

UNIVERSITY OF KWA-ZULU NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

**AN EXPLORATION OF PERCEPTIONS OF FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS
OF GIFTED LEARNERS: A CASE OF TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ILEMBE
DISTRICT**

BY

GUGULETHU MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE

December 2018

**AN EXPLORATION OF PERCEPTIONS OF FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS
OF GIFTED LEARNERS: A CASE OF TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ILEMBE
DISTRICT**

BY

GUGULETHU MAKHOSAZANA JIYANE

STUDENT NUMBER: 216074157

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF**

MASTER OF EDUCATION (EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY) IN THE

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR NCAMISILE P. MTHIYANE

SUBMISSION DATE: DECEMBER 2018

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, GUGULETHU JIYANE declare that: **An exploring the perceptions of teaching the gifted learners in the Foundation Phase: A case of two Primary schools in ILembe District,** abides by the following rules:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated is my original work.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the dissertation and in the reference section.
- (iv) This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from another person.
- (v) This dissertation does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
 - a) Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
 - b) Where their exact wording is used, it has been placed within quotation marks and referenced.

Students' name: Gugulethu Makhosazana Jiyane

Student's signature

Date

SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation is submitted with/without my approval

Dr Ncamisile P. Mthiyane (Supervisor)

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to God Almighty my creator, my source of inspiration, wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He has been the source of my strength throughout this project and on His wings only have I soared. I also dedicate this work to my husband; Philemon Jiyane who has encouraged me to finish what I have started. He has been the pillar of support throughout the period of study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This has been an incredible academic journey, the one I will never forget. It has shown me victory, perseverance, disappointment and courage to keep going, no matter what. I could not have done it without the following people:

- Above all, I express my sincere gratitude to God for leading me and guiding me throughout this journey. He made this dream possible. I thank God for His strength, wisdom and provision.
- I would like express my deepest appreciation and thanks to my supervisor Dr. Ncamisile P. Mthiyane for her patient guidance, enthusiastic encouragement and useful critiques of my study. You have been a remarkable mentor for me. I thank you for your advice and assistance in keeping my progress on schedule.
- To my husband, Philemon Jiyane thanks you for your continuous support, and for allowing me to accomplish this lifelong dream. I thank you for believing in me and for encouraging me to keep on going.
- A special thanks to all teachers of Foundation Phase and the parents who participated in this study. This study would have not been a success without them.
- I would like to thank the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and the school principals for granting me permission to conduct the study at the selected primary schools in ILembe District.
- To my friend Nomagugu Mbhele, for her encouragement and her continuous support during the times when I wanted to give up.

ABSTRACT

Gifted education in South Africa is currently a complex issue. Teachers often face overwhelming challenges of teaching the gifted learners due to lack of preparation or professional development to work in a classroom with various mixed abilities. Therefore, this study explored the perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners in order to determine if teachers were able to meet the needs of gifted learners in the mainstream classroom. The study is based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as a framework which views learners in their context, considering overlapping systems that are interconnected and influence the participant's life. The study adopted a qualitative methodological approach embedded within the interpretive paradigm. A purposive sampling strategy was considered to select participants for the study. Two public primary schools were approached to participate, especially the Foundation Phase. The participants consisted of eight teachers who were actively involved in the Foundation Phase (Grade two and Grade three) in their respective schools. Two Foundation Phase Head of Departments agreed to take part in the study. Two parents of the identified gifted learners were also invited to take part in the study. Qualitative data generation methods included one-on-one semi-structured interviews as well as focus group discussions with the research participants. Thematic analysis was used to determine the themes that were constructed from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Four themes emerged from the data. The conclusions of the study indicate that an understanding of the concept of giftedness is of great importance as this was seen as something that is designed for a particular individual and could not be altered or taken away; teachers are often faced with overwhelming challenges which hinder equal and meaningful engagement with all learners in their classrooms; a serious need for adequate teacher training at both pre-service and in-service levels, in order to address the specific learning needs of gifted learners. Research participants believed that an appropriate and professional teacher development and an improvement on the curriculum that will cater for the high intellectual level of gifted learners will assist to overcome these challenges.

Keywords: giftedness; gifted education; teacher perceptions; curriculum differentiation; Inclusive education; Foundation Phase.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY

AMG	Actiotope Model of Giftedness
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DMGT	Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FP	Foundation Phase
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HOD	Head of Department
IE	Inclusive Education
IQ	Intelligent Quotient
NAGC	National Association for the Gifted Children
NCESS	National Committee on Education Support Services
NCSNET	National Commission for Special Needs in Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisations

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER PAGE.....	i
TITLE PAGE	ii
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	iii
SUPERVISOR’S STATEMENT	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
LIST OF APPENDICES	xiii
CHAPTER ONE	2
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	2
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Background to the study	2
1.3 Problem statement	4
1.4 Purpose and rationale for the study	5
1.5 Significance of the study.....	6
1.6 Objectives of the study.....	7
1.7 Key research questions	7
1.8 Clarification of key concepts	7
1.8.1 Giftedness	7
1.8.2 Foundation Phase Learner	8
1.8.3 Gifted learner	8

1.8.4 Curriculum differentiation	8
1.8.5 Inclusive Education	8
1.8.6 Foundation Phase	9
1.9 Delimitation of the study	9
1.10 Outline of the study	9
1.11 Chapter summary	10
CHAPTER TWO	11
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS	11
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 Literature Review.....	11
2.2.1 Conceptualisation of giftedness	12
2.2.2 Nature versus nurture on giftedness.....	13
2.2.3 Understanding the relationship between giftedness and intelligence	15
2.2.4 The relationship between giftedness and talent development.....	18
2.2.5 Current international and national views on giftedness and gifted learners	21
2.2.6 The implications of Inclusive Education policies on giftedness and gifted learners.....	24
2.2.7 Foundation Phase teachers' perceptions of gifted learners.....	25
2.2.8 Parental involvement in gifted education	26
2.2.9 The implications of Curriculum differentiation on Inclusive Policy	27
2.2.10 Theoretical Framework.....	28
2.2.10.1 Brief historical background of Bronfenbrenner's theory.....	29
2.2.10.2 Microsystem as a source for giftedness	32
2.2.10.3 Mesosystem as a source for giftedness	32

2.2.10.4 Exosystem as a source for giftedness.....	33
2.2.10.5 Macrosystem as a source for giftedness.....	34
2.2.10.6 Chronosystem as a source for giftedness	35
2.2.11 Relevance of the ecological system theory on giftedness.....	35
2.2.12 Chapter Summary	36
 CHAPTER THREE	37
 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	37
3.1 Introduction.....	37
3.2 Research paradigm.....	37
3.3 Research design	39
3.3.1 The design of the study	39
3.3.2 Approach to the study	39
3.4 Context of the study	40
3.5 Sample, sampling approach and procedure	41
3.5.1 Profiling of participants	41
3.5.1.1 The Heads of Department in Foundation Phase	41
3.5.1.2 Foundation Phase Teachers.....	42
3.5.1.3 The Parents.....	42
3.6 Data generation methods and procedures	43
3.6.1 One –on-one semi-structured interviews	43
3.6.2 Focus group interviews	44
3.7 Data analysis	44
3.8 Ethical considerations	47

3.9 Issues of trustworthiness	48
3.10 Chapter summary	50
CHAPTER FOUR.....	51
DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION.....	51
4.1 Introduction.....	51
4.2 Data presentation and discussion	52
4.2.1 Parents’ and teachers’ understanding of giftedness	52
4.2.2 The need for Curriculum differentiation	56
4.3 Challenges of teaching gifted learners	61
4.3.1 The level of the quality of the activities of gifted learners	63
4.3.2 Overcrowded classrooms	66
4.3.3 Inappropriateness of curriculum and learning resources	68
4.3.4 The effectiveness of professional development	69
4.4 Teachers’ perceptions on implications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and support of gifted learners	74
4.5 Chapter Summary	79
CHAPTER FIVE	80
STUDY SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1 Introduction.....	80
5.2 Study Summary.....	80
5.3 Conclusions.....	81
5.3.1 Teachers’ and parents’ understanding of giftedness	82
5.3.2 The need for curriculum differentiation.....	82
5.3.3 Challenges of teaching gifted learners	82
5.3.3.1 The level of the quality of the activities of the gifted learners	83

5.3.3.2 Overcrowded classrooms	83
5.3.3.3 Inappropriateness of curriculum and learning resources	83
5.3.3.4 The effectiveness of professional development	84
5.3.3.5 Teachers' perceptions on implications of Inclusive Education and gifted learners.....	84
5.4 Recommendations	84
5.4.1 Identification of gifted learners.....	85
5.4.2 Training and development for Foundation Phase teachers in gifted education.....	85
5.4.3 Appropriate curriculum and resource materials for gifted learners	85
5.4.4 Parental involvement and support.....	86
5.4.5 Initiatives and support from the Department of Education.....	86
5.5 Implications for further research.....	87
5.6 Chapter summary	87
REFERENCES.....	88
APPENDIX A:	
Permission letters from the principals	97
APPENDIX B:	
Consent letter to the teachers.....	102
APPENDIX C:	
Consent letters to the parents	105
APPENDIX D:	
Ethical clearance	110
APPENDIX E:	
Permission to conduct research from DOE	111
APPENDIX F:	
Letter from the editor	113

APPENDIX G:

Semi-structured interview schedules for teachers114

APPENDIX H:

Semi-structured interview schedule for parents115

APPENDIX I:

Focus group discussion schedule for teachers116

APPENDIX J:

Turn It In Certificate.....117

APPENDIX K:

Semi-structured interview transcripts for teachers.....118

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Teachers often face overwhelming challenges of teaching gifted learners due to lack of preparation or professional development to work in a classroom with various mixed abilities. Many learners in our classrooms have been identified as gifted; however, their state of giftedness can be hindered by the inappropriate syllabus that does not provide for their needs. Teachers play a huge role in gifted learner's education. Their influence could have either a positive or negative impact on gifted learner's academic progress. Gifted learner's academic progress can also be affected by the perceptions of teachers, especially in the Foundation Phase. Consequently, chapter one introduces this study which explores perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners. The sections within this chapter include the background to the study; focus and purpose of the study; the objectives as well as the research questions, the importance of the study and its delimitations. A detailed outline of the study is explained, followed by a summary of chapters.

1.2 Background to the study

Attitudes and perceptions towards gifted learners and gifted education have been uncertain and a lack in agreement about the need for special education services for the gifted and talented children has been shown (McCoach & Siegle, 2007). South African's historical, cultural and political context has a direct effect on gifted education, and this could have a great impact on educational policies concerning the education of the gifted learners (Oswald & DeVilliers, 2013). Educational literature shows that there has been an on-going debate regarding giftedness and that it has been faced with many disagreements and implementation of its policies. Referring to Oswald and Rabie (2016), many scholars disagree on the common definition of giftedness and the shared techniques of how gifted learners should be identified. It has been shown that different literature uses the term in various ways depending on the scope of the research. Other scholars compare giftedness with achievement, not taking into consideration

the learner's educational environment. The South African post 1994 education policy documents envisioned the proper system of education which would be grounded on the principle of equal education for everyone (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & Van Deventer, 2015). In addition, the schools were lawfully mandated to encourage the principle of equality and effect some changes in education programmes, taking into consideration learners in the mainstream school but even those with learning barriers. Currently, the South African education system has incorporated Inclusive Education as a means of ensuring that every learner receives an equal education, irrespective of the level of his or her learning abilities (UNESCO, 1994). This is echoed in the Education White Paper 6, *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (DoE, 2001) which states that learning environments should accommodate learners with various learning aptitudes, and provide necessary support thereof (DOE, 2001). It further emphasises that the barriers to learning should be uncovered and minimised. Learners should be encouraged to participate within the philosophy and the syllabus provided in the learning environment.

It has been noted that the education of the gifted learners has not received much attention in the White Paper 6, *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (DoE, 2001), nevertheless the inclusion and support of all learners is still acknowledged (Oswald & De Villiers, 2013). Even though giftedness is mentioned in some curriculum policies, however gifted learners are still excluded and disregarded in the learning environments. Furthermore, there is inadequate provision for gifted learners even though they are entitled to quality education which should improve their learning capabilities. According to Oswald and Rabie (2016), giftedness is a concept that still needs more attention in the South African education system. Of importance is lack of involvement of parents in the education of gifted learners which has the possibility to enhance creation of knowledge and working collaboratively with the school and teachers for their benefits. This study hopes to highlight enlightenment to the understanding of giftedness, and the gifted learners as well as the perceptions of teachers who teach gifted learners in their inclusive classrooms, with emphasis on the Foundation Phase.

1.3 Problem statement

Since 1994, the Department of Education in the South African context has encountered a myriad of challenges concerning the delivery of education that is equal and inclusive to every learner, especially gifted learners. Du Plessis (2013) states that educational programmes in South Africa have over the years targeted interventions for learners whose academic performance is low or challenged. In the past, learners with special needs or learning difficulties have been provided with specialist educational support for their development. Even though gifted learners are another group of learners with special needs, their needs of educational support have always been ignored or not treated as a priority like learners with barriers to learning especially those who are perceived as learning slower than others. To intervene positively to the challenges that inhibit effective learning, the educational programmes in our country have incorporated Inclusive Education which aims at providing education that is equal to every learner, irrespective of his or her capabilities (Rabie & Oswald, 2016). This was followed by an introduction of the White Paper 6 policy document which emphasises that every learner is entitled to an education that will fully enhance his or her capacities without any discrimination (DoE, 2001). It further calls for respect of learner's differences irrespective of their cultural backgrounds, their sexual orientation and their health status. However, it is noticeable that the policy document pays no attention to the group of learners identified as gifted, which is cause for concern in South Africa.

Nonetheless, the Department of Education has designed a new policy document which emphasises inclusivity as the main focal point in teaching and learning in every institution of learning. This could be realised on the condition that every teacher is fully equipped in teaching learners with numerous learning abilities. Giftedness is therefore fore-grounded in this document and has been identified as the exceptionality required to be addressed within the process of a differentiating curriculum. Irrespective of Inclusive Education initiatives intended to ensure quality education for all, existing research continues to indicate some gifted learners are still disregarded in our learning environments (Oswald & De Villiers, 2013). Therefore, this study has the possibility of enriching the existing knowledge on teacher's perceptions concerning giftedness and gifted learners. This study could improve the current state of policy documents concerning academic provision for learners identified as gifted.

1.4 Purpose and rationale for the study

Personally, I am motivated to do this research study because of my experiences with my sister's son. Before he started pre-school, his behaviour changed dramatically. He suddenly became moody, angry and short-tempered. His behaviour was unpredictable and unbearable. My sister tried every parenting method, but nothing seemed to work. When he started pre-school, he was always in trouble, always being punished, always letting someone down. No one understood him, including my sister. One day one of the teachers asked to meet with my sister to discuss her son. The teacher advised my sister that her son needed to skip grade one. She was shocked but accepted the arrangement. The teacher enrolled him on a special programme, where he wrote some tests. They discovered that he was highly gifted. The teacher allowed him to attend her grade three class, and they immediately saw results. He started behaving well, he performed extremely well. He was no longer angry. He was gifted.

Professionally, I started teaching 20 years ago, and I have observed that in every classroom especially in Foundation Phase there is at least one gifted learner, whom teachers sometimes find it challenging to handle. In some cases, if these learners are well behaved, teachers would use them as assistants in class, performing different activities and even helping other learners in their groups or individually. In my teaching experience, the education system and especially in South Africa, has targeted interventions for learners whose academic performance is low or challenging. In many occasions, the focus on the implementation of different interventions and strategies for the low-achieving learners has been primarily on improving their academic achievement in reading and writing ability, as well as mathematical ability. Moreover, in previous years, learners with special needs or learning difficulties have been provided with specialist educational support for their personal development and academically. In my experience and consultation with other Foundation Phase teachers, the observation has been that even though gifted learners are also a group with special needs (being gifted), their educational needs and support is always ignored, not effectively attended to or not treated as a barrier to learning in most schools. Some teachers argue that they have not received adequate training regarding learners with different learning abilities; hence they sometimes either ignore them or act instinctively which does not help the learner that much.

The current situation in the South African education system emphasises that all learners should receive equal educational opportunities (Oswald & Rabie, 2016). For this reason, all learners, regardless of their learning abilities are accommodated in normal classrooms. This is supported in the White Paper 6; *Special Needs Education: Building on Inclusive Education and Training System* (DoE, 2001), which aims at providing all learners with equal educational opportunities. The education system in South Africa has moved towards an inclusionary approach to recognise and accommodate all different learning styles and learning abilities, thus giving gifted learners an opportunity to strive in their learning experiences and optimise their potential (DBE, 2010, p. 68). Despite various interventions made in the South African education system, there is yet a trace of neglect of gifted learners in our classrooms (Oswald & De Villiers, 2013). In addition, teachers are struggling to address the educational needs of gifted learners, due to lack of proper training especially in the Foundation Phase.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study aims at exploring perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase. The results for the current study might, therefore, provide a clear picture of teacher's attitudes towards gifted learners, especially in the Foundation Phase. The results of examining the accommodation of learners identified as gifted in the normal classroom might create opportunities for the authorities of the Department of Basic Education to plan and evaluate teacher training programmes such that they include gifted education in detail and have specialist teachers in the field. Furthermore, the study could assist in the improvement of the existing Basic Education policies to include gifted education as one of the areas of concern in teaching and learning or review the Inclusive Education policies with strong emphasis on gifted education especially in rural schools. The involvement of parents in this study might have potential benefit in developing their knowledge in giftedness also empowering them to prevent further misunderstandings. The study could also motivate parents to take part in the learning of their children. The data from this study might have the potential to provide Foundation Phase teachers with innovative strategies for actively engaging gifted learners in the classroom.

1.6 Objectives of the study

1. To explore perceptions of teachers of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase.
2. To investigate how teachers, teach gifted learners in the Foundation Phase.
3. To explore the challenges (if any) of teaching gifted learners in the Foundation Phase.
4. To assess the role played by parental involvement in the teaching and learning of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase.

1.7 Key research questions

1. What are the perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase?
2. How do teachers teach gifted learners in the Foundation Phase?
3. What are the challenges (if any) of teaching gifted learners in the Foundation Phase?
4. What is the role of parental involvement in the teaching and learning of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase?

1.8 Clarification of concepts

The current study aims to explore perceptions of teachers of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase, therefore the following concepts will be clarified; giftedness; foundation phase learner; gifted learner; curriculum differentiation; Inclusive Education; and Foundation Phase.

1.8.1 Giftedness

Giftedness is perceived as a phenomenon that is biologically rooted in the child and can be developed through interrelated relationships within the child's environment (Landsberg, Kruger & Swart, 2016). Coleman and Cross (2014) define giftedness grounded on the school-based approach. They contend that there is a relationship between the concept giftedness and advanced development. Advanced development is regarded as the foundation on which

giftedness can be understood. Contrastingly, developmentalists view giftedness as an ever-changing talent an individual possesses, that is influenced by an environment in which one lives (Dai, 2010).

1.8.2 Foundation Phase Learner

In South Africa, gifted learners refer to those learners who are within the General Education and Training (GET) band of education that encompasses grade R-3 (Erradu, 2012). Additionally, learners in Foundation Phase are practically involved in the teaching and learning experience through direct contact with concrete objects.

1.8.3 Gifted learner

A gifted learner is referred to that individual with outstanding learning abilities in one or more domains (NAGC, 2010). D Álessio (2009), defines gifted learners as learners whose abilities are higher than other learners in similar age groups. He further identifies gifted learners as having a quality advantage over other learners as they demonstrate creativity in all that they do and most of all are motivated to learn.

1.8.4 Curriculum differentiation

Curriculum differentiation involves amending the curriculum to accommodate learners with varying abilities in a single classroom (DoE, 2010). This is supported in Tomlinson and Jarvis (2009), who argue that curriculum differentiation takes into consideration that learners learn differently, and therefore the curriculum should be designed to provide for such differences.

1.8.5 Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education refers to the process of responding to the various learning needs of learners in an ordinary classroom. This means that learners' differences are acknowledged and respected irrespective of learners' social and cultural backgrounds (DoE, 2001). In du Plessis (2013, p. 78) Inclusive Education in a South African context is defined not only as a learning

environment but as a learning environment that promotes the full personal, academic, and professional development of all learners irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning styles and language.

1.8.6 Foundation Phase

The Foundation Phase in the South African context comprises of learners between the ages of 6-9 years. This is the level of education which offers basic reading, writing and mathematical learning skills. It includes grade R to grade three learners (DoE, 2001).

1.9 Delimitation of the study

This study encountered some limitations such as, the study was conducted with Foundation Phase teachers which excluded Intermediate and Senior phase teachers, therefore limiting generalisability. Nevertheless, the focus of the study was on the Foundation Phase. A similar study of a more diverse population might generate different findings. The voices of gifted learners were missing from this study, since only teachers and parents were interviewed. However, the inclusion of parents somehow gave another dimension of the family environment. Getting teachers to participate in interviews sessions during teaching and learning was a limitation on its own. Teachers ended up spending less time in the interview session. To counter this, some of the interview sessions were scheduled after teaching hours. Parents were not available during the day, because of work commitments. However, interviews were conducted in their respective homes after hours.

1.10 Outline of the study

Chapter one of this study presents the introduction, background, problem statement, rationale, significance, and critical research questions and the objectives for this study. It also clarifies the relevant concepts that are included in this study, and lastly the research framework.

Chapter two presents a review of literature which is relevant to this study. It comprises the introduction, historical background, conceptions of giftedness, understanding of gifted learners, teachers' attitudes concerning gifted learners, and curriculum differentiation. The

development of educational policies on inclusion in South Africa and internationally, the theoretical framework that underpins the study and its relevance to giftedness will also be interrogated.

Chapter three presents the research methodology that I adopted in this study which is explained in detail. The research design, qualitative approach and the interpretivist paradigm which couched this study are discussed. It further elucidates the sample and sampling methods used; the context of the study; data generation methods; ethical issues; and issues of trustworthiness followed by the method and procedures used for the analysis of generated data.

Chapter four reviews the data emerging from one-on-one semi-structured interview and focus group discussions and shows the recurring themes that emerged from data sources. It also presents the findings of data analysis, presentation and findings generated in the study.

Chapter five draws the different parts of the study to a conclusive whole after viewing the analysis of the generated data. Data is interpreted and discussed, drawing from the themes and sub-themes that emerged. Implications for future research based on conclusions and recommendations are also highlighted.

1.11 Chapter summary

This chapter displayed the context, or meaning of giftedness in various countries, or the key elements existing across all contexts. This chapter also highlights the background of the issues which prompted this research. It outlines the problem statement; significance of the study; objectives; critical research questions; theoretical framework; clarification of key concepts; research strategy; methodology; paradigm; sampling methods; analysis of data; and ethical considerations adopted. Chapter two presents the theoretical framework and related literature on the perceptions of teachers of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The chapter aims to integrate the most current and relevant literature on giftedness. This chapter focused on the theoretical framework and related literature on the perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners. The related literature explored the conceptions of giftedness; Inclusive Education policies and their implications on giftedness and gifted learners; perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers on gifted learners; parental involvement in gifted education; curriculum differentiation and Inclusive Education policies; and theoretical frameworks. Several studies have discovered that gifted learners' development could be influenced by the perceptions of teachers. Hence this study explores the perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners.

2.2 Literature review

A literature review is a significant element that provides the foundation for research in a discipline ((Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015). The literature review aims at assisting researchers in determining pre-existing knowledge on the research problem of their interest (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2005). Furthermore, a literature review is an indication of a need to fill in the gaps in the existing literature for a research enquiry on a subject of interest. In the same way, Rowe (2014) highlights the importance of literature reviews that they assist researchers to build on the knowledge that other researchers have achieved in a research discipline, facilitates the development of theory and research landscaping, and reveals gaps in the research and unidentified assumptions. Okoli (2012) also maintains that reading researcher's literature reviews familiarises new researchers with the topic of their study and assists them in demonstrating knowledge on a discipline. In this study, a literature review is presented as part of the study; therefore, it is presented before the methods section, presentation of results and their discussions.

2.2.1 Conceptualisations of giftedness

Gifted learners refer to those learners who demonstrate high potential, creativity and motivation to succeed in academic tasks (D'Alessio, 2009). The notion of giftedness is, however, not easy to describe and its definition differs a great deal on the situation in which it is being used. This has led to numerous conceptions and countless definitions of giftedness. Van Tassel-Baska in Sternberg and Davidson (2005) maintains that most scholars hold different views with reference to how giftedness is defined. Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius and Worrel (2012) contend that giftedness is demonstrated through extraordinary performance of an individual in an aptitude domain as compared to other individuals within the same domain. Similarly, Winebrenner (2012) defines giftedness as referring to individuals or learners who have an exceptional ability to excel academically and show expertise in the acquisition and processing of knowledge. Tannenbaum (2003) suggests that giftedness refers to an individual who possesses the potential for becoming a producer of ideas in domains of activity that improve the aspects of life of humanity. However, the development of such potential depends on numerous factors and life circumstances.

Currently, giftedness is viewed as a genetically determined notion. This means that giftedness does not only focus on the individual's inherent talents, but also incorporates other domains of talent (Sternberg & Davidson, 2005). In addition, giftedness can be displayed differently depending on the capability of the learners' environment in providing a variety of learning opportunities. For this reason, it is contended that giftedness is shaped by society and not discovered (Sternberg & Davidson, 2005). Hence, it is crucial to understand conceptualisation of giftedness in each country and the influence it may have on the country's policies. According to Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius and Worrel (2012), giftedness manifests itself differently in various stages of development. For example, in the beginning developmental stages, giftedness is displayed in the form of potential; in later stages, giftedness is measured in terms of achievement; and fully developed stages, eminence is the measure of giftedness. Emerging from this argument, it is imperative to understand the definition of giftedness; and to understand how different countries respond to this concept concerning policy and practice. On the other hand, Simonton (2005) argues that giftedness is closely related to talent, such that these terms are sometimes used interchangeably. He further states that giftedness and talent are similar in that, they both uphold that some individuals can be distinguished by extraordinary abilities that

set them above normal expectations. Additionally, he contends that these extraordinary capabilities could be both genetically and environmentally determined and can change overtime. This argument has led to the debate on the interdependence of nature and nurture regarding development of giftedness and talent.

2.2.2 Nature versus nurture on giftedness

Winker and Jolly (2012) view nature as referring to the human qualities that are biologically acquired through an individual's parents and cannot be altered or learned. Nurture on the other hand refers to the environment in which an individual is born, that has an influence in human development. Similarly, Santrock (2008) states that nature refers to the biological inheritance of an individual, and nurture comprises environmental experiences. Accordingly, the role of nature in the development of individuals highlights stages in growth and development that are genetically programmed, on the other hand nurture focuses on a specific environment in which an individual exists. This simply means that both biological and environmental factors have a major impact on the existence plus development of giftedness (Gottlieb, Wahlsten, Lickliter, 2006).

A relationship between nature and nurture is shown, for example in Galton's (1869) studies of nature and nurture and debates based on twin studies. In his research he was able to bring forth the idea that giftedness was inherited (Van Tassel-Basks, 2010). In his book *Hereditary Genius* (1869), Galton defined intelligence as an exceptional capability with which an individual is born. In his study of family ancestries in European generations, he discovered that intelligence ran within families (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2008). His findings indicated that intelligence is innately inherited in the same manner as physical qualities. However, his theory excluded giftedness in children since its focus was based on intelligence in men. Nevertheless, it laid foundation for the scientific research on giftedness. Conversely, a study conducted by Sternberg and Grigorenko (1997) about similar and genealogical twins who were raised in different households, revealed that genes are the major contributors on intellectual development, rather than environment. This implies that intelligence of children in the developmental stages is greatly influenced by their environment; however, its influence is lost overtime.

Al-Shabatat, Abbas and Ismail (2009) concur that various factors in the environment contribute to the growth and development of children's intelligence and also stimulate the children's interest in the involvement of various intellectual activities. They further state that an environment presents opportunities for gifted learners to display their innate talents. Therefore, giftedness needs an environment that will nurture, support and enhance an individual's aptitudes, and allow an individual to flourish. Similarly, Tannenbaum (1991) in his study argues that the child's environment including family, peers, school and the community can help to determine the field of talent to be achieved as expected by the society. Therefore, the debates of nature versus nurture on giftedness reveal that they both complement each other in explaining the intelligence scores and life time accomplishments (Al-Shabatat, Abbas & Ismail, 2009). This simply means that they both play a significant role in the realisation of giftedness. Therefore, in this study giftedness was approached in the context of recognising individuals who are important in the development of learner's abilities including parents, teachers and the school versus the family context. The strength of both contexts must be first noticed and supported to become supportive for the optimum development of all learners.

A recent study conducted by Winker and Jolly (2012) indicates that giftedness is either genetic or learned in the scientific community. Their study explores the arguments of nature and nurture based on the views of the nativists and the environmentalists with the nativists approach holding a belief that giftedness is determined by biological and genetic traits. In other words, an individual is born with giftedness and one cannot learn it or remove it no matter how hard one tries (Winker & Jolly, 2012). The environmentalists on the other hand, hold a belief that giftedness is developed in the environment, which can be learned. For example, you can theoretically take any child and provide books and a positive learning environment to create a gifted person. However, both theories have been proven to be questionable. That is, neither nativists nor environmentalists have full merit. Both perspectives have some level of nature versus nurture. In other words, giftedness is biologically determined, but it can only be shown through appropriate environmental nurturing.

2.2.3 Understanding the relationship between giftedness and intelligence

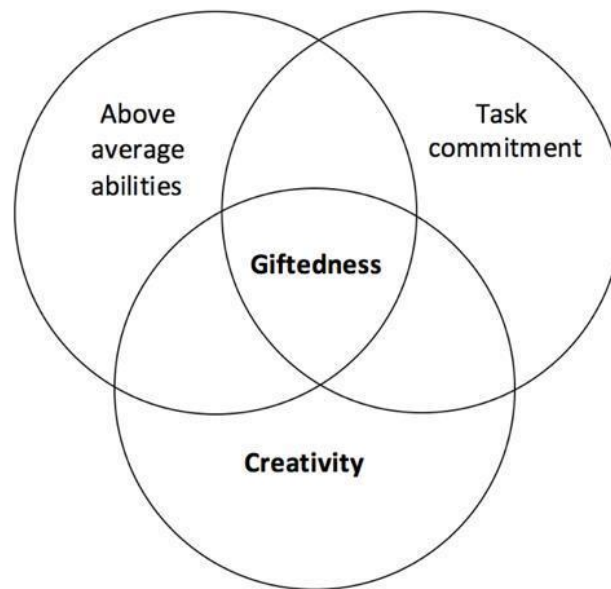
Persson (2015) argues that giftedness and intelligence are not necessarily synonymous terms even though they are sometimes used interchangeably. He further states that both categories of individuals have an exceptional ability to achieve more than their peers, however gifted individuals generally supersede high achievers in terms of performance, understanding, intensity and creativity. D'Álessio (2009) contends that the conception of giftedness is understood in relation to intelligence. However, Plucker and Callahan (2014) state that the emergence of many theories of giftedness was for the sole purpose of broadening the conceptions of intelligence, and these theories viewed intelligence as synonymous with giftedness. They further state that these theories view giftedness as a condition that is essential, however not enough for extraordinary performance. Accordingly, Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius and Worrel (2011) concur that a variety of theories and experimental investigations on intelligence have built on earlier work either opposing or complementing the conception of giftedness or talent.

Tracing the brief history of the interrelatedness of intelligence and giftedness, it was Lewis Terman (1916) who originated it using an intelligence scale to measure Intelligence Quotient. In his study, Terman identified 1528 children with an Intelligence Quotient above 135, and most had above 140 IQ (Feldhusen, 2005). The findings revealed that gifted children were ordinary individuals, as compared to the common assumptions regarding their behaviour. Therefore, giftedness does not mean that one possesses unpredictable abilities that were accidentally obtained. Terman also found out that giftedness manifests itself in childhood and needs to be stimulated and nurtured throughout adulthood. Therefore, this study as it is conducted in the Foundation Phase hoped to explore Terman's findings in two schools involving teachers and parents.

According to Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius and Worrel (2011), Terman's work laid the foundation for identifying and measuring giftedness. As highlighted in Tannenbaum (2000), Terman's findings provided the research needed to have special programmes in schools for gifted learners. In the later years it was evident that the use of Intelligence Quotient scores alone were not enough to identify someone as gifted, since individuals either could or could

not meet the necessities for giftedness (Renzulli, 2004). Therefore, giftedness was then considered as involving both Intelligence Quotient and non-intellectual capabilities. Furthermore, the findings of a study conducted by Feldhusen (2005) confirms that the special programmes as indicated above changed the teacher's focus towards the provision of high-quality teaching to accommodate the exceptional needs of gifted children. In other words, research began to develop upon a broader definition of giftedness (Feldhusen, 2005). Unlike Terman's work, Thurstone (1916) in his study and approach, discovered that individuals possess different and unusual intellectual abilities which are displayed in various domains. Therefore, this means that intelligence can be either determined through inheritance or through learning opportunities provided in an individual's environment. Therefore, considering the role of the environment in the child's development, in this study the motivation was based on the perspective that giftedness reveals itself in childhood, hence the study concentrated on Foundation Phase learners.

Another change in the conceptions and theories of giftedness came with the Marland Report of 1972. The Marland Report broadened the definition of giftedness, and reported on the state of education at that time. Numerous scholars adopted this approach and established models to describe giftedness. Renzulli (1978) established a three-ring model of giftedness which is widely used in gifted education. In this model, Renzulli shifted focus from gifted individuals to gifted behaviour. He described gifted behaviour as a connection between three traits namely, above average ability; task commitment; and creativity (Renzulli, 2011). He further pointed out that gifted behaviour can be developed in individuals who display all three traits and are able to apply them to their performances. Therefore, learners who display or have a potential to display adequate levels of these qualities should be provided with opportunities above and beyond those offered in the normal classroom. It is also noted that the three rings do not exist in isolation, rather their development is influenced by personality and environmental factors (Renzulli, 2011). In the same way Miller (2012) notes that the interaction between three qualities is presented in interconnecting circles with giftedness being found in the centre. Therefore, the interrelation and overlap of these three qualities and the environment is significant to showcase giftedness and all of them should be considered. These clusters are illustrated in Figure 2.1 below:



This diagram represents a connection of three traits which determine gifted behaviour (Renzulli, 1986)

The above adapted representation of the Three Ring Model by Renzulli shows interaction of the three clusters. It is noted that giftedness is not made up by a single cluster, rather each cluster equally contributes to the development of gifted behaviour (Reis & Renzulli, 2004). According to the model, the cluster of above-average ability is made up of general ability and specific abilities. The general ability consists of one's ability to process information; an ability to respond positively to a new environment; and also, an ability to participate in intellectual thinking (Kaufmann & Sternberg, 2005). This would include critical thinking, adaptability to new situations, and memory-processing skills which can be assessed through general tests in the learning environment. On the other hand, specific ability consists of one's ability to obtain knowledge; and an ability to perform competently in specialised activities. These would include chemistry, ballet, drawing, musical composition, and photography which can be assessed through specific tests or observation of performance (Kaufmann & Sternberg, 2005). The task commitment cluster refers to an ability to use persistence, endurance, hard work, dedicated practice and self-confidence to motivate oneself in determining what is necessary for the completion of a task (Kaufmann & Sternberg, 2005). This is supported in Gifted Education

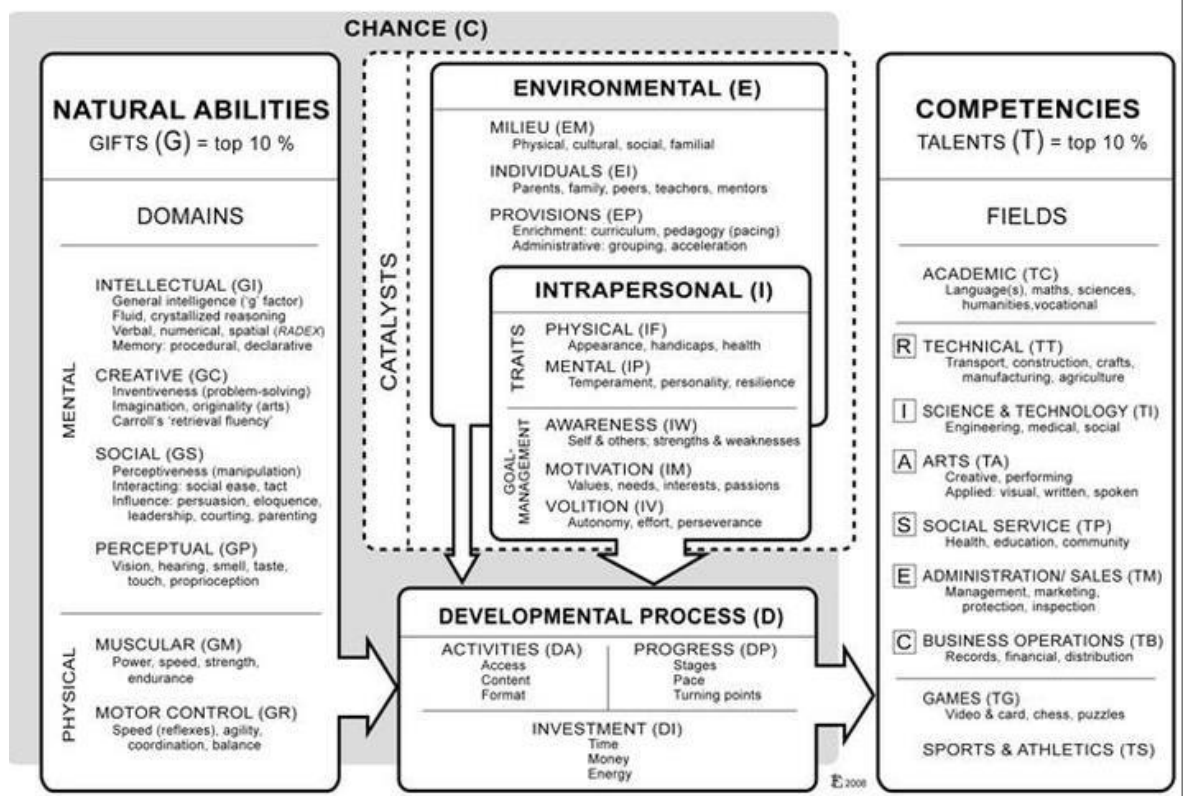
Resource Guide for Teachers (2007) which refers task commitment to the passion and determination that results from the involvement of learners in projects, problems and topics of their interest in or outside the classroom. Therefore, a task committed individual would show more commitment to the tasks that are personally meaningful to him or her. However, an absence of commitment in subject-related projects in a learner should not be seen as a lack in task commitment. Thus, task commitment cannot be used as an only indicator of giftedness.

The cluster of creativity is defined as a capability in general domain. Renzulli (2009) posited that a creative individual is somebody who has the capacity to generate or produce many interesting and practicable ideas. This is supported by Runco (2005) who describes creativity as including the ability to construct original and meaningful interpretations of experience. However, originality does not guarantee creativity; nonetheless it is essential for it. Similarly, Coleman & Cross (2014) argue that creativity in children is expressed broadly since they have a wide-ranging interest and have not established a specific area of interest. They further state that demonstration of creativity in specific domains is displayed as children develop commitment and involvement in different fields of knowledge. This is supported in the ideologies of the National Curriculum Statement (DBE, 2012). It emphasises how teachers should uphold the notion of developing learners who are critical and creative thinkers to enhance sustainable learning and teaching. This understanding proposes and aligns itself to a psychological characteristic which indicates for example, the learner's ability to be task persistent, creative and motivated which are all crucial to be sought out and cultivated in developing and engaging learning activities.

2.2.4 The relationship between giftedness and talent development

Gagne introduced the developmental model, *The Differentiated Model of Giftedness* that distinguishes between giftedness and talent (Gagne, 1995). This model aims at revealing the impact of different variables in transforming natural gifts that a person is born with into particular talents in everyday life (Kaufmann & Sternberg, 2008). In addition, the model defines giftedness as the capacity an individual possesses which could be transformed into talent if environmental and other catalysts are present to facilitate the process. Talent on the other hand, is defined as outstanding mastery of knowledge and skills in a specific domain in

such a way that an individual performs above average as compared to the same age peers. In the same way, Miller (2012) defines giftedness as in-born abilities, while talent shows the skills that have been developed through mastery of knowledge. Gagne (2009) highlights the elements which are crucial in the transformation of gifts into talent namely giftedness; talent and practice. In his distinction he claims that giftedness describes the skills that are mostly hereditarily determined, such as creativity, intelligence, socio-affective and sensorimotor skills; and talent denotes the mastery of skills in a domain. The model is illustrated in figure 2.2 below:



Gagne's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT 2.0; 2008)

Another model that was developed to expand the understanding of the conception of giftedness was Gardner's (1993) Multiple Intelligences Theory. Gardner (2009) identified seven different intelligences and confirmed the possibility of other intelligences. These intelligences include intrapersonal, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, interpersonal, linguistic and bodily-kinaesthetic. The list was later extended with naturalistic intelligence and the mention of a search for existential intelligence, bringing the number up to nine (Gardner, 2011). The implication of understanding these intelligences and utilising them in teaching and learning has led to teachers being enabled to modify their teaching and has also contributed to changes in

identification of the gifted (Kuo, Maker, Su & Hu, 2010). In his theory, Gardner provides a framework for educators to accommodate all learners in the classroom regardless of their level of intelligence (Shearer, 2004). Regarding this study, the knowledge and application of the multiple intelligences' theory can assist Foundation Phase teachers to provide enough variety in the learning activities to ensure that much of their learners' potential can be tapped into (Bas, 2008).

One other model developed by Ziegler (2005), proposed that the environmental catalysts co-evolve during the learning process. In other words, Ziegler identified that in the teaching and learning context, the systems or catalysts as he refers to are not merely stimulating or inhibiting processes in the talent development process. Giftedness or gifted performance is attributed to the individuals who successfully negotiate interactions with their environment in building action effectively. According to Ziegler's model, the focus is on actions and the development of these actions within a complex environment. In this way, for talent to develop, intelligent individuals will be able to take creative and critical multiple relevant actions to navigate within a challenging environment. This simply indicates that the ability to act to deal creatively with the situations required development of skills. However, Ziegler (2005) specifies that excellence can only be distinguished when an individual has the desire to do something, the ability to do it, and the awareness that it can be done. It is therefore recognised that many characteristics are involved in identifying an individual as gifted or talented. One of the characteristics is awareness of the need of and an action to be taken and how to intervene in such a context(s) as this requires consideration of the environment or culture for an individual to be regarded as demonstrating a considered behaviour as 'gifted'.

In considering one research which seemed relevant to this study, it defined giftedness as comprising five components that must be included in the transformation of potential in the early years to creative productivity in maturity. These components according to Miller (2012) could be arranged in a star pattern with each of the components placed in a point of the star and are significant in the identification and implementation of instruction of gifted learners. However, while instruction for the gifted is vital, Cross, Coleman and Terhaar-Yonkers (2014) highlight the recognition of the community and the home environment. This view was shared

by Coleman and Cross (2014) who emphasised and highlighted that the development of giftedness is more conducive and recognised in the Foundation Phase. This suggests that the Foundation Phase is where giftedness can be displayed more in general skills which later manifests in a specific area of study. Therefore, according to Cross and Coleman (2014) giftedness is referred to the ability of a young individual to demonstrate speedy learning as compared to the peers of similar age. Apart from recognising the age when considering giftedness in early years of schooling, Cross and Coleman (2014) highlighted that giftedness in schools is associated with specific foundational subjects like mathematics, reading and writing.

2.2.5 Current international and national views on giftedness and gifted learners

The understanding of the notion of giftedness worldwide has gone through important modifications, though no agreement for the common definition has been reached (Tapper, 2012). Miller (2008) highlights the importance of understanding conceptualisation of giftedness as it has a significant relevance for the field of education. Current conceptions of giftedness in New Zealand are viewed from three perspectives, namely developmental against essentialism; general against specific domain; and socio-cultural phenomenon (Tapper, 2012). An essentialist approach is grounded in the belief that high intelligence is genetically inherited, and that an individual is separated from age group peers by a neurological benefit. In addition, possession of this high intelligence together with encouraging environmental settings could eventually result in achievement at a later stage in life (Dai, 2010; Kaufmann & Sternberg, 2008). Contrastingly, from a developmentalists' view, giftedness is seen as a dynamic and malleable relationship amongst individuals and their surroundings, which changes constantly overtime (Tapper, 2012). This is supported in Kaufmann and Sternberg (2008) as they claim that both nature and nurture have an influence on the development of the child.

A general domain view according to Dai (2010), perceives giftedness as an extraordinary aptitude to solve problems, think abstractly and obtain knowledge. On the other hand, Tannenbaum (2003) contends that general domain approach perceives giftedness as a transferable intellectual aptitude which can be applied to a variety of domains of human capabilities. Conversely, a specific domain approach views giftedness as an achievement in a

specific domain, for example mathematical which results in the ability to adjust to any surroundings Tapper, 2012). This is supported in Matthews and Foster (2009), as they state that very few individuals are gifted in all areas. They believe that an individual can display giftedness in a single domain, however, also display average aptitudes in additional fields.

According to Ford (2003), the socio-cultural phenomenon approach acknowledges that giftedness is a concept regarded differently by various people. Accordingly, Chan (2009) claims that the socio-cultural view of giftedness considers the fostering of children in various environments. Therefore, teachers who uphold this view acknowledge that world-wide interpretations of giftedness cannot be applied to a culturally diverse classroom (Phillipson & McCann, 2007). In this study, this implies that all teachers within a school, especially in the Foundation Phase should have more knowledge of giftedness which would assist them in their practice.

Conceptions of giftedness in a South African perspective are also viewed in relation to two political periods, pre and post-apartheid. Before 1994 South Africa had shown some improvements in the education of the gifted learners. However, due to the constraints of apartheid, only white learners were considered (Oswald & Rabie, 2016). Some of the challenges that were experienced in the period after 1994 concerning gifted education were emerging and equalising the education structure followed by changes in policy. According to Oswald and DeVilliers (2013), gifted education is a complex concern that impacts how potential and achievement are perceived. They further state that the education of the gifted relates directly to the country's past, ethnic and political background which could impact on decision making processes. In other words, if gifted education was to be taken in the highest regard politically, the country would likely benefit from talented and gifted learners as they would as adults add to the economy of the country. It acknowledged that South Africa holds a worldwide view that giftedness is the nation's most valuable resource that could be a solution to the problems experienced in the medical, political and scientific fields (Oswald & DeVilliers, 2013; Landsberg, 2016). Sadly, to this end, the slow response and improvement of interventions in the structure of South African education indicate that there are still those politicians who fail to consider gifted learners' needs in educational policies. Moreover, as

much as there are policies that were developed to accommodate gifted students' needs; other teachers still believe that there is no need to cater for such learners in their classrooms. Landsberg (2016) concurs and states that, while consideration is given mostly to learners with intellectual difficulties, consideration should also be given to the learners at the other end of the scale who have high abilities. Therefore, it is essential that teachers gain insight in giftedness, so that they can ensure that education is provided to gifted learners. This in a way would allow gifted learners to become fully functioning adults who will use their gifts to the benefits of the society. Noticeably however, is that South Africa's view on giftedness relies on connections amongst an individual and the surroundings (Landsberg, 2016). This consequently implies that giftedness can be described and understood in the context of the interrelationships between different systems that exist in the environment. Gifted education in the South African context, therefore, is perceived as a responsibility for all citizens and that all systems should collaboratively work towards supporting gifted learners as individuals.

Another study that has been conducted in Zimbabwe on the conception of giftedness is based on the African viewpoint. According to this perspective, giftedness is viewed among two major ethnic groups, Shona and Ndebele as a gift especially provided by God (Ngara, 2017). Specifically, the Shona culture adopts the spiritual paradigm of giftedness which views giftedness as an uncommon aptitude that an individual is blessed with through their ancestry. Additionally, this uncommon aptitude allows an individual to perform with supreme expertise even in challenging areas. This is further explained in the study of a Zimbabwean genius child, who regardless of her disadvantaged background, graduated from the university at 18 years of age. The Shona culture's point of view, and the intelligent child would be that one who is from a disadvantaged upbringing would outshine that from advantaged home backgrounds. In this study, the Shona cultural view which is more of an African perspective of viewing giftedness, considers the socio-economic background and the context as the determinant of a gifted learner. It is however recognised that even in the African perspective in the case of Shona people; the context is viewed as most influential but in the form of competing backgrounds. However, in the study conducted by Ngara and Porath (2006) the spiritual paradigm of giftedness was adopted by Bantu people of Central Southern Africa. They shared similar spiritual understanding that giftedness is a special gift from God.

2.2.6 The implications of Inclusive Education policies on giftedness and gifted learners

The journey towards Inclusive Education in South Africa is established on the principles of equity and inclusion and the protection of human rights. During the apartheid era, black learners with special needs attended normal schools and received little support and in many circumstances, they did not attend school. Teachers were trained to teach in either a normal school or a special school (Walton, 2011). Post-apartheid saw a change in the South African education system, the new policies which aimed at challenging the influence of exclusion were developed. The country developed a new vision for an education system based on the principles of equity, human rights and human resource development. Inclusive Education was encompassed in South African education politics as a result, new Inclusive Education policies and guidelines were developed (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & Van Deventer, 2016). However, implementation of effective Inclusive Education in South Africa is influenced by the societal differences.

After the election of a democratic government in 1994, a new constitution based on human dignity and human rights was adopted which resulted in the introduction of Inclusive Education, practices and philosophies of inclusion. Schools were no longer racially separated, and the Department of Education dedicated itself in ensuring access to education for all learners (DoE, 2001). Therefore, and accordingly, Inclusive Education in South Africa is mainly focused on the recognition of human rights and the principles of democracy that recognise equal opportunities to allow all learners to realise their full potential (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). From 1994 onwards, the new education policies and legislation were developed. These included the White Paper for Education of 1995 (White Paper 1); The SA Schools Act, White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, released in 2001. White Paper 6 emphasises the respect of learners' differences, and for the modification of educational structures, systems and learning approaches to accommodate all learners. It encompasses principles of human rights, social justice, participation, redress and reasonable access. White Paper 6 also encourages classroom educators to develop their knowledge and skills to ensure accommodation of all learners. Despite the fact inclusion is about accommodation of all learners, Smith (2006) argues that Inclusive Education focuses on accommodating learners with special learning difficulties and does not include gifted learners.

He further states that inclusion should also apply to gifted learners in the same way as any other group of learners.

The recent policy initiatives on curriculum differentiation categorises gifted learners as a remarkable group which needs to be addressed (DoE, 2010). The Curriculum and Assessment policy released in 2011, calls for the acknowledgement and accommodation of different learning styles in the education system (DoE, 2011). The statement also requires inclusivity to become an essential part of the South African schools' curriculum, including planning, organisation and teaching. The research conducted by Oswald and Rabie (2016) indicates that the curriculum in South Africa lacks provision for gifted learners. Only a small number of public schools provide advanced programmes for exceptional learners. Regardless of principles guiding Inclusive Education, it is noted that other policy documents do not provide programmes that meet the needs of gifted learners. Additionally, policy initiatives are not implemented in the learning environment, as exceptional learners are the least in the spectrum for educational provision (Oswald & De Villiers, 2013). Overall findings suggest that the Education Department should transform focus towards special provision for the gifted learner's needs. Furthermore, Inclusive Education has been identified in the policy documents as a means of ensuring access to quality education for all learners. Lastly, effective implementation of Inclusive Education could offer a possible alternative in the teaching of gifted learners.

2.2.7 Foundation Phase teacher's perceptions of gifted learners

Teacher's perceptions are related to their knowledge of giftedness as well as teaching of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase classrooms. A study conducted by McCoach (2007) about teacher beliefs concerning gifted learners and the educational environment, indicated that despite 50 years of research, no consensus has been reached regarding teachers' perceptions of gifted learners and their educational needs. Teachers' perception according to Szymanski and Shaff (2013) influence the identification, recommendation for programming and the education of gifted learners. Teacher perceptions and attitudes, either negative or positive, have an influence on the performance of learners (Hornsta, Denessen, Bakker, van den Bergh & Voeten, 2010). Teachers often view gifted learners as those who excel in all subjects and are thus capable of scoring and completing all assignments at the mastery level across the school

curriculum (Winebrenner, 2012). This is supported by Szymanski and Shaff (2013) as they contend that many teachers perceive gifted learners as those who should be capable of achievement and excellence in all the curriculum areas. Bainbridge (2014) holds a belief that the misconception or misunderstanding of gifted learner's asynchronous development often leads teachers as well as parents to false assumptions that the gifted learners should be capable of behaviours that would be considered consistent with their advanced levels of thinking. Developmentally gifted children behave consistently with peers their own age, nevertheless this is often confused and misinterpreted by those who lack proper training in the identification of gifted learners. Therefore, effective teachers of gifted learners require training on meeting the needs of gifted learners (Gallagher, 2015). According to Szymanski and Shaff (2013) colleges of education and pre-service teacher programmes are not providing coursework required to identify, characterise, understand, and educate the gifted learners within the traditional classroom setting.

A study conducted by Baudson and Preckel (2013) indicated that gifted learners were perceived as advanced in intelligence yet also as withdrawn, less emotionally stable, and less agreeable than average-ability learners, regardless of their age or gender. Consequently, teachers' attitudes agreed with the disharmony hypothesis, which associates high intellectual ability with adjustment difficulties. In addition, teachers' professional experience and experience of working with gifted learners had no influence on teachers' scores such that the findings generalised across pre-service and in-service teachers.

2.2.8 Parental involvement in gifted education

Parenting is considered as the most effective factor that contributes to the performance of the child, especially in early childhood (Schneider, 2010). The parents' knowledge about gifted children enables children to be diagnosed at an earlier age and to get the benefits of the special programmes for them. As noted in Bicknell (2014), parents are the primary teachers for the children, therefore they have an ability to recognise early signs of giftedness in their children. Consequently, parents can enhance learning experiences of their gifted children if they are empowered to do so. Bicknell (2014) further states that the literature based on the involvement of parents in their children's education agrees that involvement of parents have positive effects on the learning of their children. As cited by Epstein and Dauber in Bicknell (2014), when

parental involvement is included as part of daily teaching practice, this could increase parent's interaction with their children at home. Furthermore, collaboration of parents, teachers and school supervisors may be regarded as an empowering process to improve learners' achievement. Conversely, such collaboration is typically restricted to traditional activities which parents are expected to carry out.

The study conducted by Jolly and Matthews (2012) reviewing literature on parental involvement, states that parental involvement has a great influence on the child's education, attitude, achievement and behaviour. However, this influence is articulated differently across different cultures. For example, Chinese American and Korean American parents, who are from traditionally high-achieving backgrounds, provide close monitoring and support for their children. Jolly and Matthews (2012) further state that effective parents can motivate their children to apply their imagination through play. These parents also respond to their gifted children in a developmental manner, allowing them to make decisions appropriate to their age. Similarly, Oswald and De Villiers (2013) in their study, supported the notion of the importance of involving parents in the education of their children. They state that parents require appropriate training and empowerment on giftedness to prevent misunderstandings and ignorance. They further state that parents should form part of collaboration as equal partners with other stakeholders to support the learning of their children. Nonetheless, financial constraints in other communities might hinder parents' support of their children's education. In such cases, parents should be encouraged to inspire their children to study and to perform well. Eccles and Harold's (1993) study discovered that participation of parents in their children's education usually slows down as their children move to higher levels of education. This is a result of parent's lack of knowledge in other subjects as the coursework advances. Goodall and Vorhaus (2011) proposed two categories of parental involvement, namely school-based as well as home-based. In school-based involvement, parents take part in parent-teacher meetings, whereas in home-based involvement parents provide supervision for their children's homework.

2.2.9 The implications of curriculum differentiation on Inclusive Education Policy

According to Strogilos, Tragoulia, Avramidis, Vaoulgka, Papanikolau (2017), curriculum differentiation includes effective response to the learners' differences in the classroom.

Tomlinson (2005) describes differentiation as a structured and flexible method of modifying teaching and learning to meet children's educational needs and assist them to attain maximum potential as students. He argues that effective differentiation occurs when teachers can reach out to different learners by modifying their teaching to make learning more interesting for all learners. Similarly, Cobb (2010) contends that differentiation involves flexibility in the selection of content, process and products depending on the readiness of learners according to learning preferences, learner's desires and interests. This is supported in Hall (2002) as he states that curriculum differentiation aims at maximising development and achievement of learners through meeting the learners where they are considering their prior knowledge, language, willingness, interest and preferences in learning. He further clarifies that differentiation is a method of teaching and learning intended to accommodate learners with various learning capabilities in the normal classroom. Therefore, teachers of gifted learners should employ the five dimensions of differentiation in their classrooms to meet the needs of highly exceptional learners.

2.2.10 Theoretical Framework

A theory refers to an organised and logical set of interrelated or concepts that stipulate the nature of relationships between two or more variables aiming at understanding a problem as a phenomenon (Fain, 2004). Similarly, Cypress (2017) describes a theory as an organised and systematic set of interrelated statements that specify the nature of relationships between two or more variables aiming at understanding a problem or nature of things. Landsberg (2016) concurs with Cypress's definition and views a theory as an ordered set of ideas, assumptions and concepts which inform us about a specific aspect of reality. Therefore, theories provide a framework for the study and are not permanent, and as a result, the full complication of life including understanding what giftedness is, cannot be apprehended by a single theory.

This study is couched by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory which serves as a theoretical framework for exploration of Foundation Phase teacher's perceptions of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase. Bronfenbrenner's theory examines the development of a child within the framework of the existing relationships that form part of a child's environment. The theory also recognises an underlying intrinsic relationship between biological and immediate environmental and social factors, influencing the child's development. The fundamental proposition in Bronfenbrenner's theory is that human development occurs whenever an

individual interacts with his or her environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Aligning with the theory, Kokot (2011) indicates that giftedness is an inborn potential for an outstanding achievement that depends on the individual's internal and external environment. Consequently, relationships with outer reality must challenge and foster the realisation of giftedness within the child's inner reality, hence building conditions that are necessary for giftedness (Landsberg, 2016). To determine quality education for gifted learners, this study included teachers and parents as research participants, as they play a crucial role in enhancing giftedness in children in the early years. The ecological systems theory serves as a foundational base to explore the teacher's perceptions of gifted learners, with an emphasis on the Foundation Phase.

2.2.10.1 Brief historical background of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

The ecological systems theory as stated in Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit and Van Deventer (2016) was developed by Bronfenbrenner during 1979 and it explained how everything in a child and the child's environment affects how a child grows and develops. This theory later was known as the bio-ecological model and emphasises how various systems and relationships between an individual and the environment interrelate which will therefore influence the development of the individual. Bronfenbrenner's theory (2005) functions through a multi-layered approach of which the child is at the centre. The child is viewed as an active agent in his or her own development and world and is influenced by other levels of the ecological system (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & Van Deventer, 2016). According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010), different layers of interactions exist in the individual's environment which play a huge role in the development of that individual. This theory is useful in understanding the school, classrooms and home, as these are systems that have an influence on the individual learner's development. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the influence of an individual's relationships and the systems in his or her environment to create opportunities to enhance such relationships. This simply applies to what happens to the lives of developing gifted learners where what happens at home and the school environment could influence the learner either positively or negatively.

Fundamental to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as mentioned in Landsberg (2016), is the proximal processes. These proximal processes indicate that human development can only occur if there are close connections between an individual and the surroundings. Ceci (2006) concurs with the notion that proximal processes are forms of interactions between a

developing individual and his or her environment, which could lead to either positive or negative development. However, the effectiveness of proximal processes depends on their regular occurrence and over a lengthy period. Accordingly, Swart and Pettipher (2016) claim that these processes have an influence on the actualisation of genetic potential for effective functioning. For example, these are displayed in the systems that a learner actively participates in, like the school, family and peer groups.

In this study, Bronfenbrenner's theory is used as a tool to understand the development of the gifted child's potential and how it is influenced by other systems in his or her outer environment. For example, the school as a direct system in which a learner participates, can play a crucial role in enhancing the potential that is necessary for giftedness but only if the teachers can identify those learners. As mentioned in Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2005) the ecological systems theory clarifies between influences in the child's life that could have a direct and indirect impact on his or her development. Currently, our education system is experiencing a major challenge in identifying the impact, relations and interrelationships between the learner and other systems in his or her environment.

As noted in Bronfenbrenner (1979), the learner is surrounded by various systems that determine success in his or her academic journey, and these include teachers, education system, and the school. There is a continuous interaction in the relationship between an individual and the existing systems which influences the development of an individual. Therefore, teachers, parents and the school should work together in enhancing the positive development of the learner (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Bronfenbrenner's theory is used in this study to strengthen and understand giftedness, which is also seen as a system interrelating with other systems. For example, Landsberg (2016) points out that giftedness is an inborn potential rooted in the child which matures as a manifestation of a system of interconnected influences within the child's environment. The theory is also used to understand the role of the systems such as school, teachers and peers on the development of the learners. This may be seen where a child is born with the hereditary potential for giftedness which in some ways requires that potential to be nurtured by the child's outer environment in order to enhance the child's giftedness and most importantly to recognise each learner's needs. Therefore, Swart and Pettipher (2016) emphasise the importance of understanding the influence of relationships among individuals and systems as tools that can provide opportunities for enrichment of positive relationships.

Bronfenbrenner's theory as demonstrated in Figure 2.2 indicates how the microsystem, for example the child's caregivers, and family members who create an enriched environment, interrelate with the mesosystem, like the school, peers and objects; and the macrosystem, for example the Department of Education. In this study, this model assists in understanding the nature and quality of relationships that challenge and nurture the realisation of giftedness within each child's inner reality. The implication of Bronfenbrenner's theory in this study can be realised if the collaborative partnerships with all stakeholders can be emphasised. The illustration of Bronfenbrenner's theory is shown in Figure 2.3 below:

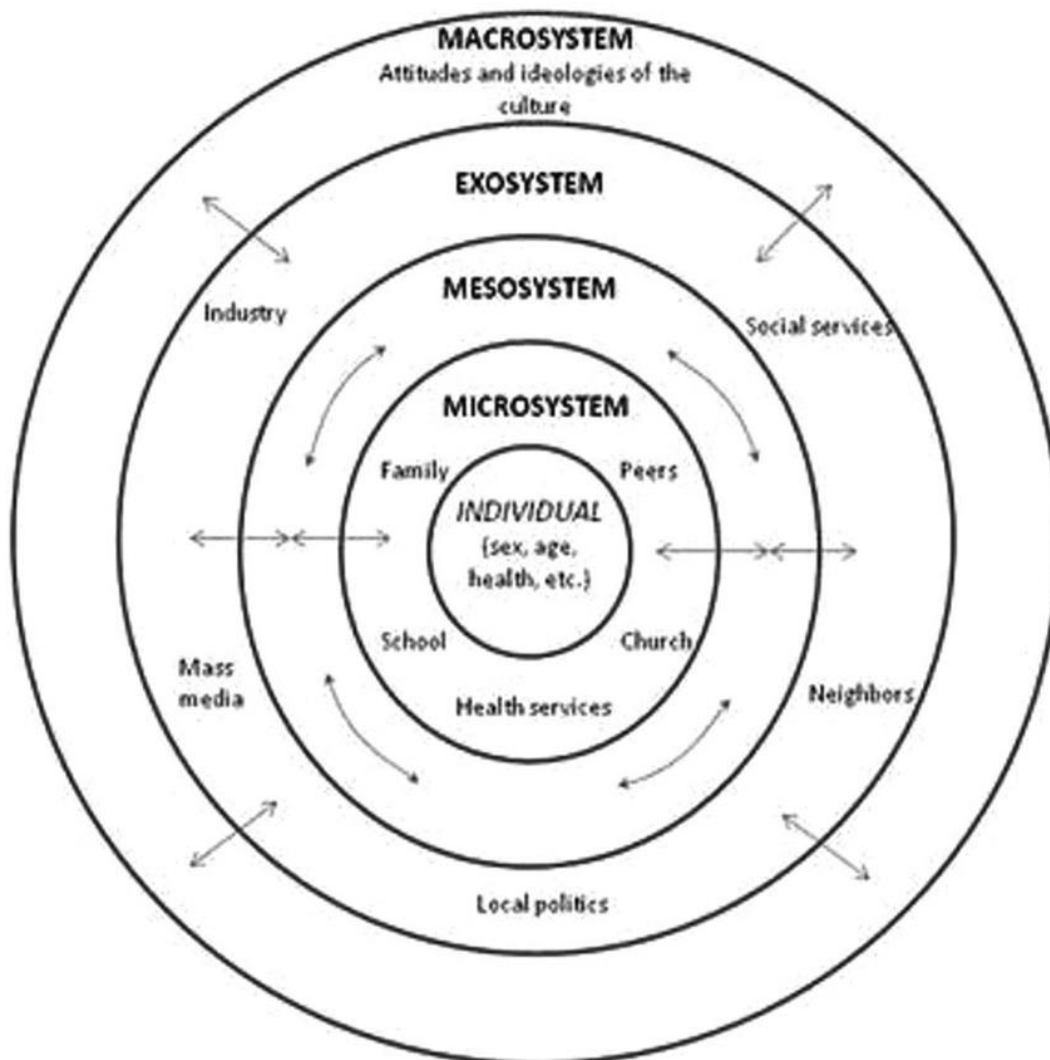


Figure 2.3: A schematic diagram of Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Model (Hyman, 2014)

2.2.10.2 Microsystem as a source for giftedness

The microsystem is an important level in the ecological system since learners actively participate at this level. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the microsystem creates a sequential interactive relationship between an individual and systems where he or she actively participates, such as family, school and peer groups. Microsystems are the basic structures where learners spend most of their daily lives. There is a direct interaction between a learner and the people in his or her environment, and each with unique attributes of personality and principles. These attributes according to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) have a direct impact on the interactions in the immediate surroundings. Microsystems in this study, comprise a network of relationships that a child forms, a relationship with an inner self, including emotional, motivational, intellectual and physical aspects that make up a child's identity; as well as the school, home and peer groups, known as the outer reality. The relationships with the outer reality play a major role on the realisation of the potential giftedness within the child's inner reality, and thus create conditions that are necessary for giftedness. In addition, a positive micro-system can develop learners' readiness to participate in complex interactions that are continuous and progressive, thus allowing the learner to flourish in giftedness. This is seen in the family settings where parents foster a development of potential for reading in the early years. The development of the potential for giftedness in the early years can be stimulated through parental monitoring and the use of relaxation time for learning new activities.

Therefore, on the microsystem level, parents should be exposed to parenting seminars to enhance their parenting skills, their behaviour and attitudes towards their gifted children. Schools should acquire appropriate tools and resources to ensure that gifted learners are offered an equal opportunity to learning as the rest of the learners in the classroom. Parents should also be directly involved in the education of their children. In-service teachers as well as pre-service teachers should receive adequate training on gifted education in order to equip them to accommodate gifted learners in their classrooms.

2.2.10.3 Mesosystem as a source for giftedness

Mesosystem, according to Bronfenbrenner (2005) is the second level or system. Mesosystems consist of connections and interrelationships that exist between two or more of the individual's microsystem. These interrelationships comprise a variety of settings in which the child is engrossed. Examples of mesosystem may be the connection between family and peers, family

and school, and family and community. This means that whatever occurs at home or with peers could have an impact on how children can respond at school (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010). For this study, the interrelationships in the mesosystem incorporate teachers as a central network of support; parents; professional people in the community; and peer groups. Teachers acknowledged that an optimal development of gifted learners can be achieved when all systems become partners and share responsibilities. For example, the linkage between family and school is shown through parent's involvement in their children's school work. In relation to this study, participants highlighted a lack of parental involvement concerning the education of their children. Teachers also pointed out that parents of gifted learners should be made aware of their children's giftedness and should be empowered to counter any misconceptions. However, other parents experience difficulties in supporting their children financially. Nevertheless, most parents showed eagerness and were prepared to give necessary support to their children.

About the interaction between the learner and the school, teachers' understanding of giftedness influences teachers' perceptions towards gifted learners. Teachers are major role players in identifying and teaching of gifted learners. However, in this study, teachers' lack of knowledge and proper training led them to ignore and marginalise gifted learners in their classrooms. This in turn affected the education of gifted learners. Another important linkage is that of the school and the Department of Education. If the DoE provides schools with appropriate learning materials and resources for the gifted learners, it can improve the teaching and learning process. This study also revealed that the DoE can allocate funding for the training of teachers in gifted education to enable teachers to teach gifted learners to develop optimally.

2.2.10.4 Exosystem as a source for giftedness

This is the third level of the ecological systems theory. Exosystem is referred to as a broader background in which an individual does not actively participate, however the occurrences in this background will directly influence the individual. In the exosystem, various systemic changes occur, and the basic rules and standards for the opportunities and practices an individual encounter are set. For example, the financial situation of a parent, social support networks, families of peers, schools and the poor health services. A practical example of the influence of the exosystem would be the inability of a learner to access health services, which would lead to a learner being absent from school for a lengthy period (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

This study acknowledges that policy documents that recognise giftedness as an exceptionality that needs attention in the mainstream classroom have been developed and implemented. Participants agreed that proper implementation of the inclusion policy could provide a feasible option for the teaching of exceptional learners. Some teachers acknowledged being emotional because of their inability to implement the inclusion of gifted learners in their classrooms. They even suggested that there should be trained teachers who specialise in dealing with gifted learners. This study also indicated that some parents could not afford to financially support their children because of their unemployment status. However, they were encouraged to motivate their children to learn and to do their best in their school work.

2.2.10.5 Macrosystem as a source for giftedness

Macrosystem is the fourth level in the ecological systems theory. It comprises of cultural patterns of society; family beliefs and their lifestyle; education; religion; mass media; philosophical and instructional backgrounds wherein these above-mentioned systems are rooted (Landsberg, 2016). Trawick-Smith (2006) mentions that macrosystem might be the furthest system from an individual, but it has an indirect influence on life and development of that individual. An example of a macrosystem is the education department where policy decisions are made. The Department of Education submits procedures to the provinces on the implementation of specific education policies, which are then submitted to the schools for practical application.

In relation to the study, a lack of supportive strategies for the implementation of the policies is experienced in the macrosystem level. This is supported in the study conducted by Oswald and DeVilliers (2013). They indicated that the teachers' training conducted by the National and Provincial Education Department has not focused its attention on the teaching of gifted learners. The focus has only been on the struggling learners. The findings of the study suggested an inclusion of gifted education in all teacher training programmes. Thus, macrosystem as an outer layer of the ecological system, has a great impact throughout the interrelations of other systems. For example, the Department of Education at the macrosystem level formulates policies. The nine provinces in the macrosystem and exosystem levels are then required to implement the policies, followed by the districts at the mesosystem level. Lastly, the schools at the microsystem level are responsible for the implementation in the

classrooms, working together with parents and peers as important resources that enhance and encourage giftedness in the Foundation Phase.

2.2.10.6 Chronosystem as a source for giftedness

Chronosystem is the fifth level that has been recently added on the ecological systems theory. It demonstrates the alterations which have happened over the years in other systems (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010). This also includes socio-historical contexts that may influence a child. The individual's experiences and how he or she responds to them changes over time. For example, a child may respond negatively to the parent's divorce after one year, but after two years of divorce, the child can become more stable. In relation to this study, chronosystem incorporates the transition in the South African education system that has occurred over a period. The apartheid period experienced segregation in the teaching of learners, due to race and learning barriers (Engelbrecht, 2006). However, during the post- apartheid period, education policies were reviewed to focus on ensuring equal and non-discriminatory education for all learners. This study indicates that despite South Africa's propagation of democratic and Inclusive Education, gifted learners are still receiving inadequate education.

2.2.11 Relevance of the ecological system theory on giftedness

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory was adapted to highlight facets which have an impact on the application of comprehensive education. This theory highlights five systems which impact the learners' development. These include microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. Bronfenbrenner's theory identifies the interconnectedness amongst these systems, thus facilitating an improved understanding of comprehensive education (Singal, 2006). It further explores the development of Inclusive Education as created and restricted by characteristics that operate in different systems. Finally, it examines the modelling of practices through interrelations between the individuals and their communal environment. The relevance of Bronfenbrenner's theory to this study is shown in the definition of giftedness. In this study, giftedness is viewed as an inborn capability for an advancement in domains which are valuable in one's culture. This capability is thus influenced by the continuous interactions within the child's environment. The systems around the child work together in ensuring the development of a potential for giftedness. For example, the school, parents and peers as the systems in which a child is directly involved, share the responsibility for enhancing the child's potential for giftedness.

2.2.12 Chapter summary

This chapter presented literature and the theoretical framework supporting the study. The following topics and subtopics were discussed: Conceptualisation of giftedness; international and national views on giftedness and the gifted learners; implications of Inclusive Education on giftedness and gifted learners; Foundation Phase teacher's perceptions of gifted learners; parental involvement in gifted education; and implications of curriculum differentiation and Inclusive Education policy. The chapter also discussed Bronfenner's ecological systems theory as it couched this study. The following chapter presents research design and methodology that is employed by the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three focuses on providing a clear explanation of the research design and methodology and research strategies employed in generating data about the perspectives of teachers of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase. This chapter also provides detailed information on the research paradigm, strategies and selection of participants and the context of study. It further explains the presentation of the matters including ethical issues followed and issues of trustworthiness in a qualitative study and how these were ensured. The study also discussed limitations of the study and the summary of the chapter.

3.2 Research paradigm

A research paradigm according to Christiansen and Bertram (2014) refers to the framework that represents a worldview about what is acceptable to research and how it can be carried out. Similarly, Nieuwenhuis (2007) describes the research paradigm as a predictable assumption or belief concerning facets of reality that give rise to a specific worldview, like beliefs regarding the nature of reality, the relationship between the knower and the known, as well as methodologies. The term ontology refers to the explanation of notions and relationships in the study, and the way in which nature of reality is explained. On the other hand, epistemology defines an interrelation amongst the researcher and the new data to be attained (Terre Blanche & Durkheim, 2006). Epistemological dimension undertakes that information is constructed and can only become relevant when the facts are understood in their framework.

In this study, epistemology indicates the participant's personal connotations of the concept of giftedness. Methodology on the other hand refers to approaches used in gathering knowledge through the analysis of personal experiences and perspectives of research participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The interviews brought a clear understanding of the experiences and emotions of the participants. The interpretive paradigm, as described by Christiansen and Bertram (2014), is an approach which aims to make sense of the way people interpret their worlds, and how they assign meaning to their particular action and the methods they use. They

further argue that the purpose of the interpretive paradigm is to cultivate an understanding of the way people make judgement of circumstances in which they live and work. As pointed out in Terre Blanche and Durkheim (2006), an interpretive paradigm enables a scholar to examine the viewpoints and personal reality of the participant. The scholar is also enabled to identify and associate with the conduct, approaches as well as feelings of participants.

The purpose of social and education research for interpretivists is to gain an understanding of the meaning which informs how people behave (Christiansen & Bertram, 2014; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Additionally, interpretivists believe that a set of historical, local and specific realities exists in the social world, thus disputing the view of a single reality. Interpretivists also believe that events and situations may be interpreted in various ways, and that the research results are created through the interpretation of data. Equally, the interpretive paradigm inspires researchers to take note of the environment wherein participants are actively involved, and assign meaning based on that context (Charmaz, 2006).

Since the study aims to explore perspectives of teachers of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase, parental involvement was important by way of facilitating better understanding and enhancement of sustainable learning of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase. Engaging with teachers developed a greater understanding of parent's involvement and enabled them with an opportunity to be aware of the education of their children. It also enabled them to understand the phenomenon of giftedness in a different perspective. Based on the epistemology of the interpretive paradigm, the emphasis is on how people assign meaning to events (Creswell, 2009; Mertens, 2010). Moreover, findings of the research were grounded in unmeasured data. Methodologically, interpretivists' study was conducted in naturally occurring circumstances, where the researcher needed to engage the situation from the viewpoint of the participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). For example, in this study the in-depth information was between Foundation Phase teachers of the two participating schools and the parents of gifted learners in a natural setting. Involving both the parents and teachers of gifted learners allowed me to spend most of the time getting to know the participants through individual one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions. Qualitative methods allow participants to share as they construct their knowledge through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

3.3 Research design

Research design according to McMillan and Schumacher (2006) gives a clear understanding of the methods for conducting a study, methods for data generation and the general plan which will elicit answers to the research questions. In concurring with MacMillan and Schumacher (2006) Christiansen and Bertram (2014) refer a research design to a planned and systematic way in which the researcher will generate and analyse data that is needed to give responses to the research problems.

3.3.1 The design of the study

This study employed a case study grounded in an interpretive paradigm. The case study according to Christiansen and Bertram (2014), is a systematic and in-depth study of a specific case in its context. A case could refer to an individual, a cluster of people, an institution or a society. The reason for using the case study is to be involved in the events of a single person or a group of people to attain intimate acquaintance with their social worlds. In addition, it is to look for patterns in the participant's lives, words and actions in the framework of the case. Creswell (2009) points out that a case study encompasses an exploration of a single or multiple case within a time frame. This is done by means of a comprehensive, in-depth generation of data encompassing numerous sources. In this study, a case study of two primary schools was conducted. Both schools had a high number of gifted learners relative to the total school population. This was hoped to assist in gaining and understanding of the reality of the Foundation Phase teachers' lived experiences of teaching the gifted learners and to assess the role of parental involvement. The study seeks to explore the perceptions of teachers of gifted learners. The participants included teachers of the gifted learners, parents of gifted learners, and two Heads of Departments of participating schools.

3.3.2 Approach to the study

The research approach for this study was qualitative. The qualitative approach was taken to best understand the experiences of the participants. This type of approach allowed participants to reflect and respond accurately to questions relating to their experiences within their settings. Qualitative research focuses on the study of participants in their natural setting, establishing patterns and themes (Creswell, 2013). In this approach, an investigation is conducted wherein the researcher slowly understands the societal phenomenon by means of comparing and

categorising the participants. For this study, information was gathered on various factors which contributed to the perspectives of teachers of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase. Babbie and Mouton (2007) argue that qualitative approach studies human action according to the participant's perceptions. Therefore, the use of one-on-one and focus group interviews in this study, provided a clear understanding on how teachers teach gifted learners in the Foundation Phase. This also provided an opportunity to assess the role played by parental involvement in the teaching and learning of gifted learners. As qualitative research occurs in natural backgrounds, and involves direct interactions, this study made use of one-on-one interviews with the participants, as well as focus groups. The interviews were conducted on the school premises for teachers, and in the home environment for the parents. The interviews provided a greater understanding of the perspectives of teachers as well as parents of the gifted learners.

3.4 Context of the study

The research study was conducted in ILembe District which is situated in KwaDukuza, North of Durban in KwaZulu -Natal Province, under the Department of Basic Education. The two schools that were used in the study are located in the Lower Tugela Circuit. Both schools are ordinary mainstream public primary schools situated in a semi-rural area. These two schools were chosen based on their proximity to each other; their similarity in demographics, and that each had a Foundation Phase. The current enrolment for school 1 was 688 registered learners, of whom 15 were identified as gifted; and 29 teachers. School 2 had an enrolment of 783 registered learners, of whom 10 were identified as gifted; and had 32 teachers. Most of the learners from these schools came from a low socio-economic background where many parents are unemployed. The learners speak isiZulu as their mother tongue or First Language.

Both schools have adopted an Inclusive Education system, where all learners are accommodated in a single classroom, regardless of their learning differences. The language of Learning and Teaching is English and isiZulu. The schools both experience poor to average parent involvement, however, educators make means of involving the parents through extra-curricular activities. The schools lack resources to cater for learners' different needs, especially gifted learners. Both schools have a feeding scheme which is funded by the Department of Education, an initiative which has helped in reducing absenteeism, late coming and school drop-out. The study was conducted in the Foundation Phase, because this is where early

identification of giftedness occurs. Both schools had a considerable number of gifted learners, hence they were selected.

3.5 Sample, sampling approach and procedures

The selection of participants for this study was supported by a purposive sampling approach. Sampling refers to a decision-making process of selecting people, settings, events or behaviours to include as participants in the study (Christiansen & Bertram, 2014). According to Marshall and Rossman (2011) purposive sampling determines and emphasises a phenomenon as a focus of study, which then offers a researcher a possibility to select a case. In addition, it permits a researcher to deliberate on the restrictions of the intended population and then select a sample of participants. The participants in this study were grade three teachers, two Foundation Phase Heads of Department, and the parents of the identified gifted learners. The participants vary in educational backgrounds and years of teaching experience. Eight Foundation Phase teachers were selected to participate in the study, four teachers from each school. These participants were chosen because they were currently teaching gifted learners in grade three. The Foundation Phase was chosen since it is considered as a crucial stage of early identification of any special needs of learners. The HODs were involved because they are responsible for the daily monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom. The involvement of parents of identified gifted learners was important to add value to the study.

3.5.1 Profiling of participants

The following presents the profile of participants in this study:

3.5.1.1 The Heads of Department in Foundation Phase

The HODs in the Foundation Phase from both schools were participants in this study. HOD 1, is a forty-two -year- old female. She has been the HOD for five years. HOD 2, is a 39 -year- old female. She has been recently promoted and has only one -year experience as the HOD. The HOD is responsible for controlling and monitoring the daily teaching and learning activities of the department. In addition to that, an HOD develops learning activities and policies; monitors the development of learning areas; monitors assessments that are conducted by teachers; convenes regular meetings; compiles quarterly reports for the department; and assists in the identification of the gifted learners. The Head of Department ensures that teachers

have the necessary direction, resources and support to carry out their responsibilities and implementation of any aspect of teaching and learning.

3.5.1.2 Foundation Phase teachers

Foundation Phase teachers were chosen to participate in this study, because this study focuses on Foundation Phase teaching and learning of gifted learners. An invitation for teachers to participate in the research study was sent to both schools and discussed with the principals as gatekeepers for consent. Teachers who were willing to participate in the semi-structured and focus group discussions were consulted, and consent letters were issued. The criteria for selecting teacher participants was based on their willingness to participate by signing consent letters; and the teacher being among those currently teaching grade three. The signed consent letters from eight participants indicated their willingness to participate and be considered for the one-on-one semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The participants involved eight teachers, of whom four were from school one (1), and the other four were from school two (2).

3.5.1.3 The parents

This study involved six parents who consented to participate in this study. These were the parents of the learners who were identified as gifted by class teachers. Three of them were parents of the learners from school one (1), and the other three were from school two (2). The parents were selected based on their willingness to participate in the study through signing of consent letters and teachers assisted in selecting those parents as they work with their children. After obtaining the necessary permission, parents were invited through official invitation letters and were interviewed on an individual basis in their respective homes.

3.6 Data generation methods and procedures

The methods that were used to generate data for this study, included individual semi-structured and focus groups interviews with the participants. The findings from data generation were compared, analysed and interpreted accordingly. These methods are discussed in detail below:

3.6.1 One-on-one semi-structured interviews

An interview involves an exchange of information between the researcher and the participant, wherein both parties actively engage in the discussion. Similarly, Bertram and Christiansen

(2014) argue that an interview is structured and focuses on the conversation between an interviewer and a participant. A semi-structured interview is one of the types of interviews mainly used in qualitative research, on which this study focuses. According to Jamsed (2014), semi-structured interviews are in-depth interviews based on the predetermined open-ended questions and allow for the use of associated questions to probe responses from the participant. In a similar manner, Alshenqeeti (2014) points out that, the semi-structured interview is more flexible than the structured interview, because it is more in-depth and enables an interviewer to probe and expand responses from an interviewee. The main advantages of using a semi-structured interview method is that it allows an exchange of information between an interviewer and a participant (Galletta, 2012). In addition, it allows for flexibility by providing an opportunity to improvise follow-up questions based on the responses of the participant.

For this study, one-on-one semi-structured interviews consisted of a pre-planned set of questions which allowed me to prompt or probe additional responses from the participants. The one-on-one semi-structured interviews with teachers were conducted in their respective classrooms after the contact sessions with their learners. The interviews lasted for one hour for each participant. On the other hand, one-on-one interviews with the parents were held at their respective homes. Semi-structured interview questions were adapted according to individual responses. Choosing a semi-structured interview assisted me to explore their perceptions of gifted learners, and their knowledge of giftedness as a phenomenon.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions

In addition to semi-structured interviews, this study also employed focus group discussions. A focus group discussion is a method used to gain a detailed understanding of people's perceptions or feelings about an issue, product or service (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche', & Delport, 2011). In a similar manner, Onyumba, Wilson, Derrick, and Mukherjee (2018) point out that focus group discussions are mainly used to gain a deeper understanding of how people view societal issues in their environment. They further highlight that focus group discussions are aimed at gaining information from individuals who were purposely selected instead of a sample of the wider population. It is also pointed out that during a focus group discussion, an interviewer becomes a facilitator and maintains a flow of discussions among the participants.

Babbie and Mouton (2007) argue that focus group discussions can be used in two ways. The first involves the grouping of participants in a circular set up, where each participant is given an opportunity to say something. The second way involves using the group to find information that would be difficult to access in an individual interview. Furthermore, they mention that using focus groups can be advantageous because they provide an opportunity to observe a large amount of interaction in a short space of time.

For this study, focus group discussions were held in a selected classroom in each school. The use of focus group discussions provided teachers with an opportunity to discuss teamwork efforts and experiences together. In addition, focus group discussions gave insight into the dynamics of the support system that teachers experienced every day. My role as a researcher was to facilitate and monitor the discussion and maintain an ethical environment.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is used to determine themes based on the participant's responses and views about the specific research topic (Al Makhali, 2012). In a similar manner, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) argue that data analysis involves systematic exploration and interpretation of data with the aim of producing meaning and obtaining a deeper understanding and developing new knowledge. For this study, a thematic analysis approach was employed to analyse and interpret themes contained in the data. This decision was based on the notion stated in Braun and Clarke (2006) that thematic analysis should be considered as the first approach of analysing data as it provides the researcher with the basic skills for using other approaches of qualitative analysis. This study used an outline guide provided by Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2012) to analyse data obtained from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The steps are summarised below:

Familiarisation with data: This phase involves repeated reading of data, for example interview transcripts or listening to voice recordings; finding meanings or patterns through analytical and critical reading; and making notes to highlight important items (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Similarly, Al Makhali (2012) argues that familiarising yourself with data means engaging yourself in the data through rereading, reviewing and transcription of data. This phase aims at assisting the

researcher to discover themes that might provide answers to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2012). For this study, during this phase I listened to the voice recordings of the semi-structured interviews, while taking down notes. This was followed by a transcription of data into written form, and re-reading of the interview transcripts in order to determine themes relevant to the research questions.

Coding: During this phase, the researcher uses the important features which were identified from the data to produce the initial codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes identify a segment or portion of data that is related to the research question, and then provide a key phrase or label for that segment (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012). The process of coding involves organising and sorting data into classifications and then searching for similarities between these classifications (Conway, 2017). For this study, the coding process took place after familiarising myself with the data. I started by re-reading the data from interview transcripts, identified segments of data that could be relevant to the research question and wrote down the codes for each segment. This process was repeated throughout the whole data content.

Searching for themes: During this phase, identified codes are arranged into possible themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012). A theme refers to meaningful and comprehensible patterns in the data that is relevant to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). When searching for themes, this means identifying relationships between the codes that share the same meaningful pattern in the data and combining them into themes and sub-themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In this study, I identified shared similar meaning, and then I formulated themes and sub-themes using all the codes that were related to the research questions. After a process of analysing and combining codes into themes and sub-themes, I generated five main themes, and other themes had sub-themes within them.

Reviewing potential themes: This phase involves re-reading of developed potential themes to determine their relevance with regard to coded data and the whole set of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012). This is also done to check whether themes provide meaning to the coded data, and to the whole set of data. Additionally, this phase provides an opportunity to revise the potential themes by way of developing

new themes, breaking down other themes into single themes, or even removing the existing themes. In this study, when reviewing possible themes from the coded data, I discovered that some themes did not have adequate data to support them. Therefore, those themes were discarded, and new themes were formulated.

Defining and naming themes: During this phase, a detailed analysis of each theme is conducted by clearly stating important aspects of each theme, and how it relates to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012). It is during this phase where one can determine whether or not a theme has sub-themes. For example, in cases where two overarching themes exist within data. In this study, during the analysis of themes, I identified that two of the six themes had sub-themes within them.

Producing the report: This phase involves summarising the analysis through a written report. As Braun & Clarke (2006; 2012) stated, this phase involves the selection of interview transcripts, finalising analysis of the selected transcripts, and relating the transcripts to the research questions and the literature. In addition, the report should present a meaningful and substantial story about data supported by the relevant literature. In this study, I selected examples of transcripts from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. From the selected transcripts, further analysis was conducted ensuring relevance to the research questions and literature.

3.8 Ethical considerations

In my role as a researcher, I ensured that all ethical guidelines are adhered to, as stipulated in the British Educational Research Associations (BERA, 2011). These guidelines state that any educational research should be conducted with reference to an ethic of respect for the participants, their views, political and social background, values and knowledge. Ethics are regarded an important element of a research study that need to be considered when generating data and making generalisations (Al Makhallid, 2012). The term ethics refers to the behaviour that is considered right or wrong (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Prior to the generation of data, an application form for ethical clearance was made to the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. After a review of the application, clearance was granted. Another

application was sent to the Department of Basic Education requesting permission to generate data at the two primary schools in ILembe District. Relevant documents were provided, for instance, the signed consent letters for the participants, the semi-structured one-one interview schedule, and the focus group discussion schedule. Once the approval was granted, I then visited both schools and handed in the consent letters to the principals requesting permission to generate data in their schools. The principals arranged the first meeting with the grade three teachers, the Head of Department for the Foundation Phase, and the parents of identified gifted learners. During the first meeting, I informed teachers and parents about the aims of the research study, and how the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions would be conducted. All participants were given consent letters to be signed as an indication of willingness to take part in the generation of data. The content of each consent letter clearly stated the purpose of the study, my personal details as a researcher, and ethical consideration that would be followed during the process of generating data. Consent letters were used as an agreement between me and the participants, therefore participants were required to sign a declaration of secrecy. Once the consent letters were signed, I assured the participants that feedback would be provided after the completion of the data generation process.

Before commencement of the process of data generation, participants were addressed about certain ethical standards, including anonymity, confidentiality, privacy, and informed consent as mentioned in Johnson and Christiansen (2008). To ensure confidentiality, I informed participants that the information they provided would not be used for anything other than this study. I also ensured them that the generated data would be kept in a safe place for a certain period. In ensuring anonymity, I assured the participants that, under no circumstances would their names be disclosed, rather pseudonyms would be used. The schools were referred to as school 1 and school 2. A non-disclosure clause was included to ensure that identity of participants would be protected. Privacy was maintained by ensuring the participants that the data acquired would not be accessible to anybody other than me.

The issue of informed consent was adhered to by issuing of consent letters to all participants, which were approved by my supervisor. As Merriam (2009) pointed out, participants should be informed of the aims of the research study, and voluntary participation should be clearly

stated. Consent letters included the topic of the research study, the personal details of the researcher, and stated clearly that participants had the right to withdraw their participation at any stage of the research. As a researcher, I ensured that all the ethical considerations were taken into consideration throughout the process of data generation.

3.9 Issues of trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research aims at strengthening the argument that the findings are worth paying attention to (Lincoln & Denzin 2005). In qualitative research, trustworthiness incorporates the notion of validity and reliability (Poggenpoel, 1998). The concept validity is referred to the degree to which the interview schedule captures what the researcher intended to (Bryman, 2012). Validity is regarded as a significant key that ensures effective research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). For this reason, validity must be considered first before reliability. To ensure validity and avoid subjectivity, I remained non-judgemental throughout the data generation process and reported the data in a truthful manner. In ensuring trustworthiness of data in this study, I employed two methods of generating data, including semi-structured one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions. Incorporating two or more approaches in data generation is useful in overcoming limitations and weaknesses, which is related to triangulation (Hunter & Brewer, 2003). According to Creswell (2013) triangulation increases the validity of the findings as evidence is used from multiple sources to highlight a theme. In this study, trustworthiness was detailed in the following four sections: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility is the extent to which data provides a true reflection of the participant's life experiences (Creswell, 2013). In addition, credibility is determined by how well a researcher portrays what is happening in the field. On the other hand, Bogden and Biklen (2006) defined credibility as a link between what the researcher recorded and the reality of what happened in the natural setting. Therefore, in order to enhance credibility of data, the researcher might employ various means of generating data. For example, in this study I used semi-structured one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions to generate data. Different groups of participants were included in the study. Therefore, in order to ensure credibility, I chose to

record both the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The data generated from individual semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions was combined and proven against the literature review. In addition, member checks also helped to ensure the validity as participants were able to view transcripts to ensure that the experiences and analysis represented their true experiences and feelings. The participants had the opportunity to delete any part of the transcription that they felt was not accurate. No participants chose to do so.

3.9.2 Transferability is determined by how well findings can be used in other settings or circumstances. According to Creswell (2013), dense descriptions of data are necessary in assuring that findings are transferable. Through a thorough description of the setting and context of this study, transferability was assured.

3.9.3 Confirmability occurs with credibility, dependability and transferability to ensure objectivity in the analysis of data (Creswell, 2013). According to Patton (2015), confirmability refers to the extent to which researchers can understand how their own predispositions can influence the research process. In this study, to ensure confirmability, I continuously checked on the data throughout the research process. The perspectives and meanings of experiences of participants were understood based on research and theory related to the study. Conclusions were derived from the data generated from the study.

3.9.4 Dependability refers to the consistency of the research findings (Conway, 2017). In other words, it ensures that the research findings can be repeated over time. Similarly, Creswell (2013) asserts that dependability relies on the data being subjected to change and unpredictability. In addition, it also involves explanation of the possible changes that might occur during the study, and how these may have affected the study.

3.10 Chapter summary

Chapter three outlined the research design, qualitative approach and an interpretivist paradigm which couched this study. The research methodology was discussed in detail. It further elucidated the sample and sampling methods used, the context of the study, data generation methods, ethical issues, and issues of trustworthiness followed by methods and procedures used

for the analysis of generated data were explained. The following chapter (chapter four) discusses and presents data that was generated utilising different methods from participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is the perspectives of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners in two primary schools. As documented in chapter three, generation of data occurred using semi-structured one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions. The participants included eight teachers from the participating schools; two Heads of Departments; and three parents of the identified gifted learners. The study focused mainly on the Foundation Phase. The discussions with the focus groups were conducted with a group of teachers as a follow up method to elicit more responses from the participants which will address the research problem. In order to close the gaps from the interviews, additional questions were prepared.

The chapter highlights the presentation of data and deliberations of findings from the field. These are arranged according to themes and sub-themes developed from the data that was generated from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The presentation employs verbatim quotes throughout in order to strengthen and validate the research findings. Analysis of data began with repeated reviews of both the interviews and focus groups discussions transcripts. Data was organised and sorted, keywords and phrases were verified, and the data was reduced and then grouped into classifications as described in chapter three. The classifications showed collective as well as diverse responses from the interviews and focus group discussions. The findings were scrutinised, examined and evaluated within the scope of the literature review and theoretical framework discussed in chapter two. Below are the critical questions of the study that serve as a reminder:

1. What are the perspectives of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners?
2. What are the challenges (if any) of teaching gifted learners in the Foundation Phase?
3. How do teachers teach gifted learners in the Foundation Phase?
4. Why do teachers involve parents in the education of gifted learners in the Foundation Phase and why they do it the way they do?

4.2 Data presentation and discussion

During the process of transcribing, coding and categorising interviews and focus group discussions, various themes emerged. The generated data was then organised into these themes and associated with the literature in chapter two. The following themes emerged: parent's and teacher's understanding of giftedness; challenges of teaching gifted learners; teacher's attitudes towards gifted learners; teacher's perceptions on the implications for Inclusive Education and gifted learners; and the need for curriculum differentiation.

4.2.1 Parents' and teachers' understanding of giftedness

The generated data from the individual interviews as well as focus group discussions show that most teachers involved in the study held a diverse understanding of 'giftedness' as a concept as compared to that of a 'gifted learner' as such. Regarding the definition of giftedness, one of the teachers put forward the following opinion:

Giftedness to me refers to a child who learns to read on his or her own, who is good with numbers.

(Mrs Pula teacher of Banana Primary school)

The participants also defined giftedness as a gift that a person is born with or as a natural ability, or talent. When further defining who can be regarded as a gifted learner, the teacher participants felt that it could be a learner who achieves more than what is expected of his or her age and grade level. Mr Apple stated the following:

Gifted learners perform better than their peers. Giftedness is what a person was born with, almost like a talent. It is a gift that does not change.

(Mr Apple teacher of Peaches Primary school).

Similarly, Ms Lion shared the same view, but she went further to include speed and accuracy of learning. She stated that:

Giftedness refers to learners with an ability to learn a skill quickly, effortlessly and intensely than peer groups.

(Ms Lion teacher of Banana Primary school).

The participants from both schools shared the common view about the definition of the gifted learner. They mentioned that a gifted learner refers to a learner who performs better than other learners in the classroom. Mrs Pula said:

Gifted learners refer to those learners who achieve more than we expect as teachers. They respond quickly, and complete their work on time.

(Mrs Pula teacher of Banana Primary).

Correspondingly, the HOD of Peaches Primary School echoed Mrs Pula's opinion and said:

A gifted learner is the one that performs better than other learners in class. Even when you give out activities, she or he quickly completes it. This learner performs more than expected and is able to identify things that other learners fail to identify. She quickly finishes her activities.

(HOD of Peaches Primary)

Both Ms Gele and Ms Pineapple shared the same opinion with the HOD. They both mentioned that a gifted learner is a quick thinker and is fast in grasping the new information presented to them. Ms Pineapple explained in this way:

When I give them class work, they finish it quickly, before I even finish giving the instructions. The tasks that I give them, like tests, they perform very well, above 80%. They are fast thinkers. Most of the times they give correct answers, surprisingly so.

(Ms Pineapple of Peaches Primary)

Data generated during one-on-one interviews with parents of gifted learners showed that they too share similar views of a gifted child. When parents were asked about what gifted means to them, some parents initially hesitated with their responses however they began to explain the meaning of giftedness as it would relate to their children. Parents typically compared their children with children of the same age and grade. The participants responded by using the words ‘talent’ and ‘above average’. The parents regarded their children to be above an average level of intelligence, ability, and talent compared with their peers. They explained that a gifted child means that she or he has a talent for something. One participant also alluded to the fact that a gifted child performs above what is expected in a particular age group. They both agreed that gifted children do not require guidance to perform tasks, because they know how to do things on their own. Miss Zee said:

Being gifted, means that you have a talent on something. It is a gift because it is not for everyone but for a specific person for a purpose. A gifted person does not have to undergo certain training

(Ms Zee parent of learner in Banana Primary)

Equally, Mrs San also shared similar views when she said:

A gifted child means that the child performs above his or her average. As you know that the child at certain stage is expected to perform in a particular way, but my child performs way above what is expected in that stage. The child does not need guidance, can do things on his or her own, can easily understand concepts, when instructions are given, and he or she is always one step ahead of you.

(Mrs San parent of learner in Peaches Primary)

To supplement and to fill in gaps left in the interviews, focus groups discussions were held with the participants. The focus group discussions were held with Foundation Phase Teachers. This section presents verbal responses of participants during the focus group discussions. During the discussions teachers emphasised the importance of understanding the concept ‘giftedness’ as key into the identification of ‘gifted learner’. Mrs Pula, a teacher in one school said :

I have taught in the Foundation Phase for 25 years, each year I had one or more gifted learners in my classroom. But in my experiences I have found out that it is significant to have knowledge of the characteristics of gifted learners, because it can help teachers to effectively teach gifted learners.

(Mrs Pula teacher of Banana Primary).

From the individual semi-structured interviews held with participants, it appeared that understanding of the concept of giftedness is of great importance as this was something that is designed for an individual and could not be altered or taken away. However, the findings further highlighted that most of the participants had a diverse understanding of the concept ‘giftedness’. A few participants were able to describe giftedness as referring to a ‘talent’ or a ‘gift’ that an individual is born with. Some further indicated that giftedness as a concept as referring to the “ability” of young children who show a fast pace in learning compared to that of their peers. In consequence, these two constructs that were highlighted or drawn from the participants’ descriptions of giftedness confirm what The European Agency for Development in Special Education (2009), pointed out in that giftedness as a concept should be viewed as a multi-faceted concept rather than a unitary concept considered in terms of inborn abilities. Participants were even in the position to substantiate with examples of what “giftedness” meant to them and the emphasis on understanding what the meaning of the concept is to the people who are teaching learners especially and in their early and primary school years.

Subsequently, giftedness can be revealed in diverse forms which need a range of frameworks and learning prospects proficient of acquiring the entirety of learner’s abilities. This is simply

confirmed in Ngara's (2017) conceptualisation of giftedness in the Zimbabwean contexts. He illustrates how and why giftedness is regarded as a special talent blessed in an individual through lineage and God, compared to the other tribe which viewed giftedness around what happens in the school learning context, and as a talent that is apparent across domains, race, ethnicity, culture, societal, class, and gender. This was somehow echoed by the parents of the gifted learners of this study. They stated that being gifted means that a child performs better as equated to the peer group. In this way, this assertion suggested that gifted learners can be children of any ethnic race hence they had their children identified as gifted in class. Both parents and teachers were in consensus that giftedness as a gift or talent is meant for that individual and cannot be taken away.

However, the teachers confirmed what the literature states in that, according to school-based conception of giftedness, the term giftedness is regarded as the ability of children who have displayed fast learning when equated with children of the same age. The underlying proposition in Bronfenbrenner's theory is that human development occurs whenever an interaction between an individual and his or her environment exists (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory views giftedness as an inborn capability for an outstanding accomplishment in a specific area that has significance for a specific culture in the growth of any individual (Kokot, 2011). He further states that for the development of this capability to take place and be enhanced, it relies on a system of equal impacts in the child's environment.

4.2.2 The need for Curriculum differentiation

The second theme that arose from individual interviews and focus group discussions with teachers was curriculum differentiation. Teacher participants emphasised the need for curriculum differentiation in the education for gifted learners. Ms Lion acknowledged that access in learning materials for the curriculum for the grades is important. She further highlighted the fact that since gifted learners learn everything more quickly than the other learners, their activities must be stimulating for them before they become bored. She explained this in this way:

I think learning materials that is presented by teachers from the curriculum is not stimulating enough for the gifted learners. When these learners become uncontrollable or bored in class they become so disruptive then the blame will be shifted to teachers. We should differentiate.

(Ms Lion teacher of Banana Primary school).

In support of Ms Lion's view Ms Pineapple alleged that the syllabus was not appropriately developed for gifted learners. She said:

I believe that development and support must be similar. Stimulation for the gifted learner is imperative, yet we only support those learners who are struggling and not develop the learning of the gifted learner to enrich their understanding and to give them activities that challenge them.

(Ms Pineapple teacher of Peaches Primary school).

On the other hand, the Head of Department (HOD) of Peaches Primary school supported the above two views of teachers and further explained what the education policy states of the gifted learners' suitable education that they need to receive in any school. She asserted that:

I feel that in the interest of the gifted learners, the education system and structure when it comes to support of gifted learners and what is expected of the teacher should change such that it accommodates all learners and the gifted learner included and not the opposite.

(HOD of Peaches Primary school).

In the same way, the Head of Department of Banana Primary school shared her view as follows:

As much as the structure of the education system for learners should also take priority like that of learners who are struggling in class, I believe that teachers are expected to apply differentiation in class in their practices. I am aware they do try, however it is challenging. Teachers attempt to do more work with the gifted learners but our conditions are challenging because this does not have to end at school or be done by one teacher only. This should extend to home in order to enrich and to keep these learners captivated.

(HOD of Banana Primary school).

The Head of Department of Peaches Primary further clarified that teachers in her school were attempting to modify the syllabus to accommodate gifted learners. During the focus group discussions with teachers, participants acknowledged that they were employing curriculum differentiation in their classrooms. However, they faced some challenges that prevented them from practicing differentiation appropriately. These challenges included over-crowded classrooms, learner's diversity, lack of proper learning material, and an overload of teachers' administrative responsibilities. Nevertheless, one of the participants expressed her opinion on the importance of differentiating the curriculum. Ms Gele summarised her reasoning about the role of differentiating the curriculum and said:

Because, I feel like it is important that their needs get met too, because a lot of times their needs are not being met in the regular classrooms. I feel like teachers are over-worked, classrooms are over-crowded. One is really trying to reach out to the most learners.

(Mrs Gele teacher of Banana Primary school).

She further explained that having gifted learners in the classroom together with lower achieving learners for her makes it easier to differentiate and to satisfy the individual needs of each of

those learners. However, the complaint from the HOD of Peaches Primary school, was that the gifted learners were the ones who always feel neglected or isolated. The gifted learners are always the first ones to be left on their own in class should there be challenges. She said the following:

I feel the pressure that teachers get also persuade teachers to finish the curriculum and for learners class average to be best. As a teacher you want all learners in the grade to be competence to ascertain that your average for the year is on expected standard. In this process and while trying to push the slow learners, the gifted learners are not given enough support.

(HOD of Peaches Primary school).

Some participants pointed out that much attention is given to other learner populations, particularly learners with special needs. Mrs Pula shared her views in this way:

I feel like so many times we focus on the struggling learners, but I feel like sometimes gifted learners also need just as much support as the struggling learners. Because, sometimes they are just sitting there, and they already know the content, and you really have to give them something else that will keep them busy, so they are not just sitting there bored.

(Mrs Pula teacher of Banana Primary school).

Mr Apple shared a similar view:

In most cases more time is spent on the struggling learners, and we don't have time to focus on gifted learners.

(Mr Apple teacher of Peaches Primary).

The Head of Department confirmed that and said:

There is no capacity to work with the gifted learners, the majority of learners in the classroom are struggling, and the teacher's energy is channelled towards them leaving them behind because in the teachers' mind they can catch up easily or cope on their own.

(HOD of Banana Primary school).

Mrs Pula's opinion was:

The majority of learners in the class are struggling and my time and energy is spent on them. There is no time to work with the gifted learner.

(Mrs Pula of Banana Primary school).

Miss Pineapple remarked:

I think they need to make people aware that these learners deserve as much time and thought as learners that are struggling in school or learners that have special needs.

(Ms Pineapple teacher of Peaches Primary school).

The Head of Department highlighted that this attention was obligatory by the education department:

The education officials frequently visit our schools to find out about strategies that teachers employ to support the learners experiencing barriers to learning, but not for the gifted learner.

(HOD of Peaches Primary school).

The teacher participants acknowledged their feeling of guilt in terms of failing to meet the required standards in terms of providing equal education for all learners in the classroom, with special attention to gifted learners.

From the above individual semi-structured interviews held with the teachers, it appears that participants acknowledged curriculum differentiation as the only strategy mentioned that would reach out to all learners with various needs in a regular classroom. As mentioned in Oswald and DeVilliers (2013) all learners differ in terms of their learning needs; learning styles and methods in which they engage with the teaching and learning process and teacher participants recognised the difference in performance and accommodation of all learners as a challenge for them. Therefore, as much as they were aware of these different needs, they needed to find ways to understand these different levels and forms of support for learners. Teacher participants also felt they required support first before they are able to support learners at different levels as they are affected in various ways by various outward factors that have an impact on their participation in the classroom. According to Tomlinson and Jarvis (2009), differentiation is described as an approach to teaching which offers a background for answering to learner's differences according to their level of readiness, their learning profiles and their interests to enhance their learning abilities. This is elaborated in Dixon, Yssel, McConnel and Hardin's (2014) study where they explain that curriculum differentiation responds to learner needs through content presentation, the way content is learned, and the way learners respond to the content. They further state that teachers who are not skilful of teaching diverse groups in the same classroom struggle with curriculum differentiation. This view therefore places emphasis on teacher development in understanding differentiation.

The participants of this study pointed out the implications of the education policy stipulating that gifted learners must be able to obtain suitable education in any school. This is confirmed in the White Paper 6 which highlights that all learners should receive an equal education, regardless of their differences (DoE, 2001). Furthermore, in the current policy document giftedness is now perceived as an exceptional dimension that needs to be considered in the regular classroom (DoE, 2010). The results of this study reveal that more emphasis is placed on those learners with learning difficulties, and in the process, the educational needs of the gifted learners were ignored. This is supported in Moltzen (2006) who believed that most collected facts in the field of special education still overlook the special needs of the gifted learners, although giftedness is one form of remarkability.

The findings further revealed that teacher participants often experience overpowering difficulties which prevent meaningful involvement with every learner in their classrooms. For example, one of the participants mentioned that her classroom is overcrowded and has up to 60 learners in one class. This is confirmed by Dixon, Yssel, McConnel and Hardin (2014) that mixed ability classrooms are difficult to teach as they consist of a variety of learning abilities, for example gifted learners, struggling learners and grade level learners. Hall, Strangman and Meyer (2009) also articulate that addressing diverse levels of learners' readiness, development skills, and product determination can be difficult for teachers. Participants also highlighted the negative sentiments as a result of their failure to effectively accommodate all the learners. Literature confirms that teaching learners with mixed-abilities is challenging for today's teachers (Dixon, Yssel, McConnel & Hardin, 2014). Even though teachers were aware and confirmed that differentiation is a challenging process, however, its implementation was vital to support both teachers and learners, but it requires a strong and skilful teacher to plan diverse levels of a similar concept at the same time and to implement that with success. They also felt that it is the schools' responsibility to offer a syllabus that speaks to the needs of every learner which is supported in The National Association for Gifted Children's (2012). It pronounces that it is the schools' responsibility to provide optimal educational experiences for the gifted learners, for the benefit of the individual and the community. This therefore highlights that the success of the gifted learners in turn is not only the success of the school but becomes the success of the whole community when the gifted learners are given support. Therefore, all the challenges that most participants perceived as lack of support from the National Department of Education including those of providing smaller classes, can be recognised and corrected in order to enable both teachers and schools to reach out to all their learners in more meaningful ways.

4.3 Challenges of teaching gifted learners

The third theme that arose from the individual interviews and focus group discussions was the challenges of teaching gifted learners as perceived or experienced by teachers. When participants were asked about any challenges, they may have experienced in teaching gifted learners, they all agreed that experience of teaching gifted learners had many challenges. Some of the participants mentioned negative behaviours, such as lack of concentration, and learners' disruptive behaviours. Four sub-themes emerged from this theme, the level of the quality of

the activities of gifted learners, inappropriateness of curriculum and resources, overcrowded classrooms, lack of professional development and having a curriculum that is not challenging for gifted learners.

4.3.1 The level of the quality of the activities of gifted learners

One of the challenges that was highlighted by most teachers and Heads of Departments in the Foundation Phase was the inability of them developing relevant activities that are age appropriate to the gifted learners. Teachers felt that they have had difficulty in assisting gifted learners appropriately and creating activities that should match the level of the cognition of gifted learners. This was captured by Ms Lion who commented thus:

It is easy to identify them....they shine from the beginning. However, my struggle now is just keeping them enriched in tasks that would keep them on the task for the rest of the period like other children. Coming up and developing such activities is indeed a struggle for me.

(Ms Lion teacher of Banana Primary school).

While Ms Lion perceived the challenges of teaching gifted learners as a struggle, Mr Apple also expressed his frustration and said:

I have tried hard to find activities that are appropriate for grade two learners, which will get them thinking including critical thinking, but sometimes the gifted would just do the task which you would have thought it is difficult in one second. It is just not easy to come up with activities and maybe it is because one is incompetent to deal with gifted learners.

(Mr Apple of Peaches Primary school).

One of the participants complained and blamed the school for not providing challenging materials, resources and activities for their gifted learners. She said:

Well, I have 10 gifted learners in my classroom. I have no relevant materials to use with them. For example, our grade three reading books are very easy for the gifted learners. So, trying to find materials that are appropriate for them is difficult. I have talked to the Head of Department about this, and there was nothing she could do.

(Mr Pula teacher of Banana Primary school).

Teacher participants also alluded to the fact that one of the characteristics of gifted learners is that they tend to finish their activities more quickly than the rest of the learners in class even if it is practical exercises. Mr Apple commented:

When I introduce a new lesson to the learners, I start by reflecting back to the previous work. But I find that the gifted learners have already grasped the content of the work. In addition, when I give them new activities they quickly finish that and I end up ignoring them, because I would still need time to focus on other learners as well.

(Mr Apple teacher of Peaches Primary school).

Similarly, Ms Lion shared a similar opinion during the focus group discussion when she said:

The gifted learners are quick to grasp the content of the lesson you are teaching. Their work is always ahead of others, because they finish their work quickly. It is a challenge because I have to give them more work in order to occupy them whether it is relevant to their grade or capacity it really doesn't matter as long as they are doing something.

(Ms Lion teacher of Banana Primary school).

Mrs Pula added this:

As my colleagues have previously mentioned, gifted learners are very fast in thinking and I have realised that if you don't give them more work, they become easily bored and then begin to disturb other learners or be disruptive in different ways.

(Mrs Pula teacher of Banana Primary school).

The teacher participants also mentioned their encountered challenges in preparing the lessons for the gifted learners. Participants felt that they needed to prepare for questions that might be posed by gifted learners during the teaching and learning process which becomes hard as it is difficult to guess the kinds of questions that they might ask. Ms Gele mentioned that:

For me what I have experienced is that it is a challenge to have gifted learners in your classroom. You have to prepare your lesson in such a way that you consider them at the back of your mind. This is more so because, if you prepare your work in the same level for all learners, you might have a learner asking you a question that you are unprepared to answer. Therefore as a teacher they keep you on your toes as well.

(Ms Gele teacher of Banana Primary school).

Mr Apple shared advice:

You have to be ready to accept questions and lots of why's that they bring. Sometimes the lesson topic would be so interesting to them and they might know everything about that topic while you don't. You have to be very open to their questioning and be accommodating to their inquisitiveness.

(Mr Apple teacher of Peaches Primary school).

Teachers have also experienced a challenge in the behaviour of gifted learners in class. They mentioned that valuable teaching time is often wasted on handling the disruptive learners. Participants asserted that gifted learners could become problematic in class, particularly if they do not receive appropriate stimulation. Mr Apple shared the following:

I give challenging tasks to gifted learners, so that I keep them occupied. They need to be taught exciting topics every time. Failing to occupy them, they become difficult especially in the Foundation Phase they have more energy and are very active and creative at this stage of development.

(Mr Apple teacher of Peaches Primary school).

Teachers admitted their crucial role in the teaching of gifted learners but acknowledged their inability to create appropriate activities that match the level of the gifted learners. Apart from the challenge of inability to develop appropriate activities for gifted learners, teachers mentioned other challenges like the number of learners in classes as a barrier to do justice to all learners equally.

4.3.2 Overcrowded classrooms

One of the challenges highlighted by the teachers that they experienced with gifted learners was the challenge of overcrowded classrooms. Teachers mentioned that most of their classrooms are overcrowded, making it difficult for them to accommodate all learners' needs in such an environment. Mr Apple, Ms Pineapple, Ms Lion and Ms Gele were all concerned about the impact of overcrowded classrooms for them to teach all learners effectively. They all explained that the number of learners in their classrooms is a challenge, because they are not

able to accommodate all learners at the same time. This was evident in Mr Apple's response as he said:

Having a large size class prevents me from reaching out to all the learners. I end up ignoring the gifted learners and focus on those who experience challenges in during teaching and learning sessions.

(Mr Apple teacher of Peaches Primary school).

Similarly, Ms Lion and Ms Gele shared a similar opinion. Ms Lion added this:

In my grade two class I have 58 learners, 15 of those learners have been identified as gifted. It is very challenging for me to accommodate these learners because of the class size. When they finish their work, I do not even get time to give them more work or feedback for that matter. This is so unfair to other learners.

(Ms Lion teacher of Banana Primary school).

Miss Gele also added:

Also the number of learners in a class is a barrier to effective teaching and learning. Sometimes as a teacher you feel so guilty but ask yourself what can I do...as this is beyond my doing and then you just work with what works for you on that day in your class You end up focusing on those who are experiencing challenges and who are brave enough to make you aware. It is difficult....

(Ms Gele teacher of Banana Primary school).

The Head of Department of Peaches Primary shared her frustration concerning the challenge of having a many learners in the class:

As the Head of Department, I have a class of 55 learners, and I also have to monitor the work of all teachers in the Foundation Phase. I don't have enough time to attend to the needs of all learners, especially the gifted learners let alone teachers. Sometimes this challenge makes us as teachers to ignore gifted learners and tell ourselves that at least they are not losing out as they are gifted compared to those with learning barrier which is indeed not doing justice to the gifted learners.

(HOD of Peaches Primary school).

Teachers highlighted that accommodation of learners with diverse learning abilities in one classroom is practically impossible with overcrowded classrooms for example a class of up to 55 learners in one classroom is not a conducive space to enhance giftedness in learners. The appropriate curriculum was also identified as one of the challenges that teachers face.

4.3.3 Inappropriateness of curriculum and learning resources

One of the challenges that teachers brought up was the inappropriate curriculum and learning materials. When learners are taught, teachers are responsible for following the grade curriculum, teaching all learners at the same level, and to give them similar activities. Participants believed that the curriculum does not provide for the intellectual level of the gifted learners. Participants felt that a grade –level curriculum challenged their teaching of gifted learners in two ways, either in holding learners back or in a lack of focus on standards causing gaps in learning. Ms Gele explained this:

I mean, I feel like a lot of the curriculums squash the gifted learners' ability to grow and to expand. Not only for learners also for us as teachers we are held back because we don't have the time to expound on something could that be bigger.

(Ms Gele teacher of Banana Primary school).

Responses from the teachers on the level of the curriculum highlighted some conflict in the views of the teachers. Two teachers argued on the justification whether it is right to teach gifted learners the curriculum of the next grade level or not. Ms Orange's response indicated that she felt comfortable letting her grade two learners try the grade three curriculum in Literacy. However, Mr Apple felt that it is better not to teach his grade two learners what they would need in grade three as this would be the problem of the other teacher of that grade. Other teachers felt that gifted learners quickly master the curriculum of the current grade, causing teachers to struggle with finding the appropriate activities for them. Ms Lion explained that gifted learners do not always already know the curriculum; they still need to be taught important skills for that grade. She shared her opinion and said:

I have noticed with other teachers who have gifted learners like me that they give them activities to work on which are not on our curriculum, completely off. So, I like to stay within the curriculum, and just take it up to a different higher level so that it becomes challenging for the gifted....

(Ms Lion teacher of Banana Primary school).

Teachers agreed that it is better to use pretesting or class discussions with learners to determine if there are any gaps, before attempting a new topic. They all stressed the importance of understanding the curriculum and the content that is specific for each grade in the Foundation Phase.

4.3.4 The effectiveness of professional development

The results of one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions both show that participants have not gained specialised development training on the teaching of the gifted learners.

Teachers admitted their part in the teaching of gifted learners; nevertheless, they admitted their lack of training. Ms Pineapple confessed that:

We have not been trained to teach gifted learners. It gets scary when coming to your class and the learner is smarter than you.

(Ms Pineapple teacher of Peaches Primary school).

Teachers acknowledged that inappropriate professional development could cause them to ignore gifted learners. Mrs Pula has taught in the Foundation Phase for twenty- five years. Even though she admits receiving training on Inclusive Education, she felt that teaching of the gifted learner has been omitted. The Head of Department of Banana Primary school revealed that teachers were not skilled to identify and develop gifted learners. She confirmed the following:

Educators are in need of professional development which might allow them to impart knowledge to gifted learners. Giftedness is there and cannot be ignored but educators are not competent to teach these learners especially in the mainstream schools where learners are taught inclusively.

(HOD of Banana Primary school).

When teachers were asked about receiving any specific training on teaching gifted learners, Ms Gele responded in this way:

No, I have never received any training from the department. I believe that as teachers we need to be trained on how to handle the gifted learners. The trainings and workshops that we attend in most cases focus on learners with learning disabilities; and gifted learners are omitted. I think, there should be at least one specific teacher in every school, who has been trained on the teaching of gifted education.

(Ms Gele teacher of Banana Primary school).

Mrs Pula shared the same sentiments when she said:

I think the Department of education should allocate at least one teacher per school, who will specifically deal with gifted learners and their parents as well.

(Mrs Pula teacher of Banana Primary school).

The Head of Department of Peaches Primary claimed that the Department of Education has not allocated funds for the training of teachers and school management in gifted education. The documents evidently state that the gifted learner in the ordinary classroom did not receive any support:

I believe that gifted learners should be given an opportunity to thrive. Gifted learners are the world's future. We are put our effort in helping the learners who are not achieving, whilst we ignore the ones who really work hard to achieve.

(HOD of Peaches Primary school).

Parents described their relationships with their children as very challenging to both the parent and the children. One of the challenges they mentioned was that their children were aware of their above average abilities as compared to that of the parents; and this prevented them from being involved in their school work. Ms Zee stated that:

My son does not want me to help him with his school work. He wants to do things his own way and in his own time. He does not take any instructions from anyone.

(Ms Zee parent of learner in Banana Primary).

During individual semi-structured interviews with the parents of gifted learners, it was confirmed that they are also faced with many challenges when working with their children especially with homework. Parents felt that their experience as parents of gifted children is that their children are perfectionists and have difficulty accepting another way of thinking, which led to frustration. In other ways this meant that parents also cannot help gifted learners.

During the individual semi-structured interviews, teachers were asked about the challenges that they experience when teaching gifted learners. The findings indicated that most teachers agreed that teaching gifted learners creates many challenges. Some of the participants mentioned negative behaviours, such as lack of concentration, learners feeling ignored and bored and learners' disruptive behaviours. This coincided with the findings from the research conducted by Oswald and Rabie (2013) which revealed that teachers more often face overwhelming challenges that prevent them from engaging meaningfully with every learner in their classes. They emphasised their negative sentiments as a result of failure to meet the educational needs of all learners. The most common challenge was an inability to find new ideas or activities to do with the gifted learners. Studies confirm that the experiences, for example, in the interactions between a teacher and a learner in the classroom may have an influence on the activities and interactions in the peer group or family (Landsberg, 2016; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This for teacher participants leads to boredom, frustration and other negative behaviours in learners. The same view is echoed in Farkas and Duffett (2008) who argue that in most cases the gifted learners become bored and under-challenged in the classrooms that do not cater for their specific educational needs. This means that gifted learners require environments that would enhance optimal developments and those that would make or encourage them to flourish.

Most participants alluded to the importance of professional development in preparing them to teach in the classrooms with diverse learning abilities. The participants agreed that they have attended several training workshops about Inclusive Education; however gifted education and gifted learners were not the focus of the workshops. This is supported in Smith (2006) who contends that even though inclusion deals with education systems accepting all learners,

however it is typically interpreted as an educational imperative which aims at accommodating learners with special learning difficulties, and not about the gifted learners. This was further emphasised by teacher participants and they expressed their concern about the Department of Basic Education not holding enough workshops and training which are specifically for gifted education. All the teachers including HODs and parents were concerned about their incompetency in dealing with gifted learners both at home and at school. This challenge for teachers and parents makes matters worse as the context is very important for a developing child. The theory also emphasises that the school and home should work together in facilitating the development of the learner. Inclusion should also apply to gifted learners in the same way as any other group of learners including those with learning barriers. The participants suggested that the National Department of Education should concentrate more on gifted education in the workshops on Inclusive Education. This should extend to pre-service teachers as supported in Oswald and Rabie's (2013) study. While findings suggest that the Department of Basic Education should be involved and revisit their policies on Inclusive Education especially for the gifted, this contradicts what is stated in one of the policy documents which declares the gifted learner as another category of remarkability that needs to be addressed within the process of curriculum differentiation (DoE, 2010). Roy, Vanover, Fueyo and Vahey (2012) highlight the importance of professional development for teachers who are teaching in diverse classrooms so that they are equipped to cater for all the educational needs of learners with various learning abilities. This suggests that all the challenges highlighted in findings above are all important for pre-service and also practising teachers.

Most participants stated that, even though the Department of Education provided the training workshops, they felt that these are inadequate to capacitate teachers to effectively understand and be able to do justice in teaching all learners equally and provide a conducive setting for all of them equally. When participants were asked about the relevance of the grade level curriculum for gifted learners, they agreed that the curriculum offered did not enrich the gifted learners. They believed that the curriculum did not promote development and creativity for gifted learners in the Foundation Phase. Teachers felt that they just do what they can to accommodate gifted learners but sometimes it works and at other times it is inadequate. However, what teachers are aware of is that gifted learners are not treated like the learners who face challenges in the classroom. They are left to fend for themselves. One teacher mentioned

that "...I ignore them..." "...I only attend those who have challenges in class". This is supported in the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2009) which specifies that many gifted learners begin to underachieve because of the reiteration of content and the focus that teachers give to the underscoring learners. A similar point is made by Renzulli and Reis (2006) who claim that a lack of challenge that gifted learners experience puts them at a risk of becoming under-achievers. Therefore, as participants suggested, schools and teachers play a crucial role in developing a content that will enhance creativity in gifted learners which can be one of the strategies to assist the gifted as they in turn will be of value to their communities and the country (Csermely, 2008). As previously mentioned, teachers were concerned that teacher training and workshops conducted by the Department of Education mainly attended to the normal and struggling learners; gifted learners gained minimal consideration, parents also had the same dilemma. Parents indicated that their gifted learners are not easy to be assisted. This leaves the gifted with no support.

4.4 Teachers' perceptions on implications of Inclusive Education on the teaching and support of gifted learners

The results of data analysis revealed that educators were acquainted with the concept of Inclusive Education nonetheless held different opinions on the means to describe it. Most of the participants interpreted Inclusive Education deliberating on the accommodation of learners with different learning abilities. The participants agreed that the viewpoint of Inclusive Education was acceptable however the reality of classroom settings made it difficult to implement. They acknowledged that they did not receive appropriate training to provide for the needs of every learner, especially gifted learners. Mrs Pula felt deeply that educators required professional development from the Department of Basic Education concerning Inclusive Education. Ms Lion pronounced her disappointment:

At present we are not ready for it. Implementation of inclusive education will bring chaos into our classroom. The Department cannot just throw disabled learners at us.

(Ms Lion teacher of Banana Primary school).

In their interpretation of Inclusive Education, teachers did not include the education of the gifted learners. However, one of the participants specified that it was difficult to pull out the gifted learners for more attention and support. Ms Gele echoed her opinion in this way:

We have to give attention to learners who are struggling with reading and writing. One has to assist learners who do not understand English language. You also have a gifted child to stimulate. In the end you not able to stimulate a gifted child because classrooms are too large.

(Ms Gele teacher of Banana Primary school).

Similarly, Ms Orange shared her frustrations and said:

The syllabus does not allow us to go back and assist those learners with some kind of barriers. There is too much work to be done in a short space of time. It is not possible to apply inclusive education in our classrooms. It is challenging to pay attention on gifted learners, because our classes are too large.

(Ms Orange teacher of Peaches Primary school).

The Head of Department from Peaches Primary shared that the school programmes did not include gifted education. She further stated that:

I believe that inclusive education is not significant in the vision of our school. In fact, I have never heard of any school in our District that made provision for the gifted learners.

(HOD of Peaches Primary school).

Similarly, Ms Pineapple contended that the standard of education in our country is planned to accommodate the average learner, and not the gifted learner. She further claimed the following:

I think inclusive education is not understood properly. There's still much to be done before it can be successfully implemented.

(Ms Pineapple teacher of Peaches Primary school).

Participants believed that education policies in their respective schools do not cater for gifted education. They also indicated that they have not heard or seen any school that provided for gifted learners. Teachers also mentioned that policy documents do not provide any strategies regarding the education of the gifted learner. Mr Apple confirmed this when he said:

There is nowhere mentioned about what to do with the gifted child. Therefore, we only do what is expected of us.

(Mr Apple teacher of Peaches Primary school).

The Head of Department of Banana Primary affirmed that teachers spend most of their time focusing on learners with difficulties in learning, which is what the policy documents stipulated:

If we talk about inclusive education, we refer to average learners, slow learners and gifted learners, and the learners with challenges to learning. Teachers spend most of their time and energy on the struggling learner; the gifted learner is left out to do the work on his or her own.

(HOD of Banana Primary school).

This was supported by the Head of Department of Peaches Primary who claimed that the policy documents emphasise the stimulation of the struggling learner. She said:

Inclusive education to us means that in the classroom you find the gifted learner, the normal learner and the slow learner, and sometimes, the disabled learner. All the energy and time is spent on those learners who are struggling, in the process we ignore the gifted learner.

(HOD of Peaches Primary school).

Teachers highlighted that the Department of Education focuses only on the children who experience difficulties in reading, and an increasing number of failures. They indicated that when gifted learner's needs are not accommodated, they present challenges in the classroom. Teachers affirmed that they received training on accommodating the needs of the learners who have learning barriers, and not the gifted learner. They indicated that the recent explanation of inclusive education and its promotion is not favourable to the development of the gifted learner. Mrs Pula suggested:

There should be expert educators in every school, who will give special attention to the gifted learners.

(Mrs Pula teacher of Banana Primary school).

Teachers believed that clarification of Inclusive Education intended for all learners to be treated equally, accommodated in the same school and classroom. However, they felt that gifted learners are not considered as one of the groups of learners who could be categorised as learners with difficulties to learning who required their needs to be provided for.

The findings from the individual semi-structured and focus group interviews indicated that teacher participants acknowledged that, although they were acquainted with the concept of Inclusive Education, they held different views on its definition. Most of the participants associated Inclusive Education with the accommodation of learners with learning difficulties in the mainstream classrooms. Drawing from the literature, Inclusive Education refers to the accommodation of every learner in a regular classroom regardless of the levels of their learning

abilities (DoE, 2001). It is further stated that the fundamentals for Inclusive Education are based on the establishment of an inclusive learning atmosphere which stimulates complete development of all learners regardless of their differences.

Inclusive Education adopts the viewpoint that learning difficulties may be overcome when support is provided for the learner. Participants agreed that they accepted the viewpoint of an Inclusive Education policy; however, classroom settings made it difficult to implement. This is affirmed in Kokot (2005) who asserted that a gap exists between an inclusive policy and its application in the classroom. Unless this gap has been dealt with, gifted learners will not be able to obtain proper education and support (Van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2006). Participants acknowledged that they are not fully equipped to accommodate the learning needs of every learner, particularly those learners with more specialised needs.

The participants believed that despite the initiatives for the modification of the education system in ensuring equal education for every learner; gifted learners are still excluded in the South African classrooms. This is affirmed in Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2006) who point out that exceptional learners do not receive enough support within the mainstream classroom. Oswald and Rabie (2013) highlight that Inclusive Education has been identified in the policy documents as an initiative towards an equal education for all learners (Oswald & Rabie, 2013). Moreover, in the recent curriculum documentation, giftedness has been acknowledged as one dimension of uniqueness that still needs to be taken into consideration in the mainstream classrooms. Participants in this study held a belief that Inclusive Education in South African classrooms places more emphasis on those learners who are experiencing learning difficulties, and not on gifted learners. As argued in Smith (2006), even though inclusion involves accommodation of all learners, inclusion is still viewed as focusing mainly on learners with learning difficulties, and not about the gifted learners. He further states that, inclusion should focus on implementing curriculum differentiation so that education needs of all learners, including those of gifted learners can be satisfied in ordinary classrooms. The participants also indicated that the recent clarification of Inclusive Education and the way it was endorsed is not favourable to the development of the gifted learner.

Participants approved that Inclusive Education could be a possible option for the teaching of gifted learners, when it is well implemented in the classrooms. The results indicate that

participants felt that education policy documents do not provide any guidelines for the education of the gifted learner. They just do only what is expected of them. Nevertheless, Hymer and Michel (2002) in Oswald and De Villiers (2013) provide common procedures for the creation of inclusive learning atmospheres which accommodate the gifted learners without disregarding the least talented learners, which could be implemented in our context. These procedures state that giftedness and capability should be viewed in the context of the profile of a learner's strong points and weaknesses and their broader learning atmosphere. In addition, education should aim at stimulating in learners a desire for learning; and facilitating the attainment of abilities and attitudes which allow this desire for learning to be fulfilled and continued.

4.5 Chapter summary

Chapter four presented and discussed the data developing from the interviews and focus group discussions. The following main themes developed: parents' and teachers' understanding of giftedness; challenges of teaching gifted learners; teachers' attitudes towards gifted learners; teachers' perceptions on the implications for Inclusive Education and gifted learners; and the need for curriculum differentiation. These were analysed and consolidated with literature and the theoretical framework that couched this study based on the research questions. The following chapter is based on analysing the data to provide answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed and examined the results of this study. This chapter aims to conclude this study by providing a summary of the study, concluding statements, recommendations and implications. The study summary provides a framework of the focus areas in every chapter from chapter one to chapter four. After interpretation, analysis and evaluation of data subsequent conclusions emerged. These conclusions relate to the research questions of the study as stated in chapter one. Recommendations were made after reviewing the findings from chapter four and the formulation of the subsequent conclusions.

5.2 Study summary

The determination of this qualitative research was to explore the perspectives of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners.

Chapter one served as an introductory chapter and provided the background and purpose of the study. The chapter also provided the main reasons for undertaking the study through presentation of the problem statement, rationale and significance of the study. This research study aimed at giving Foundation Phase teachers and parents of gifted learners a voice by allowing them to answer questions and discuss issues on gifted learners and children and their experiences. In chapter one the following were also provided; the objectives, key research questions of the study, delimitations, and key concepts used in the study, as well as the organisation of the whole study.

Chapter two provided a theoretical framework and the literature review, and the foundation against which the results of this research were evaluated. Literature review presented relevant

information concerning conceptualising of giftedness in both local and global countries, implications of Inclusive Education on giftedness and gifted learners, perceptions of Foundation Phase Teachers towards gifted learners, as well as curriculum differentiation and implications of Inclusive Education on gifted learners. In addition, chapter two provided a detailed description of the theoretical framework which couched the study, which is Bronfenbrenner's theory and its relevance to the study.

Chapter three explained the research design and the approach of the research. This study was embedded within the interpretive paradigm and adopted a qualitative research approach and further employed a case study type of two primary schools in ILembe District, with the focus in the Foundation Phase (grades 1-3). A purposive sampling method was used to select the participants which employed qualitative data generation approaches, including interviews and discussions of focus groups with both teachers and parents of gifted learners who were participants. Relevant ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness were also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four provides the presentation, analysis and discussion of the research findings resulting from the data generation methods explained in chapter three. This chapter was structured in relation to the themes and sub-themes that developed from the data to provide answers to the research problems. The findings revealed four themes that emerged from data generation including, teachers' and parents' understanding of giftedness; challenges of teaching gifted learners; the need for curriculum differentiation; challenges of teaching gifted learners; and teachers' perceptions on implications of Inclusive Education and gifted learners.

5.3 Conclusions

This section presents the conclusions that emerged which were based on the main research problems and the findings of this research.

5.3.1 Teachers' and parents' understanding of giftedness

The findings of this study indicated that an understanding of the concept of giftedness is of great importance as this was something that is designed for a particular individual and could not be altered or taken away. The findings further highlighted that most of the participants had a diverse understanding of the concept 'giftedness'. A few participants were able to describe giftedness as referring to a 'talent' or a 'gift' with which an individual is born. Some further indicated that giftedness as a concept is referring to the "ability" of young children who show a fast pace in learning compared to that of their peers. Furthermore, participants were able to substantiate with examples of what "giftedness" meant to them and the emphasis on understanding what the meaning of the concept is to the people who are teaching learners especially in their early and primary school years.

5.3.2 The need for curriculum differentiation

The findings indicate that differentiation is currently the only approach recognised to deal with learners' diversity in the ordinary classroom. Nevertheless, the results of the research indicated that most participants experienced difficulties in implementing curriculum differentiation in their classrooms. Theoretically, differentiated instruction creates a space for improvement of the syllabus for gifted learners. Nevertheless, the results of this study revealed a breach between idealism of procedures and their implementation in the classroom that need urgent attention. The findings also indicated that teachers are often faced with overwhelming challenges which hinder equal and meaningful involvement with every learner within the classroom. They requested support and acknowledgement from the Department of Education regarding the accommodation of learners with diverse learning abilities and needs.

5.3.3 Challenges of teaching gifted learners

The findings indicated that most participants acknowledged that experience of teaching gifted learners had many challenges. Some of the participants mentioned negative behaviours including lack of concentration, boredom, and disruptive behaviour. From the findings four sub-themes emerged from this theme.

5.3.3.1 The level of the quality of the activities of the gifted learners

The findings indicate that participants struggled to find appropriate activities and teaching materials for the gifted learners. This for teacher participants leads to boredom, frustration and other negative behaviours in learners. Teachers felt that the activities they offered were holding back the development and creativity of gifted learners. In contrast to the impression that gifted learners will make it themselves, the findings of the study specified that many issues should be considered to guarantee that gifted learners excel educationally.

5.3.3.2 Overcrowded classrooms

The findings of this study indicate that participants experienced a challenge in involving learners with various learning capabilities and needs in their classrooms because they were overcrowded. It was evident that in some schools there were 50 learners in a single classroom. As a result, participants developed negative emotions because of their inability to effectively accommodate all their learners. The findings indicate that participants believed that if they had smaller classes, they would be able to accommodate all their learners in a more meaningful way. This remains a challenge in the current South African education system.

5.3.3.3 Inappropriateness of curriculum and learning resources

The research findings indicate that the curriculum does not cater for the intellectual level of the gifted learners. The participants indicated that a grade-level curriculum offered did not enrich gifted learners. They believed that the curriculum did not promote curriculum and creativity for gifted learners in the Foundation Phase. Teachers mentioned that they do what they can to accommodate gifted learners, sometimes it works but sometimes it proves to be ineffective. Teachers showed their concern that gifted learners were not treated as learners who face challenges in the classroom as they are left to fend for themselves. As a result, teachers suggested that schools and teachers play a crucial role in developing a content that will enhance creativity in gifted learners which could be one of the strategies that could assist gifted learners.

5.3.3.4 The effectiveness of professional development

The findings identify a serious need for enough teacher training at both pre-service and in-service levels, in order to accommodate the specific learning needs of gifted learners. When teachers are informed, they would recognise and respect the rights of these learners and offer them the support they need to flourish and become what they can. The research results show that teacher training provided by the Department of Basic Education did not include guidelines on giftedness as a specific remarkability that needs special consideration. Educators communicated their concerns about the DoE for not holding adequate workshops and preparation which are specifically for gifted education. The results show that educators suggested that the department should concentrate more on gifted education in their training on Inclusive Education. In addition, educator training should include the support of the department and all higher institutions involved in teacher education.

5.3.3.5 Teachers' perceptions on implications of Inclusive Education and gifted learners.

The findings of this study indicate that educators were acquainted with the concept of Inclusive Education; however, they held different viewpoints on its definition. In the opinion of teachers, the results reveal that their interpretation of Inclusive Education was based on the accommodation of learners with incapacities. The participants acknowledged that if Inclusive Education could be applied effectively in the schools and classrooms, it could therefore offer a feasible option for the education of gifted learners. The participants in this research indicated that the department's initiative for inclusion excluded the gifted learners. Instead, the focus was on the learners who struggle to develop academically.

5.4 Recommendations

This section presents recommendations that are informed by the conclusions previously mentioned and are presented in accordance with Foundation Phase teachers, gifted learners, parents, and the Department of Education.

5.4.1 Identification of gifted learners

It is recommended that gifted learners should be identified as early as possible to allow for early intervention in enhancing the potential of gifted learners and to reduce the prospects of ignoring a gifted learner who could be identified at a later stage. It is recommended that children between the ages of five and eight should be tested for giftedness, because after age nine, societal effects could lead certain gifted learners to hide their gift. Therefore, standards for identification of giftedness that are delicate to the differences of cultures of learners in the country, their special personalities, and their desired methods of learning are recommended.

5.4.2 Training and development for Foundation Phase teachers in gifted education

It is recommended that every educator engaged in the teaching of gifted learners has precise understanding about giftedness, also the abilities required to provide the specific needs of gifted learners. Therefore, it would be advantageous for all teachers, including the in-service educators to obtain training in special education. It is further recommended that higher education institutions should offer more qualifications in the area of gifted education. This could in turn improve the knowledge of gifted education in our schools. Teachers recommended that the National and Provincial Department of Education should put more emphasis on gifted education in addition to other teacher training. It is recommended that teachers' workshops should contain topics on the differentiation and improvement of the syllabus.

5.4.3 Appropriate curriculum and resource materials for gifted learners

Teachers recommended an improvement in the curriculum that will cater for the high intellectual level of gifted learners. Teachers emphasised the importance of understanding the curriculum and the content that is specific for each grade in the Foundation Phase. Teachers suggested that schools and teachers should develop a content that will enhance creativity in gifted learners. This could be one of the strategies to assist gifted learners as they in turn will be of value to their communities and the country.

5.4.4 Parental involvement and support

Parents play a crucial role in the learning of their children. Therefore, they need to be sufficiently educated on giftedness and equipped to prevent any misunderstandings. The literature in this study indicated that the parents' knowledge about gifted children enables children to be diagnosed at an earlier age to get the benefits of the special programmes for them. Therefore, it is recommended that parents should ensure regular visits to the schools to collaborate with teachers in support of the learners. Teachers further recommended that parents form networks of support with other stakeholders to assist teachers and learners. In addition, gifted learners, especially in Foundation Phase will only develop optimally in the system of support where all stakeholders involved in the education of the learner share accountability and responsibility.

5.4.5 Initiatives and support from the Department of Education

It is suggested that the department should collaborate with other participants involved in the teaching of gifted learners to develop a compact policy on giftedness which accommodates the involvement of gifted learners' needs. The policy should spell out the roles of all stakeholders, for example parents, teachers, government, and the community. In addition, the DoE should develop an appropriate monitoring system to ensure proper implementation and effectiveness of the policy in schools and classrooms. Teachers suggested that the department should train specialised educators to offer specialised attention to the gifted learners. In order to achieve this, the department should allocate funding to the training of these teachers. It is recommended that the department in our country should be responsible for the promotion of accommodation of gifted learners who have special educational needs. It is also recommended that the department shift the emphasis of educator training workshops to comprise the effective involvement of gifted learners from diverse viewpoints and environments.

5.5 Implications for further research

- The role of educators in employing curriculum differentiation, identification processes, and the efficiency of different aspects of the offering of gifted teaching ought to be explored.
- This research ought to be further conducted with high school educators to find out if the results are comparable.
- Supplementary research could be conducted to discover the experiences of high school learners who were considered academically gifted in the primary school when they are in secondary school.
- A larger participating action research of the experiences of the parents in addressing issues of giftedness and engaging with learners and teachers to enhance sustainable learning for gifted learners inside and outside school, is recommended.

5.6 Chapter summary

Chapter five has revealed that given our country's past of exclusionary practices in education, it is still evident that exceptional learners are getting insufficient education, despite the country's promise of quality education for all. At a time when the educational emphasis is being placed on meeting the needs of those learners who are struggling to progress, the gifted learners often become marginalised. Therefore, the unique differences of all learners, including the gifted, should be fostered. In this study, issues like teachers' and parents' understanding of giftedness, challenges that teachers experience in teaching gifted learners, level of quality of the activities of the gifted learners, and inadequate professional development of teachers in gifted education were discussed.

Foundation Phase teachers face overwhelming obstacles as they are expected to meet all the needs of every child within their classrooms. Hence, this study inspires the discussion to continue to develop giftedness and create an awareness of gifted issues, policies and practices in our education system. This will in turn promote further discussions on how we define giftedness for teachers, parents, the Department of Education, and the community leaders. Finally, this study has pointed out the need for professional development to expand knowledge of giftedness for South African teachers.

REFERENCE LIST

- Al-Makhalid, K. A. (2012). *Primary Teachers' Attitudes and Knowledge Regarding Gifted Pupils and Their Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. (Doctor of Philosophy), The University of Manchester, Saudi Arabia.
- Al-Shabatat, A. M., Abbas, M., & Ismail, H. N. (2009). The Direct and Indirect Effects of Environmental Factors on Nurturing Intellectual Giftedness. *International Journal of Special Education*, 24(3), 121-131.
- Alshenqeeti, H. (2014). Interviewing as a Data Collection Method: A Critical Review. *ELR English Linguistics Research*, 3(1).
- Baudson, T. G., & Preckel, F. (2013). Teachers' implicit personality theories about the gifted: an experimental approach. *School psychology quarterly: the official journal of the Division of School Psychology, American Psychological Association*, 28(1), 37-46.
- BERA. (2011). Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research 2nd.
- Bertram, C., & Christiansen, I. (2014). *Understanding research: an introduction to reading research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Bicknell, B. (2014). Parental Roles in the Education of Mathematically Gifted and Talented Children. *Gifted Child Today*, 37(2), 83-93.
- Boell, S. K., & Cecez-Kecmanovic, D. (2015). On being 'systematic' in literature reviews in IS. *J. Inf. Technol. Journal of Information Technology*, 30(2), 161-173.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). *Making human beings human: bioecological perspectives on human development*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Carol van der, W. (2007). Undervalued and Under-Served: The Gifted Disadvantaged. *Gifted Education International*, 23(2), 138-148.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Christensen-Needham, V. (2010). *Primary teachers' perceptions of the social and emotional aspects of gifted and talented education*. Retrieved from WorldCat database. University of Canterbury. Educational Studies and Human Development.

Cobb, A. (2010). To Differentiate or Not to Differentiate? Using Internet-Based Technology in the Classroom. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 11(1), 37-45.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education*. London; New York: Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: choosing among five approaches*.

Cross, T. L., & Coleman, L. J. (2014). School-Based Conception of Giftedness. *Journal for the education of the gifted*, 37(1), 94-103.

Cross, T. L., Coleman, L. J., & Terhaar-Yonkers, M. (2014). The Social Cognition of Gifted Adolescents in Schools: Managing the Stigma of Giftedness. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 37(1), 30-39.

Dai, D. Y. (2010). *The Nature and Nurture of Giftedness: A New Framework for Understanding*

Gifted Education. Education & Psychology of the Gifted Series: Teachers College Press. 1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10027. Tel: 800-575-6566; Fax: 802-864-7626; e-mail: tcp.orders@aidcvt.com; Web site: <http://www.tcpress.com>.

De Vos, A. S. (2005). *Research at grass roots: for the social sciences and human services professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C. B., & Delport, C. S. L. (2011). Research at grass roots: for the social sciences and human service professions.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Donald, D. R., Lazarus, S., & Lolwana, P. (2010). *Educational psychology in social context: ecosystemic applications in southern Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

Du Plessis, E. (2013). Insights from returning teachers' exposure to curriculum change and professional development. *Acta Academica*, 45(1), 58-78.

Eccles, J. S., & Harold, R. D. (1993). Parent-school involvement during the early adolescent years. *Teachers College Record*, 94(3), 568-587.

Gagne, F. (1995). From Giftedness to Talent: A Developmental Model and Its Impact on the Language of the Field. *Roeper Review*, 18(2), 103-111.

Gagne, F. (2009). Building gifts into talents: brief overview of the DMGT 2.0. *Vision*, 19(1), 15-20.

Gallagher, J. J. (2015). Political Issues in Gifted Education. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 38(1), 77-89.

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: the theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, H. (2009). The Five Minds for the Future. *School Administrator*, 66(2), 16-21.

Gardner, H. (2011). Intelligence, Creativity, Ethics: Reflections on My Evolving Research Interests. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 55(4), 302-304.

Geake, J. G., & Gross, M. U. M. (2008). Teachers' negative affect toward academically gifted students. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 52(3), 217-231.

Hall, T. (2002). Differentiated instruction: Effective classroom practices report. . Retrieved from <http://www.cast.org/system/galleries/download/ncac/DifInstruc.pdf>

Hornstra, L., Denessen, E., Bakker, J., van den Bergh, L., & Voeten, M. (2010). Teacher attitudes toward dyslexia: effects on teacher expectations and the academic achievement of students with dyslexia. *Journal of learning disabilities*, 43(6).

Jolly, J. L., & Matthews, M. S. (2012). A Critique of the Literature on Parenting Gifted Learners. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 35(3), 259-290.

Kanevsky, L. (2011). Deferential Differentiation: What Types of Differentiation Do Students Want? *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 55(4), 279-299.

Kuo, C.-C., Maker, J., Su, F.-L., & Hu, C. (2010). Identifying young gifted children and cultivating problem solving abilities and multiple intelligences. *LEAIND Learning and Individual Differences*, 20(4), 365-379.

Landsberg, E., Krüger, D., & Nel, N. (2005). *Addressing barriers to learning: a South African perspective*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Landsberg, E., Krüger, D., & Swart, E. (2016). *Addressing barriers to learning: a South African perspective*.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2011). *Designing qualitative research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

McClain, M.-C., & Pfeiffer, S. (2012). Identification of Gifted Students in the United States Today: A Look at State Definitions, Policies, and Practices. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, 28(1), 59-88.

McCoach, D. B., & Siegle, D. (2007). What Predicts Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Gifted? *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 51(3), 246-255.

Miller, M. T., & Olthouse, J. (2013). Critical Thinking in Gifted Children's Offline and Online Peer Feedback. *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 4(1), 66-80.

Ministry of, E., Science, M., Ministry of, E., Science, M., United Nations Educational, S., & Cultural Organization, P. (1994). *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. Adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education Access and Quality (Salamanca, Spain, June 7-10, 1994)*. [Place of publication not identified: Distributed by ERIC Clearinghouse.

National Association for Gifted, C., & National Association for Gifted, C. (2009). *State of the Nation in Gifted Education How States Regulate and Support Programs and Services for Gifted and Talented Students. An Executive Summary of the "State of the States" Report, 2008-2009*. [Place of publication not identified: Distributed by ERIC Clearinghouse.

National Commission on Special Needs in, E., Training, South, A., & National Committee on Education Support, S. (1997). *Quality education for all: overcoming barriers to learning and development: report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET), National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS)*. Pretoria:

Department of Education.

Needham, V. (2012). Primary Teachers' Perceptions of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Gifted and Talented Education. *Apex*, 17(1), 1-18. doi:10.21307/apex-2012-006

Ngara, C. (2017). Gifted education in Zimbabwe. *Cogent education*, 4(1).

Ngara, C., & Porath, M. (2007). Ndebele culture of Zimbabwe's views of giftedness. *High Ability Studies*, 18(2), 191-208.

Olszewski-Kubilius, P., Subotnik, R. F., & Worrell, F. C. (2015). Conceptualizations of Giftedness and the Development of Talent: Implications for Counselors. *JCAD Journal of Counseling & Development*, 93(2), 143-152.

Oswald, M., & de Villiers, J.-M. (2013). Including the Gifted Learner: Perceptions of South African Teachers and Principals. *South African Journal of Education*, 33(1).

Oswald, M., & Rabie, E. (2016). Rethinking gifted education in South Africa: The voices of gifted grade 11 students. *Gifted Education International* *Gifted Education International*.

Pfeiffer, S. I. (2012). Current Perspectives on the Identification and Assessment of Gifted Students. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 30(1), 3-9.

Phillipson, S. N., & McCann, M. (2007). *Conceptions of giftedness: sociocultural perspectives*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Plucker, J. A., & Callahan, C. M. (2014). Research on Giftedness and Gifted Education: Status of the Field and Considerations for the Future An overview of past, present and projected future theory and research in gifted education is presented. *EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN*, 80(4), 390-406.

Reis, S. M., & Renzulli, J. S. (2004). Current research on the social and emotional development of gifted and talented students: Good news and future possibilities. *PITS Psychology in the Schools*, 41(1), 119-130.

Reis, S. M., & Renzulli, J. S. (2009). Myth 1: The Gifted and Talented Constitute One Single Homogeneous Group and Giftedness Is a Way of Being that Stays in the Person over Time and Experiences. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 53(4), 233-235.

Renzulli, J. S. (1978). What Makes Giftedness? Reexamining a Definition. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 60(3), 180-261.

Renzulli, J. S. (2011). What makes giftedness? reexamining a definition. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(8), 81-88.

Renzulli, J. S., Sternberg, R. J., & Davidson, J. E. (2000). The Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness: A Developmental Model for Promoting Creative Productivity. 246-279.

Rowe. (2014). The discourse of public education: an urban campaign for a local public high school in Melbourne, Victoria. *discourse Discourse*, 35(1), 116-128.

Santrock, J. W. (2008). *Educational psychology*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Shavinina, L. V. (2009). *International handbook on giftedness*. [Dordrecht]; [London]: Springer.

Siegle, D. (2015). Dr. James Gallagher's Concern for Gifted Learners beyond Academics. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 38(1), 58-63.

Simonton, D. K. (2005). Giftedness and Genetics: The Emergenic-Epigenetic Model and Its Implications. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 28(3-4), 270-286.

Simonton, D. K. (2005). Giftedness and Genetics: The Emergenic-Epigenetic Model and Its Implications. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 28(3-4), 270-286.

South, A., & Department of, E. (2001). *Special needs education : building an inclusive education and training system*. Pretoria: Dept. of Education.

Sternberg, R. J., & Davidson, J. E. (2005). Conceptions of giftedness.

Sternberg, R. J., Kaufman, J. C., & Grigorenko, E. L. (2008). *Applied intelligence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Strogilos, V., Tragoulia, E., Avramidis, E., Voulagka, A., & Papanikolaou, V. (2017).

Understanding the development of differentiated instruction for students with and without disabilities in co-taught classrooms. *Disability & Society Disability & Society*, 1-23.

Subotnik, R. F., Olszewski-Kubilius, P., & Worrell, F. C. (2011). Rethinking Giftedness and Gifted Education : A Proposed Direction Forward Based on Psychological Science. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 12(1), 3-54.

Subotnik, R. F., Olszewski-Kubilius, P., & Worrell, F. C. (2012). A Proposed Direction Forward for Gifted Education Based on Psychological Science. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 56(4), 176-188.

Szymanski, T., & Shaff, T. (2013). Teacher Perspectives Regarding Gifted Diverse Students.

Tannenbaum, A. J. (2003). Nature and nurture of giftedness. In N. Colangelo & G. A. Davis (Eds). *Handbook of gifted education* (3rd ed., pp. 45-49. New York, NY: Allyn & Bacon
Terre Blanche, M. J., Durrheim, K., & Painter, D. (2006). *Research in practice: applied methods for the social sciences*.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2005). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.

Tomlinson, C. A., & Jarvis, J. (2009). *Middle School Writing, Writing Curriculum*. California 91326 United States: SAGE Publications Inc.

United, S., & Office of, E. (1972). *Education of the gifted and talented: report to the Congress of the United States by the U.S. Commissioner of Education, and background papers submitted to the U.S. Office of Education*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.

VanTassel-Baska, J., & Stambaugh, T. (2005). Challenges and Possibilities for Serving Gifted Learners in the Regular Classroom. *Theory Into Practice*, 44(3), 211-217.

Vithal, R., & Jansen, J. D. (2010). *Designing your first research proposal: a manual for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Claremont [South Africa]: Juta.

Winebrenner, S. (2012). *Teaching Gifted Kids in Today's Classroom Professional Development Multimedia Package*: Free Spirit Pub.

Winkler, D. L., & Jolly, J. L. (2012). Nativists and Environmentalists: A History of Disagreement. *Gifted Child Today*, 35(2), 146-149.

Ziegler, A., Sternberg, R. J., & Davidson, J. E. The Actiotope Model of Giftedness. 411-436.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PERMISSION FROM THE PRINCIPALS OF THE SELECTED SCHOOLS

School of Education,
College of Humanities,
University of KwaZulu –Natal,
Edgewood Campus
05 September 2017

Attention: The Principal: Mr Gumede
Mbozamo Primary School
P.O. Box 2663
Kwa-Dukuza
4450

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Gugulethu Makhosazana Jiyane, a Masters student in the School of Education (Educational Psychology) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. Please be informed that I will seek the necessary permission in advance from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in your school. The title of my study is: *An exploration of Perspectives Foundation Phase Teachers of Gifted Learners in two schools in Ilembe District.*

This study aims to explore the perspectives of teachers of the gifted learners, and the challenges (if any) of teaching gifted learners in Foundation Phase. The planned study will focus on four Foundation Phase teachers, two from grade 2 and two from grade 3, as well as the Head of Department of Foundation Phase. The study will involve the use of semi-structured interviews with each of the participating teachers and the HOD. Participants will be interviewed for no longer than 45 minutes and the focus group discussions (FGD) will take about an hour long. The interviews will be voice-recorded with participants' permission.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project. Their identities will not be divulged under any circumstance(s), during and after the reporting process but instead, fictitious names will be used to represent their name. All their responses in the interviews and focus group discussions will be aware that they are free to withdraw at any time they wish so without incurring any negative or undesirable consequence(s) or penalty on their part. The interviews will be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview. All the participants will be contacted on time about the interviews and will be scheduled at a time convenient to all participants.

Should you have any questions about this study or its procedures, now or in the future, please contact me, my supervisor or the research office at the following contact details:

RESEARCHER	SUPERVISOR	RESEARCH OFFICE
Mrs. Gugulethu M. Jiyane	Dr Ncamisile P. Mthiyane	Mr P. Mohun
Tel: 032 551 5958 Cell: 073 601 9088 Email: 4khosij@gmail.com	Tel: 031 260 3424 Cell: 082 547 4113 Email: mthiyanenl@ukzn.ac.za	Tel: 031 260 4557 Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

G.M. Jiyane




DECLARATION


I PHILLIP SIMPHIWE GUMEDZ (Full names of the principal) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: *An exploration of Perspectives of Foundation Phase of Gifted learners in Two Schools in ILembe District.*

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study while permitting the researcher to audio-tape our interview session.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

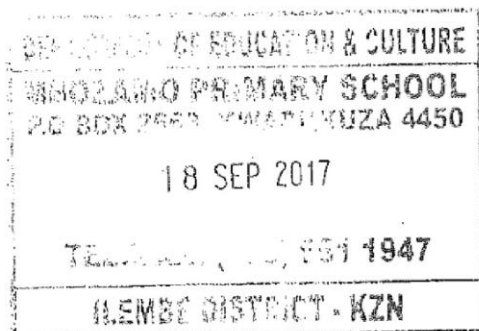
Signature of Principal: 

Date: 2017-09-12

Signature of Witness: 

Date: 2017-09-12

Thanking you in advance



School of Education,
College of Humanities,
University of KwaZulu –Natal,
Edgewood Campus
02 September 2017

Attention: The Principal: Mr Mthembu
Mavivane Primary School
P.O. Box 2668
Shakaville
Kwa-Dukuza
4450

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Gugulethu Makhosazana Jiyane, a Masters student in the School of Education (Educational Psychology) at the University of KwaZulu- Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. Please be informed that I will seek the necessary permission in advance from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in your school. The title of my study is: *An exploration of Perspectives of Foundation Phase Teachers of Gifted learners in Two Schools in Ilembe District.*

This study aims to explore the perspectives of teachers of the gifted learners, and the challenges (if any) of teaching gifted learners in foundation phase. The planned study will focus on four Foundation Phase teachers, two from grade 2 teachers, and 2 teachers from grade 3, as well as the Head of Department of Foundation Phase. The study will involve the use of semi-structured interviews with each of the participating teachers and the HOD. Participants will be interviewed for no longer than 45 minutes and the focus group discussions will take about an hour long. The interviews will be voice-recorded with participant's permission.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project. Their identities will not be divulged under any circumstance(s), during and after the reporting process but instead, fictitious names will be used to represent their name. All their responses in the interviews and focus group discussions will be aware that they are free to withdraw at any time they wish so without incurring any negative or undesirable consequence(s) or penalty on their part. The interviews will be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview. All the participants will be contacted on time about the interviews and will be scheduled at a time convenient to all participants.

Should you have any questions about this study or its procedures, now or in the future, please contact me, my supervisor or the research office at the following contact details:

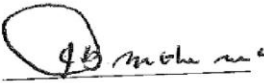
RESEARCHER	SUPERVISOR	RESEARCH OFFICE
Mrs. Gugulethu M. Jiyane	Dr Ncamisile P. Mthiyane	Mr. P. Mohun
Tel: 032 551 5958	Tel: 031 260 3424	Tel: 031 260 4557
Cell: 073 601 9088	Cell: 082 547 4113	Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Email: 4khosij@gmail.com	Email: mthiyanenl@ukzn.ac.za	

DECLARATION


I I.B. Mthembu (Full names of the principal) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: *An exploration of Perspectives of Foundation Phase of Gifted learners in Two Schools in ILembe District.*

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study while permitting the researcher to audio-tape our interview session.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Principal: 

Date: 07-09-2017

Signature of Witness: 

Date: 07-09-2017

Thanking you in advance

KZN DEPT. OF EDUCATION MAVIVANE PRIMARY SCHOOL P.O. BOX 2668, KWADUKUZA, 4450 2017 -09- 07 TEL: 032 551 3362 FAX: 032 552 7849 PRINCIPAL:

APPENDIX B

School of Education
College of Humanities
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR THE TEACHER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

My name is Gugulethu Makhosazana Jiyane, a Masters student in the School of Education (Educational Psychology) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. Please be informed that I have sought the necessary permission in advance from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education and has been granted (see copy attached). I therefore kindly request you to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. The title of my study is: *An exploration of perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners in two Primary Schools in ILembe District.*

This study aims to explore the perspectives of teachers of the gifted learners, and the challenges (if any) of teaching gifted learners in foundation phase. The planned study will focus on four Foundation Phase teachers, two from grade 2 teachers, and 2 teachers from grade 3, as well as the Head of Department of Foundation Phase. The study will involve the use of semi-structured interviews with each of the participating teachers and the HOD. The study will involve the use of semi-structured interviews with each of the participating learners and teachers and focus group discussions with both the learners and teachers. Participants will be interviewed for no longer than 45 minutes and the focus group discussions will take about an hour long. The interviews will be voice-recorded with the participant's permission

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that you may accrue as a result of your participation in this research project. Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance(s), during and after the reporting process but instead, fictitious names will be used to represent your name. All of your responses in the interviews and focus group discussions will be treated with strict confidentiality. Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you

so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequence(s) or penalty on your part. The interviews will be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview. All the participants will be contacted on time about the interviews and will be scheduled at a time convenient to all participants.

Should you have any questions about this study or its procedures, now or in the future, please contact me, my supervisor or the research office at the following contact details:

RESEARCHER	SUPERVISOR	RESEARCH OFFICE
Mrs Gugulethu M. Jiyane	Dr Ncamisile P. Mthiyane	Mr P. Mohun
Tel: 032 551 5958 Cell: 073 601 9088 Email: 4khosij@gmail.com	Tel: 031 - 260 3424 Cell: 0825474113 E-mail: mthiyanen1@ukzn.ac.za	Tel: 031 - 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

GM Jiyane

DECLARATION

I (Full names of the participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: *An exploration of perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners in two Primary Schools in ILembe District.*

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study while permitting the researcher to audio-tape our interview session.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Witness: _____

Date: _____

Thanking you in advance

APPENDIX C

School of Education
College of Humanities
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR THE PARENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

My name is Gugulethu Makhosazana Jiyane, a Masters student in the School of Education (Educational Psychology) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfilment. Please be informed that I have sought the necessary permission in advance from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education and has been granted (see copy attached). I therefore kindly request you to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. The title of my study is: *An exploration of perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners in two Primary Schools in ILembe District.*

This study aims to explore the perspectives of teachers of the gifted learners, and the challenges (if any) of teaching gifted learners in foundation phase. The planned study will focus on four Foundation Phase teachers, two from grade 2 teachers, and 2 teachers from grade 3, as well as the Head of Department of Foundation Phase. The study will involve the use of semi-structured interviews with each of the participating teachers and the HOD. The study will involve the use of semi-structured interviews with each of the participating learners and teachers and focus group discussions with both the learners and teachers. Participants will be interviewed for no longer than 45 minutes and the focus group discussions will take about an hour long. The interviews will be voice-recorded with the participant's permission.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that you may accrue as a result of your participation in this research project. Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance(s), during and after the reporting process but instead, fictitious names will be used to represent your name. All of your responses in the interviews and focus group discussions will be treated with strict confidentiality. Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequence(s) or penalty on your part. The interviews will be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview. All the participants will be contacted on time about the interviews and will be scheduled at a time convenient to all participants.

Should you have any questions about this study or its procedures, now or in the future, please contact me, my supervisor or the research office at the following contact details:

RESEARCHER	SUPERVISOR	RESEARCH OFFICE
Mrs Gugulethu M. Jiyane	Dr Ncamisile P. Mthiyane	Mr P. Mohun
Tel: 032 551 5958 Cell: 073 601 9088 Email: 4khosij@gmail.com	Tel: 031 - 260 3424 Cell: 0825474113 E-mail: mthiyanen1@ukzn.ac.za	Tel: 031 - 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

GM Jiyane

DECLARATION

I (Full names of the participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: *An exploration of perceptions Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners in two Primary Schools in ILembe District.*

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study while permitting the researcher to audio-tape our interview session.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Witness: _____

Date: _____

Thanking you in advance

School of Education
College of Humanities
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus

ISICELO SOKUTHI ABAZALI BABE YINGXENYE YOMSEBENZI WOCWANINGO

Igama lami ngu Gugulethu Makhosazana Jiyane, umfundi weziqu zeMasters engxenyeni yezemfundo eNyuvesi yakwaZulu-Natal, ophikweni oluse- Edgewood. Ngilindeleke ukuba ngenze ucwaningo njengenywe yeziqu zemfundo. Ngithanda ukwazisa ukuthi sengiyitholile imvume eMnyangweni wezemfundo Eyisisekelo kwa Zulu-Natal (Department of Basic Education). Ngibhala lencwadi ukuncela ukuba nibe yingxenywe yalolu cwaningo ngokungaphoqelekile. Isihloko salolu cwaningo sithi: *An exploration of perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners in two Primary Schools in Ilembe District.*

Akuyikuba khona nzuzo ngokuba yingxenywe yalolu cwaningo. Ubunina abuyukuvezwa noma ngaphansi kwasiphi isimo uma kusenziwa ucwaningo nasemva kwalokho. Esikhundleni salokho, amagamaze ayosetshenziswa esikhundleni samagama enu empela. Izimpendulo zenu kwinhlobo nasemaqenjini ezingxoxo ziyophathwa ngobunono bekati.

Ukuba yingxenywe yalolu cwaningo akubophezelwe, ngalokho-ke uvumelekile ngaphandle kokucwaswa nokugxekwa. Inhlobo iyoqoshwa ngokwephimbo ngesiqophamazwi ukungisiza ngizwisise obekushiwo.

Bonke abayingxenywe yocwaningo bayokwaziswa kusenekhathi ngenhlobo ukuze lokhu kwenzeke ngenekhathi esivumelana nawo wonke umuntu oyingxenywe yalo msebenzi.

Uma unemibuzo mayelana nalolu cwaningo, ungathintana nalaba abalandelayo ngezansi:

UMCWANINGI	UMELULEKI	IHHOVISI LWEZOCWANINGO
Mrs Gugulethu M. Jiyane	Dr Ncamisile P. Mthiyane	Mr P. Mohun
Tel: 032 551 5958 Cell: 073 601 9088 Email: 4khosij@gmail.com	Tel: 031 - 260 3424 Cell: 0825474113 Email: mthiyanen1@ukzn.ac.za	Tel: 031 - 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Siyabonga ngokwamukela ukuba yingxenye yalolu cwaningo.

Ozithobayo

Gugulethu M. Jiyane (Nkk.)

APPENDIX D



Protocol reference number : HSS/1831/017M

Project title : An exploration of perspectives of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners in two schools in Ilembe district

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: BREACH OF ETHICAL PROCESSES AT UKZN

I, the undersigned,

Student Name (Student Nr) : Mrs Gugulethu M Jiyane (216074157)

School : Education

Campus : Edgewood

as the Principal Investigator ("the Applicant") in the above stated project, do hereby acknowledge that:

1. The University of KwaZulu-Natal's (hereinafter "UKZN") Research Ethics Policy (V) does not make provision for Retrospective Ethics Approval;
2. All researchers (both students and staff) at UKZN are obliged to be familiar with this policy;
3. I have been informed that research cannot be done without obtaining full ethical clearance as per the policy and guidelines of the University;
4. **Research for the above project was undertaken by myself without final ethical clearance being obtained;**
5. The University reserves its right to, at any stage and time, withdraw the relevant degree obtained by myself if:
 - 5.1 It becomes known to UKZN that there was an additional ethical breach during any field work or whilst collection data for the above stated project, and / or
 - 5.2 I fail to apply for ethical clearance for any future research projects.
6. In addition to point 5 above, the appropriate disciplinary processes will follow should this occur again.

I further acknowledge that should there be any legal implications/actions emanating from the research in terms of any ethical violations, I will be personally liable and hereby indemnify UKZN against any legal action that may arise from my failure to adhere to the University Research Ethics Policy (V).

Signed at STANCER on the 16 day of NOVEMBER 2018

Signature of applicant: [Signature]

Signed at _____ on the _____ day of _____ 2018

Signature of Chair (HSSREC): _____ Date: _____

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX E



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Anele Mlaba
Tel: 033 392 1063

Ref.:2/4/8/1456

Ms G.M Jiyane

P.O. Box 2709
Stanger
4450

Dear Ms Jiyane

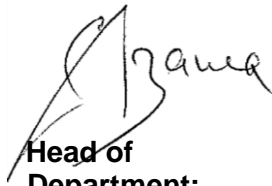
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“AN EXPLORATION OF PERSPECTIVES OF FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS OF GIFTED LEARNERS IN TWO SCHOOLS IN ILEMBE DISTRICT”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.

6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 26 January 2018 to 09 July 2020.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below.
8. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
9. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.
Mbozamo Primary School
Mavivane Primary School

Dr. EV Nzama



**Head of
Department:
Education
Date: 19
February
2018**

APPENDIX F

Angela Bryan & Associates

6 La Vigna
Plantations
47 Shongweni Road
Hillcrest

Date: 14 January 2019

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that the Master's Dissertation: To Explore Perceptions of Teachers of Gifted Learners in the Foundation Phase written by Gugulethu Jiyane has been edited by me for language.

Please contact me should you require any further information.

Kind Regards

Angela Bryan

angelakirbybryan@gmail.com

0832983312

APPENDIX G

Semi-structured interview schedule for teachers

An exploration of perspectives of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners. A case of two Primary schools in ILembe District

1. What do you understand about giftedness?
2. Is there any gifted learner in your classroom?
3. How would you identify a learner that is gifted in your classroom?
4. How do you feel about gifted learners? Why do you feel this way?
5. Have you received any specific training with regard to quality education for the gifted learner?
6. What are the attitudes of teachers towards gifted learners in your school?
7. Can you identify specific barriers to learning for the gifted learners in today's classrooms?
8. Do you think mainstream schools or classrooms make specific adaptations for learners who are gifted? Please motivate your answer.
9. What is your personal view on Inclusive Education in South Africa?
10. What is your school's view on Inclusive Education?
11. Do you think Inclusive Education allows for gifted learners to reach their full potential? Please motivate your answer.
12. How are gifted learners catered for in your classrooms or school?

APPENDIX H

Semi-structured interview schedule for parents

An exploration of perspectives of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners. A case of two Primary schools in ILembe District

1. Would you please describe your child to me?
2. What does gifted mean to you?
3. At what age did you begin to think that your child was gifted? Describe the behaviours that led you to think this.
4. What are your child's extra-curricular activities?
5. Describe your child's school performance in terms of school work.
6. When was your child identified as gifted?
7. Describe how the school is meeting your child's needs?
8. Often times parents of gifted children identified as gifted report challenges in parenting. Please describe your experiences as a parent of a gifted child.
9. Tell me how do you discipline your child? What works well for you?
10. How does your child get along with other children?

APPENDIX I

Focus group interview schedule for teachers

An exploration of perspectives of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners. A case of two Primary schools in ILembe District

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. How much experience do you have with gifted learners?
3. Have you received any professional development training on gifted education?
4. How do you teach gifted learners in your classroom?
5. How would you describe your experience of teaching gifted learners using inclusion in a normal classroom?
6. What type of inclusion strategies do you use when teaching gifted learners?
7. What challenges do you face when teaching gifted learners through inclusive education?
8. What type of support do you have in implementing inclusive education?
- 9 What would you need in order to be successful in teaching gifted learners?

APPENDIX J

TURN IT IN CERTIFICATE

The perception of Foundation Phase teachers of gifted learners: A case of two Primary Schools

ORIGINALITY REPORT

2%

SIMILARITY INDEX

2%

INTERNET SOURCES

1%

PUBLICATIONS

%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

scholar.sun.ac.za

Internet Source

1%

2

uir.unisa.ac.za

Internet Source

3

<1

%

[Felicia A. Dixon, Nina Yssel, John M.](#)

<1%

APPENDIX K

Semi-structured interview transcripts

I: Good day. So, would you tell me about your background in teaching? How long have you been teaching?

P3: *I have been teaching in the Foundation Phase for the past 25 years, and because of my experience I have been appointed as a master teacher. I am currently teaching grade three.*

I: What do you understand about giftedness?

P3: *Giftedness to me refers to a child who learns to read on his or her own, who is good with numbers. I also think that a gifted learner refers to a child that achieve more than we expect as teachers.*

I: Thank you. In your experience as a grade three teacher, have you identify any gifted learner in your classroom? And how did you identify them?

P3: *As I said that I have taught in the Foundation Phase for 25 years, each year I had one or more gifted learners in my classroom. This year I have 10 gifted learners in my classroom. But in my experiences I have found out that it is significant to have knowledge of the characteristics of gifted learners, because it can help teachers to effectively teach gifted learners.*

I: Oh, you have so many gifted learners! So, which characteristics have you identified from the gifted learners?

P3: *It's easy to identify them, they perform very well, and they finish their work quicker than other learners. And when they finish, they disturb other learners. That's why I give them more work. They are also fast thinkers.*

I: Okay, I understand. Have you perhaps thought of using them as peer educators?

P3: *Yes of course, I do that all the time. Sometimes I let them help me with assisting other learners who are struggling with reading. They play leading roles in reading*

I: How would you describe your experience teaching gifted learners in your classroom?

P3: I would describe it as mostly positive. I enjoy having bright learners in my class. But sometimes they are very exhausting. They need to be kept occupied all the time, otherwise they get bored.

I: Are there any challenges that you face when teaching the gifted learners?

P3: *Yes, one of the challenges is the lack of relevant materials to use with them. For example, our grade three reading books are very easy for the gifted learners. So, trying to find materials that are appropriate for them is difficult. I have talked to the Head of Department about this, and there was nothing she could do.*

I: Okay, I understand. So what have you done to overcome this challenge?

P3: *Mmmmh.....there is nothing much one can do. But sometimes I take them to the school library for reading. This sometimes help. Even though it is not enough.*

I: What have you learned from having gifted learners in your class?

P3: *I have learned that gifted learners do not know everything, as other people think. They struggle in as many areas as other normal learners. It's just that they get more frustrated if they struggle at something.*

I: Have you received any specific training with regard to quality education for the gifted learners.

P3: *No. We have not been trained to teach gifted learners. The only workshops that we have attended are for learners who have learning difficulties. I think the Department of education should allocate at least one teacher per school, who will specifically deal with gifted learners.*

I: Yes, I think that could really make a difference. What are your views concerning inclusive education?

P3: *According to my view, inclusive education does not talk about a gifted learner. It only focuses on struggling learners. I still believe that there should be expert educators in every school, who will give special attention to the gifted learners.*

