



Exploring teachers' perceptions when supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia in a rural school

¹Nombuso Tebele and ²John Chaka

¹Free State Department of Education, South Africa

²Department of Education Foundations, University of the Free State, South Africa

²Primary author: chakaj@ufs.ac.za

Abstract— Inclusive education remains a cornerstone in advocating for learners with barriers to adequate support. The study explored teachers' perceptions of supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia in a rural school. The study used a qualitative research approach within the interpretivism paradigm and phenomenology design. Six foundation phase teachers from a rural primary school were interviewed in the study. Thematic findings indicate that teachers face challenges supporting learners with dyslexia and dysgraphia. These included classroom overcrowding, lack of parental involvement, and inflexible curriculum. These affected teachers' ability to support these learners at schools. Therefore, teachers still require practical skills and knowledge to help learners with learning barriers at rural schools.

Keywords: Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Inclusive education, Learning barriers, Rural school

To cite this article (APA): Tebele, N., & Chaka, J. (2024). Exploring teachers' perceptions when supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia in a rural school. *International Journal of Studies in Psychology*, 4(1), 15-28. <https://doi.org/10.38140/ijpspy.v4i1.1057>.

I. INTRODUCTION

INCLUSIVE Education refers to an education system that strives for all learners to be included and supported in the classroom, regardless of their diverse learning barriers (Makoelle, 2012). According to Karimupfumbi (2020), a learning barrier is any challenge that impedes a learner's learning ability. The end of a daunting era of apartheid and the emergence of democracy afforded South Africans a chance at equal opportunities and rights. This meant addressing the inequalities in the education system, such as stereotypes and discrimination because of barriers. According to Hove (2014), South Africa has been attempting to rectify the inequalities and discrepancies within the education system due to apartheid. The Education White Paper 6 policy aimed to address the needs of learners by advocating for the inclusion of all learners in the education sector (Department of Education [DoE], 2001). The Department of Basic Education (DBE) issued the Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) framework, strengthening and implementing inclusive education by educating teachers on the procedure and identifying and supporting learners with learning barriers (DBE, 2014). However, research shows teachers encounter challenges when identifying learners with learning barriers. These include classroom overcrowding, lack of infrastructure and resources, limited knowledge of learning barriers, and inflexible curriculum (Themane & Thobejane, 2019; Walton & Engelbrecht, 2022). These challenges influence teachers' ability to identify and support learners with learning barriers. Scholars indicated that classroom overcrowding is one of the stressors facing teachers, and it becomes challenging to identify learners with learning barriers (Karimpfumbi & Dwarika, 2022; Hess, 2022). A school-based Support Team refers to a team established by schools. The school-based support team offers a

school-level support mechanism to coordinate support services to the learner, teacher, and the school (DoE, 2014). The District-based support team (DBST) refers to groups of departmental professionals responsible for promoting inclusive education through training, curriculum delivery, distribution of resources, and identifying, assessing, and addressing barriers to learning (DoE, 2014).

According to Hess (2020), teachers have a basic understanding of various barriers that learners exhibit. The SIAS framework further noted that identifying learners with learning barriers is vital in providing necessary support (DoE, 2014). Also, Moleme (2020) reported that teachers lack in-depth knowledge when supporting learners with neuro-developmental needs such as dysgraphia and dyslexia. According to Engelbrecht (2020), there is still a need to increase teachers' capacity when dealing with learners with diverse needs in ordinary classrooms.

It is essential to consider that teachers experienced challenges in rural schools in South Africa. The inflexibility of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement document (CAPS) could be a barrier to supporting learners in rural schools. As a result, teachers feel overwhelmed with the impossible workload and the demands of CAPS documents. The lack of time allocated for lessons affects teachers' ability to identify and support learners with diverse needs (Nel et al., 2016; Mpanza & Govender, 2022; Karimupfumbi & Dwarika, 2022). Mpanza and Govender (2022) found that teachers in primary schools face a lack of resources and infrastructure. Therefore, measures meant to support learners with learning barriers must be explored. Mpu and Adu (2021) indicated that teachers found that skills and knowledge acquired at SIAS training needed to be revised as they were highly theoretical and complex to implement inclusive classroom practices in a rural school in Limpopo. This shows that teachers still need further training to identify and support learners with learning barriers. Teachers are known to be agents of change. Tümkaya and Miller (2020) note that teachers

dominate the implementation of inclusion. As a result, their attitudes, beliefs, and training impact their capabilities. Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) attested that teachers' incompetence in identifying learners with learning barriers in their classrooms is a barrier to inclusivity. This depicts how teachers' attitudes and stigma impact identifying and supporting learners with learning barriers. Ntseto, Kgothule, Uguwanyi and Okeke (2021) found that teachers had negative attitudes towards inclusive education. The same could be true of their superiors, such as principals, who should be at the forefront of implementing SIAS policy in schools. This affects teachers' effectiveness when identifying learners' barriers and providing necessary support to learners with learning barriers.

This study's two main learning barriers of focus are Dysgraphia and Dyslexia. American Psychiatric Association (2013) defines dyslexia as a neurodevelopmental disorder that obstructs the ability of a learner to learn academic skills such as reading and arithmetic. Dysgraphia refers to a specific learning disorder that is characterised by disability in written expression (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Research indicates that the writing learning barrier often overlaps with other learning barriers, such as the reading barrier, speech impairment, and attention deficit disorder (Obatta, Adama, & Onu, 2020). Darici (2023) emphasised that learners who cannot read can also not write, as learners duplicate words without understanding how to use the expression meaningfully. Research findings suggest that learners with dyslexia and dysgraphia face challenges such as poor organizational skills, retarded thinking, and difficulty remembering, which affect academic achievement from an early age and often persist into adulthood (Obatta et al., 2020). Writing and reading skills are crucial skills for each learner. Thus, every learner must receive adequate support when exhibiting reading and writing learning barriers. The above findings call for exploring teachers' perceptions of supporting learners with learning barriers in a rural school. In addition, the study examined how teachers can be supported when identifying and supporting learners with learning barriers.

Problem statement

Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) posit that rural schools encounter challenges exclusive to their environment. These challenges can be categorised into classroom overcrowding, lack of infrastructure, limited resources, limited knowledge, and inflexible curriculum. These challenges influence teachers' ability to identify and support learners with learning barriers accordingly. According to the SIAS framework (DoE, 2014), identifying learners with learning barriers is vital in providing necessary support. Mukuna and Aloka (2020) alludes that most learners in rural areas face challenges in accessing psychological services, decent schools, and satisfactory health services. Challenges such as inflexible curriculum, overcrowding, and lack of resources, among others, affect teachers' ability to teach effectively and support learners with learning barriers. The main barriers of focus in this study are dyslexia and dysgraphia.

The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs expose that learners experience learning barriers at some point during their schooling (UNESCO, 1994). This signifies that teachers must have the knowledge and skills to identify learners with barriers and offer them support. However, research shows that learners are still excluded from classrooms because of their barriers. Recent studies have shown that teachers still allocate learners with learning barriers in separate classrooms (Andrews et al., 2019; Engelbrecht., 2020). Moleme (2020) reported that teachers lacked in-depth knowledge for supporting learners with neuro-developmental needs such as dysgraphia and dyslexia. According to scholars (Kalenjuk, Laletas, Subban & Wilson, 2021; Uebergang & Catroppa, 2020), schools lack awareness and understanding of identifying and addressing dyslexia and dysgraphia learning barriers. The lack of awareness of these learning barriers stems

from limited teacher training (Uebergang & Catroppa, 2020; Kalenjuk et al., 2021). The lack of awareness of these barriers can impact teacher's ability to support learners.

Research indicates that most South African learners have not reached satisfactory literacy milestones compared to standardized international achievement measures against other countries (Karimupfumbi & Dwarika, 2022). This is evident in the latest statistical International Reading Literacy study conducted in 2021, which revealed that 81% of learners in grade 4 could not read for comprehension. Merga (2020) emphasizes that poor reading skills for literacy in learners pose a challenge to reading comprehension as they find it difficult to make meaning of a text. According to Mather (2022), South African schools have focused on reading rather than writing. Research shows that learners who cannot read are also incompetent in writing, as they duplicate words without understanding how to use the expression meaningfully (Darici, 2023). Therefore, it is essential to explore both barriers collectively and not exclusively. Research findings suggest that learning barriers range in severity and can hinder the acquisition of skills such as speaking, reading, writing, and the ability to reason (Shifrer & Chandra, 2013; Obatta et al., 2020). This requires teachers to know about learning barriers to support learners accordingly. The ability to read and write are basic skills that every learner must develop, and literacy is a prerequisite for academic learning and meaningful participation in society.

Learners with dyslexia and dysgraphia face challenges such as poor organizational skills, retarded thinking, and difficulty remembering, which affect their academic achievement (Obatta et al., 2020). Research shows that learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia will likely drop out of school (Franklin-Brown, 2019). Scholars emphasized that writing and reading skills are critical academic skills, as through these skills, learners develop self-esteem and high levels of confidence (Yucedal & Shareef, 2022; Kara & Abdulrahman, 2022).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Salamanca statement-driving force behind inclusive education

Over three hundred participants from different countries met to discuss strategies to support learners who experienced learning barriers at primary schools at the Salamanca conference in Spain (Ainscow, Slee, & Best, 2019). Hernández-Torrano, Somerton, and Helmer (2022) reported that the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action attenuate learning barriers to education, specifically for teachers and schools.

It is essential to consider the many countries that have reported that teachers face several impediments when implementing inclusive education globally and locally. These included inadequate funding, classroom overcrowding, inflexible curriculum, and inadequate training to equip their inclusive practices (Mukuna & Aloka, 2020). This shows that teachers still need to be equipped with skills to create inclusive schools that accommodate the diverse needs of learners in the classrooms. The Salamanca Statement is the document that laid the foundation for inclusive education in South Africa.

However, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action accelerated the global move towards inclusive education (Guruji, 2022).. The framework outlined that mainstream schools with an inclusive orientation effectively combat discriminatory attitudes, build an inclusive society, and achieve Education for All. Similarly, South Africa embraced the inclusion mandate of international developments by publishing the Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education (DoE, 2001). This policy aims to transform the education system to be equitable and acknowledge the right of every child to attend school and receive the necessary support (DoE, 2001). The Education White Paper 6 emphasised the need to eradicate education system inequalities and

support learners with learning barriers (DoE, 2001). It describes the improvements needed so that the education system can be inclusive, where learner's differences are celebrated, not judged against. According to Walton, Andrews and Osman (2019), developing legislation and policies in South Africa is pivotal to shifting society's values from segregation and discrimination to embracing a system where values and principles such as inclusion and democracy are upheld.

Conversely, Aziz et al. (2016) noted that inequality in education is still prevalent despite several legislative policies that advocate for the human rights of learners with barriers to receiving education. McKenzie (2021) found that implementing inclusive education in South Africa is complex because of the injustices inflicted by the apartheid regime. Impediments encountered when implementing inclusive education can be noted globally.

The central focus of Education White Paper 6 is that inclusive education is a way to recognise the ability of learners to learn and the demand for support and staff development programs for teachers with learners with learning barriers (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel & Tlale, 2015). Literature also depicts examples in South Africa where inclusive education was successfully implemented. Thamane and Thobejane (2019) reported that teachers in Limpopo embraced inclusion by creating alternative approaches for learners despite overcrowding and lack of resources. Similarly, a study in Australia reported that teachers were assured of their ability to enact inclusive Education (McGarrigle, Beamish & Hay, 2021). The SIAS was formulated to make Education White Paper 6 easy to implement in schools and to mitigate learning barriers with appropriate support strategies (DoE, 2014).

Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Policy

The Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support policy (SIAS) was developed in 2008 and revised in 2014. The Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2014) states that the SIAS is an essential plan of action to enable the transformation of an inclusive educational system in cooperation with the advice of the Education White Paper 6. The SIAS is part of the cornerstone of inclusive education, which guides the early diagnosis of learners' capabilities and deficiencies.

The SIAS intends to communicate the degree and level of support necessary to promote teacher participation (DoE, 2014). According to Rottaro (2022), the SIAS conveyed a new apprehension of the roles and responsibilities of role players in the education system. The SIAS comprises different team players, such as educators, School-Based Support Teams, and District-Based Support Teams. The provision of support, as outlined by the SIAS, includes three stages (DBE, 2014). The first process is to fill out Support Needs Assessment 1 (SNA 1) forms. Most data are gathered during the admission phase of a learner and must be included in the learner profile, such as the admission form, the road to health booklet, reports from parents, and the year school report. Rottaro (2022) noted that the learner profile provided credible indications about learners' learning barriers and possible interventions for the teacher. The second process of Support Needs Assessment 2 (SNA 2) is utilised when teachers' inclusive practices and strategies in the classroom result in little to no progress. This then requires the intervention of the School-Based Support Team. During SNA 2, collaboration is required between the parent, teachers, and SBST. The SNA 3 form requires intervention in District-Based Support Teams if the learner did not benefit from the support of SBST intervention and support in SNA. South African inclusive education is structured to enable teachers to identify learning barriers early so that appropriate support is provided. Therefore, teachers' attitudes towards inclusion play a pivotal role when implementing SIAS to accelerate identifying learners with learning barriers, as teachers can provide appropriate support.

Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion

Van Steen and Wilson (2020) note that the success of inclusive education relies on teachers implementing it by identifying learning barriers to determine appropriate support. Teachers' attitudes and beliefs impact whether they can teach inclusively. Engelbrecht (2020) attests to this by stating that the negative attitudes held by teachers towards disability and other learning barriers contribute to the obstruction of diversity and inclusion. South Africa misunderstands inclusiveness and special needs (Takalani, 2021). This can be attributed to the inequality and racial differentiation during apartheid that separated schools for learners with learning barriers, which became a norm (McKeever, 2017). Learners were not only separated by race but also separated by the learning barriers they had. Lokhande and Reichle (2019) state that there is a necessity for interaction in school as the system between teachers and parents works together for the interest of learners with learning barriers. Andrews (2020) showed that most teachers in primary schools are motivated and committed to teaching inclusively (Done & Andrew, 2020). However, teachers were constrained by socio-economic challenges within school communities and the need for meaningful further education opportunities. As a result, teachers found it challenging to implement inclusive policies to help them support learners with learning barriers.

Research shows that teachers hold negative attitudes towards inclusive education. Teachers' negative attitudes towards inclusion can be attributed to inflexible curricula, inadequate training, inadequate knowledge, and limited resources when implementing inclusive education. Walton et al. (2019) stated that the curriculum is structured around subject content as it has a fixed time framework. As a result, the implementation of inclusive education becomes challenging. Literature indicates that teachers felt that inclusive education did not involve them and were concerned with competence in the subject they teach (Hong, Eum, Long, Wu & Welch, 2020; Alnahdi, 2020). According to Sakiz (2017), teachers' inability to adapt and support learners stems from the limited knowledge and skills required to adapt to support learners with learning barriers. This affects teachers' effectiveness when employing inclusive practices in classrooms. Hauwadhanasuk, Zhuang, Everson, Yu, and Karnas (2019) revealed that teachers lack special education knowledge and have insufficient training and behavioural management skills to teach disabled learners. Teachers were found to lack construct assessment tools. Moriña, Perera, and Carballo (2020) revealed that teachers lacked the capacity and experience to meet the needs of learners with disabilities and learning barriers.

Similarly, Mamabolo et al. (2021) found that teachers held disbelief that learners with learning barriers would improve their social skills in mainstream schools. Acquiring knowledge about teachers' attitudes plays a crucial role in entrusting teachers with the diverse needs of learners (Mamabolo et al., 2021). These findings were confirmed by a study conducted in South Korea, where teachers' attitudes were seen to play a significant role when implementing inclusive education (Song, Sharma & Choi, 2019).

Literature also depicts teachers' positive attitudes toward inclusion. Saloviita (2019) findings showed that newly qualified teachers depicted positive attitudes toward learners with learning barriers and used various support strategies to aid and expedite adaptation.

Literature has proposed solutions to mitigate teachers' negative attitudes toward inclusive education (Gülsün, Malinen, Yada & Savolainen, 2023; Jury, Laurence, Cèbe & Desombre, 2023; Lindner, Schwab, Emará, & Avramidis, 2023; Mudhar, Ertesvåg & Pakarinen, 2023). Research findings indicate that professional development programs can improve teachers' attitudes (Savolainen, Malinen, and Schwab, 2022). This affirms the guidelines by UNESCO (1994) that state schools with inclusive approaches effectively reduce bias against learners with learning barriers, appreciate individual diversity, and accomplish education for all. Takalani (2021) observes that equipping

teachers with practical knowledge and skills will enhance their teaching methods in the classroom and their understanding of learning barriers. Similarly, Florian (2019) states that teachers need theoretical knowledge and skills about inclusive education policies to teach a diverse classroom.

A study in Canada showed that teachers had absolute confidence in implementing inclusive classrooms as they could provide the diverse needs of learners with learning barriers (Bennett, Ismailos, & Gallagher, 2019). The Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) results recently indicated that 81% of South Africa's grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning (DBE, 2023; Roux, Van Staden & Tshele, 2023)

Dysgraphia and dyslexia as Learning barriers at schools

Dysgraphia

It is essential to consider that dysgraphia could be a learning barrier. Dysgraphia interferes with how learners acquire written language and use handwriting skills to communicate their thoughts (Kimani, 2022). Scholars highlighted that dysgraphia becomes apparent in early childhood through struggling to write, poor spelling, and limited capacity to compose texts (Chung, Patel & Nizami, 2020; Kalenjuk et al., 2022). Dysgraphia learning barrier can be categorised into two sub-types, namely linguistic and motor dysgraphia. Linguistic dysgraphia is categorized by delays in processing and organising ideas in writing (Franklin, 2018). While motor dysgraphia learning barriers are difficult, so are the mechanical aspects of writing (Farrell, 2021). Some scholars pointed out that learners with dysgraphia learning barriers must work hard and invest, characterised by long hours developing writing skills and producing written work to be on the same standard as other learners (Mayes, Breaux, Calhoun, & Frye, 2019). Dysgraphia as a learning barrier is recognised as a handwriting difficulty in learners. Dysgraphia could affect both the learner and teacher in an educational setting, as learners cannot coherently write classwork (Feizefu, 2021).

Dyslexia

Burton (2018) stated that the dyslexia as a learning barrier is recognised as a challenge in categorising unfamiliar words into essential fragments to facilitate comprehension of the material learners are reading. As a result, learners become tremendously slow in reading, with multiple errors in language and comprehension. According to Burton (2018), children with dyslexia learning barriers do not read well at the expected age. Usually, a learner in the intermediate phase can read according to the age of a seven-year-old. Learners with dyslexia often omit words when reading as they find pronating familiar and unfamiliar words difficult. Learners with dyslexia learning barrier face hurdles in understanding what they are hearing, which also impacts their comprehension skills. Researchers indicated that difficulties with reading comprehension for learners with learning barriers result in minimal reading experience, which impedes learners' vocabulary development and knowledge (Lupo, Tortorelli, Invernizzi, Ryoo, & Strong, 2019). Teachers must know learning barriers to implement appropriate measures and support strategies.

Awareness of learning barriers

Unawareness of dysgraphia and dysgraphia as a learning barrier brings long-term ramifications as children with dysgraphia and dyslexia barrier are usually undiagnosed (Chung et al., 2020; Kalenjuk et al., 2022). Research shows that dysgraphia and dyslexia learning barrier unawareness in children can be attributed to the notion that it affects learners with average or above-average intelligence (Kalenjuk et al., 2022). As a result, teachers must have knowledge and skills to support learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia. Florian (2019) states that teachers need theoretical knowledge and skills to implement inclusive practices in a diverse classroom successfully. Takalani (2021) confirms that equipping teachers with practical knowledge and skills will enhance their teaching methods in the classroom and understanding of barriers. An international study in Australia revealed that teachers must

devise alternative strategies to promote literacy skill development and engagement in struggling literacy learners (Merga, 2019). Therefore, teachers must have skills and knowledge when supporting learners with dyslexia and dysgraphia learning barriers.

Supporting learners with learning barriers: dyslexia and dysgraphia

Research shows that there is limited literature giving counsel on how to support learners with learning (Grigorenko et al., 2020). Fourie (2017) alludes that learner support is a process that requires identifying and reducing learning barriers. Supporting learners with dyslexia and dysgraphia learning barriers is crucial for implementing inclusive education. Research shows that teachers in rural schools face challenges like shortage of resources, lack of infrastructure, and shortage of books (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019; Mpiti & Mbodila, 2020). This results in teachers being left to their own devices to develop strategies to support learners with learning barriers. This is confirmed by an international study in Australia, revealing that teachers must devise alternative strategies to promote literacy skill development and engagement in struggling learners (Merga, 2019). Learners can be supported through parental involvement, explicit phonological and phonemic awareness, and cursive writing for dyslexic learners and learners with dysgraphia learning barriers.

Parental involvement

Research shows that parents and teachers are the primary microsystem levels of a learner's life and that their joint and concerted efforts can prove fruitful in developmental learning. As a result, there should be close interaction between the school as a whole and parents. (Phala & Hugo, 2022). Alam (2021) attests to this by stating that parents' literacy eases development and establishes their children's reading and writing habits. Learners' ability to write and read starts at home. Through parent's efforts to do homework and help their child read and write, the parent could identify if a learner has a barrier. Ntekane (2018) notes that a firm collaboration between a parent and a teacher improves learner's academic results at school. Therefore, parents must be involved and support their children in developing writing and reading skills.

Explicit instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness

Phonological refers to sounds of one's language, also called phonemes, to process spoken and written language. Phonological awareness is a broad term that includes awareness of speech sounds, namely rhyming letters, alliteration, and the use of syllables in words. Gillon (2017) defines phonemic awareness as learners' awareness of the individual phonemes in spoken words and their ability to deploy those sounds. Learners with dyslexia learning barriers have difficulties in distinguishing among different sounds, which results in their reading being slow or imprecise. Teachers must teach segmenting syllabi to enhance letter relation sounds so learners can master blended written sounds.

Cursive writing

Cursive writing refers to handwriting where letters join in a continuous flow. Cursive writing assists learners in letter formulation and increases their concentration in writing. According to Borges, Aprigio, Azoni, and Crenitte (2020), cursive writing demands mastery of movements that represent an excessive effort for children who cannot yet hold the pencil and control it easily. Cursive writing promotes consistency of movement in time and space, which is known for its advantage in developing handwriting skills (Semeraro, Coppola, Cassibba & Lucangeli, 2019). Recent studies suggest that writing requires an interaction between internal and external processes in the brain and observable stimuli in the environment (Morales-Rando, Pérez-Jorge, Strbová, L., & Ariño-Mateo, 2022). Cursive writing promotes visual-motor and spatial components, which assist learners when writing sentences (Cabigao, 2021). Thus, teachers can use cursive writing when supporting learners who cannot write.

Initiatives to support learners with dyslexia and dysgraphia In South Africa

The National Reading Strategy issued by the DBE (2008) states that teachers must actively teach reading and create an environment that promotes reading to assist learners with reading barriers. The DBE implemented the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in 100 schools per province in Grades 1–3 in 2015. To assess learners' reading skills in early grades to identify reading problems and adapt necessary interventions to support learners' needs (DBE, 2014). The Limpopo, Eastern Cape, and Kwazulu-Natal provinces have launched the Reading and Leading Strengthening in South African Schools (REAL SA) to improve learners' reading skills. However, recent statistics show that despite initiatives to improve learners' reading skills, learners still cannot read for meaning. Govender and Hugo's (2020) finding noted that learners in primary school have not reached the expected reading level. Writing skills are essential for learners as writing is a form of communication. Mather (2022) states that research has dominated reading skills while neglecting writing skills.

Nonetheless, writing is a crucial skill for learning in all subjects. Learners need writing skills to establish their understanding of concepts in all subjects by writing essays, assignments, and examinations. Mpiti and Mbodila (2020) state that writing and reading skills are of paramount importance in the education of learners. The lack of support for learners with dysgraphia often leads to helplessness. Research shows that learners with dysgraphia learning barriers are associated with a heightened risk of dropping out of school (Dui et al., 2020). Learners with dyslexia and dysgraphia learning barriers must receive the necessary support. Learners with different needs are at risk of not accessing equitable education opportunities (Andrews et al., 2019).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) defines child development as a complex system of relationships that multiple levels can impact. The levels include the surrounding environment, starting from immediate family, school settings, and broad cultural values, laws, and customs (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to Hess (2020), the model assists in shaping and creating an understanding of how various levels of the systems interact in an individual's development. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979) entails five systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem, which interact with an individual. Starko (2021) asserts that the ecological model is valuable for understanding classrooms, schools, and families as systems. The support of learners with learning difficulties is affected by contextual factors such as the successful implementation of inclusive policies, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, awareness of learning obstacles, and support strategies for learners who exhibit learning barriers.

Microsystem

The microsystem entails the immediate environment of an individual. The microsystem comprises family, friends, siblings, teachers, and peers. A child's interactions within the microsystem foster and support the child's development. Prolonged interaction in the classroom between the teacher and learner will prompt early intervention and support for learners with learning barriers such as dysgraphia and dyslexia.

Mesosystem

The mesosystem links one or more microsystems enclosing the developing individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, the interaction of home and school creates a mesosystem. Crawford (2020) states that ecological systems can work for or against individuals. Therefore, communication between the parent and the child's teacher

can positively affect the child's development. In this study, an interaction between the parent and the teacher can facilitate communication about a learner's possible learning barriers. This would lead to early support intervention as the parent can provide crucial background information on their child and work collectively with teachers when addressing the child's learning barriers.

Exosystem

The exosystem includes interactions between two or more microsystems, for example, a school, a neighborhood, and a learner's home (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). An individual may encounter the environment indirectly, yet they may be affected. A practical example is the parents' workplace, where the child has no direct interaction with the workplace, but the workplace system could influence them. If the parents are required to work long hours, it leads to less interaction with the child. This will affect parent's time availability to support their child when doing homework and reading. According to Tekin (2011), a child's development is maximised if the linkages between two components of this system are solid and positive. Therefore, the parent has to work hand in hand with the teacher to ensure the child is supported.

Macrosystem

The macrosystem has a pattern of interaction among the microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem (Elliott & David, 2020). The macrosystem is usually regarded as a societal system for culture. According to Bronfenbrenner (2005), societal and cultural beliefs influence a child's behaviours and perception in the macrosystem. Teachers' rigid concentration on meeting the curriculum's demands can lead to a teacher needing time to accommodate learners with learning barriers. As a result, the learner could feel that the teacher is not accommodating their diverse needs.

Chronosystem

The chronosystem involves the evolution of an individual's time. Bronfenbrenner (1979) referred to this as an ecological transition. Ecological transition alters an individual's composition of the microsystem (Elliott & David, 2020). Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory highlights the interaction between personal development and social life (El Zaatari & Maalouf, 2022). Motitswe (2014) claims that addressing learning support through the lens of bioecological theory offers insight into learners' development holistically and contextually. As a result, this system facilitates teachers' understanding of external influences on a child's environment.

IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study explores the teachers' perceptions of supporting learners with learning barriers in a rural school as the case study of dyslexia and dysgraphia. It also explores how teachers identify learners with learning barriers in a rural school. It finally explores ways teachers can be supported when identifying and supporting learners with learning barriers in a rural school.

V. METHODS

Research paradigm

This study employed the interpretive paradigm. Interpretivism emanated from the critique of positivism with a subjective perspective. It opposes the notion that a single reality exists. It is advantageous to offer in-depth meanings with the supposition that individuals cannot be investigated like physical objects (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). This paradigm is objective as the aim is to understand a social phenomenon from participants' view (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). It also adopts a relativist ontology, where a singular phenomenon has various interpretations rather than objective truth (Pham, 2018). It is beneficial in this study due to allowing teachers to understand their perceptions when supporting learners with learning barriers.

Research approach

The study adopted a qualitative research approach. Creswell (2014) defines qualitative research as an approach that investigates the meaning individuals or groups assign to a social or human problem. Muzari, Shava, and Shonhiwa (2022) state that the qualitative research approach relies on the individual's central view of the phenomenon. As a result, researchers can derive detailed descriptions of the phenomena. Islam and Aldaihani (2022) elucidate that qualitative research is conducted when the researcher needs to understand the participants' contexts to understand a problem. According to Aspers and Corte (2019), using qualitative research leads to enhanced understanding in the scientific community by contributing new significant findings resulting from the phenomenon studied. Therefore, this research approach is advantageous as it allows to grasp teachers' perceptions and understanding when supporting learners with dyslexia and dysgraphia learning barriers, especially in a rural school.

Research design

Research design refers to a data collection, analysis, and interpretation setup and includes answering the research questions (Sekaran & Bougies, 2016). The research design seeks to present empirical evidence that answers the research questions and solves research problems (Yin, 2014). Therefore, this study employed a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology as a research design involves studying a phenomenon to explore the complex world of lived experiences from people who have experienced it (Qutoshi, 2018). Through phenomenology, the researchers captured how a phenomenon was lived by participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is essential to note that phenomenology is deeply rooted in continental philosophy, with a central point being a phenomenon's meaning for various individuals. The phenomenology research design aims to understand the essence of a phenomenon (Haven & Van Grootel, 2019; Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio, 2019). This design is critical as it helps researchers decipher the meaning individuals attach to their experiences. It is beneficial because it allows us to understand teachers' perceptions when supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia learning barriers. Therefore, phenomenology research design assisted me in uncovering teachers' perceptions when supporting learners with learning barriers at their conscious level.

Research site

The research site is a physical, social, and cultural site where the study is conducted (Given, 2022). According to Mhlongo (2017), there must be proximity between participants and the researcher for convenience and financial viability. This study was conducted at a rural primary school selected in QwaQwa, Thabo Mofutsanyana District, in the Free State province, South Africa. The school is classified as a quantile one. This implies that the school relies on the Department of Education for textbooks and ordering of books. Some of the school buildings were not friendly to everyone who used wheelchairs. Most of the learners relied on the school feeding scheme for their breakfasts. The school does not have a psychologist and relies on the District Management of Education to send their psychologist to assess learners with special educational needs.

Participants

The participants comprised six teachers in this study's foundation phase at a rural primary school. All participants were selected through convenience and purposive sampling as they were convenient and easy to attain (Muzari et al., 2022). Also, this is due to the school being accessible to me as the researcher. According to Berndt (2020), selecting a sampling method depends on numerous factors, such as research question, methodology, and population size, among other factors. The purposive sampling method was utilised as the selection of the target sample meets the intended criteria, which were easy access, time accessibility, and inclination to participate in the study. Their benefits

were reasonably priced and less time-consuming (Stratton, 2021).

Data collection instruments

This study employed semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data. Grey (2014) elucidates that semi-structured interviews offer in-depth information about participants' experiences and viewpoints on a particular topic. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews encompass open-ended questions founded on the scope the researcher wants to cover (Muzari et al., 2022). Semi-structured interview data collection allows researchers to elicit information by enabling the participants to express their perceptions, experiences, and ideas, which assists researchers in acquiring rich data through an inductive process. Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) confirm that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher the autonomy to investigate pertinent sentiments that may arise during semi-structured interviews while keeping the focus on the main. An interview guide was used to direct semi-structured interviews. Belina (2023) states that the interview guide consists of a few core open-ended questions the study focuses on. The predetermined set of questions is flexible to allow follow-up questions. Börü (2018) states that semi-structured interviews allow structured and unstructured questioning approaches. The study used semi-structured interviews to help me acquire in-depth data about teachers' perceptions and understanding when supporting learners with learning barriers. Semi-structured interviews will allow me to gain information about participants' unique perspectives when supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia. The semi-interviews were conducted at the participants' school due to the naturalistic setting and easy access. The time allocation to interview each participant was 20-30 minutes.

Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is collecting, designing, and organizing data to emphasize and highlight valuable information, propose conclusions, formulate strategies, and promote decision-making (Mayer, 2015, p.58). Braun, Clarke, Hayfield and Terry (2019) state that data analysis answers the research question. Semi-interview data will be analysed through thematic data analysis by examining patterns. Braun et al. (2019, p. 844) state thematic analysis is a broad term for identifying patterns within the data sets. Thematic analysis allows the researcher to conduct rigorous qualitative analyses with tremendous theoretical flexibility. Theoretical flexibility offers meaning and necessary data analysis across disciplines. Thematic data analysis gave me rich data about the research topic. Thematic analysis involves six phases (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The phases include familiarising me with data collected from semi-structured by transcribing the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing potential themes, naming the themes, and lastly, producing the report. Thematic analysis was used to outline reoccurring themes in data analysis and themes related to the research question.

During the analysis, trustworthiness was used to determine the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods utilised to guarantee the quality of a study. This study achieved credibility through members checking the congruency of the findings in comparison with reality. Member checking refers to soliciting feedback from participants who confirm researchers' interpretations of the findings (Motulsky, 2021). Therefore, after transcribing the data collected, researchers reverted to participants to confirm with them that the data was transcribed in the intended way they articulated it. All participants were tape-recorded during semi-structured interviews. After that, the data recorded was transcribed onto the data sheets to ensure credibility when analysing the data. Tape recordings and data sheets will be kept safe for at least five years. The audio tapes and data sheets will be readily available for confirmation if verification and other evaluative trials are requested.

Ethical considerations

Ethics in research refers to scientific ethical values (Hasan, Rana, Chowdhury, Dola, & Rony, 2021). Parrott, Macinnes, and Parrott (2015) add to this by stating that ethics is a systematic study of the concepts of value, good and bad, right and wrong, and the general principles that justify the application of these concepts in a study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of the Free State committee before commencing the study. Written consent was obtained from the school principal to conduct the study on exploring teachers' perceptions when supporting learners with learning barriers. Ethical guidelines in the study included informed consent, anonymity, protection from physiological and physical harm, confidentiality, and the participant's right to retire from the study. According to Muzari et al. (2022), participants' consent to participate in any study is esteemed. Therefore, before commencing the study, a consent form was issued to participants for their consent to be involved in the research. The consent informed participants about the intention of the study, potential advantages, how their confidentiality will be ensured, and their right to deny participation in the study nor terminate their involvement without any penalty. Participants who agreed to take part in the study did so by signing the consent form. Confidentiality and anonymity are essential when conducting research. Participants' safety and interest were prioritised in the study. The school's name was given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality, and participants were assigned codes. I ensured no malice (physical nor physiological harm) whatsoever to the participants. The data collected containing the participants' personal details were stored securely.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' perceptions when supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia

Awareness of the prevalence of learning barriers

This study revealed that teachers could be aware of the prevalence of dysgraphia and dyslexia as learning barriers at a rural school. Some participants reported that it was standard to have learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia in their classrooms. These could be illustrated as follows.

"Most learners in my classroom cannot read and write" (Participant B).

"It is prevalent to have learners with learning barriers. Other times, you feel like the learner has progressed but is back to square one the following day" (Participant E).

"It is common to have learners who cannot read and write. Learners cannot differentiate between letters such as B and D" (Participant D).

"It is common to have learners who cannot read and write. For others, their speech is under-developed" (Participant F).

The findings further suggested that teachers were aware of reading and writing challenges among learners and that it was prevalent to have such learners, especially at the beginning of the year. Participants indicated that it was expected to have learners who experienced learning barriers in their classrooms.

Identifying learners with learning barriers

This study showed that teachers perceived identifying learners with learning barriers at a rural school.

"I can identify learners with learning barriers. I acquired this knowledge from inclusive education, which was taught in the module while I was doing my diploma" (Participant A).

"Identifying learners with writing and reading barriers is easy. I usually identify them and assess the nature of a learner's learning barrier" (Participant C).

"It is easier to notice learners with writing and reading barriers. I usually notice them during orientation week when the year starts" (Participant B).

The findings suggested that participants were aware and could quickly identify learners with learning barriers. The SIAS policy

outlines that identifying a possible barrier is the first step in identifying and assessing a child's learning barrier to provide support (DoE, 2014). The participants' responses suggested positive research findings as they were aware of and equipped to identify learners with learning barriers and had knowledge about learning barriers.

Teachers' experience when supporting learners with learning barriers

Satisfactory support from SBST members

The study suggested that teachers obtained satisfactory support from SBST members when helping learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia at a rural school. Participants indicated their satisfaction with the SBST, including ongoing individual support and the facilitation of formal and informal workshops to help teachers develop effective support strategies and fill learner profiles. Participants indicated that the SBST was proactive and supportive, supporting learners with learning barriers.

"I have attended formal and informal workshops organized by SBST. We also received ongoing support about various resources when supporting learners with learning barriers" (Participant A).

"We get support from SBST about how to fill learner profiles and supplementary teaching aids that we can employ to support learners with learning barriers" (Participant D).

"SBST is supportive, mainly when referring learners with learning barriers. SBST also offers feedback and shares knowledge after attending a workshop from DBST" (Participant C).

"We have been trained to identify learners with learning barriers. We have also been trained to fill learner profiles by SBST" (Participant F).

The findings suggested that the SBST was supportive as they offered knowledge to teachers on filling learner profiles and giving feedback during a meeting with DBST. They suggested mutual communication between teachers and SBST on identifying learners with learning barriers and different strategies they can use to support them.

Teachers' collaboration

This study revealed that teachers collaborate with their colleagues and share knowledge to support learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia at a rural school. Participants mentioned that previous grade teachers were great collaborators when supporting learners with learning barriers as they provided insightful and crucial background information about the barrier the learner was experiencing. Thus, participants viewed supporting learners with learning barriers as teamwork instead of an individual's obligation.

"I knew about other learners in grade 1 who had learning barriers as I communicated with other teachers at the beginning of the year about the nature of learners' barriers they faced" (Participant F).

"I go to lower grades teachers to ask for teaching strategies material" (Participant C).

"I collaborate with other teachers by switching classes as they can explain a concept more directly than I can" (Participant D).

"A previous teacher in grade 2 usually comes to tell me about learners with barriers. The teacher gives background information on a learner's learning barrier" (Participant C).

According to Abrol (2023), teachers benefit from collaborating with other teachers as they communicate and share skills to solve a problem. Consequently, teachers found collaboration a valuable strategy to share skills and knowledge when supporting learners with barriers. Collaboration refers to individuals working together to achieve a common goal. Scholars argue that the collaboration of teachers facilitates shared understanding, a reflection of teaching practices, and collegial support (De Jong, Meirink, & Admiraal, 2019).

Using effective teaching strategies

This study demonstrated that effective teaching strategies could emerge in supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia at a rural school. Participants indicated that efficient teaching strategies are used to meet

the needs of every learner. Furthermore, participants shared the best strategies to support learners with barriers.

"I use cursive writing as a teaching strategy for learners with a writing learning barrier" (Participant E).

"I use different teaching strategies such as visual and kinaesthetic to accommodate every learner" (Participant C).

"learners learn. I usually use various teaching strategies and activities as other learners are intelligent and fast, and others are slow" (Participant B).

Teaching strategy refers to an educational technique or plan of classroom actions and interactions between the teacher and a learner intended to accomplish a specific teaching goal (Ayua, 2017). Abulhul (2021) states that teachers use various strategies in a classroom to meet every learner's educational needs as learners learn and absorb knowledge differently. The findings suggested that teachers use different teaching strategies to support learners with learning barriers.

Challenges when supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia

Insufficient support from DBST

This study indicated that insufficient support from DBST could be a challenge when supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia at a rural school. Participants showed that the DBST is responsible for deploying qualified support teachers, speech therapists, and educational psychologists in schools where learners with learning barriers require extensive support. Thus, they indicated they could not receive adequate support from the DBST and feedback after the learners had been referred.

"I referred a learner who struggled to read last year to DBST, but we are still waiting for feedback. The child is now in grade 1, with no feedback from DBST" (Participant A).

"When the SBST has referred a learner to DBST, it takes a while to find placement for a learner as special schools are limited. Learners will be placed on a waiting list" (Participant B).

"When the SBST refers learners to DBST, it takes time to receive feedback as learners are placed on a waiting list. Sometimes, it takes five years still waiting for feedback. Without intervention, the learner would even complete their studies and attend high school" (Participant F).

"Regarding the district, since I have arrived at this school, DBST will tell us they do not have transport. A learner was referred to a speech therapist in grade 1, and we are still waiting for feedback" (Participant E).

Lack of parental involvement

This study suggested that the lack of parental involvement could be a challenge when supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia at a rural school.

"The parents refuse when we write to invite them to school to discuss ways to support their children with learning barriers" (Participant A).

"Parents are not supportive in their kids' learning as they refuse to assist in their children's learning development, especially on weekends and school holidays" (Participant E).

"Parents are not involved in their children's learning. Those who have successfully come after communicating with them about barriers learners have, when invited again, refused to come" (Participant C).

"Other learners have unhealthy structures at home as other learners are orphans. The learners stay with young adults" (Participant F).

Parental involvement pertains to parents being directly involved in their children's education by working collaboratively with teachers and schools in their children's learning process (Ntekane, 2018). Parents are an indispensable and crucial pillar when supporting learners with barriers. This is because, upon communicating with teachers on classroom observations and possible learning barriers, parents assist by providing and enforcing additional information for screening.

Bronfenbrenner's theory demonstrates that learners learn best when their surrounding systems interact positively (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem also depicts the

interaction between a learner's microsystem, in this case, the collaboration of parents and teachers, as a key influence in their learning life.

"an extrinsic actor of an unhealthy home environment as a barrier to parental involvement and availability when called for a meeting" (Participant F).

"Parents feel like I am delegating my job duties when I request them to help their children.... Teaching requires a collective effort from the learner, teacher, and parent" (Participant D).

"The parents are always unavailable as they say they are working when invited for a meeting" (Participant F).

"The parents are unwilling to come when invited for a meeting. I have even tried unsuccessfully to get one to come stating that I will give her a formal letter that shows she was attending a meeting at school regarding her child" (Participant E).

These findings correlated with other scholars who reported that 70% of parents' work schedules are barriers to involvement in their children's social and educational activities (La Paro, Kraft-Sayre, & Pianta, 2003 in Berry, 2019).

For those mentioned above, one participant indicated that the parent's work schedule was a barrier to attending meetings initiated by the teacher about the child's possible learning barriers (Participant F).

The findings suggest that parents are not participating in their children's education for several reasons, including unavoidable commitments. SIAS posits that parents play an instrumental role in the education and training of a learner in terms of early identification of possible barriers (DBE, 2014). According to the Department of Education, parents are equal partners in the identification and assessment process as outlined by the SIAS, as they can provide comments and observations that can assist teachers in finding the nature of the barrier the learner is experiencing (DoE, 2001). This necessitates a parent to collaborate with the teacher. According to Hampden-Thompson and Galindo (2017), a substantial quality relationship between a teacher and a parent benefits both the learner and parent. The learner will receive an early diagnosis of a barrier and necessary support. Scholars show that teachers require appropriate support to adequately assist learners with learning barriers (Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht & Nel, 2016). The Department of Education stipulated that teachers should work with the SBST and DBST when supporting learners with learning barriers (DBE, 2014).

Overcrowding classrooms

This study found that overcrowded classrooms could be a challenge in supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia barriers at a school. Participants claimed the teacher-learner ratio was a challenge when supporting learners with learning barriers in a classroom, as class sizes range from forty to forty-five learners. Overcrowded classrooms make it challenging for teachers to offer individual support to learners with learning barriers. The extracts from four participants expressed their concerns as follows:

"There is overcrowding in my classroom. Supporting every learner according to their needs becomes difficult" (Participant E).

"Our classrooms are overcrowded, the teacher ratio is 1:35, and I usually have 41 to 42 learners in my classroom" (Participant D).

"The Classroom is congested, so I cannot support every learner individually. As a result, I do extra classes to catch up and offer additional support to learners who cannot read and write" (Participant A).

"The classroom is overfull. I then do after-school classes to use different teaching strategies and support learners with barriers" (Participant B).

Participants reported that classroom overcrowding was a barrier to supporting learners who were experiencing learning barriers in their classrooms. Premier (2021) stated that teaching in an overcrowded classroom is frustrating, overwhelming, and stressful to teachers. This can explain the claim that teachers find it challenging to give individual

support to every learner. Research findings suggested that classroom overcrowding was problematic for teachers when supporting learners with writing and reading learning barriers. Furthermore, participants indicated that they resorted to other means, often at their expense, to ensure that learners are supported. These included conducting extra classes after school to support learners further. Participants alluded to the fact that, given their capacity, this was the only viable option to support and meet learners at their various points of need.

Inflexible curriculum

This study reported that an inflexible curriculum could be a challenge in supporting learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia barriers at a rural school.

"I cannot effectively support learners with writing and reading barrier as much content must be covered" (Participant A).

"There is a limited time to cover the curriculum and still give individual support to all learners. When I support learners with writing and reading barriers, such as extra activities on cursive writing and scaffolding, intelligent learners are left behind" (Participant B).

"I have to conduct after-school classes for learners with learning barriers as there is limited time to teach and still support them during school hours" (Participant D).

"The teacher and learner ratio in my classroom is 1: 40. Time is limited. I then succumb under pressure to cover the syllabus as it is a requirement and still support learners with learning barriers" (Participant E).

One of the support provisions outlined by the SIAS is that the curriculum has to be differentiated and customised to meet the individual needs of learners (DoE, 2014). Research findings indicate that one teacher did curriculum differentiation when supporting learners with learning barriers.

"I do curriculum differentiation to cover the syllabus and accommodate the needs of every learner. I create different activities according to different cognitive needs of every learner" (Participant F).

Curriculum differentiation is one of the critical competencies intended to guarantee the provision of learner support (Merga, 2020). According to Merga (2020), curriculum differentiation requires teachers to adjust the content to ensure that various teaching strategies are employed to bestow information learners require to learn. Therefore, the above statements show that the curriculum should be flexible to accommodate the individual needs of every learner. Research findings suggest an inflexible curriculum is challenging when supporting learners with writing and reading barriers.

Strategies for identifying learners with Dysgraphia and Dyslexia

Professional development

Teachers can contribute effectively when teaching. Participants indicated that professional development would be significant as they would acquire more expertise and skills to support learners with learning barriers.

"I would be glad if the Department of Education offered professional development programs such as workshops to learn how to support learners with learning barriers, as other barriers are extreme" (Participant D).

"In the four years of teaching in this school, I have not attended a workshop in which we were taught how to identify and support learners with learning barriers. I would appreciate it if we could have opportunities to study more about inclusive Education" (Participant D).

Furthermore, participants mentioned that continuous professional development was necessary as policies and knowledge on tackling learning barriers are continuously shared.

"I would appreciate it if the SBST and DBST could create workshops to contribute to our professional development. We need the skills to support learners with barriers, as some of us finished college long ago" (Participant B).

"I would appreciate it if the SBST and DBST could organize workshops for our professional development to provide us with skills" (Participant A).

"We need workshops to equip us with knowledge and skills. At other times,

it is challenging to implement recommendations we have received from workshops and training" (Participant D).

The findings suggested that teachers need teacher development through workshops and training to acquire skills and practical knowledge when supporting learners with learning barriers. Svendsen (2020) notes that teachers need concrete and practical ideas directly relating to their daily classroom situations. Therefore, personal development is necessary as teachers should be equipped with knowledge and practical skills to support learners with barriers. Professional development includes educational programs like workshops, in-service courses, and teacher-to-teacher mentor programs that help teachers (Sancar, Atal & Deryakulu, 2021). According to Svendsen (2020), teachers view development programs as beneficial as they expand their knowledge and skills. As a result,

Providing teachers' training

This study suggested that supporting teachers through training could assist in identifying learners who experienced learning barriers and support them.

"We are support teachers trained in learning barriers. We will collaborate to help each other" (Participant D).

"I would appreciate it if the DBST Could offer every school a support teacher who deals with learners with learning barriers" (Participant E).

The findings revealed that participants would appreciate the appointment of a trained support teacher who knows about learning barriers. Support teacher refers to teachers who are trained to identify learners with learning barriers and offer specific and necessary support (Karimupfumbi & Dwarika, 2022). Participants indicated that a support teacher would greatly help them as they are trained to identify and support learners with learning barriers.

Providing support from DSBT

This study indicated that providing support from DSBT could assist in overcoming challenges in supporting learners with learning barriers at a rural school. Some participants suggested that they need support from the DBST. The abstract from four participants shared the following views.

"We would appreciate it if we could receive support from DSBT, especially after referring a learner, as we receive no communication after that" (Participant A).

"We need a support teacher trained to work with learners with barriers" (Participant C)

"We need a support teacher because sometimes, when the SBST has referred a learner to DBST, they place learners on a waiting list, and it takes time to receive feedback" (Participant B).

"I would appreciate it if the district could offer opportunities to study inclusive education so I can learn what to do when learners have learning barriers" (Participant E).

The findings suggest that participants required support from DBST to provide workshops, opportunities to study inclusive education, and speed feedback on learners referred to the DBST team in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study explored teachers' perceptions of supporting learners with learning barriers. The study findings suggest that teachers know about learning barriers, specifically dyslexia and dysgraphia. Teachers were able to identify learners who exhibited such learning difficulties. The teachers are also cognisant of and perceived factors that affect their ability to support learners with learning barriers, including inflexible curriculum, classroom overcrowding, lack of parental involvement, and lack of support from DBST. The research findings indicated that teachers could only support learners whose barriers were moderate and needed further training or help from support teachers to identify

extreme cases. Teachers' perception of lack of parental involvement is impeded as the SIAS process requires teachers to work collaboratively with parents to ensure that learners receive early intervention.

Additionally, teachers recognised that the overcrowded classrooms were impeded as they could not support learners specifically and cater to their individual needs. Furthermore, the teachers' perception of the curriculum was that it was inflexible and did not make a lot of room to attend to and address challenges faced by learners with learning barriers as they felt pressured to finish the syllabus as required. Thus, this affected their ability and limited their time supporting learners who cannot read and write. Teachers' sentiments concurred that teaching in an overcrowded classroom was a challenge as they could not accommodate learners with learning barriers (Du Plessis, 2020; Meier & West, 2020; Mpu & Adu, 2021).

However, despite the Free State Department of Education's efforts to organise workshops and seminars on inclusive education and teaching aids to support learners with barriers, teachers were still facing challenges. The teachers deduced that they could be supported when identifying and supporting learners with learning barriers. They also indicated that they would appreciate receiving a support teacher qualified to work with learners with learning barriers, more workshops for practical skills and knowledge, and ongoing support from the DBST. Therefore, research findings suggest that teachers still require help implementing policies such as the SIAS to accommodate the diverse needs of learners. Teachers' challenges inevitably and negatively affect support provision for learners with learning barriers. The study describes teachers' perceptions of supporting learners with learning barriers. This can be attributed to the research design, which was qualitative, and the semi-structured interviews used as a data collection method. The research design and semi-structured interviews facilitated the sharing of information and perceptions of teachers when supporting learners with dyslexia and dysgraphia. The study enabled teachers to reflect on their strengths and available resources when supporting learners who cannot read and write. Furthermore, the study emphasized impediments faced by teachers in the process of supporting learners with learning barriers.

The scope of this study was narrow as the study was limited to one rural primary school. The school was in a rural area in Phuthaditjhaba, Thabo Mofutsanyana district. Therefore, these findings must be taken in context and cannot be generalised or applied to other populations. Additionally, the study was limited to the Foundation Phase only. The research findings are not reflective of the entire school because the study aimed to provide in-depth information relating to the study and not to generalise the findings.

The language used was a limitation as teachers indicated they wanted to fully infuse English and their home language, Sesotho, to express themselves during semi-structured interviews. Therefore, data collection took substantial time as transcribing the data was lengthy and time-consuming. It is to be noted that significant data could have been lost as I transcribed from Sesotho's home language to English.

The DBST has to be actively involved in conducting workshops about various learning barriers, particularly dyslexia and dysgraphia. The main focus of these workshops should be on providing adequate training for teachers to equip them with practical skills and knowledge to support learners with learning barriers. The Department of Education has to create viable solutions, such as employing support teachers in rural primary schools who are trained and know how to support learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia. Furthermore, there should be ongoing support from the DBST to improve teachers' efficiency when supporting learners with learning barriers. The Department of Education should encourage principals to accentuate the value of parental involvement in their children's academic endeavours during parent meetings.

The study was done at a rural primary school with readily available resources and support structures. Future research should explore teachers' perceptions when supporting learners with dyslexia and dysgraphia barriers in intermediate and secondary schools. Lastly, a research study could be conducted on how different teaching strategies could improve learners' reading and writing abilities.

The study explored teachers' perceptions when supporting learners with learning barriers such as dyslexia and dysgraphia. One rural primary school was selected to gather data, and six foundation phase teachers participated in the study. The theoretical framework underpinning the study was Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data. The themes that emerged during data analysis were analysed through qualitative thematic analysis. The research findings deduced that emerged themes indicated teachers were aware of dyslexia and dysgraphia learning barriers and identified that it was common to have learners who displayed such challenges in their classrooms.

Furthermore, teachers revealed that it was easier to identify learners with dysgraphia and dyslexia learning barriers and could support learners whose barriers were manageable. Teachers faced challenges that affected their ability to support learners thoroughly. These included a lack of support from DBST, parental support, an inflexible curriculum, and classroom overcrowding. Thus, it can be concluded that teachers still require further workshops facilitated to develop their skills and effectiveness in using different teaching strategies to support learners with learning barriers.

Teachers shared most perceptions regarding challenges they face when supporting learners with learning barriers and the joint support they require, such as more.

Training, support from DBST, and a support teacher are required to support all learners adequately. In conclusion, I recommend that the Department of Education offer more workshops and training about inclusive education, which will equip teachers with practical skills and effective strategies when supporting learners with dyslexia and dysgraphia.

REFERENCES

- Abrol, M. (2023). Role of Teacher in Promoting Inclusive Education. *IJFMR-International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research*, 5(2), 1-8. Retrieved from www.ijfmr.com
- Abulhul, Z. (2021). Teaching strategies for enhancing student's learning. *Journal of Practical Studies in Education*, 2(3), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.46809/jpse.v2i3.22>.
- Adeoye-Olatunde, O. A., & Olenik, N. L. (2021). Research and scholarly methods: Semi-structured interviews. *Journal of the American college of clinical pharmacy*, 4(10), 1358-1367. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jac5.1441>.
- Ainscow, M., Slee, R., & Best, M. (2019). The Salamanca Statement: 25 years on. *International Journal of inclusive education*, 23(7-8), 671-676. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1622800>.
- Alam, N. A. R. (2021). The importance of parent's literacy understanding towards children reading habits'. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1, 4687. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/4687>.
- Alharahsheh, H. H., & Pius, A. (2020). A review of key paradigms: Positivism VS interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 39-43. <https://doi.org/10.36348/gajhss.2020.v02i03.001>.
- Alnahdi, G. (2020). Are we ready for inclusion? Teachers' perceived self-efficacy for inclusive education in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 67(2), 182-193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2019.1634795>.

- American Psychiatric Association, D. S. M. T. F., & American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-5*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.
- Andrews, J. F., Liu, H. T., Liu, C. J., Gentry, M. A., & Smith, Z. (2019). Increasing early reading skills in young signing deaf children using shared book reading: A feasibility study. In *Research in Young Children's Literacy and Language Development* (pp. 285-301). Singapore: Routledge.
- Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What is qualitative in qualitative research? *Qualitative Sociology*, 42, 139-160. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7>
- Ayua, G. A. (2017, September). Effective teaching strategies. *Optometric Education* 20(1), 19-20, 296 2017. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.34147.09765>
- Aziz, H. A., Laili, N., & Prihantono, G. (2016). The impact of fiscal policy impact on income inequality and economic growth: A case study of district/city in Java. *Journal of Indonesian Applied Economics*, 6(2), 229-244. <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.jiae.2016.006.02.6>
- Belina, A. (2023). Semi-structured interviewing as a tool for understanding informal civil society. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 14(2), 331-347. <https://doi.org/10.1332/204080522X16454629995872>
- Bennett, S., Ismailos, L., & Gallagher, T. (2019, July). Concept Mapping: Efficacy and Beliefs of Beginning Teachers for Inclusive Practice. In *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 63(7), 759-759. Hoboken 07030-5774, NJ USA: Wiley.
- Berndt, A. E. (2020). Sampling methods. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 36(2), 224-226. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334420906850>
- Borges, M. T., Apriglio, L. C. S., Azoni, C. A. S., & Crenitte, P. A. P. (2020). Types of handwriting and signs of dysgraphia in children and adolescents with learning difficulties. *Revista CEFAC*, 22(6), 1.8. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-0216/202022617719>
- Börü, N. (2018). The factors affecting teacher motivation. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(4), 761-776. <https://doi.org/10.12973/iji.2018.11448a>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative research in sport, exercise, and health*, 11(4), 589-597. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., & Terry, G. (2019). Thematic analysis. In P. Liamputtong (ed.), *Handbook of research methods in health social sciences*, (pp. 843-860). Singapore: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5251-4_103
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Burton, K. (2018). How dyslexia affects our students. *Honors Research Projects*, 612, 1-39. Retrieved from http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/honors_research_projects/612.
- Cabigao, J. R. (2021). Improving the Basic Writing Skills of Grade 7 Learners in Filipino: An Action Research in Filipino Language. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 9(3), 67-71. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8842-6828>
- Chung, P. J., Patel, D. R., & Nizami, I. (2020). Disorder of written expression and dysgraphia: definition, diagnosis, and management. *Translational pediatrics*, 9(Suppl 1), S46-S54. <https://doi.org/10.21037/tp.2019.11.01>
- Crawford, M. (2020). Ecological Systems theory: Exploring the development of the theoretical framework as con-ceived by Bronfenbrenner. *Journal Public Health Issue Practice*, 4(2), p.170. <https://doi.org/10.33790/jphip1100170>
- Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. California: SAGE.
- Darici, N. (2023). Assisting Language Learners of Dysgraphia: A Handbook for Teacher Candidates. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 10(3), 318-325. <https://doi.org/10.23918/ijsses.v10i3p318>
- De Jong, L., Meirink, J., & Admiraal, W. (2019). School-based teacher collaboration: Different learning opportunities across various contexts. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 86, p.102925. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102925>
- Department of Basic Education. (DBE) (2014). Report on the Annual National Assessments of 2014: Grades 1-6 & 9. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Department of Basic Education. (DBE). (2023). *PIRLS 2021: South African Preliminary Highlights Report*. Pretoria: Government Printer
- Department of Education. (DoE) (2001). *White Paper Six: Special Needs Education. Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Done, E. J., & Andrews, M. J. (2020). How inclusion became exclusion: Policy, teachers, and inclusive education. *Journal of Education Policy*, 35(4), 447-464. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2018.1552763>.
- Du Plessis, E. (2020). Student teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges regarding learner-centred teaching. *South African Journal of Education*, 40(1),#1631, 10 pages. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v40n1a1631>.
- Du Plessis, P., & Mestry, R. (2019). Teachers for rural schools—a challenge for South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 39, Art. #1774, 9 pages, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39ns1a1774>.
- Dui, L.G., Lunardini, F., Termine, C., Matteucci, M., Stucchi, N. A., Borghese, N. A., & Ferrante, S. (2020). A tablet app for handwriting skill screening at the preliteracy stage: Instrument validation study. *JMIR serious games*, 8(4), p.e20126. <https://doi.org/10.2196/20126>
- El Zaatar, W., & Maalouf, I. (2022). How the Bronfenbrenner bio-ecological system theory explains the development of students' sense of belonging to school?. *SAGE Open*, 12(4), 21582440221134089. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221134089>
- Elliott, S., & Davis, J. M. (2020). Challenging taken-for-granted ideas in early childhood education: A critique of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory in the age of post-humanism. In A. Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles., K. Malone, & E. Barratt Hacking (eds) *Research handbook on childhood nature: Assemblages of childhood and nature research*, (pp. 1119-1154). Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-67286-1_60
- Engelbrecht, P. (2020). Inclusive education: Developments and challenges in South Africa. *Prospects*, 49(3-4), 219-232. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09499-6>
- Engelbrecht, P., Nel, M., Nel, N., & Tlale, D. (2015). Enacting understanding of inclusion in complex contexts: Classroom practices of South African teachers. *South African Journal of Education*, 35(3), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.15700/201409161038>
- Farrell, M. (2021). *Supporting disorders of Learning and co-ordination: Effective provision for Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, and Dyspraxia*. London: Routledge.
- Feizefu, A. R. (2021). Problems teachers face in teaching children with dysgraphia and its implication on their academic performance in fako division of the south west region of cameroon. *Central Asian Journal of Social Sciences and History*, 2(5), 35-54. Retrieved from <https://cajssh.centralasianstudies.org/index.php/CAJSSH/article/view/120>
- Florian, L. (2019). On the necessary co-existence of special and inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 23(7-8), 691-704. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1622801>
- Fourie, J. V. (2017). *School-based collaborative support networks in fostering inclusive education in selected South African schools* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation) University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Franklin, D. (2018). *Helping your child with language-based learning disabilities: Strategies to succeed in school and life with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, ADHD, and processing disorders*. New Harbinger Publications.

- Franklin-Brown, M. (2019). *Reading the world: encyclopedic writing in the scholastic age*. University of Chicago Press.
- Gillon, G. T. (2017). *Phonological awareness: From research to practice*. Guilford Publications.
- Given, L. M. (2022). *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. SAGE Publishers.
- Govender, R., & Hugo, A. J. (2020). An analysis of the results of literacy assessments conducted in South African primary schools. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 10(1), a745. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v10i1.745>
- Grey, B. (2014). *The Meaning of the Child to the Parent: The Development and Validation of a New Method of Classifying Parenting Interviews for the nature of the Parent-Child Relationship* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation), University of Roehampton. London, United Kingdom.
- Grigorenko, E. L., Compton, D. L., Fuchs, L. S., Wagner, R. K., Willcutt, E. G., & Fletcher, J. M. (2020). Understanding, educating, and supporting children with specific learning disabilities: 50 years of science and practice. *American Psychologist*, 75(1), 37-51. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000452>
- Gülşün, I., Malinen, O. P., Yada, A., & Savolainen, H. (2023). Exploring the role of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, their self-efficacy, and collective efficacy in behaviour management in teacher behaviour. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 132(104228), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104228>
- Guruji, E. (2022). *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action, 1994*. Retrieved from [https://www.educationalguruji.com/2022/01/salamancastatement1994.html#:~:text=The%20Salamanca%20Statement%20asks%20governments,\(3\)%20Develop%20demonstration%20projects](https://www.educationalguruji.com/2022/01/salamancastatement1994.html#:~:text=The%20Salamanca%20Statement%20asks%20governments,(3)%20Develop%20demonstration%20projects)
- Hampden-Thompson, G., & Galindo, C. (2017). School-family relationships, school satisfaction and the academic achievement of young people. *Educational Review*, 69(2), 248-265. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2016.1207613>
- Hasan, N., Rana, R. U., Chowdhury, S., Dola, A. J., & Rony, M. K. K. (2021). Ethical considerations in research. *Journal of Nursing Research, Patient Safety and Practise* 2799-1210, 1(11), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.55529/jnrpsp11.14>
- Hauwadhanasuk, T., Zhuang, M., Everson, S. T., Yu, S., & Karnas, M. (2019). School Leadership to Increase Inclusive Education Practices in China, Thailand, and Turkey. In P. R. Litchka (ed.), *Leading Schools with Unique Populations: An International Perspective on School Leadership*, (pp. 17-35). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Haven, T., & Van Grootel, D. L. (2019). Preregistering qualitative research. *Accountability in research*, 26(3), 229-244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08989621.2019.1580147>
- Hernández-Torrano, D., Somerton, M., & Helmer, J. (2022). Mapping research on inclusive education since Salamanca Statement: a bibliometric review of the literature over 25 years. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 26(9), 893-912. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1747555>
- Hess, S. A. (2020). *Teachers perceptions regarding the implementation of the Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) policy in mainstream schools* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation), Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa.
- Hong, S. Y., Eum, J., Long, Y., Wu, C., & Welch, G. (2020). Typically developing preschoolers' behavior toward peers with disabilities in inclusive classroom contexts. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 42(1), 49-68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053815119873071>
- Hove, N. (2014). The effectiveness of special schools in the teaching of children with learning disabilities in South Africa. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(20), 1903-1907. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n20p1903>
- Islam, M. A., & Aldaihani, F. M. F. (2022). Justification for adopting qualitative research method, research approaches, sampling strategy, sample size, interview method, saturation, and data analysis. *Journal of International Business and Management*, 5(1), 01-11. <https://doi.org/10.37227/IIBM-2021-09-1494>
- Jury, M., Laurence, A., Cèbe, S., & Desombre, C. (2023, January). Teachers' concerns about inclusive education and the links with teachers' attitudes. In *Frontiers in Education*, 7, 1065919. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.1065919>
- Kalenjuk, E., Laletas, S., Subban, P., & Wilson, S. (2021). A scoping review to map research on children with dysgraphia, their carers, and educators. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 27(1), 1-45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19404158.2021.1999997>
- Kara, S., & Abdulrahman, S. A. (2022). The Effects of Product Approach on Language Preparatory School Students Writing Score in an Academic Writing Course. *Canadian Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, 2(4), 45-65. <https://doi.org/10.53103/cjlls.v2i4.57>
- Karimupfumbi, F. (2020). *Supporting learners who present with symptoms of dyslexia: teachers' experiences of using the screening, identification, assessment, and support (SIAS) tool* (Unpublished Master's Dissertation), University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Karimupfumbi, F., & Dwarika, V. M. (2022). Teachers' experiences of using the screening, identification, assessment, and support strategy to support learners who present with characteristics of dyslexia. *South African journal of childhood education*, 12(1), a1107. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v12i1.1107>
- Kimani, M. E. (2022). Does Increased Government Spending on Additional Teachers Improve Education Quality?. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Africa's Economic Sectors* (pp. 411-435). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- La Paro, K. M., Kraft-Sayre, M., & Pianta, R. C. (2003). Preschool to Kindergarten Transition Activities: Involvement and Satisfaction of Families and Teachers. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 17(2), 147-158. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02568540309595006>
- Lindner, K. T., Schwab, S., Emara, M., & Avramidis, E. (2023). Do teachers favor the inclusion of all students? A systematic review of primary schoolteachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 38(6), 766-787. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2023.2172894>
- Lupo, S. M., Tortorelli, L., Invernizzi, M., Ryooy, J. H., & Strong, J. Z. (2019). An exploration of text difficulty and knowledge support on adolescents' comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 54(4), 457-479. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rrq.247>
- Makoelle, T. M. (2012). The state of inclusive pedagogy in South Africa: A literature review. *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, 3(2), 93-102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09766634.2012.11885569>
- Mamabolo, J. M., Sepadi, M. D., Mabasa-Manganyi, R. B., Kgopa, F., Ndlovu, S. M., & Themane, M. (2021). What are teachers' beliefs, values, and attitudes toward the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning in South African primary schools. *Perspectives in Education*, 39(2), 239-252. <http://doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v39.i2.17>
- Mather, N. (2022). The impact of teacher and learner positioning in the writing classroom. *Journal for Language Teaching*, 56(1), 1-30. <https://doi.org/10.56285/jltVol56iss1a5412>
- Mayer, I. (2015). Qualitative research with a focus on qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Sales, Retailing & Marketing*, 4(9), 53-67. Retrieved from <https://www.circleinternational.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2021/01/IJSRM4-9.pdf#page=57>
- Mayes, S. D., Breaux, R. P., Calhoun, S. L., & Frye, S. S. (2019). High prevalence of dysgraphia in elementary through high school students with ADHD and autism. *Journal of attention disorders*, 23(8), 787-796. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1087054717720721>
- McGarrigle, L., Beamish, W., & Hay, S. (2021). Measuring teacher efficacy to build capacity for implementing inclusive practices in an Australian primary school. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 27(7), 771-784. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1867657>

- McKeever, M. (2017). Educational inequality in apartheid South Africa. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 61(1), 114-131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764216682988>
- McKenzie, J. (2021). Intellectual disability in inclusive education in South Africa: Curriculum challenges. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 18(1), 53-57. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jppi.12337>
- Merga, M. K. (2019). How do librarians in schools support struggling readers?. *English in Education*, 53(2), 145-160. <https://doi.org/10.1080/04250494.2018.1558030>
- Merga, M. K. (2020). "Fallen through the cracks": Teachers' perceptions of barriers faced by struggling literacy learners in secondary school. *English in Education*, 54(4), 371-395. <https://doi.org/10.1080/04250494.2019.1672502>
- Mhlongo, S. A. (2017). *Inclusive Education Support Programmes Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties in Full-Service School: Umlazi District Educators' Voices* (Unpublished Master's Dissertation). University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.
- Moleme, M. J. (2020). *Addressing neurodevelopmental learning needs by a school-based support team in a full-service school* (Unpublished Master's thesis) University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Morales-Rando, C., Pérez-Jorge, D., Strbová, L., & Ariño-Mateo, E. (2022). Manuscript vs cursive writing. Learning to write in primary education. *Education* 3-13, 50(7), 880-892. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2021.1916053>
- Moriña, A., Perera, V. H. & Carballo, R. (2020). Training needs of academics on inclusive education and disability. *SAGE open*, 10(3), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020962758>
- Motitswe, J. (2014). The role of institute level support teams on addressing barriers to learning and provide support in schools. Are they functional? *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(8), 259-264. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n8p259>
- Motulsky, S. L. (2021). Is member checking the gold standard of quality in qualitative research?. *Qualitative Psychology*, 8(3), 389-406. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qap0000215>
- Mpanza, L.P., & Govender, S. (2022). Primary School-Based Support Teams' Experiences and Practices When Supporting Teachers. *Multicultural Education*, 8(2), 272-285. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6323544>
- Mpiti, T., & Mbodila, M. (2020). Teaching strategies in writing english first additional language by isixhosa background learners from rural primary schools. In *EDULEARN20 Proceedings* (pp. 176-183). IATED. <http://doi.org/10.21125/edulearn.2020.0093>
- Mpu, Y., & Adu, E. O. (2021). The challenges of inclusive education and its implementation in schools: The South African perspective. *Perspectives in Education*, 39(2), 225-238. <http://doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v39.i2.16>
- Mudhar, G., Ertesvåg, S. K., & Pakarinen, E. (2023). Patterns of teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusive education associated with teacher emotional support, collective teacher efficacy, and collegial collaboration. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2023.2233297>
- Mukuna, K. R., & Aloka, P. J. (2020). Exploring educators' challenges of online learning in COVID-19 at a rural school, South Africa. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 19(10), 134-149. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.10.8>
- Muzari, T., Shava, G. N., & Shonhiwa, S. (2022). Qualitative research paradigm, a key research design for educational researchers, processes and procedures: A theoretical overview. *Indiana Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 14-20. Retrieved from https://indianapublications.com/articles/IJHSS_3
- Nel, N. M., Tlale, L. D. N., Engelbrecht, P., & Nel, M. (2016). Teachers' perceptions of education support structures in the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. *Koers*, 81(3), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.19108/KOERS.81.3.2249>
- Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C.T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on medical education*, 8, 90-97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2>
- Ntekane, A. (2018). Parental involvement in education. *Research Gate*, 1(1), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.36330.21440>
- Ntseto, R. M., Kgothule, R. J., Ugwuanyi, C. S., & Okeke, C. I. (2021). Exploring the impediments to the implementation of policy of screening, identification, assessment, and support in schools: Implications for Educational Evaluators. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 8(2), 1383-1392. Retrieved from <http://www.jcreview.com/fulltext/197-622816733.pdf?1622917830>
- Obatta, M. I., Adama, G. C., & Onu, V. C. (2020). Effect of scsfolding strategy on creative writing ability of in-school adolescents with dysgraphia. *International Journal of Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Development*, 2(1), 251-262. <https://doi.org/10.13140/ijyeed.08.2020.251.262>
- Parrott, F. R., Macinnes, D. L., & Parrott, J. (2015). Mental illness and parenthood: being a parent in secure psychiatric care. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 25(4), 258-272. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cbm.1948>
- Phala, T. A., & Hugo, A. (2022). Difficulties in teaching Grade 3 learners with reading problems in full-service schools in South Africa. *African Journal of Disability (Online)*, 11(0), a906. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v11i0.906>
- Pham, L. T. M. (2018). *Qualitative approach to research a review of advantages and disadvantages of three paradigms: Positivism, interpretivism and critical inquiry* (Unpublished Masters thesis), University of Adelaide, Australia.
- Premier, J. (2021). Teachers' Experiences of Educating EAL Students in Mainstream Primary and Secondary Classrooms. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 46(8), 1-16. <http://doi.org/10.3316/INFORMIT.084289894408415>
- Qutoshi, S. B. (2018). Phenomenology: A philosophy and method of inquiry. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 5(1), 215-222. <http://dx.doi.org/10.22555/joeed.v5i1.2154>
- Rehman, A. A., & Alharthi, K. (2016). An introduction to research paradigms. *International journal of educational investigations*, 3(8), 51-59. Retrieved from www.ijeionline.com
- Rottaro, S. (2022). *Exploring collaboration between psychologists and learning support teachers during the SIAS process* (Doctoral dissertation), Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa.
- Roux, K., Van Staden, S., & Tshele, M. (2023). *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2021: South African main report*. Department of Basic Education.
- Sakız, H. (2017). Impact of an inclusive programme on achievement, attendance and perceptions towards the school climate and social-emotional adaptation among students with disabilities. *Educational Psychology*, 37(5), 611-631. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2016.1225001>
- Saloviita, T. (2019). Explaining classroom teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. *Support for Learning*, 34(4), 433-442. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9604.12277>
- Sancar, R., Atal, D., & Deryakulu, D. (2021). A new framework for teachers' professional development. *Teaching and teacher education*, 101, 103305. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103305>
- Sekaran, U., & Bougie R. (2016). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach* (7th ed.). West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Semeraro, C., Coppola, G., Cassibba, R., & Lucangeli, D. (2019). Teaching of cursive writing in the first year of primary school: Effect on reading and writing skills. *PloS one*, 14(2), p.e0209978. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0209978>
- Shifrer, D. C., & Chandra, R. M. (2013). Equity or marginalization? The high school course-taking of students labeled with a learning disability. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(4), 656-82. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831213479439>

- Song, J., Sharma, U., & Choi, H. (2019). Impact of teacher education on pre-service regular school teachers' attitudes, intentions, concerns and self-efficacy about inclusive education in South Korea. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 86, 102901. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102901>
- Starko, A. J. (2021). *Creativity in the classroom: Schools of curious delight*. Routledge.
- Stratton, S. J. (2021). Population research: convenience sampling strategies. *Prehospital and disaster Medicine*, 36(4), 373-374. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049023X21000649>
- Svendsen, B. (2020). Inquiries into teacher professional development-what matters? *Education*, 140(3), 111-130.
- Takalani, M. G. (2021). *Supporting learners with specific learning disabilities in Rural Secondary Schools* (Unpublished master's thesis), University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Tekin, A. K. (2011). Parent involvement revisited: Background, theories, and models. *International journal of applied educational studies*, 11(1), 1-13.
- Themane, M., & Thobejane, H. R. (2019). Teachers as change agents in making teaching inclusive in some selected rural schools of Limpopo Province, South Africa: Implications for teacher education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 23(4), 369-383. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2018.1434690>
- Tümekaya, G. S., & Miller, S. (2020). The perceptions of pre- and in-service teachers' self-efficacy regarding inclusive practices: A systematised review. *Elementary Education Online*, 19(2), 1061-1077. <https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2020.696690>
- Uebergang, L. C. C., & Catroppa, C. (2020). Submission for the 2020 review of the disability standards for education 2005. Retrieved from <https://www.dese.gov.au/disability-standards-education2005/consultations/consultations-2020-review-disability-standards-education-2005/submission/10856>
- UNESCO. (1994). *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on special needs Education: adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education; Access and Quality*. Salamanca, Spain, 7-10 June 1994. UNESCO.
- Van Steen, T., & Wilson, C. (2020). Individual and cultural factors in teachers' attitudes towards inclusion: A meta-analysis. *Teaching and teacher Education*, 95, p.103127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103127>
- Walton, E., & Engelbrecht, P. (2022). Inclusive education in South Africa: path dependencies and emergences. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2022.2061608>
- Walton, E., Andrews, D., & Osman, R. (2019). Professional judgment in and for complex social and educational contexts. *Southern African Review of Education with Education with Production*, 25(1), 5-15. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-1877c03ed6>
- West, J., & Meier, C. (2020). Overcrowded classrooms -The Achilles heel of South African education?, *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 10(1), a617. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v10i1.617>
- Yucedal, H. M., & Shareef, L. A. (2022). Improving Language Preparatory School Students Writing Skills through Process Approach. *Canadian Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, 2(5), 50-72. <https://doi.org/10.53103/cjlls.v2i5.65>