

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF FOUNDATION PHASE
TEACHERS IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF LEARNERS WITH LEARNING
BARRIERS**

by

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DECLARATION

I Leetwane Anna Ntlhare declare that this thesis entitled, **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF LWLB**, is my own original and independent work, except where references to other sources have been acknowledged.

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December 2023

LEETWANE ANNA NTLHARE

DEDICATION

To the memory of my late father, Ramoetse Ezael Manyanye, and my mother, Puseletso Johanna Manyanye, for their immense contribution towards my educational journey, leading to the person I am today. To my husband, Lebohang Christopher Ntlhare, for being there always and pushing me when I did not want to pursue with my studies because of the demands of an exacting workload. I sincerely appreciate the sacrifices they had all made to ensure I succeed in my endeavours.

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ABSTRACT

The research study focused on teachers' professional development needs in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase. Teachers' training and professional development needs for South African Foundation Phase teachers have never been inevitable. The Department reported the failure of Higher Education to produce competent, skilled Foundation Phase teachers to meet the needs of the learners in the diverse classrooms. For decades, the status and image of teaching had been viewed from the position of racial discrimination. The democratic dispensation ended unfair discrimination in the education system by adopting the Inclusive Education and Training System Policy in 2001 to improve access to quality education for vulnerable learners and those who experience learning barriers. Policies and guidelines were reformed, and teachers received training. However, the research shows that many professional development programmes have failed to improve teachers' training. Despite reforming policies and exposing teachers to training, the training and professional development did not equip teachers with the relevant skills and knowledge of appropriate strategies to identify LWLB. It is a fact that if the teachers' needs are fulfilled, learners' achievement will improve.

This study aimed to explore how teachers' training and professional development can be improved in identifying LWLB in Foundation Phase schools in Motheo District, Free State. The study sought to answer the main research question: What are the training and professional development needs of Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB and the implications for teacher education? An interpretivist paradigm and qualitative model were chosen to determine the views of the participants in terms of their training. Data were derived from semi-structured face-to-face and focus group interviews with Foundation Phase teachers, support teachers, and Subject Advisors in South African primary schools. Participants were purposively selected. The theoretical frameworks used constructivist and socio-constructivist learning theories. The analysis of qualitative data was conducted using thematic analysis. The research revealed that professional development does not address teachers' needs; numerous

challenges were experienced by teachers in identifying LWLB, although they had received training. The study implies that Subject Advisors ought to pay attention to the various learning theories to engage in networking activities to learn from one another. The Department of Education needs to find ways to adjust training to policy; make the training practically applicable; increase the time available for practice teaching that would allow teachers to interact with one another; and share ideas and experiences to handle challenges in identifying LWLB. Adequate and relevant resources (i.e ICT equipment), teachers' engagement during training, and learning that involves social-constructivism and constructivist theories, were suggested. The researcher proposed the use of Social Constructivism and Constructivist learning theories as strategies to develop teachers to enable them to identify LWLB in the Foundation Phase and improve the performance of such learners.

Keywords: Professional development, barriers to learning, teacher training, Foundation Phase teachers, Foundation Phase learners

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACE	Advance Certificate in Education
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBST	District-Based Support Team
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EASNIE	The European Agency for Special Needs Education
EFA	Education for All
EWP 6	Education White Paper 6
FP	Foundation Phase
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
Hons	Honours Degree
IDDC	International Disability and Development Consortium
IE	Inclusive Education
IEP	Individualised Educational Programme
JPTD	Junior Primary Teachers Diploma
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LST's	Learning Support Teachers (LST's)
LWLB	Learners With Learning Barriers
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PD	Professional Development
PK	Pedagogical Knowledge
PTC	Primary Teachers Certificate
PTD	Professional Teacher Development

RE	Remedial Education
REQV 14	Relative Education Qualification Value 14
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SAs	Subject Advisors
SATs	School Assessment Teams
SBSTs	School-Based Support Teams
SGBs	School Governing Bodies
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support
SLTS	Specialised Learner and Teacher Services (SLTS)
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	UN on Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNESCO-IBE	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural organisation International Bureau of Education.
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
VBR	Video-Based Reflection

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1

1.2 Introduction and background to the study

Recognizing individual differences of learners is a basic concept when teachers prepare to teach (Sarason & Evans, 2015). All learners can learn, and all need support, but some may, for whatever reason, require additional support for learning (Department of Basic Education: DOBE, 2014). Since the South African Department of Education introduced the Inclusive Education and Training System Policy in 2001 to improve access to quality education for vulnerable learners and those who experience learning barriers (DOBE, 2001; Education Policy Institute, 2021; Mader, 2017), the number of LWLB within classrooms have increased. As a result, teachers face the added responsibility of ensuring that all learners' needs are met. The DOBE (2014) proposed that teachers who teach diverse learners, require specific training that integrates various pedagogical skills and relevant attitudes to support learners with barriers to learning. Recent studies acknowledged that the DOBE did little to equip teachers with the essential skills and knowledge to identify different learning barriers (Alberts, 2016; Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Tshabalala (2014) advances the argument that the quality of teacher training has an impact on teaching methods and improvement of skills.

Similarly, Lockhart (2016) highlighted that none of these efforts had been successfully implemented. The DoE focused on improving matric results, instead of laying a good foundation at the primary level (Parveen, 2019). It is important to note that the South African Government has launched many initiatives to equip and train teachers to identify learners with barriers in mainstream schools.

Policies and guidelines were provided to determine how such support could be most appropriately implemented. These are included in the National Strategy for Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) (DOBE, 2014) and Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning. Furthermore, the DOBE (2001; 2005) has equipped mainstream schools with school-based structures, such as School Based Support Teams (SBST's) and School Assessment Teams (SAT's). In addition, Learning

Support Teachers (LST's) have been employed in the Foundation Phase to assist teachers and learners who experience learning barriers (Clarke & Visser, 2019; Clotfelter et al., 2016, Hemelt, & Ladd, 2016, Webster & De Boer, 2019). These initiatives proved that support had been provided to ensure that teachers received intensive training to identify learners with barriers to learning.

Despite the reforms and development of the policies mentioned above, research revealed that teachers still experienced difficulties identifying LWLB in diverse classrooms, because of the large classes (Chataika, Kamchedzera and Semphere (2017). Nketsia et al. (2020), Opoku, Saloviita and Tracey (2020) emphasise that teacher training could be a way to address teaching challenges. Some scholars reported that overcrowded classes could be considered a barrier to providing individual learning support in inclusive classrooms, and it affects most teachers who struggle to pay individual attention to learners in their overcrowded classrooms (Ajayi et al., 2017, Audu & Ajayi, 2017). Parks-Stamm et al. (2016), Zafonte and Palenque, (2016), for example, have explored how class size influences teachers' choice of teaching methods. Other scholars found that a lack of knowledge, skills, monitoring systems and provision of support could be teachers' main challenges in identifying learning barriers (Mahlo, 2017). Furthermore, various studies have confirmed that inadequate teacher training, lack of foundational knowledge, practical skills, and lack of resources provided, were the major challenges experienced in the identification of Foundation Phase LWLB (Engelbrecht et al., 2013; Savolainen, Nel, & Malinen, 2013, Mahlo, 2017).

This might explain why the training offered does not equip teachers with the required knowledge and skills to identify LWLB. From the literature mentioned above, it is evident that no research has attempted to improve teacher training to identify Foundation Phase LWLB in the Motheo District, Free State Province, South Africa. Therefore, this study contributes to the body of knowledge by exploring how teacher training could be improved in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State Province.

1.3 Statement of the problem

It is important to note that teachers should be well-equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills to identify learners with barriers to learning. These barriers could

be extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic barriers are barriers that do not exist within the learners themselves, but rather circumstances beyond or outside them (Stofile, Raymond & Moletsane, 2014).

Intrinsic barriers are located within the learner him/herself; among other things, physical, sensory, physiological, learning, developmental, mental, or intellectual impairments, whether single or multiple (Stofile, Raymond & Moletsane, 2014). Many studies have been conducted on teachers' challenges and difficulties in identifying learners with barriers to learning at schools (Mkhuma et al., 2014, Maseko & Tlale, 2014). This problem continues in rural primary schools in South Africa, despite the development and reforms of policies that the South African DOBE has made to guide teachers. Some in-service teachers have not benefited from being trained in their initial training to identify learners who experience learning barriers. Hence, most classroom teachers find it difficult to support such learners. Teacher training programmes, in general, do not prepare teachers with the skills and knowledge of appropriate strategies to identify LWLB (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

As a teacher for the past ten years, I have been involved in the remedial class, supporting teachers teaching learners in inclusive classrooms. I have observed that even though teachers have been trained and exposed to various teaching strategies to support learners with different learning styles within the classroom, they continue to experience problems in identifying LWLB. Teachers compiled lists and referred learners to the remedial class without identifying their different learning barriers. This indicates that teachers' training and professional development have not adequately equipped teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify LWLB. Some of them regard LWLB as slow learners without knowing how to identify their problems. Mkhuma et al. (2014), Maseko and Tlale (2014) indicate that teachers dealing with LWLB have trouble in identifying learners. A teacher who is not well equipped with knowledge and skills, would not be able to identify the areas of development and difficulties of learners who experience learning barriers. As a result, learners may experience failure, as they may be unable to do what teachers expect. In this regard, Whitworth and Chiu (2015) suggest that teachers should be well- trained and knowledgeable. Therefore, the study explores how teacher training and professional development could be improved to identify LWLB in the Foundation Phase.

1.4 Rationale for the study

The aim of this study was to explore how teachers' training and Professional development can be improved in identifying LWLB in Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State, in order to determine the views of and experiences of the participants in terms of identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. Teachers' training and the Professional Development of South African Foundation Phase teachers seem to be a serious challenge in identifying LWLB. The assumption that teachers depart from university with acquired skills and knowledge on teaching and identifying LWLBs, tends to be a myth. They need to learn skills first on dealing with LWLB within the classroom, rather than assuming that they come to schools able to perform all profession-related tasks. They could employ different approaches in teaching to deliver the lesson, but questions are always raised. Could they accommodate all learners in the classroom using the mentioned approaches? If not, how can all teachers be prepared via their initial training to do so? The researcher realised that several studies had been conducted on teachers attending Professional Development on identifying LWLB. Still, none have been conducted proposing a model that could be utilised to train teachers to identify LWLB in their classrooms. This topic has been chosen for several reasons. Measures have been put in place by the DoE to train teachers to improve their skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the teachers to accommodate individual learners within the classroom. Studies have also shown that teachers still experience difficulties identifying LWLB in the inclusive classroom after attending several workshops, learners progress to the next grades without knowing how to read, write or perform mathematical calculations.

From her experience at Mahlohonolo primary school in Botshabelo, in a rural area as the Support Teacher assisting LWLB, the researcher noticed that Subject Advisors do not have workable models for training teachers to reflect on the issue of identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. Subject Advisors concentrated on teaching strategies to improve teaching and learning. They overlooked the teacher as a prominent stakeholder in teaching learners. The researcher realised that there is a need to determine whether teachers understand the meaning of Professional Development activities and how they may help them identify LWLB in the classroom. Da Silva (2015) defines Professional Development as the processes, actions and activities designed

to enhance teachers' professional knowledge, teaching skills and attitudes to improve learners' learning.

This study was relevant to determine the essential skills, knowledge and understanding, attitudes, and values needed by all teachers, regardless of their grade. Firstly, the study intended to provide information on the best policies and practices to support the development of teachers for inclusive classrooms at the Foundation Phase level. Secondly, it aimed to disseminate information about innovations and approaches to overcome barriers to changing inclusive policies and practices for teacher education. The problem of identification of LWLB is a cause of concern globally, and therefore the researcher acknowledges that the findings may also benefit other countries experiencing the same challenges. The researcher assumes that addressing the teachers' needs would make a valuable contribution to the DOBE by providing opportunities for debate among curriculum experts and policy makers about the key issues at hand, in particular competences for 'inclusive' teachers. The study's rationale was to provide a framework of competencies applicable to teacher education programmes to support all learners in an inclusive classroom and encourage collaboration among teachers and students during teachers' training and Professional Development.

Firstly, the study's findings revealed that the training offered to teachers was not appropriate to assist in identifying LWLB, but rather raised the normal Professional Development of teachers. Secondly, to the best knowledge of the researcher, this could be the first study in the country to investigate the perceptions of teachers who have received training in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase, focusing on the usage of Social Constructivism and Constructivist theories during teacher training and Professional Development. The present study's findings could help improve teacher training programmes and identify the factors that could affect teachers' implementation of cooperative learning. Furthermore, the present study's results could inform practices in all South African primary schools in the country to follow the same theories in terms of teacher training and identification of LWLB (Martinez et al., 2016, Taut & Schaaf, 2016).

The collected information would help the researcher to determine the views of the participants involved in this study, regarding training and Professional Development.

The study results could also be indispensable to preparing teachers to take responsibility for all learners in their classes and build their capacity to do so. The study findings could assist DOBE in intensifying teachers' training to enable teachers to contemplate multiple areas of development of learners. The study findings could assist Subject Advisors in re-training to include identifying learners. It is believed that teachers' participation during teacher training and Professional Development could help to improve their professional knowledge and practices. The study aimed to empower teachers to draw upon their experiences, relevant to their situations. It is hoped that this study will provide insight into the applicability of these theories during teacher training and Professional Development, aiming to meet the needs of the teachers.

1.5 Theoretical framework

This study was guided by two theories on how teacher training and Professional Development could be improved in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State. Two theoretical frameworks, Social Constructivism and Constructivist learning theories informed this study. These two theories share some similarities, but also differ. The main difference between the two theories is that Social Constructivism emphasises the social aspect of learning.

1.4.1 Social Constructivism learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978)

1.4.1.1 Background of the theory

The theoretical framework is the theory of social change and structural functionalism (Turnheim et al., 2015, Berkhout, Geels, Hof, McMeekin, Nykvist & Van Vuuren, 2015), favoring a unitary concept of society that emphasises social integration. Social constructivism combines several theories and beliefs that give one singular meaning (Amineh & Asl, 2016). This theory has two broad interpretations: emancipatory and social constructivism (Amineh & Asl, 2016). Singh et al. (2013) and Rajput (2013) explain that Social Constructivism learning theory is essentially based on the belief that a learner takes an active role in his or her learning, proceeding from exposure to reception and internalising of subject matter, which integrates new material with the existing store of knowledge. This theory focuses on the effect of partnership and negotiation on reasoning and learning. Therefore, the interactive nature of this study has urged the researcher to use Social Constructivism theory, which claims that

individuals construct knowledge through collaboration with other people and form meaning based on experience, as stated by Amineh and Asl (2016) and Vygotsky (1978). It emphasises collaborative learning. Constructivism explains that humans construct knowledge and meaning from their experiences. This implies that learners learn from experience and not just from hearing lessons. It views learning as a social process whereby people learn or interact through communication. The theory explains the peer learning process during the interaction, facilitated by experts during workshops or learning sessions. Constructivism is a learning theory applicable to teacher training and Professional Development. Amineh and Asl (2016) and Mogashoa (2014) allude that Social Constructivism does not occur only within individuals, nor is it shaped by external forces, but occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities. Amineh and Asl (2016) and Mogashoa (2014) state that the social constructivism approach provides a guiding framework that underlies the practice of teachers' Professional Development as a professional growth tool designed to enhance teachers' professional knowledge and practice.

During the current study, Subject Advisors applied this theory during the training, which would allow teachers to employ collaborative learning during the learning process (Singh & Rajput, 2013). The theory elucidates that learning is a dynamic and active process of constructing meaning and transforming self-constructed understanding in interaction with the environment (Smaldino, 2019). Furthermore, it stresses that teachers must be active, playing a central role in mediating and controlling learning and maintains that students create or construct their new understanding or knowledge through the interaction of previous experiences, ideas, beliefs, events and activities with which they come in contact. Therefore, the nature of this study compelled the researcher to use Social Constructivism theory, which claims that individuals construct knowledge through collaboration with other people and form meaning based on experience (Vygotsky, 1978). The theory explores the concept of the "zone of proximal development". This concept explains how individual learning is impacted by studying alone and how individuals who receive guidance can understand more than those without direction. Kapur (2018) further, discussed the benefits of assisted learning as compared to independent learning. These benefits include the accelerated rate of assisted learning and the ability to complete a complex task independently after being assisted by somebody else. Vygotsky's brand of

constructivism in social learning also states that access of knowledge is a task outlined and adapted into organising an individual's experiences (Kapur, 2018).

1.4.2 Constructivist learning theory (Jean Piaget, 1896-1980).

1.4.2.1 Background of the theory

Geitz and de Geus (2019) explained that learning is a dynamic and active process of constructing meaning and transforming self-constructed understanding in interaction with the environment. Constructivist learning theory is a theory that is based on observation and on a scientific study of how people learn. The Constructivist learning theory states that people construct their understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things during those experiences. This fits well with the constructivist view that posits teachers as facilitators of learning rather than transmitters of data and who present the learner with experiences that bring inconsistencies to light. Kanno (2018) specified that the Constructivist approach is orientated towards the construction of knowledge by putting learners in practical situations under the guidance and tutelage of teachers (in this case Subject Advisors). It is based on the belief that learners construct knowledge through interaction. The assumption is that knowledge is physically constructed by learners who are actively involved in the learning process.

1.6 Research questions

The research question of this study would be:

What are the training and professional development needs of Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB and implications for teacher education?

The sub-research questions would be:

- i) How do Foundation Phase teachers understand professional development activities in identifying LWLB in the classrooms?
- ii) What do Foundation Phase teachers understand about learning barriers in the classrooms?
- iii) What do Foundation Phase teachers understand by identifying LWLB in the classrooms?

- iv) How do Foundation Phase teachers understand LWLB in the classrooms?
- v) What are the Foundation Phase teachers' experiences identifying learners LWLB in the classrooms?
- vi) What are the intervention strategies to improve Foundation Phase teachers' ability to identify LWLB in the classrooms?

1.7 Research aims and objectives

1.6.1 Research aim

The study aimed to explore how teacher training and Professional Development could be improved in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State.

6.2 The objectives of the study would be:

- i) To learn how Foundation Phase teachers understand Professional Development activities in identifying LWLB in the classrooms.
- ii) To gain knowledge of how Foundation Phase teachers understand classroom learning barriers.
- iii) To ascertain whether Foundation Phase teachers recognize aspects of identifying LWLB in the classrooms.
- iv) To investigate how Foundation Phase teachers understand LWLB in the classrooms.
- v) To identify the Foundation Phase teachers' experiences in identifying learners LWLB in their classrooms.
- vi) To develop intervention strategies to improve teacher training in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State.

1.7 Research methodology

1.7.1 Research approach

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study. Qualitative research refers to a range of data collection and analysis techniques that use purposive sampling and semi-

structured, open-ended interviews (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Brennen, (2017) mentioned that qualitative research is useful for obtaining insight into situations. Brennen (2017) also stated that one of the key benefits of the qualitative approach is that it is flexible and uses small sample sizes, which may save costs. This approach would suit the study, because it would help the researcher to determine the challenges teachers encounter in identifying learners with barriers to learning within their classrooms. The approach would also allow the researcher to pose questions based on the research topic and allow participants to express their views and thoughts about the identification of learners. This approach would be beneficial, because it would provide much information and a more intensive, detailed examination of the phenomenon.

1.7.2 Research paradigm

The interpretivism paradigm was adopted to obtain teachers' views regarding their experiences and the challenges in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase. Martens (2015) explained that an interpretative paradigm understands and explains actions.

This paradigm was suitable for this study, since the researcher gained insight and understanding about the identification of learners. Interpretivism involves human behaviour so that the participants' backgrounds and experiences are considered (Martens, 2015). The researcher's choice was to employ interpretivism as related to the aim of the study. The participants were awarded an opportunity to relate their experiences in their own words to ensure effective data representation. That would allow the researcher to comprehend what Foundation Phase teachers face and experience, to identify LWLB to suggest intervention strategies to overcome those problems. This paradigm would further help the researcher to understand how teachers explain and express their experiences and challenges so that the researcher might appreciate their perceptions.

1.7.3 Research design

Participatory Action Research (PAR) was employed in this study. PAR refers to an inquiry approach with the collaboration of those affected by the problem being studied for education and acting or effecting change (Burns, 2015). The study would be executed for educational purposes, as the action taken would influence curriculum

policies by disseminating findings to policy makers and stakeholders. The PAR was considered suitable for this study, because it emphasises collaboration among the researcher and participants to effect changes. In this study, the researcher and participants would collaborate and discuss the improvement of teacher training to identify learners with learning barriers in the Foundation Phase. It would be beneficial, because it would help to address the real problems identified by participants in theory and practice and thought and action (Burns, 2015).

The key features of PAR are planning a change; acting and observing the process and consequences; reflecting on these processes and consequences; re-planning, acting, observing, and reflecting again (Redman-MacLaren & Mills, 2015). This simply means that PAR would help the researcher and participants by working together to achieve a common objective in teaching and learning of how teachers can identify learners with barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase.

The PAR, Social Constructivism, and Constructivist learning theories have much in common, as they are based on collaborative participation among the participants (in this case, teachers) of those affected by the problem being studied, to educate and act on, or to effect change. It emphasises the involvement of the participants affected by the issues of the study to benefit later. The participants for this study are Subject Advisors for Foundation Phase, teachers, Departmental Heads, and support teachers. PAR would be useful for this study as it would provide teachers with appropriate skills and knowledge through collaborative efforts. It promotes teamwork, reflection, and discussions whereby teachers are encouraged to learn about their instructional practices by sharing ideas and experiences with others. This simply means that their areas for development will be improved regarding their teaching methods.

In contrast with traditional teaching, the emphasis has been on teacher-centredness. PAR is an investigation model aiming to improve teachers' future skills and activities. With the current advocacy of training change agents in the health professions, PAR is one way of achieving this, as teachers and learners work together to implement new ideas in their work environments.

PAR would be useful in this study as it would empower, involve, and actively engage all stakeholders in significant innovations in developing the education profession.

Utilising PAR would make a significant impact on the school culture, teachers' responsibilities within the classroom, as well as learners' achievement. Nguyen and Ng (2020) found that collaboration was important in improving teachers' professional development in identifying LWLB. In this study, the researcher and the participants would collectively discuss, observe, and participate in the activities to improve their professional development to identify LWLB.

1.7.4 Data collection methods

1.7.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were used to collect data in this study. Semi-structured interviews are designed so that the researcher has a list of questions to be asked during interview sessions, but additional questions might be asked as new issues arise (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). A semistructured interview is an in-depth conversation between the researcher and interviewee in which the researcher asks questions aligned with the overarching research question to gain insight into the interviewee's perceptions, opinions, and experiences (Cridland et al., 2015, Jones, Caputi & Magee, 2015). In-depth interviews would elicit information regarding improving teacher training and its challenges when identifying LWLB. A semi-structured interview was relevant to this study, because it allowed the researcher to go beyond pre-determined questions to give the participants freedom to discuss their challenges in identifying LWLB. It would allow the participants freedom to talk openly, provide the researcher with in-depth information on the research topic, and get to the root causes of teachers' challenges (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Furthermore, it would be advantageous, because of its flexibility. It would ensure that the researcher decided beforehand how to use the limited time available for the interviews and would help the researcher to keep the interactions focussed while allowing individual perspectives and experiences to emerge.

1.7.4.2 Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews were conducted with eight teachers from four selected primary schools in the Motheo District. The rationale of utilising this instrument would be its efficiency and reliability in eliciting information about teachers' challenges related to identifying learners who experience learning barriers. This research instrument was useful, because it allowed the researcher to understand a wide range of participant

views about a specific issue (Prasad & Garcia, 2017). It provided the researcher with much information quickly and at a low cost, compared to individual interviews. This instrument provided the researcher with valuable and detailed information about participants' thoughts, understanding, perceptions, and impressions expressed in their own words. The interviews were recorded, and notes were taken to back up the interviews to save time. Thereafter, the interviews were transcribed before the data were analysed.

1.7.4.3 Selection of the participants

1.7.4.3.1 Population, sampling, and sample

The study population would consist of all Foundation Phase teachers, all Foundation Phase Departmental Heads (HoDs), all Subject Advisors Facilitators (SAs) and all support teachers from the selected rural primary schools in the Motheo District in the Free State Province, South Africa. Purposeful and convenience sampling techniques were applied to select the participants who would provide the relevant information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2019). Purposeful sampling is typically referred to in qualitative research as a technique to identify and select valuable information sources for the most appropriate utilisation of available resources (Benoot et al., 2016).

Turner (2020) considers convenience sampling as a group of subjects selected based on being accessible, appropriate, or convenient. The sample included Foundation Phase teachers and Departmental Heads with more than 35 learners in their classrooms from four selected schools; support teachers and Subject Advisors who provide support to the teachers in terms of teacher development workshops within the district or a cluster were chosen to participate in the study, because they are reliable and could add value to the collected data (Forlin & Sin, 2017). This would be beneficial to provide the researcher with insight into teachers' experiences and challenges when identifying learning barriers (Chireshe, 2013; Mavuso, 2015; Nel, Nel & Hugo, 2013). The sample size comprised 28 participants (n=28) from four groups, selected purposively at primary schools in the Motheo District in the Free State Province, South Africa. Each group would involve four Foundation Phase teachers (n=4), one Departmental Head (HoD) (n=1), one Support Teacher (n=1), and one Subject Advisor (n=1). 28 participants were interviewed. The first session focus group interview with the Foundation Phase teachers was conducted, followed by face-to-face semi-

structured interviews with the support teachers from the identified primary schools and Subject Advisors to back up the focus group discussions to gather live data from natural settings. The criteria for selecting participants included all teachers with a Junior Primary qualification, at least three years of teaching experience at the Foundation Phase level, and more than 35 learners in their classrooms. They all have Sesotho as their home language and reside in rural communities. This researcher was convinced that all potential selected participants would be able to provide the necessary information regarding improving teacher training by identifying LWLB and the experiences and challenges of teacher training they encountered when identifying LWLB. The researcher was able to get access to them quite readily.

1.7.4.4 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was chosen to analyse data. Terry et al. (2017), Hayfield, Clarke, and Braun (2017) defined thematic analysis as identifying, analysing, and reporting themes found within the data set. A theme captures something important about the research questions' data and represents some patterned response or meaning within the data (Terry et al., 2017). Terry et al. (2017), Hayfield, Clarke and Braun (2017) also mention six phases of thematic analysis: familiarisation with the data, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining, naming, and recording them. One of the advantages of thematic analysis is that it is well suited to a large data set. The aim of choosing thematic analysis is to analyse the contextual data to arrive at a deep understanding of how teachers identify LWLB and the challenges they face.

Thematic analysis is best suited to elucidate the specific nature of the given group's conceptualising of the phenomenon under study (Nowell et al., 2017, Norris, 2017, White & Moules, 2017). Saldaña (2015) suggested several stages to be followed to interpret qualitative data. These stages include transcribing data, initial coding, initial grouping coding, searching for themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report. All the interviews were transcribed and then coded. Themes related to challenges faced by teachers in identifying learners, experiencing learning barriers in the classroom, were grouped together and then classified. This would provide the researcher with the necessary understanding regarding teachers' opinions on their experiences and challenges when identifying learning barriers (Creswell, 2014).

Data were thematically analyzed using open coding procedures (Brennen, 2017; Bryman & Bell, 2019). This technique involves systematically organizing, categorizing, and summarizing data and describing it in meaningful themes. In this study, the researcher used the following basic steps to analyze case study data (Brennen, 2017; Bryman & Bell, 2019). These involve making sense of the raw data, such as organising, transcribing data from interviews, and breaking data down into smaller units. Categories were generated after perusing data several times, and thereafter data were coded (open coding), according to certain categories of patterns and themes identified. Broader categories were identified (searching for similarities and differences) to establish patterns and themes (analytical coding). Themes were tested against data, looking for alternatives that would assist in explaining data and summarizing them.

1.8 Value of the study

This study intended to provide the South African Government with a better understanding of teacher needs and challenges in identifying learners with learning barriers to devise means to improve teacher training. This would assist in developing the professional skills and knowledge of teachers to teach the prescribed curriculum to diverse learners. It is also of paramount importance to schools at all educational levels as they would be able to participate in recognising what is expected of them and how to identify learners who might experience learning challenges. This research would serve as a source of reference literature to educational agencies for both private and government sectors, providing information for the school management to promote inclusive education in primary schools. Other researchers and scholars are permitted to use this research as a basis of reference to determine the current state of South African Inclusive Education and use it as a baseline for further research.

1.9 Ethical considerations

Johnson (2014), Manti and Licari (2018) define ethics as a set of widely accepted moral principles followed, to ensure that any study or research is conducted professionally. To ensure that the research is conducted professionally, following British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018), ethical guide lines include getting informed consent, avoiding deception, and considering privacy were followed.

Firstly, permission to conduct the study was sought from the DOBE in the Free State, and thereafter ethical clearance was obtained from the University of the Free State Research committee before the commencement of the field work. Further permission was sought from principals and the SGB of the selected schools. Prior to the selection of the participants, a letter of request indicating the researcher's name was sent to the school principals for approval. The purpose and necessity of the study were emphasised in the letter. Upon approval, the researcher visited the identified schools and introduced herself to the management of the schools. The researcher and the school principals informed the teachers about the purpose of the research, participants' roles, and how and when data would be collected so that they could make informed decisions whether to participate or not.

The researcher ensured that all consent forms were returned prior to data collection. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms would be applied to protect the identity of the participants. In addition, no school or participants would be identified by any information mentioned in the study. Privacy and anonymity would be addressed, and they were informed that once the research had been completed, all the information would be kept in a safe place. Only the researcher and supervisor would have access to the information. Furthermore, the researcher made it clear that their participation was voluntary, and all the information obtained from the study would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

1.10. Trustworthiness in qualitative research

Trustworthiness is essential to any research study to produce reliable results and findings that are meaningful for the study (Klenke, 2018). To ensure the trustworthiness of the research and findings based on the face-to-face semi-structured interviews in all four identified primary schools, comprehensive comparisons were made when analysing the data. This would increase the reliability of the research results. Interviews were transcribed to ensure the accuracy of the data. The discussions were recorded during the focus group interviews, and notes were taken to back up the interviews. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were applied throughout the study. To ensure the credibility of the data collected, the researcher would repeat participants' responses and clarify questions during the interview to ensure that their views were interpreted correctly. After the data analysis,

preliminary data and comments were sent to the participants. This would allow the researcher to verify whether the data were analysed correctly or not.

1.11 Definition of the key concepts

It is important for the reader to understand the definition of the concepts below.

1.11.1 Barriers to learning

In an inclusive education system, barriers to learning refer to those difficulties that may arise within the education system, the learning site, or the learner him/herself, which may prevent the system and the learners from achieving their goals (Brown et al., 2013, p. 345) state that "... a barrier to learning is something that prevents the learner from benefiting from education". The DOBE (2002) describe barriers to learning as those factors that lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity, which leads to learning breakdown or prevents learners from accessing educational provisions.

1.11.2 Teachers' Professional Development

Teachers' Professional Development refers to any activities aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers using training, support, and orientation (Loughran & Hamilton, 2016). Khorasgani (2019, p.29) defines Professional Development as "those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of learners". On the other hand, the term 'Professional Development' is usually used to encompass "all types of learning undertaken by teachers beyond the point of their initial training" (OECD, 2019). The term refers to processes, actions, and activities designed to enhance the teachers' professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes in teaching to improve learners' learning (OECD, 2019). Xu et al. (2019, p.106) recognize the importance of teacher training and Professional Development by stating that "The most important factor in the quality of learners' learning is the quality of teaching and school leadership". From the definition, it is clear that teacher training and Professional Development must be ongoing to refine their skills.

1.11.3 Teacher training

Teacher training refers to programmes that provide teachers with the required information and new skills to enhance professional development opportunities (Koellner & Greenblatt, 2018). AyvazTuncel and Çobanoğlu (2018) concur that teacher training could be considered a teaching strategy that should provide teachers with adequate time to learn, practise, implement, and reflect upon new strategies that facilitate changes in their practice. Furthermore, both groups explain that teacher training usually involves providing training in curriculum subjects to teachers by organizing workshops over time. The main objective of such workshops is to keep teachers up-to-date in their subject areas (Boudersa, 2016). According to Holliday and Brennan (2021), training refers to activities directly focused on a teacher's present responsibilities and typically aimed at short-term and immediate goals. Often it is seen as preparation for instruction in a first teaching position or as preparation to take on a new teaching assignment or responsibility. Training involves understanding basic concepts and principles as a prerequisite for applying them to teaching and the ability to demonstrate principles and practices in the classroom. In addition, Holliday and Brennan (2021) mention that teacher training also involves trying out new strategies in the classroom, usually with supervision and monitoring, and getting feedback from others on one's practice.

1.11.4 Foundation Phase learners

Foundation Phase learners are learners in that band or at the level of education that comprises Grades R to 3. It is the level where a solid foundation is laid and where learners should acquire basic skills. The Foundation Phase is a four-year phase, starting with Grade R, the reception year, and includes learners from five to eight. The most important learning programmes in this phase are Literacy, Numeracy, and Life Skills (Zhang et al., 2014, Koponen, Räsänen, Aunola, 2014, Lerkkanen & Nurmi, 2014).

1.12 Layout of the study

Chapter 1: General introduction

This chapter involves an introduction to the study, provides an introduction and background of the study, clarification of key concepts, a statement of the problem,

research questions and sub-questions, aim and objectives of the study, theoretical framework, the design, and methodology, data analysis, as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter deals with the conceptual and theoretical framework informing the study. It addresses the issues of inclusive education with regard to LWLB, challenges faced by teachers in identifying LWLB, importance of teacher professional development, skills needed for teaching diverse learners and the suggestion on how to equip teachers to be able to deal with LWLB in a diverse classroom.

Chapter 3: Research methodology and design

This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology of the study. It discusses focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, population, sampling, data collection, and analysis. Also discussed is how ethical clearance was granted by the University of the Free State.

Chapter 4: Data presentation and analysis

This chapter presents the findings/results and the interpretation thereof. It presents a summary of results. The chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the data collected. This chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis. It discusses the thematic results. The data analysis of the findings is presented by considering the participants' voices.

Chapter 5: Main findings, discussions, recommendations, and summary

This chapter consists of discussing the findings, making recommendations, and drawing the study's general conclusion. The chapter discussed data collected and sub-questions. The discussion of results highlights professional development activities in identifying LWLB in the classrooms, how Foundation Phase teachers understand by identifying LWLB in the classrooms, How Foundation Phase teachers understand professional development activities improving in identifying LWLB in the classrooms, What are the Foundation Phase teachers' experiences in identifying learners LWLB in inclusive classrooms and the intervention strategies to improve Foundation Phase

teachers in identifying LWLB. The chapter concludes by recommendations and suggestions for future research and implications of research study.

1.13 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, the introduction and background to the study was explained. It stated the problem that needs to be researched, the rationale of the study, as well as the theoretical framework underpinning the study. In addition, several research questions to be addressed were formulated, and the research aims and objectives, research methodology, data analysis, the value of the study, ethical considerations, trustworthiness, and definition of key concepts and summary were mentioned. The next chapter presents the literature review and provides the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the general introduction of the study. This chapter discusses the literature review of the study. It presents the conceptual framework and latest literature on the Professional Developmental needs of Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB and subsequently develops the theoretical framework that underpins the study.

2.2 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework discussed inclusive education and its benefits, the government policy regarding teacher training for inclusive education, addressing barriers to inclusive education, and challenges teachers encountered in identifying learners. Teacher training and professional development, failure of the policy, strategies for improving teacher training, and professional development needs of teachers in identifying learners with learning barriers, were debated.

2.2.1 Inclusive education

2.2.1.1 Definition of inclusive education

Inclusive education begins with the assumption that all children have a right to be in the same educational space (Kivirand et al., 2020, Leijen, Lepp & Malva, 2020). Many research studies have presented several definitions and benefits for inclusive education. To mention a few; inclusive education is a philosophy and a practice that cuts across all aspects of education at all levels, and as such, it is not just a distinct or one-off project, but an approach (Hernández-Torrano et al., 2020, Somerton & Helmer 2020) that underpins educational improvement. Another definition of inclusive education has been provided by Nguyet and UNESCO (2020), who claim that inclusive education involves addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education. Kivirand (2020), Leijen, Lepp and Malva (2020) provide further clarifications on inclusive education, which generally refers to the capacity of an education system to provide the academic and behavioural support needed for all learners, regardless of

disability or differences (i.e., gender, ethnicity, location, language), to participate and succeed in the academic, social, and extra-curricular activities of the school alongside their peers.

According to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2016), inclusive education means:

- A fundamental right to education;
- A principle that values students' wellbeing, dignity, autonomy, and contribution to society; and
- A continuing process to eliminate barriers to education and promote reform in the culture, policy, and practice in schools to include all learners.

Inclusive education aims to transform the education system to accommodate learners with special educational needs (Florian & Beaton, 2017; Hunt, 2019). Pertaining to its benefits, The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE, 2019) and European Commission (2018) provided ample evidence that quality inclusive education results in better behavioural and academic outcomes, social relationships, high school graduation rates, and post-school success for all children, at a lower cost than special or segregated education and has better employment and life outcomes (Grindal et al., 2016; Jones, Caputi & Magee, 2016, Hehir et al., 2016). What consistently appears in all the definitions and conceptualisations of inclusive education is that the common element involves providing access to quality education and accepting all learners (Florian & Beaton, 2017; Hunt, 2019). This simply means that the overall quality of education can only be determined by the quality of professional training offered to teachers.

Significant strides could be made in education when teacher training and development quality is addressed. Therefore, for this study, it is critical that teachers possess in-depth knowledge and skills regarding teaching, assessment practices and also have the ability to identify what learners know and can do, which is a prerequisite for teaching that is responsive to each learner's needs to meet the standards of quality education through professional development (Carter & Abawi, 2018; Chireshe, 2013). Inclusive education focuses on effective teaching strategies that will benefit all learners. Kaur et al. (2015), Noman and Awang-Hashim, (2015) allude that the focus

should be on good teaching practices for all learners, emphasising commonalities rather than differences.

2.2.1.2 The benefits of inclusive education

The DOBE (2001) indicates that all learners learn better in inclusive classrooms. An inclusive education system teaches learners the benefits of diversity, cooperation, and consideration of others. In contrast, separate programmes create barriers to opportunities for learners to learn from, support, and develop relationships with one another. Donohue and Bornman (2014) assert that traditionally, the South African education system categorised learners with barriers to learning, based on their medical conditions or according to the problems within the learners. Because of this situation, learners were tested, diagnosed, and thereafter referred to special schools. This simply means that traditionally, the system discriminated against learners. Inclusive systems provide a better quality education for all learners by changing any discriminatory attitudes towards learners. According to the DOBE, schools are the only institutions that can provide the context for the learner's first relationship with the world outside their families, because of the development of social relationships and interactions. Inclusive education could create an environment at school where learners respect and accept those with learning difficulties, understand their differences, play, socialize, and learn together. When all learners learn together, all members of society benefit (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The research indicates that quality inclusive education results in better behavioural and academic outcomes, social relationships, high school graduation rates, and post-school success for all children at a lower cost than special or segregated education (DOBE, 2001, Du Plessis, 2013). Though inclusive education benefits all learners, some studies exposed that teachers still experience challenges identifying learners with barriers to learning. Therefore, there is a need for the DoE to take the needs of teachers into account to meet the requirements of all learners in a diverse classroom.

2.2.2 Introducing and developing an inclusive education policy regarding teachers' training

South Africa is one of the countries that signed universal education policies to provide high-quality basic Education for All (EFA). The DOBE realised the significance of providing equal educational opportunities to all learners in the country, regardless of

their disabilities, and therefore, an Inclusive Education Policy was drafted. As a result, the South African Government, through the Ministry of Education, committed to support the establishment of an inclusive environment for all learners in the country by developing a policy to promote inclusive education. Before implementing this policy into the mainstream, all teachers in the country were called upon to receive relevant training that would enable them to teach diverse learners to address their educational needs.

2.2.2.1 Policy initiatives

Since the DOBE has published these policies, it is necessary to consider the aims of the inclusive education policy. These policies consist of the following aims:

- To provide advice on aspects of early identification, assessment of support needed for learners in different schools, and relevant intervention/rehabilitation;
- To suggest potential strategies to promote awareness of the educational needs and abilities of learners with barriers to learning within the education system, as well as the wider community to support the development of inclusive education;
- To make recommendations concerning the practical ways of promoting the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning in both formal and non-formal education and training sectors;
- To make recommendations regarding the promotion of a barrier-free environment for learners with barriers to learning in all learning institutions in South Africa;
- To make recommendations regarding the training and professional development of school staff and associated professionals to enable them to deliver quality service for learners with barriers to learning in an inclusive environment;
- To advise on potential approaches to enhance collaboration and networking, strategic partnerships, and participation of stakeholders, including the relevant ministries, parents of children with barriers to learning and other special needs, as well as organisations representing people with disabilities and organisations working in the field of disability and health; and

- To provide advice and recommendations on a potential research agenda to support further development of inclusive education in the country.

Even though the South African Government has attempted to implement inclusive education and commitment, as noted above, the reality is different. A research study has revealed that although the Government advocates for the inclusion of indigenous knowledge, it does not provide teachers with much guidance (or the necessary skills) in how to identify learners with barriers to learning within diverse classrooms. Most teachers were not trained on how to infuse the indigenous knowledge curriculum into the CAPS themes. This might be because learning from formal professional development programmes does not meaningfully contribute to the teachers' knowledge base, competencies and/or practice (Florian, 2019).

The year 1994 was a year of great hope to prepare South African learners for a better future. In the past decades, following the inception of the new political dispensation in 1994, the South African education system has undergone several educational reforms. These reforms came about with adopting the Inclusive Education Policy to redress inequality among South African learners (Du Plessis 2013, Nel, 2013). The Inclusive Education and Training System Policy was introduced to move away from the designated special schools system and empower teachers to identify barriers to learning and acknowledge diversity in their classrooms (DOBE, 2001). The Education White Paper 6 argues that learners who experience barriers to learning and development should have access to ordinary schools.

Contrary to traditional education, identifying barriers to learning and development was the responsibility of an expert in special schools. Consequently, many teachers found themselves in a situation where they had to teach learners with different learning styles, which sometimes proved very challenging as they had to identify learners who experience learning barriers within the classroom (Phasha et al., 2013). LWLB face different forms of exclusion, which affect them in different ways due to their inability to cope or master learning content. They progress to the next grade without a proper foundation of knowledge, such as basic numeracy and literacy. This implies that many learners complete primary school without mastering basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills (Rany, 2013).

2.2.2.2 Addressing barriers to inclusive education

One could ask how it is possible that after five to six years of sitting in a classroom for between four to seven hours every day, a large number of learners are still not able to read, write, or do basic arithmetic (Gonchar, 2014). To answer this question, one should consider three examples; each describes a scenario that is likely to lead to no learning gains among learners (Azevedo et al., 2021, Goldemberg, Montoya, Nayar, Rogers, Saavedra & Stacy, 2021). These scenarios were documented as part of an ongoing study of teaching practices in low- and middle-income countries, South Africa being one of them.

Szpakowski (2019) highlights that teaching has historically been recognized as a craft. However, the lack of data and research on what goes on inside classrooms creates a language barrier, as no common language exists for analyzing and describing teaching, limiting the ability of education systems to facilitate learning and improvement. In a classroom in Afghanistan, the teacher takes out a textbook and reads the lesson objective out loud. She asks one learner to read a passage describing the learning objective, then asks another learner to read the same passage, and yet a third learner. By the end of the class, a total of eight learners have read the same passage, spending more than 20 minutes on this activity (Bui & Fagan, 2013; Choi, 2013). Foundation Phase teachers need continuous training on how to support individual learners in inclusive classrooms to cater for learners' needs.

In a classroom in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the teacher arrives 20 minutes late. During that time, learners are unsupervised and have no learning activities in which to engage (Nelson & Guerra, 2014). Once the teacher arrives, she puts addition questions on the board and asks learners to solve them individually. After sitting at her desk for 10 minutes, she asks a single volunteer to go to the board to solve one of the problems (Nelson & Guerra, 2014). When the learner shows difficulty in solving the problem, the teacher becomes impatient and asks another learner to come and solve it. After the second learner solves the problem correctly, the teacher asks the learners if they understand. They respond in synchrony that they do, and the class ends. According to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, teachers should stimulate learners' competence and learning. This simply means that teachers should pay attention to these differences and differentiate in their instruction and tasks, instead of focusing on

the entire class as a single entity. In a review study on the effect of differentiation in the classroom on students' academic development in primary education, Lawrence (Harmini & Effendi, 2018), found a scarce positive effect of differentiation. He further states that in a few experimental studies, attuning the instruction to the potential competence and needs of learners, favoured the development of learners more than whole-class instruction. Although the effects might be scarce so far, teachers' differentiation in instruction is meant to have a positive effect (Guay et al., 2017, Roy & Valois, 2017, Westwood, 2016).

Sonmark et al. (2017), Revai, Gottschalk, Deligiannidi and Burns (2017) point out that there is a need to improve teacher education to move beyond teachers' content knowledge to informing teachers what they need to do in the classroom, focusing on evidence-based core teacher practices. Teacher education must be reformed, using the insights of evidence-based teaching and simulation of practice with well-prepared coaches. In Rawalpindi, Pakistan, the teacher asks learners to divide 4 by 2. After some time goes by, he asks one student to solve the problem on the board. This student solves it correctly and all the students' cheer. After that, the teacher erases the answer and asks another learner to come to the board to solve the exact same question. The teacher follows the same process for five additional learners. Research undertaken by Gonchar (2014), revealed that many primary school teachers have limited content knowledge of mathematics. These examples imply that learners from primary schools reach high school, not adequately prepared to continue with the subject, which may seriously hamper their learning within the classroom.

The final scenario takes place in South Africa. Often learners are referred to a remediation Support Teacher by regular classroom teachers. The support teachers are bound to work with the learner's regular classroom teacher to determine what kind of help the learner needs. For the past ten years when I was involved in the field of education as a primary support teacher, teachers viewed identifying barriers to learning as a referral instead of supporting LWLB. It is a well known fact that teaching diverse classrooms requires teachers to use several different approaches to teach content or skills, and to adapt to a different style and pace of teaching and learning Education Week (2018), including instructional methods that involve learners practicing in class, independent work activities or out of class activities and homework.

Unfortunately, teachers teach learners as if they are all on the same level. Learners are given the same tasks to perform. After assessing them, the ones who perform below par, are mostly referred to the remedial class in the first term without identifying the actual challenge at hand. This shows that teachers lack skills and knowledge on how to teach or identify learners with barriers to learning.

These scenarios are not isolated examples. A growing body of evidence suggests that to a large extent the learning crisis reflects a teaching crisis (Molina et al., 2018, Pushparatnam, Rimm-Kaufman, Wong & Keri, 2018). Other studies (Alkahteen et al., 2016; Awad, 2016; Ghoneim, 2014) believe that teacher training programmes could be key to the failure to provide teachers with appropriate skills, knowledge and strategies to identify learners with barriers to learning . Some other researchers (Taylor et al., 2017, Robinson, Hofmeyr, Draper & Johnston, 2017) mention that big proportions of state funds had been spent on upgrading teacher qualifications and increasing the professional development activities for teachers in the last three decades. However, findings on learner achievement indicate that professional development seems to have little or no impact on learner achievement (Taylor et al., 2017, Robinson, Hofmeyr, Draper & Johnston, 2017). This might be because learning from formal professional programmes does not meaningfully contribute to the teachers' knowledge base, competences and/or practices (Tooley & Connally, 2016).

2.3 Challenges encountered by the teachers in identifying LWLB

As with any other policy in any country, implementation of inclusive education and identifying learners with barriers to learning in South African schools is by no means without challenges. The challenges encountered by teachers are also diverse. Several studies have identified challenges encountered by Foundation Phase teachers in identifying learners with barriers to learning. Among those challenges that would address diverse groups of learners are to develop the know-how of individual cultures and behaviours, to design strategies and materials to facilitate teaching and learning processes and to understand the learning styles of a variety of learners. These challenges could be discussed under the following sub-headings:

2.3.1 Behavioural problems (faced inside the classroom)

Research has shown that a teacher's effectiveness has an influence on the learners' academic attainment (Mensah & Koomson, 2020). Teachers are charged with the responsibility to develop learners' primary skills, necessary for progression. It is a fact that teachers face different types of behaviour inside the classroom during their teaching process. Mensah and Koomson (2020) emphasise that some learners are unwilling to learn concepts as they find them challenging. At the same time, some of them show weird behaviour when they are asked to speak in the classroom. Some learners feel demotivated to learn when they struggle to grasp the content. In addition to that, Mensah and Koomson (2020) allude that it is the responsibility of teachers to impart knowledge, skills and to encourage proper social development of learners. These behaviours become more complicated when teachers face diverse learners in their classrooms. Therefore, teachers' ability to support learners expression during instruction is significant for improved classroom outcomes (Meng, 2021).

2.3.2 Environmental challenges

Teachers create an environment that is supposed to be friendly enough for learners to learn concepts. In a diverse classroom, it is a massive challenge for the teacher to create an environment that makes every learner feel at home. Some of the learners are so shy and reluctant to speak that they do not participate in any classroom activity. The teacher must devise a plan to encourage and support them by creating a friendly and socially free environment within the classroom. Studies (Cho, 2014; Mih et al., 2015, Mih & Drago, 2015) pointed out that learner engagement is one of the most important predictors of whether learning will take place. In support of this statement, the above researchers emphasised that the engagement of learners through reading, writing, listening or talking about a relevant topic makes learners to learn significantly more than when they are not doing anything.

2.3.3 Curriculum challenges

The challenges encountered by teachers regarding a particular curriculum are intense and complex, since in a diverse classroom, learners often have trouble to understand certain materials and instructions presented to them. Besides, their backgrounds and cultural diversity may make it hard for them to understand instructions. Therefore, the teacher must adapt teaching strategies and modify instructions to enable diverse

learners to understand concepts (Berg et al., 2018; Cantor et al., 2018; Osher et al., 2018).

In light of the current scenario, LWLB find it difficult to learn literacy and numeracy concepts in a mainstream school and keep pace with other learners. Consequently, they suffer in terms of their educational progress and academic achievement. They are often regarded as suffering from educational failure by repeating the same grade or leaving school early as dropouts. The learning difficulties among the learners are positively linked to poor teaching skills and strategies among Foundation Phase teachers (Berg et al., 2018; Cantor et al., 2018; Osher et al., 2018) support the idea that poor identification of learners is directly linked to a lack of knowledge and skills among teachers. Ingersoll et al. (2014), Merrill and May (2014), attest that when teachers cannot accommodate learners with barriers to learning in classrooms, it would be difficult for such learners to progress to the next level if they have not grasped generic concepts. The DOBE should improve teacher training and professional development for teachers who teach LWLB. Therefore, teachers must engage during professional development programmes to develop effective teaching strategies that ensure that all learners master essential concepts. Ronfeldt (2021) emphasise that empowering teachers to engage in learning environments would improve their expertise within their fields. However, learners with barriers to learning need extra support from the teacher in terms of curriculum adaptation, teaching methods, relevant teaching, and learning materials, and special assessment methods to adapt to the school environment.

2.5 Learning support teachers on the provision of supplementary teaching to learners who require additional support or help

Learning support teachers are teachers with support teaching qualifications to support teachers and learners with learning barriers to ensure effective learning by all learners. Support teachers were formerly referred to as “remedial” or “special class” teachers. According to the DOBE (2014), such teachers should have the capacity to adapt the curriculum to facilitate learning among learners with diverse needs and to support learners who experience specific impairments or disabilities and who may require

learning support, and as such, they would play a central role in the Centre of Learning or School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs) (DOBE, 2018).

2.5.1 Role of the support teachers

With a move towards inclusive education, the DOBE realised that one way to support teachers is to provide schools with support teachers. Support teachers play a very important role in a school. They fulfill the role of early diagnosis and support, working closely with the class teachers to identify learners who need additional help (Bowles, Radford & Bakopoulou, 2018, Cassim & Moen, 2020; Němec et al., 2015). They work with learners in small groups or one-on-one to support them in getting back on track and building essential skills. Their work involves planning and implementing effective teaching strategies and liaising with parents, teachers, and other relevant professionals. For instance, support teachers must communicate with the regular classroom teacher to ensure that instruction in the remedial classroom is connected to what the learner is learning in the regular classroom. In doing so, remediation becomes successful.

2.5.2 What are the requirements for a support teacher?

The current situation in South Africa regarding the recruitment and appointment of support teachers is based on the following: the standard route into this area is to first train as a mainstream teacher. The teacher must hold at least a (Relative Education Qualification Value) REQV 14, have a degree in Education, according to the Personal Administration Measures (PAM) Gazette - 15 - (DOBE, 2016, 41–44); or a qualification, equal to Grade 12, plus four years of relevant professional teacher training and must be registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) as a professional educator. The REQV 14 qualification is a professional degree requiring the recipient to have been trained for four years to become a teacher at the primary level and gain experience in mainstream teaching before obtaining a qualification in support teaching. A question from this requirement is whether the teacher's qualification includes a module(s) that prepares him or her to teach learners with barriers to learning. If not, what does any teacher holding such a qualification have to do to become a support teacher?

Recent studies conducted by local researchers, indicate that South Africa is currently facing a huge challenge to produce adequately trained support teachers. Most of the support teachers currently teaching in South Africa are not specifically trained to teach Foundation Phase learners, as most are qualified to teach in secondary schools. They are also not qualified to teach remedial classes. Albert et al. (2022) concurs with this statement that primary schools lack qualified teachers, and the immediate solution by the Ministry of Education and Training has been to employ high school teachers without relevant teaching qualifications. Against this background, one may argue that most primary schools in the country struggle to employ qualified inclusive education teachers and get properly qualified teachers.

In South Africa, some learning support teachers assigned to support learners with barriers to learning are not properly qualified, and in many instances, the expectations placed on them are considerable. However, it is essential to ensure that such teachers have the skills required for the job, regardless of how they came into the profession. It is not just finding an important teacher, but a qualified teacher with the right skills for the right situation. Albert et al. (2022) explain that as inclusive education becomes more widespread, the skills and expertise within existing special facilities could be accessed and used effectively via a range of training and support work to ensure that support teachers have the necessary skills to provide in the needs of all learners and to support the practitioners.

There are exceptional cases where experienced teachers perform very well, regardless of the lack of relevant qualifications in teaching learners with barriers to learning. However, suitably, academically qualified, and skillful support teachers are required to improve learners' performance in developing and improving. Therefore, the appointment of Remedial Teachers should be based on their relevant qualifications so that the expected outcomes can be achieved. One vital step that needs to be considered is to pay greater attention to teachers' recruitment, training, and support to respond to diverse learners' needs.

2.5.3 Challenges faced by the support teachers in teaching learners with barriers to learning

Support teachers face various challenges in motivating their learners compared to normal learners; as such, learners often have low self-esteem, and it is challenging to encourage and keep them positive. Support teachers may find it difficult to choose and implement appropriate strategies to reinforce learning. There are also many challenges faced by support teachers while interacting with learners. Additionally, the Support Teacher has to interact with the class teachers, who referred the learners to determine what kind of support the learners need. Swart and Pettipher (2016) highlighted the lack of support for remedial education teachers. It was discovered that not all learners with barriers to learning are identified. Referring learners with learning barriers to the District Office of the DoE is also challenging. Instead, learners are placed on waiting lists for three or more years without being placed in special schools. Teachers are overburdened and lack relevant resources. (Phillips et al., 2017, Ingrole, Burris & Tabulda, 2017) further explains that this may be because remedial education requires significant and targeted time and resources above and beyond what is normally provided in mainstream classrooms.

2.6 Reasons why Foundation Phase teachers fail to identify LWLB

The following barriers were derived from the limited number of publications, citing the obstacles to identifying learners with barriers to learning in the diverse classroom:

- Teacher preparation programmes do not prepare teachers for the task they must accomplish (Margolis et al., 2017, Durbin & Doring, 2017).
- The programmes devote too much attention to theory at the expense of practical skills.
- Wrong theories are taught in teacher preparation programmes (Hoadley, 2020, Gluckman, 2021).
- Teachers work in isolation from their colleagues, receiving little guidance and mentoring and receiving no useful feedback about their developing skills and abilities.

Pitsoe (2013) argue that failure to identify learners with barriers to learning at an early stage in South African schools, may result from the lack of qualified teachers teaching Foundation Phase learners. This implies that some teachers work in a phase that does not fit their specialisation. Besides that, (Alkahteen et al., 2016; Awad, 2016; Ghoneim,

2014; Pinar, 2014) in the reports, indicate that teachers and Support Teachers often lack the practical skills and knowledge to implement evidence-based inclusive teaching in their classrooms. Heeralal (2014) add that teachers are not sufficiently prepared to work in inclusive settings. This implies that a lack of expertise in training teachers to teach Foundation Phase learners in diverse classrooms, remains a challenge across the country. Little time is devoted to such aspects in teacher training and professional development. Heeralal (2014) explain that the nature of teaching teachers differs from that of teaching young learners. They also stress that teacher learning principles should be considered when training methods.

As key agents of quality inclusion and essential mediators of social inclusion and participation in both support and general classroom, teachers must be assisted in initial and ongoing training and professional development (Pinar, 2014). This simply means that changes in the focus of existing training structures and content related to inclusive teachers' preparation, are required. The establishment of comprehensive and contextualised teacher preparation programmes must be a priority with an emphasis on successfully teaching learners in diverse classrooms (Alkhateeb et al., 2016; Ghoneim, 2014; Hadidi & Alkhateeb, 2016).

2.7 Suggestions on how to equip teachers to cope with challenges

Current literature presents some suggestions as to how Foundation Phase teachers could be equipped to cope with their daily challenges (Kamkari et al., 2013). Kathirveloo et al. (2014), suggest continuous teaching by Subject Advisors to address teachers' problems. They suggest that programmes equip teachers with the following relevant skills: a) teachers must be continuously exposed to opportunities to learn to address the problems of practice they encounter to meet the unpredictable learning needs of all their learners; b) they must take responsibility for contributing what they learn, not only to their practices, but also those of their colleagues. This means that programmes must help teachers develop the disposition to constantly seek answers to difficult problems of teaching and learning and the skills to learn from practice (and from their colleagues) and learn for practice. These expectations for teacher knowledge mean that programmes must provide teachers with access to more knowledge, consider more deeply, and help teachers learn how to access knowledge and continually inquire into their work situation. The skills of classroom inquiry include

Careful observation and reasoned analysis, as well as dispositions toward an open and searching mind and a sense of responsibility and commitment to children's learning.

Rahmi (2018) believes that the best way to equip teachers with the necessary skills to identify learners with barriers to learning is to consider the four effective characteristics of teacher professional development:

- Time must be well organised, carefully structured, and purposefully directed;
- It must be aligned with other reform initiatives and model high-quality instruction;
- Outcomes must be broadly defined to include a variety of indicators of learner achievement; and
- Collaboration must be structured and purposeful, with efforts guided by clear goals for improving learners' learning.

2.8 Teacher training and professional development

Recent literature stressed that teacher training and professional development could play a vital role in helping teachers improve their teaching skills, knowledge, and competencies. Previous studies (Dudzik & Ngoc Nguyen, 2015; Hall, 2015; Jamil et al., 2015; Nguyen, 2015; Nguyen & Thuy, 2015; Supriatna, 2015; Ulla, 2017; Widiati & Hayati, 2015) have explored various aspects of teacher training in different contexts and all believe that teacher training is important for teachers. Teacher training is regarded as one of the universal professional development methods for teachers. Training refers to the relevant activities that assist employees (in this study, teachers) in undertaking professional duties in their current jobs. It involves understanding basic concepts, principles, and strategies as prerequisites for applying them to teaching in classrooms. Teacher training also emphasises the discovery of new strategies in the classroom; therefore, monitoring and supervision play pivotal roles. Teacher training is one of the most relevant aspects of professional development for teachers to change classroom practice, thereby improving schools and ameliorating learners' learning outcomes (Nenty et al., 2015, Moyo & Phuti, 2015). In supporting the above statement, researchers, including Kagoda, and Sentongo (2015), found that it could benefit

teachers in many ways. Among others, it could support Foundation Phase teachers by addressing their deficient pedagogical knowledge acquired during their pre-service programmes to equip them with modern, relevant instruction techniques to identify LWLB within the classroom. Ulla (2016) study indicates that many pre-service teachers have insufficient knowledge to facilitate meaningful learning for learners about both subject matter and pedagogy and even to identify those experiencing learning challenges. Thus, professional development could support teachers by addressing the gap between the knowledge and skills required in their programmes (Ulla, 2016). In addition, he further states that improving teachers' knowledge through ongoing training can improve learners' achievement through more effective classroom practices. It could also equip experienced teachers with current instruction techniques, such as using multimedia technology appropriate for 21st-century learning (Qi, 2021) professional development activities could positively impact teachers' knowledge and skills.

Nenty et.al. (2015), Moyo and Phuti (2015) maintain that teacher training and professional development are currently seen as central mechanisms for improving teachers' content knowledge, teaching skills and practices to meet the needs of learners with different learning styles. For this reason, Nenty et.al. (2015), Moyo and Phuti (2015) emphasize that teaching should be enhanced and move beyond traditional theory-based foundations, be research-based, and have data-driven-evidence. Teachers are considered the backbone of the evolving world in education, as learning is perceived as an ongoing process, and efforts to develop and improve teachers' teaching skills and knowledge are essential and appreciated in the educational field. Ulla (2017) asserts that well-trained and highly qualified teachers are indispensable for quality education.

2.9 Importance of teacher training and professional development

The importance of teacher training and other professional development programmes for teachers has been emphasised and discussed by several previous studies in the literature. A study by Nenty et.al. (2015), Moyo and Phuti (2015) explain that teacher professional development and training play a vital role in school improvement. Nenty et al. (2015), Moyo and Phuti (2015) found that it could benefit teachers in many ways. These interventions could only help teachers by addressing their deficiency in

pedagogical knowledge and skills acquired, through pre-service and in-service programmes to equip them with current, relevant instruction techniques. Previous studies, such as (Dudzik et al. (2015); Nguyen (2015), Hall et al. (2015); Supriatna (2015); Ulla (2017), and Widiati and Hayati (2015) explore different aspects of teacher training in different contexts and emphasise that teacher training is essential for teacher development to improve teaching skills and knowledge. Supriatna (2015), as well as Ulla (2017), stresses the importance of teacher training which could also positively impact teachers' teaching strategies with the result that learners' performance could improve. Ulla (2017) posits that teacher training and development allow teachers to share their teaching practices. Supriatna (2015) claim that such training updates teachers with current teaching trends and other relevant teaching issues and solutions. It equips them with the necessary teaching skills for their learners' learning.

On the other hand, (Jensen et al., 2017, Méndez et al., 2017) emphasise that training also improves teachers' qualifications. Effective professional development allows teachers to stay updated with the continuous advancement of knowledge and practices (Jensen et al., 2017, Méndez et al., 2017). Teacher professional development provides an opportunity for teachers to develop the skills, knowledge, and capacities to meet the ever-changing demands of working in education and "when thoughtfully conceived, well-designed and supported-is at heart all successful educational improvement efforts" (Randel, Apthorp, Beesley, Clark & Wang, 2016, p. 491). It allows the creation of conditions for lifelong learning for all, regardless of age, including special efforts directed at special persons, especially those not otherwise involved in the educational system and migrants as a tool for their social integration. Such training allows opportunities to acquire or renew basic knowledge and skills in specific, thorough, professional, and academic areas, like information technologies, foreign languages, technological culture, and social relations. It may provide access to specific and quality information, support, and counsel for setting and implementing specific objectives and tasks. In addition, it may significantly influence the teacher's beliefs in his practices, affect learner learning, and the implementation of educational reforms. Additionally, it will impact the establishment of teacher connections, strengthening teamwork and cooperation in the classroom, the local, national, and broader school, and change teaching methods, forms, strategies, etc. These

statements prove that teacher professional development is essential for realising education reform.

Given the importance of teacher training and professional development, the researcher concurs with the idea of UNESCO (2020) namely, that teachers need six areas for professional improvement when dealing with learners in an inclusive classroom: characteristics of individual learners, formal and informal assessments, teaching strategies, individualised curriculum and instruction, follow-up and referrals among service providers and use of instructional resources. UNESCO (2019) states that for teachers to be effective, they should continually expand their knowledge and skills to implement the best educational practices. These practices in teaching could only be obtained through attending various professional development courses and training programmes. Teachers are trained and updated as to the different teaching strategies and share best practices in the classroom (Ulla et al., 2017).

2.10 Traditional training and professional development of the teachers

In any organisation, there is that belief that training employees leads to better outcomes. Livingston (2016) claims that in education, traditional teacher professional development was established in a way to improve teachers' skills, but it resulted in inconsistent successes and inconclusive results. Subsequently, teacher professional development gained momentum, due to learner achievement and human capital (i.e., the value of teachers based on their contributing knowledge and skills), as described by Kinyota et al. (2019), Kavenuke and Mwakabenga (2019). These improvements do not only concern the school system, but also educational researchers alike. As such, Hall and Hord (2015) claim that numerous studies, dating back to 1957, attempted to identify effective professional development. For instance, studies by Hall and Hord (2015) attempted to pinpoint the best characteristics to improve teaching and learning.

Some researchers (Kafyulilo et al., 2016, Fisser & Voogt, 2016) stress that teachers' traditional training and professional development need to be renovated. In contrast, others suggest that they could be replaced with other informal types of professional development (Herbert & Rainford, 2014). Hall and Hord (2015) proclaim that traditional professional development time is set aside for teachers to improve their knowledge or skills in teaching, learning, and content. In addition to that, he also pointed out that

traditional professional development design includes: (a) the content taught, (b) teaching and learning design, such as lectures, self-directed or hands-on, (c) classroom activities that teachers learn about; and (d) the length of time. Based on the above statement, Livingston (2016) explains that traditional teacher professional development is stagnant in its design and implementation. Researchers continued to stress the importance and purpose of traditional professional development, but changed the focus on how it affects learners' learning outcomes (Hill et al., 2013). Conversely, others cited the importance of shifting inquiry towards understanding how teachers learn and the contribution a teacher may provide in such a setting. Antoniou (2013), Kyriakides (2013) investigated researchers' focus on teacher participation to determine their interests in professional development.

In this research, teachers displayed different views in the sense that those who contributed to the traditional professional views indicated that the programmes did not cater to the teachers' needs. Those programmes are widely criticized as ineffective in providing teachers with sufficient time, activities, and content necessary for increasing teachers' knowledge and fostering meaningful classroom changes (Tooley & Connally, 2016). These traditional or typical forms of professional development tend not to encourage accommodations or conceptual change (Tooley & Connally, 2016). Teachers complained that traditional professional development required much input and responsibility (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014). Researchers failed to study how professional development relates to teachers' learning, the process of learning, and the implementation of new knowledge (Korthagen, 2017; Mensah, 2020). The teachers also emphasized that past researchers ignored adult learning principles when working with educators for professional development. This problem negatively influenced teachers, because they did not feel that traditional professional development contributed to their professional growth (Spratt & Stewart, 2019). The essential outcomes of professional development are to change teacher practice in ways that increase learner learning (McElearney et al., 2019). However, teachers mentioned several reasons why professional development does not impact teaching practice. These reasons include a lack of collaboration, everyday teaching, and the overwhelming amount of information provided quickly (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015). In other words, research is needed to find ways to develop teachers' knowledge and

skills to be able to identify learners with barriers to learning. Subject Advisors could do these as they should support and train teachers.

2.11 Inclusive education programmes

Inclusive education policies and programmes are essential drivers of teacher training and professional development in a school setting. Khan et al. (2017), Khan, Zia-Ul-Islam, Khan (2017) state that the demands of education in the 21st century necessitate teachers to work collaboratively during teachers' training and development to ensure that all learners are learning at optimum levels in a diverse classroom. However, given the positive contributions of teacher training programmes towards teachers' teaching practices, there have been insufficient quality teacher training programmes offered in the inclusive education context, because of teacher trainers' lack of skills and knowledge (Khan et al., 2017).

Donohue and Bornman (2014) argue that the failure to identify learners with barriers to learning, early in South African schools, is partly because of a lack of qualified teachers teaching Foundation Phase learners. Besides that, Alkhateeb et al. (2016), Awad (2016), and Ghoneim (2014) indicated that teachers and support teachers often lack the practical skills and knowledge to implement evidence-based inclusive teaching strategies and practices for facilitating the success and accommodation of all learners within the inclusive classroom. Many researchers (Alkahteen et al., 2016; Awad, 2016; Ghoneim, 2014) postulate that teachers are not sufficiently prepared to work in inclusive settings. El Zouhairy and Rizzo (2014) also found that teachers poorly implemented what they had learned in their classroom practices, if they were not committed to professional learning.

2.12 Professional development of Foundation Phase teachers in South African primary schools

South African primary schools are categorised into three phases: Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase, and Senior Phase. In the Intermediate and Senior Phases, one Subject Advisor is assigned for every subject, whereas in the Foundation Phase, only one is allocated. The Subject Advisor is usually a former teacher employed by the Provincial Department of Basic Education (DOBE), assigned to a specific district within the province. Foundation Phase teachers are developed through on-the-job training

sessions in schools. During the implementation of inclusive education, Subject Advisors have been utilised to conduct teacher training workshops. In that workshop, the Subject Advisors are responsible for developing teacher knowledge and skills to teach the learners (in this case, how to identify learners with barriers to learning). Therefore it speaks for itself that the Subject Advisors should be well-developed. To achieve the expected outcomes, the Subject Advisor should acquire several skills by attending training programmes in addition to self-development. According to the OECD (2019), the following competencies are needed for the educational Subject Advisors regarding the development of the teachers' performance (in this study, identifying learners with barriers to learning): 1) competency of subject matter, 2) pedagogy, communication, 3) using educational supervision methods, 4) competency of training, as well as the competency of human relationships.

2.13 Assumptions

It is assumed that: Subject Advisors with well-developed content knowledge could transfer their newly acquired skills in developing Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB through workshops. The improvement of knowledge and skills of Foundation Phase teachers will improve learner performance. The professional development offered by Subject Advisors could play a vital role in helping teachers improve their teaching skills, knowledge, and competencies. However, research shows that many professional development programmes offered, have failed to improve teaching practice knowledge (Korthagen, 2017, Mensah, 2020). Traditionally, Subject Advisors resort to teacher-centred methods. In traditional professional development, teachers listen to the lectures known as 'sit and gets', during which teachers sit through professional sessions to get information from professionals or experts Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2014). The experts control traditional professional development exercises by planning the sessions and choosing important content. Teachers do not plan, implement, or evaluate those professional learning activities. As a result, the information may seem irrelevant to their concerns in the classroom, because the content is not specific to their teaching purpose.

Most traditional professional development focuses on learning, but is considered ineffective, because it limits teacher contribution (Livingston, 2016). A study by (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015), support that Subject Advisors fail to recognise and include

teachers' interests and insights, thereby sustaining their roles as passive learners. According to them, the discrepancy is between the teachers' perceptions of traditional professional development and researchers' commitment to finding solutions without teacher input. In addition to that, they stress the fact that teachers feel isolated and disregarded in their learning. It signifies a lack of consideration of the teacher as an adult learner and primary source of learning (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015). Teachers may benefit from adult learning principles unique to adults, promote autonomy, focus on needs, and promote holistic participation (Kennedy, 2016). Adult learners are not passive learners and do not flourish through inactive learning (Matherson & Windle, 2017). Most importantly, they want their voices heard through professional development.

2.14 Skills needed for teaching diverse learners

For teachers to teach learners with different learning styles within the classroom, Foundation Phase teachers need to have a profound understanding of what to teach. Researchers (Gess-Newsome, 2015) proclaim that this understanding of how to teach is known as Pedagogical Knowledge (PK). In addition to that, Lucenario et al. (2017) Yangco, Punzalan and Espinosa (2017) argue that a special kind of knowledge is required to teach content effectively. This type of knowledge is known as Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). This includes knowledge of how particular subject matter topics and issues could be organised and presented to cater to learners' diverse interests and abilities. This simply means that when teachers are provided with the skills mentioned above, during teacher training and professional development, he or she will be able to identify learners with barriers to learning at the fundamental stage.

2.15 How has inclusive policy helped fall short in preparing or improving teacher professional development?

2.15.1 The success of the policy

South African education has developed policies to support better teacher performance and professionalism. The new education system brings with it the possibility of optimism. It aims to enhance the teaching and learning process through better qualified teachers; done through upgrading programmes, and hundreds of Subject

Advisors carrying out formal in-service training and continuous in-service support. Yet, professionalism is obstructed by aspects inherent in the traditional education system.

2.15.2 Policy shortcomings

Improving in-service training courses and workshops for all teachers in the educational field, the South African Government has developed policies to strengthen professionalisation. Yet, there was little room for teachers' creativity and innovation within the previous education system. Firstly, past researchers ignored traditional professional development, particularly on-site workshops or training sessions (Gulamhussein, 2013). Secondly, professional development strategies do not consider the teacher as an adult capable of responsibility, autonomy, and collaboration. Previous researchers failed to acknowledge how adults learn or determine explicit information about the ineffectiveness of professional development. Hill (2013:13) declares, "rather than replacing one form of professional development with another, it would be wiser to examine what exists and make it better". Guskey (2014) declares that traditional professional development, such as workshops, could be effective when executed correctly. Four of the nine studies they analyzed for effectiveness were in workshop style. The existing gap in knowledge is that it is unknown whether researchers, school leaders, or teachers could reform traditional professional development. Ignoring traditional professional development, which school districts still provide, is a mistake. The six characteristics of effective professional development are valuable in their own right: however, only three focus on teacher participation. Teachers are adults and no research on professional

development (except about andragogy and social constructivism) includes teachers' responses to adult learning principles. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2014) related the sentiments of 50 teachers, who wanted to be treated as adults and be involved in the professional development process. Overall, many studies advocated for effective strategies, like Bryk et al. (2015), Gomez, Grunow & LeMahieu (2015) but failed to acknowledge the need for adult learning, particularly andragogy. In professional development, coherence is a value-added characteristic needed to ensure a well-rounded and unified professional development programme. Bryk et al. (2015), Gomez, Grunow and LeMahieu (2015) stress that substantial learning occurs when professional development aligns to teachers' experiences, needs and other

expectations, such as district goals, state standards, and student needs. When this occurs, there is greater chance for implementation of the newly acquired skills or change in teaching strategies, gained from professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, Burns, Campbell, Goodwin, Hammerness, Low, McIntyre, Sato and Zeichner (2017). Another critique of the professional development strategy is the need to recognize the impact of teacher involvement in the process, not just the session itself (Lane et al., 2015, Royer, Messenger, Common, Ennis & Swogger, 2015). There is a need for greater promotion of teacher involvement, but researchers often neglect to identify this strategy as part of andragogy.

Some researchers mentioned that professional development programs often do not address the teacher's needs and the school's context, comprising unfocused, fragmented, low-intensity activities with inappropriate content knowledge (Killion, 2018, Kirkpatrick, 2017). Ineffective programmes are often once-off affairs with no follow-up of how those teachers, who attended the programmes are applying the techniques and concepts presented (Killion, 2018, Kirkpatrick, 2017). Thus, these programmes fail to provide teachers with effective professional learning and follow-up, hindering their ability to transfer new ideas into their classroom instruction (Killion, 2018, Kirkpatrick, 2017). In that regard, many factors should be considered for professional learning to be effective, including influences on teachers' professional learning.

The US Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, in her 2015 report on teacher quality, argued that the focus should be on the essential principles for building outstanding teacher preparation programmes in the 21st century and on the critical teaching skills that all teachers must learn. All teacher preparation programmes must provide teachers with solid and current content knowledge and essential skills. These include using research-based methods appropriate for their content expertise, teaching diverse learners and teaching in high-need schools, and using data to make informed instructional decisions. Successful and promising strategies for promoting these skills include integrating field experience throughout the preparation programmes; strengthening partnerships, and creating quality mentoring and support programmes. Each of these strategies involves the necessity of doing things differently than how they were done in the past.

2.16 Strategies employed by other countries to train teachers

As a result of the failure of previous researchers to acknowledge how adults learn, existing literature indicates that other countries made noticeable strides to address similar challenges as those experienced by South African primary school teachers in identifying learners with barriers to learning. McGrath-Champ et al. (2018), Wilson, Stacey and Fitzgerald (2018) state that schools provide teachers with opportunities to learn from their everyday practices in Australia.

In England, primary school teachers participated in a lesson study project to understand how dialogues between teachers could enhance their learning. In South Korea, a new policy was introduced, whereby teachers engaged in whole-school observations and reflections (Brussino, 2021).

In both Shanghai and Pakistan, they encourage the use of Video-Based Reflection (VBR) to help teachers learn different teaching strategies to teach and identify learners with barriers to learning. Concerning the challenges being identified, South Africa might benefit from improving teacher training and professional development by adopting some of the strategies used by other countries.

Lefstein et al. (2020), Vedder-Weiss and Segal (2020) argue that a recent scholarship on professional development for teachers, calls for change. According to Lefstein et al. (2020), Vedder-Weiss and Segal (2020) it is time to find ways to move beyond the dominant training-focused models of professional development to models that support teacher-centered views of teaching.

Antoniou and Kyriakides (2013) characterise effective professional development as grounded in inquiry, reflection, and participant-driven experimentation, naming the role of teacher-researcher as an appropriate means.

2.17 Teaching strategies that may improve teacher training and professional developmental needs of Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB

There are some suggestions in literature as to how Foundation Phase teachers could be equipped to cope with their daily challenges (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, Hyler & Gardner, 2017). Darling-Hammond (2017), Burns, Campbell, Goodwin,

Hammerness, Low, McIntyre, Sato and Zeichner (2017) suggest continuous learning by Subject Advisors to address their problems and those their colleagues. The researchers mentioned above, suggest that programmes must equip teachers with the following relevant skills: a) teachers must be able to learn to address the problems of practice they encounter and to meet the unpredictable learning needs of all of their learners daily, b) they must take responsibility for contributing what they learn, not only to their practices, but also those of their colleagues. This means that programmes must help teachers develop the disposition to continue seeking answers to difficult problems of teaching and learning and the skills to learn from practice (and from their colleagues) and to learn for practice. These expectations for teacher knowledge mean that authorities need not only to provide teachers access to more knowledge, considered more deeply, but also to help teachers learn how to access knowledge and inquire into their work continually. The skills of classroom inquiry include careful observation and reasoned analysis, as well as dispositions toward an open and searching mind and a sense of responsibility and commitment to children's learning.

Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) suggests that in light of the fact that there has been an increase in the range of knowledge required for teaching that any one teacher cannot master, and the fact that there is diversity in the ways learners learn, demands of teachers to show continual adaptation, it is necessary that in the preparation of teachers, they are equipped with research and also collaboration skills so that they could learn from one another. Lang et al. (2015), Neal, Karvouni and Chandler (2015), state that developing an individual's confidence is influenced by allowing teachers to share experiences in areas of interest relating to similar tasks and receive encouragement from others. In addition to that (Lang et al., 2015), as confidence grows, so does openness to new ideas and readiness to join in conversations to explore ideas regarding learner achievement. Furthermore, Manton et al. (2021) confirm that social and collaborative learning continually supports professional growth, resulting in increased teacher efficiency and learner achievement.

Deater-Deckard et al. (2013) write that teacher collaboration is essential for improving learner's achievement and teacher performance. He also emphasises that teacher learning is an essential part of teacher collaboration. Deater-Deckard et al. (2013:21) state that "the strengths of authentic learning are the interaction with others". Zhang

et al. (2014), Lu, Gupta & Zhao clarify that “when teachers take responsibility not only for their learning but also for their colleagues”, this could lead to a shift in attitudes toward collaborative learning. On the other hand, Postholm (2016) alludes that collaboration is important to the success of teacher professional development and the overall instructional climate of a school when teachers have effective time for collaboration, develop a commitment to improve the instructional climate of the school, build trust in their relationships, and participate in decision-making for the school. As teachers learn from one another, their need for focused professional development to allow for a high level of teacher effectiveness, happens (Postholm, 2016). This simply means that Subject Advisors should be responsible for providing teachers with relevant resources for professional development.

Effective learning by teachers needs to be primarily focused on improving teaching practices to maximise student learning (Mpahla & Okeke, 2015). Researchers have highlighted the features of effective professional learning that lead to an improvement in teaching. These features include needs-based training, linking content to practice, varied learning activities, follow-up, and sustainability.

Knowles et al. (2015) explain that those different approaches to professional development could be implemented in various forms, depending on the teachers' needs and interests, to improve the conditions and opportunities for learners to learn. In addition to that, they claim that the implementation of the teacher professional development must abide by the following principles: recognition of the needs, and requirements of teachers, the profession of the teacher, school, and local community, to start with small steps, working in teams, to include activities that enable continuous feedback, to allow continuous monitoring and maintenance and to ensure coherence of programmes. Furthermore, they stress that the following elements should be taken into consideration during the planning, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning programmes for Foundation Phase teachers:

- Teachers need to know the purpose of learning something when they are asked to attend training programmes and the nature of their learning activities.
- They need to be responsible for their decisions involving professional learning activities and believe they can make decisions for themselves. Thus, they

should prefer to be involved in their learning activities, which include planning, implementing, and evaluating learning activities (Dudley, 2013).

Vangrieken et al. (2015), Dochy, Raes & Kyndt (2015) argue that teacher training and professional development “must be rebuilt around the challenges to practice”. In a situation of rapid change, professional development requires that teachers redefine their practice. Because teachers need to become professionals and act like professionals at a time of constant change (Ingersoll, 2018), it is necessary to reconstruct teacher professional development for teachers’ professionalism (Ingersoll, 2018, Merrill, Stuckey & Collins, 2018). Révai and Guerriero (2017) argue for reconstruction of teachers’ professionalism, skilled development is required so that priority is given to their skills and development in areas that enable them to confront new challenges. It is important, therefore, to discuss the different forms of professionalism, which either limit or promote teachers’ professional development.

2.17.1 Needs-based training

Teachers' readiness to learn could occur because of the realisation that the training programme is relevant to their daily lives (Knowles et al., 2015). Thus, to improve teachers’ knowledge, skills, and motivation, it is important to expose them to quality professional development in its design and implementation (Albanian Ministry of Education and Sports, 2013a). For example, training needs must be accurately identified before creating any programme by analysing teachers’ performance to identify gaps between the required knowledge and skills and their current knowledge and skills (Suyitno et al., 2017, Sugiharti & Pujiastuti, 2017). Identifying training needs, provides several benefits, including specification of learning objectives, determining learning content knowledge, and applying learning strategies (Suyitno et al., 2017). These elements should be used to frame the training process, the design, delivery, and evaluation of the programme.

2.17.2 Linking content to practice

Teachers have a range of professional and life experiences that impact their learning. At the start of the learning process, these experiences are recovered from memory and applied to prevailing challenges. Thus, such experiences should be considered valuable learning resources during training programmes (Knowles et al., 2015).

However, successful professional learning programmes must also go beyond teachers' current experience and provide them with research-based pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge to build their professional knowledge base (Mertala, 2019). Consequently, teachers should be equipped with modern, relevant instruction techniques, such as inquiry-based approaches and multimedia technology, appropriate for current societal perspectives of learning (Mertala, 2019).

2.17.3 Varied learning activities

Professional learning programmes could involve a range of areas, subject content knowledge, teaching and learning approaches, use of technical equipment, classroom management or student assessment (Stewart, 2019). To address content and pedagogical knowledge effectively, a range of instruction methods are required (Stewart, 2019). These include approaches, such as role-playing, group studies, demonstration, simulation, games, and case studies. Furthermore, effective instructional models should involve teachers' actual practice rather than descriptions of practice (Schleicher, 2021).

To meet different training needs, professional development should involve ongoing learning activities rather than offering single once-off workshops (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2014; Geldenhuys & Oosthuizen, 2018). Ongoing professional learning could be either internal activity-based at the school or external learning opportunities, such as a postgraduate study, workshops, and seminars. Nevertheless, research shows that the most meaningful learning experiences occur within schools. Fullan and Hargreaves (2014), Geldenhuys and Oosthuizen (2018), for example, report that teachers value school-based opportunities where they can address issues of learning and teaching connected with their daily work, rather than group sessions outside school. This school-based learning could be enhanced through collaboration, where a skilled colleague or those with external experts work closely with teachers at the school. This type of professional learning can include assisting the teacher in planning and delivering teaching and providing helpful feedback on classroom practice (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021). More general collaboration with peers could also promote successful professional development. For example, Knight, Turner and Dekkers (2013) argue that teachers need a collegiate atmosphere in which they can share their own experiences of both subject matter and pedagogy with peers. Teachers often

accept their peers' views more readily than external experts (Knight, Turner & Dekkers, 2013).

In addition to that Xu and Ko (2019) have found that professional development activities that positively affect teachers' practice in the classroom include collective participation of teachers from the same school, grade, and subject area. Such collective participation could help to develop a common understanding of instructional goals, methods, problems, and solutions.

2.17.4 Make a follow-up

Although some teachers attempt to apply new strategies in their classrooms following professional development, there is no guarantee that completing professional development programmes increases teaching practice effectiveness (Xu & Ko, 2019). For example, Dobrescu and Grosu (2014) argue that less than 10 percent of teachers fully integrate new strategies into their classroom practice without the provision of follow-up activities and additional support. Follow-up activities complement training by supporting teachers in transferring their professional learning to the classroom. Consequently, extra time is required to provide teachers with opportunities to participate in truly effective follow-up activities (Dobrescu & Grosu, 2014).

This follow-up could be as simple as observing their teaching by peers and receiving feedback to enhance the implementation of new teaching practices. According to (Cooper, 2013; Carroll & O'Loughlin, 2014), peer observation aims to enhance teaching practice by exchanging insights relating to the review of specific teaching performance, and identifying areas of subject understanding and teaching activity that have merit or need further development. However, due to the lack of opportunities for teachers to observe one another, school principals or supervisors could provide this role (Bell & Cooper, 2013; Carroll & O'Loughlin, 2014).

John Dewey, in the mid-twentieth century, identified reflection as a distinct form of cognition. He alluded that reflection enables teachers to move from being passive to reflect on their teaching. Carroll and O'Loughlin (2014) regarded observation of teaching as a branch of reflection and a tactic to generate teacher dialogue with self and others, to ultimately enhance teaching and learning (Carroll & O'Loughlin, 2014). While Svendsen (2017) reported that collective reflection amongst colleagues

permits an appreciation of collegial professional development. As such, the above statements encourage teachers to focus on relevant aspects of the teaching learning process that would then reflect on their classroom practice to improve their teaching and learning strategies to meet learners' needs.

2.17.5 Sustained

Substantive and long-term change in teachers' practice does not occur across a short time frame (Kennedy, 2016). Professional development should be a sustained and coherent process throughout a teacher's career. Continuous reflection on teaching practice might then contribute to an improvement in both schools and teaching practice (Kennedy, 2016). Furthermore, effective professional development should be targeted and ongoing, providing the support required for implementing new practices.

2.17.6 Improved classroom practice

In reflection activities, classroom videos will activate prior knowledge and experience and foster an analytical view of teaching situations, enabling teachers to build practical knowledge by integrating theory and practice (Bautista, Wong & Cabedo-Mas, 2019). Researchers recommended that video recordings can be used beyond the registration of classroom events. In addition, Cherrington (2018) supports the idea that video lessons have also proven to have a high level of effectiveness as a tool to enhance the quality of teaching.

2.17.7 Optimised selective attention and knowledge reasoning

Recent studies have shown that video-based professional development allows teachers to improve their ability to notice and interpret important features of classroom interactions and influences viewers motivationally and emotionally in ways that text does not (Walkoe & Levin, 2018). With the widespread use of video annotation as a reflection tool, the focus of research today is not merely on the aspects of video usage, but also to examine how teachers employ their cognitive ability to notice and interpret the classroom events within the video, which is called teachers' professional vision (Walkoe & Levin, 2018).

Video is suitable for this study, because it could be used to enhance teacher development, since it supplies evidence and provides models and implementation

guidance for procedures and processes. Teachers could stop, rewind and review as often as needed or desired. The use of video requires teachers to work together in small groups as they jointly plan, teach, observe, analyse and refine classroom lessons to improve their teaching practice (Walkoe, 2018, Sherin & Elby, 2020). It focuses on improving teachers' knowledge and learners' outcomes. Developing teaching within the context of video requires teachers to plan a lesson, observe the teaching and learning process during the lesson, evaluate the lesson's content and mode of delivery, and use suggestions from evaluation to prepare a better lesson. According to the study, Subject Advisors could use videos to train teachers during professional development, where teachers are encouraged to observe videos to improve their teaching skills.

2.18 Theoretical framework

Grant and Osanloo (2014) explain a theoretical framework as the “blueprint” or a guide for research. He also adds that it is a blueprint that the researcher often borrowed and/or a reflection to build his or her own house or research inquiry. The theoretical framework consists of principles, constructs, concepts, and theories that seem interrelated with their propositions deduced (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under scrutiny, exists (Kivunja, 2018). Therefore, in this study, Social Constructivism and Constructivist theoretical frameworks are considered theoretical frameworks and analytical tools driving the study. It starts with a background discussion of Social Constructivism and Constructivist theoretical frameworks, followed by a short discussion on the relationship between the two and why the theories could be utilised for successful training. The literature explores the topics that include inclusive education, benefits of inclusive education, government policy regarding teacher training for inclusive education, training and development, failure of the policy, barriers in training, identifying and addressing barriers to inclusive education, as well as strategies for improving teacher training in identifying learners with barriers to learning.

The frameworks used to guide this inquiry are based on the Andragogy model (Knowles et al., 2015). Therefore, the conceptual frameworks for this study originated from the idea that professional development could positively impact teachers'

instruction and needs by considering teachers as adult learners (Kelly & Knowles, 2016). The model assumes that teachers may benefit from adult learning principles that are unique to adults, focuses on a need and promotes a process of holistic participation (Knowles et al., 2015). Andragogy does not align solely with the goals, purposes or expected results of professional development (Knowles et al., 2015), but rather emphasises the learning process for the learner (in this case, the teacher). Drawing on this model, Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (Jean Piaget 1896) developed a framework such as the Social Constructivism and Constructivist theory that could help to guide research on large-scale reforms. Their frameworks suggest that variations in the success of large-scale reform could be explained in terms of their influence on teachers' motivations and capacities, as well as their work settings that facilitate the types of changes in school and especially classroom practices needed for significant gains in whatever learner outcomes are aspired to by reformers. The researcher used this framework and research on teacher learning and motivation, school capacity building, and leadership practices to develop a model of several variables embedded in five general constructs and the relationships among these variables and constructs (see Figure 1). According to this model, it is assumed that teachers would have better teaching practices in terms of quality of instruction if they were more engaged in professional learning activities. Transformational leadership, school organizational conditions, and teacher motivation indirectly affect the quality of teaching practices through teachers' engagement in professional learning activities. Transformational forms of school leadership directly affect school organizational conditions and teacher motivation. Such leadership also has indirect effects on teacher motivation through school organizational conditions. Although not measured in this study, it is assumed that the quality of instruction would affect student learning.

2.18.1 Social Constructivism theory (Vygotsky, 1978)

2.18.1.1 Background of the theory

The theory of relevance to this study is Social Constructivism, developed by the psychologist Vygotsky (1978), who believed in the social aspects of constructivism. Social Constructivism is a professional development theory that brings teachers together to collaborate, teach, observe, and reflect about their own teaching with the aim of improving their instructional practices. Bardack and Obradović (2019) state that the focus of Social Constructivism theory is not on individual teachers, but on the

collective group of teachers who experience the same difficulties to achieve a common goal. Social Constructivism theory represents a paradigm shift of how teachers are being trained, as well as their interaction (Patton & Parker, 2015).

Social Constructivism is a learning theory applicable to the teaching and learning environment. It explains two aspects, such as empowerment and social interaction. For this study, Social Constructivism learning theory informs the study on how to improve teacher training. Bruns et al. (2018), Costa and Cunh (2018). posits that Social Constructivism is based on learners' active participation in problem-solving and critical-thinking activities, which are relevant and engaging. It has the characteristics of effective professional development in which teachers are encouraged to be actively involved during training sessions.

This theory is suitable for this research, because it highlights the significance of social interaction and the role of culture to create knowledge. Vygotsky (1978) points out that when learners (in this case teachers) interact with one another in the learning environment, they share ideas and gain knowledge and thereafter organise these ideas to attain their shared educational goals, for instance, to solve a problem. This simply means that when teachers discuss and exchange ideas in groups during teachers' training, learning could take place and their knowledge changes and broadens. Vygotsky (1962, cited in Adams, 2017) explained that learners' construction of knowledge is the product of social interaction, interpretation and understanding. In addition to that, Dagar and Yadav (2016) concurs with Vygotsky's view and states that Social Constructivism theory emphasises the role of others in the individual construction of knowledge and view learning as primarily a social process.

Poehner and Lantolf (2013) argue that individuals are active participants in the creation of their own knowledge. In addition to that, Poehner and Lantolf (2013) agrees with Vygotsky's view and stresses that Social Constructivism theory emphasises the role of others in the individual construction of knowledge. Social Constructivism is a professional development theory that brings teachers together to collaborate, teach, observe, and reflect about their own teaching with the aim of improving their instructional practices (Poehner, 2013). Dagar and Yadav (2016) states that the focus of Social Constructivism theory is not on individual teachers ,but on the collective group of teachers who experience the same difficulties to achieve a common goal.

Daneshfar and Moharami (2018) asserts that Social Constructivism shifted from passive, lecture-style training that relied on a transmission mode of communication to actively disseminating information, in contrast to traditional training in which teachers just sit and listen to the lectures throughout professional development sessions to get information from the experts. Dagar and Yadav (2016) identify Social Constructivism as one of the theories based on the action that calls for the involvement of a community of teachers and experts working together during a training session to improve the learning conditions and achievement of results of the learners. On the other hand, Dagar and Yadav (2016) notes that Social Constructivism positively impacts the development of teachers and induces teacher change by assisting them to look at school curriculum, teaching methods, teacher learning, teachers' roles in schools and learner learning.

This theory believes that interaction between teachers and learners creates opportunities for both participants to interpret and construct knowledge. As Huang et al. (2022), Leung, Eom and Tam (2022) reported, Social Constructivism theory was originally based on the deficits of the previous model. It supports the idea that there were gaps in the teachers' knowledge and skills that could be addressed through teacher training sessions.

Vygotsky also emphasised the role of taking an active role in learning. He stated that when teachers learn, they should not be passive, but be active to gain knowledge and understanding through social interaction. Vygotsky also created the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is defined as the distance between what the learner (in this case, teacher) may achieve alone and what he or she may attain with assistance from a more capable individual. This can only occur when there are discussions between teachers and an experienced person assisting them to perform tasks to meet the needs of the learners. discusses the idea of scaffolding by indicating that when teachers talk to one another about work-related issues, learning opportunities are very likely to be increased, and teachers would learn by scaffolding and discussing in heterogeneous groups.

The theory further focuses on the effect of partnership and negotiation on reasoning and learning. Teachers learn from experts and their colleagues. The theory emphasises that when teachers meet with one another, sharing ideas and experiences

in identifying learners with barriers, their knowledge complements one another to reach a certain level in solving the challenges at hand. Learning from experts helps teachers by scaffolding learning experiences, and as such, teachers could achieve performances beyond the level that individuals might achieve on their own (Balland et al., 2013). Furthermore, studies indicate that knowledge could be constructed in situations where experiences and ideas are discussed, transmitted, debated, explained, reflected upon, and tested by individuals in a social environment (Loh, 2018). This theory is relevant to this study, because it promotes learning assisted by a teacher who helps the learner make sense of what is taught (Van de Pol et al., 2019, Mercer & Volman, 2019). Therefore, the idea of learning supported by the teacher, concurs with Vygotsky's concept that when knowledgeable people assist learners, they can reach their potential (Vygotsky, 1978).

This theory believes that interaction between teachers and learners allows participants to interpret and construct knowledge. The theory focuses on the effect of partnership and negotiation on reasoning and learning. Teachers learn from experts and their colleagues, and it emphasises that when teachers meet with one another, sharing ideas and experiences in identifying learners with barriers, their knowledge complements one another to reach a certain level in solving challenges.

Teachers who are engaged in professional learning take greater responsibility for the learning of all learners, as they do not dismiss learning difficulties as an inevitable consequence of the home or community environment. As they take more responsibility, they discover that their new professional knowledge and practice positively impact their learners, and they become more effective as teachers. Social Constructivism theory is essential, because it promotes cooperation during teacher training through sharing experiences and strengthening professional competence (quoted from questionnaire assessing workshop IV, July 2016).

The theory is originally based on remedying a deficit of the previous model. It supports the idea that there were gaps in the teachers' knowledge and skills that could be addressed through teacher training sessions. Its relevance was explained by informing the participants of the importance of interaction during the learning process and how it could benefit them. This included describing how the participants would benefit from practicing the strategy and how they could use it in real-life situations. This method

helped to contextualize the learning to make it more meaningful, thereby maintaining interest throughout the learning session. It brings teachers together to collaborate, observe and reflect on their teaching to improve their instructional practices. For instance, teachers must be able to move out of isolation and begin professional interactions with the teacher in the same grade level or content area (Wu et al., 2013, Anderson, Nguyen-Jahiel & Miller, 2013). The reason behind choosing Social Constructivism is that several researchers have found it particularly useful in improving teachers' teaching practices. It also highlights the significance of social interaction, culture's role in creating knowledge, and the importance of learning strategies that appear to benefit teachers in these learning situations.

2.20.1.2 Objectives and principles

Social Constructivism validates the objectives that teachers need to engage in tasks that involve verbal interaction through communication with learners when teaching, which involves active mental processing. The principles of the Social Constructivism theory, proposed by Vygotsky (1978), were best suited to the present study. These principles of social interaction mean that teachers must engage with other experts in the field as they interpret their challenges and experiences regarding identifying learners with barriers to learning in diverse classrooms. Many studies suggest that participation in professional development with other colleagues is an integral part of learning. It recommends learning activities experienced in groups, which are then individually internalised. As teachers work collaboratively with an expert (experts referred to as Subject Advisors) during training sessions, individual teachers can construct their knowledge and develop their skills and competencies to identify learners in the classrooms. Moreover, Social Constructivism emphasises cooperative learning as a way to achieve learning outcomes. In addition, it is more collectivistic than individualistic in the sense that participative and interactive approaches to teaching on the part of the teacher are also encouraged.

2.20.1.3 Relevancy to the study

The essence of this theory focuses on the social aspects of learning and interaction. It promotes a change in training, social interaction, active participation, and collaboration among teachers by sharing their best practices for identifying LWLB in their classrooms. This theory is an approach to teacher training that brings teachers

together to collaborate, observe, teach, and reflect on their teaching to improve their instructional practices. In this theory, collaboration between the teachers is regarded as an important tool, because the latter have the relevant skills to support learners with barriers to learning. Apart from that, the focus is not mainly on the individual teacher, but on the collective group of teachers. Besides that, it emphasises active participation during the learning process, rather than passive participation. This means that teachers should be actively involved in activities to build their knowledge and understanding and make sense of information in a social context instead of sitting and listening to lectures to get information from the experts. In other words, teachers construct knowledge, meaning, and thinking through interacting with others. At the same time, they discuss and explain different viewpoints, share information, and negotiate about their experiences and challenges in their contexts. The theory provides teachers with opportunities to acquire basic knowledge and skills through social relations. Chinn and Clark (2013) asserts that teachers would get the opportunity to share best practices with their colleagues and learn about other effective techniques to improve their teaching. Kapur (2018), identify five characteristics of Social Constructivism: collaboration, idea sharing, open discussion on teaching, learner progress, monitoring, and shared accountability. Teachers became learners during professional development as they participated and listened to one another, discussing strategies and techniques to increase their abilities to become more effective classroom teachers. As teachers began discussing methods and strategies that impacted learners' learning and growth, comradery was developed. Social Constructivism theory maintains that teachers no longer view themselves as isolated and teaching only their learners; instead, teachers who work together develop strategies and interventions that allow all learners to grow and learn (Kapur, 2018).

2.18.2 Constructivist learning theory (Jean Piaget,1896-1980)

2.18.2.1 Background to the theory

Constructivism is a learning theory that describes how humans learn to acquire knowledge. It highlights that people construct knowledge through experiences they have gained in real-life situations and then generate meaning. The focus is on the notion that learners are active rather than passive receivers. It directly contrasts traditional teaching and learning theory of transmitting knowledge to passive learners. Nguyen and Ng (2020) contends that the Constructivist learning theory emphasizes

active learning, because it assumes that learners learn not only by observing, but also by being actively involved in the process of learning, which is enhanced by motivation (Tas et al., 2018, Houtveen, Van de Grift, & Willemsen, 2018). The Constructivist learning theory was developed by the philosopher, Piaget in 1986. Tas et al. (2018) Houtveen, Van de Grift, and Willemsen (2018), posit that Constructivist theory is based on learners' active participation, problem-solving and critical-thinking activities, which are relevant and engaging. In this study, learners are regarded as teachers. This means that teachers who are engaged in effective professional learning would take greater responsibility for the learning of all learners. As they discover that their new professional knowledge and practice positively impact their learners, they will be more effective as they take learners' intellectual needs into cognisance. Therefore, there is a need for the experts to make new knowledge and skills meaningful to teachers and manageable within their practice contexts, to connect theory and practice in ways that teachers find helpful (Barends, 2015). This theory focuses on social and communication skills, collaboration, and exchanging ideas. Amineh and Asl (2017) propose that according to the Constructivist approach, knowledge is constructed in social environments, in which interaction is a fundamental factor for an effective teaching-learning process. Under such circumstances, the role of a teacher cannot be neglected; rather, it becomes more significant in terms of coaching students to select appropriate activities for learning (Amineh & Asl, 2017). For instance, when teachers interact with one another, they gain experience and can improve different teaching strategies in their respective classrooms.

2.20.2.2 Principles and objectives of theory

The Constructivist learning theory emphasises four principles, which are interconnected in the Socio-constructivism theory, namely: knowledge is constructed rather than innate or passively absorbed, knowledge is socially invented, not discovered; learning is essentially a process of making sense of the world and real-life situations, and effective learning requires meaningful, challenging open-ended problems for the learner to solve (Brew & Saunders, 2020). The principles of Constructivist learning and Social Constructivism theories are clearly interconnected and provide a valuable foundation for this research. Constructivist learning theory says that all knowledge is based on prior knowledge. This implies that teachers learn best when they can construct personal understanding based on teacher training and the

experience acquired from their teaching profession. Zaki et al. (2019) states that the theories call for working together in collaborative teams. Souza (2019), Moreira and Figueiredo (2019) assert that the theories demonstrated success through methods, including co-planning, co-teaching and assessment that led to data analysis that showed student achievement increased in social, emotional, and creativity areas.

2.20.2.3 Relevance to the study

Souza (2019), Moreira and Figueiredo (2019) argue that Vygotsky and Piaget introduced these theories to express their demand for social change, because both theories aim at intervening in the cultural, social, and historical processes of everyday life to reconstruct not only practice and practitioner, but also the practice setting. These theories focus on the active role of teachers in building understanding and making sense of information in a social context (in this case, the school amongst the teachers and Subject Advisors). These theories are appropriate to the study, because the emphasis is on social and communication skills, collaboration among the teachers, and the exchange of ideas. Besides that, it encourages activities, such as discussions, wikis, and blogs that may enable teachers to construct knowledge actively. Nurbekova et al. (2020, p. 130) state that e-learning can provide both contextualised learning and mutual support: "Technology has to be appropriate to the community that it serves and meet and satisfy the socio-cultural needs of local people". This is an aspect that needs to be considered when training teachers in the future to be more advanced in their teaching. The Constructivist theory maintains that teachers require new skills to meet the needs of a diverse learner population. This implies that technology plays a very important role in teacher training, whereby they could observe how teachers facilitate the activities that would enable them to accommodate all learners within the classroom.

2.20.2.4 Similarities between Social Constructivism and Constructivist theories

Vygotsky and Piaget share the same sentiments, as both emphasise the importance of the social environment and interactions in developing knowledge. This simply means that teachers should be actively involved in the activity to develop their knowledge, skill, and understanding, rather than passively receiving the knowledge transmitted by experts (Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2016). Both theories encourage collaboration, active participation, and change, foster teamwork, and promote

reflection. This implies that Social Constructivism and Constructivist theories are relevant to the study, because both produce knowledge that could benefit teachers. The key aim, therefore, is to empower teachers to be advanced in their teaching methodologies. Besides that, both theories teach teachers how to think out of the box, plan and involve other people to work collaboratively, and allow them to learn about their instructional practices; hence they promote collaboration, reflection, and dialogue. Moreover, they emphasise teamwork, enabling teachers to identify learners with barriers.

2.20.2.5 Differences between Social Constructivism and Constructivist theories

Banihashem (2020) allude that several theories have emerged in the field of education over the years, with Social Constructivism and Constructivist learning theories largely accepted as the two major theory ones. These theories clarify how individuals learn and propose educational practice recommendations (Chen et al., 2018, Chang, Ouyang & Zhou, 2018). Chen, Chang, Ouyang and Zhou explain that the key difference between Vygotsky's Social Constructivism and Piaget's Constructivist learning theories is that Vygotsky focused on social aspects of learning and the essence of interaction with a living representative of the culture; in other words Vygotsky indicated that when teachers discuss and interchange knowledge through social interaction during professional development, learning can take place. He realised that when teachers receive information from experts (Subject Advisors in this study), they forget what they have learned (Narayan et al., 2016). Vygotsky stressed the interaction between culture and social context, to develop teachers to improve their knowledge and skills to meet the needs of all learners within the classroom. Chen et al. (2018), Chang, Ouyang and Zhou (2018) point out another difference: in Vygotsky's view, when teachers discuss, share their experiences, and give and receive explanations from others, they are likely to benefit from the discussion and interaction. Abubakar et al. (2017) allude that Piaget focused on developmental learning, the essence of individuals' development, and the relationship of those to their learning. Teachers, as adult learners, want their voices to be heard throughout the process of Professional Development rather than being passive learners (Patton et al., 2015).

The rationale for choosing these theories is that both emphasise the participation of the teachers with other stakeholders during Professional Development in improving

teaching practices. In this instance, teachers are made responsible for learning while Subject Advisors play a significant role guiding the teachers during learning. The traditional model does not invite discussion and participation of the teachers during training sessions, compared to Social Constructivism and Constructivist learning theories, where teachers are encouraged to participate, share ideas, and observe the lesson activities. Teachers who join during training can interact, get to know one another, and share their concerns and experiences (Amineh & Asl, 2015; Mogashoa, 2014). Mogashoa (2014) and Amineh and Asl (2015) claim that implementing these theories in education could cause teachers to be actively involved in the learning environment. Social Constructivism and Constructivist theories encourage teachers to think critically, reflect in their discussions, self-examine and resolve issues that may threaten learners' success. This simply means that teachers must commit to collaborating to bring about changes in their classrooms and schools. The theories call for working together in collaborative teams. Singh and Rajput (2013) states that classrooms and schools provide teachers with learning opportunities. This study shows that teachers need to be able to discuss and to work with others during school, to learn from their everyday practices. In practice, however, this goal proves difficult. Amineh and Asl (2015) identified several changes that Social Constructivism and Constructivist learning theory could make on the instructional climate of the school, such as Professional Learning, improved teaching strategies or methods, improved levels of learner achievement and interventions of learners.

2.19 Summary of the chapter

This chapter presented the theoretical and conceptual frameworks associated with the study, based on previous research. This literature review has provided an overview of teacher training and Professional Learning in schools, illustrating that teachers' learning processes need to be well-developed to meet the needs of all learners in diverse classrooms. The chapter is premised on the view that teachers' engagement in learning environments would assist them in improving their expertise within their fields and to deal decisively with the challenges, which could otherwise be viewed as complications, especially in terms of identifying learners with barriers to learning n Amineh and Asl (2015). In view of the principles of Social Constructivism and Constructivist theories, the study is based upon the premise that practices of teachers

could be positively transformed through collaborative learning. This implies that these theories assume that teachers would have a better understanding when engaged in activities that would allow them to gain varied perspectives, sharpen their teaching practices, advance their knowledge and skills and as a result, improve their learner successes. Social Constructivism and Constructivist theories attempt to point out the best characteristics to improve teaching and learning for teachers. Some researchers Kapur (2018) emphasise that traditional teacher Professional Development needs renovation, while Kapur (2018) suggests that it should be eliminated or replaced with informal types of Professional Development. This simply means that traditional ways of training should be set aside to allow teachers to improve their knowledge and skills in terms of their teaching and learning, enabling them to identify learners with barriers to learning. Research also suggests that Professional Development is most effective when teachers engage actively in instructional inquiry in the context of collaborative professional communities focused on instructional improvement and student achievement. Peer observations using technology are also encouraged to provide a supportive environment for teachers to gain employment opportunities for reflection and improvement. Studies have found that reflection on concrete practice that is jointly observed, could lead to changes and improvements in practice (Kovacs & Corrie, 2017).

Literature advocates for a change in how teachers have been taught during teacher training and development over the years. Such change is bound to be met with resistance, because experts (in this case, Subject Advisors) resort to traditional methods, whereby teachers are usually not encouraged to participate during training sessions. Thus, they tend to forget what they have learned and ultimately fail to implement what they have heard in their respective classrooms. A study of the literature also provides the DoE with measures to be implemented to empower teachers to improve the teaching strategies that would enable them to identify learners with barriers to learning in their classrooms. This chapter emphasised the importance of a practice instructional method during teacher training and Professional Development.

Based on the literature review, there is no evidence in South Africa of the success of improving teacher training in identifying learners with barriers to learning in the

Foundation Phase. Thus, this study purports that teacher collaboration and engagement could influence teacher learning and achievement. The researcher concurs with John Slaughter, as quoted in Ainscow (2015), who once said that for teachers to gain the required knowledge, they need more opportunities to interact with others and share their experiences. The information may seem irrelevant to their classroom concerns, if they do not participate. Therefore, collaboration should receive more attention in pre-service and in-service teacher training and Professional Development. The literature also revealed that Professional Learning could be better when teachers are involved in the learning process to gain knowledge and skills to identify learners with barriers to learning so that they could assist and support all learners regarding their diverse needs. Teachers should work alongside their colleagues to discuss their experiences and arrive at intervention strategies that would lead them to identify learners with barriers to learning.

The study aimed to explore how teacher training and Professional Development could be improved in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State. Teacher training and Professional Development can provide teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills and brought about changes in terms of identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. The researchers have proven that to find effective and satisfying Professional Development is difficult (Arens et al., 2020 as cited in Hill et al., 2019; Jacob & McGovern, 2018). Kennedy (2018) delved into finding effective Professional Development through the application of specific strategies regarding content. Researchers emphasized finding a connection between Professional Development and external outcomes (e.g., teacher instruction or student achievement), but results did not indicate the desired effects (Arens et al., 2020 as cited in Hill et al., 2019; Jacob & McGovern, 2018). The results revealed no statistical significance in the strategies implemented for Professional Development instruction to either improvements in teacher instruction or student achievement. Thus, the study argue that if teachers need are taken into cogniscence, the mission of identifying LWLB will be realised.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology refers to the theory of obtaining knowledge, considering the best ways, methods, or procedures by which data should be gathered to provide the evidence basis for the construction of knowledge and the description and analysis of research methods rather than the actual, practical use of those methods (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

3.2 Research approach

Creswell (2014) defines a research approach as a plan for research that begins with broad assumptions and that narrows down to detailed methods of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. Therefore, the research approach for this study is qualitative. Creswell Poth (2018) views a qualitative research approach as suitable for this type of study, as the study aimed to explore how teacher training and Professional Development could be improved in identifying learners with barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State. Yin (2016) suggests that by using various definitions, qualitative research can be defined. Anthony and Danaher (2016) describe qualitative research as a method of inquiry where a researcher collects data in a face-to-face situation by interacting with people selected as participants in the research, then describes the phenomenon under study, according to the collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions to improve educational practices. For this study, the qualitative research method is the most suitable as the study aims to explore how teacher training and Professional Development could be improved in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in the Motheo District, Free State. Yin (2016) affirms that qualitative research allows the researcher to step into a real-world setting and make use of the contextual richness of that setting.

Based on the definitions, Yin (2016) identifies five distinct features that distinguish qualitative research from other approaches by stating that qualitative research involves studying the meaning of people's lives in their real-world roles.

First, qualitative research involves studying the meaning of people's lives in their real-world roles, meaning that the participants are not expected to change how they go about their daily lives. Participants are expected to proceed with how they would normally live, despite knowing they are part of a research study. In qualitative research, the researcher aims to understand phenomena within a naturalistic context. Hence, participants are observed in their natural environment and are not expected to behave or respond to questions in a manner that has been predetermined by the researcher (Creswell, 2018; Nieuwenhuis, 2018; Yin, 2016).

Second, qualitative research represents the views and perspectives of participants in a study, highlighting the importance of the participants' experiences and voices (Yin, 2016) Nieuwenhuis (2018) believes that qualitative research places great emphasis on "seeing through the eyes of the participants", therefore not allowing the researcher's preconceptions to overshadow the participants' expressions of their real-world experiences. Qualitative researchers often collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. They do not send out instruments for individuals to complete, as in survey research. Rather, the researchers gather information by talking directly to the people and seeing them behave within their context.

Third, Yin (2016) further explains that this research approach aims to attend to explicitly account for real-world contextual conditions, embracing all contexts of the participants' lives and what impact these have on their experiences and perspectives. Various contextual conditions include the participants' social, institutional, cultural, and environmental conditions, contributing to the authenticity of each participant's reality.

Fourth, qualitative research supports the contribution of insights from existing or new concepts that might help explain social behaviour and thinking, suggesting that, through existing or emerging concepts, qualitative research intends to explain social behaviour and thinking (Yin, 2016). Furthermore, he mentions that qualitative research acknowledges the significance of using multiple sources of evidence, rather than relying on a single source.

The researcher selected the qualitative research method, because the research problem requires data to be collected through face-to-face interaction (with the

Support Teachers and Subject Advisors) and group discussions with the teachers. During the interviews, teachers were asked about the challenges they encounter when identifying learners with barriers to learning within their classrooms and to describe the impacts of teacher training and Professional Developmental needs in terms of identifying learners with barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase. The approach also allows the researcher to pose questions based on the research topic, allowing participants to express their views and thoughts about the identification of learners. This approach benefits the study by providing more information and a more intensive, detailed examination of the phenomenon. Since this study is qualitative, the descriptive method of research was employed to record the experiences, challenges, and issues encountered by in-service Foundation Phase teachers and to describe the kind and nature of the teacher education programmes.

3.3 Research paradigm

The interpretivism paradigm was adopted to obtain teachers' views regarding their experiences and the challenges in identifying learners with barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase. Rehman and Alharthi (2016) explain that an interpretative paradigm understands and explains actions. This paradigm is suitable for this study, since it allows to gain insight and understanding about the identification of learners. Interpretivism involves human behaviour in such a way that the participants' background and experience are considered (Cohen, 2016). The researcher's choice to employ interpretivism can be related to the aim of the study. The participants were allowed to relate their experiences using their expressions to ensure effective data representation. That would allow the researcher to obtain a vision and understanding of what Foundation Phase teachers face and experience in identifying learners with barriers to learning and develop intervention strategies to overcome problems. Furthermore, this paradigm helped the researcher to understand how teachers explain and express their experiences and challenges so that the researcher might understand them and their perceptions.

3.4 Research design

In this study, Participatory Action Research (PAR) was employed. PAR originated from the belief that research could be a dynamic process that resolves issues through the

actions of those affected by the problem (Burns, 2015). Aragón and Castillo-Burguette (2015) explain that PAR is a type of qualitative study in which ongoing contribution from the participants is a distinguishable quality. It targets a practical problem, enacts change to solve it and comprehensively includes participants in the process. PAR refers to an inquiry approach with the collaboration of those affected by the problem being studied, for education and acting or effecting change (Burns, 2015). The study was based on educational purposes whereby the action taken would influence curriculum policies through the dissemination of their findings to policy makers and different stakeholders. PAR was suitable for this study, as it emphasises participation and collaboration among the researcher and participants in solving a problem to bring about changes (Aragón & Castillo-Burguette, 2015). In this study, the researcher and participants must collaborate and discuss the improvement of teacher development to identify learners with barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase. It is beneficial, because it helps address the real problems identified by participants, in theory and practice, and in thought and action (Midgley, 2015). Aragón and Castillo-Burguette (2015) delineate five principles of PAR stating that:

1. It is based on an actual problem with the possibility of improvement,
2. Its intention is to develop a solution in real time and it is a cyclical process,
3. The researcher and participants work collaboratively,
4. The researcher might be known (insider) or unknown (outsider) to the community.
5. Concurrently, the researcher and participants gather and analyse data for change.

The key features of PAR are planning a change; acting and observing the process and consequences of the change; reflecting on these processes and consequences of the change; re-planning, acting, observing, and reflecting collaboratively with the expectation to understand and change conditions (Aragón & Castillo-Burguette, 2015). This simply means that PAR helps the researcher and participants work together to achieve a common objective in teaching and how teachers could identify learners with barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase.

PAR, Social Constructivism and Constructivist learning theories have much in common, as they are based on collaborative participation among the participants (in

this case teachers) of those affected by the problem being studied, for education and acting or effecting change. It emphasises the involvement of the participants affected by the issues of the study to benefit later. The participants for this study are Subject Advisors for Foundation Phase teachers, Departmental Heads, and Support Teachers. PAR is useful for this study, because collaborative efforts provide teachers with appropriate skills and knowledge. It promotes teamwork, reflection, and discussions, whereby teachers are encouraged to learn about their instructional practices by sharing ideas and experiences with others. This simply means that their areas for development are improved regarding their teaching methods.

In contrast with traditional teaching, the emphasis has been on teacher-centredness. PAR is an investigation model aiming to improve the researcher's future skills and activities. With the current advocacy of training change agents in health professions, PAR is one way of achieving this, as both teachers and students work together to implement new ideas in their work environments.

PAR would be useful in this study due to empowerment, and it engages all stakeholders in significant innovations in education professions development. Utilising PAR can significantly impact the school culture, teacher responsibilities within the classroom, and student achievement. Hill et al. (2013) Beisiegel and Jacob (2013) state that collaboration is an important element of the success of improving teacher Professional Development in identifying LWLB. In this study, the researcher and the participants would collectively discuss, observe, and participate in the activities to improve their Professional Development and identify LWLB.

3.5 Data collection methods

The study collected qualitative information on the personal experiences of rural primary schools' teachers, regarding teacher training received and utilized in identifying learners with barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase in Motheo District. During data collection, the study was designed following a mixed-method approach, allowing a wide range of data to be gathered and interpreted. Data were obtained in two phases using two tools during the data collection process, namely face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews, both qualitative tools. The application of focus group interviews and face-to-face semi-structured

interviews supports one of the advantages of qualitative research; according to Yin (2016), the researcher has a variety of sources to collect data from to enrich the study.

Phase 1: Focus group interviews with the foundation phase teachers

In the first session, data were collected through focus group interviews with 20 Foundation Phase teachers from four selected rural primary schools in the Motheo District. Yin (2016) defines a focus group as a form of data collection whereby the researcher convenes a small group of people having similar attributes, experiences, or focuses and leads the group in a nondirective manner. He also states that the method denies the researcher an opportunity to lead the discussion and allows the participants to direct the conversation. Then et al. (2014) emphasise that allowing the participants to direct the conversation facilitates the collection of rich data. In addition to that, some researchers (Then et al., 2014) note that focus group interviews are dependent on group interaction and that all participants are encouraged to share their views and opinions and through this process the participants might activate other thoughts and experiences within the group, which certain participants perhaps might have forgotten, thus resulting in the collection of a wider range of responses in comparison with individual interviews. Focus group interviews allow participants to feel more comfortable sharing and defending their opinions and experiences within the group, as they do not feel intimidated by the researcher (Then et al., 2014).

Four of the selected schools for this study had five teachers, each volunteering to participate. Two focus groups of between five and eight participants were conducted. To identify the participants for the study, the researcher visited four primary schools at the beginning of 2021 and adhered to the safety measures of Covid 19. First, an appointment was made with the principals via email to inform the Foundation Phase Head of the Department and the teachers about the visit. In addition, clarification about the research was given to the principal. The second appointment was with the HoDs, and the Foundation Phase teachers. Emails were also sent to the Subject Advisors. The purpose of the study was clearly stated in the emails. The agreement was made to involve five Foundation Phase teachers from each school. 20 Foundation Phase teachers became part of the focus group interviews. Clear clarification about the procedures was given. Focus group interviews were pre-arranged, and the interview schedule was prepared. The researcher, as well as the HoDs, worked hand-in-glove

to identify a quiet place for the interviews to take place that would enable the participants to talk freely, discuss and share ideas about their experiences and challenges they have encountered in identifying learners with barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase. Each focus group interview lasted for 30 minutes. It began with general questions and was audio-recorded in a safe environment; notes were taken to back up the interviews and save time. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed before the data analyses.

The researcher considered focus groups suitable for this study, because a focus group does not resemble a typical question-and-answer interview where the researcher poses a question and someone in the group responds with a direct answer to that question. Focus groups, on the other hand, are centred around interaction within a group in which the researcher poses a question and the participants respond collectively through a discussion among themselves, with the researcher playing the role of 'moderator' (Guest et al., 2019, Namey, & McKenna, 2019). Stewart and Shamdasani (2014) emphasise that allowing the participants to direct the conversation allows for the collection of rich data. In addition, Guest et al. (2019) note that focus group interviews depend on group interaction. Guest et al. (2019) further explain that all participants are encouraged to share their views and opinions and through this process the participants might activate other thoughts and experiences within the group, which certain participants might have forgotten; thus resulting in the collection of a wider range of responses in comparison with individual interviews.

Focus group interviews allow participants to feel more comfortable sharing and defending their opinions and experiences within the group, as they do not feel intimidated by the researcher (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). The rationale of utilising this instrument is its efficiency and reliability to elicit information about teachers' challenges related to identifying learners who experience barriers to learning. This research instrument is useful, because it allowed the researcher to obtain a clearer understanding of a wide range of participant views that the teachers had about a specific issue (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). Its advantage was to provide the researcher with a lot of information within a short period and at a low cost, compared to individual interviews and provide the researcher with valuable and detailed information about thoughts, understandings, perceptions, and impressions of

participants in their own words. The researcher believes that focus group interviews are ideally suited for this current study, which aimed at exploring the complexity surrounding teachers' beliefs and behaviours within the context of an actual teaching experience.

Phase 2: Face-to-face semi-structured interviews

During the second session, the researcher made use of face-to-face semi-structured interviews, which could be defined as a two-way conversation between the researcher and the participant in which the researcher asks the participant questions from a list of predetermined questions, to which the participant is expected to respond with an answer that he/she sees fit (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). The semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to engage privately with the four Support Teachers and Subject Advisors. Semi-structured interviews are structured so that the researcher has a list of questions to be asked during interview sessions, but additional questions might be asked as new issues arise (Creswell, 2017). In-depth interviews were used to elicit information regarding improving teacher training and its challenges when identifying learners with barriers to learning.

A semi-structured interview is relevant to this study, because it allows the researcher to go beyond pre-determined questions and to give the participants freedom to talk about their challenges in identifying LWLB. It would allow the participants freedom to talk freely and openly to provide the researcher with in-depth information on the research topic, get to the root cause of teachers' challenges, and elicit feelings regarding the research topic (Prasad & Garcia, 2017). Furthermore, it is advantageous, because of its flexibility. It allows the researcher to decide beforehand how to use the limited time available for the interviews. It helps him or her to keep the interactions focused, while allowing individual perspectives and experiences to emerge. Semi-structured interviews are interviews in which participants are required to answer a set of predetermined questions (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). Dilshad and Latif (2013) further elaborate that one of the benefits of conducting semi-structured interviews is that it allows the researcher to ask follow-up questions based on the participants' responses, which were not initially put on the interview schedule. However, the researcher needs to ensure that the interview does not stray from the topic of the study. Semi-structured interviews are the most relevant for this study, as

they aim to explore teachers' views, perceptions, and attitudes, regarding various topics (Kallio et al., 2016, Pietilä, Johnson & Kangasniemi, 2016).

3.6 Sampling and selection of participants

3.6.1 Research site

The research sites were the places in which the participants worked. The sites for the study were selected based on the notion that qualitative research studies take place in naturalistic contexts with which participants are familiar (Creswell & Nieuwenhuis, 2017). In this study, the research sites were the schools where teachers teach and where Subject Advisors work in their offices. Four selected schools were identified as they met the criteria and were purposefully selected. In each area, one school was used for interview purposes in which teachers from school A would have joined school B to form the group. Four selected schools were situated in rural areas, which fall under Motheo District in the Free State Province.

School A

The primary school is situated in an urban area in a city called Bloemfontein, which is near a shopping complex. The private primary school is well-fenced with devil fork fencing, to such an extent that it does not allow for easy access by strangers to enter the school premises during and after school hours. Entry into the school is prohibited and monitored by a security guard. The school is well-constructed, and the form of construction is typically academic buildings consisting of offices, a Library, a hall, computer lab, play ground and classrooms, but without a boarding school. Classrooms consist of four building blocks, four classrooms in each block, considering the small number of learners enrolling every year. The school is well equipped to meet the needs of the learners. There is a supply of electricity, adequate resources and a reliable water system that provides sufficient water for all the needs of the school, and especially for toilet use that is also available.

The majority of staff members are young. The organizational structure of a school involves members of the administration, such as the principal, one deputy principal, two Departmental Heads, i.e., one for Foundation Phase and one for the Intermediate Phase, teachers, a Support Teacher, who assisted or supported teachers with LWLB and support staff. The school consisted of 23 academic staff. The primary school starts

from Grades R to 7, with 580 learners enrolled in 2021 from different races. The LoLT is English. The school is categorised into three phases, namely, Foundation Phase, Intermediate, and Senior Phase.

School B

The school is situated in a rural area in Botshabelo with lots of informal settlements. It is surrounded by houses and is close to other primary schools. It is well-fenced with devil fork fences for security purposes. Permission is required from the principal to access the school premises. Though the school is well-fenced, because of its location, the school is oftenly vandalised by some of the community members. Lack of resources and poor infrastructure of the school affect learners' performance. The intitution is an old building, which needs to be renovated. The environment around the school premises is not attractive. Though the building is old, the classrooms and playground are taken care off. The building is divided into three blocks, with five classrooms in each block.

The school consisted of the principal, one deputy principal, and two Departmental Heads, i.e., one for Foundation Phase and one for the Intermediate Phase. The total number of teachers is 25, male and female teachers. The school was offered a Support Teacher who assist or support teachers with LWLB. The primary school starts from Grades R to 7, with 490 learners enrolled in 2021. The medium of instruction is English in Intermediate Phase and Foundation Phase learners are taught in Sesotho. The school comprises of three phases, namely Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase, and Senior Phase.

School C

The school is situated in a rural area surrounded by informal settlements and is well protected with devil fork fences. There is no security guard employed. As a result, access to the school is not controlled. The school is new and well-structured. The school is well taken care off and consists of five building blocks with eight classrooms in each block. Considering its building and number of learners enrolled, school C is bigger in order to accommodate a large number of learners.

School C has a principal, two deputy principals, and three Departmental Heads, i.e., one for Foundation Phase and two for the Intermediate Phase, teachers and a Support Teacher. It also has an office worker, as well as support staff to carry out various functions necessary to school operations. It is made up of 31 teachers, males and females. The school starts from Grades R to 7 with 1 300 learners and the medium of instruction is English in the Intermediate phase, and Sesotho in the Foundation Phase. It comprises of three phases: Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase, and Senior Phase.

School D

The school is situated in a township area surrounded by houses and churches next to a main road leading to the town. It is a well-fenced school. The school is well divided, consisted of four building blocks, with four classrooms in each block. There is a shortage of resources, such as a library, computer lab and no recreational facilities for Grade R learners.

The school consists of a principal, one deputy principal, and Departmental Heads, i.e., one for Foundation Phase and two for the Intermediate Phase. The total number of teachers is 23, male and female teachers teaching different grades. The school has a Support Teacher who is responsible to supported teachers with LWLB. The school starts from Grades R to 7 and has an enrolment of 1 300 learners. The medium of instruction is English in the Intermediate Phase and Sesotho in the Foundation Phase. The school consists of three phases: Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase.

3.6.2 Selection of participants for the study

The study population was Foundation Phase teachers, Support Teachers, and Subject Advisors supervising Foundation Phase teachers. De Vos et al. (2018) describe a sample as comprising elements or a subset selected from the population and used for the actual study. Purposeful sampling is important if a researcher intends to use a few cases to gain numerous insights about a specific topic (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2018). Purposeful convenient sampling was used to select the participants from the population. Martínez-Mesa et al. (2014), González-Chica, Bastos, Bonamigo and Duquia (2014) consider convenience sampling as a group of subjects selected,

because of being accessible, appropriate, or convenient. 28 participants (n=28) from four groups, selected purposively at primary schools in the Motheo District in the Free State Province, South Africa, formed the sample for this study. Each group comprised four Foundation Phase teachers (n=4), one Departmental Head (HoD) (n=1), one Support Teacher (n=1), and one Subject Advisor (n=1). All teachers with a Junior Primary qualification had at least three years of teaching experience at Foundation Phase level, with more than 35 learners in their classrooms. They all use Sesotho as their home language and reside in rural communities. The rationale included HoDS, as the researcher believed that they would provide the most relevant information about the topic being researched, as well as because of their roles to ensure that effective teaching and learning take place. Subject Advisors were included, as they were responsible for performing the following duties: developing curriculum and teachers through training. Learning facilitators are, amongst the office-based teachers, responsible for staff development (Employment of Teachers Act 76 of 1998, Chapter C: sub-section 3.4), which means that they must take full responsibility for staff development programmes and the coordination of resources to support the teachers. They must draw up staff development programmes that are directly suitable to the needs of each school and the learners. They must provide teachers with relevant resources to cater to all learners' needs.

3.7 Data analysis

Nieuwenhuis (2018) asserts that qualitative data tend to be an ongoing and non-linear process, implying that data collection, processing, analysis, and reporting are intertwined and not merely several successive steps. Guideline steps were followed to make the data analysis process manageable. The following six steps, such as preparing data, organising, reading, coding, categorising, and interpreting were followed. These steps ensured that the data analysis was carried out in a manner that did not leave chunks of information outside the presentation (Nieuwenhuis, 2018)

Figure 3.3: Steps used to analyse data

<u>Step 1:</u>	<u>Step 2:</u>	<u>Step 3:</u>	<u>Step 4:</u>	<u>Step 5:</u>	<u>Step 6:</u>
Preparing data	Organising data	Reading through data	Coding data	Categorising data	Interpreting data

Figure 3.3 illustrates the steps to analyse the data gathered from semi-structured face-to-face and focus group interviews.

In the first step, the researcher prepared data to ensure that all the information gathered during the focus group and face-to-face interviews was transcribed. Transcripts were typed the same way the participants uttered them during the interview sessions. To ensure accuracy, the transcripts and field notes written by the researcher's assistant during the interviews, were also typed.

Second step: Once data were prepared and the transcripts were ready, the researcher organised data in such a way that it could be used and analysed. According to Creswell (2017), this step was required to categorise data into different types based on the sources of the information. Nieuwenhuis (2018) states that to collect large amounts of information, it is preferable to use pseudonyms, instead of using participants' real names name (in this case, teachers or HoD1 to HoD 2, Support teacher 1 to Support teacher 4, Subject Advisor 1 to Subject Advisor 4 etc). The third step: After the preparation and organisation of data, the researcher read through the data to familiarise herself with all aspects. Subsequently, she read the transcripts several times and listened to the recordings. Creswell and Nieuwenhuis (2017) mention that in this step, researchers can start processing the data and jot down their general thoughts as they study the transcripts.

Fourth step: In this step, coding takes place for data analysis of the open-ended responses; coding methods were necessary, because participants responded openly and in their voices (Mayring, 2022). The researcher had to read the transcribed data carefully word-by-word. Coding was done manually to allow the researcher to interact with the data, gain insight into the data collected, and identify themes and sub-themes.

Yin (2016) stresses that the coding process allows the researcher to start making meaning of data to enable the researcher to start thinking on “a slightly higher conceptual level”. When coding, the researcher coded data manually to be able to interact with the information to gain more insight into the data collected, and the identification of themes and sub-themes was then done.

Thornberg and Charmaz (2014) claim that coding results in establishing categories/themes through organising and combining related codes. Furthermore, he states that by recognising themes, major findings in data collection are brought to the surface. Therefore, the researcher felt that it was important to verify the categories, and to ensure that the initial transcripts were re-read and not to leave out any important information and not to deviate from what the participants were saying. The categories also had to be organised in such a way that it showed how they were interconnected.

Lastly, data were interpreted, making sense of data and drawing conclusions from the data collected. The researcher took the analysed data and applied it to the “context with existing theory to reveal how it corroborated the existing knowledge or brought new understanding to the body of knowledge” (Nieuwenhuis, 2018:113a). The interpretation of data led to the drawing of findings and conclusions, which in a qualitative study could be generalised to a broader audience.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) and Johnson (2014) define ethics as a set of widely accepted moral principles to ensure that any study or research is conducted professionally. To ensure that the research is conducted professionally, the steps identified by Yin (2014), including getting informed consent, avoiding deception, and considering privacy, would be followed. Ethical approval was sought from two ethics committees: upon approval, permission to conduct the study was sought from the DoE in the Free State and thereafter obtained ethical clearance from the University of the Free State Research committee before commencement of the field work. Further permission was sought from principals and the SGB of the selected schools. Before the selection of the participants, a letter of request indicating the researcher’s name was sent to the school principals for approval. The purpose of the study, as well as the need to conduct this research, was emphasised in the letter. Upon approval, the

researcher visited the identified schools and introduced herself to the management of the schools. The researcher and the school principals informed the teachers about the purpose of the research, participants' roles, and how and when data would be collected so that they could make informed decisions about whether to participate or not.

The researcher ensured that all consent forms were returned before data collection. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were applied to protect the identity of the participants. In addition, no school or participants would be identified by any information mentioned in the study. Privacy and anonymity were addressed, and they would be informed that once the research has been completed, all the information would be kept in a safe place. Only the researcher and supervisor would have access to the information. Furthermore, the researcher made it clear that participation was voluntary, and all the information obtained from the study would be treated with confidentiality.

3.8.1 Trustworthiness in qualitative research

Trustworthiness can be described as the honest and truthful presentation of a researcher's findings, captured from the participants' perspectives. Trustworthiness is an essential component to any research study to produce reliable results and findings, which are meaningful for the study (Klenke, 2018) and that could be enhanced through the researcher's objectivity, use of various data collection techniques, selection of participants, the help of several investigators in interpreting data, honesty, depth, richness, and scope of data (Klenke, 2018). The trustworthiness of a qualitative study could be established using dependability, credibility, and transferability (Klenke, 2018).

Trustworthiness

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability would be applied throughout the study.

To ensure the trustworthiness of this research and findings based on the face-to-face semi-structured interviews in all four schools, comprehensive comparisons were to be made when analysing data. This would increase the reliability of the research results.

Interviews were transcribed to ensure the accuracy of the data. During the focus group, interviews' discussions were recorded and notes were taken to back up the interviews.

Credibility

Moser and Korstjens (2018) defines credibility as the extent to which the results approximate and are judged to be accurate. To ensure the credibility of the data collected, the researcher repeated participants' responses and clarified questions during the interview to ensure that their views were interpreted correctly. After data analysis, preliminary data and comments were sent to the participants. This allowed the researcher to verify whether the data were analysed correctly or not.

Transferability

Transferability applied to qualitative research refers to the possibility of a study's results applying to other research settings or other individuals in similar situations (Ritchie et al., 2013, Lewis, Nicolls & Ormston, 2013, Lewis, Nicolls & Ormston, 2013). Providing depth in the research description allows the opportunity for transferability by other researchers, who may want to replicate the study. Transferability invites readers to draw inferences from the study after applying the findings to their own situations (Ritchie et al., 2013). The researcher ensured transferability in that all data were supported by sufficient evidence and compared the evidence to quotations from the respective participants.

Dependability

Merriam (2015) describe dependability as showing the ways in which the researcher plans to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for the study and changes in the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting. Dependability parallels reliability, which means that there is consistency in the measurement of the targeted variables. Establishing dependability requires that the researcher performs a dependability audit, showing the points at which changes occurred in the research process and understandings related to that process (Merriam (2015). Dependability was achieved within the study with record keeping; as the semi-structured interviews accompanied by voice recordings were saved and thoroughly

analysed. All questions were structured and posed in the same manner; in essence there was a sense of consistency and therefore it could be said that none of the information gathered from the various participants could be altered.

Confirmability

Moser and Korstjens (2018) define conformability as ways in which qualitative researchers could parallel the traditional concept of objectivity. Confirmability parallels objectivity, which relates to the absence of personal bias. Confirmability is based on the provision of a chain of evidence so that the reader could see the source of data and illustrative examples from the data that support the researcher's conclusions (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). This aspect was achieved throughout the study in ensuring accurate record keeping of work done, where checking of data was allowed, and which furthermore increases the credibility and trustworthiness of this research. A confirmable audit trail of field notes, transcripts, as well as consent forms would be kept safe.

3.9 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, the researcher focused on the research design and methods followed in the study. The following aspects were addressed: the research paradigm, gaining entry, the role of the researcher, research design and methodology, selection of participants, contextual description of the research data, collecting methods, data analysis methods, measures used to ensure trustworthiness, and ethical aspects. Trustworthiness was also discussed and explained. The next chapter, Chapter 4, focuses on analysing and interpreting the data collected.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research methodology and design of the study. Teacher training and professional development are, without a doubt, essential training tools that help teachers deepen their knowledge and refine their skills that would enable them to teach and identify LWLB in their inclusive classrooms. This chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis. It discusses the thematic results. The data analysis of the findings is presented by considering the participants' voices.

4.2 Qualitative results

4.2.1 Biographic results of participants

From teachers and HoDs

The results indicated that all participants were female teachers from four selected schools (Table 4.1). There were five Grade 1 teachers, four Grade 2 teachers, and five teaching Grade 3. This showed that gender differences could influence the Professional Development needs in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase of primary schools in the Motheo District. It is apparent that female teachers mostly teach Foundation Phase classes. The researcher also acknowledges that female teachers possess motherly instincts by nature; they are usually caring and warm-hearted and can mould young learners to reach their full potential. Nowadays, South African primary schools are different from those of the past. Male teachers sometimes occupy Foundation Phase posts (Grades R to 3). This creates a serious challenge for them, because they do not have the patience to deal with young learners with different learning styles, who need extra support before they can master some curriculum aspects. This fact implies that gender could impact the learners' performance in the Foundation Phase classes. The results revealed that the age groups of teachers ranged from 33 to 58. Age could therefore influence the professional developmental needs in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase of primary schools in the Motheo District. It further demonstrated that a few of them were at the beginning of their

careers, aged between 33 to 35 years, while most teachers were nearing retirement age, from 40 to 58. This may indicate that there will be a shortage of Foundation Phase teachers in the future.

Table 4.1 should serve as an eye opener for the DoE to work hand-in-hand with higher education institutions to encourage them to train Foundation Phase student teachers to identify learners experiencing learning barriers or to include the topic in the Life Skills subject. Most student teachers were not trained at higher education institutions to teach diverse learners or to identify those with learning barriers. This situation causes these learners, who are the most marginalised in terms of educational opportunity and attainment. In addition, this is a key reason why so many learners with learning difficulties drop out of school or are excluded from the learning process.

The results indicated that all participant teachers were qualified and met the minimum requirements. In South Africa, one must obtain a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD) or higher qualifications to work as a teacher. Previously (quite a few years ago), teachers were allowed to teach only if they had a Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC).

The results indicated that the participants' teaching experiences varied among them. They have varying years of teaching experience (See Table 4.1). Most have been teaching for many years, with a few teachers with little teaching experience. Based on the different years of teaching experience, it could be expected that teachers should have the required knowledge and skills to identify LWLB. All teachers were Foundation Phase teachers teaching Grades 1, 2, and 3, offering the following subjects: Numeracy, Life Skills, Sesotho, and English. Numeracy and Sesotho (as a medium of instruction) were the most important subjects in Foundation Phase that needed special attention. Learners could proceed to the next grade without knowing how to read, write or count. This allowed teachers to assess learners while reading or performing maths calculations, thus enabling teachers to identify learners experiencing learning difficulties and support the learners. Concerning race, Table 4.1 illustrates that teachers are from different races.

Table 4.1: Biographic results teachers and HoDs

Schools	Participants	Gender	Age	Grade teaching	Highest qualifications	Teaching experience	Teaching subjects	Race	Residential area
School A	Teacher 1	Female	35	2 Years	JPTD	14 years	Numeracy Sesotho Life Skills English	White	Bloemfontein
	Teacher 2	Female	35	1 Year	Hons	13 years	Numeracy Sesotho Life Skills English	White	Bloemfontein
	Teacher 3	Female	45	3 Years	JPTD	20 years	Numeracy Sesotho Life Skills English	White	Bloemfontein
	HoD1	Female	50	3 Years	ACE	35 years	Numeracy Sesotho Life Skills English	Black	Bloemfontein
School B	Teacher 1	Female	49	1	Hons	21 years	Numeracy Sesotho Life Skills English	Black	Botshabelo
	Teacher 2	Female	45	3	JPTD	15 years	Numeracy Sesotho Life Skills English	Black	Botshabelo
	Teacher 3	Female	42	2	JPTD	10 years	Numeracy Sesotho Life Skills English	Black	Botshabelo
	HoD ⁵ 2	Female	58	1	ACE ¹	31 years	Numeracy Sesotho Life Skills English	Black	Botshabelo

School C	Teacher 1	Female	55	2	JPTD	25 years	Numeracy Setswana Life Skills English	Black	Thaba-Nchu	Advance Certificate in Education (ACE) ¹ Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC) ²
	Teacher 2	Female	42	1	JPTD	11 years	Numeracy Setswana Life Skills English	Black	Thaba-Nchu	
	Teacher 3	Female	57	3	PTC ²	35 years	Numeracy Setswana Life Skills English	Black	Thabanchu	
School D	Teacher 1	Female	45	3	JPTD ³	15 years	Numeracy Sesotho Life Skills English	Black	Bloemfontein	Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD) ³
	Teacher 2	Female	33	2	JPTD ²	5 years	Numeracy Sesotho Life Skills English	Black	Bloemfontein	
	Teacher 3	Female	40	1	Hons ⁴	10 years	Numeracy Sesotho Life Skills English	Black	Bloemfontein	

Honours Degree in Psychology⁴

Head of the department⁵

SCHOOL A

Teacher 1:

Teacher 1 is a white female, aged 55, who resides in an urban area, Bloemfontein. Her highest qualification is a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 2. Her teaching experience was 14 years, teaching Numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills, and English.

Teacher 2:

Teacher 2 is a white female, aged 35, who resides in an urban area, Bloemfontein. Her highest qualification is an Honours degree (Hons), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 1. Her teaching experience was 13 years, teaching Numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills, and English.

Teacher 3:

Teacher 3 is a white female aged 45, who resides in an urban area, Bloemfontein. Her highest qualification is a Junior Teachers Diploma (JPTD), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 3. Her teaching experience was 20 years, teaching Numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills and English.

HoD4:

HoD 4 is a black female, aged 50, who resided in an urban area, Bloemfontein. Her highest qualification was Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 3. Her teaching experiences were 35 years and teaching Numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills and English.

SCHOOL B

Teacher 1:

Teacher 1 is a 49 black female who resides in a rural area, Botshabelo. Her highest qualification is an Honours degree (Hons), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 1. Her teaching experience was 21 years, teaching Numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills, and English.

Teacher 2:

Teacher 2 is a black female, aged 45 who resides in a rural area, Botshabelo. Her highest qualification is a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 3. Her teaching experience was 15 years, teaching Numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills, and English.

Teacher 3:

Teacher 3 is a 42 black female who resides in a rural area, Botshabelo. Her highest qualification is a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 2. Her teaching experience was ten years, teaching numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills, and English.

HoD2:

HoD 2 is a black female aged 58 who resides in a rural area, Botshabelo. Her highest qualification is an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 1. Her teaching experiences were 31 years, teaching Numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills, and English.

SCHOOL C**Teacher 1:**

Teacher 1 is a black female, aged 55 who resides in a rural area, Thaba-Nchu. Her highest qualification is a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 2. Her teaching experiences were 25 years, teaching Numeracy, Setswana and Life Skills, and English.

Teacher 2:

Teacher 2 is a black female, aged 42, who resides in a rural area, Thaba-Nchu. Her highest qualification is a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 1. Her teaching experiences were 11 years, teaching Numeracy, Setswana and Life Skills, and English.

Teacher 3:

Teacher 3 is a black female, aged 57, who resides in a rural area, Thaba-Nchu. Her highest qualification is a Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 3. Her teaching experiences were 35 years, teaching Numeracy, Setswana and Life Skills, and English.

SCHOOL D**Teacher 1:**

Teacher 1 is a 45 black female who resides in the Township area, Bloemfontein. Her highest qualification is a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 3. Her teaching experiences were 15 years, teaching Numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills, and English.

Teacher 2:

Teacher 2 is a black female aged 33, who resides in the Township area, Bloemfontein. Her highest qualification is a was Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 2. Her teaching experiences were five years and teaching Numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills, and English.

Teacher 3:

Teacher 3 is a 40 year old black female, who resides in the Township area, Bloemfontein. Her highest qualification is an Honours degree (Hons), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 1. Her teaching experience was ten years, teaching Numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills, and English.

The subject advisors

The information in Table 4.2 indicates that all the participants are female Subject Advisors (SAs), working at the Motheo District. Their roles were to train and support teachers and monitor their work. The same table shows that the Subject Advisors have different age groups, ranging from 43 to 59 years old, indicating most of them were just about to retire. One was 43 years old, one was 46 years old, another one was 50 years old, and the oldest one was 56 years of age. This implies that the DoE must

have started to employ others to maintain the system in a way to close the gap in Professional Development.

Regarding Grade level, the same table indicates that those participants have been teaching Foundation Phase learners in different grades; two Subject Advisors had been teaching Grade 1, one taught Grade 2, and the last one taught Grade 3. This simply means that they are experienced in teaching Foundation Phase learners. As a result, their exposure in the phase would enable them to fulfil their role in training teachers. For qualification level differences, the results in the same table revealed that three Subject Advisors obtained their Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Psychology. In contrast, only one received an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE).

Regarding the year of teaching experience, the same table indicates that the level of teaching experience varied among the advisors. The first Subject Advisor had eight years of teaching experience and only six months as Subject Advisor. The second one had three years of teaching experience and 21 years as a Subject Advisor; the third had five years of teaching experience and 11 as Subject Advisor. In contrast, they had nine years of teaching experience as Subject Advisors. Concerning subject teaching, all Subject Advisors were teaching Foundation Phase subjects, such as Numeracy, Life Skills, Sesotho, and English. English, Sesotho or Afrikaans was the medium of instruction. Regarding race, the same table results indicated that of the four Subject Advisors, one was a white female. Three were black female Subject Advisors speaking different home languages. The results show that teachers reside in other areas, such as rural, urban, and township areas, with various cultural backgrounds.

Table 4.2 Biographic results of subject advisors

Participants	Gender	Age	Grade teaching	Highest Qualification	Race	Teaching subjects	Teaching experiences	Residential areas
SA 1	Female	43 years	Grade 2	ACE	Black	Numeracy Life Skills Setwana English	Teacher (8years) Subject Advisor (6 months)	Thaba-Nchu
SA 2	Female	59 years	Grade 3	BA Hons	Black	Numeracy Life Skills Setwana English	Support Teacher (21 years) Subject Advisor (3 years)	Bloemfontein
SA 3	Female	50 years	Grade 1	BA Hons	White	Numeracy Life Skills Afrikaans English	Support Teacher (5 years) Subject Advisor (11 years)	Bloemfontein
SA 4	Female	46 years	Grade 1	BA Hons	Black	Numeracy Life Skills Sesotho English	Support Teacher (9- years) (Subject Advisor (10 years)	Bloemfontein

Bachelor Art Honours Degree in Psychology (BA Hons Psy)

Subject Advisor (SA)

Subject Advisor 1:

Subject Advisor 1 is a black female aged 43 who resides in a rural area, Thaba-Nchu. Her highest qualification is an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 2. Her experience includes eight years of teaching Numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills, and English. She had served as Subject Advisor for six months.

Subject Advisor 2:

Subject Advisor 2 is a black female aged 59, who resides in a rural area, Thaba-Nchu. Her highest qualification is a Bachelor of Arts (BA), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 3. Her experiences included 21 years of teaching Numeracy, Sesotho and Life Skills, and English. She had served as Subject Advisor for three years.

Subject Advisor 3:

Subject Advisor 3 is a white female aged 50, who resides in an urban area, Bloemfontein. Her highest qualification is a Bachelor of Arts (BA), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 1. Her teaching experiences were five years of teaching numeracy, Life Skills, and English. She had served as Subject Advisor for 11 years.

Subject Advisor 4:

Subject Advisor 4 is a black female aged 46, who resides in an urban area, Bloemfontein. Her highest qualification is a Bachelor of Arts (BA), teaching in the Foundation phase, Grade 1. Her teaching experiences were nine years of teaching numeracy, Life Skills, and English. She had served as Subject Advisor for ten years.

Support Teachers

Concerning gender, results (see Table 4.3) indicate that all the participants were female Support Teachers selected from four primary schools. The same table results indicate different age groups of teachers, as their ages ranged between 33 and 58 years. These show that a few of them were at the beginning of their careers, aged 33 to 35 years, while most teachers were near retirement age, from 40 to 58 of age. This implies that there would be a shortage of Foundation Phase teachers in the future.

The table serves as an eye opener to the DoE to work hand-in-hand with institutions of higher education to encourage them to train Foundation Phase teachers to be able to identify learners with learning barriers or to include the topic in the Life Skills subject. Most student teachers were not trained to teach diverse learners or to identify those with learning barriers at higher education institutions. This situation makes learners among the most marginalised, regarding educational opportunities and attainment. In addition, this is a key reason why so many learners with learning difficulties drop out of school or are excluded from the learning process. The results in the same table demonstrate that all teachers met the requirements and, therefore were selected to participate in this study to provide in-depth information. In South Africa, to qualify to become a teacher, one must have obtained a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD) or higher qualifications. Previously for one to become a teacher, teachers were allowed to teach by having a Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC) only. Foundation Phase is the most critical phase at the primary school level, because it is where the foundation is laid. However, teachers who teach in areas in which they had not specialised, is one of the most ignored or overlooked deficiencies in the South African Education system. No accurate statistics are available to indicate how many teachers are teaching out of their area of specialisation.

The results in the table above indicate that all teachers met the requirements; hence, they were selected to participate in this study to provide in-depth information. Eight teachers had Junior Primary Diploma (JPTD) certificates, and three had an Honours Degree (BED Hons), the highest qualification among them. Two had an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), and one had a Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC). All teachers are qualified to teach at the Foundation Phase level. Based on the findings from the interviews, most teachers did not receive training in identifying LWLB, as only a few had attended the specified training. Even when teachers attend training and Professional Development, their requirements are not satisfied.

Regarding the years of teaching experience, results in the same table indicate that the level of teaching experience varied among the teachers. A few teachers had a few years' teaching experiences (five to 15 years), while the others had more teaching experience, i.e., teaching for 20 to 35 years. All teachers have at least three years of teaching experience that will allow them to identify LWLB, provided they have received

the relevant training related to identifying learners. Regarding subject teaching, all teachers were Foundation Phase teachers teaching Grades 1, 2, and 3 and offering the following subjects: Numeracy, Life Skills, Numeracy, Sesotho, and English in their classes. Numeracy and Sesotho (medium of instruction) are the most important subjects in Foundation Phase that need special attention. This implies that teaching learners how to read and perform math calculations is still a serious challenge to teachers. The results revealed that some learners could not read or do calculations. This emphasises that teachers must be well prepared to teach reading during teacher training and Professional Development programmes to improve learners' performance. Otherwise, learners cannot proceed to the next grade without knowing how to read or count. For selection criteria, teachers had to have fewer than 35 learners in their classrooms. Concerning race, Table 4.3 indicates that out of 14 teachers, 11 were black female teachers speaking different home languages, and three were white female teachers speaking Afrikaans and English as home languages. Even though they speak other home languages, they were still obliged to accommodate the different learning styles of their learners. This could only be achieved if they could receive relevant training related to the identification of LWLB in an inclusive classroom. For residential areas, results in the same table display that teachers resided in different areas, such as rural areas, urban and township areas, and came from different social-cultural backgrounds.

Table 4.3: Biographic Results of Support Teachers

Schools	Participants	Gender	Age	Grade Teaching	Highest qualification	Teaching experiences	Teaching subjects	Race	Residential areas
School A	ST1	Female	35	Grade 2-7	JPTD	5 years	Numeracy English	White	Bloemfontein
School B	ST2	Female	35	Grade 2-7	Hons	8 years	Numeracy Sesotho	Black	Botshabelo
School C	ST3	Female	45	Grade 2-7	JPTD	20 years	Numeracy Sesotho	Black	Botshabelo
School D	ST4	Female	42	Grade 2-7	ACE	35 years	Numeracy Sesotho	Black	Thaba-Nchu

Support Teacher (ST)

Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE)

Junior Primary Diploma (JPTD)

Support Teacher 1:

Support Teacher 1 is a white female, aged 35, who resides in an urban area, Bloemfontein. Her highest qualification is a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD), teaching in the Foundation Phase and Intermediate from Grade 2 to Grade 7. Her teaching experience was five years, teaching Numeracy and English.

Support Teacher 2:

Support Teacher 2 is a black female, aged 35, who resides in a rural area, Botshabelo. Her highest qualification is a Bachelor of Arts (BA), teaching in the Foundation Phase and Intermediate from Grade 2 to Grade 7. Her teaching experience was eight years, teaching Numeracy and Sesotho.

Support Teacher 3:

Support Teacher 3 is a black female aged 45, who resides in a rural area, Botshabelo. Her highest qualification is a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD), teaching in the Foundation Phase and Intermediate from Grade 2 to Grade 7. Her teaching experience was 20 years, teaching Numeracy and Sesotho.

Support Teacher 4:

Support Teacher 4 is a 42 black female, who resides in rural Thab-Nchu. Her highest qualification is an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), teaching in the Foundation Phase and Intermediate from Grade 2 to Grade 7. Her teaching experience was 35 years, teaching Numeracy and Sesotho.

4.2.2 Thematic results

4.2.2.1 Understanding of professional development activities

The study showed that professional development activities involved teachers who attended courses and workshops focused on teaching learners reading, numeracy, about HIV/AIDS and implementing the Curriculum Assessment Policy and Standards (CAPS) document to develop their needs. The Unions and the DoE organized these workshops on specific subjects and provided them with knowledge and skills to

improve their teaching. Those courses or workshops were fruitful, because they helped teachers to improve their teaching skills in inclusive classrooms. This implies that if teachers were engaged during professional learning this would improve their self-confidence and they would take more responsibility for the learning of all learners in an inclusive classroom. Therefore, as they discovered that their new professional knowledge and practice positively impacted their learners, they became motivated and ensured that no learner was left behind and that their performance would improve.

4.2.2.1.1 Teaching learners reading

The responses from the participants' transcripts indicated that teaching learners to read was beneficial in the Professional Development activities in inclusive classrooms. Teachers were trained how to teach learners' reading skills, such as how to pronounce words correctly, read fluently, and support individual learners that might encounter challenges during the process of reading by using different reading methods like shared reading, group reading, and guided reading to develop the reading skills of all learner. These strategies would assist learners in becoming fluent readers, who read with comprehension. The participants agreed that they had attended the workshops. The following statements could illustrate these:

"Uhm..., by attending workshops arranged by the union based on reading educational based materials" (Teacher 4 School A).

"I have attended various workshops, such as how to teach learners to read, and it was arranged by Subject Advisor" (Teacher 1, School B).

"I have attended workshops related to teaching reading and other stuff" (Teacher 3, School D).

"Previously I have attended reading workshops i.e., shared reading, group reading and spell reading and others" (Teacher 2, School C).

"I have attended various workshops, such as teaching reading without taking part in any activities" (Teacher 3, School B).

“I have attended training focused on how to teach learners’ reading (i.e spell reading), guided reading, and shared reading...., I do not see anything wrong about attending those workshops, because we all benefited; my point is that if we were involved in the discussions” (Teacher 2, School A).

Participants perceived the positive impact of Professional Development activities had on them by mentioning that various workshops offered by the DoE as it provided them with the opportunity to improve their teaching practices. They emphasised that the importance of Professional Development activities explaining how well-trained workshops could improve their teaching skills, plan effective lessons, which in turn improves learners’ reading skills. Based on their statements, it is clear that participants who attended workshops benefited though the workshops, were not meant for the identification of LWLB.

During workshops, teachers were trained to help learners speak English and in their mother tongue. This would assist them in mastering the medium of instruction, which is English. One participant emphasised that teachers were trained to teach learners English. The following statements can illustrate these:

“I went to the workshops where I was taught to teach sounds and Ja..., to teach my learners sounds, therefore, it will be easy for them to read when they can identify sounds in the text. It is when teachers work together and are developed according to their needs. For instance, they need help on how they can help learners with sounds in English or learners must first know the sounds in their mother tongue so they can master them in English” (Teacher 1, School C).

We were engaged, remember earlier on I said that I had the problem with sounds. I raised questions based on sounds, because I was struggling how to teach sounds. The Learning Facilitator picked it up that I’m struggling to teach sounds that and ensure that I understand how to teach them so that learners will be able to understand the sounds. I found it very fruitful, because I can teach learners sounds in my class and it gives me self-confidence (Teacher 3, School C).

Based on the participants’ responses, it is evident that teachers understand Professional Development activities and its benefits in terms of teaching English as a

subject by stating that they had adequate training to learn how to teach sounds to the learners and this would help them to teach learners to improve reading skills. The training programmes capacitated them to teach English more effectively and learners would be able to master the content.

4.2.2.1.2 Teaching learners Numeracy

The responses from the participants' transcripts indicated that teaching learners Numeracy could be an important element in Professional Development activities in inclusive classrooms. Teachers were trained on how to teach learners to understand basic numeracy operations like addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication. By understanding operations, learners could solve problems involving numbers. This would also assist them in improving academic performance and mastering calculation skills. The extracts from the participants could illustrate these:

"I would say that Uhm..., Professional Development activities, I'll make an example of a workshop whereby teachers attend workshop to be taught, let's say in Mathematics on how to teach learners measurements, they were taught different activities and strategies that they can use in their classes to teach measurement. So that they will be able to teach learners in their classrooms" (Teacher 2, School C).

"Another professional activity is whereby we were taught how to teach learners different operations so that they can differentiate operations, because most of the time they confuse addition and multiplication" (Support Teacher 2, School C)

"Let us say in Mathematics how to teach learners measurements, and they were taught different activities and strategies they can use in their classes to teach measurement. So that they will be able to teach learners in their classrooms" (Teacher 1, School C).

Participants had a clear understanding of Professional Developments, because most of them were able to explain in detail Professional Development activities with reference to mathematical operations and measurement. This could assist them to vary their teaching methods and strategies to accommodate all the learners in the classroom to enable them to enhance their counting skills at an early age.

4.2.2.1.3 Teaching about HIV/AIDS

The responses from the participants' transcripts indicated that teaching about HIV/AIDS could be an essential element in the Professional Development activities in inclusive classrooms. Teachers were trained to teach learners about precautions to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS by not touching other people's blood, etc. This would help the learners to maintain safe behaviour and not discriminate against other learners, who may be living with HIV/AIDS. Participants shared the same sentiments and stated that:

"I have attended training focused on how to teach learners about HIV/AIDS, and I do not see anything wrong" (Teacher 2, School A).

"I have attended various workshops about how to teach learners about HIV/AIDS arranged by Subject Advisor" (Teacher 1, School B).

From the results, it is clear that participants understand and felt very strongly about the importance of Professional Development activities. They explained that being exposed to attend workshops, based on HIV/AIDS, provided more support to teach learners about HIV/AIDS aspects. Participants believed that HIV/AIDS education programmes could result in providing them with the skills and knowledge on how to teach learners and enable them to improve learners' knowledge about HIV prevention and transmission.

4.2.2.1.4 Teaching according to the Curriculum Assessment Policy and Statements (CAPS) document

The responses from the participants' transcripts indicated that teaching through Curriculum Assessment Policy Standard could be one of the approaches that could be used in Professional Development activities in the inclusive classroom. Teachers were trained and guided on what to teach, how to assess learners, and how to support those who learn, by using various teaching strategies and resources in the inclusive classroom. This would help learners to learn basic skills in different subjects, thereby improving their academic performance. The extracts from the participants illustrate these.

“I have attended various workshops, such as teaching based on CAPS, etc. workshops, but without taking part in any activities” (Teacher 3, School B).

“I have attended workshops whereby in-service and novice teachers were taught how to design a lesson plan. For example, we were provided with the policy document to guide us on how to teach learners” (Teacher 1, School D).

“We received a lot of CAPS documents from the Department of Education that are work-related” (Teacher 1, School A).

Participants who attended the workshops, understand Professional Development activities and are aware of the importance of CAPS document. From the data collected, it transpired that use of CAPS document during the training is the most important tool teachers can use in their classrooms, though they did not perform activities. Participants explained in detail that it provided them with detailed guidance on what they should teach and how to assess learners' understanding. They also believed that teachers who use the document would acquire more knowledge about their work, the content of the subjects they teach and improve their teaching.

4.2.2.1.5 Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

The responses from the participants' transcripts indicated that teaching through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) could be an essential approach to Professional Development activities in the inclusive classroom. Teachers were trained to work collaboratively to enhance their teaching practice and ensure that all learners reach their full potential. This benefits the learners so that teachers can identify learners' areas of development, which may enhance the learners' performance. The following responses attested to that:

“It is the activities intended to empower teachers to enhance the learners' performance and professional knowledge, skills, and values. These activities can be in the form of training, workshops, Professional Learning Communities, etc.” (Subject Advisor 1).

“Okay..., well..., I see those as all the activities and strategies you can use to develop yourself professionally. Here in our inclusive section, we have PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) that we run through schools to provide

activities for our teachers. We also discuss topics like how to identify learners with barriers to learning or school readiness or whatever” (Subject Advisor 4).

“Also, I have attended schools where I am not sure whether PLC’s is, I am not sure whether it is still called professional learning cognitive whereby teachers group themselves to check whether the activities they are doing match with what they are doing in class. They provide suggestions or advise each other” (Subject Teacher 2, School C).

From the above comments by the participants, teachers understand Professional Development activities in terms of PLC. The participants stressed that they benefited a lot from participating in groups, because it allowed them to share ideas with other teachers from different schools. They also expressed the fact that when they interact, and talk about their challenges, they stand a better chance to improve their teaching skills and their learners’ performance improves academically. Experienced teachers can benefit from these interactions, as it requires them to make their own thinking explicit. It helped them to reflect on their own teaching and also learn from new ideas, enthusiasm and technologies that new teachers can bring into the PLC.

4.2.2.2 Understanding of learning barriers

The study showed that barriers to learning might comprise intrinsic and extrinsic barriers that the child was born with or are external. Intrinsic factors could be caused by factors, such as lack of self-confidence, self-esteem, demotivation, language problems, hearing problems, and exposure to parental divorce. Extrinsic barriers could be caused by certain factors outside the learners, such as the school system, school infrastructure, teachers’ teaching methods, home environment, and learners struggling to cope with the curriculum. If those learning barriers are not addressed, they could affect learners’ learning and hamper their progress in an inclusive classroom.

4.2.2.2.1 Extrinsic learning barriers

The results indicated that participants understand that extrinsic barriers are regarded as learning barriers. It could be something outside of the learners that prevent them from learning or achieving what is expected in a specific grade or level. These include the following aspects: limited knowledge of curriculum content, teachers’ attitudes

towards the children, the school system, lack of school infrastructure, inadequate teachers' teaching, an unhealthy home environment, or learners' misunderstanding of instructions.

From the above statement, the participants agreed that learners with extrinsic barriers found it difficult to learn and stated that:

“Extrinsic can be defined as anything that hinders the progress of the learners that makes it difficult to learners to attain the expected outcomes or to learn what teachers are teaching or disturb learners to learn” (Subject Advisor 3).

From the data it emerged that the participant understand the meaning of extrinsic barriers. The participant explained her understanding of extrinsic learning barrier to be those factors that arise outside from the learner and impacted on learners' learning. She even pointed out that if learners cannot perform well academically this would also affect teachers to facilitate teaching. As a results, expected learning outcomes cannot reached by both teachers and learners. The participant's understanding of extrinsic learning barriers could assist teachers on how to identifying and provide support to LWLB in the classroom.

a. Teachers' limited knowledge of curriculum content

This study showed that teachers' limited knowledge of curriculum content could be an extrinsic barrier affecting learners' performance in inclusive classrooms. Participants mentioned that teachers did not know how to identify LWLB. As a result, learners struggled to master curriculum content, due to external factors that impeded their learning. The following statement can illustrate this:

“Extrinsic barriers so many things can cause it, it can be caused by the curriculum itself whereby a child is unable to assess, and it can be the teachers themselves.....” (Subject Advisor 2).

From the findings, it is evident that the participant understands that curriculum is one of the extrinsic factors that could hinder the progress of the learners. In her explanation she explained that curriculum guides all teachers as to what is essential for teaching and learning, so that every learner can have access to education. She also mentioned

that when teachers lack curriculum knowledge, their students fall behind or do not perform well academically. This shows that it is important for the teachers to be competent enough in content knowledge and pedagogy so they can help learners to master the content.

b. Teachers' attitudes towards learners

The responses from participants' transcripts demonstrated that teachers' attitudes towards the children could be an extrinsic barrier influencing the learners' performance in inclusive classrooms.

"...their attitudes towards the children, the way they talk to them. It can be bullying at school, you know, it can be so many things that the child can experience a barrier in an environment that can cause barriers to learning" (Subject Advisor 2).

From the results it means that the participant does understand that attitudes of teachers towards the learners is one of the extrinsic factors contributing to poor academic performance and learning outcomes of learners. She expressed that this negative attitudes affect learners in many ways. Hence, positive attitudes from the teacher affects learners' motivation, attitudes towards school work and encourage learners to pay attention during the lessons. Learners' self confidence improve and as a result, assists in personality development. This implies that a positive attitude is encouraged among teachers for teaching and learning to take place.

c. Lack of school infrastructure

The results revealed that a lack of school infrastructure could be an extrinsic barrier to learning, hampering learners' performance in inclusive classrooms. Participants said that if the schools did not have access to water, toilets were not in good condition, and classrooms were overcrowded, learners' performance could be affected, because they spend much time at school. Therefore, they have to cope and learn in an unhealthy environment and thus perform below par, either in summative or formative assessment.

"External barriers can be in the school system like the school infrastructure.

It can be social of nature or even in the home environment where challenges affect the child's performance or development" (Subject advisor 4).

"if the schools did not have access to water, toilets are not in good condition, this will have affect the life of all teachers and learners" (Subject Advisor 3).

From the data, it emerged that participants do understand that lack of infrastructure is one of the extrinsic factors that could have a negative impact for teaching and learning to take place. They have mentioned that this is unsatisfactory health in the sense that if the schools building lacked infrastructure, such as toilets, water supply or libraries, this would deny them the opportunity to facilitate their lessons. This would also affect learners to to such an extend that learners could not pay attention or it would result to learners' increased drop-out rates. Therefore, it is evident that social ills negatively influence the attainment of quality education.

d. Inadequate teachers' teaching methods

The results indicated that inadequate teaching methods could be an extrinsic barrier to learning that influences learners' performance in inclusive classrooms. If the teachers employed one-size-fits-all teaching methods when teaching diverse learners and did not vary their teaching methods, LWLB would suffer academically. The teachers would focus on those who understand the learning content and not consider learners with barriers to learning. As a result, their performance would deteriorate, and lag, and they may not progress to the next grade.

"Extrinsic barriers in the school system can affect the child's performance, if teachers cannot vary their teaching methods when teaching the learners in the classroom" (Subject Advisor 4).

From the statement above, the participant understands that inadequate teachers' teaching methods as an extrinsic barrier, could result in poor performance of the learners. They explained that if teachers do not employ a variety of teaching methods when facilitating the lesson, this could hamper learners' progress. Based on the findings, teachers were encouraged to use various teaching methods and strategies to improve learners' results.

e. Unhealthy home environment

The results showed that an unhealthy home environment could be a barrier to learning, which affects learners' performance in inclusive classrooms. Participants mentioned that some learners are deprived of parental love and care and live in a home environment where parents fight, which may affect learners' performance at school. Learners from such families may not be able to concentrate during the lessons. They may become depressed and isolate themselves during breaks. They may not participate at all; instead, they may be very concerned about the situation prevailing at home.

"It can be social of nature or even in the home environment where there are challenges like parents fighting each other when they are under the influence of liquor that affect the child's performance or development" (Subject Advisor 4).

The participant understands that an unhealthy home environment is one of the extrinsic factors that could affect learners' learning. Participants also emphasised that learners' problems were sometimes associated with the environment or circumstances in which they grew up. An environment that is poor and lacks opportunities might hamper learners' development and learning.

f. Learners' misunderstanding of instructions

The results demonstrated that learners' misunderstanding of instructions could be a barrier to learning, which affects learners' performance in inclusive classrooms. Participants indicated that if learners struggled to cope with given instructions, their progress might be impeded and they would not perform as expected or understand what the teachers were teaching within the inclusive classroom. Teachers defined barriers to learning as an impediment to learners' ability to master curriculum content. Learners who cannot complete a task or grasp the curriculum content in a particular subject, do not perform to the expected level, because of intrinsic or extrinsic barriers.

"If the learner experiences difficulties in mastering the learning content, it's a barrier" (Teacher 3, School C).

“What can I say, barriers to learning are when a learner struggles to cope with the curriculum” (Teacher 2, School B).

“Ma’am, I think it is when learners struggle to complete a certain task, it is a learning barrier” (Teacher 3, School B).

“The inability of learners not to grasp curriculum content in the particular subject” (Teacher 4 HoD, School B).

“Well, the barriers to learning means, for instance, if the learner struggles to complete the given task, we call it a barrier” (Support Teacher 1, School B).

Most of the participants do understand the meaning of a barrier. Participants mentioned that misunderstandings seemed to occur most when teachers asked questions based on the lesson being presented and an answer is expected. Participants seemingly support the ideas that when an incorrect response is offered, learners perform poorly or provide incomplete tasks; this shows that learners misunderstand the instructions offered by the teachers. This misunderstanding of instructions might hinder learners’ progress to achieve their potentials.

g. Exposure to divorce

The results revealed that exposure to divorce could be an extrinsic barrier to learning, which affected learners’ performance in inclusive classrooms. A child who grows up in a broken home environment, caused by the divorce or death of one or both parents, might also experience learning barriers. Children living with grandparents, who also have to fulfill parental roles at home by taking care of their siblings and performing duties that parents should do instead of focusing on their schoolwork, are affected emotionally and may not concentrate at school. They would lag behind with their schoolwork. Their performance deteriorates, and they may no longer be interested in attending school. Participants claimed that:

“Children exposed to the divorce of their parents Uhm..., or death in the family may cause barriers to the learners” (Teacher 3, School A).

“Learners living with grandparents may experience barriers to learning, because they must take responsibility to do house chores and there will not have someone to help them with their homework” (Teacher 4, HoD, School A).

From the above comments, it appears that participants understand that learners exposed to the divorce of their parents, are barriers that affect most learners' outcomes and educational attainment. They express their concerns that children whose parents are divorced, or have died, are less likely to complete high school, because it would be difficult to cope with their school work and perform house chores. Their performance deteriorates. This implies that support from teachers is needed. Foundation Phase learners seem to be experiencing a lot of challenges in their lives, which also affect their progress in learning. Participants indicated that some learners act as a child-headed family without any supervision by an adult. This is evident that teachers really find it very difficult to investigate learners' history, in order to get background information that might help them in assisting learners experiencing barriers to learning in an inclusive classroom.

4.2.2.2 Intrinsic learning barriers

The responses from teachers' transcripts indicated that intrinsic barriers could influence the learners' performance in inclusive classrooms. Participants mentioned that intrinsic barriers to learning could be anything within learners that prevents them from learning or achieving what was expected in a specific grade or level. Intrinsic barriers include lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem, low motivation, poor understanding of English as a medium of instruction, or hearing and visual problems.

“Well..., Intrinsic barriers to learning can be a challenge within a learner, either sensory, cognitive, motor or any barrier”(Subject Advisor 4).

The participant explained her understanding of intrinsic learning barriers to be those factors that are situated within the learner. It includes physical, mental, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, psychosocial disturbances, and impact on learners' learning. It may hinder the learner from accessing the educational system, and that might contribute to learning breakdown. This simply means that the participant could differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic barriers. Based on the

statement above it is believed that if learners could get the support from teachers, their academic performance could improve.

a. Lack of self-confidence

The results indicated that a lack of self-esteem could be an intrinsic barrier to learning that impedes learners' performance in inclusive classrooms. The learners would lose self-confidence and become mentally disturbed. The responses from the participants' transcripts indicated the following:

“For example, if the learner lack self-confidence, self-confidence is a learning barrier because, during the oral presentations, the learner will not be able to express themself confidently; it means the self-esteem of the learner is demotivated because some will laugh at them because they have realized that the learner lack of confidence” (Support Teacher 2, School C).

“Barriers to learning is anything within the learners that disturbs the learners from learning or that disturb learners from achieving. For example, suppose the learner lack self-confidence, self-confidence is a learning barrier because, during oral presentations, the learner will not be able to express themself confidently. In that case, it means the learners' self-esteem is demotivated because some will laugh at them because they have realised that the learner lacks confidence” (Support Teacher 2, School C).

Participants agreed that lack of confidence is one of the factors that could hamper learners' progress and deteriorate their performance. They expressed that performance affects confidence and confidence affects performance, but if a learner has self-confidence, he/she would become motivated and willing to learn. This implies that participants view teachers as role models who can motivate the learners to gain self confidence to improve their results. Participants believed that if learners could get the support from the teachers, self-confidence could be enhanced that could lead to better results on the side of the learners.

b. Lack of self-esteem

The results demonstrated that a lack of self-esteem could be an intrinsic barrier to learning, affecting learners' performance in inclusive classrooms. Teachers' responsibility is to support them and explore their abilities. Teachers should build their self-esteem if they experience learning barriers and must reward and praise the learners, which would often increase learners' self-esteem. One participant positively responded:

“By intrinsic barriers, we mean the things the child was born with, those that are biological, it can be curriculum itself that a child is unable to assess, and it can be the teachers themselves, their attitudes towards the children, the way they talk to the child. It can be bullying at school, you know, it can be so many things that the child can experience a barrier in an environment that can cause barriers to learning” (Subject Advisor 2).

Participants stressed the point that learners might struggle with one or more types of learning barriers. Participants indicated that intrinsic learning barriers include things such as attitude, prior knowledge, etc. They pointed out that it is the responsibility of the teachers to ensure that they pay special attention or deal with individual learners, according to their different specific needs, rather than displaying negative attitudes towards the learners that could disturb learners performance. They all agreed that to overcome such learning barriers, teachers could guide the learners through the use of relevant resources, allow them to participate during the lesson and provide context that are relevant to the LWLB. It means that a negative attitude of the teacher was one of the contributing factors that could impact learners and disturb their progress.

Lack of motivation

The results showed that lack of motivation could be an intrinsic barrier that influences learners' performance in inclusive classrooms. If teachers do not treat learners equitably within the classrooms, learners develop negative attitudes toward the teacher. Because of this situation, learners' performance may be lowered. Teachers often experience frustration, and learners are usually demotivated about their poor achievement. One participant stressed that:

“Barriers to learning are anything within the child, during the lesson, unfair treatment among the learners by the teacher can cause lack of motivation. The learners’ morale deteriorated and thus, contribute to learners’ performance”.
(Support Teacher 3, School A).

The participant understands that lack of motivation is one of the intrinsic barriers, which is a serious problem faced by learners in the classroom, and can hamper their learning in the classroom. She explained further that if teachers display negative attitudes towards the learners, and not treat them equally, learners’ performance deteriorate. This simply means that for teachers to improve learners’ performance, support must prevail. Based on the statement, it is evident that LWLB in the classroom were not getting special attention from the teachers, as the teachers focus only on those who perform well.

c. Misunderstanding of English as a medium of instruction

The results indicated that a misunderstanding of English as the medium of instruction could be an intrinsic barrier that influences learners’ performance in inclusive classrooms. If the medium of instruction used at school is not the learners’ home language, learners might not understand or follow instructions. When given a task, learners may not provide the correct answers; instead, they would write whatever comes to their mind and not perform well. As a result, the learner would not be able to succeed in their studies or progress to the next level. Another issue was that children from different cultures and language groups might also experience language problems if they do not receive instructions in their mother tongue.

“Language can be a barrier at school if the instruction medium is not the learners’ language. Therefore, it will be difficult for learners who experience learning barriers to understand or respond to teachers’ instructions” (Teacher 1, School A).

“The learner will not be able to write the word correctly, so the learner will not trust what is expected. For instance, they had to read the passage out of that passage. They must retell what they have read and answer comprehension test questions. If the learner does not understand the passage, they will not be able to answer the questions” (Teacher 2, School C).

“.....because during the oral presentations, the learner will not be able to express himself or herself” (Support Teacher 2, School C).

Participants understand that misunderstanding of English as a medium of instruction, is also one of the intrinsic barriers, which can disturb learners' learning. She explained some of the problems that learners often encounter when learning English content if English is not their mother tongue. She even mentioned that if the learners cannot understand the language of learning and teaching, learners and teachers cannot achieve the expected outcome. This implies that most of Foundation Phase learners were struggling to perform well, due to the medium of instruction. Participants strongly believed that Professional Development programmes that focus on offering language support to teachers would improve academic performance of the learners and assist LWLB to improve in achieving learning outcomes to such an extent that they progress at similar level as others in the classroom. As such, there would be less misunderstanding of English instruction to the learners.

d. Hearing problems

The results showed that hearing problems could be an intrinsic barrier that hinders learners' performance in inclusive classrooms. Poor performance could be caused by the inability to acquire and use language. If the learners cannot hear properly, they become mentally troubled, because they cannot interpret what the teacher said. Therefore, this may negatively affect their learning and performance, as all learning involves language. The participants attested that:

“Hearing, it can be a barrier if the learner cannot understand or hear what the teacher says” (Teacher 2, School A).

“I think children having hearing and speech problem needs educational therapy” (Teacher 4, School A).

With regard to the above discussion, participants have the same opinions regarding learners with hearing problems. Some of the participants seem to point to a problem regarding learners with hearing problems by suggested that because of the fact that learners who experience such problems could not become successful in their learning, support from physiotherapists were identified as an intervention strategy to assist the

learners. It is clear that they agreed that the way in which their schools identify LWLB is not up to standard and this have impacted on their teaching and learning. Thus, all indicated that by inviting physiotherapists, the quality of teaching and identifying LWLB would improve.

e. Visual problems

The results demonstrated that visual problems could be a learning barrier that influences learners' performance in inclusive classrooms. If the learners have visual problems, reading fluently would be difficult, and they may omit letters or words. This affects the learners' progress at school. They would no longer be interested in reading in front of other learners.

“There are many barriers like a visual problem if the learner does not see properly on the chalkboard, that learner could not write the word correctly every time the words that are written there will be a problem with spelling” (Teacher 1, School C).

The participant revealed that learners with hearing problems do not perform well academically. Possible reasons which might cause poor performance were highlighted. In the light of the statement, it appears that participants felt frustrated to deal with learners with different learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom. They felt that these situations could lead to learners achieving below their potential and would be unsuccessful even if they might have the ability to succeed.

4.2.2.3 Understanding by identifying LWLB

The study showed that Foundation Phase teachers could identify LWLB by observing learners and discovering their strengths and weaknesses in inclusive classrooms. The teachers could identify LWLB to detect what learners know, do, and cannot do. This would allow teachers to vary their teaching methods and strategies to accommodate individual learners.

4.2.2.3.1 Observing learners in classrooms

The results showed that observing learners in classrooms could be essential in identifying LWLB. It helps Foundation Phase teachers identify LWLB in inclusive

classrooms. Teachers would be creative enough to employ new methods to complement learners' weaknesses and strengthen those who perform well. Observation would facilitate the identification of LWLB, and performance would improve.

"I observe the learners in the classroom while they are busy writing the task by so doing, I managed to identify those who need help and provide support" (Teacher 3, school A).

"It is about observing the learners and how they perform and finding all those different barriers that can influence the performance" (Subject Advisor 4).

"To find all the different barriers that can influence learner performance. For me is to find the root of the problem and those challenges that affect the child's performance and look at the learners' strengths and how they use that to compensate for these barriers" (Subject Advisor 4).

"By identifying learners is being aware of..., what can I say, this specific learner is not able to be performing to his/or her potential, or the ability to single out the problem, the stumbling block that hinder learner from performing" (Subject Advisor 3).

From the statements mentioned above, participants indicated that writing LWLB' names were part of the learners' observation in inclusive classrooms. The learners whose names have been written down would enable the teachers to formulate relevant programmes that would address learners' needs.

"I think identifying the learners means having a close look at all learners and picking up those struggling with the concept you are teaching and writing their names of that learner and their problems when teaching the concept we are teaching. For those who did not understand the concept, it means they have a learning barrier" (Support Teacher 2, School C).

Participants understand how to define the identification of LWLB by explaining that observing learners could help teachers to deal with LWLB in the classroom. They agreed that teaching learners with diverse needs could be a challenge to most of the

teachers. They indicated that teachers should take the responsibility and ensure that they cater for diversity in their respective classes. Participants recommended that by observing learners could be a great help to teachers to enable them to facilitate the lesson and to identify LWLB in an inclusive classroom. This means that participants were aware of the significance of observing learners while teaching.

It is evident that teachers lacked learning support competencies, such as identifying learning difficulties and assessing learners.

4.2.2.3.2 Discovering learners' strengths

The results revealed that discovering learners' strengths would be essential in identifying LWLB, as such barriers could deny learners the opportunity to interact or prevent them from concentrating during the learning process. As a result, learners become frustrated, and their performance becomes affected.

“Some of the learners were identified and one of them is a candidate for special school. I took the learner, met with SBST members, and worked with the learner for the whole day. My objective was to see whether the learner would improve. I assess the learner. To my surprise, I realised that the learner could read. I even get support from the principal. I use this school as an example and encourage others to cope from it” (Subject Advisor 3).

Participants also understand the identification of LWLB by indicating the significance of providing support or creating extra classes for the LWLB by explaining that they would help teachers to identify the strength of individual learners in a classroom. It would assist them to look at what each individual is good at and what their passions are. By creating time to support the learner, would provide them to look at what an individual is capable of. The participant suggested that schools should set up teacher support groups where teachers share ideas. This shows that some of participants have attended workshops in identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom. Some of the participants should be capacitated with the skills that will enable them to support learners who present with characteristics of learning barriers in an inclusive classrooms, in order achieve the outcomes. It was advised that schools should set up support groups that would support the teachers in that regard.

4.2.2.3. Discovering learners' weaknesses

The results demonstrated that discovering learners' weaknesses could be vital in identifying LWLB and helping Foundation Phase teachers. These included poor performance, the inability to read, inability to write, poor eyesight, hearing difficulties, and unstable learners' family backgrounds.

a. Poor performance

The results showed that poor performance could be considered a learner's weakness, which may help Foundation Phase teachers identify LWLB in inclusive classrooms. The study illustrated that learners who suffer from ill health or come from unstable families could perform poorly as they may not be able to concentrate in the classroom. As a result, they may not attend school regularly, which will hamper their performance. Teachers may develop a negative attitude towards such learners. Furthermore, teachers' creativity deteriorated and the identification of barriers was overlooked.

"These are the learners that do not perform as expected as prescribed by the different scientific tools; for instance, one would expect the learner of a certain age to behave/performance at a specific level; but the learner's behaviour/performance is below/above what is expected of their age range" (Subject Advisor 1).

The participant shows understanding of identifying LWLB by stating the challenges faced by the teachers in identifying LWLB in their classrooms. Different barriers that could lead to poor performance of the learners were identified. The participant explained that some of the learners perform below par than is expected. It is evident that some of the learners were not receiving enough support from the teachers. It is clear that in order to improve learners' performance, teachers must receive intensive training to improve their teaching skills. Efforts should be made available to help teachers to assist learners experiencing learning difficulties to deal with specific academic weaknesses.

b. Inability to read

The results showed that the inability to read could be considered as a learner's weakness, which helped Foundation Phase teachers to identify LWLB in inclusive classrooms. The study indicated that learners unable to read could not perform

academically, because reading is a prerequisite for all subjects. Learners will not be able to understand and follow the instructions of the given tasks in different subjects. These factors impacted learners' learning and performance. Therefore, teachers become uncertain about how to assist learners in mastering reading.

“Learning barriers means when learners struggle to read....., it is a barrier”
(Teacher 3, School C).

“During oral reading, I could see that the learner is having a reading problem when struggling to pronounce the letters” (Teacher 1, School C).

“Some cannot read the words, and they just guess them” (HoD4, School A, T3, School B).

“Some of them cannot read the sentence; they have a problem reading. They struggle to read it” (Teacher 1, School C).

Participants shared the same experiences in LWLB by stating that:

“My experience in identifying learners is horrible. Learner’s progress from Grades 1 and 2 only to find that they cannot read. I am a Grade 3 teacher, and identifying learners at this stage is a mammoth task. You will find that somewhere somehow, the learner is being cheated. The child is in Grade 3, but unable to read” (Teacher 1, School C).

“I cannot identify learners with barriers to learning because some of them cannot read or write” (Teacher 3, School D).

Participants show understanding of identifying LWLB by mentioning that most of the learners were unable to read even short sentences. From the statement above, It is clear that most of the learners in the Foundation Phase could not read as expected. Thus, the participant is of the view of the necessity that all Foundation teachers must attend professional development based on reading to sharpened their reading skills.

c. Inability to write

The results highlighted that the inability to write could be considered a learner's weakness, which may help Foundation Phase teachers identify LWLB in inclusive classrooms. The failure to write could be a barrier that affects learners' performance, because they cannot complete given tasks, achieve or progress according to their abilities. Thus, learners may perform below par if they struggle to write. Poor handwriting and spelling errors hinder learners' performance.

“As I said, a learning barrier can be anything; as I have said, learning barriers is not only, maybe a learner is unable to write,..... what is it becoming the child cannot do in the classroom” (Subject Advisor 2).

“ For instance, if the child cannot write, they will devise a way to simplify the curriculum in the way the child can access. Anything that causes the child not to function well, not perform well” (Subject Advisor 2).

“If the child cannot write, he or she would simplify the curriculum in such a way to have access” (Subject Advisor 2).

“Spelling seems to be a learning barrier; some learners do not know how to spell words correctly. They omit some of the letters and become meaningless” (HoD 1, School A).

“Some of them experience a problem with the writing, and they spell words incorrectly” (Teacher 1, School B).

“Some guess the words and associate them with the first letter and only to find that what has been assumed is not the correct word” (Teacher 2, School C).

The participant indicated the challenges faced by the teachers in identifying LWLB in their classrooms. Different learning barriers that could lead to poor performance of the learners, were identified. Participants explained that some of the learners were unable to read. They lack basic reading skills. Reading and spelling seems to be a problem. This mean that teachers were struggling to teach learners on how to read or write at a young age. Failure to read fluently could delay the learners' learning. It is clear that teachers in the Foundation Phase do not know how to vary their teaching methods as

they lack basic skills on how to teach learners reading and writing. In addition to that, some of them were not trained to teach Foundation Phase learners.

d. Poor eyesight

The results showed that poor eyesight could be considered a learner's weakness, which may help Foundation Phase teachers identify LWLB in inclusive classrooms. If the learners cannot see objects at a distance (i.e., on a chalkboard), they may withdraw from activities. The participants commented that poor eyesight affects learners' learning and causes difficulty with reading or completing written tasks, but they could perform well during oral work.

“Some learners experience learning barriers. Some of them cannot see clearly, it is difficult to copy what is written on the chalkboard” (Teacher 1, School A).

“Some learners are short-sighted and hard-hearing, they cannot see clearly or hear properly, and some have psychological problems that need occupational therapy” (Teacher 1, School A).

“Some have problems with reversals; instead of writing 9, they will write 6. They write their language when I ask them to read, and they read the words what comes from their mind, you won't see the word what the learner is reading” (Teacher 2, School C, Support Teacher 1, School C).

“Some of the learners confuse letters, they write the letter “b instead of p” and when coming to the numbers, 6 becomes 9” (HoD 2 School B).

Data collected indicated that participants understand the meaning of identifying LWLB by stating that learners experience difficulties in terms of writing letters or the numbers due to lack of vocabulary, poor grammar or poor spelling. Based on the responses above, it is clear that participants lack skills to teach learners on how to write. Early identification was ignored, hence LWLB are always detected very late and teachers have to struggle to support the learners.

e. Unstable learners' family background

The results showed that an unstable family background could be regarded as a learner's weakness, which may hinder Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. Learners with one parent who is ill, are emotionally affected, as such a parent cannot take care or provide support for or become involved in the child's work. Such a home situation presents barriers to learning and negatively impacts a learner's performance. Those learners become traumatised and have to take care of their siblings and provide for their basic needs. This could affect learners' academic performance and they will be unable to pay attention in class. Parent-teacher cooperation was not active enough as the teacher would need clear feedback from the parents about the learners' progress.

As a result, it becomes difficult for the teacher to meet the needs of the learners.

“Poor concentration span. Other barriers are not just academically, but the learner's family background, e.g., the child-headed family can cause a barrier”
(Teacher 3, School D).

Similar to the statements mentioned above, one participant highlighted that the learners often do not have breakfast before coming to school, which causes a learning barrier in inclusive classrooms.

“...the other one did not eat in the morning because he has social barriers at home” (Subject Advisor 4).

The participants indicated that some of learners experience challenges regarding parental care and safety. Their performance deteriorated due to family issues. They stressed the fact that learners were at risk of being abused or attacked by strangers. They needed support from support services (i.e. Social workers).

4.2.2.2.4 Professional development activities improving in identifying LWLB

The study showed that professional development activities were not improved in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State.

4.2.2.2.4.1 Identifying LWLB

a. Provision of a Foundation Phase teacher's special training

The responses from the participants' transcripts indicated that the provision of Foundation Phase teachers' special training could improve identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. This was because teachers were not trained in how to teach and adapt their teaching strategies to accommodate, evaluate and identify LWLB in classrooms.

"Since I have been teaching, I have never attended the training related to barriers to learning" (Teacher 1, School A).

"I did not receive any training based on identifying LWLB. I think the current inclusive policy that is in place, somehow it does not cater to the needs of the teachers" (Teacher 3, School A).

"No, we normally forget what we have learned to adapt our teaching strategies in identifying LWLB because, during the training, we were just listening to the presentation" (Teacher 2, School C).

"We must be trained to adapt our teaching strategies" (Teacher 3, School C).

Participants showed understanding regarding the identification of LWLB. The participants felt that the DoE had not done enough research in terms of training teachers on how to identify LWLB. They felt a need to be provided with special training that would enable them to identify LWLB. They indicated that most of the Professional Development that were conducted were not for the identification of LWLB and were in the form of lecturing, whereas others did not attend the workshop based on the identification of LWLB. They expressed the fact that they do not know how to identify LWLB. Their responses offer evidence that they lack skills and knowledge on how to identify LWLB in their classrooms in order to improve the identification of LWLB.

b. Acquiring Foundation Phase teachers' skills and knowledge

The responses from the participants' transcripts indicated that acquiring skills and knowledge is an essential element in teacher training. It will enable teachers to adapt

to the different learning styles of learners in inclusive classrooms. It will allow teachers to vary their teaching methods and accommodate individual learners' needs. Learners would be motivated to become interested in learning.

“Ehm...., what I can say is that teacher training in identifying LWLB it means that when teachers receive training conducted or arranged by facilitators in a way to enhance the skills and knowledge of the teachers that they have already acquired to enable to improve their teaching practice and learner performance” (HoD 1, School A).

“Teachers were granted the opportunity to attend training of specific topics to improve their skills and knowledge” (Teacher 1, School B).

“Ehm...., It refers to the training attended by the teachers to gain skills and knowledge on how to teach learners using different methods” (Teacher 2, School D).

“It is whereby teachers attend training to gain skill and knowledge to identify LWLB, not including remedial teachers” (Support Teacher 1, School B).

“It means the teachers in the Foundation Phase must have the full knowledge, skills, and values to deal with such learners. They must be flexible in developing the learners' areas that are not yet developed” (Subject Advisor 1).

“To add to what my colleagues have just said, I see progress in some of the learners, because teachers have skills and knowledge acquired from the college; therefore, I make the point that I adapt my teaching strategies to accommodate those learners who need help” (Teacher 3, School D).

From the responses, participants showed understanding of the meaning identifying LWLB by stressing that they need to acquire skills and knowledge to be able to identify LWLB. They showed passion for identifying LWLB by explaining that in order for them to be able to meet the needs of all the learners, they need need to be supported to develop an understanding of the underlying concepts of identification, because they experienced difficulties to identify learners with learning barriers in an inclusive

classroom. This simply means that participants were willing to improve academic performance of the struggling learners.

c. Providing sufficient time for teachers' workshops

The responses from the participants' transcripts indicated that providing sufficient time for teachers' workshops increases the time in the workshops for identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. Subject Advisors were trained on how to facilitate teachers' training in identifying LWLB. It helped Subject Advisors engage with teachers to share ideas on identifying LWLB. It also assisted teachers in engaging in practical activities, sharing their experiences, and getting clarity in LWLB.

"The training is continual; every session we don't take long but one and half hours, because of Covid 19, we focus on one aspect not to bore teachers" (Subject Advisor 3).

"I think in future we need enough time to attend the workshops and all the primary schools must have the Support Teacher who will assist us with the learners who experience barriers to learning" (Teacher 4, School A).

The participants indicated that lack of providing sufficient time for teachers' workshops is also a barrier hindering the success of identifying LWLB. They indicated that for teachers to be able to accommodate and meet the needs of the learners, enough time is required to have sophisticated knowledge of content and how learn to identify learners experiencing learning difficulties. From the participants' responses it is clear that time during the workshops were not sufficient for teachers to acquire skills and knowledge that would enable them to facilitate the lessons.

d. Implementation of SIAS policy for teachers

The responses from the participants' transcripts indicated that implementing the SIAS policy for teachers is important in identifying LWLB. It helped teachers refer to LWLB in inclusive classrooms. The learners' areas for development were identified at an early stage in the Foundation Phase. As a result, relevant support would be provided to the learners.

From the statement above, the participants recommended using the SIAS policy to train all teachers on how to identify LWLB. Participants stated that:

“We have attended SIAS workshop. All Foundation Phase and Senior Phase teachers learned how to identify learners. It takes one and half hours” (Teacher 1, School D).

“We go to schools to educate teachers on how to use SIAS” (Subject Advisor 2).

“We go to schools to educate teachers on how to use SIAS, previously the training normally took two to three days, but because of Covid 19, the training is virtually and last for three hours and teachers get an opportunity to attend the workshops and get the same information, unlike SBST members attend and when they come back, they do not give feedback” (Subject Advisor 2).

Participants recommended the implementation of SIAS policy to train teachers to acquire skills and knowledge to identify LWLB. They pointed out that it helped teachers to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support and improve learners’ participation in the classroom. This implies that if the implementation of SIAS policy is well managed, it would allow learners to access basic education and the necessary support at school.

e. Assigning Support Teachers

The results showed that assigning Support Teachers is essential in identifying LWLB. It assisted Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. The Support Teachers work hand-in-hand with the teachers to support LWLB regarding referral procedures. This helped teachers to identify learners at an early stage to allow the referral to happen timeously. This would benefit learners to be placed at special schools if necessary. The participants highlighted that there would be marked improvement when schools were assigned Support Teachers.

Participants recommended that the DoE provides them with the Support Teachers to help them identify LWLB. Participants commented that:

“We have assigned a Support Teacher who assisted us with learners experiencing learning barriers in our school” (Teacher 1, School B).

“Can you repeat...; I can say we had a Support Teacher in the past, and there was improvement and learners were assisted, but currently we don’t have a remedial teacher” (HoD 1, School A).

The participants felt strongly that there is a need for each primary school in Motheo District to be assigned Support Teachers to support the teachers. They explained that some of the primary schools had Support Teachers and they played an active role in providing support and addressing some of the barriers experienced by the learners. Participants were aware that most of them were trained only for general mainstream education, but not in identifying LWLB. This simply means that teachers lack support in terms of identifying LWLB.

4.2.2.2.5 Foundation Phase teachers’ experiences in identifying LWLB

This study found that Foundation Phase teachers had positive and negative experiences identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms in Motheo District, Free State, primary schools. Because each class has learners with learning barriers, some of the Foundation Phase teachers experienced difficulties identifying learners with learning barriers, whereas others did not. This implies that all teachers need special training to improve teaching skills that would enable them to improve learner performance in inclusive classrooms.

A. POSITIVE

The results indicated that Foundation Phase teachers had positive experiences identifying LWLB, such as learners’ performance improvement, appreciation, and interest. These conditions motivated them to vary their teaching methods and strategies to accommodate learners with different learning styles within their classrooms, which would ultimately improve learners’ performance.

a. Improvement of learners’ performance

The results highlighted that improving learners’ performance is considered a positive experience in identifying LWLB. Learners performing well encourages them to change their attitude toward LWLB in an inclusive classroom. It allows them to improve their teaching standards by adapting teaching methods to meet the needs of all learners. As a result, the required outcomes would be achieved.

The following extract emphasises a need to improve learners' performance to achieve the pre-determined outcomes. One participant stated:

“My experience in identifying learners is horrible. Learners' progress from Grades 1 and 2 only to find that they cannot read. I am a Grade 3 teacher, and identifying learners at this stage is a mammoth task. You will find that somewhere somehow, the learner is being cheated. The child is in Grade 3, but unable to read” (Teacher 1, School C).

The participant shows appreciation to improve learners' performance by explaining that when teachers recognise that some of the learners are struggling to grasp learning content and provide support to those learners, learners become motivated about learning and confident in their abilities. This helps to show where learners need improvements. This statements implies that teachers are willing to assist LWLB and make teaching and learning more effective. On the other hand support has to be provided to primary schools so as to help teachers deal with the LWLB and to enhance learners' performance.

b. Appreciation

The results indicated that appreciation is a positive experience in identifying LWLB. Teachers appreciated the training as the best instrument to be utilised to improve their teaching skills and best practices to increase learners' learning and achievement in an inclusive classroom.

Participants indicated that training is important to enhance teachers' teaching skills to improve learners' performance. Participants mentioned that:

“The teachers appreciate.... the training because this training also assists in real-life outside their work scope” (Subject Advisor 1).

“The teachers really... welcome the training because this training also assists in real-life outside of their work scope” (Subject Advisor 2).

The participants showed appreciation with regard to the workshops attended even though the workshops were not meant to be specifically for the identification of LWLB. Based on their explanation above, the skills that they have acquired during the training

also helped them after hours. This simply means that if the participants feel appreciated they would commit themselves to improve in their work performance and deliver great results.

c. Teachers' interest in learning

The results indicated that interest is a positive experience in identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom. Experience has shown that if teachers come to schools where they feel valued and safe, they will commit themselves and work harder. There would be fewer distractions and discipline problems, and the learners would learn more. Teachers become interested to learn and even take greater responsibility for the learning of all learners and they would not ignore learners with learning difficulties, but instead strive to support them. As they take more responsibility and discover that their new professional knowledge and practice positively impact their learners, they will be more actively involved in their learning. As a result, their teaching skills would improve learners' performance.

From the above extract, the participants indicated that some teachers were interested in learning how to identify LWLB and improve their skills and knowledge. One participant pointed out that:

“Some of the teachers who are very interested or keen to learn to try to implement strategies, but some are unwilling to learn or try to improve their teaching strategies. They are still carrying on with their comfort zone” (Subject Advisor 4).

The participant indicated that some of the teachers are willing to go extra mile, to learn and enhance their knowledge and skills, in order to improve their work performance, whereas others were not interested to improve their teaching skills. This means that there is a need for participants to be competent to learn basic skills, as well as new skills as curriculum and technology keeps changing. The participants need to be able to adapt their teaching strategies to meet the needs of all learners, but this can only be achieved through on-going workshops arranged by DoE.

B. NEGATIVE

The results showed that some Foundation Phase teachers had negative experiences identifying LWLB, such as lack of learners' concentration, teachers' unwillingness to learn, and Foundation Phase teachers' frustration. This situation demoralised the teachers and caused teachers to develop negative attitudes toward learners. Thus, the identification of LWLB may become a challenge.

a. Lack of learners' concentration

The results showed that lack of concentration is considered a learner's weakness in identifying LWLB. Lack of concentration is considered a negative experience in identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom. Participants indicated that learners who lack attention could not perform well in class. The learners seem restless, disturb others, and experience difficulty in concentration. These influence teachers to concentrate on individual learners within the classroom. The morale of the teachers deteriorates, and it would appear as if they are not efficient enough to improve learners' performance.

The that learners who are hyperactive could not concentrate in an inclusive classroom and participants commented disturb both teachers and learners during the learning process. The participants noted that they need to be placed at special schools:

"It is about observing the learner and how they perform and finding all those different barriers that can influence the performance. You can have two children presenting the same problem, but the barriers might differ. For example, the child is very active in class, and the other one has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder ADHD" (Subject Advisor 4).

"In my class, there are learners who are hyperactive; they do not concentrate during the lesson. Sometimes they refuse to write" (Teacher 2, School B).

"Some of the learners, when I ask them questions in class, they often give wrong answers, because they do not pay attention, they are hyperactive, and I have realized that most of the learners need help" (Teacher 2, School D).

“Some of them are hyperactive; they need to be placed at special school whereby they will get enough attention from the occupational therapy or people who have been trained to work with them” (Teacher 2, School A).

“They need occupational therapy and are placed in the special schools because they don’t cope with the mainstream curriculum. Some of them struggle to complete or perform the given tasks” (Teacher 3, School A).

The participants raised a concern about learners who are unable to concentrate during the lessons. They indicated the different learning barriers that hinder them in not performing certain activities in the classrooms, also alluded to the fact that they need to be placed in special schools. This means that they could not be assisted in the main stream school. Thus, the DoE must ensure that those learners be placed at special schools.

b. Teachers’ unwillingness to learn

The results showed that some Foundation Phase teachers had negative experiences identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom. Teachers’ unwillingness to learn is considered as a negative experience in identifying LWLB. Some teachers were not willing to learn how to identify LWLB. They preferred to use a One-Size-Fits-All approach. Teachers who are unwilling to learn how to identify learners experiencing learning barriers negatively, impact learner performance and could also lead learners to fail academic subjects or become dropouts.

From the above statement, one participant claimed that some teachers lacked motivation and were unwilling to learn:

“...but some are unwilling to learn..... They are still carrying on with their comfort zone” (Subject Advisor 4).

The participant stressed the point that some of the participant were not interested to improve their teaching skills in order to assist LWLB. The participant indicated that teachers prefer teaching rather than learning or improving their teaching styles. This implies that teachers lack motivation in a way to be made aware about the purpose of attending in-service training.

c. Foundation phase teachers' frustration

The results showed that Foundation Phase teachers had negative experiences identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom. Foundation Phase teachers' frustration is regarded as a negative experience that caused teachers to be unable to identify LWLB. Some of the teachers were frustrated with dealing with LWLB. Foundation Phase teachers complained about learners who enrolled in mainstream schools early instead of attending pre-schools. Therefore, it would be difficult for young learners to grasp curriculum content and progress to the next grade. This affected teachers, and delivering the content and paying special attention to such learners in an inclusive classroom, became ineffective.

Participants expressed their experiences and frustration in identifying LWLB and stated that:

"It is frustrating, because teachers must buy material for themselves related to learning barriers. Lack of relevant resources is the main issue. If the learner must repeat the grade, let the child repeat. From Grade 1, learners should be retained if the teacher has proof. The system must be blamed for not allowing the child to repeat the grade. There is also a lack of foundation. For instance, if the learner struggles with numeracy or is unable to read or write" (HoD 1, School A).

"My experience is that children come to school at a young age, we as teachers we, recommend that if learners can be placed in Grade R. They need to be well developed" (Teacher 1, School B).

Participants were concerned about different factors that hinder Foundation Phase learners to perform well. They explained that some of the learners could not cope with the workload because of their age. This implies that policies of admission of learners need to be reviewed regularly in a way to address frustration and to enable learners to progress well.

d. Parental attitude

The results showed that some Foundation Phase teachers had negative experiences identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom. The attitudes of parents' attitudes are considered as a negative experience that frustrates teachers to identify LWLB. They do not allow their children to be kept back. Their focus was on learners' results, but not on their performance. This disturbed teachers regarding identifying learners who experience learning barriers or keeping those learners back.

The participants shared the same experiences about parents' attitudes regarding identifying LWLB . They commended that:

“My big problem is the parents; they are not exposed to the issue of learners with barriers to learning. They do not accept their children's learning difficulties whenever they are told about them. They only want to see their children progress to the next grade without knowing how to read or write, not realizing the consequences” (Teacher 3, School A).

“The parents’, i.e., do not want to acknowledge that their children have problems in learning. They do not want them to repeat the grade” (Teacher 1, School A).

“Not all parents understand their children's challenges or problems” (Teacher 1, School B).

“Another experience is that sometimes when you call the parent to discuss the progress of his or her child, parents do not show, but expect the child to progress to the next grade” (Teacher 2, School C).

“The challenge is to teach diverse learners in one class, and parents whose children are struggling do not want their children to repeat the grade” (Teacher 3, School C).

The participants complained about the attitudes displayed by parents. They regard a negative attitude as one of the contributing factors that disturb them to identify LWLB and as a result, learners' performance deteriorate. Participants indicated that parents focus on quantity rather than quality. This implies that

there is no good relationship between the parents and the participants. Therefore, the identification issue should be part of the discussion in one of the parents meeting organised by the school.

e. Lack of parental involvement

The results showed that Foundation Phase teachers had negative experiences in identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. Lack of parent involvement is regarded as a negative experience that causes teachers to be unable to identify LWLB. Parents do not want to support teachers, be involved in their children's learning, or attend parent meetings to learn about their children's progress. They do not want to spend their spare time assisting their children. This disturbed teachers in terms of identifying learners who experienced learning barriers or retaining those learners.

Participants shared the same views that parents do not want to cooperate with them concerning learners' performance. They mentioned that:

Another experience is that sometimes when you call a parent to discuss the progress of his or her child, parents do not show but expect the child to progress to the next grade” (Teacher 2, School C).

“You will work hard to support the learners at school, but your efforts go down the drain. Especially during long holidays when learners are not exposed to books when they come back, you must start afresh” (Teacher 2, School A).

“I think the challenges and experience are the same, there is no time for an intervention of learners, and the SBST does not meet regularly. Learners attending mainstream classes cannot balance work from remedial classes and mainstream work, creating a serious challenge. Furthermore, parents do not assist the learners with the work done in the remedial class” (Support Teacher 2, School C).

Participants felt that parents were neglecting their responsibilities as primarily educating their children and leaving the responsibility to teachers. Participants expressed their concern explaining the difficulties to interact with parents concerning their children's academic work and alluded that there is a need to be taught how to support their children. They indicated that there is a lack of parents' involvement, which

could cause learners to be deprived of extra support. They explained that parents are not supportive; when called, they do not come to school, and there are some problems which you cannot solve without the parents' consent. In this case, the support was denied indirectly by the parents. This implies that teachers are left feeling miserable and incompetent when there is no support from the parents and guardians. Their self-esteem might even suffer and sometimes they want to quit their teaching job. Parents should be supportive in terms of solving LWLB in the classroom by taking the responsibility for their children.

f. Overcrowded classes

The results highlighted that improving learners' performance is considered a positive experience in identifying LWLB.

The results showed that Foundation Phase teachers had negative experiences identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. Overcrowded classes are one of the negative experiences that cause teachers to be unable to identify LWLB. Large classes harm teachers to meet learners' needs in classrooms. Large numbers of learners in one classroom challenge teachers to pay special attention to individual learners in terms of time required and providing instructions to diverse learners. Teachers cannot attend LWLB in an inclusive classroom. Thus, it affects learners' performance, and they may develop a passive attitude in the classroom, ultimately having to repeat the grade.

In terms of overcrowded classrooms, one participant indicated that teachers experience challenges in identifying LWLB and reported that:

“Uhm..., I have an experience that my classrooms are not big enough to accommodate many learners. As a teacher, it is difficult to give learners who experience learning barriers enough support. Teaching 30 to 45 Foundation Phase learners in one class is a serious challenge. You will find that some of them repeat the grade, since you cannot pay attention all at once” (Teacher 2, School A).

Participants expressed their feelings about the challenges they faced to accommodate and identify LWLB regarding overcrowded classrooms. Most of them mentioned that they felt overwhelmed, because they were not coping with their workload and had to

pay special attention to individual learners. The participants also felt disturbed and guilty, because they cannot reach the expected learning outcomes due to large classes in the Foundation Phase. This implies that the learner ratio in South African primary schools is 55 in each classroom. This affects teaching and learning to be ineffective.

g. Referral of learners

The results showed that Foundation Phase teachers had negative experiences in identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom. A referral is considered a negative experience that caused teachers to be hesitant to identify LWLB. Most of the teachers encountered challenges when it came to referring LWLB in an inclusive classroom. The entire referral procedure seemed to be difficult for them. Time is limited to schedule SBST meetings to discuss the procedures to be followed when referring learners to remedial classes with the Foundation Phase teachers. The participants echoed the same view that identification and referral of LWLB was still a challenge. Participants commented that:

“In another case in my class, the learner has been tested and is being placed on the waiting list for placement, but the learner is still in my class. All the processes have been done. This means referral is challenging” (Teacher 3, School D).

“Another point is that there is a challenge of time whenever referral must occur; the district does not allow the SBST to meet with them to discuss learners’ challenges” (Support Teacher 2, School C).

“As I have already indicated that it is difficult to identify them, I assess the learners, and if there is no improvement, I refer them to Support Teacher” (HoD 2, School A).

“As a remedial class, I have experienced that some teachers do not complete SIAS forms or identify learning barriers of the learners. I must search where the problem lies, creating more work for me. At the same time, some of them send incomplete forms. No intervention has been done on the learners. Another point is that there is a challenge of time whenever a referral must take place. The

district does not allow the SBST to meet with them to discuss learner's challenges" (Support Teacher 2, School C).

"I used to send learners who experience barriers to learning to the remedial class" (Teacher 3, School A).

"Refer learners to the psychologists" (Support Teacher 1, School B)

"Learners with learning difficulties take longer to understand what is required and, on the other hand, we are expected to cover the curriculum" (Teacher 3, School A).

Participants emphasised that the issue of referring LWLB is still a challenge to teachers and the DoE, because there is no cooperation between the two parties. From the school level learners are being identified, but the referral system is not ultimately done by the Department. This implies that the DoE encountered a challenge of more space for LWLB. With regard to teachers' referral challenge, they need relevant workshops that would address the challenge at hand and get extra assistance for learners with whom they had identified.

h. Lack of resources

The results showed that Foundation Phase teachers had negative experiences in identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom. Lack of resources is considered as a negative experience that causes teachers to be unable to identify LWLB. Lack of resources denies teachers the opportunity to facilitate teaching to teach diverse learners in the classrooms. Some learners who experience learning barriers may be left behind, because an inclusive classroom demands that learners with visual or hearing problems must be considered when providing resources. Their understanding differs; for instance, learners with normal eyesight understand when seeing things that others understand through touching objects. Therefore, teachers may struggle to facilitate the lesson due to a lack of relevant resources. Teachers would employ a one-size-fits-all approach when assessing learners. It could be said that the unavailability of resources denies teachers the opportunity to identify LWLB in an inclusive classroom and to improve learners' performance.

One of the participants mentioned that there was a shortage of resources that could be used to assess LWLB in diverse classrooms. The participants mentioned that:

“Uhm..., There is a shortage of computers. Teachers depend on traditional assessment methods when assessing the learners” (Teacher 2, School D).

Lack of resources that can be used by participants are one of the challenges that they believe hinder teachers from assessing LWLB in classrooms. The above statement confirmed that lack of resources contribute to the identification of LWLB. It denies participants the opportunity to work in small groups and forced participants to adopt a teacher-centred approach. This implies that indeed the DoE failed to provide teachers with enough relevant resources to address the needs of the participants and the the learners.

i. Cultural challenges

The results showed that Foundation Phase teachers had negative experiences in identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. Cultural challenges are considered as a negative experience that caused Foundation Phase teachers to be unable to identify LWLB. Culture plays a major role, because it forces some parents to send their children to perform traditional activities during the academic year without realising that they are not academically coping. Therefore, the teachers’ remedial programme is affected, and learners fall behind with their school work.

From the above extract, it is clear that teachers face serious challenges in identifying LWLB due to cultural challenges. The participants noted that:

“There are cultural challenges, the teacher will say the learner has to attend occupational therapy; on the other hand, the parent will say the child has to attend a cultural ceremony (Teacher 3, School A).

The participant indicated that learners with different cultures manifest as a challenge for the participants. From the response the participant mentioned that culture is one of the challenges that constitute some of the factors that deny teachers the opportunity to identify LWLB. They also pointed out that parents have different values and the way they do things. For instance, some of the parents did not encourage their children to attend schools regularly. This implies that the parents-teachers’ relationship was not

prevailing. Participants were not having ample time to meet with parents and convince them to allow their children to attend school

4.2.2.6 Intervention strategies to improve teachers' training in identifying LWLB

This study found various intervention strategies to improve teacher training in identifying LWLB in Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State. These included organizing relevant workshops, interaction among Foundation Phase teachers, developing courses related to identifying LWLB, providing relevant resources, establishing relationships with teacher-parents and providing individual learner support.

a. Organizing relevant workshops

The result showed that organising relevant workshops is an intervention strategy to improve teacher training in identifying LWLB. Interaction among Foundation Phase is considered as an intervention strategy to improve teacher training in identifying LWLB. Subject Advisors could conduct workshops to train pre-service and novice teachers to improve teachers' skills and knowledge in identifying learners with barriers to learning in an inclusive classroom. The relevant workshops must include all primary school phases and focus on identifying LWLB.

Concerning relevant workshops, participants indicated that Subject Advisors have to conduct and organise relevant workshops that would improve teacher training in identifying LWLB. There was a need for teachers to attend courses as suggested below:

“Relevant workshops must be arranged by Subject Advisors for teachers to learn how to identify learners in an inclusive classroom” (Teacher 1, School A: HoD 2, School B).

“I think all Foundation Phase teachers, including Intermediate Phase, should be allowed to attend courses related to the identification of LWLB other than that, pre-service training programmes should be provided to all student teachers in primary and secondary schools“ (Support Teacher 2, School C).

The participant felt that organising workshops that are not related to the identification of LWLB challenges teachers to provide learning support to learners who might experience learning barriers. As result, participants suggest that the DoE should provide teachers with relevant workshops to support those learners who struggle during their learning to reach their potential. This simply means that acquiring specific knowledge of teaching and learning would allow teachers to identify learning difficulties and address them during the learning process. Teachers are expected to be equipped with knowledge that would help them when teaching diverse learners in the classrooms.

b. Interaction among Foundation Phase teachers

The results showed that the interaction of Foundation Phase teachers is regarded as an intervention strategy to improve teachers learning to identify LWLB. Interaction among Foundation Phase is considered as an intervention strategy to improve teacher training in identifying LWLB. It would help teachers to build team spirit and foster collaboration among teachers, provide time for teachers' professional development, and to discover more intervention strategies to assist novice teachers. It would help individual teachers attain complementary skills and knowledge to learn from one another.

The following participants commented that:

“I think it will be a great help if the Department of Education can arrange workshops where teachers work together as a team” (Teacher 1, School B).

“So far what we have been doing in our school we call meetings and advise each other on what to do. The training could be improved if the Education Department organised training that would allow teachers to work together during the training sessions” (Teacher 1, School C).

“I think if we could work as a team, by sharing ideas during the workshop, we'll benefit a lot. To add on that, I think if teachers who are trained can assist those who did not attend training” (Teacher 1, School D).

In my opinion, in teacher training practice, special attention should be given to preparing all teachers to exercise their autonomy and apply their skills in

adapting curriculum and instruction to meet learner's needs and identify LWLB
(Teacher 3, School C).

The participants indicated that they benefited from participating in clusters because they were able to share ideas with teachers from other schools. They emphasised that when they work as a team they have the opportunity to interact, share ideas about their challenges in teaching LWLB, and assist one another. They also suggested that if the DoE can improve training, they stand a better chance to improve learners performance.

c. Developing courses related to the identification of LWLB

The result showed that developing courses related to identifying LWLB is considered an intervention strategy to improve teacher training in identifying LWLB. It would help schools to build a good relationship with universities to share the best practices. It would also prepare student teachers for work after completing their degrees. The programme should be focused on the identification of LWLB. The universities should play a pivotal role in preparing teachers by offering inclusive programmes to student teachers. Participants commended that there is a need for higher education institutions to offer subjects related to the identification of LWLB to prepare student teachers for work. Participants suggested that:

“Uhm..., what can I say, if all the universities could offer courses related to the learners with barriers to learning, this would allow the teachers to select or attend courses and acquire skills in identifying learners with barriers to learning. Every teacher from tertiary institutions who did didactics can assist teachers how in identifying LWLB” (Teacher 2, School D).

“There must be a subject of identification of learners who experience barriers to learning at higher institutions. Another issue is that training programmes should be designed to meet the teachers' needs” (Teacher 3, School D).

Participants share the same view by stating that developing courses related to the identification of LWLB at different institutions can assist novice teachers to acquire teaching skills in identifying LWLB in the classroom before entering the system. They all agreed that such courses will help teachers - novice and pre-service teachers - to

identify LWLB in an inclusive classroom and adapt their teaching strategies. It is evident that teachers required further Professional Development workshops on the identification of LWLB. It is widely accepted that developing knowledge and requirements of teachers is one of the most fundamental measures needed to improve learner achievement. This implies that in-service training courses, as well as in-service training for school teams of different professionals (teachers, support specialists, school leaders) could help to address these complex challenges, as there is a need for different kinds of training courses. For example, courses for teachers to develop the competencies needed to teach learners with different abilities, as well as training for support professionals on their changed role in identifying LWLB.

d. Provision of relevant resources

The result showed that the provision of relevant resources is regarded as an intervention strategy to improve teacher training in identifying. It would help both teachers and learners to learn. Teachers could be trained through videos and it would benefit teachers to overcome the challenges in identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom, because when teachers watch videos they would be able to learn from other practices and implement the teaching strategies to match it.

The participants suggested that providing relevant resources should be essential to training teachers. They commended as follows:

“If the Education Department can provide us with enough resources (Teacher 2, School A).

“It is essential to provide teachers with enough relevant resources to cater to the needs of the learners” (Teacher 3, School A).

“Different resources, such as technological equipment videos can be used to train teachers” (Teachers 3, School B).

“I think reading and research is needed to improve teachers’ training in identifying learners with barriers to learning” (Subject Advisor 2: Subject Advisor 3).

“When coming to the learners who experience learning barriers, the Department of Education should be involved by retesting the learners, but I’m not sure whether am I in the right position; we don’t have power to do that” (Teacher 2, School C).

“Using the Learner Profile, Resource Lists and the functional SBST’s, the teachers in the Foundation Phase could do the early identification and intervention of the learners’ barriers to learning and development” (Subject Advisor 1).

“To implement SIAS policy more effectively, the identification of learners is explained on SIAS, and teachers need to know how to identify learners at a young age and find ways of referral. I think identification should start from Grade R. The other strategy is to implement SIAS policy effectively, find ways to streamline strategies, as well as to develop online strategies with practical examples on how to do things” (Subject Advisor 4).

“I believe that if our Subject Advisors do class visits in our schools to see where the problem lies, they would be able to assist us and come up with intervention strategies” (Support Teacher 1, School B).

The various suggestions from the participants indicated that provision of relevant resources can be of great help that would enable them to identify LWLB. In addition to that, so can the the call for effective educational resources that convey important ideas about teaching and learning in ways that can be understood and implemented in the classroom, can help immensely. Such resources, including technical equipments that will allow them to observe, interact, reflect and promote critical thinking and problem solving. This implies that provision of relevant resources will help teachers to acquire valuable information and keep them up to date with the required information that will improve their teaching and learning.

e. Establishing teacher-parent relationships

The results showed that the establishment of teacher-parent relationships is regarded as an intervention strategy to improve teacher training in identifying LWLB. It would help teachers to know about the learners’ backgrounds through the assistance of

parents. Teachers would get the opportunity to interact with parents through different means of communication to discuss learners' progress.

Participants' responses revealed that establishing teacher-parent relationships could be used as an intervention strategy to improve teacher training in identifying LWLB. This is evident in the following comments by some of the participants:

"First thing I communicate with the parents what is going on with the child and find out the background of the child and after spoken to the parents I will try to assist the child" (Teacher 1, School A).

"I try to find out about the background of the child, and after speaking to the parents, you as the teacher, you can learn more about the main cause of learning barriers of that learner" (Teacher 2, School A).

"I call the parents and show them learner's written work. Maybe I can get assistance from them and after that, I will adapt the delivery of activities and strategies to ensure LWLB can participate" (Teacher 1, School D).

Participants share the same view by stating that establishing teacher-parent relationships can free them to focus more on the task of teaching learners if they receive support from parents. They also emphasised the fact that good relationships with parents are pivotal as learner-teacher relationships. In addition to that they mentioned that good relationship with parents gives them the opportunity to know the history of the child and as result it will be easy for them to support the learners and reach a common goal. This will help learners to learn at their highest capacity. Participants emphasised that there must be a strong relationship between parents and the teachers for the sake of learners' progress.

f. Provision of individual learner support

The result showed that providing individual learner support is considered an intervention strategy to improve teacher training in identifying LWLB. It would help teachers to accommodate individual learners and to know more about individual areas for development. Adequate and suitable resources would enable teachers to support learners through different methods. From the comments by the participants, it is clear that the provision of individual learner support could be used as *inter alia*:

“I make a point that I assist them by providing extra individual support as necessary” (Teacher 1, School B)

“I remain after school with those who need assistance, twice per week to see whether there is progress or not” (Teacher 3, School B)

“I will make sure that I provide support to the learners who are struggling, and I will sit next to those who experience learning barriers and assist them” (Teacher 1, School C).

“Adapting teaching and learning strategies, I think that’s the best thing I can do” (Teacher 3, School D).

Participants agreed that provision of individual learner support is essential to support LWLB in the classroom to achieve successful learning. Participants suggested that most of the teachers lacked learning support competencies, such as identifying learning difficulties and assessing learners. They also offer suggestions on how to accommodate all learners in the classroom. According to the participants’ view, this could assist them to attend to individual needs of learners. It means that teachers are encouraged to create extra time to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom. This statement supports the ideas that teachers who are able to observe and identify LWLB in the classroom, will effectively provide the required additional support needs.

4.2.3 Summary of the chapter

This chapter focused on the themes developed from focus groups and semi-structured interviews conducted with fourteen Foundation Phase teachers, four Support Teachers, and four Subject Advisors, who were the study participants. Seven themes emerged from the interviews to explore how teacher training and professional development could be improved in identifying LWLB in Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State. The findings in this study indicated that teacher training and Professional Development offered were not relevant enough to meet the needs of the teachers in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase, the duration of the workshops was so limited to cater for all the needs of the teachers, and workshops were not related to the identification of LWLB. It is recommended that teachers need practical training to improve teacher training and Professional Development in identifying LWLB

in Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State. The study recommends numerous intervention strategies to improve teacher training and professional development needs.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented, analysed, and interpreted data and themes from the semi-structured focus group and individual face-to-face interviews relating to teacher training and professional development in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase. Extracts from the literature review were used to support data presented as the study sought to propose Social Constructivism and Constructivist theory as a strategy to improve teachers' Professional Development needs in identifying learners with learning barriers in the Foundation Phase in the Motheo District. This chapter focuses on the implications of the research recommendations, informed by the findings, the significance, limitations, and unique contributions of the study.

5.2 Discussions of the findings

The study's broad aim was to explore how teachers' training and professional development could be improved in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State. Six research questions were addressed.

The main and sub-research questions arose, based on the research study:

What are the training and professional development needs of Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB and the implications for teacher education?

- i) How do Foundation Phase teachers understand Professional Development activities in identifying LWLB in the classrooms?
- ii) How do Foundation Phase teachers understand learning barriers in the classrooms?
- iii) What do Foundation Phase teachers understand by identifying LWLB in the classrooms?
- iv) How do Foundation Phase teachers understand LWLB in the classrooms?
- v) What are the Foundation Phase teachers' experiences identifying learners LWLB in the classrooms?

- vi) What are the intervention strategies to improve Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB in the classrooms?

5.2.1 Research question 1: How do Foundation Phase teachers understand the Professional Development activities in identifying LWLB in the classrooms?

The findings show that some participants understood the meaning of Professional Development activities. It is a fact that Professional Development activities are essential for teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms. Many studies support the idea that Professional Development activities can have a positive impact on teachers' knowledge and skills (Attard, 2016). However, some Professional Development activities fail to improve teachers' performance (in this case, in identifying LWLB). These statements motivated the researcher to ascertain whether the participants understand the meaning of Professional Development activities. Scholars (Cajkler et al., 2015; Wood, Norton, Pedder & Xu, 2017) define Professional Development as the activities focused on improving teaching practice with the aim of maximizing learners' learning. From the participants' responses, it was found that participants demonstrated understanding of Professional Development activities by stating that "it is whereby teachers attended courses or workshops focused on teaching learners reading, numeracy, HIV/AIDS, and implementing the Curriculum Assessment Policy and Standard (CAPS) document to develop their needs". Not all participants understood what Professional Development activities mean. Some were uncertain about the meaning and understanding of Professional Development activities, as they said, "It is when attending the workshop", leaving out some crucial aspects and their responses were not included in the study. This simply means that if teachers cannot understand the meaning of the concept, it will be difficult for them to identify LWLB in inclusive classrooms. These comments are linked to evidence found in the literature (DOBE, 2017, Dreyer, 2017, p. 203), stating that "reading is the quintessential skill required and without it, learners are doomed to struggle through school and drop out when they are unable to master it adequately". Hill (2014) stresses that children with limited literacy skills are less likely to continue their education beyond school. Dreyer (2017) believes that reading and language arts form the core of what school success means in the early grades and thus need to be developed at an early age with great emphasis on the quality thereof. The DOBE (2012) supports the ideas that teachers must receive training on how to manage group reading, guided reading, and shared reading

strategies. In addition, it emphasises that they must know how to group learners according to their reading abilities or specific needs (in this case, LWLB).

Furthermore, teachers should provide learners the opportunity to integrate their growing knowledge of the conventions of print, letter-sound relationships, and other foundational skills in context. Participants in this study stressed the point that reading is very important at an early stage (i.e from Grade R to 3). It is a fact that the inability to read fluently at an early grade, would make it extremely difficult for learners to progress academically to the next grades.

Numeracy, HIV/AIDS, CAPS, and PLCs were also mentioned as sub-themes of Professional Development activities. The findings from the participants indicated that they learned much from the workshops. In terms of teaching Numeracy, it was found that participants learned different strategies on how to teach learners to perform calculations and measurements. These are in agreement with the DOBE (2002), indicating that it is important that teachers are role models who should always have a positive attitude when teaching Mathematics in the Foundation Phase.

Regarding HIV/AIDS, the participants agreed that teaching young learners about the issue is very important to provide young people with basic AIDS/AIDS education that will enable them to protect themselves from becoming infected. The literature supports the notion that HIV/AIDS education must be delivered to young learners during the early years of schooling (UNESCO, 2019).

For CAPS, it was found that participants were provided with resource documents that would guide them on how to facilitate the lessons in inclusive classrooms. Those workshops did not give them the liberty to engage in practical activities that would enable them to practise CAPS in an inclusive classroom. This simply means that teachers prefer to be involved in practical activities during the training.

In terms of PLCs, the participants thought that PLCs workshops are essential for fostering collaborative teaching. Through it, teachers would be able to help one another achieve a common goal: identification of LWLB. These opinions align with the literature findings (Brodie, 2013) that reveals that through PLCs, teachers can create

an environment that fosters mutual cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth through collaboration to achieve what they could not achieve alone.

In light of the above discussion, it was found that participants who were interviewed understood the meaning of Professional Development activities. Participants acknowledged these forms of workshops that had been organised to train them in various aspects of the curriculum. They indicated that they helped them acquire skills and knowledge to facilitate the lessons in inclusive classrooms. However, participants felt that mastering those teaching skills could only occur through engaging in different activities during the workshops. The findings are in line with recommendations by Jafar et al. (2021). Hairon and Tan (2017) and Jafar et al. (2017), and similarly found that effective Professional Development should engage teachers and create opportunities for active learning in which teachers improve their skills, gain more knowledge, reflect on their teaching, and prepare sound lessons and assessments. The findings also revealed that some participants did not understand the meaning of Professional Development activities, and one reason could be non-participation during the workshops.

5.2.2 Research question 2: How do Foundation Phase teachers understand learning barriers in the classrooms?

Based on the findings, extrinsic and intrinsic barriers are found to be some of the factors that could cause learning barriers and lead to learning difficulties for learners. Participants reported that extrinsic barriers manifested themselves outside the learners. These include limited knowledge of curriculum content, teachers' attitudes towards the learners, lack of school infrastructure, inadequate teaching methods, an unhealthy environment, and learners' misunderstanding of instructions.

About limited knowledge of curriculum content (derived from the participants' responses), it was found that participants understood the meaning of learning barriers. Another finding is that participants are of the same view that if teachers teach subjects they have not professionally been trained for, it would be difficult for them to deliver the content. This view was similar to what was raised by the Education White Paper (2001) that most barriers to learning arise from different aspects of the curriculum, such as the content, how the classroom was organised and managed, as well as the methods and strategies used in teaching. The findings are in consonance with Tooley

and Connally (2016), who state that if teachers were provided with proper regular training on emerging technology tools for the classroom, new curriculum resources and more, they could contribute to the success of their schools. The best Professional Development is ongoing, collaborative, and connected to and derived from working with students and understanding their culture. The absence of ongoing in-service training of the participants often leads to uncertainty, low self-esteem and lack of innovative practices in classrooms. This may also result in negative attitudes towards LWLB in an inclusive classroom. As a result, such behaviour may prevent the learners from engaging in classroom activities. Araujo et al. (2016), Carneiro, Cruz-Aguayo and Schady (2016) indicate that the demands made on learners by teachers may also be too high. If the learner cannot meet these demands, they fear criticism and non-acceptance, especially if teachers react unsympathetically toward their failures.

Regarding teacher attitudes, it is evident that attitude could also affect how teachers behave towards learners in or outside classrooms. Negative attitudes of teachers could hamper learners' performance. Araujo et al. (2016:131) defines attitude as a "learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner for a given object". If a teacher displays the following negative attitudes, such as to criticise a learner who performs poorly academically, makes or commit mistakes in front of others, label the learners or make fun of them; race, gender, disability, sexual preference discrimination and other characteristics; the response of the learner may manifest as a learning barrier. These discriminatory actions may result in learners losing interest in learning, leading to learning barriers or learners might drop out. Therefore, teachers must be encouraged not to display negative attitudes toward learners. This is in line with the literature, as Mupa and Chinoonek (2015), indicate that high-quality teaching and learning influences student-learning outcomes. Teachers must undergo cognitive and metacognitive learning processes to achieve learning outcomes in the form of changed beliefs about their practice or, even better, changes in behaviour. Participants found that teachers' attitudes toward learners are among the factors that could affect learners' performance. Mupa and Chinoonek (2015), recommend that teacher preparation at all levels (early childhood to secondary) should be oriented towards inclusive education to achieve. There is a belief that this training will enable teachers to facilitate learning for all learners and eliminate negative attitudes toward learners with LWLB in the classroom.

In terms of the lack of school infrastructure, the participants' findings revealed that if school conditions are not conducive, teaching and learning become affected. Participants indicated that lack of school infrastructure is one of the extrinsic factors that could cause learning barriers and affect learners' performance. These findings corroborated with the Review of South African Education compiled by Chisholm, Motala, and Vally for the Centre for Education Policy Development 2000+ Project (2022), stating that the vast majority of South African children in South Africa still continue to be educated in conditions of extreme neglect. Of the 32 000 schools in South Africa, one in four has no water within walking distance and eleven percent get their water from dams and rivers. 57 percent do not have electricity, and 52 percent still have pit latrine toilets. Therefore the participants felt that the South African Government must ensure that all schools are in good condition for learners to cope at school. The findings are in line with studies that recommend that for teaching and learning, the environment must be in good condition (Deed & Lesko, 2015). Findings focusing on the infrastructure and the school learning environment, revealed that teachers struggle with poor infrastructure and facilities that fail to meet the needs of learners with LWLB. Cuesta et al. (2015), Glewwe, Krause and Parnwell (2015) maintain that, for inclusive education to be practised effectively, schools need to modify and improve their infrastructure to meet the needs of all learners.

Regarding inadequate teachers' teaching methods, classroom management is essential to both teacher education and Professional Development, as it is crucial to keep teachers' knowledge up to date to deliver high-quality teaching (Abdullah et al., 2019; Ali, Mydin & Amin, 2019, Cardno et al., 2019). The findings also align with the literature, as Abdullah et al. (2019), Mydin and Amin (2019) and Cardno et al. (2019) assert that teachers should concentrate on emotional support, classroom organization and instructional support aspects of classroom interaction among teachers and students. To be able to do that, teachers should possess a certain set of knowledge and skills to understand how these three domains work, what difference could be made by the teacher in the classroom and why they are so important. It is research-proven knowledge that classroom interaction is a tool for any teacher to support him/her in any classroom situation.

From the findings, participants supported the idea that if the child grows up in an unhealthy home environment where parents fight with each other, such situations may cause learning barriers and affect learners' performance at school as learners may struggle to concentrate during the lessons and learners may ultimately fail. This is contrary to the literature (Maigida & Ogwo, 2013), that a conducive environment encourages learner engagement in learning much more than an unhealthy home environment. Learners in a good mood and emotionally involved are more likely to pay attention to information, remember, and apply it effectively.

With regard to learners' misunderstanding of instructions, the findings revealed that teachers understand that if learners do not understand teachers' instructions, it may lead to learning barriers. Participants' responses align with the ideas of Gonchar (2014), who contends that many factors make identifying learners experiencing barriers difficult, such as definitions and criteria for particular categories of barriers, and overlapping of learning difficulties. However, many teachers do not have the required skills (Rahmi, 2018), therefore, quality support is not always available for learners, especially those who experience barriers to learning. Teachers must acquire essential skills and knowledge of different learning difficulties to assist learners in the classroom. This could only be achieved through teacher training and Professional Development.

From the findings, participants agreed that parents' divorce causes children to worry, and unable to pay full attention to their school work, which may affect learners' academic performance. This is in keeping with the literature (Chimienti, 2022), stating that the divorce rate in South Africa is rising, and there are high numbers of children in single-parent families. The findings are also in line with the scenario below: "In all the schools that were visited in KwaNdebele, principals, teachers and learners shared information that shows that the separation of families is a major barrier to learning". In some of the cases that were quoted, divorced parents fight over children. Because of divorce, some learners live with people who are not their biological parents, while some are abused in various ways: physically, mentally, sexually, and emotionally. Although some teachers and principals indicated that they have sometimes intervened successfully in counseling affected learners, the effects of such conditions on learners are enormous" (Spector–Dunsky, 2020, p. 568). This implies that each school must

be provided with a social worker to assist such learners in coping academically. Participants indicated that learners' behaviour changes and their performance deteriorates in the classroom, because of their responsibilities at home. Learners struggle to concentrate on their work or complete given tasks. From the participants' perspectives, it is clear that participants understand the factors that cause learning barriers outside the learners, even though the identification of LWLB is still a challenge to them. Consequently, support and relevant identification training are urgent needs.

In terms of lack of self-esteem, the study revealed that the participants understand that intrinsic barriers manifest within learners and could cause learning barriers, leading to learning difficulties. Among the intrinsic factors they mentioned are lack of self-esteem, lack of motivation and misunderstanding of English as a medium of instruction, hearing problems and visual problems. This statement is in line with the literature (Burr et al., 2015, Haas & Ferrier, 2015), indicating that some learners experience learning breakdowns, due to intrinsic cognitive or learning difficulties in areas, such as acquiring literacy or numeracy skills or in the organisation or management of their learning. During the interviews, participants mentioned that teachers' attitudes toward the child could cause low self-esteem. The statement is in line as stated in Verma and Kumari (2016), confirming that learners' low confidence might be ascribed to fear of failure.

Furthermore, Fischer and Sliwka (2018) in Verma and Kumari (2016) indicate that a lack of self-confidence is a barrier. Based on the findings, it was found that participants confirmed that due to a lack of self-confidence, learners do not participate in class, because of fear of criticism from their peers. Verma and Kumari (2016) confirm that learners lack self-confidence and fear taking risks by being actively involved during lessons. Their self-esteem becomes affected, because of the situation prevailing at school and their ability to learn is affected. Participants also confirmed that learners who lack self-esteem could be due to the situations prevailing in school. Rozi and Sunarsi (2019, p. 65) refers to motivation as a "... an internal state that arouses directs and sustains behaviour". Citing studies conducted by Rozi and Sunarsi (2019), and Verma and Kumari (2016), it is clear that motivation to learn is a learner's inclination to find academic activities significant and valuable and to try to get planned academic rewards from them. The findings determined that learners are motivated by several factors to engage in learning, but could also face learning barriers if teachers are not

motivated toward learners who are unable to cope academically. Participants agreed that teachers' lack of motivation, support, and poor communication skills acted as barriers to learning for learners. Therefore, teachers must be encouraged to motivate learners to engage in activities rather than criticising LWLB in the classroom.

Findings from the interviews revealed that misunderstanding English as a medium of instruction could cause learning barriers and impede learner performance. Participants indicated that learners whose English is not their mother tongue find it difficult to understand instructions if English is the medium of instruction at school. The findings of this study are similar to those found in literature, stating that other barriers which arise from the curriculum are those resulting from the medium of teaching and learning, where teaching and learning for many learners take place through a language that is not their first language (DOBE, 2002). Borg (2013) points out that though English may be the medium of instruction in schools, it is also often the teachers' second language, which could result in a language problem, often causing barriers to learning. A learner whose mother tongue is not English and who receives instruction in English might struggle with his or her learning in the classroom (Borg, 2013).

Consequently, if learners cannot understand what is taught, they cannot keep up and, as a result, fall behind. Another, perhaps unintended result of learners' inability to understand the second language, is the difficulty they face in answering questions in tests and assessment situations, due to their inability to express themselves adequately in English (Spaull, 2013). The study found that participants shared the same view with literature that English as a medium of instruction could cause learning barriers and hamper learners' progress. The study implies that teachers must take the necessary measures to support teachers in improving their literacy skills by attending workshops.

Findings from the interviewed participants revealed that learners with a hearing problem experienced learning barriers in the classrooms. The findings revealed that participants were positive that hearing impairment is one of the intrinsic barriers that causes learning barriers and affects learners' performance. The findings were supported by literature, as Morgan et al. (2014), Meristo, Mann, Hjelmquist, Surian

and Siegal (2014) argue that people with hearing problems usually have poor vocabulary associated with emotion. The same author adds that they act impulsively and often have reduced emotional control. The findings revealed that learners with hearing problems experience emotional challenges by showing signs of being violent and emotionally unstable. The participants supported the idea that such learners need to be supported by an expert in that field, because they have to participate in oral activities.

Visual problems

Kao and Mzimela (2019) define visual impairment as a functional limitation of the eye(s) or visual system and could manifest as reduced visual acuity or contrast sensitivity, visual field loss, photophobia, diplopia, visual distortion, visual perceptual difficulties, or any combination of the above. A learner with visual problems faces many difficulties, like being unable to read printed texts, mobility, etc. He/she also faces challenges of social stigma, stereotypes, and challenges of fully participating in the social mainstream. So, to develop learners with visual problems, participation in a community that considers their needs and gives them appropriate assistance, is essential (Willings, 2019). Willings (2019) states refractive errors, cataracts, strabismus, lazy eye, glaucoma, astigmatism, retrolental fibroplasias, and nystagmus could cause visual impairment. People with visual problems could also be classified as either partially sighted or blind. (Willings, 2019) points out that learners with visual impairment in general classrooms usually get assistance from vision specialists. The vision specialist could assist in ways like learning by other senses, instructional adaptations, curricular adaptations, and selection of resources for the learners. The educator, therefore, should collaborate and cooperate with vision specialists to get information from specialists about the needs of the learners. The vision specialist could help identify the services to be included in the IEP. In addition, English (2018) says that specialists could help visually-impaired learners by training them how to be familiar with the school environment and could evaluate their ability to use low-vision aids and printed materials. Generally, teachers who consult specialists in the area could better satisfy their learners' needs and be more inclusive than others.

The study found that teachers do not know how to teach visually-impaired learners, that parents of the visually-impaired learners are not interested in cooperating with

schools, and that schools do not have enough resources to help the visually-impaired learners. Similarly, studies by Dagneu (2013) found that a lack of resources, such as a lack of instructional materials and equipment, hampers the implementation of inclusive education. From the above discussions regarding how Foundation Phase teachers understand learning barriers, it was found that participants do understand that certain factors manifest themselves within or outside the learners and could cause learning barriers, which ultimately affect their performance. As a result, these factors need to be addressed during teacher training and Professional Development to enable teachers to find the root cause and support LWLB within the classrooms.

5.2.3 Research question 3: What do Foundation Phase teachers understand by “identifying LWLB in the classrooms”?

Observations of classroom learners play the most crucial role in identifying LWLB. Abdullah and Shehab (2013) state that observation in research displays several features, such as the collection of evidence, the analysis or examination of evidence, and the formation of significant judgment, based on the evidence and the subsequent implications, such as changes in and the improvement of practices. From the findings, observation has been shown to be particularly beneficial for learners with LWLB in inclusive classrooms. It also helps teachers to identify areas for development. It provides an opportunity to witness the strengths or weaknesses of the learners' progress during the learning process. These findings align with the literature, as Gadja, Beghetto and Karwowski (2017) allude that participants' observations provide the teacher with the information collected during lesson activities. These observations took place in the teachers' classrooms. Without observation, teachers will not be able to identify learners who experience learning barriers and provide immediate support. Participants agreed that observation was an appropriate technique teachers could use to identify LWLB and provide evidence about learners' progress in an inclusive classroom.

In discovering learners' strengths, the participants understood the meaning of identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom. Participants explained that to discover learners' strengths, more time must be devoted to the learners to discover their levels

of understanding to facilitate the referral system in an inclusive classroom. Their understanding is in accordance with DBE (2014).

With respect to discovering learners' weaknesses, it is of utmost importance that the teacher's knowledge to discover learners' areas for development will enable him/her to devise some means to be creative enough to assist learners. The findings revealed that participants understood that if learners perform below par, that frustrates the teacher. Teachers' creative ability to assist learners deteriorates and learners lose interest in attending school. Their understanding is linked to the evidence in the literature, as Spaul (2013) states that even when teachers notice that a particular learner is lagging in reading, individualised attention is a challenge, because the teacher is overburdened.

In terms of the inability to read, learning how to read is a process that begins early in a child's life (Pretorius et al., 2016, Jackson, McKay, Murray & Spaul, 2016). Reading plays a major role in all subjects. The inability to read affects learners' learning. Sampson and Condy (2016) attest that reading may seem like something which comes about naturally, but it is a struggle for some learners to acquire reading skills. As a result, many of them are forced to repeat an academic year, because of their poor performance and some of them drop out of school, because they develop a negative attitude towards school. Ulla and Winitkun (2017) support the idea that failure to read at the required grade level could be caused by various factors, such as the language or dialect used to teach reading, especially if it is different from the learner's home language, or the classroom approach that does not cater for individual needs or using only one method to teach reading needs. Ulla and Winitkun (2017) assert that learners' literacy achievement is determined by the quality of literacy instruction offered by the classroom teacher. The findings revealed that participants experience difficulty when attempting to teach reading in inclusive classrooms, because learners' problems are not the same. Teaching such learners is challenging for the teachers and the entire school (Widiati & Hayati, 2015). Participants mentioned that some learners struggled to pronounce letter sounds, while some are in Grade 3, but cannot read and write. This statement is in line with the literature, as Ulla and Winitkun (2017) indicate that reading failure is mainly caused by failure to acquire phonological awareness and skills in alphabetical coding.

Widiati and Hayati (2015) say reading difficulty could result from inadequate teaching, as most teachers are not oriented toward helping poor readers in their classes. In their training, they were not adequately prepared to teach all learners according to their needs. Therefore, even in cases where there are adequate reading materials, the reading skills of poor readers are not improved. The most important person, the teacher in this case, often does not know how to help poor readers (Tang et al., 2017, Kikas, Pakarinen, Lerkkanen, Muotka & Nurmi, 2017). They further state that teachers have a lot of work teaching literacy skills to ensure children become fluent readers. Most teachers lack adequate knowledge of how to help such learners with special needs. He also adds that the kind of training teachers get does not adequately prepare them to handle all pupils according to their needs. Most learners require close supervision to perform better in their academic work. As a result, even when the teacher knows that a particular learner is a poor reader, he/she is not in a position to help (Tang et al., 2017, Kikas, Pakarinen, Lerkkanen, Muotka & Nurmi, 2017).

From the findings, it could be said that teachers use the same teaching method for all learners in a classroom, despite whether one is a good or poor reader. All the necessary materials could be in place, but this would not help to improve the skills of poor readers as long as the teacher, who is the key person in this whole process, is not competent enough to help the poor readers (Tang et al., 2017, Kikas, Pakarinen, Lerkkanen, Muotka & Nurmi, 2017). It was found that most of them lack the necessary knowledge and skills to teach literacy skills and as result, many learners cannot read at an early grade. These differences warrant teachers to acquire basic knowledge and practical skills to meet the needs of all the learners in the classroom through ongoing workshops. Teachers must be continuously supported through coaching in the implementation of programmes. Teachers must be encouraged to work together to adapt programmes to local conditions.

Regarding the inability to write, the participants' findings indicated that teaching writing and how to spell words correctly is challenging to teach LWLB in inclusive classrooms. Participants explained that the inability to write is a learning barrier, because most learners cannot spell words correctly or omit words. Participants pointed out that if learners cannot spell words correctly, their chances of progressing to the next grade are minimal. Research findings indicate that even though more than 75 hours per week

are devoted to teaching writing or spelling, this does not guarantee and improve learners' performance in writing. However, less than 60 minutes per week is associated with poorer performance. This simply means that for teachers to be successful in teaching writing, he/she must know how to draw up an appropriate spelling programme that will be of value in assisting the learners to be successful in spelling words correctly. Short (2017) indicates that reading and writing develop simultaneously and that learners' invented spelling (i.e., their early attempts to spell in their way) can reveal a great deal about their phonological awareness. From the above discussion, there is a definite need to provide teacher training and professional development on how to teach LWLB writing and spelling words correctly to improve their learning.

From the findings, participants indicated that there are learners with poor eyesight in their classrooms. These impairments disturb learners to cope with their school work. They may affect them so much that it may be burdensome to complete given tasks, because they can not read what was written on the board or copy from it. This implies that their performance would also be affected, and they may lose interest in learning. This frustrates the teachers, because they are not trained or prepared to work with such learners in their classrooms. It becomes a serious challenge to adapt their teaching strategies to accommodate all the learners within the classroom and meet individual needs. This statement aligns with the literature; for instance, Mwakyeja (2013) mentions that teachers who work with learners with low vision are inadequately prepared to deliver a meaningful service to learners with low vision. This poses severe challenges to the teachers, because they do not adapt to the curriculum or the environment; therefore, they usually work at high frustration levels.

Furthermore, she noted that parents or guardians know the child better. At the same time, the doctor understands the effects of a condition regarding visual functioning, and educators could describe the impact of visual impairment on learning. The literature also supports the idea that teaching learners with poor eyesight would be complex for the teachers to facilitate curriculum content and vary methodology because the teachers do not understand the specific intrinsic barriers of the learners. Sirirungruang (2015) share the same view, finding that teachers must be in a position to help learners to incorporate devices into everyday learning and leisure activities by

selecting low vision and portable devices. Furthermore, Sirirungruang (2015) indicates that teachers must be in a position to help learners to incorporate low-vision devices into everyday learning and leisure activities by selecting low-vision devices that are portable and readily available when learners need them. Based on the challenges faced by the teachers in identifying LWLB in the classroom, the participants acknowledged that for teachers to be able to assist learners with poor eyesight in the classroom, training must be provided on how to work with the learners to overcome those challenges.

The participants' beliefs agree with those in the literature regarding unstable learners' family backgrounds. Makgopa and Mokhele (2013) state that barriers to learning and development could also result from social issues, e.g., a parent who is ill is a serious issue in a child's life. This implies that parents are not available to support or take care of his/her children or to participate in the child's schooling. This issue negatively impacts the learners to cope with the academic curriculum. The learners often live in child-headed households, because the parent cannot afford to take care of them. Children at a young age often act as heads of households or take care of their siblings. These children are so traumatised and often lose interest in their learning. Therefore, it becomes difficult for teachers to identify learners with social problems.

5.2.3 Research question 3: How do Foundation Phase teachers understand Professional Development activities improving in identifying LWLB in the classrooms?

Based on the findings, participants understand the meaning of Professional Development activities, improving the identification of LWLB in the classroom. Based on their responses, teachers acknowledge the advantages of attending workshops based on identifying LWLB. But their concern was that they were not provided with special training that would enable them to identify LWLB in an inclusive classroom. Their responses during the interviews mentioned that the focus was on teaching learners to master basic skills in Mathematics, reading, and other curriculum aspects. From the findings, most teachers did not receive training related to the identification of LWLB. They also indicated that the workshops they attended were in the form of lecturing, meaning that Professional Development activities were not improved in

identifying LWLB. Based on the findings, this serves as a call for the DoE to devise means to ensure that teachers' needs are considered.

With respect to acquiring Foundation Phase teachers' skills and knowledge, it was ascertained that participants understand and believe that for them to be able to identify LWLB in the classroom, they need to acquire skills and knowledge that would benefit both teachers and learners to achieve the outcomes. Their belief system is linked to the education system (DOBE, 2015), emphasising that teachers in Full-Service Schools are recognised as the primary resources in the implementation of inclusive policy and, therefore, they must have skills and knowledge that are necessary to identify learners and employ multi-level teaching, curriculum enrichment, and cooperative learning, as well as dealing with challenging behaviour in the classroom. It is believed that the development and improvement of teachers' teaching skills and knowledge are highly necessary and appreciated in education. The DOBE is also linked to the statement mentioned above, because it is stressed that teachers have to possess a great deal of knowledge and skills about teaching and assessment practices to meet the high demands and standards of quality education. Additionally, it emphasised that inadequate skills and knowledge in educators and support personnel lead to an inability to deal with diverse learners' needs (DOBE, 2012). The findings show that participants acknowledged that teachers should acquire knowledge and skills to identify learners, based on the characteristics of each learning difficulty, rather than sending a list to the Support Teachers to detect learner problems.

In terms of providing sufficient time for teachers' workshops, the findings from the participants revealed that time is a crucial factor in teacher training and Professional Development. It means that enough time is needed for teachers to acquire relevant skills and knowledge to enable them to support and identify LWLB in their classrooms. Their views are linked to numerous literature sources stating that an appropriate length of time for any training programme is important in trainees' development (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013). Thus, duration should be considered when designing Professional Development activities. Despite the importance of the trainer as an expert, he/she is not the only source of knowledge; teachers' prior experience should also be considered (Zhao & Bokhove, 2019). Responses from participants showed that insufficient time for training programmes affects teachers' Professional Development

and denies teachers the opportunity to engage during training processes. These researchers highlighted that extra support and time is needed for Subject Advisors to demonstrate best practices during teacher training programmes (Pienaar & Raymond, 2013). An appropriate length of time for any training programme represents an important element in teachers' Professional Development. Pienaar and Raymond (2013) suggests that the duration of workshops should be considered when designing professional learning activities. The research findings showed that any in-service training programmes' short duration is considered a Professional Development obstacle for most South African Foundation Phase teachers. In line with the suggestions made by Pienaar and Raymond (2013), the participants highlighted the need for more time to demonstrate best practices during training programmes in general.

From the findings, it is clear that participants understood that Professional Development activities could improve in identifying LWLB in the classrooms through using the SIAS policy when training teachers. Participants appear to have the same views as the Department of Basic Education (2014), regarding the fact that the proposed policy implementation plan for the SIAS policy between the periods of 2015 and 2019 focused on training Foundation Phase teachers to remedy the challenges experienced in the piloted draft policy of 2008. Furthermore, the Department of Basic Education (DOBE, 2014) stressed that the SIAS is an additional policy to strengthen EWP6 (DOBE, 2001). It focuses on the needs of all learners in South Africa, particularly those who are likely to be excluded or marginalised, and aims to improve access to quality education and support for all learners (DOBE, 2014). In addition, the strategy focuses on the early identification of barriers to learning and correct assessment strategies of the barriers that learners might experience. It was also agreed that higher education and training would mediate the inclusion of SIAS in the content of all teacher training programmes (DOBE, 2001; 2014). This information was in line with the statement made by the Subject Advisors that the SIAS policy assists them in training Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB. Thus, Professional Development provides critical tools to guide teachers in improving their teaching skills and refining existing ones.

Consequently, relevant training, based on the identification of LWLB, must be taken into cognisance. Researchers have established that for inclusive education to be successful; teachers should be able to identify LWLB in the classroom, and teachers need more time, ongoing support, and in-service training (McKenzie, Kelly & Vergunst, 2020) report that Foundation Phase teachers lacked the necessary training to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to identify LWLB (Glazzard et al., 2015, Stokoe, Hughes, Netherwood & Nerve, 2015). Glazzard et al. (2015) emphasises that teachers who are expected to identify and meet the whole range of special needs in the mainstream are entitled to support. In the most effective inclusive schools, support services work to empower the school-based personnel to “solve their problems” through ongoing in-service training (Glazzard et al., 2015, Stokoe, Hughes, Netherwood & Nerve, 2017). From the participants’ responses, one can conclude that SIAS workshops were held for the Support Teachers on how to support LWLB. Based on the findings, it is evident that Foundation Phase teachers were not provided with specific training on how to teach and identify LWLB in the classroom, as they lack the skills and knowledge to perform the task. The literature supports this statement as SIAS Policy “aims to respond to the needs of all learners in our country, particularly those who are vulnerable and most likely to be marginalised or excluded” (Bouwer, 2016, p. 73). The purpose of SIAS policy is “to provide the framework for procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for learners who require additional learner support” (DOBE, 2014, p. 171-184.). Based on the aims of the SIAS policy, there is a need for Foundation Phase teachers to be provided with SIAS workshops to meet the needs of all learners in inclusive classrooms. This is in line with the Research on Learner support (Hess, 2020), which indicates that early Identification, Screening, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) is fundamental if support in the Foundation Phase has to be meaningful.

The DOBE (2014) refers to the Support Teacher as someone with specialised competencies to support learners, teachers, and the system to ensure effective learning by all learners. These include teachers formerly referred to as ‘remedial’, ‘special classes or ‘special needs’ teachers” within a medical model approach. Participants clearly understood that Professional Development activities could improve in identifying LWLB in the classrooms when assigned support teachers. Based on the findings, participants agreed that it would be an advantage to them and

the learners if every school in the province could be assigned a Support Teacher. This simply means that it is an urgent need for the DOBE to intervene and provide support to them in such a way as to help them to identify LWLB in the classrooms. Teachers' challenges in identifying learners who experience learning barriers should be addressed so that they can meet all learners' needs. Findings from the participants affirm that most primary schools were not assigned support teachers and no proper identification of LWLB could be given in an inclusive classroom without the assistance of support teachers.

In other countries, there are different approaches, for instance, in Italy, learners who experience barriers to learning are allowed to enroll into a mainstream class only if it does not exceed the number of 20 learners. For every two learners with "special needs", a Support Teacher is provided in the mainstream classrooms. Furthermore, a Support Teacher in each class that will also teach a child with "special needs" individually for six hours a week, must be provided. In addition, support is provided when the ratio is one (Support Teacher) to four (learners). A multi-disciplinary team determines the kind of support needed. They examine learners and issue certificates (Tideman, 2015). In Sweden, the role of the learning Support Teacher (special educator) has transformed from teaching learners with learning difficulties in small groups to one where she/he is responsible for guiding colleagues in the working team. He/she is responsible for initiating and leading developmental work in neighbouring schools (Tideman, 2015). These findings correlate with other countries, because Support Teacher must be provided in all primary schools. The main purpose is to minimise the number of learners who cannot read, write or perform the mathematical calculation at the Foundation Phase level. It also provides necessary support and services in the inclusive classroom to improve education for all. From the above responses, participants revealed that the South African DOBE must copy the best practices employed in other countries.

5.2.4 Research question 4: What are the Foundation Phase teachers' experiences identifying learners LWLB in inclusive classrooms?

POSITIVE

Participants who were interviewed indicated the positive impact of improving learners' performance if they had positive experiences identifying LWLB in the classrooms. The participants found that improving learners' performance in inclusive classrooms yields the best outcomes. Participants made a clear statement about the productive improvement of learners' performance by stating that it enables teachers to adapt their teaching strategies to meet the individual needs of the learners and they also become motivated when they realised that learners grasped a concept and also showed satisfaction of knowing that they are dedicating their lives to make a difference. This practice was perceived as beneficial by Kimani et al. (2013), Kara and Njagi (2013) explain that education's purpose is to equip citizens with values, skills and knowledge to reshape their society and eliminate inequality. The advantages were supported by numerous studies, for instance, by Strauss (2013) when contending that performance should not only be measured in terms of test and examination results and learners' ability to apply what is learned and the rate at which learners move on to higher institutions of learning, but should include other areas, such as whether the learners have acquired survival skills. Despite that, using learners' achievement in academic work to assess the teacher's effectiveness has gained ground. The measure of academic performance as a symbol of school success can be traced from the Victorian period (Bell & Cooper, 2013), mentioning that teachers for years have been regarded as the essential catalysts for school improvement. They remain the driving forces and main resources in learners' development and academic growth as they are sources of knowledge and agents of change (WikiEducator, 2013). So far, research by (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014; Soto-Calvo et al., 2020) has shown that a teacher's effectiveness influences learners' academic attainment. They interpret the subject matter and put theory into practice during their interaction with the learners. The teacher is "increasingly becoming the focus of interest because of the key role that he or she plays in the delivery of quality education to the learner" (Kimani et al., 2013, Kara & Njagi, 2013, p. 1). This seems to suggest that teachers are agents of change and as such are critical in the learners' academic performance. He further explains that it is the responsibility of teachers to impart knowledge, skills and encourage learners' social development. In addition to cultivating knowledge, skills, and attitudes, teachers are expected to help learners to identify and develop their potential. In the early stages of education, teachers are responsible for developing learners' primary skills necessary for advancement. Teachers play a pivotal role in helping students to direct

their potential to achieve their destiny. Learners need to be prepared for the challenges that lie ahead of them. This is anchored in the idea that our world needs a generation of teachers who aim to “develop learners instead of teaching them, who help their pupils to become independent (learning to learn), who provide learners with motivation and interest for life-long learning and urge them to become autonomous learners” (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014; Soto-Calvo et al., 2020). Teachers use several techniques to assist learners in improving their academic achievement. They evaluate, assess, and provide for learners with special needs. Teachers are evaluators at the classroom level for quality standards. They attend to learners’ work during lessons, provide tutorials, mark learners’ homework and give feedback. If a disability is identified in a learner, a teacher will work around the clock to assist the child in building confidence and recommend a relevant remedy. This builds learners’ competence, and their academic performance improves. In addition, teachers evaluate the curriculum, materials, education programmes or initiatives in place, because of their suitability for learners’ learning. From the findings, it is clear that there are factors that could contribute to learners’ poor academic performance. One such is the method teachers use to facilitate the lessons that would enable them to identify learners’ areas for development before referring them to the next class. The findings indicated that participants acknowledged that improving learners’ performance could help learners if those in need of support were sent to a remedial class. The teachers are responsible for varying their teaching strategies and assessing learners to know the strengths and weaknesses of individual learners before referring learners to the remedial class. Some learners might take a long time to understand concepts or instructions, and such learners are often regarded as low achievers because of not mastering certain concepts as expected. This is supported by Gazette (2013), who stressed that children take years to master academic content. Most of the respondents agreed that improving learners’ performance could enhance their teaching strategy, which could alleviate the problem of deteriorating learners’ academic performance. Improving learners’ performance could positively impact teachers’ and learners’ academic performance. The findings in this study revealed that the respondents accepted that in executing their duties, they may contribute to poor student performance. Based on participants’ responses and a review of the literature on improving learners’ performance, the study concluded that teachers should be motivated to improve learners’ performance.

The findings indicated that participants agreed that appreciation is one of the positive experiences in identifying LWLB in the classrooms. Studies done by Osabiya (2015) reveals that it is essential for employers to regularly research expressing appreciation to encourage the behaviour of employees to reach strategic goals. This view is similar to what is raised by Mosquera et al. (2020, p. 207) that when employees" feel appreciated and esteemed for their commitments in the work environment, great results take after, including expanded worker commitment, less staff turnover, higher customer loyalty appraisals, and the organization develops in its feeling of motivation". It was further revealed the augmented interest in employee recognition programmes in the working environment to the point where more than 80 percent of organizations have some type of worker recognition, but at the same time, work satisfaction has declined (Mosquera et al. (2020). Conversely, employee engagement remains low, with just 30 percent of the workforce effectively engaged. However, the study emphasised the need to viably help workers feel genuinely esteemed and improved in value by their particular organization. Psychological motivations, which might also be termed intrinsic motivation, include workers having the chance to utilize their ability, having a way of challenge and accomplishment, receiving appreciation, positive recognition, and being treated in a caring and diplomatic manner (Zlate & Cucui, 2015). However, it was affirmed that this type of intrinsically motivated worker, as pictured by Zlate and Cucui (2015), is committed to his work to the extent that the work inherently contains tasks that are rewarding to him or her. This author also suggested that for an employee to be motivated in a work situation, there must be a need, and the people in the organization needs to be empowered too. Gao and Jiang (2019) articulate that appreciation is basic; every human needs appreciation craves it and responds to it. Thus, that makes appreciation basic and significant to the success of any organisation.

To empower individuals, leaders ought to demonstrate appreciation in ways in which it will maximize the impact for every individual in the organization (Gao & Jiang, 2019). For recognition and appreciation to be effective, they must be personal and delivered in person (Ho et al., 2018, Kong, Lee, Dubreuil & Forest, 2018). Thus, the employee with an honest performance could predict that his or her vital contributions will be completed and valued by the organization management (Gao & Jiang, 2019).

Consecutively, recognition and appreciation include a strong-willed and positive influence on worker performance.

Catharina and Victoria (2015) state that, characteristically, organizations focus a lot on extrinsic rewards; however, intrinsic rewards are conjointly essential in teacher motivation. Appreciation and recognition are intrinsic rewards that encourage teachers and improve their performance. Hidayat (2019), Ibrar and Khan (2015) stated that employee commitment depends on rewards and recognition. Breugh, Ritz and Alfes (2018), in their study on "Intrinsic Motivations of Public Sector Employees: Evidence for Germany," found that workers' performance in the public sector depends way more on intrinsic motivations, rather than extrinsic ones. Hussain et al. (2019), Khaliq, Nisar, Kamboh and Ali (2019) reveal that intrinsically motivated employees are more valuable to any organization, since motivation results in performance. Thus, intrinsic motivation is part of the motivation-concept and refers to performing a task for its own sake to experience job satisfaction.

With respect to teachers' interest in learning, the participants acknowledged that teachers' interest in learning is one of the positive experiences in identifying LWLB. The findings from the participants suggested that if the teacher can improve learners' performance in the classroom, that would motivate him/her to pursue further studies. This would assist him/her in knowing how support could be provided to ensure that all learners' needs are met. Consequently, teachers who would have attended courses would be willing and be concerned about LWLB in the classroom, as he/she had explored a variety of support strategies within their reach to ensure that no learner is left behind in inclusive classrooms. This positive attitude was attributed to the knowledge and training acquired from the training. This finding agrees with McInerney et al. (2015), Ganotice, King, Marsh and Morin (2015) which confirm that teachers trained in identifying LWLB, exhibited positive attitudes and willingness to support learners in the classroom.

NEGATIVE

Regarding the lack of learners' concentration, participants indicated they had a negative experience identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. The findings revealed that teachers could not identify LWLB, because some of them were hyperactive, could

not concentrate during the lesson, and often had difficulties in following instructions. They need special attention. Learners with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have impairments that negatively influence their academic progress and social and emotional development. These learners disturb teachers to facilitate lessons. Thus, teaching and learning are affected. This view is corroborated by McKenzie et al. (2020), Moodley and Stofile (2020) stated that most South African children of school-going age have different learning styles to another and therefore do not engage in the academic curriculum. They also argued that teachers have failed to deliver the curriculum to learners with varying styles of learning that take cognisance of their needs and support them (McKenzie et al., 2020, Moodley & Stofile, 2020).

Regarding teachers' unwillingness to learn, it was found that participants had negative experiences identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. Participants indicated that some teachers were not interested in learning more about identifying LWLB. Instead, they preferred to use traditional teaching strategies and methods when teaching learners in inclusive classrooms. This, in turn, affects learners' performance, specifically those experiencing learning barriers. The findings from participants' responses are in line with the literature; for instance, (Filgona et al. 2020, Sakiyo, Gwany & Okoronka, 2020) argued that the main challenge in the practice of inclusive education is that there are teachers who are not willing to learn or modify their teaching strategies to attend to diverse needs of learners. The unwillingness to learn also hurts the learners' learning and their performance. Teachers lack motivation, their needs are not met and they find themselves helpless and therefore see no need to pursue further studies or learn more about identifying LWLB in the classrooms. Sigh (2015) noted that classroom adaptation is crucial in ensuring good inclusive practices. Teachers' attitudes towards curriculum issues and addressing the needs of diverse learners with barriers to learning, pose major hindrances to implementing inclusive education. Teachers are not willing to differentiate and use different teaching methods. They prefer to complete the curriculum expectations and subject matter without adapting the curriculum (Materechera, 2020). Phasha et al., (2013), Mahlo and Maseko (2013) suggested that teachers must be professionally developed since they showed that they lack the skills to adapt the curriculum to cater to diverse learners in mainstream classrooms, even though (Navarro et al., 2016, Zervas, Gesa & Sampson, 2016) believe this will improve the implementation of inclusive education.

Foundation Phase teachers' frustration stems from negative experiences identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. From the participants' responses, it was found that most teachers in the Foundation Phase were frustrated, due to some issues related to the lack of relevant resources to teach diverse learners and the failure of LWLB to be allowed to progress to the next class. Participants expressed their frustration by mentioning that they had to use their salaries to buy resources to assist learners in the classroom. This frustrated them, because they felt inadequate in dealing with diverse barriers to learning in an inclusive classrooms and had to devise ways to accommodate all the learners. Teachers developed negative attitudes towards LWLB, because they could not access learning content and it excluded them from learning by focusing only on those who could master curriculum aspects. Another frustration mentioned by the participants was that the DOBE allowed learners who were still struggling to grasp the academic content to progress to the next grade and enrolled young learners. This affected teachers to deliver the content and denied them the opportunity to focus on individual learners. The findings revealed that teachers must possess knowledge of adapting the curriculum or the teaching strategies. However, teachers also faced difficulties in modifying lesson plans to provide a variety and changes for the different needs of learners. This frustration is also supported by (Konstantinou-Katzi et al., 2013, Tsolaki, Meletiou-Mavrotheris & Koutselini, 2013) in stating that learners come to class with different kinds of readiness, interests and learning profiles and, to maximise their learning, teachers need to modify the curriculum, their teaching methods, teaching and learning resources, activities and assessment to be individually relevant. However, differentiation has challenges, as it requires focusing on designed instructions and assessment strategies according to individual differences.

In terms of parental attitude, it was found that participants had negative experiences about the parental attitude, which resulted in teachers being unable to identify LWLB in an inclusive classrooms. Parents who have a negative attitude towards teachers, result in their children manifesting poor performance in class. Participant indicated that parents do not allow their children to repeat the grade, although they experience learning difficulties. This statement is supported by the literature, indicating that parents' actions could negatively influence their children's learning (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014). This was also emphasised in research studies conducted by

(Moroni et al., 2015, Dumont, Trautwein, Niggli, & Baeriswyl, 2015) cited by McDowell et al., 2018, Jack & Compton, 2018), indicating that many South African parents, especially in disadvantaged communities and rural schools, are not adequately involved in their children's learning. Van Loggenberg (2013), found that parents have negative attitudes towards schools, and in some cases, parents revealed a lack of education. They could also negatively influence the careers of their children that they wanted to follow. From the findings, it is clear that parents are one of the contributing factors that hinder learners' progress and deny teachers the opportunity to identify LWLB. The literature showed that learners whose parents are not educated are often disadvantaged, because their parents could not support teachers to improve their performance.

The literature review revealed that parental involvement in the school's activities has a positive impact on students' academic achievement and the school's success (Pinantoan, 2013). Parental involvement boosts the morale of the teachers, because of the partnership that would have been established between the school and the community. Parental involvement in the child's school improves his/her performance (Pinantoan, 2013). All the participants complained about the inhibiting factors that make the teaching and learning process ineffectual. Among the contributing factors mentioned, among others, was the lack of parental involvement in school activities. A further view that emerged from the literature, was that many parents in South Africa lack the knowledge and insight of proactive involvement in their children's education. The White Paper 6 of 2001 emphasised that the active involvement of parents in the teaching and learning process is fundamental to effective learning and development. This implies that parents play the most important role in their children's education.

Parental involvement in their children's education has been considered a significant factor in positively impacting their children's school success (Sebastian et al., 2017, Moon & Cunningham, 2017). Humphrey-Taylor (2015) stresses that a lack of parental support and negligence in teaching and learning create barriers to learning. Wilder (2014) also believe that parental involvement is a prerequisite for improving the culture of teaching and learning in schools. Parental involvement or support in the education of children is critical. Their involvement has also been mentioned by Wilder (2014:66) when she pointed out that "... *the family is one of the most important influences in a*

child's life as it provides an emotional and physical environment that constantly surrounds the child and in which exceptional psychological ties exists." Effective learning is threatened and hindered when parents are not given recognition or their participation is not facilitated and encouraged (DoE, 2001). Fernandez (2014) affirm that unsupportive home environments, where parents perceive support as the responsibility of the school, is a learning barrier many learners experience. Wilder (2014) indicated that a lack of parental involvement hinders teachers' ability to give learners with barriers to learning, the adequate support they need. The discussion above illustrates that parental involvement is of the utmost importance to learners to reach their full potentia (Schueler et al., 2017, McIntyre & Gehlbach, 2017). Parents and teachers should communicate regularly concerning learner progress, since this would involve parents on what needs to be done, by whom, and when. Ongoing communication between the parents and the teachers would reduce stress for both parties, and the learner will receive the necessary support. UNESCO (2017) emphasises that parents and teachers need support and encouragement to work together as equal partners.

Pertaining to overcrowded classes, participants indicated that referral is one of the negative experiences in identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom. Participants expressed frustration about overcrowded classrooms when it comes to supporting LWLB. The statement is supported by literature (Mustafa et al., 2014, Mahmoud, Assaf, Al-Hamadi, & Abdulhamid, 2014) state that it adds to challenges about individual attention to identify and support learners' needs. It was found that learner-teacher ratios are not favourable. It is impossible to give equal attention to all learners. They also added that this had created a severe challenge for them to meet the learning needs of individual learners within the classroom. Participants expressed concern about the small classroom sizes with many learners in one classroom. They also claimed that including LWLB in a regular classroom created more burdens for the teachers to support and pay attention to assist those who experience learning barriers, resulting in some learners having to repeat a grade class, because they do not get sufficient assistance from the teachers. This corroborates with the literature (Qasim & Arif, 2014), mentioning that teachers often struggle to attend to all learners with learning needs in township schools, because of large class numbers and deadlines. Participants felt that the large class numbers were one of the predominant barriers to

enabling them to identify LWLB in their classrooms. Participants also reported that most of the learners in classroom were condoned to the next grade, thereby making things difficult for the teacher in the class to cope.

In March 2013, a document entitled Policy Brief (Opoku-Asare et al., 2014, Agbenatoe, & DeGraft-Johnson, 2014) requested better training to address teaching challenges, one of which is overcrowded classrooms. According to the memorandum, “it is impossible to learn or to teach when there are 130 learners in class. We (teachers) have experienced this” (Olaleye et al., 2017, Olaleye, Ajayi, Oyebola & Ajayi, 2017, p. 110). Pedder (2016), Paola, Ponzio and Scoppa (2013) highlight the fact that class size affects learners’ performance, due to misbehaviour and other disciplinary problems in large classes.

With regard to the referral of LWLB, participants indicated that referral was one of the negative experiences in identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom. From the participants responses, it was found that teachers were not prepared to refer LWLB. Participants in this study reported that when they referred LWLB, there were instances whereby learners who had already been tested would be placed on a waiting list for placement, but still attending the same class. They also mentioned that some of the teachers could not complete referral forms. Furthermore, they indicated that the DoE does not allow them to meet with the SBST during school hours to discuss their challenges; they only have to focus on completing the syllabus. Most participants indicated that referring to LWLB is challenging to perform, as most parents do not allow their children to repeat the grade and or accept that some of the learners experience learning difficulties and need help. These findings align with (Fourie, 2016), who acknowledged that a small number of SBSTs are functional and support teachers by discussing learners with barriers to learning. Apparently, teachers are hesitant to refer these learners discussed in the SBSTs meetings to the DBST, as there is no record to track the progress of the referrals made. Fourie (2016), further state that some SBSTs make no constructive efforts to provide support and meaningful learning opportunities to learners who experience barriers to learning. This shows that teachers were not trained about the procedure to be followed when intending to refer to LWLB. This was also supported in a study by Makhalemele and Nel (2014), suggesting that mainstream teachers do not understand the function of the SBST and

that the onus of this support rests on the learning Support Teacher. Okeke et al. (2014), Van Wyk and Phasha (2014), suggest that properly organised SBSTs would assist teachers with the relevant knowledge to effect a change in attitude and, secondly, produce more motivated teachers. If this is the case, regular workshops should be provided to Foundation Phase teachers that would enable them to assist learners who need support.

Based on the findings, lack of resources was one of the negative experiences mentioned by the participants that challenged them to identify LWLB in an inclusive classroom. The research findings revealed that teachers struggle to assess and identify LWLB in an inclusive classroom. The findings from the participants concur with other studies like Hill (2014), who mention that a serious shortage of physical and human resources impedes the implementation of inclusive education in inclusive mainstream schools. Matimbe (2014) maintains that the unavailability of resources affects the teachers' self-efficacy and causes them to ignore the needs of learners with barriers to learning. Fernandez (2014) suggests that it is essential that the DoE provide enough resources to enable teachers to identify LWLB to resolve the problem faced by the teachers. The Department should supply resources to keep class sizes reasonable and provide proper support to teachers through training initiatives, planning time, and provision of para-professionals and professional support. The shortage of resources poses a severe challenge for teachers to establish inclusive classrooms. Fernandez (2014) agrees with Hill (2014) and Matimbe (2014) by suggesting that district offices and schools should make a determined effort to obtain the necessary resources to ensure that teachers and learners experiencing barriers to learning, have access to adequate resources. For this issue to be resolved, the DoE must ensure that every teacher in the Foundation Phase is provided with the relevant resources to cater to all learners' needs within the classroom. It was clear that teachers lacked enough relevant resources to support all learners. If the Department provides them with the resources mentioned above, identifying LWLB will overcome such challenges.

Regarding cultural challenges, participants' responses revealed negative experiences in identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. Participants indicated that one of the negative challenges was cultural challenges, as parents disrupt learners' learning

during the academic year to perform cultural activities. Learners do not attend classes, due to cultural activities and lag when assessing learners in totality. Similar findings were found in the study conducted by Mupa and Chinooneka (2015), pointing out that teachers with no experience in intercultural education may have problems in education contexts. This might be because there are no curricula to be followed in education contexts involving different cultures. This implies that teachers do not have any information about parents, environments, and learners' different cultures. It can be said that the curricula are not flexible in terms of including intercultural awareness. This finding correlates with the conclusions of the literature (Israelsson, 2016, Sari & Yüce, 2020) that culture affects learners' roles, teachers' roles, and their responsibilities to take part in processes, which increase the workload of teachers. We need to provide extra classes for these learners. Based on the discussions, the findings are in line with the suggestion made by Mahlo (2017), stating that school success can be enhanced significantly if education processes and cultural inclinations are compatible with experiences and learning styles. This success is obvious in school environments where culturally related content, teacher attitudes, expectations and actions come together. Therefore, necessary steps should be taken by the DoE to eliminate problems that may negatively impact the education of learners from different cultures. In-service training programmes regarding teaching learners from different cultures may contribute to the professional development of teachers. Teacher training programmes must be designed in such a way that it may eliminate anticipated problems for pre-service teachers in their future professional lives.

5.2.5 Research question 5: What are the intervention strategies to improve Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB?

Participants suggested numerous intervention strategies to improve Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB. Their responses were based on the following themes: Firstly, by organizing relevant workshops. From the findings, participants suggested that organising relevant workshops is described as an intervention strategy that the DoE can utilise to improve Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB in the classroom. This strategy was considered useful when planning teacher training. Participants were aware that teachers fail to address barriers to learning in the class and require more practical-oriented training. They feel that the current workshops fail to address their needs; as stated by Kelly and McKenzie (2018), workshops given to

teachers to improve their skills fail to meet their needs as the time frame is usually very short. They focus on areas that help teachers acquire some skills, but are not comprehensive. The research findings highlighted intervention strategies that could be used to improve Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. The findings from the participants correlate with the views expressed by Majoko (2016), stressing that workshops that are planned effectively are significant, because they create opportunities to be practically involved in acquiring the necessary skills and experience. The findings indicated that if workshops specifically related to the identification of LWLB can be organised, it would assist them in improving their teaching practices and enable them to identify LWLB in their respective classrooms.

Secondly, regarding interaction among Foundation Phase teachers, participants shared that interaction among Foundation Phase teachers could be used as an intervention strategy to improve teacher training in identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. The participants indicated that working together during the training helped them learn how to support and identify LWLB. This implies that teachers must establish a team network to support one another to achieve a common goal of identifying learners in inclusive classrooms. This finding aligns with the literature, as Postholm (2016) state, that teachers can improve their practices through collaborative teamwork. Bjørnsrud and Nilsen (2019), support that research findings have shown positive gains when teachers work collaboratively in practising inclusion in classroom settings. In addition, Nguyen and Ng (2020) mentions benefits, such as joined-up thinking through the exchange of teacher practices, as collaboration contributes to a better understanding of each other's practices. Collaboration, among other things, contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. It generates useful knowledge for teachers themselves and fosters Professional Development (Bjørnsrud & Nilsen, 2019). In addition, Nguyen and Ng (2020) explains that good inclusive practices engage a multidisciplinary team composed of parents, learners, special teachers, and other relevant professionals to plan for learners with diverse barriers to learning. Such a team should plan an individualised education plan that will cater to learners with diverse learning barriers. The DOE (DOBE, 2014) point out that inclusive education pedagogy that includes other professionals, will prevent teachers from working alone without assistance. Sharing knowledge and skills will improve practice. The findings also link to Vygotsky's theory (1978) that the idea of a

social context allows the community to work collaboratively as it constitutes people who are not at the same level. He further stated that teachers could share their knowledge in Professional Development programmes and allow others to help them to overcome this challenge. Bean (2015) concurs with the Social Constructivism theory about further teacher development programmes for dealing with learners with LWLB. This strategy could be useful and work well during teachers' training to allow teachers to share their experiences.

According to the participants, teachers worked in silos before and after the training. This signifies that most teachers were not allowed to interact with one another during teacher training. They prefer teamwork whereby they can share ideas on how to assist LWLB within the classroom, learn and guide one another to find solutions to the problem with the support of Subject Advisors.

Thirdly, developing courses related to the identification of LWLB: from the participants' responses, it was perceived that developing courses related to identifying LWLB could be one of the intervention strategies for improving teacher training. Participants shared the same views that higher institutions must offer courses related to identifying LWLB. Such courses related to identifying LWLB would allow teachers to understand the different teaching or support strategies that could be used in the classroom to accommodate all learners. Another finding was that participants also suggested that teachers who have attended courses based on identifying LWLB, could assist those who lack skills in identification. The above perception is in line with Education White Paper 6, which indicates that teachers in Foundation Phase must undergo specialisation courses in Foundation Phase and Early Childhood Development.

Furthermore, it explains that their service would be qualitatively upgraded. When teachers attend courses, they will acquire skills and knowledge, which will enable them to identify LWLB. This explanation is in line with departmental information (DBE, 2015). This implies that Foundation Phase teachers must sharpen their skills through attending workshops or courses offered by higher education institutions or the DoE to gain knowledge and skills in identifying LWLB.

Fourthly, regarding the provision of relevant resources, participants highlighted the importance of providing relevant resources that could be used as intervention

strategies in improving teacher training in identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. Participants mentioned that these could help teachers facilitate effective teaching and learning and cater to the needs of learners in the classroom. Participants suggested that provision of relevant resources could be one of the intervention strategies for identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. Participants mentioned that if the Department provided them with relevant resources, teacher training would be beneficial and learners' needs would be addressed equitably in an inclusive classroom. The DoE should also provide experienced Subject Advisors who would address the challenge of identification of learners. This is in (Bean, 2015), who explains that the term "resources" refer not only to teaching methods and materials, but also to the time available for instruction, as well as the knowledge and skills teachers acquire through training and experience. This implies that teachers must be given more instruction time and professional knowledge. This could only be achieved by providing teachers with enough relevant resources. It could be said that inadequate relevant resources are an obstacle to improving teacher training in identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms (Educators for Excellence, 2020). Availability of enough relevant resources in teaching and learning and improving the teachers' training in identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms, ultimately meet the needs of all learners. The participants' responses revealed inadequate relevant resources at the Motheo District, Free State primary schools.

Fifthly, regarding the establishment of teacher-parent relationships, participants perceived that the establishment of teacher-parent relationships could be one intervention strategy to be employed in improving teacher training in identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms. The participants emphasized that the areas for the development of learners could be facilitated through the continuous engagement of the two parties, which would ultimately yield better learner performance in inclusive classrooms. The participants' perception corresponds with Coutts et al. (2014), Sheridan, Sjuts and Smith (2014) who found that schools should operate in conjunction with homes to make complementary or shared contributions toward the learning and development of children. Dawson and Wymbbs (2016) supported the idea that parental involvement greatly impacts children's learning. Some children can work better with their parents, because of the trust they have in them, while others do better with their teachers. Participants indicated that they are willing to work with parents so

that they would be able to support or assist their children with their school work. They also explained how they could work with parents to build a good relationship with them. Studies of teacher-parent relationships (Clarke et al., 2017, Wheeler, Sheridan, Witte, Sommerhalder & Svoboda, 2017). indicate that parents are not involved with their children's education, unless difficulty arises, which could lead to negative attitudes towards teachers and affect learners' performance.

The provision of individual learner support is the seventh aspect to be addressed. Participants recommended that providing individual learner support could be one of the intervention strategies in improving teacher training to identify LWLB in an inclusive classroom. From the findings, the participants discovered that individual support could assist them by creating more time after school to assist learners according to their abilities. This was supported by the DOBE (2001), which defines learner support as any form of help, assistance, and guidance given to learners who experience barriers to learning to enable them to overcome their barriers. Furthermore, they emphasised that support can also be defined as all the activities that enhance the capacity of a school to cater to diversity and ensure effective learning and teaching for all its learners (DOBE, 2015).

Some studies confirmed that due to overcrowding, teachers find it challenging to pay individual attention to each learner and implement different classroom teaching activities (Reeves, 2015). Similarly, Chingos (2013) confirms that South African classrooms have more than 40 learners per class, and this proves to be difficult for teachers to pay attention to learners' interests and abilities. Learner support is defined as "strategies which empower learners to establish and fulfill their learning, career and personal potential" (Motitswe, 2014, p. 259). Teachers themselves need 'support', to provide support to learners who have learning difficulties. Therefore, there is a need to provide individual support for learners to improve their abilities as stipulated in the Education White Paper 6, and other subsequent learning support documents, such as the SIAS and CAPS.

There was a pertinent need to understand the reasons why the trainings that were offered failed to meet the needs of Foundation Phase teachers in terms of identifying LWLB in the diverse classrooms. Results indicated that teachers required relevant professional development that would enable them to identify LWLB. From identified

themes participants showed a desire for professional development, active participation during the workshops and peer-collaboration and to be provided with relevant resources. The results imply change the way professional development were run. The results point to the need for the Subject Advisors to be provided with relevant information to support teachers for improving learners performance and enable them to identify LWLB in an inclusive classroom. The results firmly point to the need for the administration to provide quality and relevant PD for teachers and offer opportunities for teachers to engage during the workshops to acquire relevant skills and knowledge in identify LWLB. The data also revealed that the participants felt concerns about not knowing how to identify LWLD their because they lacked skills and knowledge to become successful. Based on the findings, the results

Following the theoretical frameworks, namely, Social constructivism, constructivist and learning theories. Theories concur with the research results that active participation and cooperation play a pivotal role improving teachers' professional development in identifying LWLB in the Foundationb Phase. Thus, the results of the study link with theories. The theories call for change on how PD could be facilitated to improve teachers' training that would enable participants to acquire skills and knowledge in identify LWLB in diverse classrooms. The study results further confirm that participants lack proper training and relevant resorces to improve their skills in identifying LWLB as stated in literature review. Their challenges and experiences were identified. The study also acknowledged that the trainings that were offered were not related to the identification of LWLB and were theoretically facilitated rather than being practically. Based on the findings, there is evidence that professional development was not successfully implemented and teachers' needs were not met. The information reported here seems to support the notion that, if Foundation Phase teachers in the primary schools were given the opportunity to work with collaborately during thw workshops, this would solve any potential problems that might arise in relation to identification of LWLB.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

Although this research has received much support in the literature, it has some limitations (Lim et al., 2022). The study was limited to four primary schools' Foundation Phase teachers in teacher training and Professional Development in identifying LWLB

in the Foundation Phase. However, most of the teachers working within the same areas were also experiencing similar problems, namely the inability to identify LWLB in their inclusive classrooms. But if the research had included other primary schools, the research could have assimilated more information regarding the topic. Besides that, the study also concentrated on one district, Motheo District, excluding nearby districts, to obtain information from more participants about the topic under investigation. In addition, the study focused only on the Foundation Phase level (Grades 1-3). Intermediate and Senior phase teachers struggle to identify LWLB within their inclusive classrooms. There is evidence that there are learners in Grade 7, but who are still unable to read or write. It is, therefore, evident that many learners' performance is affected. Only four primary schools assigned Support Teachers, were considered to participate in this study.

The qualitative study had its limitations in terms of the number of participants. The current study employed a small sample size of 28 (n=28) participants; 14 Foundation Phase teachers, four support teachers, and four Subject Advisors. This restricted the researcher from recruiting others when some participants refused to participate during data collection. Another challenge was that two Departmental Heads refused to participate; one HoD claimed that she would attend a management meeting at the specified time, while the other refused to participate without providing any reason. Another issue limiting this study is that some of the teachers were not interested in responding to the questions that were asked; they were just sitting and listening to the discussion of their colleagues. This simply means that these participants' voices were not heard. The researcher realised that teachers did not understand what the research is all about. They thought that they might lose their jobs when disclosing information concerning their work-related matters. By so doing, their needs could not be met. In other words, this delimited the findings.

It was hoped that their responses would help them to shed light on some of the issues which would otherwise not be heard. That would allow the researcher to ask further follow-up questions to get more information. As stated by the former Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, the success of quality education depended greatly on individual commitment to education as a South African citizen in the country. The

difference that individuals could make, whether as a teacher, learner or parent, would get one step closer in making quality education for all South Africans a reality.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

It is recommended that future research should increase the number of participants for the researcher to collect in-depth information about teachers' professional development needs in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase. It is believed that if data were collected from other districts as well, more concern or views from the participants could have been found. Future research could conduct similar studies and involve principals as they are better positioned to provide relevant advice and support to enable teachers and schools to drive improvement. Furthermore, research might try to replicate this study by involving all male and female Foundation Phase teachers to find the possible similarities and differences between the results concerning gender. They would also help teachers to access the practical improvement support they need when needed. Finally, qualitative methodology was used to conduct the current study, therefore for future research both qualitative and quantitative research might be used to gather more data. Furthermore, research with a similar topic should also be conducted with Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers.

5.5 Implications of research study

The findings of the study have implications on research and practice as further research is needed based on the following:

- The current study calls for a shift from traditional teaching (lecturing style) of teacher training and professional development to the type of teaching that fosters collaboration among the teachers, which, in turn, would lead to the growth of learners' learning and improve their performance.
- In-service teachers need to have the skills and knowledge to identify LWLB and how to design related intervention strategies. Training interventions must focus on supporting practice in an inclusive classroom.
- Subject Advisors need to be capacitated to give practical help to teachers to accommodate learners with different learning barriers in an inclusive classroom.

- The study challenges Subject Advisors to possibly re-think and instill creative and effective teaching strategies at their respective schools.
- Most teachers teach as if all learners are the same within an inclusive classroom. They do not seem to understand that learners are different. The skills, knowledge and attitudes of teachers need to be developed to deal with the learners with different learning styles within the classrooms.
- Establishment of strong partnerships between teacher training institutes and primary schools in terms of teacher Professional Development.
- Training interventions from the DoE should focus on supporting improved practice in the classrooms.
- Teachers must be engaged in practical activities during professional development rather than to be taught what to do and be obliged to adhere to the compliance measures directed by the Subject Advisors to ensure that they obey the instructions.
- Subject Advisors need to be capacitated to give practical help to teachers in the classroom. Teachers trained at universities have sufficient theoretical knowledge, but not enough practical training. The training must intergrate theory with practice to enable teachers to make informed decisions about their classroom practice.
- Follow-up training is an essential to ensure that teachers practise what they have learned from the training, and which will be of great benefit to them in their teaching practices in an inclusive classroom.
- To meet the needs of the individual learners in an inclusive classroom, teachers must be trained in the usage of different, old and new approaches to teach and assess learners experiencing learning barriers.
- Teacher training and professional development is regarded as a vehicle for teaching improvement and learning success if it is prepared and given by experts (in this case Subject Advisors) and on a regular basis to meet the needs of teachers and the demands of the schools or educational institutions. Based on this study, there is an urgent need for teachers to be involved in different programmes for teacher training and professional development.
- Training programmes must be based on training needs of the teachers.

- Teachers are life-long learners. Teachers' learning is no longer seen as being straightforward, whereby teachers just meet and are presented with information about effective teaching strategies, rather it needs continuous reflection and evaluation.
- Teacher training and professional development programmes should be introduced by educational institutions.
- Teacher training and professional development programmes should focus on core content knowledge, teaching skills, teaching strategies, and assessment strategies. There should be an alignment of educational programme content with what teachers teach, need and experience in their inclusive classrooms.
- For the Subject Advisors, the focus needs to be on practical guidance for pre-service teachers, exposing them to the realities of teaching. They must use different ways of teaching: practical teaching methods and groupwork and then, concepts ought to be reinforced on computers.
- Teachers need to be exposed to teaching strategies, to lesson-planning, differentiated teaching and assessment, and how to record learners' performance, how to complete learners profiles, and also how to identify LWLB and refer them to remedial classrooms to be assisted.
- All primary schools must employ a qualified Support Teacher who would assist teachers with LWLB to improve their academic performance as early as possible.
- Subject Advisors sometimes fail to apply what they have learned during training programs, due to lack of school training facilities, therefore, there is a need to provide teachers with relevant resources to cater for their needs.
- In general, the study emphasises the benefits from the implications of these findings. For example, Subject Advisors ought to pay attention to various learning theories to engage in networking activities to learn from one another.
- To make significant improvement in teaching and learning in inclusive classrooms, teachers must be provided with training related how to conduct extra lessons to LWLB from Grade 2 to Grade 7. The training would minimize the challenges experienced by teachers in terms of identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom and improve individual learners' performance.

- Based on the findings, the study recommends that Social Constructivism and Constructivist theories are encouraged. This implies that Subject Advisors are required to utilise different approaches when adopting Social Constructivism, as well as Constructivist strategies and provide teachers with tasks that would initiate thinking skills and enable them to be active in the learning process. By adopting these strategies during teachers' training and professional development could inform them of ways to adapt their instructional and learning practices to correspond to the needs of teachers and better resolve identified LWLB in their teaching situations.

5.6 Contributions of the study

It is assumed that data derived from this study would be an eye-opener to the South African DoE and curriculum developers to take the needs of the Subject Advisors and teachers into account by providing them with the necessary resources that could be used during teachers' training. Data used from this study would improve teachers' learning and development in terms of their educational practices. It would also assist teachers to adapt their instruction to accommodate LWLB in inclusive classrooms and how to enhance their teaching strategies. The results of this study would contribute to improve teachers' training strategies adopted in the areas of Professional Development of teachers in Foundation Phase in South African primary schools. Furthermore, the findings of the research could also provide the Education Department about the factors that affect Subject Advisors to meet the needs of the teachers and the negative impact on their learners' learning.

5.7 Conclusion

The aim of the study was to explore how teacher training and Professional Development could be improved in identifying LWLB in Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State. In order to achieve this aim, themes and sub-themes were developed from research questions. This research focused on how teacher training and Professional Development could be improved in identifying LWLB in Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State. It is evident from the findings that South African education has failed to improve teacher training and Professional Development of Foundation Phase teachers in identifying LWLB at primary schools. The majority of Foundation Phase teachers in this study were dissatisfied with the training they

received from the Subject Advisors, due to the fact that most teacher training and Professional Development programmes do not meet the needs of the teachers. Among others, the training was not engaging, as teachers still struggle to identify LWLB in an inclusive classroom. Thus, they lack knowledge and skills to do so. Teachers have agreed that one of the main factors that hinders teachers in identifying LWLB was that the training offered was not related to the identification of LWLB in an inclusive classroom; the focus was rather on certain curriculum aspects even though teachers benefited a lot. Moreover, teachers emphasised that teachers require methods to teaching and learning that were more engaging. The contributing factors, such as lack of learners' concentration, teachers' unwillingness to learn and their frustration and lack of parental involvement and attitude of parents, overcrowded classes, referral of learners and lack of resources, were identified as negative experiences they had in identifying LWLB. Therefore, there is a dire need to provide teachers with relevant training that would enable them to identify LWLB in their classrooms. As teachers play the most pivotal role in learners' lives, there is an urgent need to address teachers' crisis. This crisis affected learners' academic performance and impacted teachers negatively to facilitate effective lessons to meet learners' needs.

Teachers agreed that future training should be provided to improve teachers' training and Professional Development in identifying LWLB to take their needs into consideration. This implied that teachers lack skills and knowledge to overcome those issues. The participants expressed the need for all primary schools to be given the services of Support Teachers, who would assist teachers and LWLB to improve their teaching and academic achievements. This simply means that their needs were not met. To meet the needs of teachers, the result of the study suggests that special training related to the identification of LWLB is an urgent need. With regards to the identification of LWLB in inclusive classrooms, the DoE and higher education institutions must ascertain ways to include learning that would involve Social-Constructivism and Constructivist learning theories to enable Foundation Phase teachers to collaborate, construct their own knowledge, skills and teaching strategies that would assist them to improve their teaching skills.

5.8 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are suggested to be utilised by relevant stakeholders, such as higher education institutions, the DoE, Subject Advisors, as well as teachers in general, in an effort to improve teacher training and professional development in identifying LWLB in Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State.

From the findings, it was discovered that teachers were not given the opportunity to engaged during tearher training and Professional Development. It is recommended that the only way in which teachers can improve their skills, and in turn to boost learners' results and take more responsibility for individual learners in the classroom, is through the support of different stakeholders.

Through the findings, it emerged that Subject Advisors could not provide teachers with enough time or technological equipment when conducting the workshops to equip them with necessary skills needed in identifying LWLB in an inclusive classroom. It is therefore critical for DoE to provide teachers and Subject Advisors with relevant enough resources that would allow teachers to interact with one another to exchange ideas. In addition to that, transport should also be made available to Subject Advisors to visit schools and to conduct workshops.

Based on the findings, the Department of Edducation is not providing enough support to teachers by inviting trained support staff, such as psychologists or nurses to schools to work with the teachers to provide guidance and adapt teaching strategies. To meet the needs of the teachers, the study recommends that teachers should be trained in how to identify LWLB and address barriers to learning. This could only be done through workshops, class visits, and staff development programmes where they would invite people with knowledge and expertise in an inclusive classroom.

Subject Advisors must have time to visit schools after training just to observe teachers when facilitating lessons and provide advice to teachers. They must also give feedback on teachers' strong and weak points. This would motivate teachers and work on their weaknesses to improve their teaching and willingness to go the extra mile. Enough time is not provided to Subject Advisors to visit schools and support teachers,

due to lack of transport available. This denies them the opportunity to engage with them.

From the findings, Subject Advisors and teachers rely on textbooks and handouts for teaching and learning. The study recommends that teachers must be proactive in finding ways of searching relevant information from the Internet. They should visit libraries, search information by googling and watching videos related to the topic to be taught to be able to facilitate the lesson and what they need to do to meet the needs of the LWLB and the teachers when it comes to teaching diverse classrooms. Teachers and Subject Advisors were not encouraged to do a research related to their specific field. Their focus was on the training offered by relevant stakeholders.

From the result, it was found that learners in the Foundation Phase are unable to read and write or perform calculations, due to fact that teachers lack skills and knowledge in identifying LWLB at an early stage. For this reason, the study recommends that early intervention should be implemented to ensure that learners who experience learning barriers can be identified and get the necessary support. It would also allow learners to improve their performance as early as possible.

Continuous specific workshops and monitoring after training were also recommended to be arranged by the DoE. None of the policies specifies a model that could be used during teacher training and Professional Development. The researcher proposed that such a policy should be designed to assist policy makers in adapting aspects of the model for use by Subject Advisors to train teachers.

Through the findings, it emerged that during the training, a lecturing style was used by Subject Advisors when facilitating the workshops. Thus, the study recommends the use of a video to allow teachers to observe how to facilitate the lesson in an inclusive classroom. The video would provide classroom practice authentically with additional features, such as play and pause, and provide much information and support for teachers' reflective processes (Seidel & Tanner, 2020), unlike regular classroom supervision. Videos could be an effective tool for promoting reflective practice. They have the ability to record the classroom interaction permanently, to pause and rewind so that the segments could be reviewed on multiple occasions, with different

perspectives each time, if one desires. Those benefits help teachers develop insight to better understand teaching and learning (Farrel, 2019).

From the findings, it was found that the attitude of parents is one the contributing factors that affect teachers in identifying LWLB. The study recommended that establishing good relationships between parents and teachers around aspects of children's learning, must always prevail. Grade meetings must be strengthened. There must be programmes given to parents to resolve prevailing challenges, and follow-up must be done often. DVD presentations that would provide guidelines to parents and teachers on supporting LWLB, need to be available.

It was found that most of the teachers struggle to identify LWLB and this affects the performance of the learners. As a result, the study recommends that higher education institutions must ensure that student teachers acquire skills and knowledge on identifying LWLB in inclusive classrooms so that they are already fully prepared to teach, assess and identify learners who experience learning barriers when employed.

With regards to parents' attitudes towards teachers in identifying LWLB, it was found that teacher complain about negative attitudes of parents, whereby some of them did not allow their children to be retained even though the child struggle to master academic content. The study concurs with the DOBE (2001) that the development of parents' associations should be promoted and involved in the implementation of programmes designed to enhance the education of their children for them to be productive and for parents to stay abreast with the education of their children. These parents' associations can greatly help the parents to be knowledgeable about what is happening in schools and the DOBE (2001). They will also be able to establish support that they can offer their children regarding their different learning barriers and for those with physical barriers (DOBE, 2001).

From the finding it was found that most Subject Advisors use a traditional approach when conducting workshops. The traditional teaching concept mostly acquired knowledge through memorization and recitation techniques. This approach has made teachers passive and thus less able to apply their knowledge in solving their daily life problems (Shieh & Yu, 2020). However, the Constructivist theory has brought significant changes to the conceptual belief and practical learning and teaching

process, in which learners are encouraged to actively construct (build) their knowledge through exploration and discovery activities (Shieh & Yu, 2017). Therefore, the study proposes using Social-Constructivism and Constructivist theories as teaching strategies to improve teacher training and Professional Development in identifying LWLB in the Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State. These theories are based on the deficiencies of previous models and support the idea that there were gaps in teachers' knowledge and skills that could be addressed through teacher training and Professional Development. Theories call for the involvement of teachers, the community, and relevant stakeholders to work together to improve the issue of early identification of LWLB that would improve learners' performance in the classrooms.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

19-May-2021

Dear Mrs Leetwane Nthare

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Professional development need of Foundation Phase teachers in the identification of learners with barriers

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2021/0291/21

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

205 Nelson Mandela
Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa

P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
Tel: +27 (0)51 401
9337
duplessisA@ufs.ac.za
www.ufs.ac.za



APPENDIX B: SELECTED SCHOOLS

TAWANA PRIMARY SCHOOL



P.O.Box 145
THABA NCHU
9780
Email: tawanaintermidiate@telkomsa.net
Enquiries: R.G PHAJANE: (051) 873 3069
Cell: 074 404 2441

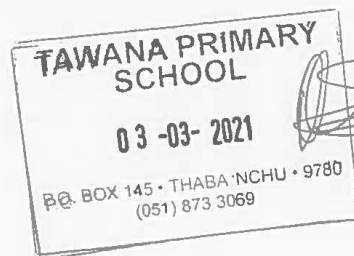
RE: RESPONSE TO YOUR REQUEST FOR RESEARCH

Attention: Ntlhare Leetwane

Tawana Primary School administration is pleased to inform you that your request to do research on inclusive education in our school has been accepted.

Yours in Education

R.G Phajane





KRUITBERG PRIMARY SCHOOL

132 Raymond Mhlaba Street · P.O. Box 22169 · Exton Road · Bloemfontein · 9313

Tel: 051-433 2336

Tel: 051-433 2723

Fax: 051-433 3591

Cell: 082 718 4719

E-mail: kruitberg@mweb.co.za

02 March 2021

Dear Mr LA Ntlhare

Response to your request to conduct research at Kruitberg Primary School

This letter has reference: Application to conduct research at Kruitberg Primary School.

Permission is granted on your request to conduct research at Kruitberg Primary on the days you have stated.

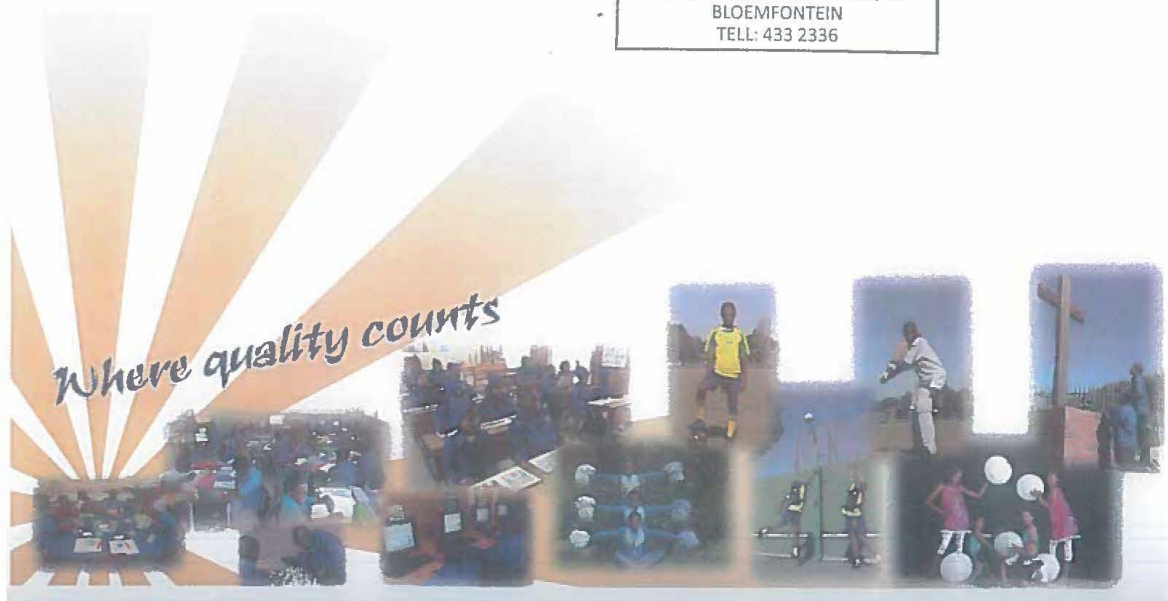
We ask that your research will not hinder learning and classes here at our school and that you will adhere to COVID-19 rules when you are in our school.

Hope you find the above in order.

Thank you


MRS MC FOURIE
PRINCIPAL

KRUITBERG SCHOOL
132 RAYMOND MHLABA STREET
02 -03- 2021
P.O. BOX 22169 EXTONWEG /RD
BLOEMFONTEIN
TELL: 433 2336



St.Mary's Primary School

P.O.Box 16031,BATHO,BLOEMFONTEIN 9307: TEL 051 432 2907,TEL 051 432 9827

Email: stmarysps@telkomsa.net

4th March 2021

Re: Permission to perform a research study

To whom it may concern

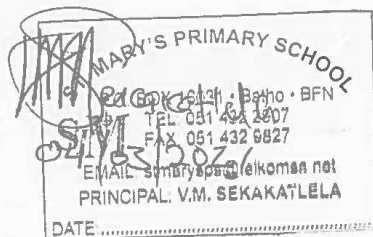
Dear LA Ntlhare

Your request to perform research study at St. Mary's primary school has been granted. We looking forward to accommodating you at our institution.

Regards

Mr.VM.Sekakatlela

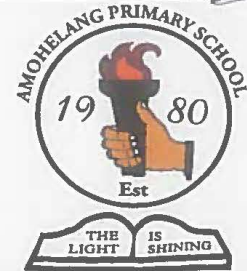
(Principal)



PRIVATE BAG X 506
BOTSHABELO
9781

1159 SECTION C
BOTSHABELO
9781

TEL: 083 580 3262 / 051 532 1608
FAX: 051 532 0205 / 086 269 8896
E-MAIL: amohelang1608@gmail.com



INQUIRIES: MAHAO P.E

REF: ATTENDANCE REGISTER

03 MARCH 2021

ATT: LEETWANE ANNA NTLHARE

RE: APPROVAL LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT OUR SCHOOL

This is to confirm that your request to conduct research at our school (Amohelang Primary School) is approved. You will inform us about the date of commencement.

Regards

Khakhau KP
(Principal)



THE LIGHT IS SHINING

Amohelang Intermediate School K.P. KHAKHAU (Headmaster) Tel: (051) 532 1608 Fax: (051) 532 0205
E-mail: amohelang@mymtnmail.co.za

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH (DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION)

Enquiries: MZ Thango
Ref: Notification of research: LA Ntlhare
Tel. 051 404 9257/ 9207/ 082 537 2654
Email: MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za



District Director
Motheo District

Dear Mr. Moloï

NOTIFICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR DISTRICT BY LA NTLHARE

The above mentioned candidate was granted permission to conduct research in your district as follows:

Topic: Professional development needs of Foundation Phase teachers in identification of learners with barriers.

- 1. List of schools involved:** Amohelang, Kreitberg, St Mary's and Tawana Primary Schools.
- 2. Target Population:** Twenty Grade 2-3 Foundation Phase Teachers including HODs, Four Support Teachers in grade 2-3 and Four Subject Advisors of Foundation Phase subjects at the selected Primary schools.
- 3. Period of research:** From the date of signature of this letter until 30 September 2020. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year nor during normal school hours. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
- 4. Research benefits:** The benefits of this study include the understanding of teacher needs and challenges they encounter in identifying learners with barriers to learning and to devise some means of improving teacher training in helping them to develop professional skills and knowledge to enable them to teach the curriculum to diverse learners.
- 5. Logistical procedures were met, in particular ethical considerations for conducting research in the Free State Department of Education.**
- 6. Strategic Planning, Policy and Research Directorate will make the necessary arrangements for the researchers to present the findings and recommendations to the relevant officials in the district.**

Yours sincerely

Mr. M.M. Sithole
DDG: Corporate Services

DATE:

Enquiries: MZ Thango
Ref: Research Permission: LA Ntlhare
Tel. 082 537 2654
Email: MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za



No. 1 Corner Amber Crescent and Olive Street
Mandela View
Eden Park
Bloemfontein
9301

Dear Mrs. L.A. Ntlhare

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

This letter serves as an acknowledgement of receipt of your request to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education.

Topic: Professional development needs of Foundation Phase teachers in identification of learners with barriers.

1. **List of schools involved:** Amohelang, Kreitberg, St Mary's and Tawana Primary Schools.
2. **Target Population:** Twenty Grade 2-3 Foundation Phase Teachers including HODs, Four Support Teachers in grade 2-3 and Four Subject Advisors of Foundation Phase subjects at the selected Primary schools.
3. **Period of research:** From the first week of February 2021 until 30 September 2021. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
4. The approval is subject to the following conditions:
 - 4.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
 - 4.2 A bound copy of the research document or a CD, should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 101, 1st Floor, Thuto House, St. Andrew Street, Bloemfontein.
 - 4.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
 - 4.4 The ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
5. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours sincerely

Mr. M.M. Sithole
DDG: Corporate Services

DATE:

RESEARCH APPLICATION BY L.A. NTLHARE, PERMISSION LETTER 18 DECEMBER 2020. MOTHEO DISTRICT
Strategic Planning, Research & Policy Directorate Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300 - Thuto House, Room 101, 1st Floor, St Andrew Street, Bloemfontein

www.fsdoe.fs.gov.za

APPENDIX D: A REQUEST LETTER TO THE PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS

View
2021

No 1 Mandela
Bloemfontein
9301
22 February

The principal

.....
.....

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY IN YOUR SCHOOL

I hereby request permission to conduct educational research study in your school for My Phd research project at from February to April 2021.

I am a student at University of the Free State, my student number is 2003119555 and my specialisation is Inclusive Education (Educational Psychology).

The approved research topic by the University of the Free State research committee is **Professional development needs of Foundation Phase teachers in the identification of learners with Learning barriers**. The aim of the study is to explore how teacher training and Professional development can be improved in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in Motheo district, Free State. The target groups are the primary schools situated in rural and urban areas such as Thaba-Nchu, Botshabelo and Bloemfontein areas. two schools in each area. I request to interview 1 to 5 Foundation Phase teachers including HoDs, support teachers and Subject Advisors assigned to support teachers in Foundation Phase. Four teachers with the HoD, one support teacher and one Subject Advisor from each school. Each school should have support teacher, all teachers who have a Junior Primary qualification, have at least three years teaching experience at Foundation Phase level, and have more than 35 learners in their classrooms. All of them use Sesotho as their home language and reside in the rural communities.

Data will be gathered in form of face-to-face interviews which are mend for support teachers and Subject Advisors. The second interview will be focus group with the teachers including HoD. All the interviews will be including all teachers who have a Junior Primary qualification, have at least three years teaching experience at Foundation Phase level, and have more than 35 learners in their classrooms. All of them use Sesotho as their home language and reside in the rural communities. All the interviews will be recorded, and their responses will be treated confidentially. The interviews will be schedule after school and last for 1 hour. Participants have the right to withdraw if they wish to do so.

I hope my request will be taken into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L.A Ntlhare

E-mail: Intlhare@cut.ac.za

APPENDIX E: A REQUEST LETTER TO HEAD OF SUBJECT ADVISORS

No 1 Mandela View
Bloemfontein
9301
22 February 2021

The manager
Department of Education
Motheo District
Private Bag XXX
Bloemfontein
9331

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY IN YOUR SCHOOL

I hereby request permission to conduct educational research study in your school for My Phd research project at from February to April 2021.

I am a student at University of the Free State, my student number is 2003119555 and my specialisation is Inclusive Education (Educational Psychology).

The approved research topic by the University of the Free State research committee is Professional development needs of Foundation Phase teachers in the identification of learners with Learning barriers. The aim of the study is to explore how teacher training and Professional development can be improved in identifying learners with barriers to learning. The study aimed at four Subject Advisors assigned to support teachers in Foundation Phase. Each participant shall be interviewed and recorded individually face-to-face.

The participant's identity shall be protected, and participation shall be voluntary, and their responses will be treated confidentially. Each the interviews shall be recorded and last for thirty minutes. The interviews shall be scheduled depending on the time suitable for subject advisors to participate hours and last for thirty minutes. Participants have the right to withdraw if they wish to do so. The researcher is however aware that the ultimate decision to grant permission for conducting a research study must come from your dignified office.

I hope my request will be taken into consideration.

Yours sincerely

L.A Ntlhane

E-mail: lnthare@cut.ac.za

APPENDIX F: CONSENT LETTER

CONSENT LETTER

PO Box XXX
XXX Primary School
Botshabelo/ Thaba-Nchu/Bloemfontein

Sir/Madam

I am a Phd student at the University of the Free State and currently involved in a research project. Tittle of my study is **Professional development needs of Foundation Phase teachers in the identification of learners with Learning barriers**. I am requesting you to participate in the study.

The aim of the study is to explore how teacher training and Professional development can be improved in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in Motheo district, Free State.

Should you accept my invitation, anonymity and confidentiality will be assured throughout the study and your name and the school will not be disclosed to anyone. The information gathered during data collection will be utilised for research purposes only.

Kindly complete the declaration of consent memo attached below.

Your Sincerely

L.A Ntlhare

APPENDIX G: INFORMED CONSENT FORM
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I hereby declared that my participation in this research study is voluntary, and I have never been promised any I incentives by the researcher to participate in this study. The purpose of the study has been clearly stated and I have a right to withdraw from participation at any time whenever I wish to do so. I acknowledge that the findings from this study will be used only for this study and my name will be kept anonymous.

Thank you in advance for taking part in this study.

Signature..... Date.....

APPENDIX H: LETTER TO THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR
LETTER TO THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

No 1 Mandela View

Bloemfontein 9301

15 February 2021

District Director

Department of Education Motheo District

Private Bag XXX

Bloemfontein 9331

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH STUDY

I hereby request your permission to conduct educational research project, which will involve

selected schoolteachers in the district. I am a Phd student in educational Psychology at the University of the Free State. The title of my study is: **“Professional Development needs of Foundation Phase teachers in identifying learners with learning barriers in the Motheo District, Free State”**.

The research will be conducted in four primary schools in the Foundation Phase (Grade 1-3) with five teachers and the support teacher in each school. Attached herewith is a copy of the approval letter (Ethical clearance) from the University of the Free State to conduct the study.

I hope my request will be taken into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Anna Ntlhare

E-mail: Intlhare@cut.ac.za

APPENDIX I: PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHICS

PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHICS

Dear participants

For the sake of exploring how teachers training and Professional Development can be improved in identifying learners with learning barriers in the Foundation Phase in Motheo District, Free State, because of learners who are unable to read, write and perform maths calculation in the diverse classrooms, hence they have received training, individual biographic information is essential. Would you please respond to the questions to assist in analysing semi-structured focus group and face-to-face interviews.

answer the following questions by completing the table provided.

Please state your gender.

Please state your age.

Please state your years of experience in teaching.

Please state the subjects you were teaching at primary level.

Please state your level/grade of teaching.

Please state the Highest qualification.

Please your race.

Please state your residential area.

Biographic information of the teachers

School	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Grade teaching	Highest qualification	Teaching experiences	Teaching subjects	Race	Residential areas
School A	T1								
	T2								
	T3								
	H1								
School B	T1								
	T2								
	T3								
	H2								
School C	T1								
	T2								
	T3								
	H3								
School D	T1								
	T2								
	T3								
	H4								

Biographic information of Subject Advisors

Pseudonym	SA 1	SA 2	SA 3	SA 4
Gender				
Age				
Capacity/Position				
Highest qualification				
Teaching experiences				
Race				
Subject teaching				

Biographic information of Support Teachers

School	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Grade teaching	Highest qualification	Teaching experiences	Teaching subjects	Race	Residential areas
School A	ST1								
School B	ST2								
School C	ST3								
School D	ST4								

APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SEMI-STRUCTURED GROUP INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

INDIVIDUAL FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS FOR THE SUPPORT TEACHERS

RESEARCH INTERVIEWS GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORT TEACHERS

- 1) What do you mean by Professional development activities?
 - What professional activities have you undertaken previously or currently?
 - Were the activities engaging to your learning needs? If no, explain.
- 2) What do you mean by barriers to learning?
- 3) 4.3 What do you mean by identifying learners with barriers to learning?
 - Have you had learners in your class experiencing learning barriers?
 - What type of learning barriers do they have?
 - How do you identify learners who are experiencing learning barriers?
 - When confronted with learners who experience barriers to learning what do you do with the learners?
- 4) How do your professional development activities improve in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in Motheo district, Free State?
 - Will you use what you have learn to adapt your teaching strategies in identifying learners with barriers to learning in the classroom?
- 5) 4.3 What do you mean by teachers' training in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in Motheo district, Free State?
- 6) What are your experiences in in identifying learners with barriers?

-Do you have any experience working with learners with barriers to learning?

- 7) What are your challenges that you encounter in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in Motheo district, Free State?

-How should you be assisted to overcome challenges encountered?

- 8) What are your successes on improving teachers' training in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in Motheo district, Free State?

- 9) What are the intervention strategies that can improve teachers' training in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in Motheo district, Free State?
-

INDIVIDUAL FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS FOR THE SUBJECTB ADVISORS

RESEARCH INTERVIEWS GUIDELINES FOR SUBJECT ADVISORS

1) What do you mean by Professional development activities?

-What kind of teaching activities you thought helped teachers to learn in identify learners with barriers to learning?

2) What do you mean by barriers to learning?

3) What do you mean by identifying learners with barriers to learning?

-If majority of teachers fail to identify learners with learning barriers, what would you do?

-Why is it necessary for teachers to learn on how identify learners with barriers to learning?

-How will you facilitate your teaching methoDs to help teachers who are struggle with the identification of learners with barriers?

4) How do your professional development activities improve in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in Motheo district, Free State?

5) What do you mean by teachers' training in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in Motheo district, Free State?

-Have you offered teachers with special training regarding the identifying learners with barriers to learning? If yes, how long is the training?

-What teaching approach did you use when training teachers in identifying learners with barriers to learning? Why?

-How often do you monitor teachers' progress after training?

6) What are your experiences in in identifying learners with barriers?

7) What are the greatest challenges that you encountered in assisting teachers in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in Motheo district, Free State?

-How should you be assisted to overcome challenges?

8) What are your successes on improving teachers' training in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in Motheo district, Free State?

9) What are the intervention strategies that can improve teachers' training in identifying learners with barriers to learning in Foundation Phase in Motheo district, Free State?

APPENDIX: K: LANGUAGE EDITOR



Cell: 082 2025 167 | Email: maryna.roodt@gmail.com

EDITOR'S DECLARATION

To whom it may concern:

I, Maryna Roodt, an independent freelance language practitioner, hereby declare that I was tasked to carry out the language editing of the following dissertation:

Written by:
Student name:
Student number:

which is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of:

After my initial editing, several updates of the entire document were carried out by means of a "question and answer" exercise to render the work as error-free as possible. Please note that I take no responsibility for any alterations and/or errors that were introduced to the document after I finally returned it to the author.

I have extensive experience in copy- editing and have the following qualifications:
BA (major in English); Hons (BA) (English); MA(Applied Linguistics)
and MA (Higher Education Studies).


MP Roodt
maryna.roodt@gmail.com
082 202 5167


The Goodest
Language Nurturer

