

Perspectives on Educational Psychological Support Services in New Zealand and South African Schools

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Abstract : New Zealand is well known for its natural beauty, diversity of people but also for its strong focus on mental health through the provision of a vast network of psycho-social support services. South African-trained psychologists often make New Zealand their new home when emigrating - as it is relatively simple to slot into the well-established mental health system. South Africa is bigger in size, population, GDP and probably people diversity than New Zealand but struggles to provide adequate educational and psychological support services to schools. This is mainly due to budgetary pressures brought about by the imperative to first ensure that the approximately 13 million learners all have a teacher in front of their classes and at an average ratio of not more than 40 learners per class. In this paper, perspectives on educational and psychological support in New Zealand and South African schools will be shared. Through basic qualitative research encompassing semi-structured interviews with two South African educational psychologists who returned from New Zealand, supplemented by document analysis, the New Zealand situation will be scrutinized. South African perspectives will be obtained through a number of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires administered by education support services specialists working in district-based support teams in three provinces of the country. This research is in process, but preliminary findings indicate large disparities between the two countries' emphasis, funding, post provisioning and structure regarding educational and psychological support services.

Keywords : educational psychological support services, support for learners experiencing special needs, education support services, diverse learner population

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