychologists and so must be taken into account and addressed accordingly (Coxon, 1991; Daniels et al., 2007; Pillay, 2003).

Participants in both the national and provincial data collection phases in this study raised their concern about the way in which education support and development in South Africa is focusing currently on “curriculum delivery” and academic achievement in particular. The concern was that the curriculum is not being understood as encompassing the key aspect of school development. More specifically, it was felt that the role of school psychology in facilitating curriculum delivery and learner achievement was not understood or acknowledged.

Understanding that school psychology contributes to school development, curriculum delivery and academic achievement is crucial and non-psychologists and school psychologists alike must engage with this notion and gain this understanding. Some psychologists who participated in the study were not able to see the role they can, and often do, play in enhancing curriculum development and implementation in schools and classrooms. It is vital, therefore, that school psychologists broaden their understanding and perception of the roles they play in education (De Jong, 1996; Farrell, 2004; Lomofsky & Green, 2004; Moore, 2005; Stobie, 2002). Too narrow a view of school psychology may have the, albeit unintended, consequence of dismissing a central role which is focused on the core business of schools and classrooms, that is, teaching and learning.

9.4.2. Training and Development Needs are Diverse

Analysis of the data from all sources clearly indicated that the capacity, experience and qualifications of those in “school psychologist” posts are diverse. This is apparent, for

example, in the Western Cape, where some school psychologists have a 4-year Bachelor in Education (Honours) qualification, while others hold a PhD in educational psychology and yet are expected to engage in the same work and hold the same status within the department. This variation in qualifications is not unlike the status quo in many countries around the world (Jimerson, et al., 2007).

This diversity within the sector has implications for the nature of in-service training and development of school psychologists who are already employed within the system. Training programmes ought to cater to the needs of all the school psychologists who are employed in the various departments across districts and provinces. Participants in this study recommended that training programmes should include modules on systems thinking, consultation, school development, intersectoral collaboration and community psychology. Such training will allow psychologists to become more proactive in their engagement at multiple levels in the education system. This corresponds with the ideas of Pillay (2003), who argued that these areas must be integrated into the clinical work of the students and not only covered as theoretical components of the course. This would facilitate the extension of the role of school psychologists beyond that of the “traditional therapist” to incorporate the role of consultant, advocate, trainer, and agent of change.

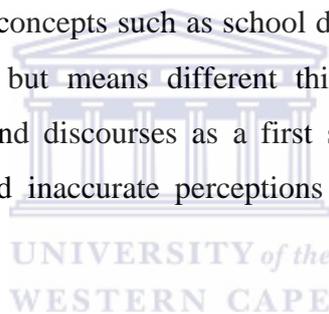
The possibility that there may be some resistance to further development and training must be acknowledged. Some school psychologists interviewed during this study expressed their reluctance to engage in further training and development. The argument often presented was that school psychologists, as a group, are among the highest qualified professionals in the Western Cape Education Department. The feeling was that, as a sector, school psychologists are sufficiently skilled to effectively deliver the services they have been tasked with. Other sectors, it was felt, should be targeted for “upskilling” first.

Although school psychologists are indeed highly qualified professionals and skilled practitioners, what has emerged in both the literature review and the findings is that school psychology is a changing field. While traditional practices of assessment and therapy remain essential, new theoretical frameworks and practice options are emerging and being adopted in the field. This implies, as with all other professions and disciplines, that ongoing professional development is crucial for school psychologists.

9.5. Discourse and Worldview

Evident in earlier phases of data collection was that participants' understandings of school development were vague and diverse. When different sectors work together, it is crucial that a common vision is set, together with a shared understanding of the process of school development, and intersectoral collaboration as it will be engaged in is agreed upon. Clarifying concepts and how these need to be operationalised as sectors work together is of fundamental importance (American Academy of Paediatrics Committee on School Health, 2001; Dettmer et al., 1996; Intriligator, 1994; Juszczak et al., 1998; Manley-Casimir et al., 1994; Mostert, 1996; Papa et al., 1998; Sanders, 2001).

The findings in this study highlighted how practice and services to schools are often confounded as a consequence of differing discourses. Different sectors and even individuals have different understandings of concepts such as school development or collaboration. The same terminology is employed but means different things in different subsystems and contexts. Reaching clarity around discourses as a first step in a collaborative process is crucial because it helps to avoid inaccurate perceptions of what professionals should be engaged in.



9.5.1. Understanding School Development

Examination of the findings of the study indicated differing understandings of school development. School psychologists seem unclear about what school development interventions could encompass, and are consequently uncertain about whether they should be involved in this kind of work.

Without a common understanding of what school development is, what it is aimed at and what it entails by way of assessment and intervention, working collaboratively to facilitate change at the level of the school can be a rather arduous task. In the absence of a common understanding of what school development aims to achieve and how this can best be implemented in order to achieve shared goals, it is difficult for school psychologists to incorporate this into their professional identity and to reap success from interventions and change initiatives in schools where development is initiated and facilitated through collaboration with other sectors.

At issue here is the importance of being conscious about the theories and paradigms which guide one's practice (Lazarus, 2007). Many practitioners work from instinct, and do good work, but such practice will be deepened when frameworks and models which underpin school development practice are clear since this would facilitate ongoing development of such practice and its implementation in other contexts and settings.

Another issue is the differing approaches to school development and support, as espoused within the circuit team. School psychologists do not engage in school development with an outlook of judgement and evaluation. School psychologists' understandings of school development differ from those held by other sectors with whom they work. Participants described how they are expected to "check on schools", to "monitor and evaluate" institutions based on grids and schedules set up by the provincial and national departments of education. This evaluation activity is not developmental in and of itself but is often misunderstood by other sectors as encompassing school development.

Participants in the focus groups explained that the approach of school psychologists tends to be more developmental and emphasises that the school as the client holds responsibility for the change that takes place in the system. This approach is more challenging since it is often more time consuming than simply evaluating schools and moving on. Although more challenging, Dalin et al., (1994) and Fullan (1993) argued that the ownership of change is what potentially makes it more sustainable. Change and development is facilitated by the consultant (in this case, the school psychologist) but shaped, owned and implemented by the role players within the school. This lack of a shared understanding of the relationship and process through which school development is facilitated has a significant impact on the nature of collaboration as well as the impact of the school development intervention itself.

9.5.2. Understanding Intersectoral Collaboration

The definitions provided by school psychologists in this study concur with those of the authors of the literature consulted on the topic. However, the descriptions of collaborative practice as it exists on the ground, often includes working *alongside* other sectors as opposed to *working together*. For example, when referring learners who experience barriers to learning to other professionals and institutions for further assessment or placement, the

learner is “handed over”, such that there is co-operation but not collaboration (Goldman & Schmalz, 2008; Intriligator, 1994)

The disjuncture caused by differing definitions of collaboration as it is practiced in many circuit teams is concerning. The authors of the literature reviewed emphasise the intersectoral nature of collaboration, that is, that different sectors work together by each contributing their expertise (Ahgren et al., 2009; Leurs et al., 2008; Mostert, 1996). The practice in many circuit teams, however, is to minimise notions of expertise and specialisation and to emphasise that which is common. Therefore, everyone in the team is expected to do the same thing. It appears, therefore, that, at the time of this study, the term *teamwork* is being misunderstood and misinterpreted by individuals who are working in or managing circuit teams. For example, school psychologists described situations where teamwork is assumed to be taking place if individuals travel together or sit in the same room and all do the same job. This “togetherness” and “sameness” is essentially what is understood to characterise good teamwork!

The vague understanding of intersectoral collaboration explains why school psychologists often experience intersectoral collaboration within the circuit team as frustrating because the teams they are a part of are not functioning in a multifunctional and multidisciplinary manner. School psychologists questioned during this study explained that when they collaborate with role players *outside* the department of education or their circuit team, the collaborative process is underpinned by a common understanding of what collaboration entails, of how the different sectors are able to work together, and that the boundaries are usually clear. Each sector focuses on its area of specialisation, contributes its expertise and is consequently acknowledged. Many school psychologists explained that issues of status and marginalisation do not emerge in these collaborative relationships; instead, they feel affirmed through the process of intersectoral collaboration. It appears that one of the reasons for this is that roles and boundaries are very clear when school psychologists collaborate with other organisations and professionals. Areas of expertise are acknowledged early on in the collaboration and specialised contributions are valued.

Respondents made it clear that the varied ways in which collaboration and teamwork have been engaged in across the 49 circuits in the Western Cape have led to a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst school psychologists, who raised concerns about the quality of the

support service consequently being provided to schools. All sectors should have common understanding of what collaboration entails, with agreed-upon frameworks or guidelines for intersectoral collaboration and goals to be achieved. Without this, the process has the potential to be sorely misinterpreted and poorly implemented. Collaborating sectors therefore need to develop a common understanding and discourse around this area of work.

9.6. Wider Education System

Issues that have an impact at a macro level are important to acknowledge and understand even though they are often experienced at a distance and perceived of as beyond transformation by individuals. Two issues emerged as central at the level of the wider education system in this study: a perception that psychology is not regarded as a priority within education and the lack of representation for school psychologists at senior management in the provincial department.

9.6.1. Psychology in Schools is Not a Priority

In this study, school psychologists revealed a strong perception that school psychology and specialised learner and educator support is not deemed a priority at micro and macro levels in the education system in South Africa. They maintained that the focus within education is on curriculum delivery and academic achievement, but there is minimal understanding of the important role that psychology and other specialised support services play in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning and, consequently curriculum delivery and academic performance.

Many participants spoke very nostalgically of the “old clinic days”, as a time when things worked well. Specialised education support under Apartheid education was provided through structures called “school clinics”. The school clinics were housed in a building within a district that served a number of schools. The school clinic was designed to facilitate intersectoral collaboration amongst professionals involved in the provision of support to learners, educators and parents. These professionals, who were all employed by the provincial department of education, included psychologists, psychometrists, learning support educators, occupational therapists, speech and language teachers and social workers. They worked individually and as teams, providing education support to schools in the surrounding communities.

The school clinics, within which school psychologists were based, were structured to provide services within politically aligned departments. They were designed to serve White learners, and to a lesser degree, Indian and Coloured learners in the education system. One of the positive features of this system was the autonomy that the school psychologists had, something they experience as sorely lacking in the current system, which has clear hierarchies and closed, rigid lines of communication and accountability.

Participants contend that in the past, school psychologists were valued, services provided were holistic, efficient and effective, and the management of school psychologists was held within specialised education support. So although people worked in teams, the understanding of what collaboration entailed, and what it was geared towards, was shared by all sectors involved.

Participants' yearning for structures and practices of the past emphasises the positive experience of those who were based in these departments. The lack of services in schools which catered for African children in the Apartheid structure, where there was no school psychological service of note, is underplayed. The reality is that if the "clinic system" were to be re-introduced, it would have major implications in terms of resources and training because there would be a need to for many more psychologists. After 1994, redress in education support implied that systems of the past were no longer feasible. The new system has to work towards equity across all schools. In addition, those schools which had not been served in the past would often not have English as their first language, which in itself has serious implications in a province where the majority of school psychologists are White English- or Afrikaans-speaking individuals. Language therefore presents as a challenge in itself (Daniels et al., 2007), which *none* of the participants acknowledged.

9.6.2. Lack of Representation at Senior Management

Systems are marked by patterns of interdependence and interconnectedness (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002; Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010; French & Bell, 1999; Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger, Wandersman, & D'Aunno, 1984; Plas, 1986). School psychologists, however, experience a disconnectedness from the larger system within which they function.

Many participants expressed their frustration regarding the lack of representation of school psychologists at senior levels in the province and nationally. Transformation within education and education support is often initiated and managed at these levels and school psychologists find themselves at a serious disadvantage because they have had no voice to speak on their behalf at these senior levels and, consequently, have been unable to influence decisions around the nature of psychological support being provided to schools.

Communication patterns in a system can be destructive (Donald et al., 2010). School psychologists experience poor communication patterns as a barrier because information does not flow through the system. School psychologists are not informed of processes and decisions taken at higher levels of system, and they are unable to feed into such processes. They argue that since there are currently no dedicated posts at higher levels in the system to represent the interests of school psychologists, the need for school psychological services is not prioritised. Therefore, when new policy is formulated, school psychologists are unable to influence this policy development process and yet are expected to facilitate implementation. This lack of voice and involvement in the change process diminishes ownership and often heightens resistance to change (Fullan, 1993).

This challenge is intricately connected with the issue of power, which was discussed under the section on personal and interpersonal dynamics. As long as school psychologists feel disempowered, that their impact is not being recognised and, in some cases, is even disregarded, the quality of the service they provide can be compromised.

Analysis of the data that emerged from the email interviews, focus groups and questionnaires revealed six categories of challenges that are faced by school psychologists who facilitate school development in collaboration with others. These challenges emerge in role definition, in personal and interpersonal dynamics, at the level of the organisation, around training and development, in differing discourses and worldviews, and at a macro level in the wider education system. In the section that follows, ideas presented by participants regarding how these challenges could be addressed are outlined.

9.7. Addressing the Challenges Faced by School Psychologists

Participants were asked to share their thoughts and ideas about ways in which the challenges they experience could be addressed. The analysis of the responses to the questionnaires and discussions in the focus groups allowed five significant actions to emerge. These related to clarifying roles, training in school development and intersectoral collaboration, addressing personal and interpersonal dynamics, instituting changes at organisational level, and advocating the profession of school psychology.

9.7.1. Clarification of Roles and Boundaries

Participants in this study argued that one of the most significant interventions needed is to focus on clarifying roles, not only of school psychologists but of all role players within various subsystems within education support. This includes role definition for school psychologists, in circuit teams, in district offices, in provincial education departments, and within the broader community. It also applies to other professionals and stakeholders with whom school psychologists collaborate. Such clarity would facilitate collaboration and consequently increase the effectiveness of school development processes and interventions. Role clarification would emphasise the diversity within teams but facilitate pooling of skills and knowledge, thereby challenging and shifting the notion that all sectors need to do the same thing. Instead, the emphasis would be on how each sector contributes something different in order to reach a common goal (Goldman & Schmalz, 2008; Gronski & Pigg, 2000; Intriligator, 1994; Mostert, 1996; Walsh et al., 1999).

A proposition was put forward by some school psychologists in the focus groups to restructure school psychological services to accommodate varying levels of training, and expertise in school development. Following this idea, the service would, in essence, be divided into direct and indirect support provision, with professionals being assigned to a post that focused on one of the two but working in collaboration with another school psychologist in a post focused on the other. This would, it was argued, clarify the particular role to be played by the school psychologist. Such differentiation would imply that some school psychologists would be able to offer a more direct service to learners, focusing on assessment and interventions such as therapy and counselling, while others would focus on the provision of more indirect services, which would include training and consultation with teachers and working with parents and school management teams. A systems thinking approach would

require clear communication between the two posts, or approaches ensuring their interdependence, to ensure comprehensive, high quality service provision to schools. It is worrying that participants did not address this aspect of their suggestions and assumed that simply splitting the posts would achieve the desired effect. The expectation should be that these providers would collaborate and work in partnership with each other and other role players to deliver a comprehensive psychological service to schools.

9.7.2. Training in and Orientation to School Development and Intersectoral Collaboration

Participants recommended that psychologists working in schools need to commit themselves to a rigorous, relevant and ongoing programme of professional development. Such a programme must ensure that the appropriate knowledge and skills are held by those who engage in psychological practice within schools. The need for training and development of those who co-ordinate and manage school psychological services was emphasised by school psychologists in the focus groups as well. Improving the knowledge, skills and expertise of all role-players was regarded as crucial to ensure effective collaboration towards school development.

Many recommendations were put forward regarding pre-service training of psychologists who work in schools. The need to develop general basic skills of communication, leadership and management and group facilitation was highlighted by key informants in the email interviews. More specific reference was made to the need for a strong emphasis to be placed on school development and intersectoral collaboration as “knowledge areas” in the curriculum of training programmes for psychologists. To this end, programmes need to focus on exposing students to systems thinking and to paradigms which embrace community psychology approaches and the value of both direct and indirect support service delivery. Training programmes need to be aimed at facilitating a shift in the mindset of students who often enter training programmes holding a stereotypical view of what psychologists do—a perception perpetuated in the media—towards a community psychology approach within school psychology (Nel et al., 2010; Pillay, 2003).

Participants in this study highlighted the importance of consultation and collaboration between stakeholders such as universities, education departments and non-government organisations, in the process of curriculum planning and implementation. This implies

developing stronger links between training and practice spaces, liaising with job providers, keeping abreast of shifts in policy by working closely with role-players at national and provincial levels, and networking between training institutions towards some standardisation of training across the country that acknowledges the demands and challenges in the field of education and school psychology.

9.7.3. Addressing Personal and Interpersonal Dynamics

The quality of relationships between role-players, it was felt by many participants in this study, must be improved. This requires individuals to invest more effort in communicating openly, respecting one another and acknowledging one another's strengths and expertise (El Ansari & Phillips, 2001; Green & Tones, 2000). The relationships between sectors within circuits and districts were identified by school psychologists as requiring particular attention. Communication was highlighted as a key aspect, with emphasis being placed on the nature as well as the content of communication. Participants in the focus groups mentioned the importance of talking about the work they do as a means of earning respect and acknowledgement, which would consequently improve relationships and collaboration. Efforts to improve interpersonal dynamics will reduce the tendency to be judgmental and increase openness to alternative approaches and opinions.

9.7.4. Organisational Change

It appears from the findings drawn from the focus groups and questionnaires that the circuit team, as a system, requires serious review. Participants in this study highlighted the need to reflect on and modify or rework the structures and procedures governing circuit teams. They felt that these structures and procedures need to be systematised across the education sector and designed to facilitate school development through intersectoral collaboration. Protocols and guidelines for practice, it was argued, are crucial if goals are to be consistently achieved within and across the various levels of the education system.

Participants in this study claimed that putting such guidelines for practice in place would ensure that schools have clearer expectations of what education support service providers would offer and how all role players would need to work together. Clearer policy imperatives and protocols around the nature of collaboration and school development, participants felt, would enhance service provision.

Another change at organisational level proposed by the participants was improving human and physical resources, regarded as a central imperative, with an emphasis on both quality and quantity of education support services. The call from participants was not only for an increase in the number of posts for school psychologists but to also ensure that the individuals who fill these posts are well trained and qualified to fulfil their roles effectively.

However, the demand to increase school psychology posts and fill these with suitably qualified professionals is not realistic in the South African context, where resources are stretched at all levels. The state's budget for education support, it seems, is not able to support the creation of additional posts for school psychologists in each of the provinces. Even if this were possible, at present, tertiary institutions are not training sufficient numbers of educational psychologists to fill these posts.

Resource constraints impact at the level of training of personnel in tertiary institutions as well as at the level of the delivery of services, with few posts being available. These limited resources have a strong effect on the nature of the psychological service that is being provided to schools across provinces in the country. At the time of writing, resource allocation is determining the nature of the services being provided, often with dire consequences. If parity could be reached, and resources were improved, then services being provided could be streamlined to ensure that some basic services could be offered to all schools across the country. However, this is highly unlikely in the short term since the financial implications are immense.

9.7.5. Advocacy for School Psychology

Many participants in the study noted that education support provision needs to be reconceptualised in South Africa and clarity gained regarding school psychological services in particular. The contention is that change in policy and practice, at circuit and district level, and transformation of the structures through which education support is provided, is crucial.

School psychologists need to acknowledge the responsibility that they have to advocate for the profession. School psychologists are in a position to convince policy makers and decision makers that they have something essential to offer schools and, more broadly, education. As practitioners in the field, school psychologists need to make their voices heard with regard to what makes for good practice.

School psychologists *must* be empowered to begin to influence their own destinies (Lown et al., 2001; Mackay, 2002; Nel et al., 2010; Stobie, 2002). The constant refrain that “school psychology is under threat” must be responded to. The onus is on the school psychologist to identify and define those aspects of service delivery which will ensure the provision of a relevant and effective service to schools. School psychologists need to take responsibility for advocating for themselves by clarifying who they are and what they have to offer. This is a struggle that cannot be waged on their behalf. They have to hold this responsibility themselves. School psychology has the potential to shape education and, in particular, education support provision.

In the course of this study, participants acknowledged that a crucial step in the advocacy process is the need to deepen understanding and clarity around the professional identity of school psychologists. On an intrapersonal level, the morale of school psychologists must be lifted and a sense of confidence and assertiveness developed in order to more effectively advocate for the profession in the public sector. At a broader level, school psychology should be marketed as a profession and service, raising awareness of what it has to offer education and, consequently, influencing public perceptions of school psychology through “re-education”.

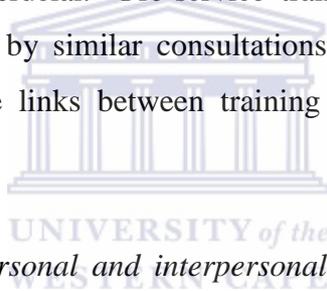
All school psychologists in the Western Cape involved in this study called for the development of a structure that can represent school psychologists. Such an association would allow its members to strategise as a group and collectively advocate for the role and position of school psychologists. Issues impacting on school psychologists could then be tabled through a formal structure and consequently be recognised and responded to.

9.8. Summary and Conclusion

Ideas regarding how the challenges facing school psychologists who facilitate school development, in collaboration with other sectors, are presented as recommendations in the final chapter, which follows. The suggestions put forward by key informants and school psychologists who participated in the study were outlined in the previous section. Some of these ideas, it is encouraging to note, are already being implemented by some participants in the teams and other contexts within which they work.

As regards the *clarification of roles and boundaries*, although this would be best facilitated through organisational change, practitioners need to take responsibility for defining and redefining the roles they play within the education system, especially when collaborating with other sectors. Essentially, the locus of control, which is perceived to be external, needs to shift to the internal, which would result in increasing power, assertiveness and control.

All those in school psychology posts would benefit from *training and orientation to school development and intersectoral collaboration* as modes of service delivery within school psychology. The level of qualification of school psychologists in the provincial education department in comparison with other colleagues is not the issue and should not be presented as a reason to evade continuing professional development opportunities. The responsibility for designing, facilitating, managing and financing these courses will need to be delegated. The need for departments of education, universities and other training institutions to collaborate on these matters is crucial. Pre-service training programmes for educational psychologists must be informed by similar consultations between trainers and those who provide employment so that the links between training and the realities of practice are meaningful and clear.



Addressing the challenges of *personal and interpersonal dynamics* is often very complex because it requires self-reflection. These challenges are seldom overcome through outside intervention, unless individuals are willing and able to engage in introspection and to acknowledge changes that need to be made on an individual level. Trust, respect, tolerance and communication are factors that need to be acknowledged and enhanced by individuals on an intrapersonal level and then in relation to others (interpersonally).

Organisational change requires a similar process of critical reflection. A process that facilitates critical self-study within the provincial and national education departments needs to be facilitated. This will allow role players in these systems, in particular those in senior positions, to acknowledge that which needs to be adjusted and changed and to institute structures and procedures that will facilitate such change in consultation with all stakeholders. Allocating resources and clarifying expectations, roles, boundaries, and lines of accountability will require individuals and groups to relinquish power and authority, even if momentarily, in order to decide on the best way forward for individuals, groups and the organisation as a whole.

School psychologists will need to take full responsibility for *advocacy*. Although feelings of marginalisation and the resulting low morale is understandable, practitioners need to assert themselves and begin to make their presence felt and valued in education in a more visible and vocal manner. A first and crucial step is to develop a collective understanding of the professional identity of the school psychologist and then to share this with those with whom they collaborate as well as those who are recipients of the services provided. Essentially, school psychologists have to take responsibility for addressing this challenge or risk being regarded as no longer necessary in education.

In this chapter, the challenges that face school psychologists as they collaborate with other sectors in an attempt to facilitate school development were discussed. Emphasis was placed on those factors that make this kind of work difficult as they present as barriers to good practice. Themes within the following categories were expounded on and linked to the literature consulted on the topic under study: roles and boundaries in collaboration, personal and interpersonal factors, organisational challenges, training and development, discourses and worldviews, and the wider education system. The suggestions proposed by participants, in the email interviews, focus groups and questionnaires, regarding how these challenges could be addressed were also discussed.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final chapter opens with an overview of the study, after which key findings are presented by highlighting significant aspects that emerged in the research. Recommendations arising from the findings of this study are presented using the categories that emerged from the data analysis as a frame. The recommendations therefore focus on addressing those challenges facing school psychologists as they work with other sectors to facilitate school development. The chapter closes with a discussion of the limitations of the research and suggestions for further research.

10.1. An Overview

The role of school psychologists has been debated and contested nationally and internationally for decades. The emphasis in these debates has tended to be on the need for adjustments in school psychology practice and a redefinition of the role of school psychologists.

This study is focused on the roles and practices of school psychologists who support the development of schools in South Africa. In particular, it was conducted to investigate challenges that emerge when school psychologists work with other sectors to facilitate school development. The struggles of practice are highlighted and ways in which these challenges could be addressed are recommended.

The conceptual framework which grounded this study encompasses three key concepts: *school psychology*, *school development* and *intersectoral collaboration*. School psychology, as an object of the study, includes the latter two concepts, which are aspects of school psychology and are explored as two intersecting concepts. This research, therefore, has its home in the field of school psychology but focuses in particular on the challenges experienced when school development and intersectoral collaboration intersect as forms of practice. Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2 represents an attempt to depict the relationships between the key objects of this study graphically, emphasising that the focus of this study is on the challenges that emerge within the intersection of the Venn diagram.

Systems thinking” is the frame of reference that was employed to understand phenomena and perceptions of reality. It provided the theoretical lens through which data were analysed and explained. This implies that emphasis was placed on the transactional processes in systems and the interrelationships between the individual parts that emerged in the study as critical. Understanding the principles that underpin systems and groups and the ways in which individuals engage in these was the focus. The principles that were highlighted in the study included the notions of interdependence and interconnectedness, adaptation, patterns, causality, role definition, boundaries and change.

The research objectives of the study were as follow:

1. To ascertain the key roles played by school psychologists in South Africa.
2. To investigate the practices of school psychologists who are involved in school development.
3. To determine whether and how school psychologists work with other role players to facilitate school development.
- 4. To explore the challenges faced by school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development.**
- 5. To ascertain how these challenges are currently being addressed, and how they can be overcome in the future.**
6. To formulate recommendations for the training of school psychologists in relation to school development and intersectoral collaboration in particular.

The research aim and objectives translated into the following questions, which framed and focused the research process. The main research question was: What are the challenges that face school psychologists who facilitate school development through intersectoral collaboration and how can these challenges be addressed? The following sub-questions guided the study:

1. What are the key roles played by school psychologists in South Africa?
2. In what ways are school psychologists involved in school development?
3. Do school psychologists work with other sectors or professionals when facilitating school development? If so, with whom?
4. How do school psychologists work with others in the process of school development?
- 5. What challenges face school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development?**
- 6. How can these challenges be addressed?**
7. How can the training of school psychologists in relation to school development and intersectoral collaboration be transformed?

The research paradigm which framed this study is constructivist interpretivism, which is a worldview that reality is constructed through human interaction. From this view, it is accepted that multiple subjective realities are constructed, interpreted and observed by the researcher. Within this paradigm, it is understood that the researcher and the participants are able to construct understandings separately and together (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Interpretivist theorists therefore accept that realities are subjective and that, consequently, multiple interpretations may be possible.

A primarily qualitative research approach was employed in the design and implementation, although the study may be regarded as having a mixed methods design since multiple techniques were utilised in the data collection processes. This is congruent with a constructivist-interpretive paradigm since the emphasis in qualitative research is on obtaining rich, comprehensive, in-depth data from exploring multiple dimensions of an issue, hence revealing the complexity thereof. Mixed methods were employed to triangulate the findings which emerged from predominantly qualitative approaches and techniques being employed.

The study encompassed four phases of data collection. Document analysis was conducted in the first phase, where policy documents, research reports, job descriptions and organograms were studied and analysed. In phase two, 17 key informants in psychology and education around the country were interviewed electronically. In phase three, 47 school psychologists based in posts at district level in the Western Cape province participated in focus group discussions in their district. Finally, phase four constituted the completion of a questionnaire by those who had participated in the focus group discussions. The questionnaire was composed of both open-ended and closed-ended questions, thus generating quantitative and qualitative data to triangulate, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the data. Since the study employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques, a combination of varied approaches to data analysis was employed.

10.2. Key findings

Significant findings that emerged in this study concerned the role of the school psychologist in South Africa, the nature of school development processes and the intersectoral collaboration psychologists engage in and the challenges they face in facilitating school development through intersectoral collaboration. The findings presented are largely based on the experiences of participants from the Western Cape, however, a concerted effort was made

to understand the context within which school psychology is practiced in South Africa more broadly.

10.2.1. Roles of School Psychologists

School psychologists are engaged in providing support on multiple levels within the education system. Their roles extend from work at the level of the individual learner or educator to the level of the classroom and the school. These multilevel interventions indicate the varied knowledge, skill and expertise held by school psychologists, making them valued assets within the field of education and in the education system in particular.

Although school psychologists interviewed in this study tended to emphasise the direct support provided to learners as their unique contribution, many of the participants were struck by the extensive indirect support provided within this sector by themselves and their colleagues.

Apart from assisting with the establishment of institution level support teams (ILSTs), the support and training provided to these teams in schools was regarded as being an important contribution of school psychologists. Although the development of ILSTs has thus far not been consistent within and across districts and provinces, school psychologists invest a great deal in ensuring that, once established, these structures in the school perform the crucial functions they ought to.

10.2.2. School Psychologists Facilitating School Development

School psychologists captured their understanding of school development by focusing on the purpose and strategies employed. The thoughts and ideas expressed resonate well with the literature reviewed on the topic and link with policy directives in this regard too. The importance of working with both individuals *and* the system in order to facilitate school development was an important aspect of school psychologists' support provision. This information is crucial since it shows that school psychologists apply systems thinking in their practice, albeit often unconsciously.

Consultation and programme development in schools is a key aspect of school development, and school psychologists report engagement with these aspects of practice with a number of different sectors (educators, parents, principals, etc.), and they engage with a wide range of

content (for example, violence, study skills, reading, substance abuse, classroom management).

Essentially, school psychologists are engaged in meaningful school development activities. These are perceived by school psychologists to be undervalued within the system by other sectors and so are downplayed by school psychologists themselves. The results of this study draw attention to school psychologists' efforts in facilitating school development and highlight this aspect of the work they engage in.

10.2.3. School Psychologists Engaging in Intersectoral Collaboration

As was evident in the exploration of school development as a concept, school psychologists' understanding of intersectoral collaboration was highly sophisticated. Participants were able to acknowledge key features of collaborative work and provide examples of interventions that were framed within a teamwork approach. It emerged, however, that the depth of understanding of intersectoral collaboration as a concept did not translate as effectively into practice. Much of the collaborative work that school psychologists described implied that they were working alongside other sectors as opposed to planning, visioning and sharing resources and skills in a conscious manner. There were, however, instances where individuals shared very successful experiences of intersectoral collaboration in action. These "best practice" experiences *should* be shared, and yet participants reported that they do not currently have structured spaces within which to do this.

The most evident issue emerging here was the frustration expressed by school psychologists at the misinterpretation of intersectoral collaboration as it is operationalised in circuit teams. This misuse of the notion of teamwork and collaboration has unfortunately resulted in school psychologists being reluctant to engage in any teamwork within the department of education. The findings reveal that they have experienced intersectoral collaboration in the circuit team as stripping them of their professional identity and that this has had a profound effect on many of them, both on a personal and on a professional level, and has, in many instances, had dire consequences for the provision of psychological services to schools.

10.2.4. Challenges in Facilitating School Development Through Intersectoral Collaboration

Six categories of challenges facing school psychologists when they collaborate with other sectors to facilitate school development emerged during this study, namely, roles and boundaries, personal and interpersonal factors, organisational challenges, training and development, discourse and worldviews, and the wider education system.

Roles of school psychologists are often poorly defined and not clearly communicated in the education system to all stakeholders, resulting in ineffective implementation of their functions. Moreover, school psychologists who participated in the study contended that the role-players with whom they work tend to have a very narrow perception of what school psychologists can do. The assumption is that school psychologists are essentially responsible for conducting psycho-educational assessments and intervening when counselling and therapeutic services are required.

The job description outlined for school psychologists is regarded by participants as too wide, resulting in increased workload for school psychologists and extended expectations on the part of those in management positions who oversee the work of school psychologists. The job description at present is open to varied interpretation, leaving school psychologists playing roles that do not draw on their psychological expertise.

The challenge facing school psychologists is in balancing the direct support with the indirect support they provide. These approaches to the provision of psychological services to schools are interdependent and interconnected and need to be understood in this way and implemented accordingly. The problem is that direct support and indirect support are often perceived as separate rather than integrated practice options.

School psychologists are challenged to insert their expertise in collaborative structures and processes. They need to take responsibility for demonstrating their specialist knowledge and skills by contributing their psychological expertise in intersectoral interactions in order to illustrate in practice the specialist roles that school psychologists can play.

School psychologists play a crucial role in supporting and empowering educators, but this role is challenging because it requires teachers to be open to interrogating their practice and exploring new ways in which they can support learners who experience barriers to learning. The work of school psychologists is only effective if teachers are willing to critically reflect on processes in their classrooms and effect the necessary changes in consultation with school psychologists.

School psychologists require knowledge and skills in working with schools as systems. A lack of expertise in consultative, systemic, indirect, holistic and preventative approaches impacts negatively on the quality of school development interventions.

Power and marginalisation were two key themes within the category of *personal and interpersonal factors*. The hierarchical structure of the WCED, where decision-making power and authority lie in “post” level, is experienced by participants as rigid and disempowering. Most participants in the focus groups described circuit team managers as authoritarian and controlling, lacking openness and flexibility in the management styles they adopt.

Many school psychologists expressed a feeling of marginalisation. They maintained that they are not acknowledged and that they have not been sufficiently consulted in processes of transformation in the WCED. Their opinions have not been called for, and where these have been shared, the impression is that they have not been incorporated into organisational change processes.

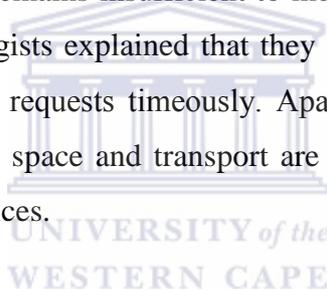
Organisational challenges exist at micro and macro levels. School psychologists contended that structures and procedures within the WCED are not always clarified. An example of this is the circuit team, which was designed as a structure to facilitate intersectoral collaboration. Participants in the study, however, explained that with little clarity as to how these structures ought to function, it is difficult to ensure consistency and effectiveness in the functioning of these teams across the province.

Another procedural challenge is the lines of authority which have been put in place regarding who school psychologists are expected to report to. The circuit team manager has been designated the role of manager over school psychologists. Managers are expected to engage

in performance evaluations and, as such, oversee the work done by school psychologists and yet they have no background or qualification in psychology. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate the practical work done by school psychologists but even more difficult to assess the theoretical assumptions that underpin such work.

Most school psychologists who participated in the study expressed concern about the lack of co-ordination and poor management of intersectoral collaboration at the level of the circuit team. They claimed that teamwork and collaboration between and across disciplines is not successfully managed. This is further influenced by ineffective channels of communication, lines of accountability and decision-making procedures, all of which impact negatively on the process and product that emerges from collaborative efforts.

Even though it can be argued that the Western Cape is well resourced, it was felt that the number of school psychologists remains insufficient to meet the needs of schools efficiently and effectively. School psychologists explained that they are always overloaded and hardly ever able to respond to school's requests timeously. Apart from limited human resources, physical resources such as office space and transport are also barriers to provision of high quality school psychological services.



The management of change processes within the organisation of the WCED was described by participants as ineffective and poorly managed. Consultation with practitioners in the field was minimal, and communication and information flow during change processes were experienced by school psychologists as highly problematic.

Another category of challenges that emerged was in the area of *training and development*. Professional training and development of school psychologists was identified as crucial by participants in the study to support and facilitate a paradigm shift where more systemic, consultative approaches could be adopted by school psychologists. It was acknowledged that the training needs are diverse and that service providers such as universities would need to constantly consider reviews of the curricula of educational psychology training programmes at both pre-service and in-service levels. The diversity in the capacity, experience, and qualifications in the school psychology sector would need to be factored into the design of training programmes.

The challenge of varied *discourses and worldviews* also emerged as critical. School psychologists emphasised the importance of clarifying concepts and terminology and how these can be operationalised in collaborative initiatives between different sectors. Participants acknowledged the importance of common understandings of school development and intersectoral collaboration, both in theory and as practice. Without a clear understanding of what school development and intersectoral collaboration are, and how these can be best facilitated, the processes may be sorely misinterpreted and poorly implemented.

At a macro level, within the *wider education system*, participants felt that school psychology is not deemed a priority and is therefore not foregrounded in discussions on provision of top quality education in the province or the country. They argued that the view of what makes a difference in education is very narrow and that, generally, within the wider education system, the potential contribution of school psychology is underplayed and even ignored. In the Western Cape province, school psychologists complained that they were not well represented at senior levels in the provincial department and national departments of education. Since transformation is often initiated and managed at these levels, school psychologists explained that they often felt excluded from these processes, and were consequently unable to influence decisions made with regard to education, more broadly, and education support, in particular.

10.3. Significance of this Research

The findings of this study shed light on the context of school psychology in South Africa and, more specifically, in the Western Cape province. The results illuminate the school psychology approach to school development as it is facilitated in collaboration with other sectors. It needs to be acknowledged that the Western Cape is a context which allows one to be more optimistic about the future of school psychology, given that it is among the better resourced provinces in the country.

This study, it is hoped, will provide a useful picture of how school psychologists really function and be an important contribution to the body of knowledge in this field since it indicates the contribution that psychology, as a profession, is attempting to make to the development of schools as organisations. Its findings present the challenges faced by school psychologists who work with other sectors to facilitate school development, and in it, recommendations are made regarding how to address these challenges at various levels in the

system. This research will contribute to the development of school psychology in South Africa and provide direction for collaborative developmental work with (and within) schools. The aim is to inform the training in and practice of school psychology in relation to intersectoral collaboration and school development in particular.

The findings illustrate what school psychologists do, and what they can be expected to do, thereby guiding both employers and those who are recipients of their service. Those who employ school psychologists will consequently have a clearer sense of what can be expected from the school psychologists, allowing them to shape job descriptions more carefully and create relevant and appropriate support and professional development opportunities for those in their employ. Schools, teachers, learners and parents will also be able to clarify what they can expect of school psychologists by way of service delivery. Those involved in the training of school psychologists will be guided by this research to ensure that they are prepared adequately to fulfil their responsibilities in providing appropriate relevant, quality, effective support to schools and those in the system.

10.4. Recommendations

The recommendations are presented using the challenges that emerge from the study as a frame. These were role definition, personal and interpersonal dynamics, organisational change, discourses and worldviews, training, advocacy and wider education system issues. The recommendations are, on the whole, practical, well-grounded responses to challenges that have been identified as emanating at various levels in the system, micro (at the level of the individual) through to macro (at the level of the state).

10.4.1. Role Definition

10.4.1.1 The job description of school psychologists requires review so that it is not left open to varied interpretation which may lead to ineffective application. As has been noted in this study, a job description that is too wide is open to manipulation by all. It is crucial that this review process is a consultative one that involves all school psychologists based in the districts.

10.4.1.2 Roles of school psychologists, as captured in job descriptions, must include reference to both direct and indirect support as important aspects of school psychology practice.

10.4.1.3 Job descriptions for school psychologists need to reflect the need for expanded school psychology practice so that they not only encourage practitioners to work systemically but ensure that they do.

10.4.1.4 Equally important is the need to re-educate clients, whether they are learners, teachers, schools or the broader community, so that they may gain a new understanding of what school psychologists have to offer. This “new” role must include and also go beyond the traditional role they have played for such a long time.

10.4.1.5 Circuit team managers and other role players in the education department should be invited to presentations outlining the job description of school psychologists. It is important that this process is not merely a discussion of the job description but that it explores in some depth the nature of school psychology and the specific role of school psychologists in relation to school development educator development and learner development.

10.4.1.6 Given the intense discussions taking place throughout the country about the quality of education, school psychologists would do well as a sector to reflect on the role of the profession in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning through programme development and implementation at the level of the school.

10.4.1.7 The institution level support team is an important structure in schools in South Africa. These structures are an important leverage point in the delivery of effective support to individuals, groups and the organisation as a whole. School psychologists need to work intensively with ILSTs and attempt to achieve maximum impact at the level of the school across districts and provinces. The ILST has the potential to be a powerful structure that can facilitate quality support provision within schools. School psychologists have a responsibility to support and empower this subsystem in an ongoing way.

10.4.1.8 A strong research component needs to be built into the job description of the school psychologist. This would not be to merely elevate the academic or scholarly status of the

practitioners but also to enhance their practice. School psychologists could, for example, be expected to employ an “action research” approach to school-based intervention, where they would need to collect data on patterns and themes in and amongst schools regarding presenting problems or solutions. These findings could be used to develop programmes that could be implemented in schools across districts and provinces and could influence policy formulation. This would encompass effective use of highly skilled professionals to benefit the education system at multiple levels.

10.4.2. Personal and Interpersonal Dynamics

10.4.2.1 Time and energy must be invested in the introductory phase of working together to make explicit that which is often implicit and assumed, for example, who will work together, how they will work together, and what they will focus on. Ground rules must be set, roles clarified, trust built and lines of communication established. Such preparatory work is crucial so that the team’s efforts are effective and the collaboration is not impaired.

10.4.2.2 One of the unexpected effects of the data generation process in this study was the impact that the focus group discussions had on the individuals involved therein. Participants expressed deep appreciation of the process, especially in relation to it creating an opportunity for school psychologists to engage with one another and to discuss their practice and the challenges they face in the contexts they work in. Collegial spaces are crucial both between and within sectors. Individual and group supervision processes need to be established and occur routinely. Much benefit is to be had in creating professional development opportunities which allow for personal development to emerge as a consequence as well. This implies intervention at intrapersonal and interpersonal levels, aspects of staff development that are not often foregrounded.

10.4.2.3 One crucial point is that school psychologists and other role players see the need to initiate collaboration and development work in schools. Being passive and even apathetic contributes to the malaise and low morale of psychologists who are currently in the service. To wait for someone to clarify job descriptions and explain what school development encompasses is neither useful nor effective. If school psychologists know what effective collaboration entails, they need to model it, to demonstrate how this is a way of working that can improve services to schools.

10.4.2.4 School psychologists need to be assertive and clear about what they have to offer. In a system where boundaries are inconsistent, school psychologists need to set clear boundaries. This has worked for individuals who have adopted this approach to collaboration within their teams. It is, however, easier to engage in action with assertion if one has clarity around one's own identity and role function. This implies that the responsibility for change lies mainly with the school psychologists.

10.4.2.5 It is important that school psychologists approach the team and other stakeholders with whom they collaborate with humility. School psychologists need to recognise their own limitations and not assume superiority in terms of the knowledge and skills they have to contribute to school development initiatives.

10.4.3. Organisational Change

10.4.3.1 Organisational challenges essentially demand action at the level of provincial and national education. If school psychology, school development and intersectoral collaboration are not addressed at a macro level, then from a systems perspective, it becomes very difficult to sustain efforts at micro levels. Individuals and groups may adapt and shift mindsets and practices, but this must be supported at the level of policy, as a political priority. Commitment to school psychology, school development and intersectoral collaboration through effective leadership and management, goal-setting, resource allocation and the establishment of effective and efficient structures and procedures is fundamental.

10.4.3.2 The circuit team was established as a structure that was intended to facilitate intersectoral collaboration. The procedures which govern these structures are crucial to ensure the effective functioning of these subsystems. Although some flexibility as regards how circuit teams function from one context to another is needed, some guidelines for practice are crucial to ensure consistent, standardised service provision across circuits and districts in the province.

10.4.3.3 Communication channels between circuit team members, the district office, and provincial head office need to be clarified. Currently, these lines of communication are experienced as absent and consequently disempowering.

10.4.3.4 Lines of authority in the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) must be reviewed. Circuit team managers who are not required to have any background or training in psychology are responsible for the management, supervision and performance evaluation of school psychologists. Although this may seem fair as regards the administrative work that school psychologists engage in, it is crucial that the supervision and evaluation of the psychological work engaged in, whether direct service or indirect service, is the function of a qualified psychologist. In the current structure of the WCED, the senior psychologist is best placed to perform this function.

10.4.3.5 If human resources are a challenge and outsourcing certain activities is an option, perhaps the task of psycho-educational assessments could be handed over to a team of qualified contract employees. Assessment is an important role but is time consuming and therefore costly in terms of time-on-task for a single learner. It is crucial that clear guidelines are put in place to monitor this practice, with opportunities to consult with the practitioner who conducted the assessment. Without control mechanisms, the system would be fraught with inconsistencies and potentially poor quality practice.

10.4.3.6 Registered educational psychologists are a scarce resource in the South African context. Given the large number of practitioners currently in the service of the department who will reach retirement age in the next 10 years, and the small numbers emerging from tertiary institutions each year, a contingency plan needs to be put in place. Some consideration needs to be given to the possibility of employing school counsellors to fill these posts in the future. The department will be able to draw from a larger pool and, in so doing, attract strong candidates.

10.4.3.7 Intersectoral collaboration requires time, money and other resources. Support providers need to factor this into their programmes, and these programmes need to be supported by the institutions concerned. This includes ensuring that there is sufficient funding to support co-ordination and collaboration tasks.

10.4.4. Discourse and Worldview

10.4.4.1 Role players need to begin to listen to one another more carefully, to share discourses and worldviews so that clarity regarding the terminology that drives their practice is achieved. People need not all talk the same language, but they have to find a way to

understand each other and the varying ways in which they work. Making this conscious and transparent is crucial.

10.4.4.2 There needs to be a common, shared understanding of what intersectoral collaboration and teamwork implies. What people do when they work together and how they work together to facilitate school development is crucial. Although the diverse realities across and within contexts (circuits or districts) must be acknowledged, the need for consistency in terms of the principles that guide collaborative practice and service provision need to be consistent and common across circuits, districts and provinces. It cannot be assumed that individuals will simply “do the right thing”.

10.4.4.3 Similarly, it is important to ensure collective understandings of school development. An effort must be made to demystify the theory and practice thereof. Once misunderstandings and misinterpretations are deconstructed, school psychologists and other sectors they work with can begin to shift their practice accordingly. Creating space for these deliberations is crucial.

10.4.4.4 Ongoing professional development and training are central to exploring discourses and worldviews and is addressed in the set of recommendations that follow.

10.4.5. Training

10.4.5.1 Training and development is imperative. Professional development needs are varied and numerous. The need for commitment to training and development is twofold though: Individuals need to be committed to lifelong learning, and the system within which practitioners work needs to be committed to supporting this ongoing development by investing time, money and structural support.

10.4.5.2 Continuous professional development must be regarded as essential for school psychologists and all others employed in positions where their work entails working with schools in a developmental way. Tertiary institutions must be approached to develop a series of short courses in collaboration with education departments in various provinces that would target those working in education support. The provincial and national departments must support this ongoing development through allocation of resources such as time and money.

10.4.5.3 Within the education department, where intersectoral collaboration is an aspect of the job description of so many employees, it is necessary that implicit assumptions about collaborative work are made explicit in writing. Professionals who are expected to work collaboratively should attend workshops and seminars on intersectoral collaboration and be provided with a handbook that explains how to work in collaborative groups, that outlines the rules and norms, and offers suggestions about how to work together effectively. Everyone should be expected to heed this advice on how teams should manage themselves as well as how individuals need to engage in order to maximise the effectiveness of the team while ensuring their own individual development is facilitated as well.

10.4.5.4 Tertiary institutions need to network and collaborate with one another and with education departments who employ school psychologists at curriculum planning and implementation stages. Although it is understood that there are certain fundamentals that must be included in training programmes, consideration must be given to the knowledge and skills required in the communities that will be served.

10.4.5.5 Initial training programmes and continuous professional development, focusing on school development, must include a practical component that would entail participants in the course working with a school/s in a deep and dynamic way in a team under supervision

10.4.5.6 Continuing professional development must target the following sectors:

- Clinical and counselling psychologists who may not have sufficient knowledge and experience of education policy and practice
- Educational psychologists whose training may not have covered systemic thinking and indirect service delivery as key components of the programme.
- Individuals who have not yet obtained a qualification as a psychologist but are engaging in the provision of psychological services to schools. These individuals may be in possession of an Honours degree, a post graduate Diploma in Education.

10.4.5.7 Intersectoral collaboration should be introduced in undergraduate training programmes for teachers and other sectors, for example, occupational therapists,

physiotherapists, social workers. This is already being done at some universities, but needs to be incorporated in all programmes across the country.

10.4.5.8 Those responsible for co-ordinating and managing circuit teams, or any other multidisciplinary, multifunctional structure, must receive the necessary training that equips them to lead and manage these teams effectively, maximising the benefits of intersectoral collaboration.

10.4.6. Advocacy

10.4.6.1 Schools cannot be expected to build psychological service provision into their school improvement plans if they do not have a clear sense of what school psychologists have to offer. Training and orientation for educators, school governing bodies and school management teams is therefore crucial. This is important, especially if circuit and district plans are dependent on and intricately connected to school improvement plans. If this is how strategic plans are developed in the province, then such a structural insertion is fundamental.

10.4.6.2 Training programmes for educators and other health professions at undergraduate level should include a section that highlights what can be expected of psychologists working in the education context. This may involve a guest lecture by a school psychologist, but will need to be lobbied for by practitioners on the ground who will need to establish networks and partnerships with local universities.

10.4.6.3 School psychologists should highlight the role that can be played by the school psychologist within the school by engaging with ILSTs and educators as important stakeholders. Care must be taken to extend educators' perceptions of school psychology and education support beyond the traditional understanding of assessments and therapeutic interventions with individual earners. Emphasis must be placed on the continuum of direct and indirect support and the benefits of both to the school as a whole.

10.4.6.4 School psychologists must take responsibility for “educating” those in management positions about the nature and scope of practice of school psychology. Raising awareness at this level is crucial if school psychologists are to be acknowledged for their knowledge, skills and expertise. Presentations of “best practice” in public forums are important advocacy activities to engage in.

10.4.6.5 Advocacy is important at macro and micro levels. Individual psychologists need to take on an activist role in larger spaces as described above. Equally meaningful is the role school psychologists must play in having strategic conversations with the “right” people, sharing thoughts and ideas with the other sectors that they work with and most of all to demonstrate their worth through their practice and action.

10.4.6.6 A forum or association of school psychologists should be established to champion the cause of psychology in schools. The option to develop a substructure within the Division of Educational Psychology, Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) has been considered but has not yet been taken up by school psychologists. A separate structure may need to be established to lobby for the interests of psychologists working within state departments and with schools.

10.4.6.7 School psychologists need to empower themselves, to shape their own identity and professional direction. As members of a profession and as individual practitioners, school psychologists need to make bold statements that announce who they are and what they have to offer. Until they do this, they run the risk of being called upon to invigilate examinations, check mark schedules, count toilets and check CEMIs numbers.

10.4.7. Wider Education System

10.4.7.1 In the Western Cape, there is a reasonably strong service still in place, but school psychologists are expressing their concern at the way in which the service is being co-ordinated and managed. A matter of concern is that school psychological services are dwindling in many other provinces. The national education department therefore needs to make a clear and definite commitment to holding onto school psychological services, to acknowledge that it is a service that schools need and deserve if high quality education is to be achieved. Such commitment should take the form of national guidelines regarding school psychology in education, the development of which must include an open, consultative, public participation process.

10.4.7.2 Shifts in policy, paradigms and practice are all necessary at individual, micro and macro systems levels. As long as support provision is marked by the glamourising of inclusive education alongside the continued application of “special needs” approaches that

focus on individual assessment and intervention, school psychologists will find it difficult to embrace more systemic ways of working.

10.4.7.3 There appears to be an assumption that with decentralisation, power and control is dispersed and not held in a single entity--that democracy will reign. It needs to be noted, however, that decentralisation often results in a feeling of disconnectedness with the central seat of power, which disempowers those on the ground even more than they were before. School psychologists must have representation at provincial senior management level. It must be understood, however, that this representation is not a call for a boss or manager, but someone who can represent the voice and concerns of school psychologists.

10.5. Limitations of the Study

This study can be critiqued for emphasising or prioritising the view of only one sector in collaborative initiatives to develop schools. Although this study was conducted to investigate the collaboration between different sectors involved in school development, it was focused on the experiences of only one role player, namely, the school psychologist. In terms of the scope of this study, the aim is to understand the challenges facing school psychologists in particular, and not to explore perceptions of all role players more generally. The perspective shared in this study is clearly the subjective experiences of school psychologists and may indeed differ from, and be challenged by those with whom they work within the education system and beyond.

The documents analysed in the first phase of data collection were primarily policy documents emerging from different levels of the education system. Many “internal” documents, like reports on redesign processes and minutes of meetings held in the provincial department of education or at district offices, were not easily accessible. These documents may have deepened understandings of the decisions taken in redesigning structures and procedures in the Western Cape Education Department, with specific reference to the restructuring of school psychological services in the province. It was, however, difficult to access these or to refer to them without breaching confidentiality.

Rather than presenting an overview of school development and intersectoral collaboration within school psychology in South Africa, this study illuminates practices and experiences in

only one of the nine provinces. A concerted effort was made to include a comprehensive picture of school psychology in South Africa through the email interviews. The limited number of responses from other provinces was a serious constraining factor. This study is therefore mostly limited to the realities of the Western Cape, which are different from those of most other provinces.

Email interviews were employed to gather data that would provide insight into the status and practice of school psychology in South Africa. Although meaningful data was generated in this process, face-to-face interviews may have yielded more in-depth information and facilitated the gathering of data from various sectors in all provinces across the country. The logistics related to finance and travel, however, were a serious constraint.

Although this study employs a mixed methods approach, the quantitative elements are primarily descriptive and represent the perceptions of a fairly small number of participants (35). The findings from the questionnaire, though significant, given the 85% response rate, can only be generalised to the Western Cape province. A broader based national survey of school psychology practice, especially in relation to school development and collaborative practices, would have yielded valuable data. The logistical challenges in this regard were limiting, even on the small scale attempted in this study.

10.6. Suggestions for Further Research

The following suggestions for further research are proposed:

- *School community perceptions of the role of psychologists in school development.* Case study research investigating what members of selected school communities regard the role of psychologists to be in developing the school.
- *School psychology in South Africa: Current status and its future.* A mixed methods research focusing on gathering quantitative data as well as interviews with those in leadership positions in education at provincial and national levels.
- *Community perceptions of school psychology.* Research within a community psychology paradigm to clarify community needs and possibly develop an action plan for school development in selected schools.

- *Educators' experiences of the circuit team as a collaborative strategy to facilitate school development.* The clients being served by the circuit team need to be able to provide feedback regarding the quality of support service provision through this structure. The research may have a quantitative aspect, to gather statistical data that may be interesting, but must include a qualitative aspect that will facilitate an in-depth exploration of the experiences of those on the ground.
- *Support providers' perceptions and practice of school development.* An action research study is needed that involves participants attending a course in school development and reflecting on shifts in their practice thereafter. The study would encompass a series of focus group discussions with support providers from various sectors in the education department, reflecting on changes in their perceptions and practices of school development as a consequence of the intervention.
- *Intersectoral collaboration in action.* A participatory action research project could be launched in selected circuits, where the researcher facilitates the establishment of an intersectoral team and monitors them over a period of time as they facilitate school development.
- *School psychologists engaging in school development.* An action research project would be conducted by an individual or group of psychologists who present their experiences of engaging in school development. Such research serves as a crucial example to other psychologists who are uncertain about the steps to take and the challenges to avoid.
- *Educational psychology as community psychology.* An investigation that explores the extent to which educational psychology practice is meeting the needs of schools and the communities they serve would help overcome bias and lack of understanding.
- *Educational psychology in action.* Case study research in which systems interventions at various levels within the school community is described is recommended.

10. 7. Conclusion

In the course of this study, the challenges that school psychologists face as they attempt to meet the expectations of “doing things differently” when working with others to promote school development were investigated. This was not an investigation into what school psychologists believe their role should be. The study was embedded in a context that has been shaped by leaders in the field of educational psychology and school psychology in South Africa and internationally. School psychologists’ reactions to the expectations that have been set have been reported on, in so doing, allowing the voice of those “on the ground” to be heard.

It is problematic that the professional expertise and insight of school psychologists is not being acknowledged, recognised and used optimally to benefit schools, educators and learners. It must be acknowledged, however, that disparate levels of training and qualifications within and across provinces means that not all school psychologists are equally skilled, and therefore able or willing to make professional contributions at systemic levels. This relates to the issue of training and development, and the need for “upskilling” of school psychologists in areas that their initial training may not have covered adequately.

Shifts have to take place at the level of the education department. Structures and procedures which will facilitate intersectoral collaboration around school development have to be established. It is crucial, however, that changes take place at the level of the individual as well. Once structures are in place, individual school psychologists need to work actively within these structures, advocating for school psychology and its place within the education system. Should this not take place, school psychologists may be a “dying breed” in education in South Africa.

As regards the Western Cape, it seems that for as long as possible, the fight for school psychology in the education system must continue. Services offered by school psychologists must remain relevant and appropriate and respond to the needs of schools, educators and learners. School psychologists contend that they currently offer an invaluable service which unfortunately they feel is not being recognised and acknowledged.

It appears that there is a disjuncture between policy that has been formulated by the state and education departments, and practice in the field, in schools. The policy states emphatically

that school development within an intersectoral collaboration framework should be a key focus of the practice of supporting schools. It is acknowledged that direct support to learners cannot be neglected but indirect support service delivery is proposed as an approach to be adopted. The policy appears to provide all the answers to the challenges being faced by practitioners, but what it focuses on may be described as conceptual framing. The policy does not engage with the practical implications thereof. The solutions proposed are not being engaged with or sufficiently incorporated into the practice of school psychology and the functioning of circuit teams or district-based support teams.

An interesting pattern emerges when reflecting on the challenges faced by psychology in education at multiple levels in our society. Educational psychology seems to be struggling with the same status and identity challenge within education and psychology departments in universities. Psychologists struggle with the same need to assert themselves, the same misunderstandings of the role they play and what they have to offer. The territoriality issue emerges as well in varying ways. Educational psychologists need to change their attitude and not to feebly accept what has characterised the education system with regard to specialised education support. Although it is important that they acknowledge their own limitations and engage with humility, school psychologists must take on the challenge of asserting their identity as a discipline and profession. This can best be done by incorporating their relevant specialist knowledge and expertise where appropriate in school development initiatives to gain the status and recognition that is deserved.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Permission to conduct research.

Navrae
Enquiries **Dr RS Cornelissen**
IMibuzo
Telefoon
Telephone **(021) 467-2286**
IFoni
Faks
Fax **(021) 425-7445**
IFeksi

Verwysing
Reference **20081230-0009**
ISalathiso



Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement

Western Cape Education Department

ISEBE leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Ms Nadeen Moolla
23 Canal Road
WOODLANDS PARK
7780

Dear Ms N. Moolla

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CHALLENGE OF INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **26th January 2009 to 29th May 2009.**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Ronald S. Cornelissen

for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**

DATE: 20th January 2009

APPENDIX B: List of documents included in document analysis.

Department of Education. (1997). *Quality education for all*. Report of the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training and the National Committee Education Support Services. Pretoria: Government Printer.

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APPENDIX C: Letters of consent

Letter of consent: Key informants in psychology and education in South Africa

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535
South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2927
Fax: +27 (0) 21 959 3943
Website: www.uwc.ac.za
Email: nmoolla@uwc.ac.za

Dear

I am a lecturer and PhD student at the University of the Western Cape. I am an educational psychologist and have been involved in the training of educational psychologists at the University of the Western Cape since 2004. In addition, I have worked extensively with schools adopting a whole school development approach for over a decade and have taught and engaged in research in the area of intersectoral collaboration within education support services in South Africa since 1994.

I have embarked on a PhD in educational psychology which is being supervised by Professor Sandy Lazarus. The study explores the roles and practices of school psychologists who support the development of schools. In particular, it investigates school psychology practice in the context of the challenge of facilitating whole school development through intersectoral collaboration.

You have been identified as a key informant and are invited to participate in the research which will deepen understandings of the roles of school psychologists and their practices in relation to working with others to support the development of schools. It will contribute to the development of school psychology in South Africa and provide direction for collaborative work within the school context. This study will also inform the training and practice of school psychology in relation to intersectoral collaboration and whole school development in particular.

The research objectives are:

1. To ascertain the key roles played by school psychologists in South Africa.
2. To investigate the practices of school psychologists who are involved in whole school development.
3. To determine whether and how school psychologists work with other role players to facilitate school development in South Africa.
4. To understand the challenges faced by school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development.
5. To ascertain how these challenges are currently being addressed, and how they can be addressed in the future.
6. To draw out recommendations for the training and practice of school psychologists.

The research activities which will be pursued include an extensive literature review and documentary analysis, a structured email interview surveying practices of school psychology across the country, and focus group interviews and questionnaires with school psychologists employed in the Western Cape Education Department at district level.

It should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete the questions that follow. Please note that in responding to this email, it is understood that you are giving consent to participation. You may rest assured of protection through anonymity. This means that your name will not be revealed on any public documentation, unless you specifically agree for this to occur. The ethical principles of research will be upheld through the duration of the study and in the dissemination of the findings.

The findings of this research will be shared with relevant role players, and communities through forums and various kinds of publications. Your participation in the email interview gives your consent to have the findings published within the context of the aims outlined above.

Should you require any further information please feel free to contact me directly at the numbers listed below.

Sincerely

Nadeen Moolla



UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

A place of quality, a place to grow, from hope to action through knowledge

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Consent to participate in focus group and questionnaire

I am a lecturer and PhD student at the University of the Western Cape. I am an educational psychologist and have been involved in the training of educational psychologists at the University of the Western Cape since 2004. In addition, I have worked extensively with schools adopting a Whole School Development approach for over a decade and have taught and engaged in research in the area of intersectoral collaboration within education support services in South Africa since 1994.

I have embarked on a PhD in educational psychology which is being supervised by Professor Sandy Lazarus. The study explores the roles and practices of school psychologists who support the development of schools. In particular, it investigates school psychology practice in the context of the challenge of facilitating whole school development through intersectoral collaboration.

You are invited to participate in the research which will deepen understandings of the roles of school psychologists and their practices in relation to working with others to support the development of schools. It will contribute to the development of school psychology in South Africa and provide direction for collaborative work within the school context. This study will also inform the training and practice of school psychology in relation to intersectoral collaboration and whole school development in particular.

The research objectives are:

1. To ascertain the key roles played by school psychologists in South Africa.
2. To investigate the practices of school psychologists who are involved in whole school development.
3. To determine whether and how school psychologists work with other role players to facilitate school development in South Africa.
4. To understand the challenges faced by school psychologists when collaborating with other sectors to facilitate school development
5. To ascertain how these challenges are currently being addressed, and how they can be addressed in the future.
6. To draw out recommendations for the training and practice of school psychologists.

The research activities which will be pursued include an extensive literature review and documentary analysis, a structured email interview surveying practices of school psychology across the country, and focus group interviews and questionnaires with school psychologists employed in the Western Cape Education Department at district level.

I am required by the ethical guidelines of the Faculty of Education, UWC, to obtain your consent to participate in the above study. Please find attached a consent form to be signed by you should you agree to participate in the study.

Should you require any further information please feel free to contact me directly at 0219592927 (w) / 0217612445 (h) / 0795024108 (cell).

Sincerely

Nadeen Moolla



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THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CHALLENGE OF INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION

Letter of consent

1. I agree to participate in the study as outlined in the attached letter.
2. Should I be employed by the Western Cape Education Department at district level, I agree to participate in a focus group interview and complete a questionnaire.
3. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without fear or penalty; this includes having my inputs withdrawn from the study.
4. I understand that I may choose not to answer a particular question or set of questions.
5. I understand that I will be protected through anonymity. This means that my name will not be revealed on any public documentation, unless I specifically agree for this to occur.
6. I agree to the tape-recording of the focus group interview should I be participating therein and understand that I can request that it be switched off at any time.
7. I understand that the findings of this research will be shared with relevant role players, and communities through relevant forums and various kinds of publications. I therefore agree to the findings being published within the context of the aims outlined in the covering letter.
8. I understand that I may, if I wish, have access to interview notes and/or transcriptions from the interview process for editing purposes, and that I must respond within two months should I wish to make any recommendations for changes.

I hereby agree to / do not agree (indicate choice by circling) to participate in this study and to have the findings used in the ways described above.

Name in print: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



APPENDIX D: Email interview questions

The Interview

Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible. Where you are unable to respond or where questions do not apply to you please indicate “Not Applicable” / “N/A”

1. Who is your employer?
2. What position do you hold?
3. In what way are you involved in the field of educational / school psychology?
4. If you are based in an education district, please state how many school psychologists are employed within your district office?
5. How many school psychologists are based within special schools in your district or province?
6. What are the key functions/roles played by school psychologists in your district / province? What are the main activities school psychologists are involved in? (Please attach or fax a copy of the job description for school psychologists employed in your district or province.)
7. Who at the district office is involved in school development?
(If you are based within an education district, please attach or fax a copy of the organogram of your district / province)
8. In what ways are school psychologists involved in **school development** work in particular?
9. Are school psychologists expected to work with other sectors or professionals when they engage in school development? Please underline.

YES

NO
10. If yes, please explain how school psychologists work with others when facilitating school development.
11. What challenges face school psychologists who facilitate school development through intersectoral collaboration, i.e. collaborating with other professionals and stakeholders?
12. How can these challenges be addressed?
13. What recommendations can you make to inform the **pre- and in-service training** of psychologists in relation to intersectoral collaboration and school development?

Thank you for your co-operation in responding to this email and answering the questions above.

APPENDIX E: Focus group interview schedule

Key questions which guided the focus group interviews

1. What are the key roles you play as school psychologists? What are the main activities that you are involved in?
2. Categorise these roles / activities into "School Development", "Intersectoral Collaboration" and "Other". Some may fit in both places. Provide input where necessary.
3. Do you collaborate with other sectors? List them.
4. What is the nature of the collaboration with other sectors?
5. What challenges do you face in engaging in school development through intersectoral collaboration?
6. How can these challenges be addressed?

Focus Group interview process

Introduction

(Letter of consent – review, provide lots of input about recording the session, e.g. why the need to record, recording on tape and newsprint, permission clear, only me to get access, etc.)

Attendance (sign register – name, base, contact details, cell, email)

Orientation (including 'definition' clarification of intersectoral collaboration and school development

- Brainstorm: What do understand by school development?
- Input on school development using PowerPoint and handout. Input to connect with and correct what may have emerged in brainstorm.
- Brainstorm what words come to mind when you hear the phrase "intersectoral collaboration".
- Input re intersectoral collaboration using PowerPoint handout. Input to connect with and correct what may have emerged in brainstorm.

Key Roles

What are the **key roles** you play as a school psychologist? Work individually on a page and then collate as a group onto flashcards. Ensure all activities and roles played are captured.

School development and intersectoral collaboration

Which of these would you categorise as **school development work** and which involves **intersectoral collaboration** as discussed earlier. Therefore cluster. Where there is overlap this is to be captured in both categories.

School development	Intersectoral collaboration	Other

What other activities do you engage in that you would regard as contributing to school development? In what ways are you involved in school development? Provide examples. (Trying to ensure that nothing has been missed)

Intersectoral Collaboration

Do you work with other sectors / professionals / role players when facilitating school development/supporting the development of schools? Name these groups and/or individuals. (List generated and captured on newsprint)

What is the nature of the collaboration with other sectors? Describe the contribution made by each of the role-players and in particular your own as a school psychologist. Also explain how this collaboration co-ordinated.

Challenges in collaborating with other sectors

What **challenges** do you face when working with other sectors / professionals in facilitating school development? (list generated on newsprint)

How are these challenges currently being addressed? How? (Look at each one above and generate response.)

What suggestions can you make for overcoming these challenges?

APPENDIX F: Input in Focus Groups

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>The role of school psychologists has been debated and contested nationally and internationally for decades.</p> <p>The emphasis has been on the need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a shift in school psychology practice • redefining the role of school psychologists 	<p>This study tries to understand the challenges that face school psychologists as they attempt to meet the expectations of “doing things differently”.</p> <p>It intends to shift the context within which school psychologists work in order to facilitate the effective provision of school psychological services.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>School Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School development aims at ensuring that all aspects of school life are geared towards fostering effective teaching and learning • Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ go beyond individual assessment and therapy with learners only ○ target those who work with learners (Indirect Service) ○ facilitate change in schools and classrooms ○ are at level of the school as an organisation ○ develop people, structures and procedures • The school psychologist develops the school through an in-depth understanding of individuals and vice versa 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Underlying assumptions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although work with individual is important, lack of resources implies the need to complement this • Improving the organisation can improve the quality of learning and development of the individual learner • We can make an impact if we support and develop the systems within which children live and learn • Families and schools are crucial systems that we must engage with
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Some examples of school development work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation development, e.g. developing structures • Policy development at school level • Programme development and implementation • Broad-based interventions with learners • Professional and personal development of educators • Conflict management • Curriculum development and adaptation • Consultation with SMTs • Leadership and management coaching • Facilitating school-community partnerships 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Intersectoral Collaboration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together in a team • Work with other professionals and sectors • Establishing and working in partnerships • Synonyms include: interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, inter-professional, multi-functional, etc • Brings together that which is diverse to achieve common goals and generate solutions to problems
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Underlying assumptions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for holistic understanding of problem • Facilitates development of comprehensive response • Support provision is improved – co-ordinated, easier access, more effective • Role-players learn from one another • Improved relationships and communication • Pool resources • Less duplication 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Some examples of intersectoral collaboration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working as circuit teams • Facilitating workshops together • Working together on ESTs • Assisting a school with the development of a School Improvement Plan • Developing a strategic plan to improve literacy levels in a school or circuit

APPENDIX G: Questionnaire to school psychologists

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2927
Fax: +27 (0) 21 959 3943
Website: www.uwc.ac.za
Email: nmoolla@uwc.ac.za

17 June 2009

Dear Colleague

QUESTIONNAIRE: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CHALLENGE OF INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION

This questionnaire represents the final phase of the doctoral study in which you recently participated. The study explores the roles and practices of psychologists who support the development of schools. More particularly, it investigates school psychology practice in the context of the challenge of facilitating school development through working with other professionals and sectors.

You are once again assured that your responses will remain anonymous and that the information you provide will be treated as confidential at all times. This is an opportunity for you to influence the future development of school psychology practice in relation to developing schools through collaborating and co-operating with other sectors.

It should take approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire which must be placed in the enclosed envelope, sealed and returned to me by post or as arranged with you personally.

Thank you once again for your participation in this study. Your opinions, experiences and ideas are extremely valuable.

Sincerely

Nadeen Moolla
Lecturer and Educational Psychologist



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SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY PLACING AN X IN THE RELEVANT BLOCK/S OR WRITING DOWN YOUR ANSWER IN THE SPACE PROVIDED. YOUR ANONYMITY IS GUARANTEED.

This questionnaire consists of five sections namely, background information, school psychologists' key roles, school psychologists' involvement in school development, their experiences of working collaboratively with others, and the challenges they face in collaborating with others as they attempt to facilitate school development.

SECTION A: Background Information

This section of the questionnaire refers to background or biographical information. These questions provide information about you.

1) How old are you?

1	20 -29
---	--------

2	30 – 39
---	---------

3	40 – 49
---	---------

4	50 – 59
---	---------

5	60 – 69
---	---------

6	70 - 79
---	---------

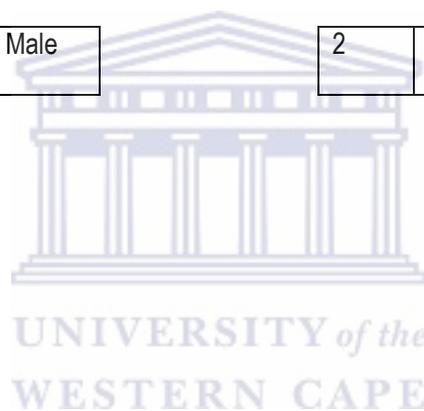
2) Gender

1	Male
---	------

2	Female
---	--------

3) Indicate the area you work in.

1	Rural
2	Urban
3	Both
4	Other



4) How many years have you been practising as a psychologist? _____

5) How many years have you been employed by the WCED as a school psychologist?

6) What is the highest qualification you have obtained?

1	Bachelor's degree (3 years)
2	Bachelor's degree in psychology or education (4 years)
3	Bachelor's degree + 1 year specialisation
4	Honours in Educational Psychology
5	Masters
6	Doctorate
7	Other (specify)

7) Are you registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa?

1	YES
---	-----

2	NO
---	----

8) If yes, please cross the category/categories within which you are registered

1	Educational Psychology
2	Counselling Psychology
3	Clinical Psychology
4	Research Psychology
5	Industrial Psychology
6	Registered Counsellor
7	Other category (specify)

9) Do you belong to a professional organisation?

1	YES
---	-----

2	NO
---	----

10) If yes, please state which one/s.

**SECTION B: Key roles played by school psychologists
(Main functions/activities of school psychologists)**

The questions in this section are designed to identify and describe the assessment and intervention activities that characterise school psychology practice in the Western Cape.

11) Please indicate the extent to which you employ the following assessment procedures in your work with learners, educators and schools by placing an X in the appropriate box.

11) Assessment Procedures		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
11.1	Interviews with learners	1	2	3	4
11.2	Interviews with parents	1	2	3	4
11.3	Interviews with educators	1	2	3	4
11.4	Interviews with SMT	1	2	3	4
11.5	Classroom observation	1	2	3	4
11.6	Observation of learners on the playground	1	2	3	4
11.7	Learner portfolio	1	2	3	4
11.8	Educator portfolio	1	2	3	4
11.9	Diagnostic psycho-educational assessment				
11.10	Standardised assessment instruments	1	2	3	4
11.11	Informal assessment	1	2	3	4
11.12	Needs analysis / Situation Analysis / SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) analysis	1	2	3	4
11.13	Dynamic assessment	1	2	3	4
11.14	Whole school evaluation	1	2	3	4
11.15	Other (please specify):	1	2	3	4

12) Please indicate the extent to which you employ the following intervention strategies in your work with learners, educators and schools by placing an X in the appropriate box.

12) Intervention strategies		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
12.1	Individual counselling / therapy with learners	1	2	3	4
12.2	Individual counselling / therapy with educators	1	2	3	4
12.3	Individual counselling / therapy with parents	1	2	3	4
12.4	Group counselling / therapy with learners	1	2	3	4
12.5	Group counselling / therapy with educators	1	2	3	4
12.6	Group counselling / therapy with parents	1	2	3	4
12.7	Family therapy	1	2	3	4
12.8	Parent education	1	2	3	4
12.9	Development of Individual Educational Development Plans (IEDP)	1	2	3	4
12.10	Learning support, e.g. developing learners' basic academic skills	1	2	3	4
12.11	Referral to special schools and other support structures and agencies	1	2	3	4
12.12	Crisis intervention, e.g. trauma debriefing	1	2	3	4
12.13	Providing assistance to Life Orientation educators	1	2	3	4
12.14	Providing assistance to learning support educators	1	2	3	4
12) Intervention strategies (continued)		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
12.15	Supervising intern psychologists	1	2	3	4
12.16	Learner progression and promotion	1	2	3	4
12.17	Moderation				
12.18	Other(please specify):	1	2	3	4



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SECTION C: School psychologists' involvement in school development

13) What do you understand by school development?

- 14) Please indicate the extent to which you are involved in the following school development activities by placing an X in the appropriate box. Please add any that have not been listed here.

14) School development interventions		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
14.1	Organisation development, e.g. developing and supporting systems and structures that enhance the quality of education provided by the school	1	2	3	4
14.2	Assist with development of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)	1	2	3	4
14.3	Policy development and implementation at school level	1	2	3	4
14.4	Consultation with Senior Management Team and/or Principal (discussions that assist in addressing challenges faced at the school)	1	2	3	4
14.5	Consultation with educators (discussions that assist in dealing with challenges faced in the classroom)	1	2	3	4
14.6	Support educators with curriculum adaptation, curriculum development and/or curriculum delivery	1	2	3	4
14.7	Assist in the development of classroom management strategies	1	2	3	4
14.8	Leadership training with SMT, SGB, educators and/or learners	1	2	3	4
14.9	Contribute to professional development of educators e.g. conduct workshops for educators, teaching positive behaviour strategies.	1	2	3	4
14) School development interventions (continued)		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
14.10	Contribute to personal development of educators, e.g. support, counselling, mentoring.	1	2	3	4
14.11	Facilitate conflict management with learners and/or educators	1	2	3	4
14.12	Parental guidance and education, e.g. workshops, talks, seminars	1	2	3	4
14.13	Group psycho-educational-social interventions with learners e.g. workshops on lifeskills, study skills, career guidance, etc	1	2	3	4
14.14	Programme development and implementation within the school e.g. drug abuse, discipline, behaviour management, HIV/AIDS, sexuality, etc.	1	2	3	4
14.15	Support and develop ILSTs / ESTs (Education Support Teams)	1	2	3	4
14.16	Consultation with Education Support Teams (ESTs / ILSTs)	1	2	3	4
14.17	Facilitate development of school-community partnerships	1	2	3	4
14.18	Consultation with colleagues at circuit /district level	1	2	3	4
14.19	Other (please specify):	1	2	3	4

- 15) As a school psychologist, indicate with an X what percentage of your time is spent on school development activities such as those outlined in question 2 above?

1	Less than 10%	2	10 – 29%	3	30 – 49%
4	50 – 69%	5	70 – 89%	6	Above 90%

SECTION D: School development through intersectoral collaboration

The questions in this section refer to your experience of working in a team or in partnership with others in order to develop schools. It focuses on interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, interprofessional and intersectoral efforts you have been involved in when facilitating school development.

- 16) In the context of the above definition and your participation in the focus group, what do you understand by intersectoral collaboration?

17) Are school psychologists expected to work with other sectors and professionals when they facilitate the development of schools? Please place an X in the appropriate box

1	YES
---	-----

2	NO
---	----

18) If yes, which individuals, groups and/or organisations do you collaborate with?

	18) Who we collaborate with	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
18.1	Circuit Team Manager	1	2	3	4
18.2	Curriculum advisors	1	2	3	4
18.3	IMG advisors	1	2	3	4
18.4	School nurses	1	2	3	4
18.5	Therapists (OT, Physio, Speech and Language, etc)	1	2	3	4
18.6	Social Workers	1	2	3	4
18.7	Learning support educators	1	2	3	4
18.8	Educators	1	2	3	4
18.9	Representative Council of Learners (RCLs)	1	2	3	4
18.10	School Governing Bodies	1	2	3	4
18.11	Parents	1	2	3	4
18.12	Lay counsellors	1	2	3	4
18.13	Community organisations (including NGOs and religious organisations)	1	2	3	4
18.14	Hospitals and clinics	1	2	3	4
18.15	SAPS	1	2	3	4
18.16	Other state departments (e.g. Labour, Justice, etc)	1	2	3	4
18.17	Pre-schools	1	2	3	4
18.18	Universities	1	2	3	4
18.19	FET Colleges	1	2	3	4
18.20	Other (specify)	1	2	3	4

19) Explain **how** school psychologists work with others in facilitating school development. What is the nature of the teamwork and collaboration when engaging in **school development**?

20) What percentage of your time would you say is spent working collaboratively with other role players to facilitate school development?

1	Less than 10%
---	---------------

2	10 – 29%
---	----------

3	30 – 49%
---	----------

4	50 – 69%
---	----------

5	70 – 89%
---	----------

6	Above 90%
---	-----------

SECTION E: Challenges facing school psychologists

This section explores the challenges experienced by you as you collaborate with others and facilitate school development

21) What challenges have you faced as a school psychologist when **facilitating school development?** (Indicate the extent to which the following issues constitute a challenge for you by placing an X in the appropriate box)

21) Challenges facing school psychologists who facilitate school development		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
21.1	Stereotyped views of what school psychologists have to offer (e.g. schools expect medical model approach)	1	2	3	4
21.2	Lack of clarity regarding the job description of school psychologists	1	2	3	4
21.3	Job description is too wide	1	2	3	4
21.4	Made to assume responsibilities unrelated to training and expertise as psychologists	1	2	3	4
21.5	Limited understanding of the role school psychologists can play in school development	1	2	3	4
21.6	Low acceptance/status of school psychology as a profession	1	2	3	4
21.7	Too few school psychologists	1	2	3	4
21.8	Insufficient training, expertise and experience to facilitate school development	1	2	3	4
21.9	Insufficient time to conduct assigned responsibilities	1	2	3	4
21.10	Office space impacts negatively on ability to provide service effectively e.g. confidentiality	1	2	3	4
21.11	Lack of financial resources to properly fund services to be delivered	1	2	3	4
21.12	Lack of stability in the educational system, e.g. too many education reforms	1	2	3	4
21.13	Education policy challenges e.g. lack of common understanding of policy interpretation by schools, district and province	1	2	3	4
21.14	School development a long term process	1	2	3	4
21.15	Schools lacking motivation to engage in school development	1	2	3	4
21.16	Other (please specify):	1	2	3	4

22) What challenges have you experienced when you have **worked collaboratively** with other sectors and professionals in the development of schools?

22) Challenges facing school psychologists in working with others/in a team context to facilitate school development		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
22.1	Goals for school development not common or shared	1	2	3	4
22.2	Education support not seen as a priority within the education system	1	2	3	4
22.3	Personal dynamics (e.g. confidence, competence, assertiveness, self-esteem of the individuals involved, etc.)	1	2	3	4
22.4	School psychologists do not have a voice in the transformation process in the province or district	1	2	3	4
22.5	Interpersonal dynamics (e.g. trust, communication, conflict, power relations, etc)	1	2	3	4
22.6	Senior management attitude towards school psychologists and services they have to offer	1	2	3	4
22.7	Work of school psychologists not appreciated and valued	1	2	3	4
22.8	Poor co-ordination and management of support provided to schools	1	2	3	4
22.9	Collaboration within circuit teams not co-ordinated and managed effectively (control as opposed to management)	1	2	3	4
22.10	Lack of clarity re roles and functions of various stakeholders	1	2	3	4
22.11	Blurring of professional boundaries	1	2	3	4
22.12	Perceptions that collaboration implies "equality" and therefore little opportunity to assert specialisation or expertise (teamwork="generalist" work)	1	2	3	4
22.13	Few opportunities to confer with colleagues within the circuit team	1	2	3	4
22.14	Few opportunities to confer with SNE/SLES colleagues within the district	1	2	3	4
22.15	Little feedback after referral, quality of service provided by other sectors uncertain	1	2	3	4
22.16	Lack of common understanding of what teamwork or collaboration entails in terms of maximising benefit for schools	1	2	3	4
22.17	Financial and other resource challenges	1	2	3	4
22.18	Other(please specify):	1	2	3	4

23) How can the challenges that you have noted above be addressed?

24) Indicate which of the following in-service training courses would enhance your work as a school psychologist who works with others in facilitating school development. Please make an X in the box to indicate your professional development needs.

	Professional training needs	YES	NO
24.1	School development (definition, theory and practice, role of school psychologists, etc)	1	2
24.2	Intersectoral collaboration (How to work effectively with other sectors, disciplines, professionals, stakeholders, etc)	1	2
24.3	Consultation with teachers, parents, other professionals, etc	1	2
24.4	Facilitating workshops for parents, teachers, learners, etc.	1	2
24.5	Understanding and facilitating group dynamics	1	2
24.6	School psychology as community psychology	1	2
24.7	Understanding and implementing policy that impacts on school psychology practice	1	2
24.8	How school psychology can enhance the quality of teaching and learning	1	2
24.8	Other(please specify):	1	2

Thank you for your co-operation in completing this questionnaire. Your contribution is highly appreciated. Kindly place the completed questionnaire in the envelope provided, seal and return to me by post or as arranged with you personally.

Kind regards
Nadeen Moolla

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0217612445 (home)
0219592927 (work)
nmoolla@uwc.ac.za

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Woodlands Park
7780

