

## STUDY UNITS 5 & 6

- In study unit 5 you will find a list of the components to be adapted in the planning/designing of the learning support programme after your baseline assessment of the context of the learner who experiences barriers2L (situation analysis) has been completed.

- In study unit 6 you will find a list of strategies to be adapted in the implementation of the learning support programme

□ In exam you could be asked to list the assessment techniques, the components, the strategies & then to discuss one of these in detail.

**LEARNER SUPPORT : Addressing barriers2L: screening, identification & assessment**

□ The inclusive school.

□ The role & responsibilities of the teacher as assessor of barriers2L.

□ Screening, identification & assessment procedures.

**LEARNER SUPPORT:**

**ADDRESSING barriers2L: THE INCLUSIVE SCHOOL**

□ **Study Unit 5:** Planning a learning support program (adaptations & modifications to teaching components, like curriculum differentiation, adaptations to the classroom environment & organisation, adapted aids & methods, adapted time, planning the collaboration with other stakeholders & planning ongoing /continuous assessment).

□ **Study Unit 6:** Implementing a learning support programme (adaptation & modifications to the teaching strategies, like cooperative learning, individual support, buddy system, adapted strategies for the entire class [methods such as discovery, discussions, working from concrete to abstract, etc]).

**Outcome for this theme:**

Students should be able to demonstrate their understanding & knowledge of learner support:

how to plan & implement a learning support programme.

**Assessment criteria:**

In the examination students should show evidence of understanding of & insight into the ff. aspects of learner support in the inclusive school

**\$ The meaning of relevant concepts & related aspects to the theme:**

- learner support
- learning support programme
- learning support strategies
- inclusive educational settings
- inclusive institutional level support approach: the new approach
- inclusive school:
  - \* the school environment
  - \* the curriculum
  - \* outcomes-based education

□ **The new institutional level support approach to learner support.**

Learning support was previously known as *assistance* or *remedial education* or *special education*.

. The **intensity level of support** is very important.

Contrasting learning support with remedial education highlights the shift of focus endorsed in addressing barriers to learning, & the frame of inclusive education adds to our understanding of the context & strategy of intervention. *Remedial education* conventionally adheres to the medical model of diagnosis & treatment, which is becoming increasingly outdated among the caring professions as they address the barriers learners are experiencing. The remedial approach to educational intervention is a problem-centred, needs-based approach to learning. The remedial approach holds a real danger of categorising & labelling the learner in terms of gross emphasis of the impairment or problem area. The aim of the remedial specialist is generally to “rectify” (remedied) the learner’s “deficits” or “shortcomings” or even “failings” & to “accelerate” the learners development. So the focus during “therapy” is very much on addressing the specific problem or weaknesses “in” the learner as stated in the “diagnosis” Progress is frequently measured quantitatively -- in terms of more deficit-specific tests, & development of norms & achievement scores (Bouwer in Landsberg 2005:48).

An inclusive education policy requires schools to respond to the diversity of learners & to provide equal educational opportunities of a high quality for all. With regard to learners who experience barriers to learning a policy of educational equity therefore implies enriching the regular education taking place in the classroom with *learning support*. However *addressing barriers to learning & participation* are shared responsibilities. Learners should be supported to promote their maximum participation in their environment. They should be supported in a joint attempt to reduce, circumvent, break through & even remove the barriers, for each to achieve the *maximum independence possible in learning*. Learning support should enable them to function optimally in the regular classroom, each according to his or her own learning style (own choice), **abilities & potential** (Bouwer in Landsberg 2005:48). The concept *learning support* then acknowledges the potential of individual learners to grow at their own pace, thus reaching a level of achievement that corresponds to their own unique abilities.

### 10.38 Learning support programme

The teacher should accommodate the individual learner as “he or she is”, within the classroom curriculum by means of specific or adapted/modified outcomes, adapted instructional strategies, supplemented with further support by a support network of other role players in the life of each learners. The learning support programme also includes the assessment of the progress of learners who are receiving learning support. The learning support programme includes:

- . planning/designing: taking into consideration all the teaching components such as the curriculum, content, outcomes, aids, strategies, time available, involvement & cooperation of all the other stakeholders involved
- . implementing: the implementation of the strategies for
  - An individual learner (one-to-one basis)
  - An entire group of learners (e.g. cooperative learning)
  - A smaller group of learners who experience barriers to learning between groups of learners who are not experiencing barriers to learning

□ **The steps in designing/planning a learning support program (adaptations & modifications to teaching components).**

### Special schools as resource centres

In order to ensure that the barriers to learning of all learners are met, there should be learning contexts which provide specialised teaching & support for those **learners who require a high intensity level of support**. Such learners may require specialised teaching & support as a result of the nature & extent of their impairments or because they are in trouble with the law & have been remanded into the custodial care of a particular

institution.

The *special* school has a very important role to play. In the short term thirty special schools will be converted into resource schools in 30 selected districts all over the country. In the long term

380 special schools will function as **resource schools**.

### **Special schools will do the following:**

- . ONLY provide education services to learners who require **intense/high levels of support** (e.g. previously known as learners with severe & multiple disabilities).
- . NOT accommodate learners who require much less support & should ideally be in mainstream classes.
- . Extend their services beyond the classroom to other schools in the district.
- . Function as part of the district-based support team to help & assist neighbourhood schools, especially the full-service schools.
- . Receive staff training for their new roles.

### **Full-service schools**

Full-service schools will be “ordinary” primary schools identified by the Department of Education & converted into schools which welcome ALL children & provide a full range of support. The establishment of these schools will be a first step to providing support closer to home.

The vision is to transform approximately 30 of the 20 000 mainstream primary schools into **full-service schools (2001 - 2003)** which will serve as models for more such schools (500 in future (2004 - 2009 - 2021)).

The following story of Susan & Ansuja illustrates how the district-based support team & the full-service school can work together in the new system.

Susan & Ansuja are two friends who had previously attended a special school. Susan is **partially sighted** & Ansuja is **physically impaired (wheelchair user)**. Susan had been in a hostel & Ansuja had to travel by bus every morning to the special school. Now they both live around the corner from the school that has recently been designated to provide a full range of support & can go there by using public transport, the wheelchair & the assistance of school friends.

The school that they have just joined is the full-service school in the area.

They are apprehensive about how they will be received but enjoy the idea that they will be going to school with their siblings. To prepare the school for their arrival a **district-based support team** was formed & one of the good & experienced teachers of the nearby special school was appointed as a district support team member. She assisted the school by talking to the teachers about **adapting learning material** for Susan (e.g. bigger print) & **organising their classes** in such a way that both girls could participate in the group work. She also gave some advice to Susan & her teachers about phoning home or involving her mother if needed. The circuit manager of the school arranged the ramps & the widening of some doorways. The principal arranged for some children/buddies would welcome the two girls on their first day & show them around the school. In advance she also spoke to the staff about the two new learners & in her talk to the staff she pointed out that, in many ways, **teachers already have learners experiencing barriers to learning in their school**. Thus, by accommodating & adapting teaching for these learners, educators could ensure that all the children would therefore benefit. She explained about the **support team & its role** & how they would liaise with the staff

**□ The general & adaptive strategies for the implementation of the learning support programme.**

