

## **Untying the knots of dual pedagogical interfacing of teachers' exertion in a full service school**

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### **Abstract**

*The dawn of democracy in 1994 in South Africa addressed the agonising and controversial education of the apartheid era by creating a single regulatory body to deal with state schools. However, transferred incongruences and complexities have directly affected management and control at government schools by creating a picture-perfect teaching and learning model. There has been an understandable absence of valuing learning differences and diversity; this valuing needs to be uniformly aligned to human rights, social justice and equity issues, as enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. In this ethnographic study, knots are untangled to reveal the instructional practices of teachers working in a full service school (FSS). The balancing act of simultaneously schooling mainstream learners and learners experiencing intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning is interrogated. In this interpretative ethnographic topological approach, the portrayal of untying the taut knots (a derivative from Wittgenstein's view) is unravelled in the capacities of teachers at Lighthouse Full Service School<sup>1</sup>. The depiction of their multidimensional exertion is presented to highlight the encumbrances that teachers at FSSs experience. Reconfiguring the work of teachers at FSSs will create opportunities for further research in teaching and learning.*

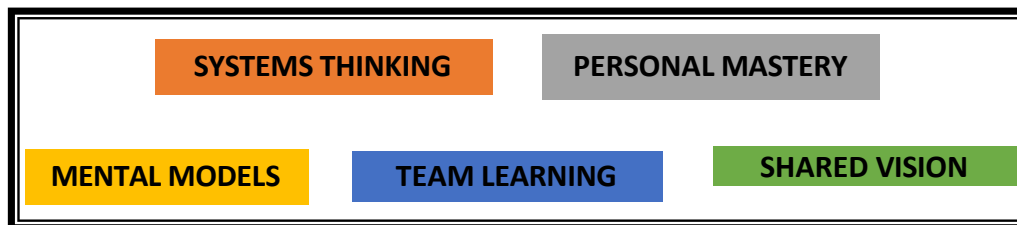
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### **Introduction**

A full service school (FSS) can be defined as a learning organisation which resonates with systems theory. Three philosophers have contributed their meaning to this conceptual framework. Learning organisation fits seamlessly with Senge's (1990) model of the five disciplines. This study concurs with Senge's philosophies of the five disciplines of a learning organisation.

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<sup>1</sup>A pseudonym is used to protect an anonymous image of the actual school and their staff.



*Figure 1: Adapted from Senge's (1990) model: The five disciplines of a learning organisation*

Being a learning organisation, an FSS should be both appreciated and developed (Kirschner, 2015; Phala & Hugo, 2022; Sampaio & Leite, 2018). Second, Senge (1990, p. 14) sums up a learning organisation as being “continually expanding its capacity to create its future”.

This is reiterated by Hornby (2015) and Leithwood and Aitken (1995, p. 63) who describe a learning organisation as a group of people following common purposes (individual purposes as well) with a collective commitment to recurrently weighing the significance of those purposes, modifying them when that makes sense, and continuously developing effective and efficient ways of accomplishing those purposes.

Third, the most commonly known elements of a learning organisation can be seen as synchronised group effort concerning commonly shared goals; active obligation to continuous improvement and the dissemination of best practices throughout the organisation; horizontal linkages of information flow to beneficially bring expertise together, as well as associations with the external world; and, the ability to understand, analyse and use the dynamic system within which they are functioning (Keating, 1995; Salend, 2011; Vainker & Bailey, 2018).

Stemming from the theoretical underpinnings of a learning organisation, the researcher will continue to expand on the actualities of an FSS. At the outset, the researcher will briefly describe an FSS to strengthen the underpinning of this discourse of the compound work demands; this is done to identify requirements for simultaneously providing mainstream teaching and inclusive education.<sup>2</sup> This is necessary because the regulatory system presumes that teachers will adapt and adjust their teaching to perform the curriculum demands according to that of FSS. Despite the additional demands, teachers at FSSs are not handpicked to handle

<sup>2</sup>Inclusive Education is provisions within mainstream class to deal with the existent diverse needs of its learners.

It is the inclusion of persons with disability into the mainstream education system.

the multi-layered demands; yet, in terms of rank and monetary advantages, authorities measure the professional proficiency of these teachers in the same way as any other is assessed teacher in South Africa (Min, Jeffery & Chen, 2017).

This interpretative ethnographic portrayal of the work of teachers in an FSS discloses the complexity and demanding nature of expected performance as outlined by education watchdogs. South African schools have espoused inclusive education, a neocolonial education plan that is embedded in the education policies and a road map of Euro-American countries from the Global North. The Walton (2018) study uses the lens of inclusive education as the fundamental goal of the South African Constitution to embrace inclusion, social justice and equal citizenship from an Afrocentric perspective that hones transformation in education. The transformative process of creating several policies like the Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) (2001) and Guidelines for Full Service/Inclusive Education Schools (2014) developed by the government were intended to provide equal education opportunities to all children in South Africa—and this means so much more in an FSS.

The introduction of inclusive education into mainstream schools means that teaching must incorporate learners with a wide array of educational needs. Barriers to learning refer to any factors, both intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external) to the learner, that cause interference with that learner's ability to benefit from the teaching design. This paper sets out to interrogate the multifaceted and multidimensional roles teachers at FSSs have to undertake to ensure that, from policy to practice, inclusive education meets with the regulatory policies set out to address the needs of learners with learning challenges (Landsberg, Kruger & Swart, 2014; Phala & Hugo, 2022;).

### **Setting the scene**

In this portrayal of the work of teachers at an FSS in South Africa, the multifaceted knots of actual work are untied to define the subtleties of what the actual teaching entails. The new transformational education approach changed the face of education after ushering in democracy in 1994. In keeping with one of the cornerstones of the Constitution of South Africa in 1996—that quality education is provided for all learners—a new curriculum dispensation of inclusive education was initiated. This was designed to cater for the inclusion (in the mainstream

education system) of learners with disabilities<sup>3</sup> (Applesamy, 2018; Makhalemele & Payne-Van Staden, 2015). Inclusive education is about shifting awareness and organisation of school systems and environments, placing greater emphasis on diversity of learning needs and capabilities. Be that as it may, two major elements were not taken into account by the doyens of democracy. First, our new democracy inherited a labour force that varied in terms of the quality of pedagogical training, and second, not all teachers had inclusive education backgrounds to cater for their learners with multiple diversity. Deepening this deficit is the considerable differences in mainstream versus FSS in teaching and learning transactions (Skosana, 2018).

Teachers at an FSS are duty-bound to face complex subtleties of inclusion among learners in their classrooms. Inclusive education has its roots embedded in international policies that address the inclusion of learners and the right to education. Two articles in The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, European Convention on Human Rights and inclusive education were illuminated in *Education for All* commitment launched in 2005 by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). The Guidelines for Inclusion report stated of inclusive education that:

It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children". (UNESCO, 2005, p. 14).

This reinforced the idea that learners with disabilities should not be excluded socially. They must also be treated equally. Teachers at FSSs in South Africa are thus obligated to immerse themselves in a learning situation that is multifaceted, diverse and demanding. These teachers not only have to engage in interdependent collaborative interactions for curriculum delivery but socio-emotional needs have to be addressed as well (Applesamy, 2018; Skosana, 2018). The underlying expectation from regulatory watchdogs is to provide pedagogical support (inter-reliant dependence) via a variety of coordinated activities.

This occurs only if the School-Based Support Team (SBST) and the District-Based Support Team (DBST) work in partnership to ensure that learners that are facing barriers to learning are given exclusive support/back-up through an inclusive education compendium. This provision resonates with the Education for All strategy that is highlighted in O’Riordan (2020); this becomes a compass because it stimulates a wide range of learners’ needs that are addressed by their teachers.

The ultimate engagement between teachers, educational stakeholders and parents (including the respective undertakings by these role players) is indeed unpredictably diverse (Phala & Hugo, 2022). Teachers in an FSS have to succumb to a vast difference in their professional execution of teaching whereby government/Department of Basic Education (DBE) has a detailed programme to deal with the variety of dynamics forces to make up the special needs that require instantaneous appraisal and assessment from constant feedback to government and senior management (Applesamy, 2018). Teachers at FSSs are compelled to strategise suitably with crucial aspects unique to each school in terms of operation to meet the punctuated demands of teaching and learning that fluctuate immensely on a daily basis (Conway, 2017). According to Donahue & Bornman (2014) teachers on the staff of an FSS have to intensify their planning, motivation of learners and engagements with colleagues by constructing a productive learning community in both the mainstream CAPS demands as well as incorporating or introducing an individualised creative inclusive and multi-levelled learning programme. Strategic planning in an FSS is no easy task or undertaking since “a one-size-fits- all “approach will be inappropriate. A teaching design and the stance of leadership have to be created and recreated as varying needs and demands from learners require an individualised support plan or programme to cater for the inclusive and diverse needs of every learner under the teaching microscope. Teaching designs and leadership perspective, in a conventional government school, is exclusive to teachers; essentially to their work situation as explained lengthily by Maharaj (2019). This capacity for FSS teachers is far greater. The combination of dissimilar instruction styles differ from classroom to classroom as well as school to school. Mastery to strike a harmonious answer to find a balance between teaching and learning in each classroom situation becomes challenging (Phala & Hugo, 2022). The knots that exist in an FSS classroom are multifaceted and demanding. However, scrutiny serves as a dual pedagogical encumbrance for teachers at an FSS.

The loosened knots demonstrate how inclusive education is immersed in the classroom which serves as a dual pedagogical encumbrance for teachers at an FSS. Later in this paper, the evidence depicts how teachers adjust and adapt their pedagogy to suit the requirement of FSS from their perceptions of buy-in to the demands of the DBE.

### **Purpose of study**

This study sets out to explore the subtleties of teachers executing the CAPS curriculum in a state FSS in KwaZulu-Natal. It explicitly draws attention to the interchangeable interplay of mainstream and inclusive education teaching flair and procedure.

The construction of this study mirrors the McGregor (2003) study that stresses the importance of not taking the workspaces of teachers for granted. The emphasis in this study finds mutual foundation in my pointing out that FSS is not a fixed/self-reliant entity but it is an institution that is constantly shaped by intersecting both mainstream and inclusive education interactions and practices.

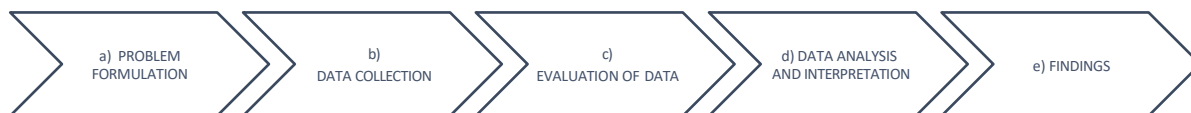
### **Research questions**

1. What does your work at an FSS entail?
2. How do you cope with the curriculum demands at an FSS?
3. Why do you work the way that you do at an FSS?

### **Methodological insights**

The study is located within a qualitative interpretative ethnographic context in which an FSS was purposively targeted. The targeted institution is a public school, namely Lighthouse Full Service School (LFSS) situated in the Umlazi District in KwaZulu-Natal; the school has become an important case in that it serves both mainstream learning and those experiencing learning barriers.

Information was drawn from informal interviews, focus group interviews, and document analysis. The method of this study adheres to the five stages of the integrative review process that were articulated by Cooper (1982). These stages sequentially unfold from the problem formulation; data collection; evaluation and data analysis and interpretation; and presentation of results. Cooper illustrates the integrative research review as a type of research that synthesises and condenses by separating empirical findings into a lucid whole.



*Figure 2: Integrative review process, adapted from Cooper (1982)*

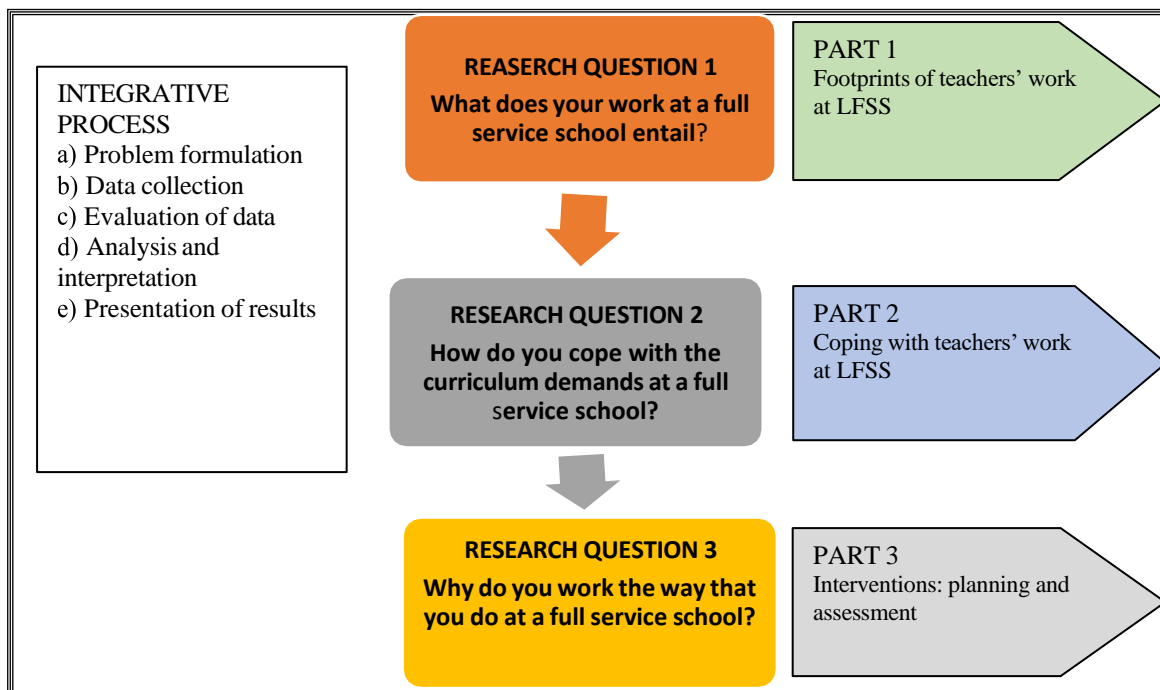
The data that underpinned the study came from ten qualified teachers and a teacher assistant that have served at LFSS for between two and twenty-seven years. Because staff members at LFSS have experience at the institution from before the change of status, teachers volunteered to participate in semi-structured interviews to provide hands-on feedback. Exactly as stated by Donohue & Bornman (2014), not all the teachers had received formal inclusive education training. Some responses from the participants shed light on the complexity and multidimensionality of tasks positioned at FSSs that result in resentment and uncertainty in the execution of their duties.

The participants that wished to remain anonymous contributed to this study by pointing out their experiences at this particular school through the set of questions that was probed to gain insight into the dynamics of the teaching software at LFSS.

### **Research design**

The response to the three research questions forms the nub of the discussion that untangles the realities of being directly involved in FSSs. The focus questions all aimed at unfolding the learning dynamics of organisations to flesh out the typology of the workplace space at LFSS. The school is submerged in a community that serves learners that come from impoverished households; in recognition of this, the learners are provided with hot meals at school.

The teachers have to negotiate their engagement on work practice through ongoing interaction with both learners and teachers. It is during the feeding scheme that the researcher thus managed to engage in interactions with different teachers and learners without disrupting teaching and learning. The diagram below highlights how each research question unties the knots of what it means to teach in an FSS. Each research question forms one part of the discussion together with the themes that emanated from the focus group discussions. The themes are accountability, policies and laws, incidental work, time at work and work on time.



*Figure 3: Research design*

In this article, the researcher pursued an in-depth engagement with teachers to explore practices at LFSS in which participants drew narratives from their actual work experiences. Figure 3 gives an insight into what it means to work at LFSS, a reputable school that is fully involved in catering for learners that have diverse learning needs. The participants provided impetus for teachers that work with learners in a diverse classroom; with the information provided explaining the multiple tasks and accountability that rest on the shoulders of a teacher at an FSS as described by Makhalemele & Payne-Van Staden (2017). A description and mapping of the balance of interactions undertaken by teachers in their LFSS classrooms (where diverse needs of learners are addressed) is provided. This heightens understanding of the dynamics of how an FSS differs from a typical mainstream school. The tendencies and differences among the agents of change employed in classroom management by the DBE are uncovered and revealed in three parts. First, Part 1 addresses the footprints of work at LFSS; Part 2 then determines how teachers cope with their work at LFFs, and finally, Part 3 evaluates the intervention at LFSS in terms of planning, organisation and assessments.



### **What the footprints of work at an FSS entail**

'According to Phala & Hugo (2022); Min, Jeffery & Chen (2017) and Makhalemele & Payne Van Staden (2015)', the works of teachers at FSSs is set out using intricate guidelines to address human rights social justice and inequality with a particular focus on moving away from exclusive teaching methods to an inclusive education approach of addressing learners that experience intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external) barriers that have an impact on their learning (Min, Jeffery & Chen, 2017; Makhalemele & Payne-Van Staden, 2015; Phala & Hugo, 2022).

Teacher 1 from the focus group explained what is needed to meet the obligations of curriculum demands. The demands are related to tight time frames and the “multiple barriers” that hamper progress on completing tasks on time because not all learners grasp concepts satisfactorily so as to allow the lesson to progress and for lesson objectives to be fulfilled.

According to other participants, teaching and re-teaching also creates timing backlogs; therefore, completing the curriculum becomes a mammoth task.

As a teacher I...(hmm) find that I have to do more than just teach the work...that is set for the actual lesson material...I have to work with learners that have...multiple barriers and difficulties...just grasping simple aspects of the curriculum. (Teacher 1, Umlazi District, May 2019).

Similarly, Khan et al. (2017) in their work undertaken in Pakistan found that FSSs do not train teachers sufficiently to handle the multiple difficulties in their classrooms. These sentiments are expanded on by Min, Jeffery and Chen (2017) in the context of their work in the United States and Applesamy (2018) in the South African context. These authors set out to fathom out how teachers have to adapt and adjust their skills to address their learners who are not grasping content within the set time frames.

To facilitate the mastering of skills that are demanding for learners who find learning skills and concepts difficult (and who express frustration at times when their assessment results are poor), the time allocated to tasks is expanded. The reaction from Participant 1 unties the knot of dual pedagogical instruction that requires the teacher to blend in systems thinking, personal mastery and a shared vision of how to make teaching meaningful for the learners at LFSS. Kirschner (2015) and Ojageer (2019) describe the exact sentiment, referring to this adjustment as a “flexible” support structure for learners.

Participant 7 expressed a new challenge of dual pedagogy in terms of curriculum adaptation to CAPS (National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement) at LFSS from the foundation to intermediate phase; the policy has required adherence to principles and demands for inclusive education. Concern regarding curriculum demands is raised by Phala & Hugo (2022); this is echoed by Participant 7 (see quote below), in terms of teaching literacy to Grade 3 learners:

I try to brainstorm...as many ways to teach my learners because the transition from one phase to the next...is also challenging. What makes the nature of my teaching difficult is actually preparing the learners...to switch from a mother tongue (isiZulu) medium of instruction in the foundation years to a first additional language as the medium of instruction. Not only is the language a challenge...but the problem that begins is that now three more subjects are introduced with the new FAL...[First Additional Language, English] as a means of interaction and communication. (Participant 7)

The critical step envisaged by the DBE to strengthen and transform education as early as possible is not adequately supported with interventions that address barriers to learning and development at FSSs.

Other participants concurred with Participant 7 and explained how they use mental models of adjusted teaching strategies to get the learners to understand and grasp the content being taught. Both in the case of the teacher and learner, personal mastery of adaptation to the learning barriers has to intertwine innovative systems thinking to allow the teacher/learner to become accustomed to the transition from the foundation phase to the intermediate phase.

However, Participant 3 went on to state that having an assistant teacher coming into their classes once a week did very little to improve the already difficult situation of having overcrowded classes. In trying to find the simplest way to get a message across, Participant 10 explained that the demands on methodological adjustments also made teaching difficult and “multifactorial”.

(As a) teacher assistant, partnering with (class) teachers... once a week ...I help slow learners with cognitive barriers get support. To achieve better results and building their (learner) confidence towards school work. (Teacher 3, Umlazi District, May 2019) The inclusive education syllabus needs more teaching time especially when we have differentiated teaching methods applied in the very lesson. The diversity in terms of

learner development have to satisfy and teaching programmes have to be tailored to suit all learners. I find this a challenge and very tough. When management has short deadlines for final assessments the pressure of keeping up is very multifactorial. (Participant 10)

The above evidence from other participants besides Participants 3 and 10 is explicitly described by Hornby (2015); they state that teaching at an FSS includes a wide range of disciplines and offerings supplemented by related research and methods that informing evidence-based preparation (p. 10).

Other teachers at LFSS indicated that there are instances where teaching strategies interface with teaching and learning at a level of interaction beyond the execution of a “one-size-fits-all” curriculum model. The teachers teaching the same grade have to follow a different approach and most of the time move at a slower pace than subordinate colleagues. This makes assessment programmes difficult, and these teachers are therefore forced to create an innovative and suitable personalised approach to dealing with the various cases, engaging in team learning, constructing mental modes of teaching and a creating a shared vision. These approaches are blended to make teaching meaningful for learners at LFSS. This innovative approach is expanded on by Ojageer (2019), who also describes this assimilation of additional support from either the parameters of the teacher within the class or getting additional support from within and outside the school becomes necessary to meet the demands of learners that have diverse learning needs.

Participant 6 gave insight into the rapid changes in their work, adding that their teaching has undergone rapid changes and transitions over the years. Their contributions to the focus group shed light on the interactions in support structures and professional learning communities. This significant sphere of influence at LFSS results in teachers executing “progressive“ practices that serve and address the needs of learners with diverse educational requirements.

The day-to-day activities of individualised support become ever-changing because each learner has different learning potential. As a teacher, I have to adjust according to the learner and not the curriculum expectation. (Teacher 6, Umlazi District, May 2019)  
There are various policies from internal and external stakeholders which has obligatory implications therefore as a teacher there is no compromise but to re-plan and adjust to enforce the changes. (Teacher 8, Umlazi District, May 2019)

There are obligations from our senior management and department officials that needs to be carried out. As the teacher in charge of such a learner, I have no choice but to implement the rules. (Teacher 11, Umlazi District, May 2019)

According to Salend (2011), in the four key principles addressing inclusive education, mention is made of networking and collaboration being essential to dealing on the one hand with learners experiencing barriers, and on the other hand, teaching staff that cannot cope with the volume of work. This strategy—rooted in the global space—informs the interventions sought by Participants 6, 8 and 11. The latter participants confidently expressed that their teaching had to extend beyond the classroom and it was imperative to get external agencies involved.

Responses from participants 6, 8 and 11, highlight open systems thinking being incorporated into classroom workspaces where teachers adopt personal mastery through collaboration and team learning. The strengthening of their mental models and a shared vision from the experiences of other teachers make their work effective in meeting the demands of the CAPS policy set out for FSS.

The changing face of FSS is reassuring but teachers at LFSS vented their concerns about the divergent streams required to cater simultaneously for mainstream learners and learners experiencing learning difficulties.

The reworking of their teaching strategies results in bloating of the auxiliary workload demands of teachers at an FSS. Khan et al. (2017) and Skosana (2018) concur with Participants 6, 8 and 11 in that connections enable collaborative teaching strategies to emerge that can address the challenges and workload pressures experienced by teachers at an FSS.

The second part of the discussion extends the argument on how the footprint explored above is negotiated by teachers at LFSS.

### **Coping with challenges at Lighthouse Full Service School**

As previously mentioned, not all teachers at LFSS are formally trained in the inclusive education necessary for implementing the regulatory demands; simply because these teachers were members of staff when it was a typical state primary school, they were absorbed into the new curriculum adopted by the DBE. Teachers at LFSS have confirmed that preliminary training was offered to them to introduce the requirements of screening learners with special needs but induction for new staff has been inadequate. Hence it becomes the role of the SBST

and school management team to diligently implement policies set out for FSS.

The supporting information from a teacher in Umlazi indicates the encounters and difficulties they withstand in keeping up with the rapid pace and relentless shifts.

In order to feel satisfied as a teacher I have to make an added effort to ensure I address the cognitive, social and emotional development in terms of the growth of each learner placed under my care. (Teacher 1, Umlazi District, May 2019)

Workshops that are done within a fraction of the day sets out great volumes of new materials which has to be enforced promptly. (Teacher 5, Umlazi District, May 2019)

There are various policies from internal and external stakeholders which has obligatory implications therefore as a teacher there is no compromise but to re-plan and adjust to enforce the changes. (Participant 9)

The above retorts from three of the participants are aligned to the work of Min, et al. (2017) and Phala and Hugo (2022) who note how curriculum changes have to be factored into the teaching style of the teachers. It cannot be doubted that an FSS continually adds strategies to expand techniques using systems thinking for holistic development of the learners under their care.

Adopting of individualised personal mastery by the teachers is aimed at catering for the needs of learners. Teachers also need to unlock strategies to meet curriculum demands to enable team learning, and achieve shared vision to make their work effective. As noted by participants in the focus group, working through great volumes of material requires FSS teachers to have suitable mental models to allow them to remain focused and respond to periodic adjustments in the curriculum.

The participants also identified the work changes that infringe on teaching plans. As a result of not adhering to the changes, teachers have further complications creeping into their professionalism; according to participant 7, it therefore becomes necessary to reconfigure their methodologies and viewpoints.

Researchers and academics are constantly making new findings and judgements and in order to improve our standards the officials choose to follow these academic suggestions to raise focus and engagements so that our performance amid the international arena is in par. (Teacher 6, Umlazi District, May 2019)

The change of curriculum demands and the top-up programmes introduced by the

subject specialists from the department of education. The strengthening course of action introduced from...District has to be followed accordingly, therefore as a teacher I have no choice but to keep up the newly formulated demands imposed on our schools at subject committee and cluster meetings. (Teacher 7, Umlazi District, May 2019)

The above concerns raised by Participants 6 and 7 as to how teaching at state-run LFSS is a juggling act of keeping up with the new regulatory demands has also been raised widely in the literature (O’Riordan, 2020; Pappas et al. 2018; Skosana, 2018). According to the latter authors, working in an FSS requires incorporating the systems thinking theory of Senge via adjustments to personal mastery skills, participation in professional learning committee meetings and receiving additional learning support. It also requires adaptation of mental mindset and development of shared vision to keep their focus on track to meet requisite burdens of the curriculum and the workload demands set by education watchdogs.

As the researcher listening to participants talk about keeping abreast of global archetypes, I tested the waters to find out if LFSS will be able to deal with the much-discussed Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). It is also evident that LFSS is lagging in the implementation of 4IR technologies. The school will have to readjust and realign to global change to suit the pace of the learners and the abilities of their learners. Although there was undoubted evidence that the participants were technologically savvy, this knowledge and the associated skills would take a long time to be incorporated into daily functioning and operations at LFSS. Some of the insightful responses from Participant 3 and Participant 6 were thought-provoking.

The 4IR is changing how we live, work and communicate. It’s also reshaping government, education, healthcare and commerce. Almost every aspect of life needs to adjust to these changes but our learners at this FSS have to become aware of technology and how it helps them study. This will be a very long-term process of being a teaching method that will be successful. (Teacher 3, Umlazi District, May 2019)

The 4IR message that is making great strides across the globe is not workable in our FSS because we have learners that have diverse learning needs. They have challenging setbacks to grasp the ordinary curriculum demands that are overwhelming. The introduction of technology to enhance their work will become very difficult and hard to achieve. 4IR is only workable if we are using it as an ISP (individualised support plan) for a few learners to make teaching and learning meaningful and fun to stimulate

learners that have cognitive barriers. The infrastructure and organisational arrangements for every learner will certainly pose a huge problem for the entire school cohort. (Teacher 6, Umlazi District, May 2019)

The above sentiments expressed in the focus group discussion directly align with the concerns of participants as discussed by Sampaio & Leite (2018) and Phala & Hugo (2022, p. 6) where (as mapped out by Senge) all five organisational demands are required to recreate and adjust LFSS to make teaching and learning real and productive. This untying of the knots of how teachers daily navigate the workspace describes the actual teaching programme.

The third and final part of the discussion extends understanding of what is entailed in the workspace pattern (of required interventions and assessments) of teachers at an FSS.

**Teacher interventions of planning and assessments at Lighthouse Full Service School** The experiences described by participants in this study (in terms of how interventions are created and recreated to meet demands and complex workloads at LFSS) directly lend themselves to the findings in literary discussion from Hornby (2015); Khan et al. (2017); Phala and Hugo (2022); Hornby (2018) and Khan, et al. (2017) and Makhalemele and Payne-Van Staden (2015). Participant 6 and Participant 11 succinctly described their experiences at LFSS but their positive responses to how they recreate and adapt their teaching send out a clear message—that is, teaching and learning at this school are carried out productively and effectively—for at no point did any participant state that they disregarded work demands.

As a head of the grade, I am expected to assist my peers in times when problems arise during class time. I am forced to master the art of problem-solving so that I help the majority that is really battling to cope with the volume of work expected at their grade level. I have to make a really great effort to support not only the teachers but some serious problems that the learners give their class teacher. (Teacher 6, Umlazi District, May 2019)

I have been trained in Exclusive Education and I can see how it is required in LFSS therefore I want to pass on enough information to my learners so that education can be superior in terms of interaction and confidence. (Teacher 6, Umlazi District, May 2019)

The forthcoming generation needs to be confident and capable of handling the challenges of the world. I want to always give my learners all the information and confidence to make them powerful and great leaders who will be of value to the nation.

(Teacher 11, Umlazi District, May 2019)

The participants that stated their concerns and explained how they fit into teaching at an FSS have also raised the concerns of Applesamy (2018); Khan et al. (2017) and Skosana (2018)—that teaching at an FSS certainly requires teaching and learning that is different and demanding. It also requires a continual search for coping strategies and styles to make a difference for learners experiencing barriers to their learning process.

The above three responses from the participants confirmed to me that Senge's five systems of thinking fit seamlessly to adjusting personal mastery, enhancing team learning, reconfiguring mental attitudes and building on shared values to untie the knots of planning and assessments that are applicable in terms of the type of work that teachers undertake at an FSS.

The reassuring opinions from the participants coerced me to further enquire about why those strategies were suitable to the agents of educational transformation as the participants themselves at LFSS on the whole are careful about choosing strategies. Their answers concurred with Phala and Hugo (2022) and Min, Jeffery and Chen (2017) and will certainly give another teacher some ideas of the dimensions of creativities that teachers at LFSS apply to their teaching and learning situation as described by Participants 2, 3, 5, 10 and 11:

This type of strategy will make our community become strong and productive in the great space of life. (Teacher 5, Umlazi District, May 2019)

My strategy is my branding and I will like to be an exemplary role model that will make my community proud of the achievements of my learners. (Teacher 10, Umlazi District, May 2019)

My strategies are adapted and fine tunes from me constantly getting fresh information and abiding to the laws and policies therefore I know that my learners are always receiving the best they can. These learners depend on the school to grow them. They will lead SA [South Africa] when we are no more. (Teacher 11, Umlazi District, May 2019)

Because it is working for me and it is a good way to conquer whatever may come my way. (Teacher 2, Umlazi District, May 2019)



To change South African Education system. To make our nation a leading nation.

(Teacher 3, Umlazi District, May 2019)

The idea of close-knit communities, parental support and involvement and networks beyond the family as elaborated by Min, Anderson and Chen (2017, p. 30) and Applesamy (2018) explains cognitive and social mediation for constructing an enhanced level of sense-making of coping at an FSS.

In terms of Senge's systems thinking of a shared vision, one cannot disregard how teachers have to continually make use of mediation as a model of learning arguably moving an educator's role from provider of knowledge to learning facilitator, as the learner becomes self-regulated, independent, and creative. Systems thinking is a road map where a shared vision, mental fitness and collaborative learning go hand in glove to make teaching effective at an FSS. As I was unravelling and untying the knots found in the feedback of these participants I resolved that teaching can constitute one of many things; for agents of the state employed to undertake this vital basic need, the implementation of regulatory demands can also diverge from school to school. The dual pedagogical loyalty from teachers at LFSS allows for a degree of comfort that additional work is ongoing but the endurance from teachers is different at FSSs as opposed to mainstream schools.

Besides the concerns from LFSS participants provided above, further trepidation emanated from participants. To give FSSs the desired impetus to redress the inequalities of the apartheid era under the democratic transformation process requires intervention from relevant stakeholders. Without holding back, teachers expressed their unhappiness with what they viewed as the unrealistically light learners-to-staff ratios/staff composition at their schools which created difficulties when physically impaired learners were not catered for, unlike in other state schools that have such learners. The large class sizes emerged as a subject that has been disregarded by education authorities, yet it has a significant impact on the way that teachers spend their time on tasks (and struggle to complete tasks on time) at LFSS.

The accounts given by Participants 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9 shed light on the organisation and assessments of interventions adopted by teachers at LFSS.

There are so many learners with such diverse needs that I have to attend to and the assistance that I receive is minimal or nothing at all when the teacher assistant is not available. (Teacher 5, Umlazi District, May 2019)

If only I had a teacher assistant given to me in my large class of 49 learners I think I will make a large difference to the type of output in my service delivery. (Teacher 9, Umlazi District, May 2019)

The management of an LFSS is always adding new ideas and methods of coping with the two streams of learning at school. Mainstream demands from CAPS is synchronised with SNA [Support Needs Assessment] learners and their demands. Sometimes I really don't know which one to focus on. Although it's exciting and different I feel that each class should have a teacher assistant to keep all the vital records and activities according to national and provincial norms and standards. (Teacher 6, Umlazi District, May 2019)

I have to constantly switch my attention to moving forward with those that grasp the concepts and work but in a short space of time within the very same period I have to cater for those learners that have different learning abilities to be added in the tasks and activities. (Teacher 8, Umlazi District, May 2019)

As a teacher assistant I had to [manage] 16 classes in a week doing a wide range of learner needs with a governing body salary (R1000 per month). (Teacher 2, Umlazi District, May 2019)

The EWP6 spells out the requirements for teachers on how to deal with learners experiencing barriers to learning at state schools. The DBE (2010) indicates what is envisioned from FSSs and Vainker and Bailey (2018) heighten the reality of what inclusive education means (and how interpretations are not uniform); this can explain how teachers have to adhere to policies without first gaining a proper understanding of such policies something that presents a challenge to best. Hence, the execution of the inclusive education curriculum becomes difficult to explain from an inter-agency perspective, yet at an intra-agency level such as at LFSS, teaching and learning are ongoing.

The participants themselves have not only opted to execute the CAPS curriculum in the way that they choose to meet the demands of the state and DBE but also to ensure that learners with

barriers to learning are accommodated concurrently with mainstream learners in their classes. This type of provision and overhaul comes at the expense of teachers utilising their systems thinking or interpretation of the own personal mastery skills as well as confining to staff team building that required a suitable mental mindset and a shared vision entwined to make their teaching appropriate and meaningful at LFSS.

### **Findings and recommendations**

In untying the knots of the teaching and learning process at this particular FSS I have understood the procedures and ascertained the type of footprint that is created by teachers. My findings are explained and immediately thereafter are my suggested recommendations.

#### **Overview of findings of the study**

1. From planning to operation as well as monitoring, the dynamics of full service require extensive community-based and parental involvement that can transform schools into holistic learner-centred institutions.
2. Increased level of internal control and extended time allocation is needed to enable a structured plan of action to be developed that addresses both inclusive and mainstream education demands of each learner; learning barriers must be addressed in a special programme with intensified support during specified contact time in the school day.
3. There is a clear indication that teachers at FSSs lack the capacity and scaffolding to cope with the multiplexity of the demands that learners create when inclusivity in a single classroom has multiple teaching adaptations that have to simultaneously be factored in. Both mainstream learners and learners with barriers have to be catered for with many strands of teaching styles that have to be planned, prepared and executed to get tasks completed on time. The demands on these teachers are greater than at other state school, in that accountability to learners with barriers is an add-on to their workload.
4. The requirements for resources and dedicated infrastructure are complex, compounding the challenges that face teachers at FSSs. Even if assistive devices are present, the desired support becomes split between mainstream learners and those with barriers, with such barriers at times being psychosocial or psycho-emotional, rather than cognitive. FSSs are not given human resources to deal with these complex problems, unlike special needs schools that are provided with this type of support.

5. Strengthening support in FSSs involves combined exertion from all stakeholders in the DBE to ensure networking and collaborating to satisfy targets.
6. FSS teachers are insufficiently equipped with the knowledge to plan for and conduct teaching of learners with diverse learning needs.

## **Conclusion**

In untying the knots in the work of teachers in an FSS, key indicators surfaced. These indicators are, first, to sharpen the focus on construction by teachers of their work programmes in terms of the distinctive needs of the learners. Second, emphasis and focus must be directed to the innumerable ways in which learning takes place on the part of learners with diverse needs. Third, an inventory of the manifold learning programmes that are created and sustained to accommodate the different learning styles must be collated and scrutinised. This must be done to either assist FSS teachers or endorse their initiatives to create a bank of pedagogic methodologies for teachers-in-training to benefit them during their study. Fourth, there are vast expectations of accountability for FSS teachers in their workspace that are not present in mainstream schools.

This study gives impetus to education watchdogs to further engage in research to obtain valuable information for mapping out the imbalances in interactions with learners of different needs in an FSS classroom.

The responses from the participants were perfectly synchronised both with Wittgenstein's theory of untying knots and Senge's model of the five disciplines of a learning organisation. These responses shed light on the multivariate approach adopted by the teachers where systems thinking, mental models, team learning, personal mastery and a shared vision are the combined constituents of teaching at an FSS.

This multidimensional research approach could be of vital importance to both policy and curriculum implementation stakeholders. Teaching at an FSS directs teachers towards both formal and informal instructional demands during the actual interaction with the diverse learner needs at school. Hence the power of the dual "pedagogical clock" is determined by the collaborative and interactive tasks by teachers to keep the learners' time on a task attuned. The pacesetter from the teacher is in sync with time constraints which partially neglects key aspects of delivering curriculum as preferred.

The organisational, interactive and cognitive pace in a classroom where learners have diverse education needs require a well-thought-out/constructed teaching design that allows for support structures that are readily available for teachers; thus teaching can continue effectively with assistants being assigned to complete activities and tasks under direction and command of the class teacher.

A future research path could be a comparative education study of inclusive education between schools in an affluent area offering inclusive education to a school in a township offering inclusive education.

### **Recommendations from the findings**

As the researcher, I set out to get a full picture of the demands and dynamics for teachers in an FSS. In getting to the actuality of simultaneously teaching mainstream learners and those with barriers, I have the following recommendations:

1. Itinerant teachers with special skills in psychosocial and psycho-emotional needs should be assigned to FSSs so that teachers can be supported and developed to deal with the diverse needs of their learners. The DBE must design a business plan with a road map identifying how areas of concern will be addressed through collaboration and networking with special schools so that scaffolding is offered to cluster schools.
2. A structured assessment strategy must be devised to deal directly with different learning barriers for basic, medium and advanced support since teachers that refer their learners to the Department of Health or Department of Social Welfare cannot follow up with learners experiencing barriers outside the cognitive domain. Many learners at township schools have child-headed households/absent parent(s). These orphans and vulnerable learners have to be catered for separately. An assessment strategy and plan of action must be designed and support for learners must be dealt with case-by-case on merit.
3. Teachers that work at FSSs should be recognised either monetarily or given refresher courses and in-service training.

4. Learners experiencing barriers to learning must be accorded privacy and their dignity must be upheld more especially when such learners are trapped in a spiral of poverty, deprivation and cultural stagnation.
5. FSSs are regarded as social institutions that place the socialisation of the learner as their main purpose. The absence of social capital in society gives rise to disadvantaged learners which lack a combination of cultural and social involvement; such learners should be introduced to micro-projects to enhance self-esteem while assisting teachers to engage in intra-agency and inter-agency collaboration to assist learners that have barriers other than cognitive learning skills.
6. Teachers at FSSs need to be more knowledgeable on how to plan and teach learners with diverse learning needs in their classrooms. Schools must be twinned with glocal schools so that communication, participation and accountability are heightened in terms of levels of exertion of work.
7. The study identifies how FSSs differ from mainstream state schools despite having similar teachers. The evidence from all three parts of the exploratory enquiry reveal impediments to executing the curriculum design for FSSs and allows for deeper examination and investigation. The curriculum implementation plan needs exigent deliberation in terms of reconfiguring and addressing the workload demands of teachers together with the times on tasks (and tasks on time) that get altered when dealing with learners that have diverse educational or learning barriers.

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