The experiences of teachers regarding teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia

Ina Olivier

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The experiences of teachers regarding teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia

by

Ina Olivier

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MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, INA OLIVIER, student number 12293572 hereby declare that this dissertation,

The experiences of teachers regarding teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia

which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

.....

INA OLIVIER

30 November 2017

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This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this dissertation, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval.

The author declares that she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's *Code of Ethics for Research* and the *Policy and Procedures for Responsible Research.*

DEDICATION

No one in the field of education would deny that there are myths surrounding dyslexia . . . but this does not mean that dyslexia is a myth.

- **Snowling**

This research is dedicated to all teachers who are making a positive difference in the lives of learners with dyslexia.

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ABSTRACT

The experiences of teachers regarding teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia

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Degree: M.Ed. (Learning Support, Guidance and Counselling)

The inclusive education policy in South Africa requires teachers to accommodate learners who are experiencing learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Research indicates that teachers experience the teaching of learners with dyslexia as challenging and are often unprepared to support these learners.

Within the context of the bio-ecological approach and asset-based approach, this qualitative multiple case study investigated how teachers perceive their role regarding teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, and how they could overcome challenges to effectively teach and support these learners. Three primary schools were purposively selected within the Gauteng province. Through criterion sampling, a sample of two Intermediate Phase teachers from each school was selected to participate in the study. Data sources include verbatim transcribed semi-structured interviews, observational data, participants' reflective journal, research journal, field notes, and visual data. Thematic analysis is used with acknowledgement of co-creation of knowledge and meaning by both the researcher and the participants.

Present findings suggest that teachers' attitudes could shape, influence, and inform their teaching approaches when teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. An asset-based approach could allow teachers to identify, mobilise, and manage assets and resources to address the challenges regarding teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. This in turn could lead to a change in teachers' attitudes and applied teaching approaches to teach and support these learners. The research findings may contribute to the existing knowledge base within the field of dyslexia, inclusive education and psychology. A better understanding of teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia could lead to more efficient teacher development and support to teachers in their everyday teaching of learners with dyslexia.

KEY TERMS

- Accommodate
- Asset-based approach
- Attitude
- Attributes
- Bio-ecological approach
- Dyslexia
- Experience
- Inclusive Education
- Teachers
- Teaching

DECLARATION OF EDITING

November 2017

This is to certify that I, the undersigned, was responsible for the language editing and technical formatting of:

THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS REGARDING TEACHING AND SUPPORTING LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA

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Disclaimer
The text was reviewed and edited with 'change tracking'. As such, the document I submit is fully editable, and the author is entitled to accept, reject, or modify my changes and suggestions. The final version of the document, submitted for assessment or publication by the author, may differ from that suggested by me.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
BDA	British Dyslexia Association
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBST	District-Based Support Team
EHRC	Equalities and Human Rights Commission
fMRI	Functional Magnetic Resonance Imagery
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
IDA	International Dyslexia Association
IE	Inclusive Education
IQ	Intelligent Quotient
ISASA	Independent Schools Association of South Africa
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LSEN	Learners from Special Education Needs Schools
MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imagery
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NGO	Non-government organisation
NIH	National Institute of Health
PET	Positron Emission Tomography
RADA	Red Apple Dyslexia Association
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER 1: CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Many people are uncertain of what dyslexia is, or know someone who has it, or have heard about famous people such as Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Walt Disney, Whoopi Goldberg, Tom Cruise and William Butler Yeats who, despite having dyslexia, achieved success in their field of expertise (Davis & Braun, 2010; Murphy, 2003). It is likely that when people hear the word 'dyslexia' they consider it as some form of a learning impairment, but the learning impairment is only one aspect of dyslexia (Davis & Braun, 2010). Dyslexia as a specific learning impairment is not only a condition specific to the individual but also specific in its symptoms to that individual. It is, therefore, not considered as a generalised impairment (Farrell, 2012; Hall, 2009; Lyon, Shaywitz, & Shaywitz, 2003; Washburn, Binks-Cantrell, & Joshi, 2014).

The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) defines individuals with an impairment as any person who has "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities" (Hall, 2009, p. 4). With regard to this definition, dyslexia can be classified as a specific learning impairment because of the impact it has on learning as one of those day-to-day activities.

Inclusion is an international trend, and with inclusive education being implemented worldwide (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Gordon, 2013; Sicherer, 2014; Swart & Pettipher, 2012), the government of South Africa has formulated a policy, *Education White Paper Six: Special Needs Education* (Department of Education, 2001), to embrace inclusion as the means by which learners who are experiencing barriers to learning will be educated. Consequently, it is illegal for schools to discriminate against learners with impairments through admissions, and in the curriculum either through teaching or resources (Department of Education, 2001; Hall, 2009). Since it is classified as a learning impairment, dyslexia is accommodated within this legislation and policy.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In many areas of South Africa, particularly rural areas, learners with impairments experience difficulty accessing schools and appropriate health services. These learners are furthermore vulnerable to violence, abuse, and exploitation (Nel, 2013). Although laws and policies attempt to address the needs of learners with impairments, it is likely that such

learners might not benefit from the current teaching system and teaching aimed at inclusive education, and therefore may not reach their full potential. Furthermore, knowledge of learner impairment is fragmented, and many gaps in service delivery remain due to insufficient resources, procedural obstacles, weak capacity of teachers, and inadequate budget allocations (P. Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Philpott & McLaren, 2011).

Since the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa in previously known mainstream classrooms, the increasing number of learners with impairments, and particularly learners who are experiencing learning difficulties, is raising concern among teachers. Teachers are increasingly becoming aware of learners who, because of a learning impairment, find it difficult to excel academically. At the same time, teachers are faced with the challenge of teaching and supporting learners with both learning and physical impairments (Gordon, 2013; Sicherer, 2014; Washburn et al., 2014).

It is believed that inclusive education requires all teachers to deal with learners who are experiencing learning difficulties – including dyslexia – in their classroom. Research (P. Engelbrecht, Oswald, Swart, & Eloff, 2003; Riehl, 2008; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996) indicates that teachers not only experience the teaching of learners with diverse educational needs as difficult and unrewarding, but that they also believe they are unprepared to support these learners.

As the demands and challenges on schools and teachers increase, so does the incidence of stress in the teaching profession (Schulze & Steyn, 2007). It is a widely-held view that the teaching profession is considered as one of the high-stress professions, with many teachers being exposed to above average levels of occupational stress (Carton & Fruchart, 2013; Coetzee, Jansen, & Muller, 2009). Research evidence from Gordon (2013) reveals that teachers could experience challenges such as time constraints, paperwork overload, inadequate support and resources, and feelings of being inadequately trained and qualified. Furthermore, the research of Schulze and Steyn (2007) identified possible contributing factors such as numerous changes inside and outside the school, and teachers' lack of professional confidence as some causes of teacher stress.

Schulze and Steyn (2007) also hold the view that high levels of teacher stress could have adverse effects on the teachers themselves, inhibiting classroom teaching and learning. Hodkinson (2006) concurs that teachers' teaching experiences could potentially affect their views and support for inclusion, and therefore, it is important to understand the experiences of teachers regarding the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia. The report of Wadlington and Wadlington (2005) indicates that teachers' misconceptions and lack of

awareness regarding dyslexia have a negative impact on the learner with dyslexia in the classroom. Moreover, the non-recognition of dyslexia and delayed support to the learner with dyslexia worsen the problem even further in the sense that teachers can become more frustrated than the learners themselves (Osmond, 1993).

On the contrary, when the learner is labelled as being dyslexic, the dyslexia is seen as absolute with no solution; the dyslexic label effectively ignores what is normal about the learner (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2006). For this reason, many people ignore the individual behind the impairment, focusing only on the impairment and not the individual as such (Nel, 2013). Tincher (2005) concurs that although numerous symptoms characterise the nature of dyslexia, the identification of any uniquely shared strengths among learners with dyslexia is neglected. Without a clear understanding of these unique core elements, the deficit model of dyslexia will continue to dominate research and intervention, identifying learners with dyslexia as being learning impaired when it may be a function of how these learners process linguistic and visual information. Therefore, research evidence could inform teachers and develop their understanding of dyslexia to enable them to teach and support those learners who are experiencing reading, spelling, and language-related difficulties in an inclusive classroom (Bell, McPhillips, & Doveston, 2011).

Within the capacity of a learning support specialist intervening with learners who experience reading and spelling difficulties, I have noticed that many parents and teachers are ignorant to the possibility that these learners might have dyslexia. Ignorance about dyslexia is a cause for concern, as misconceptions and prejudice towards dyslexia have evolved from the perception that people with dyslexia are lazy or stupid, or that it is just an excuse for parents as to why their children fail in literacy skills (Hall, 2009; Ho, 2004). Since the ignorance of dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the delayed support of learners with dyslexia impede the process of inclusion, it could be that these learners might not benefit from inclusive education and will, therefore, not reach their full potential.

Against the background of applying inclusive education policies, research indicates that teachers experience the teaching of learners with dyslexia as challenging and are often unprepared to support these learners which could inhibit classroom teaching and learning. Therefore, the present study attempted to voice primary school teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia.

1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

I was fortunate to be part of the South African education system that has undergone the paradigm shift from the early medical deficit model with the intention of segregation and

exclusion to the recent social-ecological model advocating integration and inclusion (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Swart & Pettipher, 2012). The rationale of this study arises from my personal interest in dyslexia as a specific learning impairment. As a learning support specialist at an independent primary school, and an Intermediate Phase teacher with many years of teaching experience, I support learners who experience difficulties with spelling, reading, and reading comprehension. During my intervention with these learners, I have noticed that not all learners who struggle with the acquisition of reading and language skills are necessarily slow learners. Furthermore, during my contact and informal conversations with fellow teachers at the schools where I was employed, many of my colleagues expressed their concerns regarding the possible challenges of implementing inclusive education to teach and support the increasing number of learners who are experiencing reading and language difficulties in a diverse classroom.

I started enquiring about the literature available on dyslexia and the inclusion of learners who experience learning difficulties[1]. In searching journal articles, books, and previous research studies about dyslexia, I have found that there is adequate information in the literature regarding the history (Pavey, 2007; Shaywitz, Morris, & Shaywitz, 2008; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005), causes and characteristics (Allen, 2010; Bell et al., 2011; Bornman & Rose, 2010; Davis, 1992; Farrell, 2012; Lyon et al., 2003; Murphy, 2003; Williams & Lynch, 2010), as well as the social and emotional consequences of dyslexia on the learner and the parents (Burden, 2008; Humphrey, 2002; Macdonald, 2009, 2010; Osmond, 1993). To examine how teachers' attitudes regarding dyslexia affect their experiences of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, I reviewed international research studies (Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010; Klehm, 2014; Sicherer, 2014; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Washburn et al., 2014; Williams, 2012) and found that these studies were conducted using a quantitative methodology implementing surveys and questionnaires.

In contrast to quantitative research being conducted to examine the knowledge base of pre-service teachers from the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) regarding dyslexia as a language-based learning impairment (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Washburn et al., 2014; Williams, 2012), very little evidence of qualitative research was found in the literature on the question of Intermediate Phase teachers' experiences of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia from the teachers' point of view. Because the information presented in the literature review is based on research findings from several studies conducted in other countries (Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010; Klehm, 2014;

[1] Refer to Appendix A1 for an analysis of resources used in the literature review.

Sicherer, 2014; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Williams, 2012), there would seem to be a definite need for conducting more research on dyslexia within the South African context.

To support the need for conducting research regarding dyslexia within the South African context, the findings of the phenomenology study conducted by Gordon (2013) reveal that there is a research gap in information that specifically addresses the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of teachers toward inclusion. In addition to these findings, quantitative researchers such as Burden (2008), Gwernan-Jones and Burden (2010), and Humphrey (2002) also point out that teacher knowledge, perceptions, and attitude regarding dyslexia and learners with dyslexia are exploratory, and still, need investigation. These findings indicate a need to explore teachers' attitudes regarding dyslexia as well as how teachers manage their classrooms and teaching styles because any preconceived ideas could influence the way in which they teach and support learners with dyslexia (Sicherer, 2014; Washburn et al., 2014; Williams, 2012). Besides, conducting a qualitative research study regarding teachers' experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia could be significant to teachers and mental health practitioners. The research findings may illuminate their understanding of dyslexia and the possible effects it could have on teachers' everyday teaching of learners with dyslexia.

Against this rationale, the study could both elaborate on the current knowledge base and contribute to new knowledge within the field of dyslexia, inclusive education, and psychology as the findings could reveal how teachers experience the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. Moreover, teachers, educational psychologists, and researchers may gain more insight into how teachers perceive their role in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia and how these teachers overcome challenges within an inclusive education environment to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia. It is likely that, in the long term, a better understanding of teachers' experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia will lead to more efficient teacher development and support to teachers in their everyday teaching of these learners.

1.4 PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE STUDY

To address the above research needs, the purpose of this qualitative study was to provide a rich, in-depth description of Intermediate Phase teachers' experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. The study set out to enter the teacher's domain at public and independent primary schools in the Ekurhuleni North, Ekurhuleni South, and Gauteng East school district of Gauteng with the intention to investigate how teachers perceive their role in teaching and supporting the learner with dyslexia. This study also intended to

explore how teachers overcome challenges within an inclusive education environment to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following primary research question:

> How do Intermediate Phase teachers experience the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia?

To address the primary research question, the following secondary research questions were developed:

- How do Intermediate Phase teachers perceive their role with regard to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia?
- How can Intermediate Phase teachers overcome challenges within an inclusive education environment to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia?

1.6 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

The working assumptions formulated in Table 1.1 were based on a review of the literature on inclusive education and dyslexia, theories and findings from previous research, as well as my own knowledge, professional experience, and involvement in supporting learners with spelling, reading, and language difficulties. The sources mentioned in Table 1.1 are only examples of the literature and do not reflect a full literature review.

Table 1.1: Working assumptions (adapted from Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 551)

Potential Working Assumption	**Source** (These are examples of the literature and do not reflect a full literature review).
Although most teachers are qualified and attend in-service training, not all of them have adequate knowledge, skills and experience to provide effective teaching and support for all the learners in their classrooms, including learners with dyslexia. Above all, teachers could, despite their qualifications and in-service training, believe that they may lack experience, confidence, and classroom support to teach and support learners with dyslexia.	***Professional experience and Literature*** Sicherer, M. (2014). *Exploring Teacher Knowledge about Dyslexia and Teacher Efficacy in the Inclusive Classroom: A Multiple Case Study.* (Doctoral dissertation, Northcentral University, San Diego). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database. (UMI No. 3620170). Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1536405084?accountid=14717 Gordon, T. R. (2013). *Attitudes regarding inclusion among general education teachers at the Elementary Level.* (Doctoral study, Walden University, Minnesota). Available

	from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database. (UMI No. 3560670). Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1357147890?accountid=14717
The teachers' ability and skills to teach and support the learner with dyslexia may be influenced by their attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment.	***Professional experience and Literature*** Washburn, E. K., Binks-Cantrell, E. S., & Joshi, R. M. (2014). What do preservice teachers from the USA and the UK know about dyslexia? *Dyslexia, 20*(1), 1-18. doi:10.1002/dys.1459
Teachers' attitudes regarding dyslexia could lead to stigmatisation and labelling of learners with dyslexia.	***Literature*** Ho, A. (2004). To be labelled, or not to be labelled: that is the question. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 32*(2), 86-92. doi:10.1111/j.1468-3156.2004.00284.x
Some teachers' limited knowledge regarding dyslexia and possible misconceptions and prejudice toward the learner with dyslexia may cause them to become frustrated in teaching learners with dyslexia.	***Professional experience and Literature*** Klehm, M. (2014). The effects of teacher beliefs on teaching practices and achievement of students with disabilities. *Teacher Education and Special Education: The Journal of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, 37*(3), 216-240. doi:10.1177/0888406414525050
The teaching of learners with dyslexia could be demanding as these learners require intensive, structured and systematic instruction to make progress in their spelling and reading skills. It is therefore quite possible that teachers may experience challenges in the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia.	***Professional experience and Literature*** Bornman, J., & Rose, J. (2010). *Believe that all can achieve: Increasing classroom participation in learners with special support needs*. Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik.
Teachers' awareness of their own attributes, strengths, and assets may support their teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia.	***Professional experience and Literature*** Engelbrecht, A. (2013a). The barrier: Could it be me? In M. Nel, A. Engelbrecht, H. Swanepoel, & A. Hugo (Eds.), *Embracing diversity through multi-level teaching: For Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phase* (pp. 51-73). Cape Town, South Africa: Juta.

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

With reference to Figure 1.1, the following section provides the definitions and clarifications of relevant concepts employed in this study.

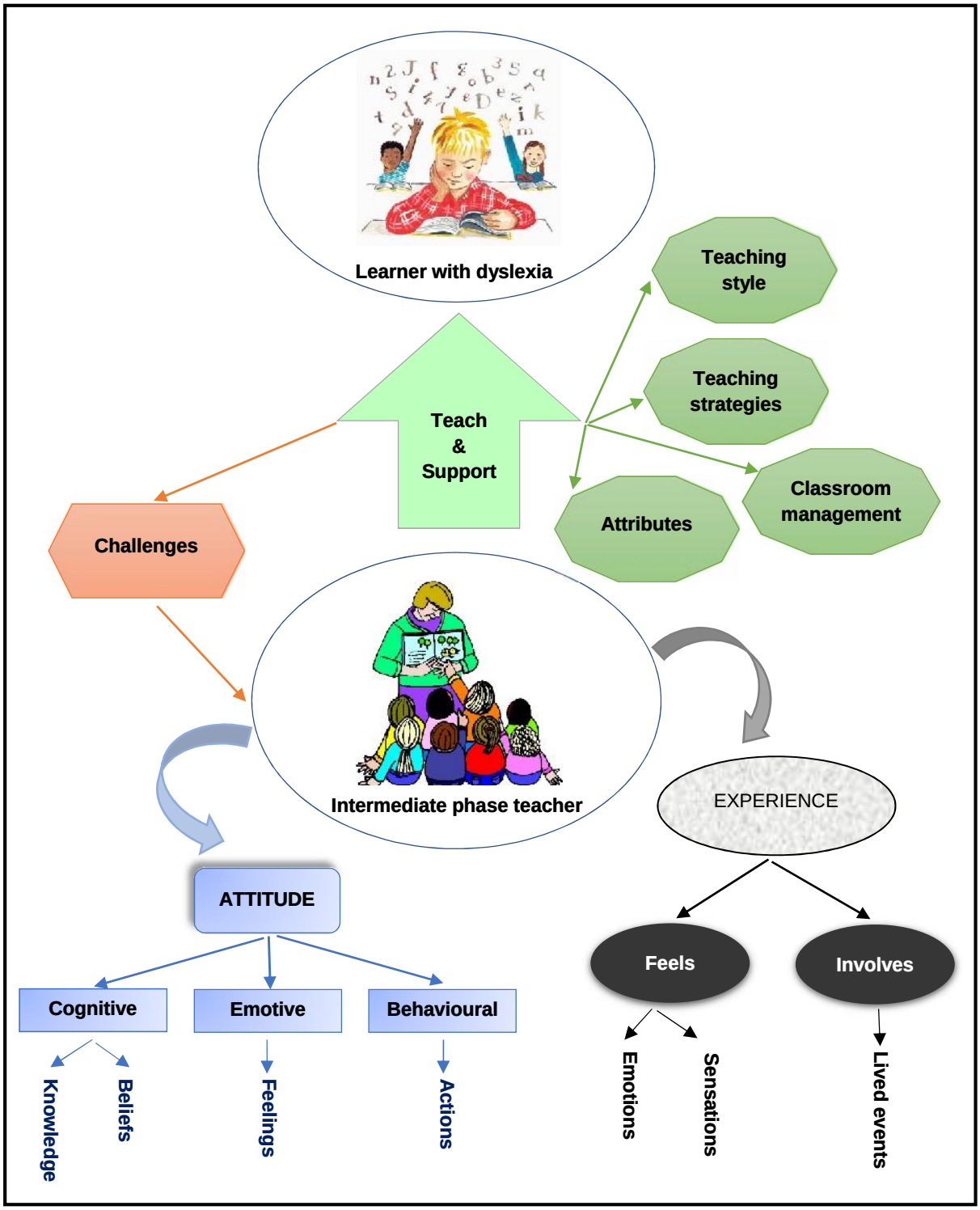


Figure 1.1: **Concept map of key concepts** (Ancess & Vreeland, 2012; Bhatia, 2009; Corsini, 2002; De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013b; Heimlich & Norland, 2002; Miller, 2011; Plevin, 2013, Swanepoel, 2013; UNESCO, 2001; VandenBos, 2007)

1.7.1 Accommodations

The term 'accommodations' refers to a strategy that intends to reduce the effects of dyslexia in the academic environment to enable learners to demonstrate what they know. However, it does not alter the amount of information that the learner should learn. It can also be defined as tools and procedures that provide equal access to instruction and assessment for learners with dyslexia and might include untimed tests or extra time on assignments (Bailey, Jacob, & Wadlington, 1996; Bornman & Rose, 2010; Gordon, 2013).

1.7.2 Attitude

This concept can be defined as a learned predisposition to react to a given situation or a person in a consistent way (Corsini, 2002). Attitudes are considered to have three components: cognitive, emotive, and behavioural. The cognitive component consists of a person's knowledge and beliefs which explain the holding of the attitude. The emotive component involves the emotional aspects of the attitude and refers to the person's feelings of distaste or affection. The behavioural component reflects the extent to which a person is prepared to act towards the attitude object in a certain way (Bhatia, 2009; Corsini, 2002; De Boer et al., 2010). Attitudes are complex products of learning, experience, and emotional processes and include enduring preferences, prejudices, superstitions, and scientific or religious views (Corsini, 2002).

1.7.3 Attributes

Corsini (2002) and VandenBos (2007) define attributes as the essential quality or character of a person, sensation or object. Individual personality traits complement and affect teachers' attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning, and will influence their curriculum delivery (Engelbrecht, 2013b).

1.7.4 Challenges

Challenges can be defined as obstacles evaluated as opportunities rather than threats. A threat becomes a challenge when the individual's coping resources are adequate not only to overcome the stress associated with the obstacle but also to improve the situation in a measurable way (VandenBos, 2007).

1.7.5 Classrooms

A classroom can be defined as a room or any place in a school or college where groups of learners are taught (Hornby, 2010). In the context of this study, teachers need to create a classroom environment in which learners have a sense of belonging and unconditional acceptance (Engelbrecht, 2013c).

1.7.6 Classroom Management

This concept relates to the teacher's skill of dealing with learners or situations in a successful way (Hornby, 2010). Rob Plevin (2013) defines classroom management as everything that is under the direct control of the teacher. According to Jackie Ancess (Ancess & Vreeland, 2012), classroom management is to set up an orderly and safe space so that the learners can learn what the teacher wants them to learn. Classroom management is, therefore, a complex task whereby teachers run a classroom so that it becomes an optimally healthy and inclusive environment (Donald et al., 2006).

1.7.7 Diversity

This concept refers to the multi-faceted variations and differences found among people, families, learning contexts and communities (UNESCO, 2001). Diversity is visible in economics, culture, race, background, the size of families, geographic location, talents and skills, and the natural environment (Eloff, 2006).

1.7.8 Dyslexia

The word 'dyslexia' is derived from the Greek words *dys*- (impaired) and *lexis* (word). In essence, dyslexia means a disorder that causes a marked impairment in the development of basic reading and spelling skills (Boyadjian & Ghanem Zogheib, 2011; Mather & Wendling, 2012; McGuyer, 2011). Dyslexia is neurobiological in origin and can be classified as a specific learning impairment because of the impact it has on learning as a day-to-day activity (Hall, 2009). Dyslexia is characterised by difficulties in accurate and fluent word recognition, and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. Secondary consequences may include difficulties with reading comprehension which leads to a reduced reading experience that may impede the expansion of vocabulary and background knowledge (Lyon et al., 2003).

1.7.9 Experience

This concept refers to a conscious event that is lived through, as opposed to one that is imagined or thought about. The individual is feeling emotions and sensations and is involved in what is happening, rather than standing back at a distance and theorising (Bhatia, 2009; Corsini, 2002; VandenBos, 2007).

1.7.10 Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a developmental approach designed to meet the educational needs of all children, youth, and adults, with emphasis on individuals subjected to marginalisation and exclusion (Spasovski, 2010). Swart (2004) defines inclusive education (IE) as "the

practice and process of involving and meeting the diverse needs of all learners – regardless of age, ability, socio-economic background, talent, gender, language, HIV status and cultural origin – in supportive classrooms and schools" (p. 231). To implement IE, teachers, schools, and systems may need to change to better accommodate learners' diversity needs and that these learners are included in all aspects of school life. Moreover, IE means a process of identifying, reducing or removing any barriers within and around the school that obstructs learning (UNESCO, 2001).

1.7.11 Individuals with Impairments

The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 define individuals with impairments as any person who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (Hall, 2009; Pavey, 2007).

1.7.12 Intermediate Phase Teachers

The teachers referred to in this study are South African school teachers who received tertiary training of at least three years, and who are teaching learners who are usually or typically between the ages of 10 years and 12 years in the Intermediate Phase (Grade 4 to Grade 6) at ordinary primary schools and Special Education Needs Schools (LSEN).

1.7.13 Knowledge

The word 'knowledge' refers to a type of experience that includes a vivid representation of a fact, formula, or complex condition, together with a strong belief in its truth (Corsini, 2002). Knowledge is the information and understanding of a specific topic of the world in general, as well as skills acquired through education or experience (Hornby, 2010; VandenBos, 2007).

1.7.14 Learners

The word 'learners' relates to school children who are in the process of acquiring new information, behaviour patterns, or abilities (Corsini, 2002; Hornby, 2010). This study has focused on teachers who are teaching and supporting primary school-going children who are usually or typically between the ages of 10 years and 12 years in the Intermediate Phase (Grade 4 to Grade 6).

1.7.15 Perception

It relates to the process by which the brain receives the flow of information about the environment from the sense organs through activities such as recognising, observing, and

discriminating to become aware of objects, relationships, and events. These activities enable an individual to understand, interpret, and organise the stimuli received into meaningful knowledge to make sense of the environment (Dednam, 2011; Statt, 1998; VandenBos, 2007).

1.7.16 Special Concessions

These are alternative methods of assessing learners with specific learning needs in order to provide learners with barriers to learning just and fair opportunities in an inclusive education system (University of Pretoria, 2010b). For example, asking a learner with dyslexia to give an oral report when other learners are required to do a written report (Bailey et al., 1996).

1.7.17 Support for Learners with Dyslexia

Support refers to structured interventions that learners are receiving in the classroom at school. The levels of support are specific to the needs of the learners and the intensity may vary from limited to extensive support (Bornman & Rose, 2010).

1.7.18 Teaching of Learners with Dyslexia

The teaching of learners with dyslexia involves a constant and intentional search for effective ways of connecting with the learners and the learning process (Donald et al., 2006). Low expectations and an urge of parents, teachers, and caregivers to do everything for the learner result in a 'learned helplessness' which can be disastrous. Teachers are challenged to look at the curriculum through the "eyes of the learner" rather than to look at the learner through the "eyes of the curriculum" (Bornman & Rose, 2010, p. 24).

1.7.19 Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies are actions that teachers could take when presenting lessons or interacting with learners to assist and support their learning (UNESCO, 2001). It is important to use the strategy of designing down or scaffolding concepts, knowledge and skills into manageable steps to allow enough time for learners experiencing barriers to learning to practically demonstrate their acquisition of skills, knowledge, and concepts (Swanepoel, 2013).

1.7.20 Teaching Styles

Heimlich and Norland (2002) define teaching style as the interface between teachers' beliefs and values, and the behaviours that they incorporate in the teaching-learning exchange. Teaching styles also relate to the personal attributes that define a teacher's

classroom methods and behaviour. Some qualities associated with teacher effectiveness include mastery of subject matter, pedagogical thinking, organisational ability, enthusiasm, warmth, calmness, and the establishment of rapport with learners (Corsini, 2002; VandenBos, 2007). Teaching styles can also be interpreted as curriculum delivery styles, and refer to the different ways of delivering the curriculum (Engelbrecht, 2013b). According to Miller (2011), there are generally four different curriculum delivery styles – linear, laissez-faire, critical theorist, and holistic.

1.8 OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was guided by interpretivism as an epistemological paradigm, a qualitative research approach as a methodological paradigm, and a multiple case study as the research design. Table 1.2 provides a summary of the framework for the research process followed in this study and was adapted from the study of Loots (2011). In presenting the outline of the research methodology, I refer to the research questions as the focus of the study, the relevant literature and conceptual framework as background to the study, and the applied research methodology to address the purpose and aim of the study. The research methodology and strategies are further clarified by referring to the paradigmatic approaches, the research design and sampling procedures, the data collection and documentation strategies, as well as the data analysis and interpretation. Also, included in Table 1.2 are the ethical considerations and applied strategies to ensure quality criteria. Chapter 4 provides a detailed discussion of the research methodological choices I have made.

Table 1.2: Framework of the research methodology and research process followed in this study (adapted from Loots, 2011, p. 14)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	
Primary Question	**Secondary Questions**
How do Intermediate Phase teachers experience the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia?	How do Intermediate Phase teachers perceive their role with regard to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia? How can Intermediate Phase teachers overcome challenges within an inclusive education environment to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia?

LITERATURE REVIEW (Chapter 2) AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK (Chapter 3) AS BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY				
Dyslexia as a specific learning impairment: definition, cause, and characteristics.	Classroom management and teaching strategies to teach and support learners with dyslexia.	Challenges regarding teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.	Coping resources and strategies which assist teachers to alleviate challenges regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia.	A conceptual framework based on the asset-based approach and Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective within the wider positive psychology paradigm.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGIES (Chapter 4)							
Paradigmatic Approaches	**Research Design and Sampling**	**Data Collection Strategies**	**Data Documentation Strategies**	**Data Analysis and Interpretation**	**Quality Criteria**	**Applied Strategies to ensure Quality Criteria**	**Ethical Considerations**
✚ Interpretivism ✚ Qualitative Research	✚ Comparative Case Study ✚ Purposeful sampling of cases ✚ Criterion sampling of participants	✚ Semi-structured individual interviews ✚ Classroom observations ✚ Teachers' reflection on their experiences ✚ Teachers' lesson plans ✚ Learners' lessons and assessment activities	✚ Verbatim transcripts of audio recordings ✚ Observation protocol ✚ Participants' reflective journal ✚ Research journal ✚ Field notes ✚ Visual data	✚ Narrative approach ✚ Thematic analysis and interpretation	✚ Credibility ✚ Dependability ✚ Authenticity ✚ Confirmability ✚ Transferability	✚ Prolonged engagement with participants ✚ Member checks ✚ Crystallisation ✚ Rich, thick descriptions and field notes ✚ Reflexivity ✚ Peer reviewing ✚ Supervision debriefing ✚ Building an audit trail	✚ Approval of Ethics committee ✚ Permission from GDE ✚ Informed consent ✚ Informed assent ✚ Right of privacy ✚ Confidentiality ✚ Anonymity ✚ Voluntary participation ✚ Protection from harm ✚ Access to results ✚ Discuss ethical dilemmas with supervisor ✚ Role of the researcher

1.9 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

The overall structure of this study takes the form of six themed chapters, including this introductory chapter.

CHAPTER 1: CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

In this first chapter, I provide an overview of the study. To begin with, the introduction and background of the study are stated; followed by a brief description of the problem statement and rationale. Next, I present the purpose and aim of the study as well as the research questions that have guided the study. Then, the working assumptions and relevant concepts associated with the research are defined to give a sense of coherence. Finally, I briefly address the research methodology, ethical considerations, and quality criteria.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In Chapter 2, I present a review of the existing literature to elaborate on the background of the study and to further explore the research problem. In reviewing the literature, the research gaps and limitations, as well as the positive work being done to improve the learning experience for those affected by dyslexia, are identified to reveal possible areas for future investigation. Dyslexia as a specific learning impairment is explained, followed by teachers' classroom management and teaching strategies to support learners with dyslexia. Also, the possible challenges of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are presented. I conclude the phenomenon of dyslexia with a discussion of the attributes and resilience factors that could assist teachers with their teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this third chapter, I discuss the conceptual framework that was developed for this study. In the context of the relationship between the teacher and the learner with dyslexia within the classroom, and with the focus on teachers and their experiences regarding the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia, the conceptual framework is based on Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective and the asset-based approach within the wider positive psychology paradigm.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Chapter 4 provides a detailed discussion of the research methodology, research design, and strategies applied to the research process. I explain the research methodology with regard to the paradigmatic approaches, the research design and sampling procedures, the data collection and documentation strategies, as well as the data analysis and

interpretation. The limitations and strengths concerning the research process are identified, and I conclude this chapter by referring to the quality criteria and ethical considerations of this study as well as the role of the researcher in the research process.

CHAPTER 5: REPORTING THE RESULTS

In Chapter 5, I provide the results of the study by presenting the themes, subthemes, categories, and subcategories as they emerged during the thematic content analysis administered on the raw data of the transcribed interviews, field notes, and textual data.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes with Chapter 6. I address the research questions and working assumptions posed in Chapter 1 by presenting the research findings in relation to the relevant literature presented in Chapter 2. The challenges and limitations are mentioned, followed by recommendations, including recommendations for further research, practice, and training.

1.10 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this qualitative, comparative case study was to provide a rich, in-depth description of the Intermediate Phase teachers' experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. The current chapter serves as an introduction and overview to the study. The introduction and background are stated, followed by the problem statement, rationale, and research questions. The key concepts underpinning the study are discussed and defined. Finally, the research methodology, ethical considerations, and quality criteria are briefly addressed.

The next chapter proceeds with an overview of existing, relevant literature relating to the research problems being investigated.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present literature related to the learner with dyslexia, as well as literature related to the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia. Appendix A consists of the analysis of national and international resources such as books, articles, theses and dissertations, conferences, policies, documents and flyers, websites, newspapers, and magazines used in my literature review. Following this is a comprehensive review of the literature which can be found in the Addendum to Chapter 2: Literature Review. I compile the literature review into four sections – starting with an explanation of dyslexia; exploring the definition, causes, characteristics, and misconceptions of dyslexia. I also address the controversy regarding the dyslexia debate and the labelling and stigmatisation of individuals with dyslexia. In the second section, I discuss the different teaching styles, teaching strategies, classroom management and classroom management strategies which teachers apply to teach and support learners with dyslexia. The third section is concerned with inclusive education and the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. I conclude this chapter with the last section in presenting the assets, resources, and strategies that could assist teachers with their teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia.

2.2 WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?

Many professionals will claim that they know what dyslexia is. Yet, there are many misunderstandings and misconceptions about dyslexia, even in the educational setting (Williams & Lynch, 2010). The word 'dyslexia' is derived from the Greek words *dys*- (impaired) and *lexis* (word). In essence, dyslexia means a disorder that causes a marked impairment in the development of basic reading and spelling skills (Mather & Wendling, 2012). Dyslexia can be described as a language-based learning impairment which results in individuals experiencing difficulties with language skills such as reading, spelling, writing, and pronouncing words. Dyslexia is referred to as a learning impairment because dyslexia can make it very difficult for a learner to succeed academically in the typical instructional environment. Learners who are experiencing dyslexia in its more severe forms will qualify for special education, special accommodations, and extra support services (International Dyslexia Association, 2012). Dyslexia is an internationally accepted term and the condition affects children and adults in every country irrespective of the language or the education

system (Reid, 2011). Lerner and Johns (2012) concur that dyslexia is a severe reading disorder that has puzzled the educational and medical communities for years.

In an attempt to lessen the confusion regarding dyslexia as a learning impairment, Lyon (1996) excludes the following aspects: (a) dyslexia cannot be attributed to cognitive impairment, (b) it is not related to emotional disturbances, (c) it is not the result of cultural differences, and (d) it is not the disability of the disadvantaged. This view is supported by Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) stating that dyslexia is not caused by poverty, speech or hearing impairment, developmental delay, or the learning of a second language. However, these conditions may put a learner more at risk for developing a reading disorder.

Regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment, I present in this sub-section the definition, causes, characteristics, and misconceptions concerning dyslexia. This sub-section of the literature review acts as backdrop to understand the context in which teachers teach and support learners with dyslexia on a daily basis. I also address the controversy regarding the dyslexia debate and the labelling and stigmatisation of individuals with dyslexia.

2.2.1 Defining Dyslexia

Although professional organisations around the world have attempted to develop a definition of dyslexia, no universally accepted definition exists. Previous research on dyslexia argues that there is no agreement on the definition of dyslexia across English-speaking countries, nor is there an agreement on its causes, subtypes, and characteristics (Mather & Wendling, 2012; Ministry of Education, n.d.). However, Bornman and Rose (2010) propose the following definition of dyslexia:

> Dyslexia is a neurologically-based, often familial, disorder, which interferes with the acquisition and processing of language. Varying in degrees of severity, it is manifested by difficulties in receptive and expressive language, including phonological processing in reading, writing, spelling, handwriting, and sometimes in math. Dyslexia is not the result of lack of motivation, sensory impairment, inadequate instructional or environmental opportunities, or other limiting conditions, but may occur together with these conditions. Although dyslexia is lifelong, individuals with

dyslexia frequently respond successfully to timely and appropriate intervention. (p. 135)

The Red Apple Dyslexia Association (RADA) classifies dyslexia into three main types: (a) dyseidesia which entails the inability to perceive whole words as visual gestalts and match them with auditory gestalts (the visual decoding and encoding of a whole word); (b) dysphonesia which entails a deficit in visual-symbol and sound integrations (the auditory decoding and encoding of sounds and syllables), and the inability to develop phonetic word analysis-synthesis skills; and (c) dysnemkinesia which entails the inability to develop motor gestalts for written symbols, and write them without reversals in the correct direction (Red Apple Dyslexia Association, 2016).

Despite the several different definitions and types of dyslexia, there is a general agreement on a few aspects (Lerner & Johns, 2012; Shaywitz, 2003):

- Dyslexia has a biological basis and is caused by a disruption in the neural circuits in the brain.
- Dyslexia has perceptual, cognitive, and language dimensions.
- Dyslexia can't be cured, and dyslexia problems persist into adolescence and adulthood.
- Dyslexia leads to difficulties in many areas of life as the individual matures.
- Many individuals with dyslexia excel in other facets of life.

In this study, dyslexia will be interpreted as a specific learning impairment (Lyon et al., 2003) that has a serious impact on a learner's ability to acquire certain perceptual, cognitive, reading and language skills in order to learn.

2.2.2 Causes of Dyslexia

To date, there has been little agreement on the causes and effects of dyslexia (Ministry of Education, n.d.). According to Davis and Braun (2010), researchers originally thought that individuals with dyslexia had some form of brain or nerve damage or a congenital malfunction that interfered with the mental processes necessary for reading.

At present, there is a great deal of work on the neurological and genetic relationship with dyslexia. The use of magnetic resonance imagery (MRI), functional MRI (*f*MRI), and positron-emission tomography (PET) scans allow scientists and neurologists to observe the brain at work (Reid, 2011). Recent imaging research has demonstrated that the brains of individuals with dyslexia show different, less efficient patterns of processing during tasks

involving sounds in speech and letter sounds in words (Murphy, 2003; Shaywitz, 2003). Brain imaging studies show the neural pathways involved in reading (ibid.), and studies of brain activation patterns suggest that the brains of learners with dyslexia can be altered after effective intervention (Temple et al., 2003). It is, therefore, important to have a greater understanding of current brain research and its relation to learners with dyslexia in order to help teachers understand and assess instructional interventions so that they will be able to support their learners to succeed in the classroom (Hudson, High, & Al Otaiba, 2007).

There are various theories about why dyslexia exists and what causes it. Most were formulated to explain the characteristics of dyslexia and why the impairment occurred. The following competing theories have emerged and can be categorised into the different domains from which they have evolved (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Hall, 2009). It is, however, beyond the scope of this study to describe them in-depth, so, they are mentioned briefly.

2.2.2.1 Cognitive theories

These theories refer to the learner's inability to process sounds within words at the cognitive level, despite normal hearing (Bornman & Rose, 2010). It is not just about impaired reading and spelling abilities alone but also the processes underpinning literacy skills (Bell et al., 2011). Cognitive theories relate to the phonological deficit hypothesis and the dyslexia automatisation deficit (Reid, 2011) as well as the double deficit hypothesis (Wolf & Bowers, 1999).

2.2.2.2 Brain-level theories

The research of Hudson et al. (2007) has indicated that when accomplishing the same language task, the brain of an individual with dyslexia has a different distribution of metabolic activation than the brain of an individual without reading problems. In the dyslexic individual, there is a failure of the left hemisphere rear brain systems to function properly during reading. Many dyslexics show greater activation in the lower frontal areas of the brain which leads to the conclusion that neural systems in frontal regions may compensate for the disruption in the posterior area (Shaywitz et al., 2002). Brain-level theories relate to the Cerebellar deficit hypothesis (Riddick, 2010) and the Magnocellular deficit hypothesis (Reid, 2011). However, interpretations regarding these findings in the field of neuroscience should be made with caution, as research is still ongoing and not yet sufficiently developed to be applied in an educational context (Bell et al., 2011).

2.2.2.3 Genetic factors

A considerable amount of research activity has been focusing on the genetic basis of dyslexia (Reid, 2011). Dyslexia is both familial and heritable. The disorder is found in 23% to 65% of the children of parents with dyslexia. According to the Red Apple Dyslexia Association (2016), the risk of children being dyslexic if one of their parents has dyslexia is about 50%. If both parents have dyslexia, the risk of their children having dyslexia is 100%. Therefore, the familial risk is a useful indicator of dyslexia and can be observed as early as pre-school (Bell et al., 2011; Reid, 2011; Shaywitz et al., 2008).

One danger of genetic research is the assumption of inevitability. The other assumption is that because it is genetic there is little that can be done about it. It is not guaranteed that a parent with dyslexia will pass it on to the child, and the brain does not solely develop based on genetics. Nevertheless, a family history of dyslexia is something that teachers should be on the lookout for (Hall, 2009).

In contrast to the genetic and heritable view of dyslexia, critics could argue that the figures presented on heritability can be explained away by environmental factors. On the contrary, a closer examination of the figures suggests it is very unlikely that environmental factors have an effect because children who are not living with a relative with dyslexia are just as likely to have difficulties, while others living with a dyslexic relative may have no difficulties at all (Riddick, 2010). Although there seem to be signs of heritability (Hall, 2009; Pennington, 2003; Snowling, 2013), families share both genes and environments, making it difficult to separate the genetic and environmental contributions towards dyslexia (Bornman & Rose, 2010).

2.2.2.4 A new perspective regarding dyslexia

In shifting the paradigm to a broader perspective, which views learners with dyslexia within their families, as well as within their social and cultural context, all the factors pertaining to these learners can be considered (Bell et al., 2011). More recent theories have placed dyslexia as a socially constructed condition, arguing that it is a society which makes dyslexia a barrier in life rather than the condition itself (Hall, 2009; Macdonald, 2009; Pavey, 2007). This social model contrasts with the medical model and the deficit model which places the focus upon the individual, discussing disability in terms of a medical solution and the individual's perceived shortcomings (Pavey, 2007; Swart & Pettipher, 2012).

The causal modelling framework

Morton and Frith's three-stage causal model (Frith, 1995) has become widely acknowledged in the sense that it brings together the different approaches to understanding dyslexia. Referring to Figure 2.1, the model shows dyslexia to be considered in three related ways: (a) in terms of the brain and biology, that is, the anomalies in the brain structure, and the contribution of genetics; (b) in terms of cognition, that is, the thinking process; and (c) in terms of behaviour, that is, the things that learners do when tackling the process of developing skills in reading, writing and spelling, and mathematics. The environment, including the learning environment, is a factor alongside all three these elements. This model indicates that in paying greater attention to the learning environment, it can have an impact on the other elements (Pavey, 2007).

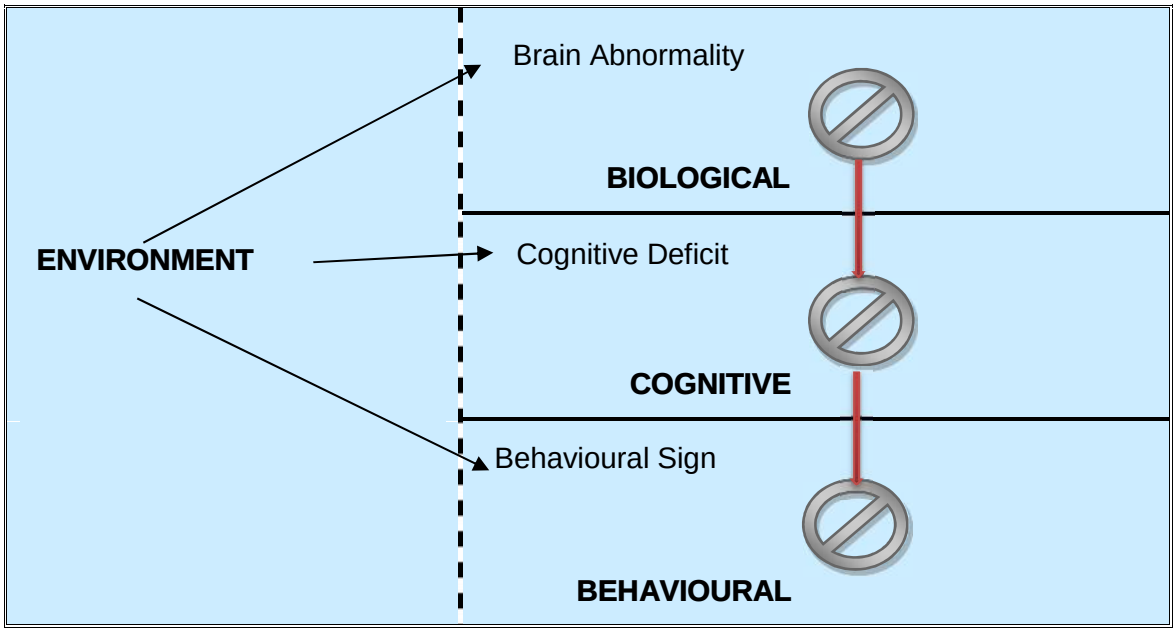


Figure 2.1: The basic causal model (adapted from Frith, 1995, p. 8).

To clarify the confusion between 'reading difficulty', 'poor readers' and 'dyslexia', Frith (1995) defines these concepts as follows:

- 'Dyslexia' refers to a developmental disorder, implying a specific causal chain across the three levels;
- 'Reading difficulty' addresses one level specifically, and is neutral as to the cause;
- The concept of a 'poor reader' is a description belonging to the behavioural level. Complex influences from internal and external environmental factors determine the behavioural outcome.

Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective

Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective (Donald et al., 2006; Swart & Pettipher, 2012; University of Pretoria, 2010b) was adapted by Poole (2003) to examine the environment in relation to the learner with dyslexia. The learner at the centre of this ecological model may have cognitive processing difficulties, and should not be defined solely by their dyslexia. Their learning is also influenced by a wider web of learning environments and relationships both within and outside the school. This will have an influence on the teacher's understanding of how dyslexia manifests itself in the system (Bell et al., 2011).

The social model approach regards misconceptions and teachers' ignorance concerning dyslexia as a social problem because it could have an influence on the development of the learner's learning skills, and have a negative impact at a later stage of the dyslexic learner's life. Furthermore, it is believed that the lack of sufficient knowledge concerning dyslexia may lead to social problems, such as failing in education, employment and segregation of society. These common threats not only affect learners with dyslexia, but also their families as well as the society. As reading and language difficulties could have a negative impact on the social life of an individual, it is, therefore, a social matter of social work (Jusufi, 2014).

To conclude, dyslexia can be conceptualised at a biological, cognitive and behavioural level. Problems faced by learners with dyslexia span far wider than just reading difficulties, and cultural and environmental factors interact at each of these levels (Frith, 1995). The teaching of learners with dyslexia is highly dependent on how teachers understand the nature of these learners' learning needs. Understanding the unique strengths and needs of the learner with dyslexia means that teachers should be adaptive in their teaching skills in offering learning experiences and environments where all learners can be included (Bell et al., 2011).

Having defined what is meant by dyslexia as a specific learning impairment, I will now move on to discuss the characteristics and misconceptions regarding dyslexia.

2.2.3 Characteristics of Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a developmental disorder that manifests in different ways at different developmental stages of the learner. At first, dyslexia manifests as a difficulty in learning letters and letter-sound correspondence, following in learning to accurately read words, and finally in impaired reading rate and written expression skills such as handwriting automaticity, spelling, and compositional fluency (Berninger, 2000).

The consequences of dyslexia have a noticeable impact on the education of the learner with dyslexia (Hall, 2009). The learner will display slow learning development which is different from most other learners, and one should keep in mind that during the learner's school years, learners with dyslexia will display most of the characteristics although it may vary from day-to-day, depending on the learner's developmental age (Bornman & Rose, 2010). Notwithstanding Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, it can still be noted that there are certain markers that single out learners who are 'at risk' – provided the teacher knows what to be alert to (Hall, 2009).

The most consistent thing about learners with dyslexia is their inconsistency. All the characteristics, however, will have a negative impact on learning in the classroom (Bornman & Rose, 2010).

- In the pre-school years, learners may experience a delay in speech and language development, poor rhyming skills, and difficulty in learning letters.
- In the early school years, poor letter-sound knowledge, poor phoneme awareness, poor word-attack skills, and problems with copying letters or words are significant.
- Typical characteristics such as slow reading, poor decoding skills when dealing with new words, as well as poor spelling are noticeable in the Intermediate Phase.
- In the Senior Phase, dyslexia is manifested in poor reading fluency, slow writing speed, and poor organisation and expression in written work.

Jusufi (2014) and Thompson (2014) claim that teachers are key role-players in the successful identification, assessment, and the effective instruction of learners with dyslexia. Early intervention is imperative in improving academic achievements and the well-being of the learner with dyslexia. As Snowling, Duff, Petrou, Schiffeldrin, and Bailey (2011) state: "A general aspiration is to identify dyslexia in development so that intervention can be put in place to prevent or limit reading difficulties. Such an approach should be more fruitful than one which necessitates waiting for children to fail in their reading before a 'diagnosis' of dyslexia can be made" (p. 158). Authorities such as the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) emphasise that teachers need to know what it feels like to have dyslexia in order to empathise with the learner and offer valuable support (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005). Therefore, an adequate level of teacher awareness of dyslexia is imperative (Thompson, 2014).

Teachers should keep in mind that a learner who has a learning difficulty such as dyslexia will demonstrate ongoing, significant difficulties with learning or with performing a particular set of tasks in reading, writing and mathematics over an extended period of time (Dunoon,

2015). To be able to suggest the necessary referrals, it is important that teachers carefully observe the learners in their classrooms to detect the warning signs of dyslexia. In assisting teachers to identify learners who may have dyslexia, I refer to the Addendum to Chapter 2: Literature Review in Appendix A2, which offers a comprehensive list of characteristics regarding dyslexia.

2.2.3.1 Comorbidities of dyslexia

Dyslexia often does not occur on its own. Very often learners with dyslexia may also experience comorbidity of other learning difficulties such as dyspraxia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Washburn et al., 2014). Learners with dyslexia may also have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or certain speech and language disorders (Pennington, 2003). Many children who are predominantly on the autistic spectrum will have some dyslexia (Hall, 2009; Pennington, 2003). In addition, learners with dyslexia might face issues such as low self-esteem and anxiety (Berninger, 2000) because of their feelings of failure and inadequacy and a sense of isolation from peers (Long, MacBlain, & MacBlain, 2007; Riddick, 2010). Moreover, low expectations and an urge on the part of parents, teachers, and caregivers to do everything for the learner result in a 'learned helplessness' which can be disastrous (Bornman & Rose, 2010, p. 24). Although intervention might prove successful for academic success, many learners with dyslexia will continue to struggle with the effects of their learning impairment throughout adolescence and their adult lives (Thompson, 2014).

2.2.4 Misconceptions about Dyslexia

Although dyslexia has been clearly defined and its characteristics are known, many people, including parents and teachers, have misconceptions about dyslexia (Williams & Lynch, 2010). One of the biggest misconceptions is that learners with dyslexia 'see' letters and words backwards and, in turn, write using reversals (Allen, 2010; Williams & Lynch, 2010). Shaywitz (2003) mentions that there is no evidence that these learners actually 'see' letters and words backwards, rather, they have difficulty connecting the proper names to letters and words. Learners with dyslexia do not have difficulty copying a word correctly; instead, they experience trouble with reading the word correctly.

Another common misconception mentioned by Shaywitz et al. (2008) is that learners will outgrow dyslexia or that dyslexia can be cured. As noted before, genetic studies affirm that dyslexia tends to run in families and there is no medical cure (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005). Dyslexia is a life-long condition although evidence-based, specific interventions have been reported to help improve reading problems associated with dyslexia (Shaywitz,

2003; Snowling, 2013; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Washburn et al., 2014). Other less common misconceptions are that learners with dyslexia are left-handed, have difficulties with spatial orientation, have problems tying shoelaces, and are clumsy (Allen, 2010).

As presented in Table 2.1, the Dyslexia Awareness and Resource Centre has disapproved the following myths about dyslexia:

Table 2.1: Myths and truths about dyslexia (Pavey, 2007; Snowling, 2013; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Washburn et al., 2014; Williams & Lynch, 2010).

Myths	Truths
Dyslexia is the result of brain damage.	Dyslexia is not the result of brain damage. The term 'dyslexia' grew out of early studies of individuals with brain damage, but children with dyslexia do not have brain damage. Today the term 'dyslexia' is used to refer to a specific type of reading difficulty that is neurological in nature (Williams & Lynch, 2010).
Words 'jump around on the page' for individuals with dyslexia.	Words do not 'jump around on the page' for individuals with dyslexia. Dyslexia is a problem with language processing at the phoneme level rather than a visual problem (Washburn et al., 2014; Williams & Lynch, 2010). However, the explanation of Davis and Braun (2010) regarding the individual with dyslexia's nonverbal conceptualisation and threshold of confusion resulting in disorientation where the perception of the symbols gets altered and becomes distorted, could lead to the misconception of words or letters jumping around on the page.
Reversals of letters and words are a sign of dyslexia.	Letter and word reversals alone are not predictors of dyslexia. Reversals of letters and words are typical of learners up to the age of seven years as they become more certain of a newly learned writing system (E. M. Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Washburn et al., 2014; Williams & Lynch, 2010).
Dyslexia occurs more often in boys than in girls.	Girls are just as likely to have dyslexia as boys. Longitudinal evidence suggests that boys and girls are equally affected by dyslexia (Snowling, 2013). More boys than girls are poor decoders in primary school and, therefore, are more likely referred by teachers and parents. Boys are more frequently over-identified for reading difficulties than girls, leading to the misconception that dyslexia rarely affects girls (Pavey, 2007; Snowling,

	2013; E. M. Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Washburn et al., 2014; Williams & Lynch, 2010).
Coloured overlays[2] improve the reading skills of children with dyslexia.	Coloured overlays have not been found to be differentially effective with learners who have dyslexia. Coloured overlays do not improve reading rate or reading accuracy (Pavey, 2007; Williams & Lynch, 2010).
Learners with dyslexia have low intelligence.	Learners with dyslexia do not have low intelligence. These learners do have average and above average intelligence, as their IQ-scores may not accurately indicate their actual abilities due to the language requirements of most IQ tests (Williams & Lynch, 2010).

Evidence from the study of Jusufi (2014) indicates that the lack of knowledge concerning dyslexia among teachers can influence their judgement towards learners' behaviour, and places learners with dyslexia at risk of being ignored, discriminated and excluded from other learners who do not experience learning difficulties. Washburn et al. (2014) support researchers in believing that teachers need to have an accurate understanding of dyslexia. To be able to teach and support learners with dyslexia, teachers need to understand the definition and the causes of dyslexia, and they should be able to identify a learner who may have dyslexia and who is not merely a struggling reader. Many scholars hold the view that teachers need to learn how to teach these hard-working, intelligent learners who, despite quality conventional reading instruction, still find it difficult to read (Allen, 2010; Hight, 2005; McGuyer, 2011; Sicherer, 2014). Consequently, teachers are likely to benefit by being more informed regarding the characteristics of dyslexia, and the misconceptions ought to be dispelled (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Washburn et al., 2014; Williams & Lynch, 2010).

Before proceeding to examine the needs of learners with dyslexia in a diverse classroom, I find it necessary to address the controversy regarding the dyslexia debate and the labelling and stigmatisation of individuals with dyslexia.

2.2.5 The Dyslexia Debate and Labelling Dilemma

Both the medical and educational models view dyslexia as a result of neurological and learning dysfunction (Macdonald, 2009). The medical model perceives dyslexia as a neurological dysfunction where full educational participation is restricted by the learner's neuro-biological factors (Nicolson & Fawcett, 1994; Olson, 2002; Stein & Talcott, 1999).

[2] Sheets of transparent coloured plastic that is placed over a page of a book in order to colour the text underneath without interfering with its clarity.

Similarly, the educational model refers to cognitive factors such as the phonological deficit hypothesis – rather recognising the influence of teacher-learner educational intervention than the deficit within the learner. Thus, the educational model views dyslexia as a specific learning impairment where characteristics are overcome by educational accommodations (Elliott, 2006; Macdonald, 2009; Riddick, 1995).

In contrast to the medical and educational models, the social model views discrimination as a social barrier, redefining dyslexia as a social rather than an individual impairment (Macdonald, 2009). A few academics in the United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA) have dismissed the legitimacy of dyslexia (Macdonald, 2010), and Rice and Brooks (2004) claim that diagnosis cannot distinguish between general reading difficulties and dyslexia, especially in the case for those diagnosed from a lower socio-economic background. Furthermore, Ho (2004) and Paradice (2001) support these statements, suggesting that there is little consensus on what dyslexia is and that a diagnosis takes blame away from the parent in relation to the learner's difficulties.

Elliott and Gibbs (2008) also view dyslexia as a random and socially defined construct. They argue that an attempt to distinguish between categories of 'dyslexia' and 'poor reader' or 'reading disabled' are "unsupportable, arbitrary and thus potentially discriminatory" (Elliott & Gibbs, 2008, p. 475). Many difficulties that are seen as typical of learners with dyslexia are also found in younger 'normal' readers who read at the same age level (Cassar, Treiman, Moats, Pollo, & Kessler, 2005), suggesting that reading difficulties are more characteristic of a certain stage of reading development than representing pathological features. According to Elliott (2006), the label of dyslexia has no use within the educational setting, as the intervention strategies between learners with dyslexia and learners with general reading difficulties are the same. He further suggests that all learners with reading difficulties should be provided with a structured intervention programme. For this reason, "there is little need to split up this population into dyslexic sheep and other poor reading goats" (Elliott, 2006, p. 15).

This anti-labelling approach implies that learners should not be labelled with dyslexia since it encourages parents to view the learner's educational difficulties as a medical rather than a social problem (Ho, 2004; Riddick, 2000). It also allows the learner access to support and technology that would otherwise be refused if the learner were seen as a low achiever (Macdonald, 2010). However, Riddick (2000) claims that dyslexia restrictions are entirely socially constructed by a literacy-based society. In brief, dyslexia is both a social construct and a medical condition, as specific support and interventions cannot be made until a biological difference is diagnosed (ibid.).

Although it seems that the anti-labelling approach has made an assumption that stigma is produced after the attachment of the dyslexia label, the research of Macdonald (2010) has rejected this idea. In fact, it is certain symptoms associated with learning difficulties that are stigmatised, rather than the attachment of a label. Being forgetful and disorganised, or finding reading and concentration difficult are factors beyond the learner with dyslexia's control. It is therefore very cruel to think of them as being stupid, lazy, or slow (Stark, 2015). Moreover, findings from the research of Taylor, Hume, and Welsh (2010) suggest that being labelled as having general special educational needs could negatively affect a learner's self-esteem because, unlike the label of dyslexia, this label offers little in the way of an explanation for the learner's academic difficulties. Besides, interventions are not as available for those learners with a less specific label. Therefore, labelling the learner with dyslexia can offer increased support in the form of technology to allow them to overcome the social barriers they confront in everyday life (Macdonald, 2010).

In their controversial book, *The Dyslexia Debate,* Elliott and Grigorenko (2014) dispute the use of the term dyslexia as well as the validity of a diagnosis of dyslexia. It is, therefore, apparent that a more specific, clarifying and defining diagnosis for dyslexia is required. Due to a lack of good communication between professionals in healthcare and education working within the field of dyslexia, a disagreement on a working definition of dyslexia exists, resulting in a lack of a unitary model of dyslexia based on clinical and scientific research (Paradice, 2001; Stark, 2015). Teachers often refuse to use the term dyslexia stating that it is a medical term (Washburn et al., 2014; Williams, 2012), and conversely, healthcare practitioners have been reluctant to diagnose dyslexia stating that it is an educational problem (Stark, 2015). Consequently, parents and learners with reading difficulties, resulting from dyslexia, often feel caught in the middle of this dilemma (ibid.).

Adding to the controversy of the dyslexia debate, Graham Stringer, Member of Parliament (MP) for Blackley in the United Kingdom (UK), has branded dyslexia as a 'cruel fiction', arguing that the "education establishment, rather than admit that their eclectic and incomplete methods for instructions are at fault, have invented a brain disorder called dyslexia" ("MP brands dyslexia a 'fiction'," 2009, para. 6). Dyslexia, however, exists despite intervention, and teaching methods cannot be held responsible for dyslexia and is certainly not the cause thereof (Stark, 2015).

Overall, it seems that individuals with dyslexia are barred from society because of neurological differences in the way they process language. One needs to reject the view that learners' reading difficulties are being caused either by medical factors or by poor

teaching. Some learners' reading progress may be slow due to teachers not knowing about evidence-based teaching methods, while some learners fail to acquire adequate reading skills despite intensive, high-quality teaching (ibid.).

Against this background, my study aimed to enter the teacher's domain with the intention to investigate how teachers perceive their role regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia.

2.3 MEETING THE NEEDS OF LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA IN A DIVERSE CLASSROOM

So far, this chapter has focused on the phenomenon of dyslexia as a specific learning impairment. In this section, I will first discuss existing literature which is concerned with inclusive education and meeting the needs of learners with specific learning impairments such as dyslexia. Secondly, I will provide a general overview of the different teaching styles followed by discussing certain teaching strategies. Finally, I will elaborate on classroom management and classroom management strategies which could enable teachers to teach and support learners with dyslexia.

2.3.1 Inclusive Education as Means to Teach and Support Learners who are Experiencing Barriers to Learning

Inclusion is an international trend, not only focusing on improving school systems for all learners, but also including disadvantaged groups in the existing settings (Ahsan, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2012). In South Africa, despite barriers to learning such as developmental delays, inability to access the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), the inability of the education system to support schools effectively, and the lack of family and school partnerships, learners with mild to moderate barriers to learning are included in ordinary schools (Engelbrecht, 2013a). As is the case of many other countries such as the USA (Washburn et al., 2014) and the UK (Bell et al., 2011), South Africa has gone through a number of policy reforms to promote inclusive education (Swart & Pettipher, 2012). Since the implementation of *Education White Paper Six: Special Needs Education* (Department of Education, 2001), inclusion has had a positive impact on the lives of many learners.

Statements of rights and government policies may set aims concerning inclusion, but it is individual teachers who ultimately make inclusive education (IE) either a success or a failure (UNESCO, 2001). This view is supported by Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff, and Pettipher (2002) who argue that teachers are the key stakeholders in determining the quality of inclusion as they can either play an important role in transforming schools or, by withholding necessary support, can bring no change at all. Therefore, Education White Paper Six (Department of

Education, 2001) emphasises the central role of the teacher in teaching and supporting learners who are experiencing barriers to learning.

Following both Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective and the socio-ecological model which acknowledges that there are barriers in society and within the system that create barriers for learners trying to achieve their learning potential (Donald et al., 2006; Swart & Pettipher, 2012), teachers are aware of the complex relationship between the learner, the school, the education system and the social, economic and political context of which all these role players are part. Whenever a barrier arises in any one of the many different contexts, it may affect the learner's learning process (Engelbrecht, 2013b). Teachers, therefore, have an important responsibility to ensure that all learners, regardless of their background, participate fully in society and that they have equal opportunities to be included and affirmed in the classroom (Department of Education, 2011; UNESCO, 2001).

As teaching perspectives are shaped by teachers' personal beliefs and intentions and complemented by their personality traits, teachers should monitor their own beliefs, attitudes and behaviours when responding to the diverse needs of all their learners. In addition, the South African teacher needs to be able and willing to acknowledge and respond appropriately to an inflexible curriculum delivery on learning and development. Therefore, the teaching perspective and personal characteristics of the teacher will shape the different ways of curriculum delivery (Engelbrecht, 2013b).

What follows is a brief description of the different curriculum delivery or teaching styles that might enable teachers to meet the needs of learners with dyslexia in a diverse classroom.

2.3.2 Teaching Styles

Teaching style involves matching teachers' behaviours with their philosophy and is, therefore, not an excuse for poor teaching, inappropriate classroom behaviours, or the use of poorly conducted teaching methods (Heimlich & Norland, 2002). Teachers select their teaching strategies and implement techniques according to their beliefs and values, and modify their style to fit their belief system. Teaching style is the recognition of each teacher's uniqueness, and teachers can harness their individual styles in order to be as effective as possible at teaching (ibid.).

To be flexible and to respond appropriately to the diverse needs of learners, teachers should know their own teaching style or curriculum delivery style (Engelbrecht, 2013b). In this sub-section, the four different curriculum delivery styles of Miller (2011) are briefly discussed.

2.3.2.1 Linear curriculum delivery style

To be linear means to have perfect control of the teaching environment. The linearist favours a structured environment where teaching and learning occur with maximum efficiency (Engelbrecht, 2013b; Miller, 2011). In this teaching style, diversity is not the ultimate goal, as it values procedure and routine (Miller, 2011). The learner is motivated to perform well, with mastery as the only acceptable outcome (Engelbrecht, 2013b).

2.3.2.2 Laissez-fair curriculum delivery style

The laissez-faire curriculum delivery style supports no official curriculum, hoping to maximise individual freedom. The laissez-fair approach wants to protect learners from being violated by coercion and power paradigms that impede learning against individual readiness (Miller, 2011). As learners have natural traits such as curiosity, passions and interests that affecting learning, they are encouraged to learn through play and exploration to become expert learners in areas that suit them (Engelbrecht, 2013b; Miller, 2011).

2.3.2.3 Critical theorist curriculum delivery style

The critical theorist curriculum delivery style emphasises social justice. The aim of the teachers is to guide learners to see social injustices and to engage in social activities outside the classroom (Engelbrecht, 2013b; Miller, 2011). Miller (2011) further mentions that any curriculum should invoke critical consciousness, advocating social and educational transformation and promote respect, understanding, appreciation and inclusion.

2.3.2.4 Holistic curriculum delivery style

The holistic curriculum delivery style contrasts with the linear and laissez-faire teaching styles as the curriculum emerges from negotiations among teachers, their learners, and the environment (Engelbrecht, 2013b; Miller, 2011). The teacher arranges the learning environment to stimulate learners to respond. This curriculum delivery style demands teacher awareness and knowledge in a wide variety of content to meet the diverse interests of learners. The holistic teacher should pay attention to each learner and the manner to which that learner responds and interacts with the lesson. The teacher also pays attention to the emotional, creative, and aesthetic components of learning, and assumes that enjoyable experiences lead to learning (Miller, 2011). From these observations, the teacher then redesigns the learning environment so that educational experiences are expansive and meaningful to all learners (Engelbrecht, 2013b).

In conclusion, learners have diverse learning styles and, therefore, teachers should consider making adjustments in their curriculum designs (Miller, 2011). Studying and

reflecting on how decisions are formed, raise awareness of how easy it is for teachers to become the barrier to their learners' learning (Engelbrecht, 2013b).

Turning now to teaching methods, I highlight different strategies and approaches to teaching and learning. I also discuss both the importance of curriculum differentiation and intervention strategies to support the learner with dyslexia.

2.3.3 Teaching Strategies

Teachers are aware that all learners are unique with different abilities, skills and knowledge, socio-economic backgrounds and personalities (Department of Education, 2011; Kendall, 2008) and, therefore, need different strategies and interventions. Because each learner has his or her own needs which the teacher must cater for in the classroom (Kendall, 2008), teachers should consider adopting a different approach to teaching and learning (Engelbrecht, 2013a). The way to respond to learner diversity in the classroom is through curriculum differentiation and could be done at the level of content, teaching methodologies, assessment and learning environment. Curriculum differentiation involves processes of modifying, changing, adapting, extending, and varying teaching methodologies, teaching and assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum (Department of Education, 2011). Moreover, curriculum differentiation enables all learners in an inclusive classroom to learn according to their individual needs (Gordon, 2013).

To implement inclusion through curriculum differentiation, multi-level teaching is one strategy that could meet learners' individual needs and cater for all ability levels in the classroom (Department of Education, 2011; Engelbrecht, 2013a; Gordon, 2013). Multi-level teaching considers the different types of learner needs within a classroom and provides learners with appropriate curricular and environmental modification to enable them to learn in ways that are appropriate to their learning style and academic goals (Gordon, 2013). In the sub-section that follows, I present different ways in which teaching and learning could be adapted to meet the needs of learners with dyslexia.

2.3.3.1 Curriculum differentiation

Within multi-level teaching, the teacher introduces the target concept to the whole class first. When assigning a task, the teacher will divide learners into separate groups according to their different levels. The teacher will end the lesson with the whole class together in the application stage of the lesson (Department of Education, 2011; Engelbrecht, 2013a). Pavey (2007) suggests that the tasks ought to be both relevant and manageable for

learners with dyslexia as these learners need ways of displaying their knowledge. Therefore, learners with dyslexia should not be settled in a low-ability group.

Curriculum differentiation and adaptation can be done at the level of content through differentiation in learning materials, the level of teaching methodologies through differentiation in methods of lesson presentation and lesson organisation, and the level of learning environment through differentiated assessments (Department of Education, 2011). Each one of these levels is discussed below.

Differentiation in learning materials

Learners are provided with a wide range of learning materials that cater for different abilities, interests and learning styles. Teachers need to be aware that learning materials might need to be adapted for learners with learning difficulties. For example, a learner with poor vision or a learner experiencing reading difficulties might need a larger print to be able to read easily (Department of Education, 2011). Learners with dyslexia access information differently, and it is more likely that the learner will benefit if the information is presented in a variety of styles. Textbooks, lecturing, and notes could therefore be supplemented or replaced by music, movement, and visual elements such as pictures, diagrams, and charts (Gordon, 2013).

Differentiation in methods of presentation

Teachers can modify the format in which tasks are presented, for example, the complexity of graphs, diagrams, illustrations, and cartoons. Pictures or diagrams could be replaced or supplemented by written descriptions and explanations. Also, the amount of information could be reduced, and unnecessary pictures of diagrams could be removed (Department of Education, 2011).

Differentiation in lesson organisation

Teachers need to differentiate the way in which activities are planned in a lesson to ensure maximum involvement and participation of learners in the lesson. In reflecting on Gardner's multiple intelligences and recognising learners' different learning styles, teachers should adapt their lessons based on learners' reading level, developmental levels, interests, backgrounds and learning profiles (Department of Education, 2011).

Differentiated assessment

Differentiating assessment involves a new way of thinking where teachers need an assessment approach that is flexible to accommodate learners' needs (Department of Education, 2011).

Building a collaborative network of support for teachers is imperative to successful curriculum differentiation. Through collaboration, teachers can learn from one another, support the tasks of one another, develop learning materials together, and serve as a resource to one another (Department of Education, 2011).

2.3.3.2 The learner experiencing dyslexia within an inclusive classroom

While autism and ADHD are two of the more common learning difficulties, dyslexia appears to be the most common specific learning difficulty in ordinary schools (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005). The National Institute of Health (NIH) in the USA has found that dyslexia affects 20% of learners, affects boys and girls equally, and is the leading cause of reading failure and early school dropout (Stark, 2015).

Since inclusive classrooms become increasingly prevalent, it is anticipated that more and more teachers will need to meet the needs of learners with dyslexia. Although dyslexia is 'invisible', it is a very real learning difficulty experienced by the learner (Wadlington, Jacob, & Bailey, 1996), and teachers should remember that interventions are meant to give the learner with dyslexia an equal chance, not an unfair advantage.

As already mentioned, dyslexia is a chronic, persistent specific learning difficulty and is neither a developmental lag nor outgrown (Shaywitz et al., 2008). It cannot be cured (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Washburn et al., 2014; Williams & Lynch, 2010), but with consistent multisensory instruction, learners with dyslexia can learn to adapt to their impairment and be successful in school and through their lives (Allen, 2010; Shaywitz, 2003; Snowling, 2013).

According to the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000), aspects of teaching reading include decoding, fluency, and comprehension. The report of the National Reading Panel identified the use of explicit instruction of letter-sound relationships to teach decoding. Fluency was most effectively taught through guided, repeated oral reading, and comprehension was found to be best taught through both direct and indirect vocabulary instruction. Text comprehension was taught most effectively through the use of cooperative learning, monitoring, questions

answering, analysis, and summarisation (Marchand-Martella, Martella, Modderman, Petersen, & Pan, 2013).

Previous research (Eden et al., 2004; Murphy, 2003; Shaywitz, 2003; Shaywitz et al., 2008) suggest that interventions during the primary grades can rewire the brain so that most learners do not experience reading failure. However, the learner's level of motivation and commitment to engage in specific learning tasks that provide the opportunity to rewire the brain should also be taken into account (Dunoon, 2015).

The implication concerning dyslexia is that reading problems must be recognised early and addressed (Shaywitz et al., 2008; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005), and Allen (2010) suggests that an assessment for dyslexia must be done prior to third grade to be able to support the learner with dyslexia. There is consensus among Allen (2010) and Shaywitz et al. (2008) that the best way to teach learners with dyslexia, especially in the earliest grades of reading instruction, is the implementation of a systematic, multisensory, sequential phonics-based program that explicitly focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, sound-symbol correspondence, syllables, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Furthermore, metacognitive strategies assisting with word recognition and meaning of text reduce the base rates of at-risk learners to below 5% (Shaywitz et al., 2008).

Conversely, Shaywitz et al. (2008) warns against explicitly diagnosing learners who are at risk of reading difficulties as having dyslexia because during the early grades, these learners are just learning to read, and it is difficult to define word-reading deficit at this level of reading development. However, it appears that systematic, structured programmes can significantly improve core reading skills in the weakest readers at these ages (Allen, 2010). Normally these programmes include activities such as word recognition skills, word attack skills (the ability to make sense of an unknown word), word identification and fluency skills (Thompson, 2014). It is equally important that teachers are properly trained in phonological instruction and that this instruction is provided in a small group or one-to-one setting to better the outcomes for learner reading achievement (Allen, 2010; Williams, 2012).

Investigations using remedial interventions that begin after the second grade indicate that it is more challenging to bring learners up to the expected grade levels once they fall behind. Nevertheless, significant improvements in reading could still occur. Although promising, interventions have yet to close the gap in the ability in learners experiencing dyslexia to read fluently because these learners often remain accurate but slow readers (Shaywitz et al., 2008). It is, however, imperative that primary school teachers should understand that

the longer it takes to identify learners with dyslexia, the more difficult it will be to teach them to read proficiently (Allen, 2010).

Intervention does not only include specific language-based skill activities but also includes concessions, accommodations and modifications for the learner with dyslexia (International Dyslexia Association, 2012; Thompson, 2014). Furthermore, intervention should include counselling to address the learner with dyslexia's confidence, self-esteem, anxiety, and other related difficulties (International Dyslexia Association, 2012).

2.3.3.3 Learner resilience factors

In sharing knowledge regarding brain research, dyslexia could be demystified and help teachers, learners and their parents to realise that language processing is only one of many talents, and learners with dyslexia process language differently than other learners (Hudson et al., 2007).

To boost the learner's self-esteem, it is important to recognise strengths in the learner with dyslexia such as a natural flair for music, dance, drawing or acting, or athletic talent, creative problem-solving skills and intuitive people skills. High-quality intervention (Farrell, 2012; Shaywitz, 2003; Snowling, 2013), strong oral language skills, ability to maintain attention as well as good family support are protective factors that lead to better outcomes for these learners (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Williams & Lynch, 2010).

2.3.3.4 Teaching strategies to support the learner with dyslexia

It has commonly been assumed that teachers should not only have knowledge of learning impairments but also have the confidence to apply the underlying developmental skills in the classroom to be able to effectively support learners with learning impairments. Therefore, teachers should be able to identify the specific barriers to learning which impede learners from developing their potential (Lessing, 2010).

Teachers do not diagnose dyslexia because of its medical nature; they will rather label the learner as having a learning difficulty in reading (Williams, 2012). Teachers diagnose reading difficulties when there appears to be a discrepancy between the learners' intelligent quotient (IQ) and their reading performance. A significant reading discrepancy only occurs after second or third-grade level, and this 'wait-to-fail' approach causes learners to tolerate several years of reading failure before receiving suitable support (Farrell, 2012; Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003; Williams, 2012). This 'discrepancy definition' of dyslexia has gradually fallen from use, and it is now recognised that dyslexia occurs across the IQ spectrum, although

one needs to bear in mind that those learners with a higher IQ are more likely to do better in terms of reading comprehension (Snowling, 2013).

In the sub-section that follows, I present a few teaching and assessment strategies which could enable teachers to teach, support, and accommodate learners with dyslexia in an inclusive classroom.

Accommodations for learners with dyslexia

Shaywitz et al. (2008) propose a complete education for learners with dyslexia which includes evidence-based reading interventions and accommodations. In general, there are three types of accommodations: (a) those that provide information through an auditory mode, by-passing reading difficulty, (b) those that provide assistive technologies, and (c) those that provide additional time so that learners with diffluent reading abilities can demonstrate their knowledge.

Gordon (2013) and Jusufi (2014) hold the view that if teachers are aware of dyslexia and its manifestations, they might have better approaches towards learners with dyslexia. When teachers are knowledgeable and apply the appropriate strategies, they facilitate the academic and social success of learners with dyslexia as well as non-dyslexic learners who are also experiencing learning difficulties. With a more extensive knowledge of dyslexia, teachers can help learners with dyslexia in many ways without thinking that these learners only need professional intervention (Jusufi, 2014). Thompson (2014) supports the view of Gordon (2013) since most learners with dyslexia do not have access to personal, individualised and one-to-one intervention as they are not removed from the class setting in ordinary schools. It is, therefore, imperative that learners with dyslexia are provided with extra support and assistance especially in the language classroom (Erkan, Kızılaslan, & Dogru, 2012). Thus, when teachers understand the nature and characteristics of dyslexia, they are better able to address the needs of learners with dyslexia and assist them to learn optimally (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Williams & Lynch, 2010). Wadlington et al. (1996) call upon teachers to create practical and beneficial strategies of their own to balance the needs of learners with dyslexia with those of the other learners.

Referring to Appendix A2: Addendum to Chapter 2: Literature Review, I present a summary of the areas of difficulty (Bell et al., 2011) linked to the suggested strategies and accommodations that learners with dyslexia might require (Erkan et al., 2012; Lerner & Johns, 2012; Pavey, 2007; Wadlington et al., 1996):

Assessment of learners with dyslexia in class context

Teachers should not only be able to identify learners who are experiencing learning difficulties, but they should also demonstrate sensitivity toward these difficulties. The processes that may interfere with learning are complex, and sensitive teachers should notice when and in which tasks learners experience difficulties (Pavey, 2007). Rather than focusing on the learner's perceived shortcomings and deficits, teachers should focus their attention on the dynamics of the setting and the social context (ibid.).

Marking of workbooks and worksheets

In terms of classroom practice, teachers should consider the manner of marking learners' worksheets and workbooks. It is recommended that marking should be limited to a portion of the writing rather than the whole, and some teachers will avoid red ink as it represents connotations of failure (Pavey, 2007). In addition, the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) (as cited in Pavey, 2007), recommends the use of two pens – neither of which should be red; one colour pen is for content, and the other for spelling and presentation. Furthermore, only spelling that has been taught should be corrected. BDA further suggests that in the case of particularly weak spelling, a tick can be placed on words that are correct rather than place corrections on all the errors. Another strategy is to put a tick on a line where no errors are made and using a dot alongside the margin to indicate an error. Pavey (2007) also suggests that work should be marked in relation to the learning objective, which has been explained to the learners beforehand so that they understand what is being marked and why.

Formal assessments and tests

Learners with dyslexia may require assistance with test instructions. Pavey (2007) suggests the following strategies in assisting these learners:

- Teachers could read directions to learners and they highlight important core concept words such as 'underline' and 'choose three examples'. Oral directions should be audio-recorded and replayed as needed.
- Test papers should be printed in a large, easily readable font size. A variety of question types should be utilised, although lengthy test sections should be avoided.
- For learners with dyslexia, the testing time needs to be lengthened or the number of test items should be reduced. It is more comfortable for learners with dyslexia to write directly on the test, rather than using an answer sheet.

- Learners with dyslexia should not be penalised for spelling or mechanical errors. Oral tests and typed answers could also be considered as alternative options. In some cases, the learners with dyslexia may require a reader.
- The testing environment should be as stress-free as possible, and it might be necessary to allow the learner to complete the test in another room. Extra time and explicit instructions could ease anxiety and alleviate apprehension.

In conclusion, findings of the descriptive case study of Erkan et al. (2012) indicate that positive teacher behaviour and motivational teaching strategies are imperative in the teaching, support and accommodation of learners with dyslexia. Turning now to classroom management and classroom management strategies, I discuss the central role of teachers in skilfully managing their classrooms because the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia depends on the way in which teachers manage their classrooms.

2.3.4 Classroom Management

The classroom environment is a crucial factor in providing teaching, learning and assessment activities on various levels (Engelbrecht, 2013c; Tomlinson, 2003). Classroom environments refer not only to the physical conditions within a classroom but also to the psychosocial climate that has a reciprocal influence on those physical learning conditions (Engelbrecht, 2013c).

In managing the classroom environment, the role of the teacher remains central. Thus, classroom management can be defined as everything that is under the direct control of the teacher (Plevin, 2013) which includes lesson planning, time management and discipline (Kendall, 2008). In an investigation into classroom management, Kendall (2008) found that it becomes challenging when certain factors are considered – things such as the number of learners with learning difficulties, the degree of severity of the impairment, and how peers in the class respond to the learner with learning difficulties.

The holistic approach views learners as individuals with physical, cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual needs. For teachers to maintain a whole-child approach, they need a continuous approach that focuses on the full range of learner needs. If these needs are not fulfilled in the classroom, learners will seek their own methods of fulfilment – almost always at the teacher's expense (Engelbrecht, 2013c). When dealing with learners with learning difficulties, it is easy to label the learner solely in terms of their behaviour, and teachers' attitudes towards them then develop accordingly (Plevin, n.d.).

Regarding classroom management practices, it seems that teachers who are more skilled promote a supportive learning community rather than simply regulating the environment (Bishop, Brownell, Klingner, Leko, & Galman, 2010). Teachers with a positive attitude have positive expectations. Rather than being on the lookout for problems in the classroom, they look for solutions. They communicate that they are there to help learners rather than find fault with them. When problems do occur, the teacher seizes control of the situation and responds in a manner that conveys care, fairness and consideration (Plevin, n.d.). On the contrary, less accomplished teachers are often at a loss for how to manage the learner's behaviour (Bishop et al., 2010). Teachers with negative attitudes wind learners up and expect trouble. Their classroom has a negative air, and when behaviour problems occur, they escalate into serious confrontations because the teacher's response tends to be aggressive, sarcastic or dismissive (Plevin, n.d.). Therefore, skilled classroom management can support or impede the learning process for learners (Bishop et al., 2010).

2.3.4.1 Classroom strategies

Although the role of the teacher is neither to diagnose dyslexia nor to categorise dyslexia as one set of difficulties (Washburn et al., 2014), teachers' conceptualisation of dyslexia and how they interpret and meet the individual needs of the learner will likely have an impact on their classroom practices (Bell et al., 2011; Gordon, 2013; Hight, 2005; Hudson et al., 2007; Sicherer, 2014; Williams, 2012). As learners spend most of their time in the classroom and other school settings, they are expected to follow instructions and to participate in organised learning activities in a socially appropriate manner (Kendall, 2008).

In her study, Kendall (2008) found that teachers have to change strategies all the time to successfully manage classroom discipline. Overall, teachers from this study reported that the reward system works well in managing learners' behaviour. Considering the above, the present study investigated the way in which Intermediate Phase teachers had managed their teaching styles and classroom management strategies to support the learner with dyslexia. To create a positive, learning-friendly classroom environment, Plevin (2008) offers a variety of possible scenarios and strategies. With reference to the Addendum to Chapter 2: Literature Review in Appendix A2, he suggests possible classroom strategies which teachers could apply to control the learning environment in their classrooms.

As was pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, the next section is concerned with inclusive education and the possible challenges experienced by teachers in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.

2.4 CHALLENGES OF TEACHING AND SUPPORTING LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA IN AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

As already mentioned, inclusion is an international trend, and with inclusive education being implemented worldwide (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Gordon, 2013; Sicherer, 2014; Swart & Pettipher, 2012), the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Republic of South Africa, 1996) includes a Bill of Rights that guarantees all South Africans the right to basic education (Stofile & Green, 2007). This implies that education for all children from ages seven to 15 years, including learners who are experiencing barriers to learning, is compulsory as mandated by the *South African Schools Act Number 84* (Department of Basic Education, 1996) and the *Education White Paper Six, Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system* (Department of Education, 2001). Since classified as a learning impairment, dyslexia is accommodated within this legislation and policy.

Inclusion requires changing the culture and organisation of the school in order to create sustainable systems which develop and support flexible approaches to learning (Swart & Pettipher, 2012). The challenges, however, do not lie in the design of policies around special needs but rather in the implementation thereof (Thompson, 2014). Cardona (2009) points out that successful implementation of inclusion policies depends largely on teachers having the knowledge, skills, and competency to make it work. Thus, the transformation in South African education practices presents teachers with new opportunities and challenges regarding the implementation of these policies (Bornman & Donohue, 2013). Challenges to inclusive education in South Africa, among others, include the current physical and psychosocial environment in schools, the need for conceptual and practical integration of the inclusive education agenda with the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R-12, the need for teacher capacity development, the need to address current teacher morale and attitudes, and the need to rethink training and development for inclusion (Stofile & Green, 2007). A few of the elements of educational change (Swart & Pettipher, 2012) and the associated challenges (Stofile & Green, 2007) thereof are discussed below.

2.4.1 Vision and Leadership

The primary step for creating an inclusive school is to establish a shared vision of preferred conditions for the future based on the democratic principles of inclusion, and provision of quality education to all learners, including learners with dyslexia (Swart & Pettipher, 2012). School principals have a responsibility to set the tone of the school and help the school to become and maintain a supportive and caring community (ibid.).

There is some research evidence to suggest that in order to implement inclusion in schools, it is imperative to treat learners with dyslexia with equality and provide them with conditions that improve their learning during their school years (Jusufi, 2014). Furthermore, schools should organise courses for teachers to inform them about learning difficulties and to enable them to teach learners with dyslexia in a supportive teaching and learning environment (ibid.).

Similarly, Hodkinson (2006) suggests that barriers to inclusive education are located within the locus of individual schools. It has been reported that inclusion is being delayed because educational institutions are not able to include all learners due to a lack of knowledge, vision, resources, and morality (Hodkinson, 2006). The research of Wadlington and Wadlington (2005) implies that school management does not play a significant enough role in creating teacher awareness of dyslexia as it is the management's duty to ensure that teachers are well-equipped with the strategies of identifying learning difficulties. The study further suggests that teachers' lack of motivation to empower themselves with knowledge about dyslexia could be attributed to the fact that schools do not offer continued support for teachers once they are in-service (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005).

2.4.2 Whole-school Development

According to Blecker and Boakes (2010), the climate of the school as it relates to an inclusive curriculum influence the teacher's ability to facilitate inclusion. For this reason, the whole-school development approach is considered the most comprehensive approach to developing an inclusive school (Swart & Pettipher, 2012). This approach aims at improving all aspects of the school as an organisation and involves all role players and all systems of the school. Therefore, collaboration between role players is imperative. For developing an inclusive school, the following aspects of the whole school approach could be considered (ibid.).

2.4.2.1 Integration of the inclusive education agenda with the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12

It is assumed that the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R-12 will enable South African teachers to implement inclusive education more effectively. However, one of the major challenges confronting teachers is to make a conceptual link between the NCS and inclusive education because teachers view inclusive education as an extra burden (Stofile & Green, 2007). Furthermore, teachers are faced with the challenge of providing an inclusive classroom experience for all learners (Thompson, 2014). In adapting the curriculum to address the diverse needs of all learners, teachers are challenged to look at the curriculum through the "eyes of the learner" rather than to look at the learner through

the “eyes of the curriculum” (Bornman & Rose, 2010, p. 24). Newly qualified teachers tend to feel lost when they do not have access to a structured curriculum because the pressure to create curriculum occurs while they are learning to maintain discipline, engage learners in classroom activities, communicate with parents, and assessing learners’ work. In such situations, they feel exhausted and scramble to stay ahead of their learners (Bishop et al., 2010).

In general, teachers agree that responsibilities and expectations of general education teachers are unreasonable (Fuchs, 2010), and having learners with impairments creates additional demands beyond the already strenuous demands of the profession (P. Engelbrecht et al., 2003; Forlin & Chambers, 2011). The additional responsibilities of providing appropriate learning materials and using appropriate assessment strategies, together with an increased accountability for the educational success of all learners in their care, have placed heavy burdens on teachers – especially those who find themselves ill-equipped to teach and support learners with special educational needs (Long et al., 2007). According to Fuchs (2010), teachers feel that they lack adequate planning- and collaboration time, as well as a lack of instructional time to cover all the requirements in the curriculum and, therefore, they may fail to modify work to accommodate the needs of learners with dyslexia or fail to address the holistic needs of the learner in general (Thompson, 2014).

Research evidence into teachers’ ability to curriculum adaptation (Kendall, 2008) suggests that teachers find it difficult to adapt lessons to suit all the learners’ needs in the classroom and they have to be constantly creative to include those learners with specific learning difficulties. Teachers are expected to academically develop the whole class by providing differentiated lessons, however, learners with specific learning difficulties need individual assistance lest they fall behind. This has been seen in the case of Hodkinson (2006), where newly qualified teachers report the effect that inclusion of learners with special educational needs is having on their peers in the classroom. Similarly, previous studies (Bornman & Donohue, 2013; Engelbrecht et al., 2003; Kendall, 2008; Wadlington et al., 1996) have reported that teachers find it challenging to manage the right balance between adapting the curricula for learners with learning difficulties while providing quality education and equal treatment for all the learners in the class. It can be challenging and time-consuming for the class teacher, taking up time and attention that would otherwise be dedicated to the whole class (Hodkinson, 2006). In addition, teachers find it difficult to differentiate between learners with dyslexia and slow learners since learners with dyslexia can be found in ordinary schools as opposed to special schools. This could mean that general education

teachers might feel overwhelmed in trying to deal with learners with dyslexia at the expense of other learners (Thompson, 2014).

2.4.2.2 Teacher capacity development, training and support

Teachers who have undergone a teacher education program that promotes the value of inclusive education are willing to include learners from diverse backgrounds and are more likely to create successful inclusive classrooms (Romi & Leyser, 2006). However, it is reported that despite having a broader understanding of inclusive education, some teachers feel uncomfortable in including learners with special needs in their classrooms (Ahsan et al., 2012). Lessing (2010) holds the view that supporting learners with dyslexia in an inclusive classroom not only implies a change in the attitude of teachers but also requires teachers' knowledge of a variety of skills underlying the mastering of the literacy and numeracy learning areas. The question remains whether teachers have the knowledge and skills to change from a general education teacher to a specialised teacher supporting learners with special educational needs in an inclusive classroom. It is, therefore, evident that the successful implementation of inclusion policies may firstly be dependent upon teachers' attitudes thereof and, secondly, upon their perceived competence to deliver this initiative (Hodkinson, 2006). According to Eloff and Kgwete (2007), adequate pre-service and continued in-service teacher training are a prerequisite to the successful implementation of inclusive education. Moreover, Swart and Pettipher (2012) acknowledge that teachers, to be able to teach in an inclusive school and to collaborate with one another, need to acquire a common vision, conceptual framework and language, and a set of instructional and technical skills to deal with the diverse needs of all learners. Staff development needs to be linked to school development and should be school-based and context-focused. Therefore, the development of inclusive practices requires social learning (Ainscow, 2007) and is dependent on highly trained teachers in both general education and special needs education (Thompson, 2014).

At school, teachers perform different roles, including being a counsellor, minister, pseudo-parent, social worker, life skills coach, and a watchdog to refer learners who are at risk of learning difficulties to the authorities (Dunoon, 2015; Stofile & Green, 2007). Moreover, teachers are responsible for the academic success of all the learners in their classrooms although they may not be prepared for the challenges of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia (Sicherer, 2014). They should be able to inform parents when learners experience problems with learning without speculating as to reasons thereof, as the reasons are often complex. Although many teachers are doing their best to teach and support learners with specific learning difficulties (Dunoon, 2015), the majority of teachers

were never trained for these roles and do not have adequate capacity to address the diverse needs of learners (Stofile & Green, 2007). General education teachers are challenged when learners with impairments are integrated into their classrooms, and although a lack of awareness, inadequate training and the high expectations of learners with impairments to reach their full academic potential are not a failure on the part of the teacher, continual experiences of perceived failure could have serious emotional consequences for teachers (Gordon, 2013). Many teachers express their concerns and anxiety because they are unable to deal effectively with learners with learning difficulties, including learners with dyslexia. Specific areas of concern are the characteristics and identification of dyslexia, the daily assessment and intervention of learners with dyslexia (Thompson, 2014; Wadlington et al., 1996; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005), and how to individualise programmes (Bornman & Donohue, 2013). The challenge is, therefore, to equip teachers with skills and to strengthen their self-confidence and belief in themselves as lifelong learners within their profession (Stofile & Green, 2007).

In his recent study, Jusufi (2014) reaches the conclusion that despite the increased recognition of learners' rights on inclusion in the education system, there is a significant gap between theory and practice of implementing inclusive education. Thompson (2014) holds the view that a major challenge to successful inclusion in developing countries such as South Africa is a lack of teacher awareness to the needs of learners with specific learning difficulties. Teachers consistently reported the need for more training in accommodating and adapting assignments, assessment techniques, as well as a variety of instructional strategies to enable them to meet the needs of learners with impairments (Fuchs, 2010). Furthermore, evidence from the study of Jusufi (2014) shows an urgent need to address some teachers' misconceptions regarding dyslexia to prepare them to teach and support learners with dyslexia so that these learners do not feel academically and socially excluded.

In an investigation into the perceptions and knowledge of teachers about early reading instruction, Bos, Mather, Dickson, Podhajski, and Chard (2001) have found that general education teachers may not be adequately prepared to teach learners with dyslexia, and many special education teachers also appear to have limited knowledge. Teacher apathy towards the acknowledgement of dyslexia as a 'real disability' is one of the many reasons why general education teachers lack awareness concerning the identification and management of dyslexia (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005). Other reasons which could account for the lack of awareness concerning dyslexia are inaccessibility to relevant information, and inadequate pre-service training or lack of continued professional development (Thompson, 2014).

Similarly, research evidence of De Boer et al. (2010) and Sicherer (2014) suggest that teachers are negative or undecided in their beliefs about inclusive education. They do not rate themselves as knowledgeable to teach and support learners with dyslexia and feel unsure of their effectiveness in teaching learners with dyslexia. Furthermore, teachers find it challenging to teach and meet the needs of learners with dyslexia. They feel they do not have the competence and confidence to teach these learners because they lack training in the field of dyslexia (Gordon, 2013; Thompson, 2014). In addition, emotional feelings of being inadequate, overwhelmed and burdened could have negative consequences for the working relationship between the teacher and the learner with specific learning difficulties (Thompson, 2014).

Talmor, Reiter, and Feigin (2005) have found that teachers report high levels of stress when interacting with learners who are experiencing barriers to learning as they might not be fully informed about the limitations and strengths of such learners. Because learners with learning difficulties may not meet expectations, teachers should adjust assessments for such individual learners. This constant need for adaptation and change is tiring for teachers and could lead to frustration and confusion leaving the teacher in need of more knowledge and guidance concerning the teaching and supporting of learners with specific learning difficulties (Kendall, 2008). Most implementation efforts focus on providing teachers with effective teaching strategies but neglect the conditions within which teachers must carry these out. When implementation efforts fail, teachers are blamed for incompetence, non-cooperation, lack of commitment, and laziness. However, teachers need time to gain insight and develop confidence and coping strategies in the context of continuous support in the classroom (Stofile & Green, 2007).

It would then appear that despite continuing requests for training of all teachers in the field of special educational needs, perceptions and feelings of inadequate training persist among teaching professionals (Hodkinson, 2006). Research evidence from the study of Sicherer (2014), and Gwernan-Jones and Burden (2010) suggest that, despite positive feelings about inclusion and learners with dyslexia, many general education teachers report that they do not have adequate training, support or knowledge in creating inclusive classrooms to be able to teach and support learners with dyslexia effectively. A lack of support almost certainly impairs the academic achievement of learners with learning difficulties and frustrates teachers who experience difficulties overcoming the learner's academic barriers. These frustrations could contribute to negative teacher attitudes towards inclusive education (Bornman & Donohue, 2013). Additionally, teachers report a sense of powerless and helplessness as they feel they do not have the necessary support and skills to assist

their learners (Kendall, 2008; Thompson, 2014). Thus, Thompson (2014) assumes that both general education teachers and teachers of special needs education worldwide are inadequately trained to provide appropriate services and resources to learners with dyslexia.

2.4.2.3 Role player capacity development for collaboration

Research suggests that developing skills such as support, collaboration and consultation are imperative for an inclusive education system (Stofile & Green, 2007) as no teacher, parent, learner, education support professional or volunteer should have to handle significant challenges on their own (Swart & Pettipher, 2012). Moreover, schools are systematically organised, problem-solving organisations where all teachers are expected to participate in both the teaching and learning process (Obiakor, Harris, Mutua, Rotatori, & Algozzine, 2012). This includes teamwork and collaboration between administrators, teachers, support personnel, and health care professionals such as psychologists, speech therapists and occupational therapists (Gordon, 2013). The outcomes of collaboration include attitudes and beliefs supportive of a collaborative approach, as well as mutual trust and a sense of community (Swart & Pettipher, 2012). Equally important is that School-Based Support Teams (SBST) need to be able to access support from the district and the community. Inclusive education cannot be implemented if district officials resist change, or are uncertain about their role, or lack the skills to perform it (Stofile & Green, 2007).

Research evidence of Fuchs (2010) claims that teachers felt there was a lack of support from school administrators regarding in-service education and training, class size, collaboration and planning time, as well as shared duties and collegiality among School-Based Support Teams and special education teachers (Fuchs, 2010). Similarly, Gordon (2013) found that aside from feeling unqualified, burdened with paperwork, and not having enough time, teachers felt they do not have the necessary support and available resources to implement inclusion successfully. However, Kendall (2008) argues that although support is available in the form of speech therapists, occupational therapists, educational psychologists, as well as assistance from the principal and the Head of Department, teachers would like to have additional support in place such as assistant teachers because they believe this would help them to effectively teach and support learners with learning difficulties. Above all, it is also believed that there is a sense of teamwork and collaboration when teachers receive support from parents. Although it is still challenging, teachers are able to endure the teaching and supporting of learners with specific learning difficulties better when parents support the teacher (ibid.).

2.4.2.4 Physical and psychosocial learning environments

The development of conducive learning environments is imperative to improve the quality of education and increase access to schools (Stofile & Green, 2007). It is the view of Pillay and Di Terlizzi (2009) that as a developing nation, South Africa is not adequately equipped with the resources and facilities required to meet the diverse needs of inclusion. In order to accommodate the needs of learners with dyslexia, the ordinary school buildings, curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment procedures should be reformed (Gordon, 2013). Avramidis and Norwich (2002) identified overcrowded classrooms, insufficient time to plan with learning support teams, lack of a flexible timetable, and inadequately available support from external specialists as barriers to the successful implementation of inclusive education. A large number of schools in South Africa still have overcrowded classes and lack physical spaces for learner discussion and equipment to enable learner investigations to make learning interesting, relevant and challenging (Stofile & Green, 2007).

2.4.2.5 Resources and learner support services

Funding and resources are key factors for the successful implementation of inclusive education (Thompson, 2014). The lack of funding in ordinary public schools as well as poverty in South Africa are considered barriers to inclusive education, and, therefore, remains a challenge to the implementation of inclusive education (Pillay & Di Terlizzi, 2009). Underprivileged learners with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia do not have access to a scribe during formal tests and examinations. The services involved with special concessions are usually paid for by the parents which result in excluding poor learners from learning opportunities (Thompson, 2014). Therefore, the education budget will need to be increased to enable schools to acquire appropriate teaching and learning resources (Gordon, 2013; Hodkinson, 2006).

Based on their study with South African pre-service teachers, Oswald and Swart (2011) reported that teachers showed positive attitudes toward inclusive education, but they were concerned about the availability of resources and support services. It is interesting to note that Pillay and Di Terlizzi (2009) have found that ordinary schools do not provide necessary support structures such as multidisciplinary learner support teams for learners with specific learning difficulties. This is exemplified in the study of Hodkinson (2006) in which newly qualified teachers' conceptions of inclusion have changed due to the perceived lack of support for learners with special educational needs within the ordinary classroom.

Gordon (2013) noted that challenges such as time constraints, overwhelming paperwork and documentation as well as inadequate support and resources are barriers to inclusive

education which general education teachers face daily. Teachers experienced with the inclusion of learners with impairments have also identified skills, collaboration, administrative support and ongoing training as resources for supporting and sustaining inclusive education in schools (Bornman & Donohue, 2013; Swart & Pettipher, 2012). However, these resources should not be limited to those existing within the school itself but should also include those existing within the community such as neighbouring schools, district offices, special schools and universities (Swart & Pettipher, 2012).

2.4.3 Morale and Attitudes of Teachers

Teaching ranks in the top quartile on complexity for all occupations, making it a demanding profession to master (Carton & Fruchart, 2013; P. Engelbrecht et al., 2003; Thompson, 2014). The inclusion of all learners becomes an issue related to the teacher's beliefs, values and attitudes about diversity, change, collaboration and learning (Swart & Pettipher, 2012). Attitudes about diversity and change can be both a barrier as well as a positive force in implementing inclusive education. Negative beliefs and attitudes, if not properly addressed, contaminate the school environment as it could be counterproductive to the effectiveness of an inclusive classroom (Berry, 2010; Sicherer, 2014; Swart & Pettipher, 2012).

The Education Labour Relations Council Integrated Report (Stofile & Green, 2007) indicates that the morale of South African teachers is generally low. Some of the key factors that have a significant impact on teacher effectiveness and lead to work-related dissatisfaction include stress with the curricula, high workload, large class sizes, the physical layout of classrooms, and learning support materials and equipment (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007; Stofile & Green, 2007; Thompson, 2014). The study of Berry (2010) reported that some teachers seem sensitive to balancing the needs of all learners in their classrooms, while they were unsure as to whether the presence of learners with impairments will negatively impact the learning of the other learners. Teachers who demonstrated the belief that all learners with impairments should be educated within inclusive classrooms also acknowledged the fact that they are faced with challenges and difficulties in creating successful inclusive practices (Sicherer, 2014). The additional demands of having learners with impairments in their classrooms cause teacher stress and create negative beliefs and attitudes (P. Engelbrecht et al., 2003; Forlin & Chambers, 2011).

Many teachers are stressed out by disruptive and non-achieving students which lead to feelings of frustration and inadequacy and a low sense of efficacy to fulfil academic demands (Gordon, 2013). Similarly, Kendall (2008) asserts that teachers share negative

emotions such as exhaustion, feeling challenged, sense of failure, disappointment, helplessness, and irritation. Gordon (2013) argues that teachers should not only have a positive attitude towards learners with impairments but should also be supportive and committed to educating such learners. As noted by Fuchs (2010), most of the teachers agreed that inclusion was a positive educational placement for the learner with specific educational needs and both learners with and without impairments benefited from being in the same classroom. All in all, teachers' beliefs about their own ability to teach and support diverse learners in the general education classroom impact their attitudes and beliefs about inclusion (Fuchs, 2010).

In the last section of this chapter, I present teachers' assets, resources, and coping strategies that might influence their classroom practices. I elaborate on personal characteristics which contribute to teacher effectiveness as well as applied coping strategies within a supportive environment; all which could influence teachers' emotional and cognitive well-being.

2.5 TEACHERS' ATTRIBUTES, ASSETS, RESOURCES, AND COPING STRATEGIES INFLUENCING CLASSROOM PRACTICES

The research of Wadlington and Wadlington (2011) regarding the efficacy and worth of the classroom teacher reveals that the values and principles that guide professional conduct are just as imperative to effective teaching as skills and knowledge. Equally important, Engelbrecht (2013b) indicates that individual personal characteristics affect the teacher's attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning, and therefore, will influence curriculum delivery. This view is supported by Blecker and Boakes (2010) who write that it is important that teachers know which skills, knowledge and dispositions they need to enable them to implement and practice inclusive education appropriately.

Necessary dispositions required for a successful inclusive classroom practice include open-mindedness, self-awareness and reflection, and social justice. Open-minded teachers are receptive to new information, reflective teachers critically think of their own teaching and make appropriate changes consistent with their understanding of teaching and learning, and teachers committed to social justice attempt to achieve equity and equality for all learners (Blecker & Boakes, 2010). In the following sub-section, I discuss personal attributes, resources, and coping strategies enabling teachers to endure the possible challenges in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.

2.5.1 Personal Attributes

Personal attributes include teacher beliefs and personal individual traits, and together with unique teaching experiences, they are likely to play a powerful role in shaping teachers' classroom practices as well as their perception of teaching and learning (Bishop et al., 2010). The following personal characteristics are considered as contributing to teacher effectiveness (Bishop et al., 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013b):

2.5.1.1 Empathy and compassion

Engelbrecht (2013b) identifies empathy and compassion as an encompassing attribute of effective teachers because learners need to see, feel, and experience it in their daily contact with their teachers. Teachers demonstrate compassion by listening to learners and valuing their inputs, responding to learners' needs, and demonstrating patience, honesty, trust and humility. Schools should be safe places where learners can learn and be nurtured in an emotionally safe environment. Teachers should deliberately choose certain teaching strategies that contribute to an educationally and emotionally safe environment. Equally important, compassionate teachers should protect learners against hurtful behaviours such as bullying and teasing (ibid.).

2.5.1.2 Equality and respect

Stronge, Tucker, and Hindman (2004) regard equality and respect as the foundation of effective teaching. It is important that teachers and learners should understand that equality is not necessarily about equal treatment of learners but accounts for the necessary support provided to the needs of every individual learner in the class (Engelbrecht, 2013b). Teachers could demonstrate respect in showing sensitivity to others' feelings and avoiding situations that can unnecessarily embarrass learners. Moreover, equality and respect involve treating learners in a balanced and open-minded way that is considerate of their unique and diverse circumstances (ibid.).

2.5.1.3 Attitude towards the teaching profession

The more positive and enthusiastic teachers are about learning, teaching and professional development, the more likely learners will develop a positive attitude towards learning and teaching (Engelbrecht, 2013b). Effective teachers tend to have high self-esteem, personal control and optimism since they focus on the positive aspects of their lives (University of Pretoria, 2010b). Despite all the challenges that effective teachers experience, they still manage to display a sense of accomplishment and pride in their work. Preparedness and creativity contribute towards maintaining a positive attitude towards the teaching profession and are imperative to successful classroom instruction (Engelbrecht, 2013b). Stronge et

al. (2004) conclude that what teachers advocate about their profession influences those who hear it, and this could start a cycle of either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the teacher on the part of the community.

2.5.1.4 Social interactions with learners

Teacher-learner relationships determine the psychosocial classroom atmosphere and whether it is advantageous to meaningful learning. By sharing personal learning experiences, and complementing these actions by interacting in a warm, personal manner, learners feel affirmed both as learners and humans. Furthermore, a professional teacher-learner relationship tends to reduce behavioural problems (Engelbrecht, 2013b). By calling learners by their names, smiling often, showing interest in their feelings and opinions, and accepting learners for who they are, teachers could add a personal touch to their lessons (ibid.). Lessen and Frankiewicz (as cited in Bishop et al., 2010) reported that effective special education teachers displayed humour, enthusiasm, fairness, empathy, flexibility, and self-control. Furthermore, they maintained good relations with both individual learners and groups of learners. All of these aspects foster mutual trust inside and outside the classroom which forms the cornerstone of respect (Engelbrecht, 2013b).

2.5.1.5 Promoting enthusiasm for and motivating learning

Effective teachers have the power to motivate ordinary learners and turn them into extraordinary, lifelong learners. Learners often live up to their teachers' expectations of them, and therefore, teachers have the responsibility to motivate and affirm their learners to be the best they possibly can be (Engelbrecht, 2013b).

2.5.1.6 Reflective practices

Teachers can turn themselves into expert teachers through engaging in reflective practices (Engelbrecht, 2013b). Reflective teachers consistently analyse their teaching practices and search for ways to better assist their learners. Furthermore, reflective teachers are introspective, open-minded, and responsible. They could view situations from multiple perspectives and are willing to admit their own mistakes (Bishop et al., 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013b).

2.5.2 Coping Resources and Strategies within a Supportive Environment

Coping resources and strategies, personality traits, and the environment could influence teachers' emotional and cognitive well-being (Coetzee et al., 2009). Next, I discuss the influence of both a supportive school environment and the possible coping resources and

strategies which enable teachers to deal with the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia.

2.5.2.1 School environment

General education teachers are likely to develop their teaching skills by means of collaborative colleagues, access to teaching and learning materials, and supportive administrators (Bishop et al., 2010). In his study, Jusufi (2014) suggests that teachers could improve their knowledge if schools offer different seminars, training, and lectures concerning learners with special educational needs. As previously mentioned, a lack of support, time, and money, are almost certainly contributing factors to stress. Implementing strategies to improve the work environment could result in reduced stress (Austin, Shah, & Muncer, 2005; Coetzee et al., 2009).

A school where a positive atmosphere of social support exists enables teachers to share concerns with each other (Kyriacou, 2001). Moreover, some schools have counselling services available to teachers who are experiencing high levels of stress (ibid.). Collegial support allows teachers to take risks, provides new ideas for instruction, and helps them to feel more self-efficacious about teaching (Bishop et al., 2010). Furthermore, school principals play an important role not only in establishing supportive academic cultures and crafting high expectations for behaviour and learning, but also in supporting teachers in fulfilling those expectations (ibid.).

2.5.2.2 Coping resources and strategies

Coping resources are considered as being "a natural predisposition towards certain characteristic behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs which serve as a set of important resources that mediate the effects of stressful situations" (Coetzee et al., 2009, p. 173). Coping resources refer to those resources which enable individuals to handle stressors more effectively, to experience less intense symptoms upon exposure to stressors, and to recover faster after being exposed to stressors. Coping resources are classified into two types: psychological resources and social resources. While psychological resources refer to those behaviours, characteristics, abilities, values and attitudes owned by individuals, social resources refer to the individual's social networks that provide support in stressful times (ibid.).

Coping strategies refer to behaviours that occur after the appearance of stressors or in response to chronic stressors (Coetzee et al., 2009), and could vary with the level of teacher experience (Carton & Fruchart, 2013). Austin et al. (2005) and Kyriacou (2001) classify teachers' coping strategies in two main categories: direct action strategies and palliative

strategies. Direct action strategies refer to the things teachers can do to eliminate the source of stress, for example, the organising of oneself more effectively, developing new knowledge and skills (Austin et al., 2005; Kyriacou, 2001), searching for innovative ways to make the work interesting, re-organising the work, and setting priorities (Antoniou, Polychroni, & Kotroni, 2009). Palliative strategies are more commonly used and do not deal with the source of stress itself, but rather aim at decreasing the feeling of stress that occurs. Palliative strategies may be mental (trying to change one's analysis of the situation) or physical (involving activities that relieve any built-up tension and anxiety) (Austin et al., 2005; Kyriacou, 2001). According to Seidman and Zager (as cited in Coetzee et al., 2009), teachers experience lower levels of stress or teacher burnout when they engage in low-level exercise, or practice meditation and relaxation, or pursue hobby activities.

Social support plays a noticeable role in reducing the effects of stress on teachers' health and well-being. Emotion-focused social support provides teachers with opportunities for moral support, sympathy, and understanding while problem-focused social support provides a useful means for seeking advice, information or assistance (Antoniou et al., 2009). Austin et al. (2005) have found that teachers with high levels of stress are more likely to use negative coping strategies such as escape-avoidance whereas teachers with lower levels of stress use positive coping strategies more frequently. To enable teachers to effectively manage their stress levels, the following strategies could be applied:

Strategies to manage stress and improve resilience

To reduce work-related levels of stress, Austin et al. (2005) suggest that teachers could adopt coping strategies such as delegating responsibilities, or engaging in enjoyable activities such as gardening, listening to music, playing a musical instrument, or practicing a hobby. Similarly, other strategies such as knowing your personal limitations, assertiveness, responding appropriately, and having personal achievement values could be used when the work environment becomes stressful.

Banu (2013), Kyriacou (2001), and (University of Pretoria, 2010b) suggests the following stress management strategies[3] that teachers could use to assist them with a stressful work environment:

- Teachers should build a strong support network and establish positive relationships with family and friends who can listen to their concerns and offer social support.

[3] Refer to Appendix A2: Addendum to Chapter 2: Literature review for a comprehensive list of stress management strategies.

- They could use humour and laughter since humour is considered a helpful coping mechanism for stressful situations.
- Teachers should monitor their stress, relax after work, develop hobbies and get enough sleep.
- They should be flexible and adapt and tolerate change when they expect change to happen.
- Teachers could practice positive self-talk in order to develop a positive attitude. They should trust themselves to solve problems and make sound decisions.
- Teachers should keep problems and challenges in perspective through reflective practices and introspective analysis.

In brief, effective teachers tend to have high self-esteem, personal control and optimism as they prefer to focus on the positive aspects of their lives. Teachers with a positive perspective on life are likely to work well within the asset-based approach (University of Pretoria, 2010b) and, therefore, this study aims to investigate how Intermediate Phase teachers could overcome challenges within an inclusive education environment to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter began by presenting literature related to the learner with dyslexia and the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia. The first section addressed the phenomenon of dyslexia; particularly, the definition, causes, characteristics, and misconceptions of dyslexia. The second section addressed the different teaching styles, teaching strategies, classroom management, and classroom management strategies. The third section addressed the challenges of inclusive education concerning teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Finally, this chapter concluded with the attributes, assets, and coping strategies which might influence teachers' classroom practices.

In the next chapter, I discuss the conceptual framework that was developed for this study based on Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective and the asset-based approach within the wider positive psychology paradigm.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes and discusses the conceptual framework used in this study. Since this study has focused on teachers' experiences of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective as well as the asset-based approach within the wider positive psychology paradigm is incorporated and adapted to suit this purpose. In this chapter, I briefly introduce the four interacting dimensions of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective; followed by an in-depth discussion of the context regarding the different ecological systems and its relevance to the learner with dyslexia, the teacher, and the educational environment. Next, I discuss the symbiosis between positive psychology and the asset-based approach with its synergism to Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective. I also identify the potential assets applicable to this study and present the different stages of the asset-based approach. I conclude with how the asset-based approach could assist teachers in the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia.

3.2 BRONFENBRENNER'S BIO-ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

As noted before, recent theories have placed dyslexia as a socially constructed condition, arguing that it is a society which makes dyslexia a barrier in life rather than the condition in itself (Hall, 2009; Macdonald, 2009; Pavey, 2007). The learner with dyslexia is influenced by a wider web of learning environments and relationships both within and outside the school. This may have an influence on teachers' experiences of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia as well as their understanding of how dyslexia manifests itself in the system (Bell et al., 2011). In the sub-sections that follow, I present an overview of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective and briefly explain the four interacting dimensions associated with the bio-ecological model.

3.2.1 The Bio-Ecological Model

Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective is a multidimensional model of human development (Donald et al., 2006; Swart & Pettipher, 2012), and is the most suitable model in considering a conceptual framework for this study. The model can assist us in understanding and exploring inclusive education as being about the development of systems, and the development of individuals within these systems. The bio-ecological model explains the developmental relationship between the individual, the environment and

the interaction between the two (Swart & Pettipher, 2012; University of Pretoria, 2010b). For the purpose of this study, Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective is adapted to explain the multidimensional relationship between teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, the different educational environments, and the interaction between the learners, teachers and the educational environments (Swart & Pettipher, 2012; University of Pretoria, 2010b). The bio-ecological perspective is characterised by four interacting dimensions: the proximal process, person characteristics, systems or contexts, and time (Swart & Pettipher, 2012). Following is a brief explanation of the four interacting dimensions.

3.2.1.1 Proximal process

The proximal process involves particular forms of interactions that exist between the individual and the environment (Swart & Pettipher, 2012; University of Pretoria, 2010b), and can be defined as a "regular, progressive and more complex reciprocal interaction between a living organism and the immediate environment over an extended period of time" (University of Pretoria, 2010b, p. 34). In other words, the proximal process refers to patterns of everyday activities, roles, and relationships in which teachers participate as a way of understanding and interpreting their world (Donald et al., 2006; University of Pretoria, 2010b). From a bio-ecological perspective, proximal processes are guided and affected by the characteristics of the teacher and the nature of the contexts within which they occur (Donald et al., 2006; Swart & Pettipher, 2012).

3.2.1.2 Person characteristics

Bronfenbrenner and Evans (in University of Pretoria, 2010b) relate person characteristics to a developmental outcome as it is one of the elements that influence the form, power, content, and direction of proximal processes throughout development. The individual is required to interact regularly over an extended period of time with the environment in order to assure development. The environment, in turn, has an effect on development, and the individual's behaviour at times represents an outcome of how the individual interacts and responds to a particular context (ibid.).

3.2.1.3 Context

The context concerns the environment in which development occurs and can also be referred to as environmental systems. These systems influence the individual's environment where the individual is placed in the centre of all the interactive systems (University of Pretoria, 2010b). In this study, the context refers to the environmental systems which influence the teacher's environment, as the teacher is placed in the centre

of all the interactive systems (ibid.). The interactive levels include the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem (Donald et al., 2006), all nested inside each other and interacting with the chronosystem (Swart & Pettipher, 2012).

This study investigated Intermediate Phase teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia, and therefore, the conceptual framework as illustrated in Figure 3.1 is based on the context of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model (Swart & Pettipher, 2012, p.13). The different environmental systems within the educational environment as the context of the ecological model will be explained in more detail in the next part of this discussion.

3.2.1.4 Chronosystem

The chronosystem refers to the changing social and cultural influences on development, as well as the individual's developmental period within which proximal processes are taking place. Time can also be represented in terms of time spent teaching or learning at school (University of Pretoria, 2010b).

3.2.2 Bronfenbrenner's Bio-Ecological Perspective Relating to Teachers who are Teaching and Supporting Learners with Dyslexia

As explained earlier, there are different environmental systems that influence the individual's development. The teacher is the focus of this study and, therefore, the classroom environment, the school environment, and the greater educational environment influence the teacher's development and experiences. Also, the way in which teachers experience learners with dyslexia within the classroom environment may not only influence teachers' personal development but also their professional development. Although learners with dyslexia are indirectly involved in this study, their impact on the development and experience of the teacher may be significant. However, the development and experiences of the learner with dyslexia could also be influenced by the teacher's attitudes regarding dyslexia and their experiences in the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia.

The development and experiences of teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia can also be influenced in the way they experience the school environment comprising of components such as learners (including learners with impairments), parents, colleagues, the Head of Department (HOD), the School-Based Support Team (SBST), the principal and the School Management Team (SMT), and the School Governing Body (SGB). As an inclusive school environment could influence teachers' attitudes and experiences regarding inclusion and the support of learners with dyslexia, so do teachers' attitudes and experiences regarding dyslexia and the possibly associated challenges of

inclusive education influence the school environment. Furthermore, teachers' attitudes and experiences regarding inclusion and dyslexia may not only influence the school environment, it could also influences the learners' perceptions of themselves and their experiences of the teacher and the school environment. Although the school environment and the educational environment, including the organisations and individuals found in these environments, are not the focus of this study, the direct and indirect influences from these environments may have a significant impact on the experiences of both teachers and the learner with dyslexia within the classroom environment. The influence of the context may be reflected in teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia in their classrooms.

Following is an explanation of the different environmental systems (Figure 3.1) based on the context of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model which illustrates the outline of the framework.

3.2.2.1 The microsystem

The microsystem represents patterns of activities, roles and interpersonal relationships in a given face-to-face setting closest to the individual's life (University of Pretoria, 2010b). It is within this system that the proximal interactions occur (Donald et al., 2006). The teacher who is teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia has been positioned at the centre of the context and is considered as a microsystem in this study.

The teacher

Teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia, and the possible challenges thereof (Bell et al., 2011; Bornman & Rose, 2010; Pavey, 2007; Swart & Pettipher, 2012) within the context of an inclusive school environment, may be influenced by factors such as the teacher's attribute, training, knowledge, teaching perspectives and curriculum delivery style (Engelbrecht, 2013a). However, the main concern of this study is not an in-depth analysis of these factors; it is only being mentioned as contributing factors that could influence teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia.

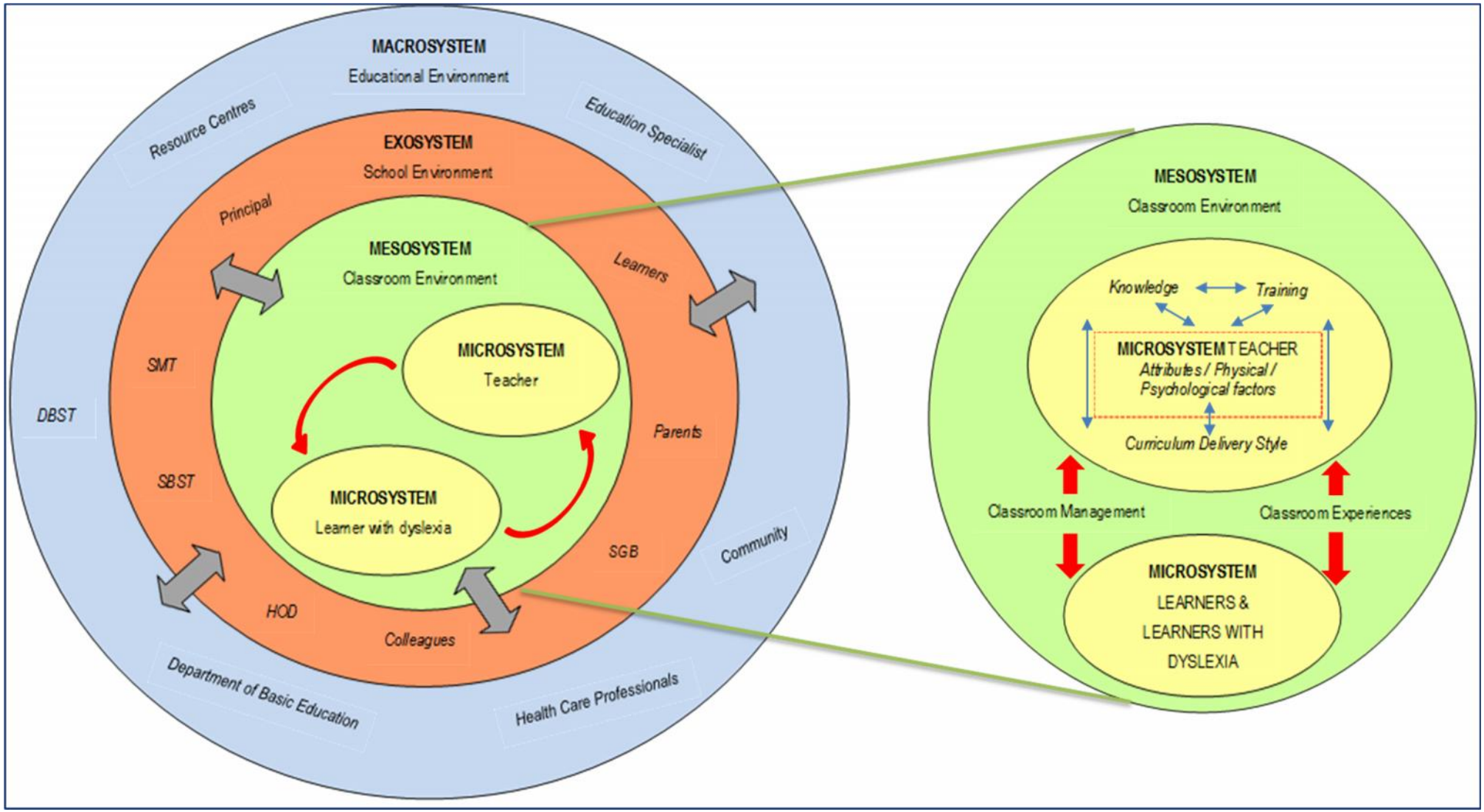


Figure 3.1: Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological approach as conceptual framework (adapted from Swart & Pettipher, 2012, p. 13).

The training that teachers receive in teaching and learning can influence their experiences in the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. It is possible that a better knowledge and understanding regarding dyslexia, and how to support learners with dyslexia within the classroom, could improve the experience of teachers within the classrooms (Bell et al., 2011; Bornman & Rose, 2010; Pavey, 2007; Swart & Pettipher, 2012).

Furthermore, the ecological model also takes into consideration that internal and external factors, both negative and positive, could not only impact the teacher's professional and personal development but also their experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Negative external factors such as possible challenges associated with inclusive education and negative internal factors such as illness and stress could influence the way in which teachers teach and support the learner with dyslexia. Conversely, positive internal factors such as personal characteristics that assist teachers in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, as well as positive external factors such as an inclusive school environment that assists teachers in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia might have a positive impact on the daily experiences of teachers dealing with the learner with dyslexia.

3.2.2.2 The mesosystem

The mesosystem refers to the interaction and relations among two or more microsystems in which the individual actively participates (University of Pretoria, 2010b). In the mesosystem, the teacher (microsystem) interacts with the learners within the classroom, including learners with dyslexia (another microsystem). Therefore, the classroom environment is considered as the mesosystem in this study.

The classroom environment

The classroom environment includes the teacher and all the learners, including learners with dyslexia. Teachers' abilities and skills to effectively manage their classrooms may influence the process of learning and teaching and impact their experiences in the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. Therefore, teachers' abilities and skills to manage their classrooms successfully could have a positive impact on their classroom experiences because the teacher could feel a sense of accomplishment with regard to learning and teaching. In the same way, teachers' inabilities and a lack of skills to manage their classrooms may have a negative impact on both the teacher and the learner's classroom experiences, with the possibility that the teacher could experience teaching and learning as stressful. Overall, the relationship between teachers and learners, including learners with

dyslexia, is significant as the classroom becomes an environment whereby important learning behaviour can be observed to identify and support learners with dyslexia.

3.2.2.3 The exosystem

One or more systems interact but do not necessarily involve the individual directly; however, the individual is influenced by the events happening within the systems (University of Pretoria, 2010b). In this context, the school environment is considered as the exosystem and will directly or indirectly influence the teacher's experiences in terms of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. The teacher will also interact with parents of the learners in their classrooms, including the parents of the learners with dyslexia, other learners in the school, colleagues, the Head of Department (HOD), the School-Based Support Team (SBST), the School Management Team (SMT), the principal, and the School Governing Body (SGB). These teachers and parents comprise the school environment and they may directly or indirectly impact the teacher's experiences of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.

The principal, the SMT, and the HOD

The principal and the SMT may insist that teachers use a certain curriculum delivery style, or manage their classrooms in a certain way, which could influence teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia in their classrooms. The HOD and the SBST have the influence to contribute towards the management of the school and the curriculum, and to support teachers in teaching and supporting learners, including learners with dyslexia.

Parents

The ecological model extends parental involvement to the classroom and school environment. Parental involvement may ensure that teachers can implement an academic intervention to support the learner with dyslexia where necessary. In turn, teachers can provide valuable feedback to the parents regarding the progress of the dyslexic learner.

The SGB

According to the Department of Basic Education (2015), the SGB promotes the best interest of the school and ensures the school's development. The SGB is required to support the principal, the teachers and other staff members to perform their professional functions. The teacher-learner ratio in the classroom is one possible issue that could indirectly influence teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. Therefore, the SGB's involvement in the recruiting and appointing of teachers (including

determining their remuneration) over and above the existing teachers appointed by the Department of Education at the school clearly illustrate the point that the SGB has the ability to assist the principal with school-related events (Department of Basic Education, 2015).

3.2.2.4 The macrosystem

The macrosystem refers to the social and economic structures and the attitudes and values for how the other components of the system should operate (Swart & Pettipher, 2012; University of Pretoria, 2010b). The classroom environment, school environment, and educational environment are intertwined and for any change to occur in any of these environments, they need to be interacting with each other. The school and the teacher's growth and development could be dependent on the interaction between the classroom, school, and educational environment, and the relationships developing between these environments. The macrosystem in this study refers to the educational environment and could include the community where the school is situated, healthcare professionals, social services, education specialists and the District Based Support Team (DBST), as well as the Department of Basic Education.

The educational environment, as the macrosystem, assists in the development and implementation of acts and policies. Educational policies regarding the implementing of inclusive education such as *Education White Paper Six: Special Needs Education* (Department of Education, 2001), have a direct impact on teachers' experiences regarding inclusion and the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia.

Healthcare professionals

In South Africa, healthcare professionals such as educational psychologists and neurologists, as well as organisations such as the Red Apple Dyslexia Association (www.dyslexiasa.org), are suitably qualified to assess learners, make a diagnosis of dyslexia, and provide appropriate intervention to these learners. The healthcare professional, in consultation with the learner's parents, has the power to include the teacher in the intervention process, and can communicate with the teacher as to what intervention or support has been decided upon (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Shaywitz et al., 2008; Williams & Lynch, 2010).

The education specialists and the DBST

As part of the macrosystem, education specialists, educational psychologists, and learning support specialists provide assistance and individual support to teachers as well as learners who are experiencing learning barriers. The DBST and education specialists visit schools

and offer collective support to teachers by conducting in-service training through workshops and seminars (Department of Basic Education, n.d.; Department of Education, 2001).

The Department of Education

Policies, acts, and papers providing guidelines and procedures for schools, teachers and principals are developed at a national level. At a district level, the Department of Education has education specialists, subject advisors and the DBST that directly support schools and teachers (Department of Basic Education, n.d.).

3.2.3 The Teacher and the Learner with Dyslexia within the Education Context

This study investigated the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. The relationship between the teacher and the learner with dyslexia could easily be influenced not only by internal factors such as the teacher's cognitive abilities, attributes, motivation, talents, skills, and the teacher's physical and psychological well-being (University of Pretoria, 2010b), but also by other possible environmental or contextual challenges such as meeting the diverse needs of learners within an inclusive classroom. Furthermore, other external factors such as teachers' training, teachers' curriculum delivery styles, as well as teachers' attitudes and possible past classroom experiences in the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia might also impact the relationship between the teacher and the learner with dyslexia.

External factors within the different environmental systems could impact teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia, and this may be significant as it could influence the entire education system directly. The experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia could, therefore, impact not only the teachers but also the learners with dyslexia and their parents. Moreover, teachers' classroom experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia could have an impact on the other learners in the class, other teachers in the school, as well as healthcare professionals and the community.

In the section that follows, I present the symbiosis between positive psychology and the asset-based approach with its synergism to Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective.

3.3 THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH

The asset-based approach complements Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective because the constructs of the asset-based approach focus on the different systems and contexts. In reflecting the components of person, process, and context of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective, the asset-based approach adds a unique perspective to learning

support. The asset-based approach is found in the education of learners who are experiencing barriers to learning as it is about addressing barriers within the learning support context by identifying the strengths, capacities, and resources available to teachers, learners, the school, and the community enabling them to be more resilient (Bouwer, 2012; Eloff, 2006).

A worldwide move towards positive psychology had occurred at the same time as the asset-based approach emerged (Eloff, 2006; Wissing & van Eeden, 2002), and in the following sub-section, I elaborate on positive psychology as an overarching paradigm for the asset-based approach.

3.3.1 Positive Psychology as an Overarching Paradigm for the Asset-Based Approach

Positive psychology can be described as "an umbrella term for the study of positive emotions, positive character traits, and enabling institutions" (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005, p. 410). The aim of positive psychology is neither the denial of negative aspects of life nor an effort to see such aspects through rose-coloured glasses. Rather, the aim is to study the ways that people experience joy, display altruism, and create healthy families and institutions and, thereby, addressing a full range of human experiences (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Positive psychology focuses on intrinsic assets, strengths and resources, and therefore, broaden the understanding of individual assets within the asset-based approach (Eloff, 2006). Both positive psychology (and the asset-based approach) could be used to address and overcome challenges in allowing individuals to obtain access to assets, capacities, and available resources through collaboration with other people and the community (Bouwer, 2012; Eloff, 2006). Consequently, the positive psychology movement has informed and enriched the development of the asset-based approach (Eloff, 2006).

3.3.2 The Development of the Asset-Based Approach

The early years of the new millennium have seen the development of asset-based approaches, especially in educational psychology (Eloff, 2006). Educational psychology studies using the asset-based approach as a theoretical framework (Loots, 2006, 2011; Olivier, 2010; Venter, 2014) have emphasised both the importance of relationship building and resources in the asset-based approach. These studies noted that teaching professionals continually focus on the 'half-full' part of the glass, meaning that a focus on strengths and resources could result in positive effects. Teaching professionals, therefore, are dedicated to identifying, accessing and mobilising the assets surrounding teachers, learners, schools and the community for sustainable support (Eloff, 2006).

3.3.3 Advantages and Challenges of the Asset-Based Approach

The asset-based approach empowers individuals, schools, families and other groups in the community by reconceptualising challenges and then making suggestions for remedial action to address the weaknesses and needs (Eloff, 2006). In South Africa, both the ecosystemic approach (Donald et al., 2006) and Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective (Swart & Pettipher, 2012) focus on the broader social context in which problems are manifested as they shift paradigms away from the exclusivity of one-to-one interventions to a service delivery model (Eloff, 2006). The advantage of assessing a learner according to the asset-based approach will enable the teacher to view the learner as a functioning and holistic being in a social context (Uys, 2012).

One of the biggest challenges of the asset-based approach is that educational psychologists and teaching professionals are still prone to 'deficit thinking' in terms of lacking and limitations (Bouwer, 2012; Eloff, 2006) and, consequently, could lead to the labelling of learners with impairments because the focus is on the impairment and not on the learners as individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses. This might cause the teacher to overlook the hidden potential of learners and expecting too little from them during classroom activities (Uys, 2012). In short, the asset-based approach calls for a paradigm shift in the way we perceive learning support (Eloff, 2006). In believing that assets exist in all the different systems, I proceed to explore the asset-based approach in theory and discuss the guidelines for identifying assets, capacities and resources within the asset-based approach.

3.3.4 Exploring the Asset-Based Approach

Within the social system, an asset-based approach is a strength-based approach that focuses on capacities, skills, resources, strengths, and assets as a way of addressing deficiencies in order to deal with challenges and developing support in different types of contexts (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006; Eloff, 2006; Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2001). McDonald (1997, p. 115) refers to the asset-based approach as the "half-full-glass" approach to intervention. In comparison to a glass both being half full and half empty, every teacher, learner, classroom setting, school and learning environment not only has needs and deficiencies but also possesses assets, capacities, abilities and gifts (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Teaching effectively depends on whether those assets and capacities can be utilised and shared. If they are, teachers most likely will be valued and feel connected to the people around them. The education system will also be enriched by the contribution that teachers make (Eloff, 2006; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

An asset-based approach to learning support has a strong internal focus which means that problem-solving comes from within (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006). Furthermore, the asset-based approach is relationship driven because relationships that are developed while taking this approach are based on the strengths and talents of the involved individuals, and not on deficiencies, weaknesses and problems (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006; Eloff, 2006). The asset-based approach also calls for a paradigm shift from a service delivery perspective to a networking, empowerment perspective (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006; Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2001). It does not intend to change the system, but attempts to look for inherent abilities and assets that can be found within the teacher and the learner with dyslexia, and from that basis work outwards towards the whole education system (Eloff, 2006). Therefore, the asset-based approach depends on being able to identify the teachers', learners' and community's strengths within the education context (University of Pretoria, 2010b).

As this study focused on the Intermediate teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia, Figure 3.2 illustrates how teachers could use the asset-based approach to address risk factors such as needs, weaknesses, and challenges within the educational context. The left column represents risk factors such as adversity, distress, deficiencies, bad experiences, and possible challenges which could be experienced by teachers while teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Within the framework of positive psychology and the asset-based approach, these risk factors are not being ignored but addressed by using assets, strengths, capacities, and resources present in the different systems. To develop support and mobilise teachers' assets and resources, they share these with other people within relationships, partnerships, and networks. Therefore, applying the asset-based approach could support teachers to adapt to the educational environment through practising resilience and coping strategies (Eloff, 2006; Seligman et al., 2005).

In conclusion, teachers could use the asset-based approach within the broader framework of positive psychology to address and overcome challenges by focusing on the presence of positive factors such as assets, capacities, and resources which can be obtained by forming relationships and partnerships within their community (Bouwer, 2012; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006; Eloff, 2006).

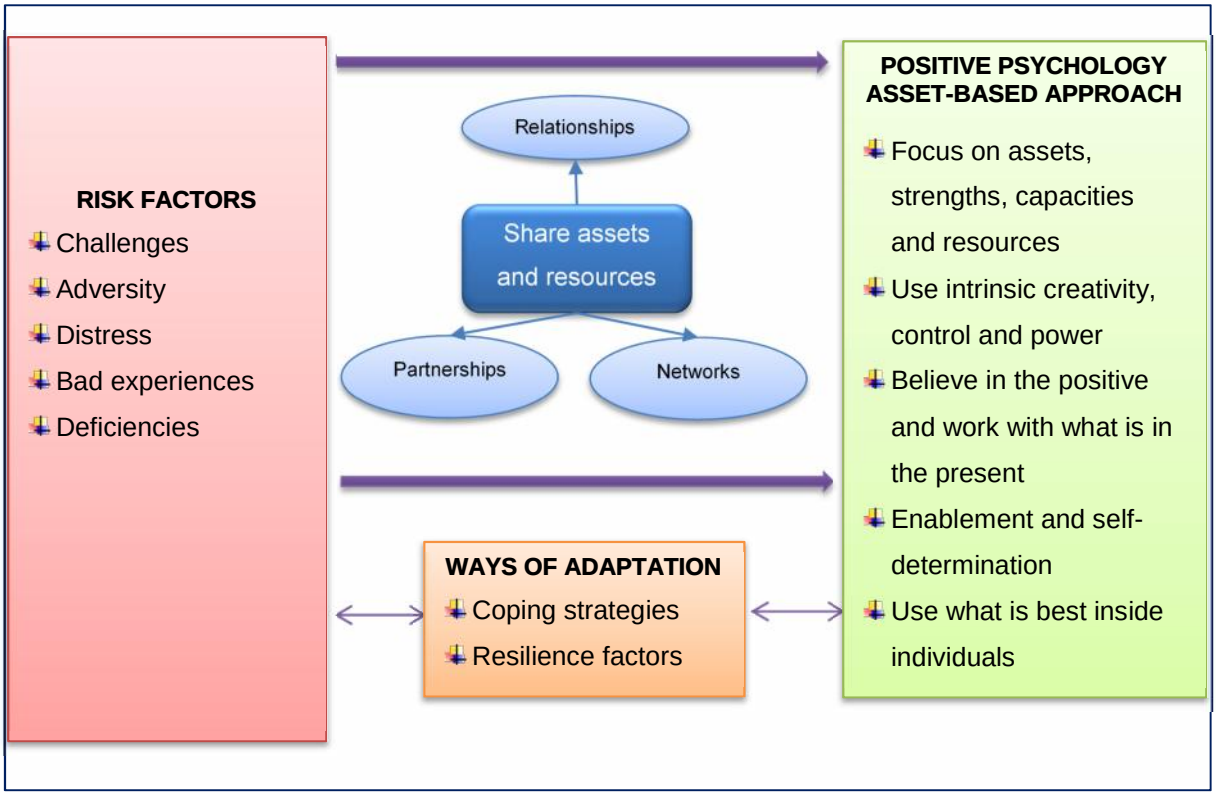


Figure 3.2: **Using the asset-based approach to address challenges** (adapted from Venter, 2014, p. 17).

3.3.5 Identifying Assets, Capacities and Resources

In believing that assets exist everywhere, I discuss the following potential assets applicable to this study:

3.3.5.1 Individual assets

Eloff (2006) places individual assets at the centre of the asset map because it could have a profound ripple effect on the other systems. One change in the teacher's behaviour could lead to many changes in the whole educational system since a continuous reciprocity is present in the system. Individual assets relate to the teacher's acquired skills and knowledge, personal characteristics, and potential assets such as interests, values and experiences. As the asset-based approach places a responsibility for networking on the professional, the teacher's background information forms part of the networking database, and may also reveal unidentified assets (ibid.).

3.3.5.2 The school

First of all, potential assets within the school system can be identified in the area of leadership and management where both principals and teachers could develop an inclusive leadership style as well as leadership abilities in teachers and learners (Eloff, 2006).

Secondly, assets in the area of human resources (Donald et al., 2006) could include strengths in interpersonal relationships, activities that support the development of teachers and learners, a willingness to be open-minded and responsive beyond the general duties of the teachers, and a culture of teamwork (Eloff, 2006). Thirdly, to be able to respond to the diverse needs of the learners, including learners with dyslexia, teachers should know how to use technical assets such as learning materials, furniture, science equipment, and sport and recreation facilities (Donald et al., 2006; Eloff, 2006). Finally, the way in which a school identifies itself may be an asset. Potential assets could include a mission statement and policy for the school, goal setting, the manner in which the curriculum is implemented, and involvement in the community (Eloff, 2006).

3.3.5.3 The classroom

The classroom is a subsystem of the whole school system (Donald et al., 2006), and cannot be separated from the school within which it functions (Eloff, 2006). Assets identified in the classroom may include human resources, learning and teaching materials, furniture, teaching methods, and dynamic assessments. Potential assets will differ from each classroom because of the different socio-economic contexts as well as different needs. Teachers will also identify assets differently depending on the attitude and creativity of each teacher.

In brief, the asset-based approach is based on the belief that all teachers, learners, parents and learning contexts have abilities, skills, resources and assets that contribute to positive change (Eloff, 2006). In our education system, we need to move away from a deficit model and rather focus on the positive aspects present within the teachers and learners. The quality of education could be improved by identifying and harnessing the strengths within the teachers and learners (University of Pretoria, 2010b). In the next sub-section, I briefly discuss the different stages of implementing an asset-based approach to learning support.

3.3.6 The Stages of the Asset-Based Approach

Although the process of implementing the asset-based approach is discussed in different stages, one should keep in mind that the different stages are interdependent and not separate from each other. This outline is based on strategies of capacity building, education, networking and relationship building (Eloff, 2006).

3.3.6.1 Learning to focus on assets and capacities

Gaining awareness is the first step towards change and requires the gathering of information and empowering the individual by focusing on assets and resources. Teaching

professionals have the intention to focus on assets as it recognises and mobilises untapped capacities that may benefit the system in which learning support occurs (Eloff, 2006).

3.3.6.2 Identifying assets and creating an asset map

This stage is about getting individuals to identify their personal attributes and to be less discouraged by challenges (Bouwer, 2012). Assets can be recognised by drawing an 'asset map' of all the available skills, talents, capacities and resources, and should include talents and gifts of individuals as well as the capacities of local institutions and non-government organisations (NGOs). All the identified assets, capacities and resources are visually represented by means of an asset map. The asset map will depend on the context in which the learning support occurs, and creates a way of understanding the context, the interrelationships between the different systems and the potential of the assets, and the capacities and resources within these systems (Eloff, 2006; Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2001).

3.3.6.3 Mapping access to assets and mapping relationships

For the purpose of learning support, Bouwer (2012) notes the importance of mapping access to assets. Strengths and assets are only useful once they have been accessed. It could, therefore, be useful to also map relationships on an asset map (Bouwer, 2012). An asset map that represents strong, constructive relationships may assist the mobilisation of assets since particular individuals within a system have the power to mobilise assets (Eloff, 2006).

3.3.6.4 Mobilising assets

Eloff (2006) defines asset mobilisation as the utilisation of available assets, capacities and resources not yet being fully deployed. According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), mobilisation involves connecting people with other people, local associations, local businesses and local institutions. Mobilising strengths and assets include empowering both the teacher and the learner to realise, appreciate and access the talents and resources available, and motivating potential supporters to offer their time, expertise and encouragement (Bouwer, 2012).

3.3.6.5 Sustaining mobilisation

At this stage, the teaching professionals should constantly be working to empower individuals to recognise and appreciate all the people for what they know and are able to do, and to approach them with trust when there is a need for participation, advice or assistance – to the extent that the need for the professional becomes redundant (Bouwer,

2012; Eloff, 2006). However, the supportive, collaborative role of the professional may remain (Eloff, 2006).

3.3.6.6 Revisiting, revising, reflecting and reconsidering continuously

As mentioned earlier, none of these stages are separate from one another. Anyone of the stages should be constantly revisited through a process of reflection, revision, and reconsideration. However, this is a process that is different for each individual because it allows for creativity as one focuses on individual strengths and capacities (Eloff, 2006).

3.3.7 The Teaching and Support of Learners with Dyslexia Through an Asset-Based Approach

With reference to Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective (Donald et al., 2006; Swart & Pettipher, 2012), teaching professionals should always view the learner with an impairment holistically, as environmental factors could contribute to the outcome of the condition (Uys, 2012). Although it is important to acknowledge a specific impairment, such as dyslexia, it is more important to understand the impact of dyslexia on the learner's ability to learn and adapt. Within the framework of the bio-ecological model and the asset-based approach (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006), professionals now not only focusing on the inabilities, challenges and weaknesses, but also on recognising and developing the strengths and skills of the learner and assets in the environment (Uys, 2012).

Teachers' attitudes, flexibility, creativity, motivation and interests as well as their ability to adapt their teaching styles to fit the diverse needs of the learners in the classroom are imperative for successful learning. The school's resources and facilities are also important assets because they expose learners to a wider variety of knowledge and opportunities (Dednam, 2011).

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has described Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model and the asset-based approach within the wider positive psychology paradigm as the conceptual framework used in this study. I introduced the four interacting dimensions of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective and explained the context of the different environmental systems relating to the learner with dyslexia, the teacher, and the educational environment. I also discussed the symbiosis between positive psychology and the asset-based approach with its synergism to Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model. Thereafter, I identified the potential assets applicable to this study and presented the different stages of the asset-based approach. I concluded with how the asset-based approach could assist teachers in the teaching and support of learners with impairments, including the learner with dyslexia. In

the next chapter, I discuss, describe and argue my choice of research methodology, research strategies and procedures applied in this investigation.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I discussed Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective and the asset-based approach within the wider positive psychology paradigm as the conceptual framework used in this study. In Chapter 4, I describe, explain and elaborate on the research methodology, strategies and procedures that I have used in this study. Firstly, I justify my choices of interpretivism as a meta-theoretical paradigm and qualitative research as a methodological paradigm. Secondly, I elaborate on my choice of research design and the selection of participants and sampling procedures. Throughout the discussion, I explain the strengths and limitations of the various choices I have made concerning these aspects. Thereafter, I explain the different phases of this study and discuss the strategies by which I conducted the data collection and data documentation. I also elaborate on the manner in which I conducted the data analysis and data interpretation. I justify my choices against the background of the research questions as formulated in Chapter 1. Finally, I conclude this chapter by discussing the quality criteria and ethical considerations of this study.

4.2 PARADIGMATIC ASSUMPTIONS

Mertens (2014) defines a paradigm as personal worldviews and assumptions that guide the researcher's thoughts and actions. In the following section, I describe interpretivism as my meta-theoretical paradigm and qualitative research as a methodological paradigm to underpin this study. Figure 4.1 illustrates the research methodology which guided this study followed by a discussion of the meta-theoretical paradigm, the methodological paradigm and the research design.

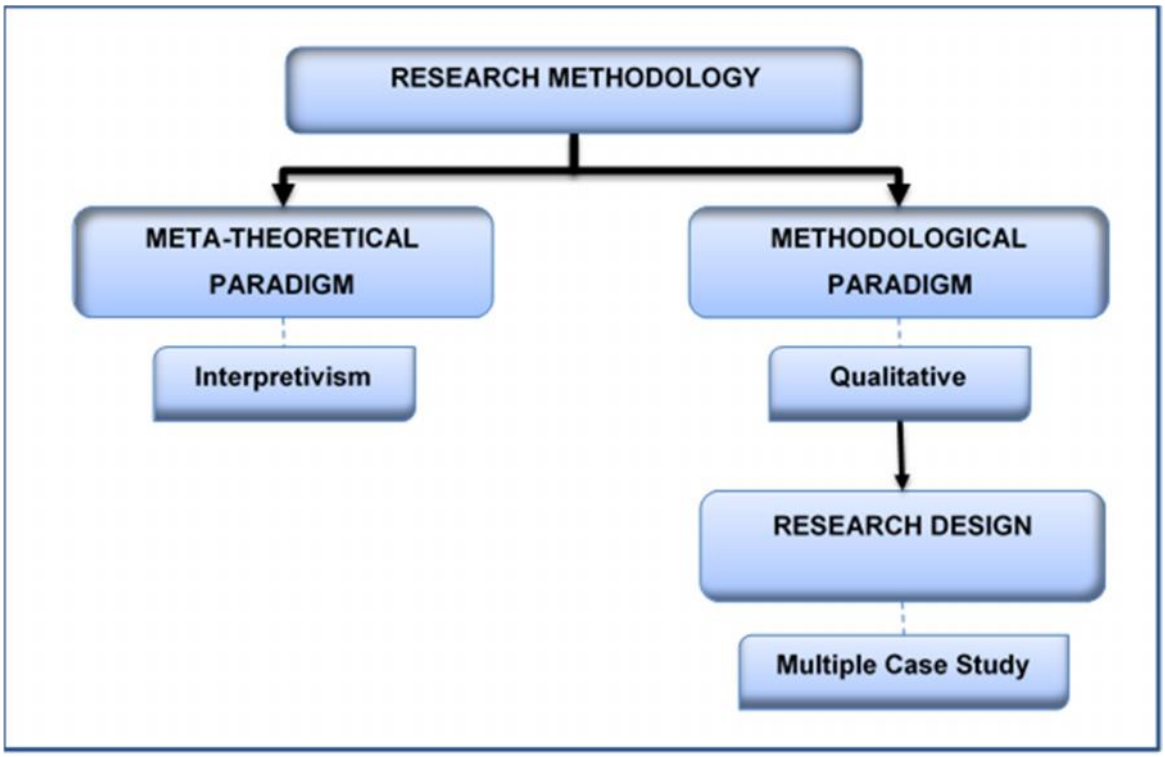


Figure 4.1: Overview of the research methodology

4.2.1 Meta-Theoretical Paradigm

To obtain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, I elected interpretivism as meta-theoretical paradigm. Interpretivism, constructivism and hermeneutics are related and can be considered as one category within the interpretive paradigm. Philosophical assumptions are embedded within interpretive paradigms and are used by qualitative researchers when they conduct a study (Creswell, 2013). The interpretivist perspective offers an alternative to the positivist perspective (Creswell, 2013; Ponterotto, 2005) as the interpretivist perspective is based on the relativist ontology of multiple realities, a subjectivist epistemology where the researcher and the participant co-create understandings, and a natural set of methodological procedures (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Ponterotto, 2005). In other words, the interpretivist perspective is based on the beliefs that multiple realities are subjectively and socially co-constructed between the researcher and the participants and shaped by their lived experiences and interactions in an attempt to understand and to make meaning of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2013; Hatch, 2002; Morgan & Sklar, 2012a; Nieuwenhuis, 2013a). In this study, the interpretive perspective allows me to focus on the actions and intentional behaviour of the teachers as I subjectively attempt to understand their experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia from their world of life and work (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

Conducting research from the interpretivist stance has enabled me to subjectively interpret the social world as an interpretive world, as no distinction is being made between the researcher and the phenomenon being studied (Altheide & Johnson, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Jansen, 2013). Moreover, the use of inductive strategies with a descriptive outcome has enabled me to generate thick, in-depth descriptive theories rather than to formulate and test theories (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002; Hatch, 2002; Lichtman, 2006). As an interpretive researcher, I assume that reality can only be accessed through language, consciousness and shared meanings. Human behaviour is part of social conventions, and to understand what a particular action means, someone must interpret that action in a particular way (Schwandt, 2000). Therefore, the actions and behaviour of teachers teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia require interpretation because "the facts do not speak for themselves" (Jansen, 2013, p. 21).

In brief, the aim of employing interpretivism as meta-theoretical paradigm for this study is to offer a perspective on how teachers perceive their role with regard to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, to explore the way in which teachers could overcome challenges within an inclusive education environment to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia, and above all, to provide insight into the way in which Intermediate Phase teachers make sense of their experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia within a diverse classroom.

4.2.1.1 Strengths of the interpretivist perspective

As opposed to positivists who believe that knowledge can only be discovered through science, interpretivists argue that human nature is too complex to provide precise and theoretical answers to human problems (Nieuwenhuis, 2013a). Since the interpretive perspective is based on multiple realities, it has the advantage that objective reality can never be captured (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), allowing the researcher to assign multiple meanings to the phenomenon in order to secure an in-depth understanding of the interactions within and between the phenomena (Nieuwenhuis, 2013a). Due to the complexity of human behaviour, the goal of my study was to portray the social world as an interpretive world and not a literal world, as I used social contexts to understand and to rely as much as possible on the teachers' experiences in the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia (Altheide & Johnson, 2011; Creswell, 2013). To understand the meaning of human action requires an empathetic identification with the participant. As a researcher, I attempted to psychologically connect with the participants to be able to understand their motives, beliefs, desires, and thoughts (Schwandt, 2000). To provide evidence, I became the 'human instrument' through which the data was collected and analysed, for I had the

knowledge, responsiveness, adaptability, and the ability to handle sensitive matters, and to look at human events in a more holistic manner. The richness and depths of explorations and descriptions required my ability to clarify and summarise, to explore, to analyse, and to examine different responses (Cohen et al., 2011; Nieuwenhuis, 2013a). Therefore, interpretivism is not only a process by which I have attempted to understand the participants' self-understanding of a particular action, it also aims to understand how we interpret the meaning of our own actions and those with whom we interact (Schwandt, 2000).

From the interpretivist perspective, I am personally involved in this study because it is not only difficult to be distant and objective, as found in positivism (Hatch, 2002; Nieuwenhuis, 2013a), but also impossible to understand human experiences without considering both the researcher and the participant's values and beliefs (Ary et al., 2002). I should, therefore, acknowledge the interactive relationship between the teachers and their experiences regarding the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia, and accept the interaction between myself and the teachers because through this interaction deeper meaning can be uncovered (Ponterotto, 2005). Despite the advantages of conducting this study from an interpretivist paradigm, I need to address certain limitations to this meta-theoretical paradigm.

4.2.1.2 Limitations of the interpretivist perspective

Until the 1990s, most research from the interpretivist perspective was not taken seriously because quotes and observations were not accepted as evidence, especially if there was not a large sampling size involved. However, researchers from the interpretivist perspective argue that evidence is not about facts, but an argument that is contextualised and part of a project with assumptions, criteria, and rules of participation (Altheide & Johnson, 2011). As no distinction is made between the researcher and the phenomenon being studied (Jansen, 2013), I had to keep in mind that subjective reports and less controlled interviews could sometimes be incomplete, misleading, and inaccurate (Cohen et al., 2011). However, to address the goals of the present study and to prevent inaccurate and misleading findings, I had no intention to be distant and objective in conducting this study because I had to focus on the contexts in which teachers live and work (Creswell, 2013). I accordingly applied strategies to demonstrate the trustworthiness and credibility of the study which I will discuss in another section. Since the findings of qualitative research within the interpretivist paradigm are often regarded as being a matter of opinion (Ary et al., 2002), I had to accept that the findings of qualitative research cannot be generalised beyond the studied phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2013a). Therefore, this study set out not to generalise, but to

provide rich and in-depth discussions of the findings generated from the data. Next, I describe and justify my choice of methodological paradigm.

4.2.2 Methodological Paradigm

For this study, I have chosen the qualitative methodological paradigm. It aims at generating theory rather than testing theory (Ary et al., 2002). Furthermore, qualitative research contains an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). It lays particular emphasis on the "inductive, interpretive methods applied to the everyday world which is seen as subjective and socially created" (Hatch, 2002, p. 6). Qualitative researchers argue that human behaviour is bound to the context in which it occurs, that social and cultural reality cannot be reduced to variables in the same way as physical reality, and that meaning is constructed by the participants involved in the social settings (Ary et al., 2002). Since it is impossible to measure social reality in the same way as physical reality (ibid.), qualitative research is exploring the 'why' and 'how' questions of research rather than 'what' and 'how many' (Lichtman, 2006; Nieuwenhuis, 2013a). Furthermore, Nieuwenhuis (2013a) has described the qualitative approach as research that attempts to collect rich, descriptive data of a specific phenomenon with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed. As qualitative research involves "in-depth interviews and observations of humans in natural and social settings" (Lichtman, 2006, p. 22), the researcher relies on the views of the participants, asks broad, general questions, collects data consisting of words, describes these words into themes, and conducts the research in a subjective, biased manner (Creswell, 2008). Moreover, data is captured through descriptions that could include field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, audio- and visual recordings, and self-reflecting memos (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The qualitative perspective best suits this study's research goals of obtaining insight into Intermediate Phase teachers' perception of their role regarding teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, and to explore how teachers could overcome challenges within an inclusive education environment to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia within the social context of a diverse, inclusive classroom. Conducting qualitative research also enabled me to generate thick, in-depth descriptive data of the participating teachers' emotions, perceptions, beliefs and values which cannot be reduced to variables in the same way as physical reality (Ary et al., 2002). Besides, the decision of choosing the qualitative approach relates to my personal skills, training, and experiences (Creswell, 2008) as a teacher and learning support specialist assisting learners with spelling and reading difficulties.

4.2.2.1 Strengths of the qualitative methodological paradigm

As the qualitative research perspective relates to the interpretivist philosophical paradigm, the advantages of conducting a qualitative study will correspond with those of the interpretivist philosophical paradigm. The academic and research communities no longer view experimental research as the only way in answering research questions. In qualitative research, there are multiple ways of acquiring insights and knowledge into the experiences of teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Therefore, I entered into this qualitative study with an open mind receptive to new ideas, and was prepared for a certain level of ambiguity (Lichtman, 2006).

Strong holists conclude that knowledge is perspectival and contextual, and Schwandt (2000) and Lichtman (2006) concur that it is impossible to distinguish any single, particular interpretation as more correct, or better than another. As I constructed multiple realities, there were many possible interpretations of understanding and explaining the teachers' views and interactions with the learners with dyslexia. By consulting my field notes and reflective journal, I inserted my own thinking into the data transformation process (Hatch, 2002).

Within the qualitative research perspective, I became the human investigator and the primary instrument responsible for the gathering and analysing of data (Ary et al., 2002). It is through my human intelligence and senses that data was collected, information was gathered, settings were viewed, and realities were constructed. All the information was influenced by my experience, knowledge, skills, and background (Hatch, 2002; Lichtman, 2006; Nieuwenhuis, 2013a) as a teacher and learning support specialist. In conducting this study, it was important to separate my role as a teacher and a learning support specialist from my role as a qualitative researcher. I had to accept my role as a researcher to establish a professional relationship with the participating teachers because the teachers had to consider me a researcher and not a teacher or learning support specialist. The extended engagement with the participating teachers in this study and the collection of rich data led to thick descriptions that distinguish qualitative research from some traditional inquiry (Hatch, 2002).

I preferred the qualitative methodological paradigm for this study, as the nature of the study did not require excessive numbers, statistics and tables (Lichtman, 2006). Rather, the present study tended to observe individuals as they interacted with each other. This allowed me to extensively investigate, in some detail, the teachers' experiences regarding

the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia, rather than portraying dyslexia as a phenomenon at the surface without any insight (Lichtman, 2006; Nieuwenhuis, 2013a).

4.2.2.2 Limitations of the qualitative methodological paradigm

As the qualitative research perspective relates to the interpretivist philosophical paradigm, the challenges of qualitative research will also correspond with the challenges of the interpretivist philosophical paradigm. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative researchers are seen as journalists. Their studies are classified as unscientific, exploratory, and subjective. Positivists argue that qualitative researchers write fiction and that there is no way to verify their truth statements. In fact, positivists reject the textual, narrative approach to research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Because qualitative reports are written in a narrative style, it requires the art and skill of a writer. As such, it can often be difficult for researchers to express their thoughts on paper which in turn might lead to the procrastination of tasks (Hatch, 2002). Furthermore, the lack of rules can be frustrating, and the researcher may feel uncomfortable and confused when something evidently has more than one possible meaning (Lichtman, 2006). Since the nature and types of interactions between the researcher and the participants are unpredictable, researchers should be open-minded and willing to adjust their methods and way of design (Ary et al., 2002).

Qualitative researchers remain in the field for some time and, consequently, their personal issues such as emotions, attitudes, values and beliefs, and characteristics may have an influence on the research process. Since this study explored the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, I had to investigate situations from the teachers' point of view to try and understand the world from their perspective (Cohen et al., 2011).

As a novice qualitative researcher, I was prepared to find data analysis strategies difficult because analysing huge amounts of data in qualitative research is always considered as a painstaking, time-consuming and complex task (Ary et al., 2002; Hatch, 2002). As I had previously never done a full-scale analysis, it could be a daunting task to make sense of the data that I had collected (Hatch, 2002). I also had to keep in mind that collecting and analysing data would take considerable time and adding participants or sites would lengthen that time (Creswell, 2008).

4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Nieuwenhuis (2013b) defines research methodology as a strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to selecting a research design and specifying the selection of participants, the data collection strategies to be used, and the data analysis to be done. The nature of my research questions determined my choice of research design, and influenced the way in which I collected and interpreted data.

In this section, I discuss the research process in terms of explaining and justifying the selected research design, the selection of the cases and participants, the process of data collection and documentation, and the data analysis and interpretations.

4.3.1 Research Design

Yin (2014) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). In support of this definition, Creswell (2013) describes case study research as a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time. Examples of binding a case include time and place (Creswell, 2013), and time and activity (Stake, 1995). In other words, the boundaries in a qualitative case study design could be compared to the inclusion and exclusion criteria for participant selection in a quantitative study. Moreover, the boundaries of the case study indicate the breadth and depth of the qualitative study and not merely the selection of the participants (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Once the case and its boundaries have been determined, the type of case study being conducted should be considered. As stated by Yin (2014), case studies can be categorised as explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive. He furthermore differentiates between single case studies and multiple case studies. By comparison, Stake (1995) identifies case studies as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective. Here, the intent of conducting the case study (Creswell, 2013) and the overall purpose of the study will guide the selection of a specific type of case study design (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The purpose of a case study is to understand the case in-depth within its natural setting and acknowledge its complexity and context (Seabi, 2012). The case study research starts with the identification of a specific case which could be an individual, a small group, or an organisation (Creswell, 2013). For instance, the case will be the experiences of teachers, but the case cannot be considered without the context of teaching, specifically within the

school and classroom settings. In fact, teachers' experiences regarding teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are determined and shaped within these settings. Detailed and in-depth data collection involves multiple sources of information such as interviews, observations, audio-visual material, reports and documents, and the researcher reports a case description and case themes (ibid.).

For this study, I selected a case study research design since the focus of the study is to answer 'how' and 'why' questions, the behaviour of the participants cannot be manipulated, the contextual conditions are relevant to the phenomenon under study, and the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clear (Yin, 2014). In brief, the case study, as a research method, has allowed me to investigate the Intermediate Phase teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia while retaining a holistic, real-life perspective (ibid.). Moreover, the nature of this study justifies the use of a multiple case study design since it has explored the teaching experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers in various primary schools within the Gauteng province. The case would still be the experiences of teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia but the different experiences engaged by teachers in different primary schools were analysed. It was, therefore, imperative to select the cases carefully to predict either a similar or contrasting result based on a theory (Yin, 2014).

Other approaches were considered for this study. A strictly quantitative exploration would not be valid due to the small sample size and the nature of the research questions. Moreover, the goal of this research was not to test an intervention or determine a cause and effect relationship (Creswell, 2009). I also eliminated grounded theory for this study as the theory is already present in the literature. Merriam (2002) argued that a central element of grounded theory is that the theory is grounded in the results of the study. Therefore, the research should not start with a pre-existing theory that the study is trying to prove. Finally, I dismissed the mixed methods approach because of the nature of the present study's research questions. No possible hypothesis could arise from the questions as the goal of this study was exploratory. For these reasons, I considered the multiple case study as the best approach to address the research questions.

In deciding to conduct a multiple case study research design, I had to consider and address certain limitations and concerns regarding this qualitative research design.

4.3.1.1 Limitations of the case study research design

One of the limitations inherent in a qualitative case study research design is the identification of the case. I had to decide which bounded system to study, and whether to

study a single case or multiple cases. A multiple case study may dilute the overall analysis as more cases being studied lead to less depth in any single case (Creswell, 2013). A valid concern in conducting a case study is the need for greater rigour when doing a case study research. Practices of being careless and negligent, not following systemic procedures, or allowing evidence to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions should be avoided. Therefore, all evidence needs to be reported fairly since problems may occur more frequently and demand greater attention in conducting case study research (Yin, 2014).

Certain strategies could be applied to address these limitations. Building trust with participants and checking for misinformation requires close, long-term contact with the participating teachers (Creswell, 2013). I can't set my views aside, as I am subjectively involved with the participating teachers, and therefore, by keeping a research journal, I reflected on my personal experiences by clarifying and commenting on my assumptions, feelings, preconceptions, and past experiences. One major concern regarding case study research is the generalisation of findings. This concern can be addressed in the sense that case studies are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations (Yin, 2014). In the event of experiencing challenges in analysing data, I have the support of my supervisor and other scholars to assist me in making sense of the collected data. Additionally, my supervisor and peer reviewers acted as a 'devil's advocate', as they asked hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations, thereby keeping me honest in conducting this study (Creswell, 2013).

4.3.1.2 Strengths of the case study research design

Despite the limitations and concerns regarding case study research, Yin (2014) views a case study as a form of inquiry that does not depend solely on ethnographic or participant-observer data. Therefore, I had the opportunity to follow-up data with telephonic conversations and e-mail letters after the initial personal interviews. Furthermore, in exploring and reporting similar and different experiences of teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, the research findings could be valuable for teachers, healthcare workers, and policymakers (Creswell, 2013).

4.3.2 Data Collection Procedure

Having discussed the multiple case study research design for the present study, this section addresses the data collection procedures. In qualitative research, the data collection procedure involves a series of interrelated activities with the purpose of gathering information to answer the research questions.

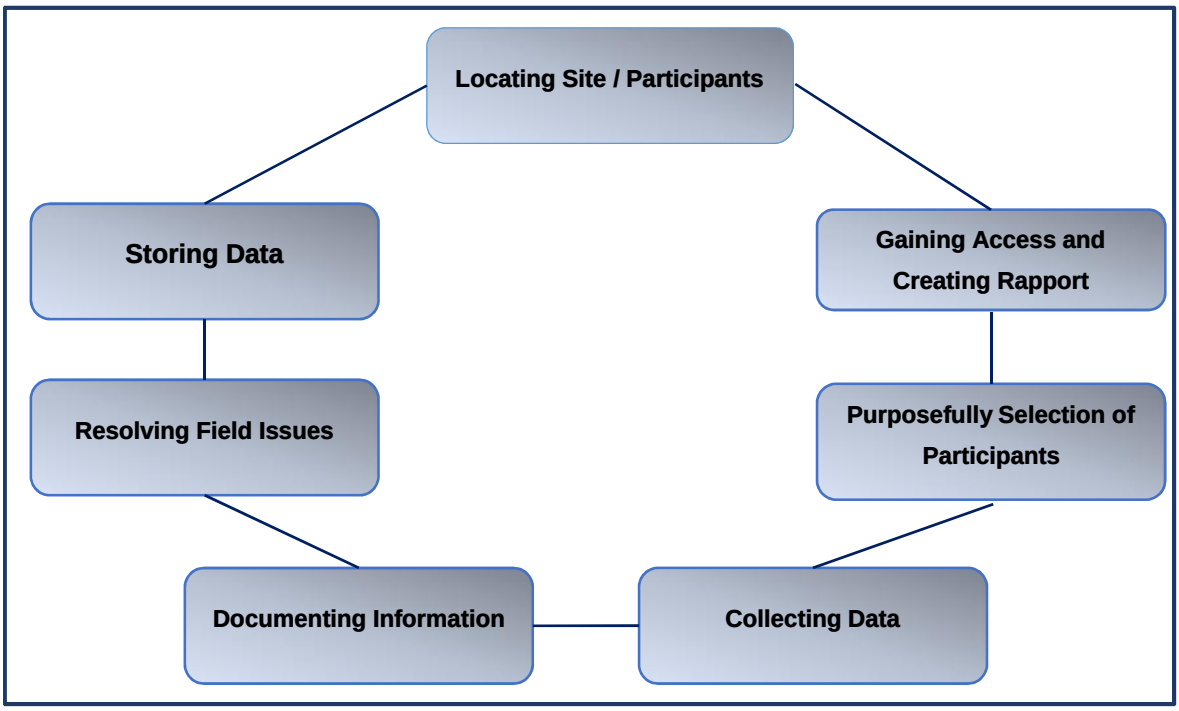


Figure 4.2 Data collection procedure (adapted from Creswell, 2013, p. 146)

Referring to Figure 4.2, I visually presented an overview of the data gathering process as presented by (Creswell, 2013) followed by a discussion of each process.

4.3.2.1 Locating the site of collecting data

For this multiple case study, the unit of analysis included three conveniently and purposively selected primary schools based on geographical accessibility within the Ekurhuleni North, Ekurhuleni South, and Gauteng East school district of the Gauteng province. I had decided not to conduct this study at the school where I am employed, as certain issues such as unfavourable data, or the disclosure of private information might implicate risks for me, the teachers, and the school (Creswell, 2013).

4.3.2.2 Gaining access and creating rapport

To conduct the present study, I obtained approval from the University of Pretoria[4] and the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)[5]. I also obtained permission from the principals of the public and independent primary schools to approach the Head of Department to assist with access to the schools and facilitate the gathering of data (Creswell, 2013).

[4] Refer to Appendix D1 for Approval of application – University of Pretoria.
[5] Refer to Appendix D3 for research approval letter from GDE.

To gain depth of information, it was essential to establish a good level of rapport and empathy with the participants especially where the participating teacher had a strong personal involvement in the matter (Lester, 1999). This multiple case study involved teachers who were teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, and it was, therefore, important to obtain these teachers' written permission through a signed letter of consent.

4.3.2.3 Selection of participants and sampling procedures

Having discussed the site and gaining access to the site, the next sub-section addresses the sampling procedure. Non-probability sampling is used in qualitative research where the aim of the investigation is to create an in-depth description and not to generalise findings. Since there are various forms of non-probability sampling (Morgan & Sklar, 2012), I decided on purposive sampling as the most suitable form of sampling to investigate and answer the research questions of this study. Two participating teachers from each of the three schools were selected by the head of department or the principal through criterion sampling (Creswell, 2013; Morgan & Sklar, 2012a; Nieuwenhuis, 2013b). For this multiple case study, it was imperative to select not only teachers who were accessible and willing to share information regarding their teaching experiences, but also to select teachers who met the following required criteria:

- The teacher should be involved in teaching learners in the Intermediate Phase because a significant reading discrepancy among learners who are struggling with reading only occurs after the third-grade level (Shaywitz et al., 2008; Williams, 2012). From my experience as a teacher and as a learning support specialist, I concur with Engelbrecht (2005) that from the fourth grade onwards 'learning to read' changes to 'reading to learn'.
- The participating teachers should have one or more learners with dyslexia in their classrooms.
- The learners that inform the teacher's experiences could have been either formally diagnosed with dyslexia or be suspected of having dyslexia. In the case of a learner being diagnosed with dyslexia, the diagnosis should have been made by an educational psychologist, a dyslexia specialist or a medical and mental health practitioner. In the case where participating teachers suspect dyslexia, their assumptions should be based on their knowledge regarding dyslexia, their ability to identify the characteristics of dyslexia within the learner, and the learner's behaviour and work ethic in the classroom.

Since the present study was explorative and investigative, my aim was to have enough participating teachers to generate 'thick descriptions' and rich data (Cohen et al., 2011), and to provide a detailed account of their experiences while not overwhelming myself with the amount of data (Morgan & Sklar, 2012a).

4.3.2.4 Data collection and documentation strategies

Next, I discuss and explain the data collection and documentation strategies. This qualitative multiple case study research was carried out in real-life situations, and data collection techniques such as interviews and observations were unobtrusive because I had no intention to manipulate either the behaviour of the participating teachers (Yin, 2014), or dyslexia as the phenomenon of interest (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b). For the present study, I employed multiple methods such as interviews, observations, textual and audio-visual data to obtain rich, descriptive information to be able to crystallise the findings of the study. In Table 4.1, I present an overview of the data collection strategy, the documentation of the data as well as the aim of the data collection strategies. I further elaborate on each data collection strategy by discussing the advantages and limitations of each one of the strategies.

Table 4.1: Data collection and documentation strategies

Data Collection Strategy	Documentation of Data	Aim of Data Collection Strategy
Semi-structured individual interviews	Audio-recorded verbatim transcriptions of interviews	To explore and investigate: - How Intermediate Phase teachers perceive their role with regard to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia; and - How Intermediate Phase teachers overcome challenges within an inclusive education environment to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia.
Classroom observations	Observation protocol Personal research journal and field notes Audio-recording of classroom observations	- To establish context and meaning. - To capture the participating teachers' behaviour, approaches and available resources in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. - To present detailed, descriptive field notes.

Teachers reflect on their experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia	Participating teachers' reflective journal	➢ To collect the participating teachers' reflections on their experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.
Participating teachers' lesson plans Learners' lessons and assessment activities	Visual data (Photographs)	To collect: ➢ Visual evidence of participating teachers' teaching and assessment strategies. ➢ Visual evidence of learners' lesson and assessment activities.

Having summarised the various data collection and documentation strategies relevant to this study, I further elaborated on each data collection strategy by discussing the advantages and limitations of each one of the strategies.

Semi-structured individual interviews

For the present study, I conducted face-to-face, semi-structured interviews as it was informal and flexible. I developed a set of predetermined open-ended questions[6] in advance to address the research questions of the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b) and all six participating teachers were required to answer the same open-ended questions. To avoid distractions and to allow the participating teachers to be comfortable, the interviews were conducted after school hours in a private setting and at a time that was convenient for them. I allowed 60 to 90 minutes to interview each participating teacher; however, they were welcome to extend the interview time if they needed more time.

Notwithstanding the advantages of interviews, certain limitations were foreseen in conducting semi-structured interviews. As I explored and probed the participating teachers' experiences to identify new emerging lines of inquiry (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b), I could easily get side-tracked by issues not related to the present study. Also, different participating teachers interpreted the same questions in different ways, and their meanings differed from the meanings that I had identified (Hobson & Townsend, 2010). Furthermore, generalisability was difficult to sustain (ibid.) seeing that conducting interviews and verbatim transcriptions were time-consuming and costly, meaning that only a few teachers could participate in the present study.

[6] Refer to Appendix B1 for an example of the interview protocol.

Documenting interview data

Documenting the interview data could be done by writing the answers down, but it was time-consuming. Consequently, I used an audio recorder, following the granting of permission from the participating teachers to record the interviews. In addition, taking notes to review the answers enabled me to record a more accurate account of the individual interviews. It was important to listen to the recordings of the interviews as soon as possible and to transcribe the interviews verbatim for data analysis purposes after conducting the interviews. Equally important was to review the notes to identify gaps I needed to explore when conducting member checking (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b). The personal interviews were verbatim transcribed[7] and provided me with the opportunity to revisit the data to ensure transferability, credibility, confirmability, and authenticity.

Classroom observations

The goal of observation is to understand the participating teachers' experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia from the perspective of the teachers, to carefully record what the participating teachers say and do, and to make sense of their experiences within the classroom setting (Hatch, 2002). I had chosen observation as a data collection instrument because of the several advantages it could hold for this multiple case study. First of all, direct observation allowed me better understanding of the participating teachers' experiences of teaching and supporting the learner with dyslexia within the classroom environment. Secondly, I had the opportunity to observe things that would be less likely to surface by using other data collection strategies. Thirdly, I could become aware of sensitive matters the participating teachers might be reluctant to discuss during interviews and finally, I added my own experience in the classroom setting to be able to analyse what was happening (ibid.).

However, observation as a data collection strategy could be a limitation due to certain issues such as impression management and deception on the part of the participating teachers (Creswell, 2013). Another challenge I had to keep in mind was that my presence in the classroom could lead to participating teachers feeling uncomfortable (Cohen et al., 2011).

To address the possible limitations, I prepared the participating teachers in advance of my role of observer as participant (Creswell, 2013). As an outsider, I would watch and take field notes without getting involved in the participating teachers or the learners' teaching

[7] Refer to Appendix C1 for verbatim transcripts of the six participating teachers' interviews.

and learning activities in the classroom. Furthermore, I explained to the learners that I am there to observe their teacher and not to assess them or their school work.

Documenting observation data

I developed an observation protocol[8] in advance to guide me through the observation process. Furthermore, I prepared field notes immediately after the observation to provide rich narrative descriptions of the participating teachers and the events being observed (Creswell, 2013). I also obtained informed consent from the participating teachers to audio-record the classroom observations to establish context and meaning.

Teachers reflect on their experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia

A reflective journal is a personal document in which the author of the document finds expression so that the reader of the journal comes to know the author's view and experiences of events. The author records thoughts whenever he or she notices anything, discusses something regarding the research with someone, observes participants in an activity or anything else that might help to better understand the phenomenon under investigation. Such thoughts could form the basis of the researcher's findings and conclusions (Kumar, 2014).

I requested the participating teachers to keep a reflective journal throughout the course of the research as it represents the immediate recordings of their feelings, thoughts, and experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. In addition, as the researcher, I kept a reflective journal to reflect on my role as a researcher within the research process, and to think about my reactions to the research content (Willig, 2008). My reflective journal and field notes included a daily schedule with logistics of the present study, and reflections of my own assumptions, biases, beliefs and values, and experiences during interviews and observations (Ary et al., 2002; Hartas, 2010; Hittleman & Simon, 2006). Both my research journal and the participating teachers' reflective journals were part of the data necessary to conclude certain insights and understandings (Willig, 2008).

Since the participating teachers' reflective journals were personal documents in which they could express feelings that would otherwise never have been made public, I obtained their permission before I disclosed any information from their reflective journals.

[8] Refer to Appendix B2 for an example of the observation protocol.

Visual data in the form of participating teachers' lesson plans and learners' lessons and assessment activities

Hatch (2002) considers visual data as unobtrusive data because their collection does not interfere with the ongoing events of everyday life. Collecting visual data as part of this qualitative research offers several advantages. As already mentioned, visual data can be collected without disturbing the natural flow of the participating teachers' activities. Visual data might also be useful in the sense that it could be compared with data from personal interviews and observations, making them useful for crystallisation (ibid.).

However, using visual data in isolation could offer a distorted view of events and social contexts which lead to compromising the trustworthiness of certain pieces of visual data as there are no member checks because the data cannot speak back (Hatch, 2002).

As an educational researcher, I collected copies of the participating teachers' lesson plans as well as samples of the lesson and assessment activities of the learner with dyslexia. The personal interviews and classroom observations were audio-recorded to ascertain the correct data capturing.

Documentation of visual data

Visual data was explored and recorded on the observational protocol[9] through descriptions of classroom tools, furniture and decorations found in the participating teachers' classrooms. I also obtained examples of visual data[10] in the form of teachers' lesson plans and learners' lesson and assessment strategies.

4.3.2.5 Data analysis and interpretation

In qualitative research, data analysis is based on an interpretive philosophy that is concerned with the meanings participants give to their experiences, behaviours, feelings and knowledge in order to make sense of their world (Hittleman & Simon, 2006; Nieuwenhuis, 2013c). Qualitative data analysis is an ongoing and iterative or non-linear process (Cohen et al., 2011; Hittleman & Simon, 2006; Nieuwenhuis, 2013c), in which the researcher interacts with the data throughout the study to make sense of the data collected from multiple sources. This iterative process of examination and interpretation allows the researcher to draw provisional conclusions and to enhance the research questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). Furthermore, qualitative data analysis consists of: (a) preparing and organising the data for analysis; (b) describing, classifying, and interpreting

[9] Refer to Appendix C3 for observation protocols of the six participating teachers.
[10] Refer to Appendix B6 and B7 for examples of teachers' lesson plans and learners' lesson and assessment activities.

data into codes and themes; and (c) representing and visualising the data in figures, tables, or a discussion (Creswell, 2013). The aim of interpreting data is to draw conclusions, and therefore, the findings and conclusions of this study is a bounded conclusion as it is only applicable to the participating teachers in their own contexts (Nieuwenhuis, 2013c).

Referring to Figure 4.3, I visually presented an overview of the steps followed in the data analysis and interpretation process of the present study. Thereafter, I elaborated on each one of the steps.

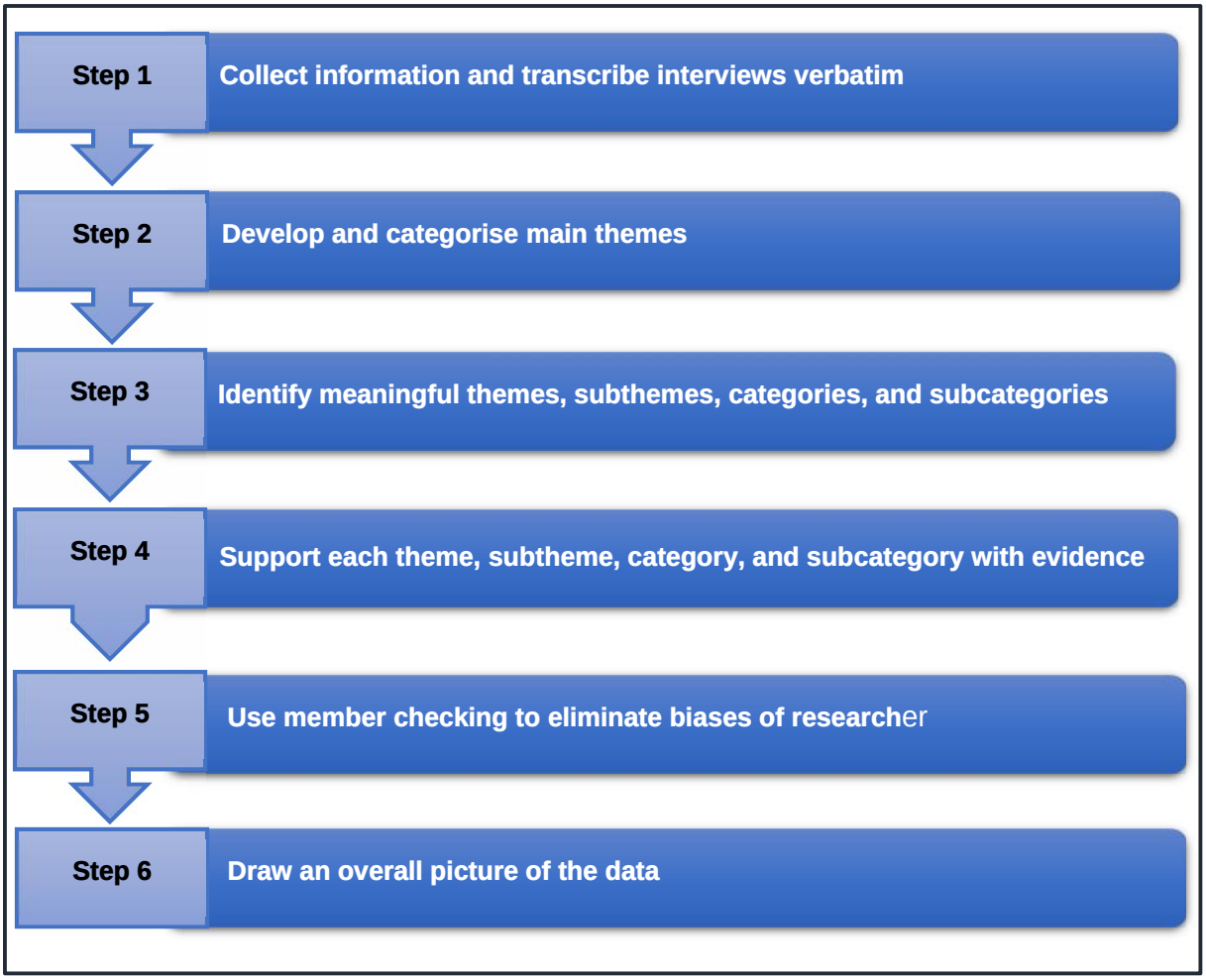


Figure 4.3: Steps of the data analysis and interpretation process (adapted from Venter, 2014, p. 54)

Throughout the present study, the data analysis followed a narrative approach in the form of a thematic analysis by using verbatim quotations from the participating teachers' interviews (Cohen et al., 2011), classroom observations, visual data, and teachers' reflective journals. In the construction of the narrative analysis, the first step was to collect all the data that had been obtained, to transcribe each participant's personal interview after each session, and to read through the verbatim transcriptions to familiarise myself with the

content. Then, during the second step, I searched for commonalities running across texts (narrative strings), and emerging themes (narrative threads) to help researchers and readers to understand the participating teachers' experiences regarding teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia (Cohen et al., 2011; Nieuwenhuis, 2013c). I used different colours to highlight phrases and paragraphs related to possible emerging themes and categories. I created preliminary codes and code headings through which I categorised the data[11] (Creswell, 2008). Thirdly, I consulted my supervisor to revise, define, and group the possible themes by tabulating the emerging themes, sub-themes, categories, and sub-categories. To assist me with the grouping of the different themes and subthemes, I formulated inclusion and exclusion criteria (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The fourth step was to support each theme, subtheme, category and subcategory with evidence collected from the different data sources such as the personal interviews, classroom observations, reflective journals, researcher journal and copies of the participating teachers' lesson plans as well as samples of the lesson and assessment activities of the learner with dyslexia. Following this step, I contributed to the quality criteria of the present study by using member checking to eliminate both misunderstandings that could occur and any possible subjective bias from the researcher (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2013c). The last step was to draw an overall picture of the data and themes identified (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014).

4.3.2.6 Field issues

During the data gathering process, I anticipated certain field issues. Gaining access to primary schools had challenges of its own. The verbatim transcriptions of the face-to-face, semi-structured interviews was time-consuming, and observations were at times overwhelming with information. In asking the participating teachers to keep a reflective journal, I had to rely on the participating teachers' cooperation, bearing in mind that not all of them were comfortable with journaling (Creswell, 2013). I discussed these field issues more in-depth in Chapter 6.

4.3.2.7 Storing data

In following a narrative approach to this qualitative multiple case study research, I developed a filing system to capture all audio- and visual data collected. Qualitative data stored were field notes as well as audio recordings and transcripts of the participating teachers' interviews. As suggested by Creswell (2013), I applied certain principles to protect the storage and handling of data. All the data was stored on a password-protected

[11] Refer to Appendix C2 for the thematic data analysis of the six participating teachers.

computer, and regular backup copies were made of the computer files. I used a high-quality, digital audio recorder to record the interviews and classroom observations, and copied these audio files to the computer as a backup. Equally important were the anonymity of the schools and participating teachers. For this reason, I protected their identity by masking their names in the informed letters of consent as well as other sources of data collection.

4.4 QUALITY CRITERIA

Instead of considering the information collected as 'valid', 'reliable', and 'objective', qualitative researchers consider the quality of their information in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity (Hittleman & Simon, 2006; Lichtman, 2006). To demonstrate the trustworthiness of the present study, I attempted to interpret the information consistently, fairly, and accurately to represent the ideas, feelings, behaviour, and activities of the participating teachers (Hittleman & Simon, 2006). Table 4.2 presents a summary and explanation of the applied strategies, including a description of the relevant quality criteria needed to establish trustworthiness. Thereafter, I elaborated on each one of the quality criteria applicable to this study.

Table 4.2: Overview of applied quality criteria strategies and the relevant quality criteria

Quality Criteria Strategy	Explanation	Quality Criteria Description
Prolonged engagement with participants	To build trust with the participants; to gather rich, meaningful, and sufficient data; to identify key relevant issues; and to check for misinformation (Ary et al., 2002; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013).	Credibility Dependability
Member checks	The participating teachers determine if the findings are recorded accurately (Creswell, 2008). The participants have the opportunity to add further information, and to judge the accuracy and credibility of the findings (Ary et al., 2002; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013; Hittleman & Simon, 2006).	Authenticity Credibility Dependability
Multiple methods of data collection Crystallisation	To use a combination of data sources such as interviews, observations, participants' reflective journals and a research journal to remain less bias (Ary et al., 2002; Hittleman & Simon, 2006; Lichtman, 2006) Using multiple methods to cross-check information and to confirm findings (Ary et al., 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Janesick, 2000).	Credibility Confirmability Dependability

Rich, thick descriptions and field notes during data collection process	Detailed descriptions and field notes enable readers to transfer information to other settings because of 'shared characteristics' (Ary et al., 2002; Creswell, 2013).	Credibility Transferability Dependability
Reflexivity	Reflection on data analysis process using a research journal in which I reflect on my thoughts, feelings, experiences, and decisions made during the research process (Ary et al., 2002; Creswell, 2013; Janesick, 2000; Richardson, 2000).	Credibility Confirmability Authenticity
Peer reviewing and supervision debriefing	The peer reviewer acts as a 'devil's advocate', keeping the researcher honest, and asks hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations. I collaborate with my supervisor and other scholars working in the field of my inquiry and keep written accounts of the peer debriefing sessions with my supervisor (Ary et al., 2002; Creswell, 2013).	Credibility Confirmability Dependability Authenticity
Building an audit trail	The audit trail consists of documents on how the study was conducted and contains the raw data gathered in interviews and observations, and how working assumptions were developed, refined and tested from the data (Ary et al., 2002). The conduct and findings of an external audit test the honesty and working assumptions of the study and identify the next step in the research (Cohen et al., 2011).	Confirmability Dependability Authenticity

4.4.1 Credibility

Credibility, similar to internal validity, could be defined as the correct representation of the context and events by the qualitative researcher (Bryman, 2012). In other words, the credibility of data describes the findings of qualitative research, whether it makes sense or not, and how the findings support reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). Moreover, credibility refers to the importance of results and their credibility for both the participants and readers (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

To lend credibility to the present study, it was essential to prolong my engagement with the participating teachers and to spend sufficient time in the research field before reaching any conclusions regarding the findings of the study (Mertens, 2014; Seale, 1999). Throughout the data collection process, I built trust with the participating teachers to gather rich, meaningful, and sufficient data (Ary et al., 2002; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013). I submitted the documentation to peer reviewers and other scholars working in the field of my inquiry and asked them to act as critical readers to assess the way in which the

conceptual analysis was done (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, member checks were carried out after the initial analysis of the participating teachers' face-to-face interviews which gave them the opportunity to examine and comment on the data analysis (Ary et al., 2002; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2008, 2013; Hittleman & Simon, 2006).

4.4.2 Dependability

Goetz and LeCompte (as cited in Di Fabio & Maree, 2012) define dependability as the reliability and stability throughout the research process and influences the level of control in a study. In short, dependability implies that if the study were to be repeated, the same results will be obtained (Silverman, 2010).

Throughout the present study, I aimed to achieve dependability by providing rich and detailed descriptions of the data collected. I used data from various sources such as transcriptions and comprehensive field notes (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012; Hittleman & Simon, 2006) as well as through member checking. I also used crystallisation not only to cross-check information and to confirm findings (Ary et al., 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Janesick, 2000) but also to search for common themes which could help ensure the dependability of findings. Furthermore, I coded and recoded the data to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability to change. I monitored the quality of my audio recordings and interview transcriptions. It was equally important to regularly reflect on the research process in my research journal to eliminate any bias (Maree, 2013). I also relied on peer examination and discussions regarding the data I collected by using multiple methods to cross-check information and to confirm findings (Ary et al., 2002; Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Janesick, 2000; Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2009).

4.4.3 Authenticity

Within qualitative research, authenticity infers to whether the descriptions of people, events, and places and the explanations thereof correlate with one another. Authenticity also entails the degree to which different points of view are fairly and equally represented (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Seale, 1999, 2002).

In attempting to meet the criterion of authenticity, I collaborated with the participating teachers, my supervisor, and other scholars in the field of my inquiry to obtain different viewpoints. To keep a rich and detailed description of the participants' views and experiences, I used member checking where the participating teachers had the opportunity to determine if the findings were recorded accurately (Creswell, 2008). I also kept written

accounts of the peer debriefing sessions with my supervisor (Ary et al., 2002; Creswell, 2013).

In the following chapter, I present the participating teachers' experiences of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia by providing direct quotations from the participants, thus, providing insights into each participant's view and experience. In addition, I reflected in my journal as well as with my research supervisor regarding the influence which my own views and biases might have had in the present study.

4.4.4 Confirmability

Babbie and Mouton (2001) suggest confirmability in qualitative research rather than objectivity in quantitative research since confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings of a study reflects the focus of the inquiry and not the biases of the researcher. I attempted to increase confirmability of the present study by using a combination of data sources such as interviews, observations, participating teachers' reflective journals, and my personal research journal to remain less bias (Ary et al., 2002; Hittleman & Simon, 2006; Lichtman, 2006). Furthermore, I documented the data analysis process and regularly reflected on this process and also attempted to understand and interpret the findings (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Keeping an audit trail was another strategy used to ensure confirmability. An audit trail consists of documents that verify how the study was conducted and contains the raw data gathered in interviews and observations, and how working assumptions were developed, refined and tested from the data (Ary et al., 2002). The conduct and findings of an external audit test the integrity and working assumptions of the study and identify the next step in the research (Cohen et al., 2011). Moreover, an audit trail enables a third person to track the sources that were used in creating the interpretations and conclusions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Seale, 1999). To increase the confirmability of the study, it was equally important to seek advice and guidance from my research supervisor and other scholars working in the field of dyslexia (Ary et al., 2002; Creswell, 2013) during data collection and interpretation and to rely on the participating teachers' input during the process of member checking.

4.4.5 Transferability

Transferability could be defined as a concept which infers a rich, detailed description of the research setting and the participants to make sense of the findings and to transfer information to other settings because of 'shared characteristics' (Ary et al., 2002; Creswell,

2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In other words, transferability refers to the dependability and generalisability of the findings (Patton, 2015). Detailed information and findings enable readers of the research to make judgements based on similarities and differences when applying the research findings to other settings (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Mertens, 2014). As detailed explanations and documentation of the research setting and contexts are needed, the researcher should, therefore, spend sufficient time in the field to accumulate rich and detailed information (Seale, 1999). To ensure transferability, I completed my fieldwork over a period of eight months, visiting each one of the three selected primary schools on 18 different occasions.

The present study was a multiple case study of a selected group of participants who are part of a specific community. The findings could not be generalised because it did not necessarily correspond to the opinions of the total community (Patton, 2015). However, the aim of the present study was to gain greater insight into teachers' experiences regarding teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia and, therefore, the detailed explanations and documentation of the research findings of the study could be considered as informative and useful for future research (Edwards, 2001). These research findings could present opportunities to other researchers in the field of dyslexia to identify similarities and differences in the various studies conducted, and assess the possible relevance of the findings of this study to any other given context (Mertens, 2014).

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Since this study involved human beings, it was imperative to adhere to strict ethical requirements. As ethical considerations are applicable both within the research field and within the study itself (Loots, 2011), I followed all relevant legislation and ethical guidelines (Creswell, 2013; Morgan & Sklar, 2012b). What follows is a description of ethical principles I considered throughout this research. Firstly, Table 4.3 provides a summary of potential ethical issues during all the phases of the research process including strategies to address these issues. Secondly, I elaborated on ethical criteria such as permission to conduct research and voluntary participation, informed consent and confidentiality, anonymity, the right to privacy, protection from harm and access to results (Morgan & Sklar, 2012b).

Table 4.3 Ethical considerations in conducting qualitative research (adapted from Creswell, 2013, pp. 58-59).

Phase of the Research Process	Ethical Issues	Strategy to Address the Ethical Issue
Prior to conducting the study	Seek university approval Ethical standards that are needed in professional areas Seek approval from provincial Department of Education Select a site without a vested interest in the outcome of the study Negotiate authorship for publication	Submit proposal defence to Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria to obtain permission to conduct the study Gain ethical clearance from ethics committee Obtain permission from Gauteng Education Department (GED) and the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA) Identify primary schools in the South-Eastern region of Johannesburg; find gatekeepers to help with access to the schools Give credit for work done on the project; decide on author order
Beginning to conduct the study	Disclose purpose of the study Do not pressure participants into signing consent forms	Contact teachers, and disclose the purpose of the study which is stated on an informed consent form Explain to the teachers that their participation is voluntary, that they do not have to sign the form; that all information is confidential; that the participants' anonymity and the right to privacy are respected; and that it would not place the participant at risk
Collecting data	Respect the site and disrupt as little as possible Avoid deceiving participants Respect potential power imbalances and exploitation of participants Do not 'use' participants by collecting data and leaving site without giving back	Respect school activities and conduct research in an unobtrusive manner; build trust and convey extent of anticipated disruption in gaining access Discuss purpose of the study with participating teachers and how data will be used Avoid leading questions and disclosing sensitive information; gain permission from the participating teachers to record their voices and images during interviews and observations; parent and learner consent forms are needed when conducting observations in the classrooms Provide electronic copies of the manuscript at the end of the study to create reciprocity with participating teachers and schools
Analysing data	Avoid siding with participants and disclosing only positive results Respect privacy of participants	Report multiple perspectives and contrary findings Assign fictitious names of aliases; develop composite stories

Reporting data	✚ Avoid falsifying authorship, evidence, data, findings, and the conclusions of a study ✚ Avoid plagiarism ✚ Avoid disclosing information that would harm participants ✚ Communicate in clear unambiguous language	✚ Report honestly ✚ Acknowledge and cite other scholars' works according to the prescribed guidelines for reprint or adaptation of work ✚ Use composite stories so that the participating teachers cannot be identified ✚ Use appropriate language for the intended audience of the research
Publishing the study	✚ Share data with others ✚ Do not duplicate publications ✚ If requested, complete proof of compliance with ethical issues	✚ Provide copies of report to participating teachers and stakeholders; share practical results; consider website distribution and publishing in different languages ✚ Refrain from using the same material for more than one publication ✚ Disclose funders for the research, and who will profit from the research

4.5.1 Expertise of the Researcher

My expertise as a researcher is based on being a teacher with many years of teaching experience in the Intermediate Phase as well as being a learning support specialist supporting learners who experience difficulties in spelling, reading, and reading comprehension. My personal interest in dyslexia derived from my postgraduate studies in the field of Special Needs Education which included learner support, guidance, and counselling. These experiences provided me with the necessary interviewing skills and qualities to assist me in remaining both neutral and objective as well as empathetic during the research process. It also assisted me to reflect on my decisions and possible ways to handle challenges. Furthermore, I was guided by my research supervisor who provided invaluable support and guidance. Her expert skills and comprehensive experience in the field of qualitative research in Educational Psychology supported me in conducting ethical research.

4.5.2 Permission to Conduct Research, Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

First and foremost, I obtained permission to conduct my research from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. Secondly, I obtained permission from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)[12] and the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA) to conduct research at one public primary school, one public Special Education Needs school (LSEN school), and one independent primary school.

As noted by Cohen et al. (2011) and Silverman (2010), informed consent infers to giving detailed information regarding the research which could influence the participant's decision towards participation. Informed consent implies four components: competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension (Babbie, 2013; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2009). Competence entails that participants are selected in terms of being able to make choices and decisions, and are, therefore, not limited by mental capacity or impairments. Voluntary participation relates to respecting participants in the sense that informed consent has been obtained, ensuring that they are willing to participate and are neither being coerced nor intimidated into reaching a decision to participate (Babbie, 2013). Full information infers that the participants are aware of possible risks of the study, and that consent is given by the participants (Creswell, 2013). Comprehension entails that the

[12] Refer to Appendix D3 for the research approval letter from GDE.

participants understand the information given, that they are fully aware of the nature of the study, and that they are well informed.

After obtaining permission from the Gauteng Department of Education, I contacted each principal with an informed letter and consent form[13] to gain permission to conduct research in the selected school. In this study, the initial meeting with the principal and the Head of Department provided the opportunity to elaborate on the study and to clarify any questions they might have had. The Head of Department identified possible participants, and they were asked for their voluntary participation in the study. Each one of the teachers received an informed letter and consent form[14], disclosing the nature of the study. I also explained their right as a participant to withdraw from the study at any stage. Should they choose not to participate in the study, it would not affect them in any way. They would neither lose any benefits nor be penalised for their decision not to participate or withdrew from the study. Also, the participating teachers would not be compensated for their contribution. Before conducting classroom observations, I visited the learners in the class and explained the purpose of the study and my visit. Each one received an informed assent letter to sign[15]. Informed consent letters were also sent home to the parents[16] to sign, allowing the learner to be indirectly involved in the research.

4.5.3 Confidentiality, Anonymity, and Trust

I concur with Berger (2012) that qualitative researchers develop relationships with their participants. However, the relationship is unequal with power located on the side of the researcher. Therefore, it was my responsibility to safeguard both the right to privacy of the participating teachers in this study as well as the information they provided so that their identity could not be recognised by others (Cohen et al., 2011). To protect the identity of the participants, I implemented the principles of anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy for the duration of the study (Berg, 2009; Cohen et al., 2011). Anonymity infers that the identities of the participants will be kept confidential (Babbie, 2014; Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2009). To ensure anonymity, the selected schools and participating teachers' names and personal details were not disclosed on research data throughout the research process. The names of the schools and the participating teachers were only known by myself and my research supervisor. I used pseudonyms to ensure that the identities of the schools and teachers were protected and not identifiable in any way. I also asked the participating teachers' permission to verbatim transcribe the audio recordings during their interviews and

[13] Refer to Appendix D4 for an example of permission letter from Primary Schools.
[14] Refer to Appendix D5 for an example of the participant's informed letter and consent form.
[15] Refer to Appendix D7 for an example of the learner's assent letter and form.
[16] Refer to Appendix D6 for an example of the parental permission letter and form.

observational classroom visits. In addition, composite stories would be used when reporting the data so that the participating teachers could not be identified. Prior to signing the informed consent letter, conducting interviews and classroom observations, I made it clear that they could withdraw from the study at any time or they could choose not to answer a question which could lead to the disclosure of sensitive information.

To gain the trust of the participating teachers, I assured them that the audio recordings and transcriptions of their interviews would be protected and kept in secure computer files. Moreover, only my research supervisor and I would have access to the files, and the participating teachers' information would solely be employed for the present study's purpose.

4.6 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

In conducting a qualitative, multiple case study, my role as a researcher was central to the present study. It was through my senses that data and information were gathered, settings were viewed, and realities were constructed (Lichtman, 2006). In this study, my functional role as researcher entailed the collection of data, transcribing and analysing the data regarding the interviews and classroom observations as well as the crystallisation of data. Furthermore, I had to fulfil the role of designer and analyser (Maree, 2013) of the semi-structured interview protocol and the observational protocol as already referred to in the research methodology section of this chapter. I was also primarily responsible for collecting data by conducting individual, semi-structured interviews, to verbatim transcribe each one of the six interviews, to observe the participating teachers' teaching experiences with the learner with dyslexia, and to analyse and interpret the data by following an iterative process of moving back and forth between data collected and data already analysed (Lichtman, 2006). During the semi-structured interviews and the observation of the participating teachers, my role as a researcher was to listen and observe carefully and to continuously abide by all ethical guidelines (Maree, 2013).

My interpretation of the data and information was influenced by my experience, knowledge, skills, and background (Lichtman, 2006). As a learning support specialist at an independent primary school, and an Intermediate Phase teacher with many years of teaching experience, I have an inherent interest in the teaching and support of learners who experience difficulties in spelling, reading, and reading comprehension. Being an advocate for inclusive education, I have a positive bias toward the inclusion of learners with specific learning difficulties in mainstream classrooms. These attributes not only provided a rationale for the present study but also provided a source of possible bias in the manner

this study was conducted, which included the data collection and interpretation. Although I drew on my own experiences regarding dyslexia to make meaning of the information throughout the data analysing process, I was also constantly aware of my own biases, assumptions, and beliefs regarding dyslexia and, therefore, attempted to consistently apply the guidelines for quality criteria as discussed in the ethical considerations section of this chapter. Furthermore, to eliminate and control personal biases that could have distorted the interpretation of the participating teachers' perspectives, I collected data from multiple sources to have a more accurate account of things (Lichtman, 2006). Before interviewing or reviewing any data, I had to set aside any preconceived thoughts and ideas that could have impeded my ability to listen and to interpret the meanings of the participating teachers. In addition, I kept a personal research journal throughout the entire research process to reflect on the activities and to capture any segments that I might have needed to revisit.

Within qualitative research, the relationship between the researcher and participant could affect the outcome of the study. As a researcher it was my responsibility to establish a relationship, built on trust, with the participating teachers (Hartas, 2010). To accomplish this, I sought to eliminate any false expectations by clearly identifying and openly communicating with all the participating teachers. By doing so, I could not be viewed as someone who was doing something questionable or unethical. It was, therefore, imperative to verify my interpretations of the data through the process of member checking (Lichtman, 2006) which involved sharing the results of the data analysis and interpretation with each participating teacher to eliminate any bias from my side.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed and justified the research methodology, strategies, and procedures applied in this study. I elaborated on my reasons for choosing interpretivism as an epistemological or meta-theoretical paradigm and qualitative research as a methodological paradigm. In line with the abovementioned paradigmatic assumptions, I justified my choice of a multiple case study as a research design. I also discuss the selection of the participants and the sampling procedures. Thereafter, I explained the different phases of this study and discussed the strategies in which I conducted the data collection and data documentation. I also elaborated on the process of conducting the data analysis and data interpretation. Finally, I concluded this chapter by discussing the quality criteria and ethical considerations of the present study.

In Chapter 5, I address the results of the study in terms of the identified main themes and subthemes during the content analysis and interpretation phase. In presenting the themes, I authenticate and enrich the results of this study by incorporating not only verbatim quotations from the participating teachers' interviews but also excerpts from a range of other data sources such as my research journal and visual data.

CHAPTER 5: REPORTING THE RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4, I discussed the research methodology and research strategies underpinning the present study. I explained and elaborated on the selected paradigm, data collection, documentation, analysis and interpretation procedures. In this chapter, I address the results of this study by presenting the themes and their subthemes, categories, and subcategories that emerged from the participating teachers' verbatim interview transcripts during the thematic analysis and interpretation phase. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for each theme, subtheme, category, and subcategory guided me to classify the raw data (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Furthermore, I present the results of this study by combining the verbatim quotations from the participating teachers' personal interviews with excerpts from other data sources such as my research journal and visual data. In the next chapter, I will reflect on the emerged themes in terms of the literature, and present the findings and recommendations corresponding with my research purpose.

5.2 RESULTS OF THE THEMATIC CONTENT ANALYSIS

In the section that follows, I present the themes, subthemes, categories, and subcategories that emerged from the participating teachers' verbatim interview transcripts. As I seek to test and expand on existing theories, I have decided to use a set of priori codes which I identified and developed from my literature review (Nieuwenhuis, 2013c). In analysing and interpreting the data, the following four themes emerged:

- Teachers' attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia;
- Teachers' approaches to teach and support learners with dyslexia;
- Teachers' challenges regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia;
- Teachers' assets, resources and strategies in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.

Furthermore, I elaborate on each theme separately by discussing the applied inclusion and exclusion criteria for the relevant subthemes, categories, and subcategories (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). For ease of reference, I used a colour-coded process to present the classification of data (Creswell, 2008). Verbatim quotations are provided with the number of the participant that made the statement. I allocated a number to the participant according

to the sequence of the interviews. In presenting the themes, I authenticate and enrich the results of this study by incorporating not only verbatim quotations from the participating teachers but also excerpts from a range of other data sources such as my research journal and visual data.

5.2.1 Theme 1: Teachers' Attitudes Regarding Dyslexia as a Specific Learning Impairment and the Learner with Dyslexia

Teachers demonstrate certain attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment which could influence their experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Thus, the first theme focuses on addressing teachers' attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia. I discuss this theme in three subthemes in terms of the teacher's cognitive, emotive, and behavioural attitude regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia (Bhatia, 2009; Corsini, 2002; De Boer et al., 2010). Table 5.1 presents a summary of the first theme with the related subthemes and categories, including the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 5.1: Overview of Theme 1's subthemes and categories including the inclusion and exclusion criteria

THEME 1 **Teachers' attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia** *The child has difficulties in processing spoken language, written language. I think it's a language issue where all your comparative spelling, your reading, your comprehension, everything falls into it, and it's the way of processing the information that is different* (School 3 – Participant 5, Interview 5, Line 127-138).		
Subthemes and Categories	**Inclusion criteria**	**Exclusion criteria**
Subtheme 1.1 Teachers' cognitive attitude regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia	This subtheme focuses on the participating teachers' cognitive attitude in terms of their general knowledge and misconceptions regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and their beliefs regarding the learner with dyslexia.	
Category 1 Teachers' general knowledge and misconceptions	This category includes data related to the participating teachers' general knowledge regarding the definition, types, causes and characteristics of dyslexia, whether it is based on facts or misconceptions.	Any reference not related to the participating teachers' general knowledge regarding the definition, types, causes and characteristics of dyslexia, whether it is based on facts or misconceptions.

Category 2 Teachers' beliefs and perceptions	This category includes data related to participating teachers' beliefs regarding the learner with dyslexia based on their general knowledge and misconceptions regarding dyslexia.	Any reference not related to participating teachers' beliefs regarding the learner with dyslexia based on their general knowledge and misconceptions regarding dyslexia.
Subtheme 1.2 Teachers' emotive attitude regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia	This subtheme focuses on the participating teachers' emotive attitude in terms of their emotions or feelings and their concerns regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia.	
Category 1 Teachers' emotions	This category includes data related to the participating teachers' positive and negative feelings regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia.	Any reference not related to the participating teachers' positive and negative feelings regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia.
Category 2 Teachers' concerns	This category includes data related to the participating teachers' concerns regarding the learner with dyslexia. The participating teachers' concerns are based on their cognitive attitude as described in Subtheme 1.1.	Any reference not related to the participating teachers' concerns regarding the learner with dyslexia which are based on their cognitive attitude as described in Subtheme 1.1.
Subtheme 1.3 Teachers' behavioural attitude (actions) regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia	This subtheme focuses on the participating teachers' behavioural attitude regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia in terms of the teachers' actions towards the learner with dyslexia.	

5.2.1.1 Subtheme 1.1: Teachers' cognitive attitude regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia

This subtheme concerns the participating teachers' cognitive attitude regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia. I discuss the subtheme in two categories. The first category relates to the participating teachers' general knowledge and misconceptions regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment, and the second category refers to teachers' beliefs and perceptions regarding the learner with dyslexia.

Category 1: Teachers' general knowledge and misconceptions

This category concerns the participating teachers' general knowledge in terms of the definition, types, causes and characteristics of dyslexia, whether it is based on facts or

misconceptions. The participating teachers from all three schools[17] seemingly demonstrated a relatively fair common knowledge and understanding of dyslexia as a specific learning impairment which is evident in the following verbatim extracts: *Struggling with the language as such; comprehension, spelling, sentence building … but it is mostly the spelling and the reading* (S1, P3, Int.3, L97-98)[18]. *They struggle with spelling [and] they struggle to read. When it comes to any written exercise, it's a challenge for them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L187-189). *From what I can understand, it's difficulty with reading, and writing, interpretation, and a lot of reversals* (S2, P1, Int.1, L94-95). *I would say children with severe writing, first off writing disabilities, when they cannot recognise letters. I've had children who would look at a word written in one font and then written in another font and would not be able to see that it is the same word because it's a different font and, therefore, their reading is then affected* (S2, P2, Int.2, L126-130).

The participating teachers from School 3 further elaborated on the cause of dyslexia: *My understanding of it is that it is a neuro, a genetic, what do you say, imbalance or something. Genetics plays a part in it. That the child has difficulties in processing spoken language, written language. … It takes them longer to process. … It's not just reversals of letters and words* (S3, P5, Int.5, L127-138). *I understand that it's a neurological inborn barrier that children have. … And it's not just the typical reversals that one teaches that teachers will see. It comes in through following direction, and it comes in from being able to assess and read [mathematics], and it comes into following sequencing orders. It is such a vast and misunderstood diagnosis* (S3, P6, Int.6, L109-116).

One of the special needs education teachers from School 1 reported on the types of dyslexia as categorised by The Red Apple Dyslexia Association: *Those are the children that struggle with reading, writing, and spelling but some have dyseidesia which is more like a visual. So, it's [visual things] that they struggle with, and then the other [type is] dysphonesia which is the auditory. They struggle with auditory; what they hear and how to process it* (S1, P4, Int.4, L102-106). *Sometimes, obviously, they have dysphonesia; auditory, they're trying to hear and trying to get which letter it is [which] is a problem* (S1, P4, Int.4, L528-530).

Furthermore, teachers seemingly demonstrated their general knowledge in terms of identifying the characteristics of dyslexia within the learner with dyslexia. It was obvious

[17] *School 1* – Public LSEN school; *School 2* – Public ordinary school; *School 3* – Independent ordinary school

[18] In presenting the results, the following codes will apply: S = School, P = Participant, Int. = Interview, QPI = Question prior to interview, L = Line

that teachers could identify poor spelling as a characteristic of dyslexia: *At the end of the year, you will practise 'because' a thousand times and they will still, if they need to write you a sentence, spell it wrongly* (S1, P3, Int.3, L303-305). *I noticed when we're doing a spelling test, she often leaves out words. So, she's obviously struggling to take the word, process it, and put it down on paper* (S2, P1, Int.1, L200-202). *When they come to you they don't even know the vowels and they don't know the vowel sounds and they don't know the alphabet. … They spell very phonetically, and I think that's okay with children with dyslexia and I accept that* (S3, P5, Int.5, L437-449). *You know, a child that has dyslexia, they don't have the ability to discriminate their different sounds* (S3, P6, Int.6, L535-536). *And if you don't understand (a) the symbol, and (b) that there's a sound attached to that, then you can't progress to sentences. And if you can't progress to sentences, you can't progress to paragraphs. And then feature on to even stories. So, I don't think you can even venture down to reading unless you have basic spelling in place* (S3, P6, Int.6, L552-560).

Not only were teachers able to identify poor spelling as a characteristic of dyslexia but also poor reading skills: *They read very poorly. There is no visual tracking. They still use their fingers. Words are incorrect* (S2, P2, Int.2, L372-373). *Reading is also a problem area because they don't often comprehend what they're reading. So, they don't understand what they're reading. So, comprehension is a large issue as well* (S3, P5, Int.5, L461-463).

Teachers were also seemingly able to identify difficulties in language processing and a slow working pace as characteristics of the learner with dyslexia: *They are so slow in everything that they do. Their writing skills are slow because they can't collect all the information to put down* (S1, P4, Int.4, L919-920). *Their pace is extremely slow, or it varies. I've got some that fly through, and some who's pace can take them two hours to write two sentences* (S3, P5, Int.5, L726-728). *Then they don't know how to process and put it down on the piece of paper, their answers* (S3, P5, Int.5, L472-473). *He physically couldn't copy correctly, and he physically couldn't put down his thoughts because it was such a task* (S3, P6, Int.6, L161-163). *And then his work tempo, it's always inconsistent. Today will be a good day, tomorrow will be an all-over-the-place day* (S3, P6, Int.6, L770-773).

Teachers from School 1 and School 2 concurred that learners with dyslexia face challenges such as a combination of other barriers to learning, including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), low self-esteem, and anxiety: *Usually it's not just dyslexia, it's a combination of all the factors. It's not just the one, it's always a combination of different impairments* (S1, P3, Int.3, L200-203). *But with the ADHD you sometimes have those same signs* (S1, P4, Int.4, L685). *Definitely, their self-image isn't very good. Their self-esteem is a bit low* (S1, P4, Int.4, L267-238). *Another thing that what I have noticed is that the children*

have a lot of anxiety and they're probably feeling a lot of stress because they can't cope (S1, P4, Int.4, L423-426). *Maybe because she has repeated, and she's a year older and she knows she has this problem that probably contributes to the fact that she's probably got a low self-esteem and doesn't want to ever put up her hand* (S2, P1, Int.1, L208-210). *Their self-esteem [is] low. They are emotionally insecure. They feel very reluctant to ask for help because they feel that they come across as not worthy to the rest of the class; their peers are watching them all the time* (S2, P2, Int.2, L233-237). *[Their] self-esteem confidence is knocked because when they get into [Grade 5] … they are working in a bigger environment with more children. Their confidence is rocked* (S3, P5, Int.5, L276-278).

Furthermore, teachers apparently demonstrated their knowledge in terms of some misconceptions concerning the cognitive abilities and intelligence of learners with dyslexia: *But because of poor spelling and reading as such, it doesn't say that he has a low intelligence. The work that he is doing, in that set time, everything is correct* (S1, P3, Int.3, L209-211). *We were able to see it's not a cognitive problem. It's her writing* (S2, P2, Int.2, L201). *He is averaging with regards to everybody else* (S3, P6, Int.6, L317-318).

Another misconception regarding the reversals of letters and words being a sign of dyslexia was evident by one of the teacher's verbatim extracts: *A small example would be was / saw. They would see the word as 'saw' instead of 'was' but they would read it as 'saw'* (S2, P2, Int.2, L373-35). Furthermore, one of the teachers from School 3 explained the reading process as 'words jumping around on the page' for individuals with dyslexia: *Even if it's reading, you know, the page could be spinning, the words could be jumping, the light could be shining* (S3, P6, Int.6, L139-141). *They see the words jump. And then they see the twirl and everything* (S3, P6, Int.6, L545-547).

Category 2: Teachers' beliefs and perceptions regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia

This category concerns the participating teachers' beliefs regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia based on their general knowledge and misconceptions regarding dyslexia. The following verbatim extracts suggest that participating teachers in School 1 and School 3 perceived the learner with dyslexia as being different to the mainstream learner: *He's in a way different than the other learners* (S1, P3, Int.3, L118). *They are different to our mainstream children. … They can get very frustrated very easily. They tackle things in a totally different [manner]. Every now and then, they come up with these sparkles of genius. They answer things in a totally roundabout fashion and come up with these amazing answers that you think, "Wow, where the heck did that come from?" So, their way of thinking, I think is different* (S3, P5, Int.5, L143-145).

Although some participating teachers seemingly perceived the learner with dyslexia as different to the other learners, one teacher from School 3 believed that the learner with dyslexia has a lot of potential: *He's fully capable, he truly, truly is. He has a lot to offer and he has a lot inside him* (S3, P6, Int.6, L193-194). Furthermore, teachers seemingly believed that the learner with dyslexia needs intervention to support them with their schoolwork: *They are in serious need of intervention, of remediation. A lot of the times, I find that they struggle. They struggle across [the board] in all subjects* (S2, P2, Int.2, L152-155).

Ignorance regarding dyslexia could lead to teachers perceiving the learner as being naughty, lazy, not listening or not doing their work. A diagnosis of dyslexia, teacher awareness regarding dyslexia and understanding the learner with dyslexia might change these beliefs as is evident from the following verbatim extracts: *[The diagnosis of dyslexia] can [change your view] because sometimes you sort of [notice that] this child struggles. They can't read, they can't write but sometimes when you hear where in the dyslexia [spectrum] they fall; if it's the visual, the auditory, it does help you to understand them a little bit better as to where [and] how you must help them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L121-124). *If you don't [understand them], you tend to shout and call them lazy … or they're not doing their work … or they're not listening* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1048-1049). *You need to have an understanding that it's not the kid being naughty. It's an actual issue that's hampering them from learning. So, you would have to have some understanding on that behalf* (S2, P1, Int.1, L543-546). *If I'm being honest, before I did any dyslexia work, I thought he was lazy. … And then I learned about it and I felt guilty because I'd labelled him as not wanting to do all of these tasks, but he physically couldn't* (S3, P6, Int.6, L157-161).

Some participating teachers seemingly perceived the learner with dyslexia's behaviour as being disruptive: *But putting them in a classroom, you will often find disruptive behaviour when they can't cope. It's sort of sometimes acting not like the class clown but looking for attention to be drawn to them in a different sort of [way]. It becomes like negative attention* (S1, P4, Int.4, L269-277). *Even though I've only got eight [dyslexic learners], they all have their special personalities and they can become rowdy and find it difficult to concentrate, and find things hard, so [they] get frustrated* (S3, P5, Int.5, L668-671). However, it seems that some general education teachers from School 2 and School 3 did not experience any behavioural problems with the learner with dyslexia: *I can't say that I've ever had to discipline a dyslexic learner* [sic] (S2, P2, Int.2, L231). *But discipline … he's a lovely young mannered or well-mannered little boy. … So, he's not one, if you have to ask me who's the biggest instigator, who would come [to] mind, not at all* (S3, P6, Int.6, L751-754).

As to the question of whether the participating teachers believe the learner with dyslexia could be successful in an ordinary school environment, the participating teachers had different opinions regarding the success potential of the learner with dyslexia. Some participants argued that learners with dyslexia could be successful if the learner receives the necessary intervention and support: *Yes. Provided that there are the concessions that are put in place and there is the help that's been given, yes* (S2, P2, Int.2, L210-214). *So, I think that if it's not too severe, they probably can be successful, and I think that if the teacher knows how to assist and what area is that the learner needs assistance in, then definitely. If the kids are left on their own and nobody's helping the teacher and there's no sort of coming together halfway, then, yeah, I think the kids will definitely struggle in a mainstream school* (S2, P1, Int.1, L171-176). *I do believe they need co-sessions. They do need some help along the way, but, yes, I believe they can be successful, and if we can just provide the right environment for them to reach their goals. I do think they can be* (S3, P5, Interview5, L240-243). *At varsity, we had an educational psychologist who is dyslexic as well as attention deficit as well, and the list continued. … She's doing her doctorate in dyslexia, and if that's not a prime example [of being successful despite of dyslexia]. … I believe if you have something, you can either let it control you, or you can do something about it. You can soar regardless of what it is* (S3, P6, Int.6, L251-256).

Conversely, participating teachers from School 1 had different opinions as to the success potential of learners with dyslexia within an ordinary school environment. One of the teachers argued that learners with dyslexia cannot be successful since they were referred to an LSEN school: *I really don't think so. That's why they refer them to LSEN schools. … What they usually do if they [the learners] can't cope, then they will refer them to LSEN schools* (S1, P3, Int.3, L178-181). *I do feel with extra help they can [be successful in an ordinary school setting]. I wouldn't say mainstreaming them 100% but they can be a lot more successful within their given environments, less needy. But I wouldn't say never try put them there to see if they would cope. … So, for me, I would say rather keep them here [in the LSEN school]. Keep them feeling somewhat successful here than taking them from here and put them back in mainstream and then they can't [cope]. Yes, they'll definitely fall behind* (S1, P4, Int.4, L222-236).

In this subtheme, the participating teachers seemed able to demonstrate their cognitive attitude in terms of their general knowledge and their beliefs regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia. Turning now to the second subtheme, I discuss the participating teachers' emotive attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia.

5.2.1.2 Subtheme 1.2: Teachers' emotive attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia

This subtheme concerns the participating teachers' emotive attitudes regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia. I discuss this subtheme in terms of the teachers' emotions and their concerns regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia.

Category 1: Teachers' emotions

This category relates to the participating teachers' positive and negative emotions regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia. As is evident from the following verbatim extracts, the participating teachers seemed to have a positive emotive attitude towards the learner with dyslexia: *I do have a love for helping them. So, I'm not easily frustrated by them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L115-116). *Sometimes I do feel sorry for them because that's not their fault. So, they struggle but it's not as if they don't wanna* [sic] *work* (S1, P4, Int.4, L159-161). *Their work ethic amazes me. Their determination, their perseverance amazes me* (S3, P5, Int.5, L145-146). *They're very demanding. At the same time, they're very giving. They have so much love to share and give to you and it's a hug every day* (S3, P5, Int.5, L172-174).

Although the participating teachers' seemingly experienced feelings of affection regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia, they also shared negative emotions such as frustration, guilt and emotional exhaustion as well as feelings of being inadequate: *I couldn't think … just tired at the end of the day* (S1, P3, Int.3, L1021-1022). *I would say you do get a little bit frustrated. You try not let them pick up on it, but you do get that feeling of, "Okay, just give me six or five minutes so I can just attend to another child"* (S1, P4, Int.4, L155-157). *I'm often frustrated and confused. I cannot understand why they would now [make mistakes]* (S2, P1, Int.1, L581-582). *Anxiety because I want to know that I'm not making things worse* (S2, P2, Int.2, L179). *Yoh, emotionally drained. They pour from you all the time. They suck from you all the time* (S3, P5, Int.5, L170-171). *I sometimes feel as if I am inadequate. I don't have the skills, I don't have the knowledge, I don't have the know-how on how to deal with these children* (S3, P5, Int.5, L182-183). *And then I learned about [dyslexia] and I felt guilty because I'd labelled him as not wanting to do all of these tasks* (S3, P6, Int.6, L160-161).

Category 2: Teachers' concerns regarding the learner with dyslexia

This category relates to both the participating teachers' cognitive and emotional concerns regarding the learner with dyslexia. These concerns were based on their cognitive attitude as discussed in Subtheme 1.1. Special needs education teachers from School 1 were

seemingly concerned about the learner with dyslexia not being able to keep up with the work pace in the higher grades: *But in Grade 5, they will need to pack up, and they need to go to the next teacher. So, if he's not done with his work, they won't give him extra time. … So, whatever he's done in his book, that's what he will get a mark for* (S1, P3, Int.3, L150-155). *I think the concern is the future; from taking them from my grade to the next grade. … I do have that concern of that they're not going to cope from day one already. … I would just say keeping up is a big concern. And obviously, the understanding of what they're doing, being able to read, help themselves at least* (S1, P4, Int.4, L170-180).

Conversely, general education teachers from School 2 and School 3 apparently questioned their ability to teach and support the learner with dyslexia: *I was quite apprehensive because I thought I would have to give her a lot more individual time, that I would have to perhaps make special provision for her to read through the worksheets* (S2, P1, Int.1, L130-133). *My concern is I don't know [if I'm] doing any justice. I don't know if I'm doing them any good. I question myself all the time. … I don't know what I'm doing to them at this moment in their lives. So, yeah, I question my ability* (S3, P5, Int.5, L218-224). *If it was confirmed that he is dyslexic, then I would've wondered if my notes that I'm giving him are okay, you know. Is the font fine to him because I know there's a special font. If the content is [clear] enough for him to digest in that sense* (S3, P6, Int.6, L228-232).

Additionally, general education teachers from School 2 and School 3 seemingly had concerns regarding the increasing cases of suspected or diagnosed learners with dyslexia: *But I feel there's more and more of [these] kids. So, it's not just now, there's only one but I think there's a lot of them* (S2, P1, Int.1, L749-750). *We need help because I think there are more and more dyslexic children* [sic] *coming through* (S3, P5, Int.5, L422-423).

In this subtheme, participating teachers seemed able to demonstrate their emotive attitude regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia. The third subtheme refers to the participating teachers' behavioural attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia.

5.2.1.3 Subtheme 1.3: Teachers' behavioural attitude (actions) regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia

The third and last subtheme concerns the participating teachers' behavioural attitude regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia in terms of the teachers' actions towards the learner with dyslexia. Participating teachers from School 1 and School 3 seemingly acknowledged the emotional needs of the learner with dyslexia which is evident from the following verbatim quotations: *I think just giving them*

support, whether it be me, another learner or in some other way, I think helps them become successful in their classroom environment (S1, P4, Int.4, L258-260). *We nurture these children* (S3, P5, Int.5, L281). *I just tell them that they are the lucky chosen ones and that there are only eight of us. I mean, that we're a small family, so we're good to go* (S3, P5, Int.5, L346-348).

In general, it seems that the participating teachers treated learners with dyslexia equally i.e. the same as they would treat other learners in the classroom: *This is the first diagnosed case, so we treat them all the same because they are here in an LSEN school. They have an impairment* (S1, P3, Int.3, L333-335). *In terms of supporting the learner, I do not give her any special or specific help* (S2, P1, QPI 5). *I just have certain, if I can say, concessions for him that make it a bit easier, but I don't have special treatments or special feelings towards him* (S3, P6, Int.6, L209-212). *I treat him [as] fairly as everybody else, and I don't wanna* [sic] *discriminate* (S3, P6, Int.6, L220-221).

From the following verbatim extracts, it seems that the participating teachers approached the learner with dyslexia in a gentle and encouraging manner: *You need to refocus him, encourage [him]. That's what I usually do; to encourage them* (S1, P3, Int.3, L219-220). *Always giving them that extra attention, boosting them if they do [try]* (S1, P4, Int.4, L243-244). *I just believe in a lot of praise, a lot of help, you know* (S1, P4, Int.4, L307-308). *Lots of encouragement. Lots of verbal encouragement* (S2, P2, Int.2, L261-262). *We will tell him that it's not the way that we behave. [What can] you do differently, that kind of thing. Yeah, we handle it. We try and be gentle about handling it and not get hysterical* (S3, P5, Int.5, L292-294). *So, you become a bit more relaxed if I can use that word, and more sympathetic, and some leeway is created. But still expecting a standard within their parameters* (S3, P6, Int.6, L187-189).

However, one general education teacher from School 2 reported that she did not want to agitate the learner with dyslexia: *Yet, she doesn't [ask for assistance]. So, I don't want to go to her and say: "Do you want me to read to you?" "Do you understand?" I don't always want to pick on kids* (S2, P1, Int.1, L217-219). *Often, I can see she freezes up. There's nothing that I can do about it, so I have to leave it* (S2, P1, Int.1, L233-234).

In summary of the first theme, teachers seemed able to demonstrate their cognitive, emotive, and behavioural attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia. In the next theme, I discuss the participating teachers' approaches in teaching and supporting the learner with dyslexia within the classroom context.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Teachers' Approaches to Teach and Support Learners with Dyslexia

Teachers should be able to respond to the diverse needs of all learners including the learner with dyslexia (Department of Education, 2011; Engelbrecht, 2013a). Therefore, the second theme focuses on teachers' approaches in the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia. For this study, approaches include any methods and strategies applied by participating teachers to teach and support learners with dyslexia. I discuss this theme in six subthemes concerning the participating teachers' lesson planning and organisation, general teaching approaches and methods, spelling and reading strategies, teaching and learning materials, classroom management, and assessment strategies. Unlike the other themes, Theme 2 has no categories or subcategories and, therefore, I include inclusion and exclusion criteria with each one of the subthemes. Table 5.2 presents an overview of the second theme with the related subthemes and inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 5.2: Overview of Theme 2's subthemes and the inclusion and exclusion criteria

THEME 2 **Teachers' approaches to teach and support learners with dyslexia** *I think in general we are doing what needs to be done. We are providing the additional support, we are providing the additional attention, we are applying for concessions, we're encouraging parents to take the children for scholastic assessments to ensure that it is diagnosed.* (School 2 – Participant 2, Interview 2, Line 336-343).		
Subthemes and Categories	**Inclusion criteria**	**Exclusion criteria**
Subtheme 2.1 Lesson planning and organisation	This subtheme includes data related to how teachers plan and organise the lessons and learner activities based on the learners' reading level, developmental levels, interests, backgrounds and learning profiles.	Any reference not related to how teachers plan and organise the lessons and learner activities based on the learners' reading level, developmental levels, interests, backgrounds and learning profiles.
Subtheme 2.2 General teaching methods and strategies	This subtheme includes data related to the participating teachers' methods of instruction and presentation as well as their teaching strategies to implement curriculum differentiation.	Any reference not related to the participating teachers' methods of instruction and presentation or their teaching strategies to implement curriculum differentiation.

Subtheme 2.3 Spelling and reading strategies	This subtheme includes data related to teaching spelling and reading which includes decoding, fluency, comprehension and text comprehension.	Any reference not related to teaching spelling and reading which includes decoding, fluency, comprehension and text comprehension.
Subtheme 2.4 Assessment strategies	This subtheme includes data related to the participating teacher's assessment strategies and applied assessment differentiation regarding the learner with dyslexia's informal and formal assessments.	Any reference not related to the participating teacher's assessment strategies or applied assessment differentiation regarding the learner with dyslexia's informal and formal assessments.
Subtheme 2.5 Teaching and learning materials	This subtheme includes data related to the participating teachers' teaching and learning materials applied to teach and support learners with dyslexia. These teaching and learning materials include font type of letters and a larger print. It also includes data related to the information presented in a variety of styles and supplemented by music, movement, and visual elements.	Any reference not related to the participating teachers' teaching and learning materials applied to teach and support learners with dyslexia. Any reference not related to the font type of letters and a larger print used in learning materials. It also includes any reference to data not related to the information presented in a variety of styles or supplemented by music, movement, and visual elements.
Subtheme 2.6 Classroom management	This subtheme includes data related to how the participating teachers manage their classrooms and how they apply classroom strategies to address the behaviour of the learner with dyslexia in the classroom.	Any reference not related to how the participating teachers manage their classrooms or how they apply classroom strategies to address the behaviour of the learner with dyslexia in the classroom.

5.2.2.1 Subtheme 2.1: Lesson planning and organisation

This subtheme refers to how teachers plan and organise their lessons. Learner activities are based on the learners' reading level, developmental levels, interests, backgrounds and learning profiles. The visual data in Figure 5.1 illustrates an example of how participating teachers from School 2 plan and organise a language lesson.

Languages: Lesson Preparation for week: 2 – 6 May 2016			
Skill: Listening and Speaking/ Reading and Viewing/ Writing and Presenting/ Language Structures and Conventions			
Activities: degrees of comparison, prepared speech, listening comprehension			
Date:	**Activities Per Day:**	**Reflection**	
Monday	Public holiday		
Tuesday	Degrees of comparison	**Text** Cinderella	
Wednesday	Continuation of rules 5,6 and 7 for degrees of comparison	**Resources** Textbook, smartboard	
Thursday	Listening comprehension	**Expanded Opportunities** Sentences with thrass word to expand vocabulary	
Friday	Prepositions	**Enrichment**	**Intervention** Revision of prepositions
		Assessment	
		Tool	**Method**
		Memorandum	**Educator** **Self**
		Rubric	**Peer** **Group**

Figure 5.1: Example of a teacher's lesson planning and organisation (S2, P2)

Participating teachers subscribe to the necessity to be prepared in planning and presenting their lessons, and most of them seemed to be well prepared: *Before the end of the term, my planning for the next term will be done. Two weeks before the end of the term, it will be*

copied. So, I am prepared (S1, P3, Int.3, L253-255). *Definitely, I'm always 100% prepared in class. My kids don't have time to sit and do nothing* (S2, P1, Int.1, L575-576). *I'm always prepared. Sometimes there's a sense of being over-prepared just to my detriment* (S3, P6, Int.6, L919-920).

With regard to flexibility and adaptability, participating teachers from School 1 and School 2 reported the following: *I would say I'm quite flexible. I am structured, but I can change around a bit* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1066-1067). *It's just adaptability. You adapt to the situation around you and you do what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, how it needs to be done* (S2, P2, Int.2, L728-730).

When preparing her lessons, one teacher from School 2 apparently did not change and adapt her lesson plans to suit the needs of the learner with dyslexia: *I do not change my lesson plans or adapt them to suit this learner* (S2, P1, QPI 9).

To support the learner with dyslexia, the Grade 4 participating teachers from School 1 were seemingly more flexible in managing their instruction time as the learners remain in the same classroom during the school day: *What makes it easier in this class, they don't need to pack up and go to the next period. They stay in class. So, you can give them more minutes to finish. So, it's more flexible* (S1, P3, Int.3, L534-542). *What we do sometimes is, we [Grade 4 learners] sit together, the three of us and then we will show the video clip ... Even though you [will only be doing] the subject tomorrow because we don't do it on the same day. We've got different timetables* (S1, P3, Int.3, L747-750). One teacher from School 2 reported that the time provided for the periods on her timetable was long enough to sufficiently cover the planned learning activities: *Our periods are long enough to ensure that we get through our workload for the day. So, what I've planned for my lesson, I generally tend to cover for that lesson* (S2, P2, Int.2, L532-534). Furthermore, her timetable was adjusted to offer her more flexible time in supporting learners with dyslexia: *My timetable was adjusted to assist [to teach and support the learner with dyslexia]* (S2, P2, Int.2, L719-720).

5.2.2.2 Subtheme 2.2: General teaching methods and strategies

In this subtheme, I discuss the participating teachers' general methods of instruction and presentation as well as their teaching strategies to implement curriculum differentiation. It seems that some participating teachers preferred structure and routine when presenting their lessons: *I'm a perfectionist. So, everything needs to be, the structure of my classroom, everything needs to be in place* (S1, P3, Int.3, L252-253). *I try and keep it very structured.*

One will hand out books, one will [hand] out the worksheets, somebody will just even pick up [papers] (S1, P4, Int.4, L479-480). *It has to be structured. There must be rules, there must be regulations. They must know what they're doing, when they're doing it, why they're doing it* (S3, P5, Int.5, L394-395*). I try not to vary that structure or throw anything in there because they do get panicky when … their daily routine has been tampered with. Yeah, so, I have a routine and we stick to it* (S3, P5, Int.5, L384-388).

Teachers from School 3 seemed to believe that the learner with dyslexia also needs rote learning which is evident in their verbatim extracts: *Some of it is very old school, for instance, rote learning and drilling. … They [especially need] tables and spelling and that type of thing* (S3, P5, Int.5, L376-378). *We need to do rote learning for these children, for the dyslexic children* [sic]*. So, I would go straight back to basics … starting simple and build on, and build on, and build on, and I think that's where you need to start* (S3, P6, Int.6, L515-518).

Teachers from all three schools seemingly acknowledged learners' different learning styles as they concurred that a multi-sensory approach is beneficial to the learner with dyslexia: *You need to make it interesting [for] them, they need to focus, flash cards and different colouring board pens, pictures, and different aids. Some of them learn by hearing, some of them need to see this, the things, some do the hearing and the seeing, and sometimes, if it's possible, to touch … so they can learn better* (S1, P3, Int.3, L321-328). *I definitely think hearing it, writing it, trying to even unjumble the letters* (S1, P4, Int.4, L533-534). *We do writing, sometimes do reading, writing and speaking and listening in every lesson, using a variety of the textbooks. And also, not only an oral lesson but to cater for the visual learners as well* (S2, P1, Int.1, L278-280). *But I know with dyslexic children* [sic] *they need to be exposed to all sorts of methods. They need auditory, they need visual, they need tactile* (S3, P5, Int.5, L434-436).

Teachers from all three schools seemed to concur that teaching should be fun and interactive: *If it's like maybe they're doing nouns or verbs, I try and get the whole class to actively do something that can demonstrate it* (S1, P4, Int.4, L871-873). *Because I'm passionate about the English, I tend to try to make my lessons as fun and interactive as possible.* … *Children learn through play* (S2, P2, Int.2, L314-320). *Very fun. I think that people will assume it's relaxed because we joke a lot, we laugh a lot. It's very interactive. I don't believe you should be lecturing at this age. … So yes, very interactive … A fun, loving, warm space, I hope* (S3, P6, Int.6, L469-475).

With regard to learners, including the learner with dyslexia, working together in a group with the purpose of being active involved in the learning process, teachers from School 1 and School 2 reported on cooperative learning as is evident in the following verbatim extract: *I think, putting them in a smaller group together with others that struggle. Sometimes, one of [the weaker ones] that struggle in the group can still help the others in another way. Then, also in their bigger group setting, there's always one that is stronger at reading* (S1, P4, Int.4, L251-255). *Yeah, I try and create a lot of experiential learning. I let them sit in groups. So, there's a little bit of peer work and they're not just coming in, sitting down, writing* (S2, P1, Int.1, L154-158).

In addition, teachers from all three schools seemingly concurred that one-to-one or small group instruction is significant in supporting the learner with dyslexia: *You need to reinforce. You need to break up everything. You need to do it step by step, lots of one-on-one. That's why we have the smaller classes. To be able to assist everybody in class* (S1, P3, Int.3, L270-272). *So, with everything, they need a 100% one-on-one attention. I always have to call them afterwards to re-explain* (S1, P4, Int.4, L141-142). *I do try my best to give that extra one-on-one; go to their table, explain to them, call them to my table, try and do a couple orally with them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L489-490). *So often, if I'm busy explaining and I see that she's fallen behind, or she doesn't have the work, or if she needs help, she often then goes to the learnership as she explains one-on-one* (S2, P1, Int.1, L298-300). *I think learners with dyslexia need more of a hands-on approach with them* (S2, P2, Int.2, L384-385). *I think it's time, it's one-on-one, it's making them aware. I'm able to do that in that environment* (S3, P5, Int.5, L415-416). *I'd personally love to … take all my knowledge, and … play the games [on a smaller scale] and use all the rainbow letters, and have access to eight small amounts of rainbow letters, and work one-on-one in that regard. I think that would be ideal for me* (S3, P6, Int.6, L728-733).

The following verbatim extracts indicate the manner in which teachers differentiate lesson activities to support the learner with dyslexia: *You need to be energetic and to keep their [attention], you need to take a break after each period … just to refocus them for the next period* (S1, P3, Int.3, L338-341). *For me, I find the repetition, the whole time, repetition, getting children in the groups, reading the individuals, [the whole time ensuring] that they direct themselves, go [back] into the story, I find that the whole consistent repetition thing helps for them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L590-593). *So, I often just use [the DBE workbook] like an introduction or a revision or sometimes as a homework activity* (S2, P1, Int.1, L314-315). *In class, we do work on differentiated levels. First one just for him because then again, I don't believe that we should be isolating. So, there are children [with similar capabilities] to*

his. … They get shown a visual level to work [towards] and then they're motivated to work to that and then the next. There's also extra work for them to complete (S3, P6, Int.6, L480-485). *Even the children who are ADD, they'll be the messengers, and they will do the handing out of books. So, they're … using their energy in a positive sense* (S3, P6, Int.6, L414-418).

To consider the needs of the learner with dyslexia, teachers seemingly used a variety of teaching strategies in presenting their lessons: *So, I try and juggle around how I bring things across to them. But definitely repetition, colour, and having a buddy system* (S1, P4, Int.4, L649-654). *Last week we did direct and indirect speech and instead of letting them write out the core notes, I did the format of a mind map* (S2, P1, Int.1, L292-295). *If I'm doing prepositions, for example, I'd be known at times to put up an obstacle course and as we go through the obstacle course, write down the prepositions that we do: under, up, down, through, you know, those things like that* (S2, P2, Int.2, L315-318). *My methods, they vary. Some is talk, some is group work. … some is self-discovery* (S3, P5, Int.5, L388-390).

With regard to presenting their lessons, participating teachers seemingly demonstrated the ability to vary their teaching strategies to address the needs of the learner with dyslexia: *I try to maybe [say] let's take a break. Let's try something else and come back to that* (S1 P4, Int.4, L1065-1066). *I need to make sure that I'm not talking first for half an hour and then they're writing. So, I try [mixing] it up so that the kids are not only doing one thing for a length of time* (S2, P1, Int.1, L502-504). *I try and find different techniques and methods. It makes me think of how to teach something differently. … How can I tackle something in a different sort of fashion*? (S3, P5, Int.5, L162-166).

5.2.2.3 Subtheme 2.3: Spelling and reading strategies

In this subtheme, I discuss the participating teachers' spelling and reading strategies to support learners with dyslexia. Aspects of these strategies include decoding, fluency, comprehension and text comprehension. With regard to spelling and decoding, teachers seemed able to support learners with dyslexia as is evident in the following verbatim quotations: *So, when I'm going through the spelling with them, I bring to their attention double consonants, blends, suffixes, prefixes, what the root word should be* (S2, P1, Int.1, L324-328). *We try and teach them decoding … how to [break up] a word, how to chunk a word, and again that comes back to the spelling. If they can put a sound to that letter, then perhaps we could decode a word. … We do a lot of sight words* (S3, P5, Int.5, L456-459*). What we – or what I can do – is break the word into sort of smaller chunks and then into sounds and try and connect a sound to a word-picture kind of thing. So, syllabification,*

sounding, sound families, and then building up the words (S3, P5, Int.5, L429-434). *I think you need to know how a child deals with spelling. So, for example, there're so many different programs with regards to spelling; there is 'Thrass', the 'Letter land', and phonics program. If you can identify that they were better with the 'Thrass' system, then bring that in for them. If they were better with the 'Letter land' pictures, then bring that in for them* (S3, P6, Int.6, L531-535). *I do some lot more sequencing activities than I would have because that's one area where dyslexic children* [sic] *can't. Or I do a lot of swopping sounds or sounds just to see who can't, but if they can't do one activity it doesn't necessarily mean that they're possibly dyslexic* (S3, P6, Int.6, L596-600).

Whereas teachers from School 2 and School 3 seemingly focus on phonetics and letter-sound relationships, teachers from School 1 rather focus on vocabulary enrichment to improve the learners' reading comprehension: *What we do for spelling now, we focus on words for different subjects because we teach all five subjects. We focus on the vocab* [sic] *now, rather than the spelling. You can practise the spelling, you can do the rainbow thing, let them write with 10 different colours over the word, and still, they will know the word for today. Tomorrow if they need to write the word 'because', they will spell it wrong again* (S1, P3, Int.3, L294-301).

In the following verbatim quotations, participating teachers seemed to demonstrate repeated oral reading as a reading strategy to reinforce learners' reading fluency: *What we do is, we read together as a class. What I do is, I will first read the page, they need to follow. Then they will read together and then they will each get a line. But what we do is random, or else they would count the lines and they will try to practise that* (S1, P3, Int.3, L283-286). *Reading we will also do [together]. "I will read, follow with me while I'm reading." Then I'll [get the stronger boy and] say, "Right, it's your turn to read." Again, the rest have to follow. So, literally, they're getting the same thing read to them like three or four to five times. By then I will say to that child, "Okay, start [with] sentence number one."* (S1, P4, Int.4, L563-567). *I try and do silent reading, reading out loud* (S2, P1, Int.1, L177). *Reading, we read in class together, we read individually. As a class, we read, we do group reading. So, reading is an ongoing process in the class all the time, whether it is a worksheet, whether it is a chart, whether it is a reader but we're reading all the time together in the class* (S2, P2, Int.2, L356-360).

Furthermore, the participating teachers seemingly applied direct and indirect vocabulary instruction as a reading strategy to build learners' comprehension: *What we mostly do is, explain the difficult words before we do the reading. Take it out, flash cards, put it on the board. … So, you go through all that; explain all the difficult words before you do the*

reading and then you do the actual reading. Read together and let them read a part (S1, P3, Int.3, L286-294). *So, with the reading, I just try every day … go through the words, go through the vocabulary before we begin the exercise, ask them if they can find the word on the page* (S1, P4, Int.4, L576-578). *The words, the difficult words or the words that are new to Grade 5, we would use a dictionary. … It was basically vocabulary building as a strategy to assist* (S2, P2, Int.2, L391-396). *I do a lot of building of vocab before the actual reading passage, so they become familiar with those words* (S3, P5, Int.5, L459-461).

Participating teachers from School 1 and School 2 also reported on question answering and analysis of a passage as a possible reading strategy to reinforce text comprehension: *I constantly ask them for feedback as well, so I can try and see that they're understanding what they read* (S1, P4, Int.4, L505-506). *They all have to have a turn to read and they might have to discuss [it] with their partner* (S2, P1, Int.1, L275-276).

5.2.2.4 Subtheme 2.4: Assessment strategies

This subtheme refers to the participating teacher's assessment strategies as well as their applied assessment differentiation to support and accommodate learners with dyslexia. The way in which the participating teachers not only assess the learners' workbooks and worksheets but also their formal tests, offer learners with dyslexia a fair chance to demonstrate their knowledge. Within the classroom environment, teachers from School 1 and School 3 seemed able to demonstrate the ability to support and accommodate learners with dyslexia in assessing and commenting on their school tasks: *Because he's passive, I need to write in his book, "Didn't complete in a set time", although you need to give the dyslexic child* [sic] *that extra time* (S1, P3, Int.3, L127-129). *What we also do is, when we do comprehension out of 10, eight marks will be [for the] content, only two marks will be for spelling, because with our learners, at the end of the day, they will get zero if you take off a mark for spelling* (S1, P3, Int.3, L312-315). *When we do a spelling test on a Friday, the word will be completely wrong but sometimes the first three letters are correct. So, I'll put three ticks, so they can see the first three are correct. Then they often see the ticks and they'll say to me, "I didn't do so bad." But at the end, I haven't actually written the mark because they got zero* (S1, P4, Int.4, L547-553). *If I know what they're trying to say, I will accept that* (S3, P5, Int.5, L449).

With regard to the formal assessment of the learner's tests and examination papers, teachers seemingly allowed learners with dyslexia extra time to complete their papers: *Because we are an LSEN school, we need to give them extra time even if they do write a test paper. We are allowed to give them 15 minutes' extra time* (S1, P3, Int.3, L131-133).

Most dyslexic learners [sic] *are being granted an extra 15 minutes' time by the Department* (S2, P2, Int.2, L238-239). Furthermore, teachers also seemingly allowed learners with dyslexia to do their assessments verbally: *So, I try often … [to] write at the page … "Did his assessment orally" to get the marks* (S1, P4, Int.4, L900-903). *She also has an amanuensis for … her final exams. The scribe transcribes her answers as she gives them* (S2, P1, QPI 5). *We need to have concessions for these children and allow them to do an assessment verbally … and they can achieve* (S3, P5, Int.5, L243-245).

Some participating teachers differentiate assessments in terms of spelling, reading, and handwriting so that learners with dyslexia can demonstrate their knowledge. With regard to differentiating a spelling assessment, one teacher from School 3 reported as follows: *You can't start at a level up here when they need to start from the beginning. I [also wouldn't] start on the amount of spelling words … that the rest of the class was working on because to memorise 20 words for them is just terrifying, to say the least. So, I would cut their whole spelling list of words that they would need to start with, and just do a set of five* (S3, P6, Int.6, L518-522). Participating teachers seemingly accommodate learners with dyslexia in terms of their reading and reading activities which is evident in the following verbatim citations: *I always say, "Okay, would you like to have a turn?" Then they start* (S1, P4, Int.4, L247-248). *Look, in the prepared reading, obviously, she's had time to prepare, so there were no issues that came up* (S2, P1, Int.1, L370-371). *If it was a prepared reading, then I would work with her and if the rest of the class was reading two paragraphs, I would cut hers down by one paragraph, and let her focus on the one paragraph* (S2, P2, Int.2, L385-389). A common strategy amongst participating teachers from School 1 and School 3 was the reduction of written work when assessing the learner with dyslexia: *If there are 20 questions, we will reduce it to 10. Out of 10 questions, eight will be [content related]. They can find [the answers] from the text [and] two will be, "What do you think?" to challenge them a bit* (S1, P3, Int.3, L520-522). *So, let's make this assessment just an oral, it will be easier … or just choose answers, it will be [easier]. Even though it's very easy for the others, we try and accommodate them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L946-948). *There is a differentiated program for him, for he is completing x-amount compared to [the rest of] the class* (S3, P6, Int.6, L316-317).

However, it appears that teachers from School 2 and School 3 did not differentiate assessments for the learner with dyslexia as they prepared the same assessment for all the learners: *She does spelling tests with them on a regular basis* (S2, P2, Int.2, L355-356). *I expect from my children the same as the mainstream children. They can do it, they can*

achieve. It may take a little bit longer, but I expect the same. They write the same tests; we do all the assessments the same (S3, P5, Int.5, L368-371).

To support and accommodate learners with dyslexia, schools should apply for special concessions to the Department of Basic Education: *She's got a concession for her exams* (S2, P1, Int.1, L83). *We have got LSEN numbers that have been applied for; concessions that have been applied for, for amanuensis* (S2, P2, Int.2, L691-692). *I know there has to be paperwork that shows … certain identifying factors have been made. So, for example, time or spelling have been noted throughout the schooling career which can [let you qualify] for that big concession that's been made* (S3, P6, Int.6, L986-990). In addition, it seems that teachers, in collaboration with the School Management Team, could use their own discretion in allowing the learner with dyslexia special concessions: *My HOD, she'll be supportive if we need [concessions]. … But we try not to start as young as Grade 4. They try and leave it more for high school when there's a [heavier] workload, a lot more information to get across. They will prefer to use it there* (S1, P4, Int.4, L948-954). *Any concession that is made is my own form of [concession], nothing IEB standard. It is just something to assist him* (S3, P6, Int.6, L992-996).

However, one of the teachers from School 3 stated that assessments should also be focusing on learners' strengths and not only on their weaknesses: *We need perhaps also assessments according to these children's strengths and not only penalise them for their weak areas because they have many strengths* (S3, P5, Int.5, L252-254).

5.2.2.5 Subtheme 2.5: Teaching and learning material

This subtheme refers to the participating teachers' applied strategies to differentiate and adapt learning materials to support learners with dyslexia. The adaptation and differentiation of teaching and learning materials are based on the font type of letters and a larger print used in learning materials as well as presenting information in a variety of styles and supplemented by music, movement, and visual elements. Teachers from School 1 and School 3 reported the use of colour as a visual element to support the learner with dyslexia: *[Using the visualizer], you can have the colour, you can have the sound, you can have all of it all at once, but I do not use it every single day because then they become very accustomed to it* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1210-1215). *Instead of writing homework, we now do visual cues. So, he just does colours for certain subjects. So, it's a bit of an easier task* (S3, P6, Int.6, L174-176).

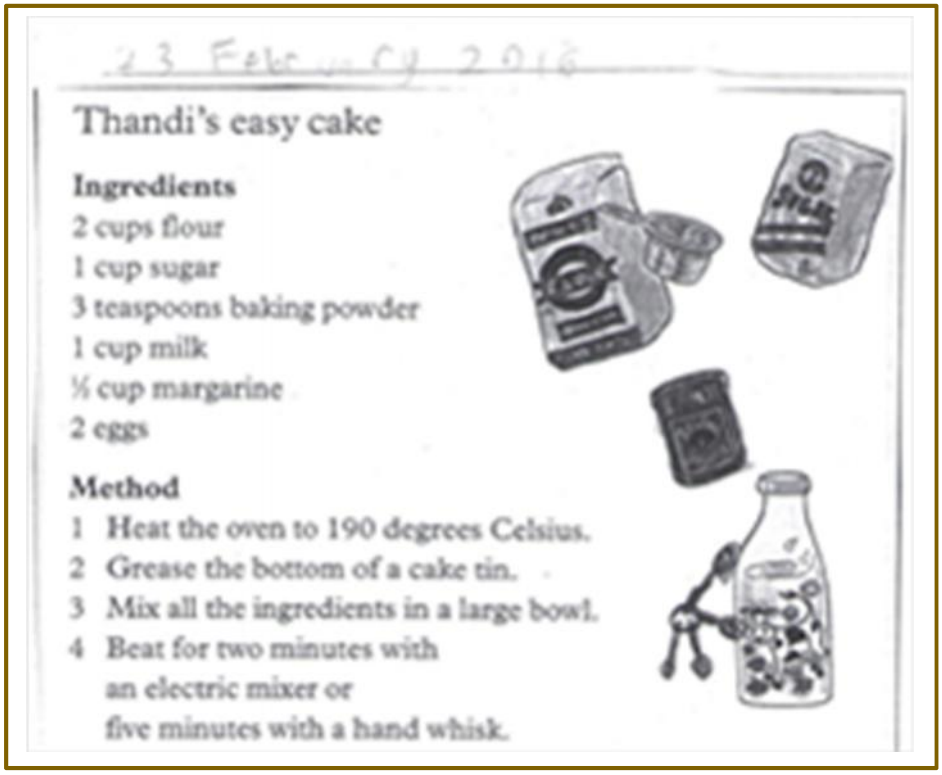
Teachers from School 1 and School 3 also apparently identified the use of a variety of teaching aids to address the diverse learning needs of learners with dyslexia: *You need to*

bring in lots of aids to keep their [attention] (S1, P3, Int.3, L336-337). *What we do sometimes is, we [Grade 4 learners] sit together, the three of us and then we will show the video clip* (S1, P3, Int.3, L747-748). *I think you need to sit and literally isolate every single word through pictures, through rhyme, through story. … I don't think there is a blanket method that could work for everybody personally* (S3, P6, Int.6, L536-540).

Furthermore, one teacher from School 1 reported on her strategy regarding the copying of work from the board or from worksheets to support learners with dyslexia: *Sometimes, I would have to write notes on paper to give that specific child because now he struggles to follow it from the board. So, I would have to give some of them my main copy because they struggle to flip back the page to try and find [their place]. … I often have extra worksheets including my own which I then give to them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L445-450). Furthermore, the participating teachers demonstrated the ability to accommodate learners with dyslexia with regard to their slow work pace and handwriting: *I take my prep … I'll photocopy that and stick it in her book so that she [does not have] to come and write that out herself after school or break* (S2, P1, Int.1, L289-292). *He's working with a tilt table. He's not working in cursive anymore. So, I put him into print to assist with his writing* (S3, P6, Int.6, L369-371).

Teachers reported the following strategies in their accounts of reducing and simplifying information to support and accommodate the learner with dyslexia: *What we do is, we follow the CAPS but we reduce the content. … We will retype the two pages onto half a page and we will put pictures there* (S1, P3, Int.3, L517-520). *Sometimes, also I blank out if there's too much information on the page. I'll say, "Cover up the bottom, we're only working on the top."* (S1, P4, Int.4, L660-662). *Sometimes I will even cut it shorter or I will spend more time on what I feel [are] the basics and what they need, and I might leave out what I believe is an odd section that they don't really need* (S3, P5, Int.5, L740-743). *There needs to be less written for him to read because they do read 25% slower than the average reader* (S3, P6, Int.6, L272-273).

As is evident by the following verbatim extracts, participating teachers from all three schools seemingly identified a larger print and font type as beneficial to support learners with dyslexia: *Definitely, if we put the words up big for them. Even if we had to make it up with separate letters or blends* (S2, P1, Int.1, L321-322). *They require a special font for it as well, and I think that has helped [with] assessing in your class* (S2, P2, Int.2, L437-439). *I don't like working from a textbook with my children because I redo a lot of the stuff according to font size and in-between line size, and so I like to retype it* (S3, P5, Int.5, L939-941). *I think if it was in an ordinary setting, his notes need to be in a special dyslexic font* (S3, P6, Int.6, L271-272).



23 February 2016

Thandi's easy cake

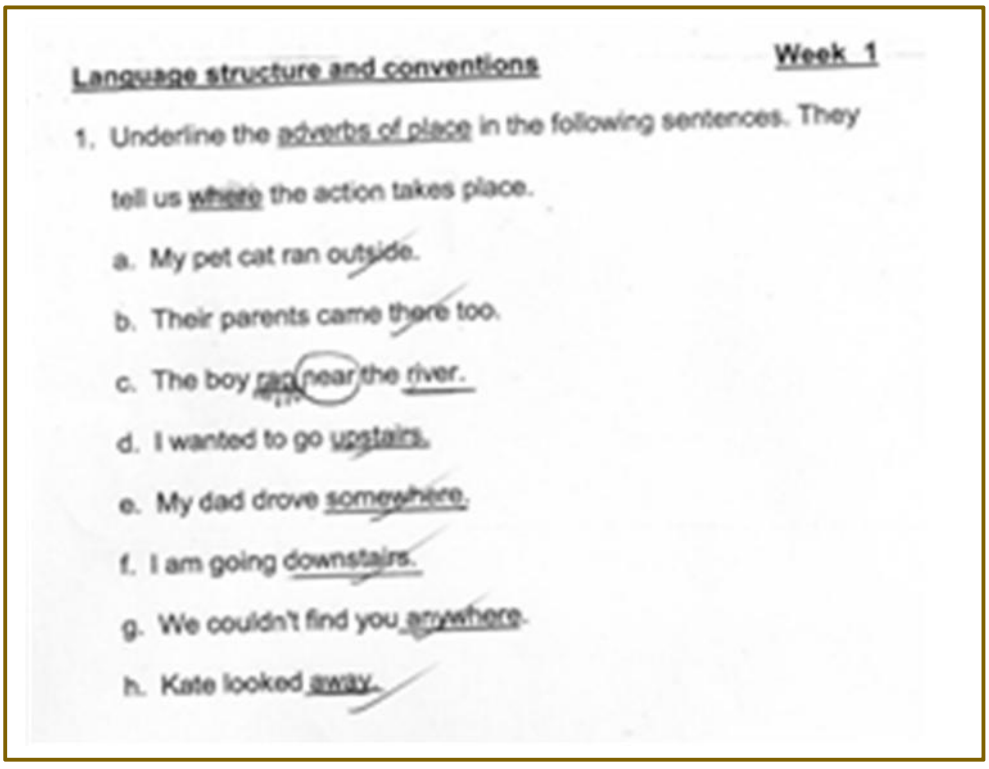
Ingredients

2 cups flour
1 cup sugar
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup milk
½ cup margarine
2 eggs

Method

1 Heat the oven to 190 degrees Celsius.
2 Grease the bottom of a cake tin.
3 Mix all the ingredients in a large bowl.
4 Beat for two minutes with an electric mixer or five minutes with a hand whisk.

Figure 5.2: Larger print (Times New Roman with 14 point) and visual elements in learning material (S1, P3)



Language structure and conventions **Week 1**

1. Underline the adverbs of place in the following sentences. They tell us where the action takes place.

a. My pet cat ran outside.
b. Their parents came there too.
c. The boy ran near the river.
d. I wanted to go upstairs.
e. My dad drove somewhere.
f. I am going downstairs.
g. We couldn't find you anywhere.
h. Kate looked away.

Figure 5.3: Larger print (Times New Roman with 14 point) and wider (double) line spacing (S1, P4)

The visual data in Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3 displays examples of learners' worksheets and serves as an illustration of teachers' apparent ability to adapt learning materials in terms of using larger print and wider line spacing as well as adding visual elements.

Additionally, one teacher from School 3 seemed to believe that learners should read according to their age level and, therefore, reading activities should be differentiated accordingly: *Reading, I think needs to be done not on grade level, but according to their age level* (S3, P6, Int.6, L544-545). *His reading, his books are generally the minimalistic type of books, and the number of pages aren't as extensive as everybody else's. So, it's definitely a lot shorter* (S3, P6, Int.6, L569-571).

5.2.2.6 Subtheme 2.6: Classroom management

This subtheme relates to how the participating teachers manage their classrooms and how they apply classroom strategies to address the behaviour of the learner with dyslexia in the classroom. Special needs education teachers seemingly believed that learners with dyslexia benefit from discipline and structure within the classroom environment: *They blossom, … if there's discipline and structure in the class. They need that* (S1, P3, Int.3, L256-264). It is, however, evident that the learner with dyslexia tends to get lost in the class when there is seemingly a lack of structure: *With the noise levels that get raised sometimes, those children tend to just slip away into the noise and then by the time I want to assess the work, they only then come, "Ma'am, I didn't understand. I couldn't read this one." So, I try and keep a [peaceful atmosphere] in the class* (S1, P4, Int.4, L451-455). *Creativity causes chaos. So, we tend to not use it very often which we should* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1130-1131).

Teachers from School 2 had a teacher assistant in the classroom to assist them with managing their time more efficiently: *But the learnership is also supposed to [be] observing and assisting us and helping in class with classroom management. So often, my learnership will sign their reading cards, and I will then spend other time explaining work* (S2, P1, Int.1, L655-657).

The following extract from my observational protocol explains how I observed the benefits of having the assistance of an extra teacher in the classroom:

In my opinion, a classroom assistant or a student teacher could be beneficial both to the teacher and the learners, including the learner with dyslexia. In this case, while the learners were busy copying the work down from the PowerPoint presentation, the

learnership moved around amongst them and provided support where learners needed assistance. This gave the teacher the opportunity to carry on with her reading assessment.

(Observational Protocol, Participant 1, 18 April 2016)

Learners with dyslexia might have challenges regarding their concentration and attention levels which could affect their behaviour in the classroom. Teachers from School 1 reported that they were transparent with learners regarding the consequences of bad behaviour or schoolwork not being done: *I don't tolerate nonsense. I do take away some of their breaks because what I say, is what I do. If … the learner continues to talk, then there will be consequences. So, I am very strict* (S1, P3, Int.3, L256-259). *The disruptive behaviour, obviously, there are consequences. … So, they need to know that just because they struggle doesn't mean that the attention is permanently focused on them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L308-313). Furthermore, one teacher seemingly applied pro-active strategies to prevent the learners with dyslexia from being off-task: *Often, I stand to make sure that they're not fiddling with things and I can see that they are focused. Try follow or I get the friend next to him [to] make sure that he knows where he is. So, I try to rectify [but] not in a negative way* (S1, P4, Int.4, L316-319). To accommodate learners with dyslexia with regard to their memory and concentration, participating teachers seemingly applied the following strategies: *That child, you need to put close to you. You need to put them at the front of the class* (S1, P3, Int.3, L242-243). *I try and engage them a little bit more so that when they have to do the activity, it's fresher for them. They've just been sort of called together; again, just recap and then go back* (S1, P4, Int.4, L462-464). *I try to use colours a lot because from previously being on courses, they do say colour helps* (S1, P4, Int.4, L637-638). *We try to keep him zoned in. He was sitting by me which is at the back of the class, but then we saw that he was too distracted with the whole class in front of him. So, he's now at the front of the class and with less distraction* (S3, P6, Int.6, L355-358).

Some teachers seemingly applied strategies such as positive and motivating remarks in dyslexic learners' workbooks to acknowledge their efforts and to externally motivate and reward them for schoolwork well done: *So even with me, those children, you know, you always get stars for 10 out of 10 or two stars, and then 9 out of 10. Maybe a 7 out of 10 get a silver star. I even give to a 5 out of 10; write a nice comment or give a star to that child that I know [is trying] to give their best* (S1, P4, Int.4, L289-292).

Teachers from School 2 reported that the school apply a merit system to reward learners' good behaviour and work well done, and to improve their self-image and confidence: *We've*

got a merit system that works really well at school. Merits, we've got an assembly [where we give] recognition for work well done (S2, P2, Int.2, L262-264). In this regard, the following extract from my research journal reflect my observation during one of the field visits to School 3:

In the reception area against a wall, I could see a panel with photographs of learners with a star attached to it. The principal explained with pride that all those learners were awarded a star for an achievement in their work or their behaviour. I thought that it was a wonderful and positive way to acknowledge and reward the learners.

(Research Journal, 30 June 2016)

In summary of the second theme, teachers from all three schools demonstrated the ability to teach and support the learner with dyslexia within the classroom context. The third theme concerns the participating teachers' challenges in terms of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.

5.2.3 Theme 3: Teachers' Challenges Regarding the Teaching and Support of Learners with Dyslexia

It is quite possible that teachers could experience challenges in the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. Hence, the third theme addresses the participating teachers' challenges with regard to the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. Referring to Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective as the conceptual framework of this study, I discuss this theme in four subthemes. The subthemes concern the participating teachers' challenges in terms of themselves as teachers, the learner with dyslexia, the school environment, and the collaboration with external role players. Table 5.3 presents an overview of the third theme with the related subthemes and categories including the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 5.3: Overview of Theme 3's subthemes, categories and subcategories including the inclusion and exclusion criteria

THEME 3 **Teachers' Challenges Regarding the Teaching and Support of Learners with Dyslexia** *So, I feel like, with everything, now on top of it, I must now remember in this one class for this learner, I must now adapt my teaching methods and worksheets and presentations to assist her. It can be very overwhelming and pressurising because how many more times must I adapt and change? Like, sometimes, I think I don't know what more to do.* (School 2 – Participant 1, Interview 1, Line 150-154).		
Subthemes and Categories	**Inclusion criteria**	**Exclusion criteria**
Subtheme 3.1 Challenges related to teachers	This subtheme focuses on the participating teachers' challenges related to themselves in terms of their knowledge and teaching experience, and their teacher training and development.	
Category 1 Teachers' teaching experience and knowledge	This category includes data related to the participating teachers' challenges regarding their limited experiences and inadequate knowledge in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. This category also includes teachers' subsequent negative emotions such as low self-confidence because of their limited experience and inadequate knowledge in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.	Any reference not related to the participating teachers' challenges regarding their limited experiences and inadequate knowledge in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. It also includes any reference to data not related to teachers' subsequent negative emotions such as low self-confidence because of their limited experience and inadequate knowledge in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.
Category 2 Teacher training and development	This category includes data related to the participating teachers' pre-service and in-service training or the lack thereof. The subcategories include data related to teachers never being trained in knowledge and skills to change to a specialised teacher, the need for more training, financial implications regarding in-service training, and teachers' negative emotions of no confidence to teach learners with dyslexia.	Any reference not related to the participating teachers' pre-service and in-service training or the lack thereof. It also includes any reference to data not related to teachers never being trained in knowledge and skills to change to a specialised teacher, the need for more training, financial implications regarding in-service training, and teachers' negative emotions of no confidence to teach learners with dyslexia.

	(a) *Inadequate training in skills and knowledge* This subcategory includes data related to the participating teachers' training in knowledge and skills to change from a general mainstream teacher to a specialised teacher supporting the learner with dyslexia within an inclusive classroom.	Any reference not related to the participating teachers' knowledge and skills to change from a general mainstream teacher to a specialised teacher supporting the learner with dyslexia within an inclusive classroom.
	(b) *Need for further training* This subcategory includes data related to participating teachers expressing their need for more training to support learners with dyslexia as well as the type of training they would like to receive.	Any reference not related to participating teachers expressing their need for more training to support learners with dyslexia as well as the type of training they would like to receive.
	(c) *Financial implications* This subcategory includes data related to the cost of attending in-service training and courses which were either paid by the participating teachers themselves or by the schools.	Any reference not related to the cost of attending in-service training and courses which were either paid by the participating teachers themselves or by the schools.
Subtheme 3.2 Challenges related to learners	This subtheme focuses on participating teachers' challenges related to the learner with dyslexia in terms of a lack of early identification or diagnosis of dyslexia, the learner with dyslexia's motivation and learned helplessness, and providing individual assistance or intervention to learners with dyslexia.	
Category 1 Early identification of dyslexia	This category includes data related to dyslexia not being identified or diagnosed during the early school years of the learner with dyslexia due to ignorance or poverty and financial constraints of parents and caregivers.	Any reference not related to the early identification or diagnosis of dyslexia during the early school years of the learner with dyslexia due to ignorance or poverty and financial constraints of parents and caregivers.
Category 2 Learner with dyslexia's motivation and learned helplessness	This category includes data related to learners with dyslexia struggling with their schoolwork leading to a lack of motivation to excel in their school work which could result in a 'learned helplessness'.	Any reference not related to learners with dyslexia struggling with their schoolwork leading to a lack of motivation to excel in their school work which could result in a 'learned helplessness'.
Category 3 Individual assistance or intervention to learners with dyslexia	This category includes data related to participating teachers' challenges in providing individual assistance or intervention to learners with dyslexia in the classroom.	Any reference not related to participating teachers' challenges in providing individual assistance or intervention to learners with dyslexia in the classroom.
Subtheme 3.3 Challenges related to the school environment	This subtheme focuses on participating teachers' challenges related to the school environment in terms of curriculum delivery and the physical and psychosocial learning environment.	

Category 1 Curriculum delivery	This category includes data related to challenges experienced by the participating teachers to implement the curriculum within an inclusive classroom environment. The subcategories include data related to the diverse needs of the learners, time constraints, and difficulty with the assessment of learners with dyslexia.	Any reference not related to challenges experienced by the participating teachers to implement the curriculum within an inclusive classroom environment. It also includes any reference to data not related to the diverse needs of the learners, and difficulty with the assessment of learners with dyslexia.
	(a) *Diverse needs of learners* This subcategory includes data related to the participating teachers' challenge of providing an inclusive classroom experience for all learners including the learner with dyslexia.	Any reference not related to the participating teachers' challenge of providing an inclusive classroom experience for all learners including the learner with dyslexia.
	(b) *Time constraints* This subcategory includes data related to time constraints experienced by the participating teacher in terms of the lack of instructional time and the lack of a flexible timetable.	Any reference not related to time constraints experienced by the participating teacher in terms of the lack of instructional time and the lack of a flexible timetable.
	(c) *Difficulty with assessment of learners with dyslexia* This subcategory includes data related to participating teachers' difficulties to adapt and assess the activity tasks and formal assessment tasks of learners with dyslexia within the classroom.	Any reference not related to participating teachers' difficulties to adapt and assess the activity tasks and formal assessment tasks of learners with dyslexia within the classroom.
Category 2 Learning environment	This category includes data related to challenges regarding inadequate teacher support in terms of support structures, a lack of teaching and learning support materials, overcrowded classrooms and the lack of space to store teaching and learning equipment.	Any reference not related to challenges regarding inadequate teacher support in terms of a lack of teaching and learning support materials, overcrowded classrooms and the lack of space to store teaching and learning equipment.
Subtheme 3.4 Challenges related to collaboration with external role players	This subtheme focuses on participating teachers' challenges related to the collaboration with external role players such as parents, the Department of Basic Education, and learner support services within the community.	
Category 1 Parents and relatives	This category includes data related to the lack of collaboration between the participating teachers and parents or guardians and relatives.	Any reference not related to the lack of collaboration between the participating teachers and parents or guardians and relatives.

Category 2 Department of Basic Education and ISASA	This category includes data related to the lack of support provided by the DBE/ISASA through the District-Based Support Team, education specialists, and resource centres.	Any reference not related to the lack of support provided by the DBE/ISASA through the District-Based Support Team, education specialists, and resource centres.

5.2.3.1 Subtheme 3.1: Challenges related to teachers

This subtheme concerns teachers' challenges in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia in relation to themselves as teachers. I discuss this subtheme in two categories. The first category relates to the participating teachers' teaching experience regarding the learner with dyslexia, and the next category refers to their in-service training and development to teach and support learners with dyslexia.

Category 1: Teachers' teaching experience and knowledge

This category relates to the participating teachers' challenges in terms of their limited experience and inadequate knowledge in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. This category also includes teachers' subsequent negative emotions such as low self-confidence because of their limited experience and inadequate knowledge in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. As evident by the following verbatim extracts, teachers from School 2 and School 3 seemingly admit to a lack of knowledge and limited teaching experience with regard to the learner with dyslexia: *I have not had much experience teaching learners with dyslexia in my 12 years of teaching* (S2, P1, QPI 1). *There are kids that will slip through and you won't know that they are struggling with something and you don't [always know] how to assist them* (S2, P1, Int.1, L746-748). *We are ignorant and we're not remedial specialists and we don't have the knowledge, and we don't have the know-how, and we don't have the methodology* (S3, P5, Int.5, L517-519). *I wouldn't say I'm confidently knowledgeable about it [dyslexia]* (S3, P6, Int.6, L109). Subsequently, teachers from School 2 and School 3 seem to have low self-confidence in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia as is evident from the following verbatim extracts: *If I [knew] more and I had practical suggestions on how to help her then she would probably feel very supported and understood, and I would feel like I was making a difference* (S2, P1, Int.1, L389-391). *There's the anxiety from, "Did I do right?"* (S2, P2, Int.2, L649-650). *I sometimes feel [as if] I am inadequate. I don't have the skills, I don't have the knowledge, I don't have the know-how on how to deal with these children* (S3, P5, Int.5, L182-183). *I question myself all the time. I don't know if I'm doing the right thing for them. I don't know if I can help them. I don't know if I AM helping them. I just questioned myself* (S3, P5, Int.5, L219-221).

Category 2: Teacher training and development

In this category, I discuss the participating teachers' in-service training or the lack thereof. The subcategories refer to teachers' inadequate training in skills and knowledge to change to a specialised teacher, the need for further training, and financial implications regarding in-service training.

Inadequate training in skills and knowledge

This subcategory relates to the participating teachers' training in knowledge and skills to change from a general mainstream teacher to a specialised teacher supporting the learner with dyslexia within an inclusive classroom. Teachers from School 2 and School 3 seemingly do not consider themselves as specialised teachers as they are neither trained nor equipped to teach learners with dyslexia: *But unfortunately, we are not specialists in it* (S2, P2, Int.2, L445-446). *We haven't had any [training] on dyslexia* (S2, P1, Int.1, L403). *We're not remedial specialists* (S3, P5, Int.5, L517-518). *We are not equipped to deal with all those problems* (S3, P5, Int.5, L524).

Although in-service training and courses are provided, teachers apparently consider the training as insufficient to teach and support learners with dyslexia: *[The learning impairments] weren't just dyslexia-based. They were like barriers to learning where they bring in the hard of hearing, or cerebral palsy or things like that but it wasn't based just on dyslexia. I haven't [as yet] attended a conference that's just on dyslexia. Most of it is ADHD* (S1, P4, Int.4, L725-728). *We do have workshops, but I haven't been to any that cater for this kind of thing. [Cluster meetings] doesn't cater to barriers to learning. It doesn't help us as a teacher* (S3, P5, Int.5, L639-642).

Need for further training

This subcategory concerns participating teachers expressing their need for further training to support learners with dyslexia as well as the kind of training they would like to receive. Apparently, teachers from School 2 and School 3 acknowledged the necessity for further in-service training: *That information would need to be passed on because we were not told about dyslexia at college. I mean, that was a couple of years ago for me* (S2, P1, Int.1, L181-183). *Teach us, train us, show us, our educators. We need help because I think there're more and more dyslexic children* [sic] *coming through. I think we need training* (S3, P5, Int.5, L422-424). *I don't think varsities themselves offer [training] unless you specialise such as yourself, which is sad because I do think it should be part of the core learning that you do at varsity* (S3, P6, Int.6, L662-664). *I think [online courses] should be made available*

[and] if not that, then there should be more workshops that are put in place (S3, P6, Int.6, L720-723).

Moreover, teachers from all three schools seemingly would value in-service training where they could receive information regarding the characteristics of dyslexia, and practical suggestions on how to teach and support learners with dyslexia: *I think I would like to go to a proper [course] to have a more in-depth understanding of dyslexia because you used to think it was just the children reversing the letters* (S1, P4, Int.4, L762-764). *If I could learn a little bit about the basic knowledge and [gain a better] understanding of what dyslexia is, and moreover, how to help the learner in class. So, the practical side of how to help the learner* (S2, P1, Int.1, L473-475). *I would like to attend a more in-depth course like the course that was given [to the] Foundation Phase. I'd like to know how to help the child, not just to recognise what the problem is. I'd like to know how to help the child in a structured manner to ensure success* (S2, P2, Int.2, L490-493). *I like practical, hands-on, good workshops where I can go, and I can be shown methods that have been proven and work and I can learn from them and come and implement it in my classroom. I want practical things that work from knowledgeable people that know what they are talking about* (S3, P5, Int.5, L626-629).

Financial implications

This subcategory relates to the financial cost of attending in-service training and courses which were either paid by the participating teachers themselves or by the schools. Teachers were encouraged to attend courses and in-service training, and it seems that, within certain limits, schools were prepared to support teachers with regard to finances: *Usually finances are not an issue, I mean, obviously if it's thousands and thousands [that needs] to be looked at as to benefit of the school* (S2, P1, Int.1, L435-437). However, teachers from School 3 seemingly had to pay for themselves when attending courses: *It's at our own discretion to attend, and also the expense, we have to pay for those courses ourselves. And they are very expensive* (S3, P5, Int.5, L1006-1007). *Some of these courses are just way out of our brackets. We can't afford them. And that's unfortunate, and it's a great pity and something needs to be done about that* (S3, P5, Int.5, L1016-1018). *When you were done, you could buy this certificate just to say that you have completed the [online] course. But it was a good couple of dollars. … With the exchange rate, it was just way too expensive for a certificate* (S3, P6, Int.6, L1080-1086). Another financial implication regarding online courses was the cost of data and access to the internet: *I think the fact that it's all online is a bit of a hindering part because not everybody [has] access to 30 hours of data* (S3, P6, Int.6, L720-722).

In summary of this subtheme, the participating teachers from all three schools seemingly acknowledged some challenges in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia in terms of their knowledge and teaching experience, including their teacher training and development. The second subtheme concerns the participating teachers' challenges related to the learner with dyslexia.

5.2.3.2 Subtheme 3.2: Challenges related to learners

This subtheme refers to the participating teachers' challenges related to the learner with dyslexia in terms of a lack of early diagnosis or identification of dyslexia, the learner with dyslexia's motivation and learned helplessness, and providing individual assistance to learners with dyslexia.

Category 1: Early identification or diagnosis of dyslexia

This category concerns learners with dyslexia not being identified or diagnosed during their pre-school or early school years due to ignorance from either teachers or parents, or poverty and financial constraints of parents and relatives. It seems that parents and teachers were ignorant to identify the characteristics of dyslexia in the learner's early childhood development as is evident from the following verbatim transcripts: *This is the first one that's been diagnosed. In the past, [learners] think they have dyslexia but it's not on paper. So, you can think what you like* (S1, P3, Int.3, L165-167). *In the past, I have had children that struggle but were never diagnosed* (S1, P4, Int.4, L185). *I don't know if that's a general learning barrier she has or if it has to do with the dyslexia* (S2, P1, Int.1, L202-203). *We really struggle to go and get [learners] to have a [psychology assessment] because that will help with the concessions, but we struggle. I think [parents] don't wanna* [sic] *hear and you can't blame them* (S3, P5, Int.5, L93-95). *I think the earlier [dyslexia is diagnosed], the better because especially now when you hit Grade 4 you've had four years of gaps if I can call it that. And to start filling and to start intervention, it's incredibly hard* (S3, P6, Int.6, L448-450).

Besides ignorance on the part of either teachers or parents, poverty and parents' financial constraints seemingly contributed to learners not being diagnosed with dyslexia: *Sometimes, with finances, [the parents] need to go to a neurologist. It costs a lot of money. They don't have the money* (S1, P3, Int.3, L167-168). *I think in the one case, … it is a problem of financial constraints with the parents. They are unable to pay for the assessment to be done* (S2, P2, Int.2, L63-65). Teachers from School 3 seemed to believe that in cases where parents do have the financial means to pay for assessments, they rather prefer not to be confronted with their child's learning difficulties: *I have those [parents]*

that don't want to hear it, and it's very difficult, and it's very frustrating because if we had a diagnosis, perhaps we would know which path to travel with the child or where to be send a child that will cater to their needs (S3, P5, Int.5, L761-764).

Category 2: Learner with dyslexia's motivation and learned helplessness

This category relates to the participating teachers' challenges regarding learners with dyslexia struggling with their schoolwork which could lead to a lack of motivation and result in a learned helplessness. Participating teachers from all three schools seemingly had challenges with the learners with dyslexia's perceived lack of motivation to excel in their school work which could lead to a learned helplessness: *He can get negative because he's not finishing his work in class in a set time* (S1, P3, Int.3, L209). *They actually get the attitude of, "Oh, I hate this" because they know that they're going to struggle* (S1, P4, Int.4, L189-190). *I think when they feel that it's over, they can't cope, they're labelled. … Sometimes they become lazy, so they don't want to help themselves* (S1, P4, Int.4, L298-301). *She doesn't ever ask for assistance* (S2, P1, Int.1, L104-105). *If everything's out of 15 and is differentiated, I push him to get to the end because I don't want this learned helplessness to arise, and he's capable of doing 15* (S3, P6, Int.6, L761-763).

Category 3: Individual assistance or intervention to learners with dyslexia

This category refers to participating teachers' challenges in providing individual assistance to learners with dyslexia in the classroom. Time constraints and the number of learners in the class seemingly contributed to teachers' challenges to provide individual assistance to the learner with dyslexia: *There's no time to get to the learner with ADHD or what so ever* (S1, P3, Int.3, L179-180). *Not that I [mean to complain], but you know, 18 children to have 18 sets of alphabet letters to spell out words, and change letters and change sounds and change this and do that is not always easily accessible* (S3, P6, Int.6, L734-736).

In summary of this subtheme, participating teachers reported on their challenges related to the learner with dyslexia in terms of the lack of an early diagnosis of dyslexia, the learner with dyslexia's lack of motivation and learned helplessness and teachers' challenges in providing individual assistance to learners with dyslexia. The third subtheme concerns teachers' challenges related to the school environment.

5.2.3.3 Subtheme 3.3: Challenges related to the school environment

In this subtheme, I discuss the participating teachers' challenges related to the school environment with regard to curriculum delivery and the physical and psychosocial learning environment.

Category 1: Curriculum delivery

The first category concerns participating teachers' challenges implementing the curriculum within an inclusive classroom environment. I discuss this category in three subcategories. The first subcategory relates to the diverse needs of the learners, including the learner with dyslexia, and the second subcategory refers to time constraints. The third subcategory relates to participating teachers experiencing difficulties with the assessment of learners with dyslexia.

Diverse needs of learners

This subcategory concerns the challenges of participating teachers in providing an inclusive classroom experience for all learners including the learner with dyslexia. As evident from the participating teachers' verbatim quotations, it seems that the number of learners with special needs influences the teachers' curriculum delivery: *It's the whole class because it's [the entire] spectrum. It's Tourette syndrome, it's ADHD, it's ADD. So, that's why they're in the LSEN school. They've been referred here* (S1, P3, Int.3, L57-59). *I have two [learners] that have got hearing problems. … Some wear glasses but no other [major] special, special needs or anything* (S1, P4, Int.4, L62-67). *If you've got four kids with ADHD and one with dyslexia and you've got five behaviour problems, that's more than half your class already that are problematic* (S2, P1, Int.1, L694-696). *So, I feel like, with everything, now on top of it, I must now remember in this one class for this learner, I must now adapt my teaching methods, and worksheets and presentations to assist her* (S2, P1, Int.1, L150-152). *Sixteen years ago, things were different. So, when I started out, there wasn't this inclusivity and you taught your curriculum, you did your assessments, you did what you needed to. Now, you've got to be aware of these varied ability groups in your [class], and you've got to think how best to assist these learners* (S2, P2, Int.2, L568-572). *They are children, they all have some type of barrier to learning whether it be constant concentration, anxiety, focus, auditory, eyes, visual. They've all got something, so all my children suffer from some sort of learning barrier* (S3, P5, Int.5, L100-102).

Time constraints

This subcategory refers to time constraints experienced by the participating teacher in terms of the lack of instructional time and the lack of a flexible timetable. The Grade 4 participating teachers from School 1 were seemingly more flexible in managing their instruction time as the learners remain in the same classroom during the school day: *What makes it easier in this class, they don't need to pack up and go to the next period. They stay in class. So, you can give them more minutes to finish. So, it's more flexible* (S1, P3, Int.3, L534-542). *What we do sometimes is, we [Grade 4 learners] sit together, the three*

of us and then we will show the video clip or whatever, so, it's over and done with. Even though you do the subject only tomorrow because we don't do it on the same day. We've got different timetables (S1, P3, Int.3, L747-750).

One teacher from School 2 reported that the time provided for the periods on her timetable was long enough to sufficiently cover the planned learning activities: *Our periods are long enough to ensure that we get through our workload for the day. So, what I've planned for my lesson, I generally tend to cover for that lesson* (S2, P2, Int.2, L532-534). Furthermore, her timetable was adjusted to offer her more flexible time in supporting learners with dyslexia: *My timetable was adjusted [to teach and support the learner with dyslexia]* (S2, P2, Int.2, L719-720).

Difficulty with the assessment of learners with dyslexia

This subcategory relates to the participating teachers' challenges to adapt and assess the activity tasks and formal assessment tasks of learners with dyslexia within the classroom. As is evident from their verbatim transcripts, teachers seemingly experienced difficulties with the written assessments of learners with dyslexia: *I think orally doing an assessment is quite easy, so they can quickly tell me something. But the written assessments are challenging* (S1, P4, Int.4, L898-900). *Then, if they don't get the assessment done in class, I can't send it home because then their parents will help them a lot because they too maybe don't have patience [and might] become frustrated* (S1, P4, Int.4, L914-916). *But sometimes, time doesn't allow for you to sit with 24 children for them to tell you the same seven answers. It becomes a bit difficult* (S1, P4, Int.4, L896-898). *I'm teaching to assess rather than teaching to import knowledge which is a problem* (S2, P2, Int.2, L526-527).

Category 2: Learning environment

This category concerns the participating teachers' challenges regarding inadequate teacher support in terms of a lack of teaching and learning support materials and equipment, overcrowded classrooms and the lack of space to store teaching and learning equipment. Regarding inadequate teacher support, the participating teachers from School 1 and School 3 seemingly could benefit from either a teacher assistant in class or the support from a multidisciplinary team: *I wish I had an assistant that would be able to … help them that extra bit more so that they always focus, they're always on the right track, that they don't have to rely on the younger students to help them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L779-782). *[We have] very limited support, very little [support]. We do have those professionals on board, but it's not solely aimed at dyslexia* (S3, P5, Int.5, L605-607). Conversely, teachers from School 2 reported on the advantages of having a teacher assistant to assist them with general duties in the

classroom: *We started out very slowly with just [those] in Grade 4 and … and then the school decided that it is something that they want to implement as a pilot program to see [if it is] going to help alleviate the huge numbers in the class, the teacher's stress, the management, the dealing with kids* (S2, P1, Int.1, L690-694).

It seems as if the participating teachers from School 1 had adequate teaching and learning support resources, but they experienced challenges with the technology equipment: *Sometimes I suppose it's a problem because they trip over the cord and then the electricity is off. So, we can't always use [the project visualiser] as our source* (S1, P4, Int.4, L646-647). *Technology is a problem because [once or twice] the things have crashed. My data ran out, so [I wasn't] able to show [the video] to them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1223-1224). On the contrary, teachers from School 3 seemingly lack teaching resources: *No, I'm going to say that's an area we need to work on. We don't have the resources that we need to do the job correctly* (S3, P5, Int.5, L932-934). *No, nothing that's available to me [in the classroom]* (S3, P6, Int.6, L954).

Learners with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia might benefit from a teacher's individual attention because of the smaller number of learners in the class. As is evident from the following verbatim extracts, a possible lack of individual attention due to large numbers of learners in a class is apparently one of the reasons why learners with dyslexia are transferred to an LSEN school: *I've got four classes of 35 learners each* (S2, P2, Int.2, L51). *That's why they refer them to LSEN schools, because of the bigger classes* (S1, P3, Int.3, L178-179). With regard to participating teachers' challenges regarding a lack of physical space in the classroom, the following extract from my research journal reflects my observation during one of the field visits to School 2:

With 35 learners' bookcases next to their tables, there was no walking space for the teacher or learnership in the passage between the tables. They had to step over the bookcases to attend to individual learners. An accident waiting to happen …...

(Research Journal, 18 April 2016)

In this subtheme, participating teachers apparently identified challenges related to the school environment in terms of the curriculum and the physical and psychosocial learning environment. The fourth subtheme concerns participating teachers' challenges related to collaboration with external role players.

5.2.3.4 Subtheme 3.4: Challenges related to collaboration with external role players

This subtheme refers to teachers' challenges in terms of collaboration with external role players within the school environment and the community. The two categories relate to the parents' support and teacher support provided either by the Department of Basic Education or the Independent Schools' Association of South Africa.

Category 1: Parents and relatives

This category concerns the lack of collaboration between the participating teachers and parents or guardians and relatives. Teachers from all three schools seemingly reported challenges with parents experienced as neither being interested in their child's school activities nor supportive of their child's homework: *You do get parents that work with you wonderfully. But then other parents, they're not doing homework, or they're not interested* (S1, P3, Int.3, L549-551). *The parents sometimes, I feel like here the miracle's gonna* [sic] *happen. But then at home, we don't need to do anything. So, I think that sometimes it's a bit of a challenge … because aftercare must do it and they must do it here at school* (S1, P4, Int.4, L982-985). *Her parents haven't approached me either. So, there's been very … little to no contact with regard to that issue* (S2, P1, Int.1, L107-109). *One of the challenges I would say would be the parents. A lot of the times they wouldn't try to take the child for [an] assessment. … Parents, they don't oversee homework that has been done. They don't assist with the reading or the spelling. So, that is a challenge for us* (S2, P2, Int.2, L548-551).

Teachers from School 3 apparently believe that some parents who have the financial means to pay for assessments rather prefer not to be confronted with their child's learning difficulties: *Tender topic, parents. I don't think parents want to hear, and they don't want to take responsibility. So, they often blame it on the education system, or the teacher, or the teachers in the past* (S3, P5, Int.5, L756-760).

Category 2: Department of Basic Education and Independent Schools' Association of South Africa

This category refers to the lack of teacher support provided by the DBE or ISASA through the District-Based Support Team, education specialists and resource centres. It seems that teachers from School 2 and School 3 had concerns regarding communication with either the Department of Basic Education or with the Independent Schools' Association of South Africa: *I wouldn't go to the Department first if you know what I mean. I think it would be like the last step. [When you're] desperate and no one else can help you* (S2, P1, Int.1, L625-630). *We have issues with them, with the Department coming in, and a lot of the times, I*

find it personally difficult to reach someone at the Department (S2, P2, Int.2, L680-682). *I've never personally been involved with the IEB [ISASA] itself* (S3, P6, Int.6, L689).

To conclude this theme, participating teachers from all three schools reported challenges with regard to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. They identified challenges related to themselves as teachers, to the learners with dyslexia and to the school environment, as well as challenges regarding collaboration with external role players within the school and community. Moving to the fourth theme, I discuss teachers' assets, resources and strategies contributing to the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia.

5.2.4 Theme 4: Teachers' Assets, Resources and Strategies in Teaching and Supporting Learners with Dyslexia

The fourth theme addresses the assets, coping resources and strategies assisting teachers with the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. I discuss this theme in three subthemes. The first subtheme concerns the participating teachers' demonstrated characteristics in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. The second subtheme relates to teachers' coping resources and strategies. In the third and last subtheme, I explore a supportive school environment. Table 5.4 presents an overview of the fourth theme with the related subthemes, categories, and subcategories including the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 5.4: Overview of Theme 4's subthemes, categories, and subcategories including the inclusion and exclusion criteria

THEME 4 **Teachers' Assets, Resources, and Strategies in Teaching and Supporting Learners with Dyslexia** *Then you need to [think of] tomorrow. There's always tomorrow. Tomorrow it will go better* (School 1 – Participant3, Interview 3, Line 636-637).		
Subthemes and Categories	**Inclusion criteria**	**Exclusion criteria**
Subtheme 4.1 Teachers' demonstrated characteristics.	This subtheme focuses on teachers' demonstrated characteristics contributing to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia. Teacher characteristics relate to care and support, fairness and respect, a positive attitude, a reflective mind and the teacher as a life-long learner.	
Category 1 Care and Support	This category includes data related to participating teachers demonstrating care and support towards learners with dyslexia. The	Any reference not related to participating teachers demonstrating care and support towards learners with dyslexia. It

	data includes characteristics related to teachers being compassionate, patient, appreciating learner inputs, protecting learners against bullying or labelling, building a supportive relationship and motivating the learner with dyslexia.	includes any reference to data not related to teacher characteristics such as being compassionate, patient, appreciating learner inputs, protecting learners against bullying or labelling, building a supportive relationship and motivating the learner with dyslexia.
Category 2 Fairness and Respect	This category includes data related to participating teachers demonstrating fairness and respect towards learners with dyslexia. The data includes aspects such as social justice and equality for all learners, being sensitive to learners' needs and feelings, and accept and respect learners.	Any reference not related to participating teachers demonstrating fairness and respect towards learners with dyslexia. It includes any reference to data not related to aspects such as social justice and equality for all learners, being sensitive to learners' needs and feelings, and accept and respect learners.
Category 3 Positive attitude	This category includes data related to participating teachers maintaining a positive attitude when they demonstrate optimism, a high self-esteem, perseverance, and passion towards teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.	Any reference not related to participating teachers maintaining a positive attitude when they demonstrate optimism, a high self-esteem, perseverance or passion towards teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.
Category 4 Reflective mind and life-long learners	This category includes data related to participating teachers demonstrating a reflective practice in terms of being open-minded and receptive to new information, responsible and dedicated, and willing to admit mistakes.	Any reference not related to participating teachers demonstrating a reflective practice in terms of being open-minded and receptive to new information, responsible and dedicated, and willing to admit mistakes.
Subtheme 4.2 Teachers' coping resources and strategies	This subtheme includes data related to participating teachers' coping resources and applied coping strategies to decrease the feeling of stress that might occur in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. The categories include data related to coping strategies in terms of physical strategies, social support structures, and meditation or relaxation strategies.	
Category 1 Physical activities	This category includes data related to participating teachers' physical activities in terms of hobbies and low-level exercise to decrease feelings of stress in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.	Any reference not related to participating teachers' physical activities in terms of hobbies and low-level exercise to decrease feelings of stress in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.
Category 2 Social support	This category includes data related to participating teachers' social support structures in terms of emotion-focused social support strategies and problem-focused social support strategies.	Any reference not related to participating teachers' social support structures in terms of emotion-focused social support strategies, and problem-focused social support strategies.

Category 3 Meditation and relaxation	This category includes data related to participating teachers monitoring their stress levels in terms of personal reflection through meditation and/or relaxation after school hours.	Any reference not related to participating teachers monitoring their stress levels in terms of personal reflection through meditation and/or relaxation after work.
Subtheme 4.3 Supportive school environment	This subtheme includes data related to the role of the school environment in providing support and assistance to participating teachers to alleviate teacher stress related to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. The categories include data related to assets and resources available to the teacher in the classroom and the school including the school's strategies to support the teachers in managing their work-related stress. The categories further include data related to community assets to support the school.	
Category 1 Classroom assets and resources	This category includes data related to the availability and accessibility of teaching and learning materials in the classroom.	Any reference not related to the availability and accessibility of teaching and learning materials in the classroom.
Category 2 School's assets and resources	This category includes data related to the school's strategies to support teachers in managing their work-related stress in terms of teacher development, collaborative colleagues and other role players, and the role of the SGB in providing financial support to the teacher and the school.	Any reference not related to the school's strategies to support teachers in managing their work-related stress in terms of teacher development, collaborative colleagues and other role players, and the role of the SGB in providing financial support to the teacher and the school.
	(a) *Teacher development* This subcategory includes data related to teacher development in terms of pre-service and/or in-service training to assist teachers in coping with the challenges of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.	Any reference not related to teacher development in terms of pre-service and/or in-service training to assist teachers in coping with the challenges of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.
	(b) *Collaborative colleagues / role players* This subcategory includes data related to a positive atmosphere and social support provided by colleagues and other role players in the school environment working collaborative in a team to assist and support participating teachers who need professional and/or social support to cope with the challenges of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.	Any reference not related to a positive atmosphere and social support provided by colleagues and other role players in the school environment working collaborative in a team to assist and support participating teachers who need professional and/or social support to cope with the challenges of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.

	(c) *Financial support/role of SGB* This subcategory includes data related to the role of the SGB in providing financial support to the teacher and the school.	Any reference not related to the role of the SGB in providing financial support to the teacher and the school.
Category 3 Community assets and resources	This category includes data related to assets and resources provided by the community to support teachers and learners with dyslexia.	Any reference not related to assets and resources provided by the community to support teachers and learners with dyslexia.

5.2.4.1 Subtheme 4.1: Teachers' demonstrated characteristics in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia

In this subtheme, I discuss the participating teachers' demonstrated attributes contributing to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia. The four categories within this subtheme relate to care and support, fairness and respect, a positive attitude, a reflective mind and the teacher as a life-long learner.

Category 1: Care and Support

This category concerns the participating teachers demonstrating care and support towards learners with dyslexia. The demonstrated characteristics relate to teachers being compassionate, patient, appreciating learner inputs, protecting learners against bullying or labelling, building a supportive relationship and motivating the learner with dyslexia. As evident from the following verbatim extracts, participating teachers from all three schools seemingly identified compassion and empathy as essential personality traits contributing to teacher effectiveness when teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia: *You need to have compassion. … With them, you need compassion every day* (S1, P3, Int.3, L703-705). *I think I'm a very empathetic person. So, I can see their frustration and … I feel like I'm always ready to help them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1170-1174). *Definitely empathy and compassion. I think I've got the compassion for the kids* (S2, P1, Int.1, L577-578). *I think I care for them, and they see that, and they understand that* (S3, P5, Int.5, L853-854). *I think there needs to be a level of compassion because with compassion comes understanding* (S3, P6, Int.6, L871-873).

Participating teachers also identified patience as vital in the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia: *You need to be very patient* (S1, P3, Int.3, L114). *I think having a lot of patience, it's something that you do need to work with them, not [to] get easily frustrated* (S1, P4, Int.4, L810-812). *You would need the patience to take them through the steps, again and again, and again until they get to point B* (S2, P2, Int.2, L606-608). *I can check myself and just breathe and be patient. So, I have that ability* (S3, P5, Int.5, L852-853).

In addition, one of the teachers from School 3 seemed able to demonstrate care through her appreciation of learner inputs: *I also like to let them give their opinions and let them vote for something silly like, for example, do you wanna* [sic] *do this sheet now or this sheet later. Then I get them [to give] their opinions because it's important that they know that their opinions are valued* (S3, P6, Int.6, L915-918).

With regard to protecting learners with dyslexia against bullying or labelling, participating teachers from School 1 and School 2 reported as follows*: I try and keep a peaceful [atmosphere] in the class. It doesn't always work because they do sometimes get [angry]. Some of them didn't take their medication* (S1, P4, Int.4, L44-456). *We gently [tried to] stop it. You know this is not right, we don't do this. We are all here to learn this* (S2, P2, Int.2, L274-275).

Teachers seemed to demonstrate care and support when they attempted to build a healthy and professional relationship with the learners: *I wouldn't know if it's a good characteristic to have but I'm a friendly face for them. They're not too scared to ask me for help* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1075-1076). *That you [and the other] kids, in general, see them as equal. They're not just regarded as a broken person. That they've got substance, that they've got something* (S3, P6, Int.6, L893-896). Overall, participating teachers from all three schools seemed to support and motivate learners with dyslexia to excel in their school work as they have high expectations of these learners: *High expectations, I try. I don't have too many high expectations of those children because I feel like I've got a very challenging class this year. I try and just reach that level not too far beyond* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1152-1154). *I'm probably not as forgiving as I could be but it's because I have such high expectations, and I put so much in, and I am so prepared* (S2, P1, Int.1, L582-584). *I do have high expectations. I expect the best from them and I have high expectations upon myself as well* (S3, P5, Int.5, L884-886). *So, I'll push, and I'll push, and I'll push so that he can become the best version [of himself]* (S3, P6, Int.6, L890-891).

Category 2: Fairness and Respect

The second category is concerned with the participating teachers demonstrating fairness and respect towards learners with dyslexia. The demonstrated characteristics include aspects such as social justice and equality for all learners, being sensitive to learners' needs and feelings, and accepting and respecting learners. The following extracts from the participating teachers' interviews seemed to indicate the teachers' ability to demonstrate social justice and equality for all learners, including the learner with dyslexia: *Fairness, because of the black and white. I [have had] it before that a black child said to me, "But*

you're unfair." So, … I said, "It doesn't matter to me if you're green or yellow." It's fairness (S1, P3, Int.3, L682-688). *I do think I'm fair. I think I treat them all equally. They get praised equally, they get reprimanded equally* (S3, P5, Int.5, L872-873). *I treat him fairly as everybody else, and I don't wanna* [sic] *discriminate* (S3, P6, Int.6, L220-221).

Moreover, participating teachers from all three schools seemingly demonstrated the ability to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of learners with dyslexia: *I feel it's harsh to say to a child, "You know, you're dyslexic." I sometimes feel they don't really understand what it means* (S1, P4, Int.4, L404-405). *I do try to [be as] fair as possible and give the kids the support that they need* (S2, P1, Int.1, L557-558). *I think it makes me aware that every child isn't the standard, in-the-box type of kid. We all have various underlying factors and contributing factors, and you cannot just take them at face value. … You cannot just accept that this child is the same as the one that sits next to him. And you need to do something about it. You need to assist in some sort of formidable way* (S3, P6, Int.6, L839-845).

Participating teachers from all three schools seemed to regard respect as a fundamental aspect in displaying fairness: *You need to respect your colleagues; you need to respect the children or else it will go down the drain* (S1, P3, Int.3, L702-703). *I would interpret respect meaning respect towards the children in my class. … I do have respect for them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1121-1122). *Respect, for me, is a big, big, big thing* (S2, P2, Int.2, L636-637). *There is definitely respect 'cause I like to teach my kids that, you know, I have respect for them, so they in return have respect for me* (S3, P6, Int.6, L910-912).

To demonstrate respect towards learners with dyslexia and to establish a relationship with these learners, participating teachers apparently considered the following aspects as significant:

- Accept the learners for who they are: *I feel as they accept me for who I am, and I accept them for who they are. So, it's a two-way street there* (S3, P5, Int.5, L881-882). *I'm sympathetic towards all my children 'cause all my children have some form of 'a something'. And no one is a perfectly unique child, but they are all perfect and unique in their own special ways and, you know, we help them in his own way and we get him to where he needs to be* (S3, P6, Int.6, L217-220).
- Retain personal touch: *Personal touch, yes, it's like in my class and with my work and what I do, every day* (S1, P3, Int.3, L706-707). *I used to think that I have my own personal touch with everything because that's what makes me, me and what makes them, them. So, it will come through* (S3, P6, Int.6, L924-926).

- Maintain a sense of belonging both to themselves and the learner: *Sense of belonging … because I feel I belong here. It's my passion. That's why I want to come to school every day* (S1, P3, Int.3, L714-716). *A sense of belonging, feeling like I am in the right place where I should be* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1127-1128). *Sense of belonging, I'm assuming that's making them feel that it's important for them to be there and that I make them feel worthy* (S3, P6, Int.6, L926-928).
- Retain mutual trust: *So, you develop that sense of trust with them because if you're fair, they will trust you and that's important* (S3, P5, Int.5, L914-915).
- Express forgiveness: *Forgiving absolutely* (S3, P5, Int.5, L880). *Forgiving; they know if I lose it, it's gone, it's forgotten. … I think you need to show your children that you are forgiving because then it teaches them that in return too* (S3, P6, Int.6, L915-924).
- Demonstrate a sense of humour: *You need to have a sense of humour but sometimes they won't pick it up* (S1, P3, Int.3, L692-694). *I'm a clown. … I've been known to take on different personas and voices with the kids. It's like a [make-believe] personality that's there, and they relate to it* (S2, P2, Int.2, L309-314). *Sense of humour, I do have sometimes. Sometimes I have a sense of humour failure as well* (S3, P5, Int.5, L874-875).

Category 3: Positive attitude

This category refers to participating teachers maintaining a positive attitude in their teaching practice. Teachers with a positive attitude demonstrate optimism, a high self-esteem, perseverance, and passion towards teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Participating teachers from School 1 and School 3 seemingly demonstrated high self-esteem and optimism as evident in the following verbatim quotations: *I'm a very positive person. I'm really, I don't see the negative side* (S1, P3, Int.3, L139-140). *So, each year, it's like you gain a bit more confidence in helping them but it's never the same* (S1, P4, Int.4, L202-203). *You have to be positive* (S3, P5, Int.5, L171). *I think definitely [I have] a positive attitude* (S3, P6, Int.6, L910).

Participating teachers also regard passion and perseverance as key factors contributing towards a positive attitude: *It's my passion to come to school. I can't wait to come to school* (S1, P3, Int.3, L122-124). *But you have to sort of have a love for [teaching] to help these children that battle. So, some sense of a love for helping them even though they struggle* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1052-1054). *I think you need to want to do what you're doing. I'm very passionate at what I do* (S2, P2, Int.2, L609-610). *I think you have to persevere because it's difficult, it's hard going. It's not easy* (S3, P5, Int.5, L212-214). *Sounds so cliché but,*

you know, loving. I'd like to think that there's the sense of loving; that you haven't given up (S3, P6, Int.6, L891-893).

Category 4: Reflective mind and life-long learners

This category refers to participating teachers demonstrating a reflective practice in terms of being open-minded and receptive to new information, responsible and dedicated, and willing to admit mistakes. Teachers from all three schools seemingly identified open-mindedness and being receptive to new information as reflected in the following verbatim extracts: *Often, I try and read up on the internet more things to help in class with the dyslexic children* [sic]*. So, I often see I'm on track with the things I'm doing* (S1, P4, Int.4, L635-637). *They need to be open to learning, to getting new knowledge and implementing that in class. They can't be afraid to try new things* (S2, P1, Int.1, L546-548). *It always helps to be knowledgeable. The more you learn, the better you [understand], the better you'll be able to assist* (S2, P2, Int.2, L608-610). *I try and find different techniques and methods* (S3, P5, Int.5, L162). *I'm pretty content with my knowledge that I'm now receiving from the course that I'm doing* (S3, P6, Int.6, L701-703).

Participating teachers from School 2 and School 3 also seemed to demonstrate their ability to be aware of their own teaching practices, and to reflect on the benefits of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia within an ordinary school environment: *Working with kids has given me a broader perspective on life* (S2, P2, Int.2, L616). *I think it's made me a lot more patient with the child in that you realise that the child has got this barrier, and it needs to be addressed, and therefore, you tend to take more time out for that child* (S2, P2, Int.2, L162-164). *It makes me think of [how I can] teach something differently. … How can I tackle something in a different sort of fashion* (S3, P5, Int.5, L163-166). *I think what I learn now, I'm a [much] better teacher than what I was … I think now, I'm a lot more open to seeing certain [tell-tale] signs, and a lot more sensitive to what they could possibly be going through, and a lot more open to doing certain activities that could suggest that type of diagnosis* (S3, P6, Int.6, L584-589).

Moreover, participating teachers seemed to regard the ability to be responsible and dedicated as part of their reflective practice: *And then, I think there needs to be dedication because you need to help. You need to be dedicated to help, and you need to be dedicated to find these help* [sic]*, and you need to be dedicated to getting them in the best possible way that they can be* (S3, P6, Int.6, L874-876).

Being aware of their own teaching, participating teachers seemingly identified the ability and willingness to admit mistakes: *I won't try and challenge them on [the mistake]* (S1, P4,

Int.4, L1151-1152). *I often say to the kids, "Sorry, I made a mistake here"* (S2, P1, Int.1, L576-577). *Willingness to admit mistakes, yes. And if I don't admit [it to] them, they make sure [I know]. They point it out to me* (S3, P5, Int.5, L882-884). *I always admit when I've made a mistake, and I have to show them I've made mistakes because we are all human. So, it allows them the opportunity to see that mistakes are normal* (S3, P6, Int.6, L920-924).

On a question posed in the participating teachers' reflective journals regarding the use of teacher strengths to the advantage of the learner with dyslexia, one of the participating teachers reflected on her personal attributes as follows:

I believe I'm very caring. I have a lot of compassion for my children. I have high expectations for them so I, therefore, motivate them a lot. I create a warm and loving space where they can feel free to explore, learn and make mistakes. I feel I need to lead by example. Thus, I need to always be well prepared, respectful, fair, loving and genuine. I hope that this will show all learners a sense of belonging and equality.

(Reflective Journal, Participant 6)

In summary of this subtheme, participating teachers from all three schools seemed to demonstrate teacher attributes contributing to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia. The second subtheme concerns teachers' coping resources and strategies.

5.2.4.2 Subtheme 4.2: Teachers' coping resources and strategies

This subtheme relates to teachers' coping resources and applied palliative coping strategies to decrease the feeling of stress that might occur. The three categories in this subtheme refer to the participating teachers' physical activities, social support strategies, and meditation or relaxation strategies.

Category 1: Physical activities

This category refers to participating teachers' physical activities in terms of hobbies and low-level exercise to decrease feelings of stress. The participating teachers from all three schools seemingly partook in various physical activities ranging from low-level exercise to adrenalin seeking adventures: *Gardening and baking, and walking … and braai* (S1, P3, Int.3, L869-871). *I try and exercise, go for walks, do the Parkrun* (S2, P1, Int.1, L719). *Cooking. I would get into the kitchen and put on my music, and dance myself crazy* (S2, P2, Int.2, L732-733). *I do training with my dogs. Dogs and cats* (S3, P5, Int.5, L1062-1064). *But I scuba dive. I enjoy adventure stuff. So, I'm jumping out of planes, and skydiving and anything adrenalin seeking is my type of avenue* (S3, P6, Int.6, L1051-1053).

Category 2: Social support

This category concerns participating teachers' social support structures in terms of emotion-focused social support strategies and problem-focused social support strategies (Antoniou et al., 2009). As evident from the following verbatim quotations, the participating teachers seemingly relied on their spouse, family, and friends for social support: *I've got my family. I have grandchildren ... and I take them to Papachino's [restaurant] just to play there and to make a pizza* (S1, P3, Int.3, L861-863). *I'll go out with my friends. I still love to go out and have a party. Definitely, I'm social; spend time with my family* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1359-1360). *I find that my family life is constructive and so after school, it's [a great] stress relief* (S2, P2, Int.2, L647-648). Furthermore, teachers from School 2 and School 3 also apparently trusted their spouse and family for problem-focused support: *My husband's a teacher as well. So, he's a good soundboard for me* (S2, P2, Int.2, L650-651). *My support structure is mainly like my home, my family, and my boyfriend in that regard. So, they hear out whatever situation it is; my ideas and what I want to do, what I should be doing* (S3, P6, Int.6, L1035-1037).

Category 3: Meditation and relaxation

This category relates to participating teachers monitoring their stress levels in terms of personal reflection through meditation or relaxation activities after school hours. Teachers from School 2 and School 3 were seemingly involved in activities such as reading, writing, and meditation to lower their stress levels: *I try … to read a little bit. I do a lot of writing* (S2, P1, Int.1, L719-720). *I love reading anything that I can get my hands on. … Reading is good for me. I'm not so much of a TV person* (S2, P2, Int.2, L740-742). *Meditation. I meditate. Yeah, that's my time* (S3, P5, Int.5, L1049).

In this subtheme, the participating teachers seemed able to demonstrate palliative coping strategies to alleviate teacher stress. The third subtheme concerns the role of a supportive school environment in reducing teachers' stress levels.

5.2.4.3 Subtheme 4.3: Supportive school environment

This subtheme relates to the role of the school environment in providing support and assistance to participating teachers to decrease teacher stress related to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. The three categories in this subtheme concern the assets and resources available to the teacher both in the classroom and in the school. The second category further relates to the school's strategies to support the teachers in managing their work-related stress, and the third category refers to assets and resources available in the community to support the teacher and learners with dyslexia.

Category 1: Classroom assets and resources

This category is concerned with the availability and accessibility of teaching and learning materials in the classroom. In terms of technical teaching devices such as a computer, visualiser, television, and smart board, the participating teachers seemed to be privileged with the availability of these teaching resources: *You can show them video clips. We've got a TV … that we share. ... And the overhead projectors, and everything. … Not in every class but you need to [book it]* (S1, P3, Int.3, L737-742). *We used to have a library but not anymore because we've got internet and stuff and we can download here at school* (S1, P3, Int.3, L777-778). *I have like a projector visualiser I also try and use in the classroom to help them* (S1, P4, Int.4, L645). *The computer is also available for me. If I want to go do research, I've got internet access at school. In fact, the kids [also have] internet access at school* (S2, P1, Int.1, L605-607). *We use the smartboard as one of the resources* (S2, P2, Int.2, L659). *We have a computer centre for them and they are welcome to go anytime and do research. … With that, the internet connection [is] very strictly monitored* (S3, P5, Int.5, L962-970).

Furthermore, the participating teachers seemingly identified other teaching and learning resources in their classrooms which is evident in the following verbatim extracts: *We've got the posters* (S1, P3, Int.3, L737). *I've got numbered counters that are printed on a chart. I've got the alphabet up in the class for letters. We do have dictionaries* (S1, P4, Int.4, L859-864). *We're not overcrowded, the kids [have their own] books, their personal space on the desks. I've got a PowerPoint where I can play video's and put the screen on if I want that. I can use the original chalkboard if that's what I wanted. We've got the dictionaries, the readers, the textbooks, the study guides; we have all of that available to us. So, I think that we are quite privileged at the school with what we have. With whatever resource that we want we've got* (S2, P1, Int.1, L598-605). *We've got charts, we've got books, we've got readers, we've got, I think everything. We're a well to do school, and we're able to support the learner quite well in that way* (S2, P2, Int.2, L659-662). *We have textbooks. I have a lot of teacher resource books* (S3, P5, Int.5, L838-839). With regard to learning material, teachers from all three schools seemed to use learner workbooks provided by the Department of Basic Education: *They give us the … Departmental books that we need to work in* (S1, P3, Int.3, L795-796). *The Department wants to see that you are using their books even though we are an LSEN school* (S1, P3, Int.3, L809-811). *We use a combination of the textbook, the study guide, and their DBE. … Every learner has been issued with a DBE book that they get from Grade 1 to Grade 7 in English, Afrikaans, and Maths. And the Department requires that we use it* (S2, P1, Int.1, L309-312). *I [draw] from a lot of resources. … I don't use the [DBE] book as such, but a lot of the ideas for writing*

exercises are brilliant for my children because it is very guided and structured. So, I use that as a sort of springboard for me and my class (S3, P5, Int.5, L1025-1028).

Category 2: School's assets and resources,

This category refers to the school's assets and resources, and coping strategies available to participating teachers to alleviate work-related stress related to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. In the subcategories, I discuss aspects such as teacher development, collaborative colleagues and other role players, positive atmosphere and social support, and the role of the SGB in providing financial support to the teacher and the school.

Teacher development

This subcategory concerns teacher development in terms of in-service training to assist teachers to manage the challenges of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. As evident from their verbatim transcripts, the participating teachers seemed able to identify the school's support to teachers in terms of in-service training provided by the School-Based Support Team as well as training provided by independent service providers in the community: *And at our school, usually what they do is, they get someone in that's got the background or the power muscle in that field. So, usually in our school, they will get people in and we need to attend* (S1, P3, Int.3, L377-381). *When I started working here, I then went on a few courses about dyslexia. But I haven't studied anything further* (S1, P4, Int.4, L718-720). *Our school does School-Based Support Team training four times a year. That's compulsory for all staff members* (S2, P1, Int.1, L403-404). *Look, we have attended a course [on dyslexia] a couple of years ago, just to give us a basis, an understanding of what we're dealing with, with the children. … It was a psychologist, an educational psychologist, who came through in school to do [the course]* (S2, P2, Int.2, L137-144). *But here, we have an occupational therapist, remedial therapist, and a [speech therapist]. They give us workshops once a term* (S3, P5, Int.5, L542-543).

Apparently, participating teachers from School 1 and School 2 were also invited to attend courses and workshops provided by teacher unions in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education: *But like the past Saturday, NAPTOSA, the teachers' union, they've arranged here at school different settings and you can choose where you want to go to. … We need to go to that constantly. … You need to give a good reason why you cannot attend such things but it's regularly* (S1, P3, Int.3, L387-397). *Some of them are from NAPTOSA. The Department held [the training] at JCE and Wits. And then others are like independent institutions that [are sent] through and advertised. So, it's from a variety* (S2,

P1, Int.1, L414-416). *We've attended several [union] courses on the teaching of reading and writing in the [Intermediate and Senior] Phase* (S2, P2, Int.2, L471-472).

Furthermore, participating teachers from School 3 were seemingly informed of courses and workshops held by independent service providers of which the teachers then could choose to attend: *When they hold workshops and meetings, we are informed of them. … We do get fliers and pamphlets of workshops being held at Japari and Bellavista and those kinds of schools* (S3, P5, Int.5, L1003-1006). *There are workshops, if I'm not mistaken, for the CPTD-points* (S3, P6, Int.6, L661).

Collaborative colleagues / role players

This subcategory relates to a positive atmosphere and social support provided by colleagues and other role players in the school environment working collaborative in a team to assist and support participating teachers who need professional and/or social support to cope with the challenges of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. It seems that the participating teachers from all three schools could depend on their colleagues, management support structures and health practitioners for support as is evident in their verbatim quotations: *We have a meeting once a week, the whole Phase. And then we have the class discussion once a week where you discuss [any] problems. Then you get the help from somebody or they will get outside help or resources* (S1, P3, Int.3, L767-771). *So, colleagues wise … it's good. We have a good system. We work together … sort of share information to try and do things, or we'll even discuss how to change an assessment, taking into consideration dyslexic children* [sic] (S1, P4, Int.4, L942-945). *My HOD of Guidance is the one who deals with retentions and the Department and concessions and learners with special needs. So, I can go to her and ask her, and then, if she doesn't know, she can find out* (S2, P1, Int.1, L454-456). *The colleagues, HOD, SBST, I think we work like a team. … The four of us, we tend to bounce things off of each other, so we work pretty closely* (S2, P2, Int.2, L545-548). *My colleagues are very supportive. … They are supportive and my principal and HOD, they will guide and support me as much as they can* (S3, P5, Int.5, L798-800). *We do have a great support system with the staff, you know, that we [bounce ideas off of]. We do in our solution-focused session, we need to stop; [take a step] back and remove ourselves from the situation and just look at [the positives] and not just dwell on the negative. Because, usually when there's a problem, you just zone in on all the negatives and forget any positive that may be around. So, we do that. When we need the guidance, we do have the management that we can go to* (S3, P6, Int.6, L1018-1025).

Participating teachers also reported that the schools' management teams seemingly provided some coping strategies to support them which is evident in the following verbatim extracts: *I think if I had to have, let's say, some sort of stressful issues and I need a few days off, they would support that. … I think in that sense they would understand* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1324-1327). The seemingly applied positive psychology at School 3 is equally important to support teachers when encountering work-related stress: *A lot of this [solution-focused outlook] has helped me to remember that I'm not here to fix it, you know. I'm here to assist along the way, and we take whatever situation it is, and you make it your positive* (S3, P6, Int.6, L855-858). Furthermore, participating teachers from School 1 reported that they have a care group that looks after the teachers' general well-being: *And then we have this care group. What we do is, say once a month, 'X' will organise some soup and some bread or whatever for us in the class and it is a surprise. … And if there's a birthday, we will make it special. And if [we've received] sad news, they also will make it special for you. Or we will go out for coffee. So, it's this caring* (S1, P3, Int.3, L836-847). *We do try and have days where we get together. … We will go somewhere together as a team just to unwind a bit and relax. But we don't do it often, obviously because there are a lot more demands at school. But once a term we try and do something together or … we'll get all the teachers together or maybe just have cake and tea* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1327-1333).

It appears as if the participating teachers also valued independent service providers as part of their support structure: *We have a counsellor here* (S1, P3, Int.3, L836). *I have got therapists, a speech therapist and an occupational therapist that do offer to take children in smaller groups out of the class to complete schoolwork in smaller groups* (S1, P4, Int.4, L743-745). *And then also we have therapists at school which I can also [ask for assistance]. We have a remedial therapist, a speech therapist and an OT. So, between the three of them and my HOD, I could ask any one of them for assistance* (S2, P1, Int.1, L456-459). *I have a remedial lady that comes in twice a week that does a group session with [the learners] which helps tremendously* (S3, P5, Int.5, L410-412). *We have therapists as well that are available to us. So, I do run, and I ask them, "Can they please guide me, how do I tackle this problem?"* (S3, P5, Int.5, L502-506).

Additionally, teachers from School 2 reported on the benefits of having a teacher assistant to assist them with general duties in the classroom: *We started out very slowly with [just those in] Grade 4 and then we got another one, and then the school decided that it is something that they want to implement as a pilot program to see [if it is] going to help alleviate the huge numbers in the class, the teacher's stress, the management, the dealing with kids* (S2, P1, Int.1, L690-694). *I have a learnership with me four days out of five. If*

I'm busy with the class she would then be assisting the learners who are in need of support, or if I'm busy with learner support, she is supervising that the rest of the class work is taking place the way it ought to (S2, P2, Int.2, L327-331).

Financial support/role of SGB

This subcategory refers to the role of the SGB in providing financial support to the school and the teachers. It seems that schools provided the financial needs to the participating teachers with regard to purchasing stationery and teaching aids: *So, if I needed or wanted something even if it's something simple like I need colours or coloured paper, or I need to make these things creative for the children, then there is no restriction. … If I need coloured charts with things on it or something, it just depends if there's a restriction in money* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1242-1250). Participating teachers from School 2 also seemingly identified the school's financial support in terms of paying the expense of in-service training on behalf of the teachers attending courses and workshops: *The school pays for [courses and workshops]* (S2, P1, Int.1, L449). In addition, the School Governing Bodies of School 1 and School 2 seemingly supported the schools financially with regard to employing additional teachers and teacher assistants. This is evident by the following verbatim quotations: *But should we need extra and the Department don't have a post, the Governing Body will bring them in and they will then pay their salary* (S1, P4, Int.4, L1308-1309). *I would definitely say our school's learnership program because we have one in every class in Foundation Phase, and we have one for English and Maths teachers in the Senior Phase … Yeah, they receive a tiny little salary [from the SGB]* (S2, P1, Int.1, L642-674).

Category 3: Community assets and resources

This category concerns assets and resources provided by the community to support teachers and learners with dyslexia. Participating teachers from all three schools reported that they were seemingly privileged to collaborate with a multidisciplinary team comprising of professionals within the community: *We have the therapists, the OT's, the speech therapist. We've got the psychologist here. We've got the counsellors* (S1, P3, Int.3, L466-467). *We have remedial staff on the premises available to us for any questions [including] a speech, remedial and occupational therapist* (S2, P1, QPI 13). *But here, we have an occupational therapist, remedial therapist, and a [speech therapist]* (S3, P5, Int.5, L542-543).

Participating teachers from School 3 also seemed to consider after-school care and transport services available to the school as assets provided by the community: *There are aftercare centres around us and they do have their own taxi's, independent of us. We don't*

provide any services as such but there are aftercare centres close by. There are taxi services, yeah. So, we do have that (S3, P5, Int.5, L976-978).

In summary of the fourth theme, teachers seemed able to identify not only personal assets, resources, and strategies but also school and community assets and resources to assist them with the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia.

5.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I presented the results of the study in terms of four themes consisting of each theme's relevant subthemes, categories, and subcategories. In the final chapter, I present the findings of the study, and relate the results to the existing literature and working assumptions. Finally, I discuss the challenges and limitations of the study and conclude the chapter with recommendations for further research, practice, and training.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I presented the results of the study in terms of four themes; that is teachers' attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia, teachers' approaches to teach and support learners with dyslexia, teachers' challenges regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia, and teachers' assets, resources and strategies in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. These themes were discussed with regard to each theme's relevant subthemes, categories, and subcategories. I interpreted the identified themes and subthemes with the aim of gaining a deep understanding about teachers' world-life experiences in terms of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia in their classrooms.

This is the concluding chapter and aims at elaborating on the identified themes by connecting them to the multiple case study approach and the research questions posed in Chapter 1. I also present the research findings in relation to the relevant literature as discussed in the literature review presented in Chapter 2. Furthermore, I discuss the contributions and limitations of the study and conclude with recommendations for further research, practice, and training.

6.2 LITERATURE CONTROL

To substantiate my findings and to answer the present study's research questions, I consulted a broad range of existing literature[19] to identify similarities, contradictions, and silences in the current literature. Figure 6.1 provides an outline of the themes and how these assisted me in answering the research questions.

[19] Refer to Appendix A1 for an analysis of international and national resources.

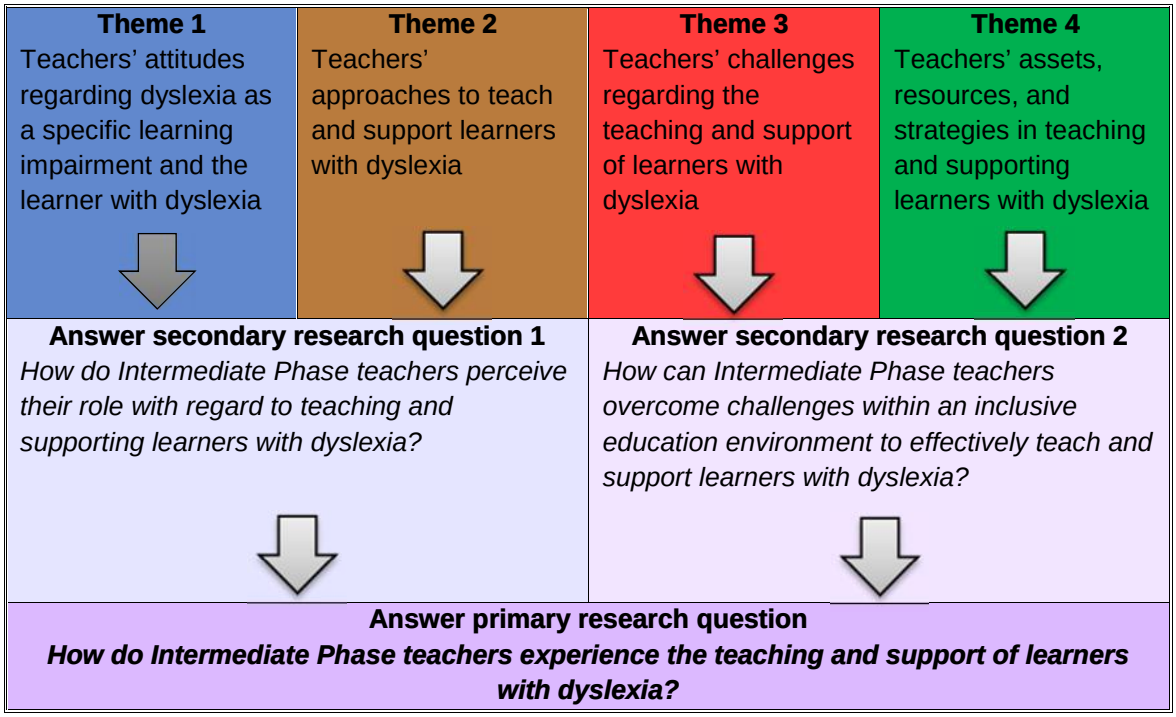


Figure 6.1: Outline of research themes and related research questions

In the following sections, I comment on the research findings connecting them to the relevant existing literature and answering the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

6.3 ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study was to provide a rich, in-depth description of Intermediate Phase teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. In establishing a research partnership with the selected teacher-participants, I was not only able to examine the extent of how teachers perceive their role with regard to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia but also to develop a better understanding of how they overcome challenges within an inclusive education environment to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia in their classrooms.

In this section, I revisit the secondary research questions before addressing the primary research question, that is: *How do Intermediate Phase teachers experience the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia?*

6.3.1 Secondary Question 1: How do Intermediate Phase Teachers Perceive their Role with Regard to Teaching and Supporting Learners with Dyslexia?

With respect to determining the participating teachers' perception of their role in the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia, I positioned the results of Theme 1 and Theme 2 within existing literature to present the findings and to answer the first secondary question.

6.3.1.1 Findings related to teachers' attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia

The results from Theme 1 were mostly supported by the current literature, with some evidence of contradictions as captured in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Theme 1 positioned within existing literature

THEME 1 **TEACHERS' ATTITUDES REGARDING DYSLEXIA AS A SPECIFIC LEARNING IMPAIRMENT AND THE LEARNER WITH DYSLEXIA**		
Correlating Findings		
Subtheme 1.1: Teachers' cognitive attitude regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia		
Category 1: Teachers' general knowledge and misconceptions		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers interpret dyslexia as a language-related learning difficulty as the learner experiences difficulty with the acquisition of spelling, reading, comprehension, and writing. Teachers also concur that learners with dyslexia process information in a different way.	Existing literature concurs that dyslexia can be described as a language-based learning impairment which results in individuals experiencing difficulties with language skills such as reading, spelling, writing, and pronouncing words. Learners also experience mathematical problems (Davis & Braun, 2010; International Dyslexia Association, 2012). Dyslexia is a processing difference affecting reading, writing, and spelling (Reid, 2011).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to demonstrate a relatively fair understanding of dyslexia as being a specific learning impairment.
Teachers elaborated on the cause of dyslexia, describing it as a neurological inborn barrier and that genetics play a role.	Existing literature indicates that dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin (Mather & Wendling, 2012). Dyslexia has a biological basis and is caused by a disruption in the neural circuits in the brain (Lerner & Johns, 2012; Shaywitz, 2003).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to demonstrate knowledge with regard to the cause of dyslexia.
Special needs education teachers from the LSN school described the types of dyslexia as dyseidesia which implies visual difficulties and dysphonesia which imply auditory difficulties.	Existing literature classifies dyslexia into three main types: dyseidesia, dysphonesia and dysnemkinesia (Red Apple Dyslexia Association, 2016).	Special needs education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to demonstrate knowledge on the different types of dyslexia.
Teachers identified poor spelling and reading skills, difficulty in language processing and a slow	Typical characteristics such as slow reading, poor decoding skills, as well as poor spelling are noticeable in the Intermediate Phase	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to have the necessary knowledge to be

working pace as characteristics of dyslexia. They reported that the learners do not know their vowel sounds or the alphabet, and they do not have the ability to differentiate between different sounds. Teachers also identified ADHD, a low self-esteem, and anxiety as comorbidities of dyslexia.	(Bornman & Rose, 2010). There will also be sound confusion and auditory discrimination difficulties. Learners with phonological difficulties will also experience a difficulty with rhyming (Reid, 2011). In addition, learners with dyslexia will take longer to assimilate new information to the point of mastery (Reid, 2011). Equally important is the fact that learners with dyslexia face issues such as low self-esteem and anxiety (Berninger, 2000). Learners with dyslexia may also have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (Pennington, 2003).	able to identify certain obvious characteristics and comorbidities of dyslexia.
Teachers had certain misconceptions with regard to dyslexia as they explained that letter and word reversals are predictors of dyslexia. They further described the reading process as 'words jumping around on the page' for individuals with dyslexia	Existing studies find that one of the biggest misconceptions among teachers concerning dyslexia is that learners with dyslexia 'see' letters and words backward and, in turn, write using reversals. Moreover, words do not 'jump around on the page' for individuals with dyslexia as dyslexia is a language-based problem associated with auditory processing and memory, rather than a visual problem (Allen, 2010; Ashburn & Snow, 2011; Jusufi, 2014; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Washburn et al., 2014; Williams & Lynch, 2010).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to have certain misconceptions regarding dyslexia.
Category 2: Teachers' beliefs and perceptions		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers perceived the learner with dyslexia as being a bit different to the mainstream learner. They believed that the learner with dyslexia displays a lot of potential and has a different way of thinking.	Existing literature concurs that many individuals with dyslexia excel in other facets of life. (Lerner & Johns, 2012; Shaywitz, 2003).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to perceive the learner with dyslexia as being different to the mainstream learner, but still with the potential to excel and be successful in life.
Ignorance regarding dyslexia led to teachers perceiving the learner as being naughty, lazy, not listening or not doing their work. Teachers concurred that a diagnosis of dyslexia, teacher awareness regarding dyslexia and	Existing literature indicates that ignorance regarding dyslexia is concerning as misconceptions and prejudice towards dyslexia have evolved from the perception that people with dyslexia are lazy or stupid, or that it is just an excuse for parents as to why their children fail in literacy skills (Hall, 2009; Ho,	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia may show some ignorance regarding dyslexia which could result in teachers labelling learners with dyslexia according to their behaviour in the classroom. However, a diagnosis of dyslexia, teacher

understanding the learner with dyslexia could positively change these beliefs.	2004). When dealing with learners with learning difficulties, it is easy to label the learner solely in terms of their behaviour, and teachers' attitudes towards them then develop accordingly (Plevin, n.d.). Furthermore, existing research states that teachers might have better approaches towards learners with dyslexia and would be able to better address the needs of learners with dyslexia and assist them to learn optimally if they are aware of and understand the nature and characteristics of dyslexia and its manifestation (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Gordon, 2013; Jusufi, 2014; Williams & Lynch, 2010).	awareness regarding dyslexia and understanding the learner with dyslexia might change these perceptions.
Sometimes, teachers perceived the behaviour from the learner with dyslexia as disruptive. However, general education teachers from the ordinary public school did not experience any behavioural problems with the learner with dyslexia.	Existing literature with regard to the characteristics of dyslexia implies that learners with dyslexia show signs of frustration, withdrawal, depression or bullying behaviour and may become too quiet, the class clown or a trouble-maker (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Davis, 1992; Williams & Lynch, 2010).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia may perceive the behaviour of the learner with dyslexia as either disruptive or quiet and withdrawn.
Special needs education teachers from the LSEN school believed that learners with dyslexia cannot be successful in ordinary schools since they were referred to an LSEN school. However, general education teachers from the ordinary schools argued that learners with dyslexia could be successful in an ordinary school provided that the learner receives the necessary intervention and support.	Existing research indicates that learners with dyslexia can learn to adapt to their impairment and be successful in school and through their lives (Allen, 2010; Shaywitz, 2003; Snowling, 2013).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to have different opinions with regard to the learner with dyslexia being successful in an ordinary school setting.
Subtheme 1.2: Teachers' emotive attitude regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia		
Category 1: Teachers' emotions		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers felt sympathy towards the learner with dyslexia and wanted to help them. They also admired	Existing literature finds that teachers with a positive attitude towards learners with learning difficulties look for solutions rather	Teachers with positive feelings towards the learner with dyslexia are likely to have a better understanding and

the learner's determination and work ethics.	than being on the lookout for problems in the classroom. They communicate that they are there to help learners rather than find fault with them (Plevin, n.d.).	positive expectations of the learner with dyslexia.
Teachers shared negative emotions such as frustration, guilt and emotional exhaustion as well as feelings of being inadequate to teach the learner with dyslexia.	Existing studies indicate that teachers often had feelings of exhaustion, frustration, disappointment, helplessness, inadequacy and a sense of failure (Gordon, 2013; Kendall, 2008).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are also likely to experience negative emotions with regard to teaching learners with dyslexia.
General education teachers from ordinary schools were more objective and apathetic with regard to their feeling towards the learner with dyslexia.	Teacher apathy towards the acknowledgement of dyslexia as a 'real disability' is one of the many reasons why general education teachers lack awareness concerning the identification and management of dyslexia. Teachers need to know what it feels like to have dyslexia to be able to empathise and support the learner with dyslexia (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005).	General education teachers may experience a lack of empathy towards the learner with dyslexia and are likely to be more objective regarding their feelings in terms of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.
Category 2: Teachers' concerns		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Special needs education teachers from the LSEN school expressed their concerns regarding the learner with dyslexia not being able to keep up with the work pace in the higher grades.	Existing literature indicates that not all teachers are sufficiently aware of the implications of dyslexia. It is, therefore, important that teachers need to know the learning profile of the learner and the further implications of dyslexia (Hall, 2009; Ofsted, 1999).	Special needs education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia may be concerned about learners with dyslexia's ability to cope with work pace in the higher grades.
General education teachers from ordinary schools expressed their concerns of doing justice to the learner with dyslexia.	Existing studies concur that teachers believe that they are unprepared to support learners with diverse educational needs (P. Engelbrecht et al., 2003; Riehl, 2008; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Moreover, teachers do not rate themselves as knowledgeable to teach and support learners with dyslexia and feel uncertain with regard to their effectiveness in teaching learners with dyslexia (De Boer et al., 2010; Sicherer, 2014).	General education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be concerned about and question their ability to teach and support the learner with dyslexia.
Teachers had concerns regarding the increasingly suspected or diagnosed cases of learners with dyslexia.	Existing literature indicates that learners with mild to moderate barriers to learning are included in ordinary schools (Engelbrecht, 2013a). The National Institute of	As they become more aware of dyslexia as a specific learning impairment, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with

	Health (NIH) in the USA has found that dyslexia affects 20% of learners, affects boys and girls equally, and is the leading cause of reading failure and early school dropout (International Dyslexia Association, 2012; Stark, 2015).	dyslexia are likely to be concerned about the increasing number of learners being diagnosed with dyslexia.
Subtheme 1.3: Teachers' behavioural attitude (actions) regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers addressed the emotional needs of the learner with dyslexia through nurturing and attending to the needs of the learner by providing additional support in the classroom.	Existing literature finds that when teachers understand the nature and characteristics of dyslexia, they are better able to address the needs of learners with dyslexia and assist them to learn optimally (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Williams & Lynch, 2010).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to address the emotional needs of the learner by providing additional support in the classroom.
Special needs education teachers from the LSEN school treated learners with dyslexia fairly and equally i.e. the same as they would treat other learners because all the learners have a form of learning impairment. General education teachers from the ordinary schools did not discriminate against the learner with dyslexia or have any special treatments.	Existing research evidence suggests that it is imperative to treat learners with dyslexia with equality and provide them with conditions that improve their learning during their school years (Jusufi, 2014)	Within an inclusive educational environment, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to treat learners with dyslexia fairly and equally i.e. the same as the other learners.
Teachers approached learners with dyslexia in a gentle manner through a lot of praise to boost their self-esteem and refocused and encouraged the learners without agitating them.	Teachers with a positive attitude have positive expectations. When problems do occur, the teacher seizes control of the situation and responds in a manner that conveys care, fairness and consideration (Plevin, n.d.).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to deal with the symptoms of dyslexia in a positive way, approaching the learner in a gentle, caring and encouraging manner.
Contradictions		
Subtheme 1.1: Teachers' cognitive attitude regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia		
Category 1: Teachers' general knowledge and misconceptions		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
The result of this study is in contradiction with current literature with regard to misunderstandings and misconceptions regarding dyslexia as a specific	Existing studies conclude that there are many misunderstandings and misconceptions about dyslexia in the educational setting. One such misconception is that learners with dyslexia have low intelligence	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to dispute certain misconceptions regarding dyslexia. A possible explanation for this

learning impairment. Teachers disputed the misconception of learners with dyslexia having low cognitive abilities and low intelligence as they could identify average and above average intelligence within the learner with dyslexia.	(Jusufi, 2014; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Washburn et al., 2014; Williams & Lynch, 2010).	contradiction could be related to general education teachers being encouraged to attend courses and in-service training.

6.3.1.2 Findings related to teachers' approaches to teaching and support learners with dyslexia

The results from Theme 2 were mostly supported by current literature, with some evidence of contradictions and silences as captured in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Theme 2 positioned within existing literature

THEME 2 **TEACHERS' APPROACHES TO TEACH AND SUPPORT LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA**		
Correlating Findings		
Subtheme 2.1: Lesson planning and organisation		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Most of the teachers were well organised and prepared in the planning and presenting of their lessons.	Existing literature affirms that preparedness and creativity contribute towards maintaining a positive attitude towards the teaching profession and are imperative to successful classroom instruction. Teachers with a positive attitude towards teaching still manage to display a sense of accomplishment (Engelbrecht, 2013b).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are mostly well prepared in the planning and presentation of their lessons.
Teachers were flexible and adaptable in their lesson planning.	Current research states that resilient teachers adapt and tolerate change when they expect change to happen. They display flexibility and consider different approaches, methodologies and strategies when teaching learners in the classroom (Banu, 2013; Bishop et al., 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013b; Kyriacou, 2001; University of Pretoria, 2010b).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be flexible and adaptable in their lesson planning.

Subtheme 2.2: General teaching methods and strategies		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Some teachers were aware of the learner with dyslexia being disorganised and confused and, therefore, preferred structure and routine when preparing and presenting their lessons.	Existing literature indicates that teachers with a linear teaching approach value procedure and routine (Engelbrecht, 2013b; Miller, 2011). Learners with dyslexia often have trouble knowing what to do next when performing daily tasks as they seem to be disorganised, pressured, slow and confused (Dunoon, 2015).	Some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to implement a linear teaching approach.
Teachers concurred that the learner with dyslexia needs rote learning and drilling in multiplication tables and spelling.	Existing research affirms that teachers could assist learners with dyslexia by providing more examples and activities and increasing the amount of repetition and review (Bell et al., 2011; Erkan et al., 2012; Lerner & Johns, 2012; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Pavey, 2007; E. Wadlington et al., 1996).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to support learners with dyslexia by means of rote learning and repetition.
Teachers acknowledged learners' different learning styles by using multi-sensory techniques based on aural, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic aspects to support the learner with dyslexia.	Existing research indicates that learners with dyslexia can learn to adapt to their impairment through consistent multisensory instruction (Allen, 2010; S. E. Shaywitz, 2003; Snowling, 2013).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to acknowledge that a multi-sensory approach based on aural, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic aspects is beneficial to the learner with dyslexia.
Some teachers concurred that teaching should be fun and interactive rather than lecturing.	Existing literature implies that a holistic approach to learning demands teacher awareness and knowledge in a wide variety of content to meet the diverse interests of learners. Teachers with a holistic approach to learning focus on the emotional, creative, and aesthetic components of learning, and assume that enjoyable experiences lead to learning (Miller, 2011).	Some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to prefer a holistic approach to learning as they value teaching and learning as being an interactive and enjoyable experience.
Teachers applied cooperative learning, group work and peer support as some of their teaching strategies.	Existing literature implies that when assigning a task, the teacher divides learners into separate groups according to their different levels	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to apply cooperative learning and group work as one of their teaching

	(Department of Education, 2011; Engelbrecht, 2013a). The tasks ought to be both relevant and manageable for learners with dyslexia and, therefore, these learners should not be settled in a low-ability group as they need ways of showing their knowledge (Pavey, 2007).	strategies to implement curriculum differentiation.
Teachers assumed that learners with dyslexia benefit from individual attention and, therefore, applied one-to-one or small group instruction as a teaching strategy to reinforce information and to provide step by step instruction to support these learners.	Current research indicates that teachers provide phonological instruction in a small group or one-to-one setting to better the outcomes for learner reading achievement (Allen, 2010; Hodkinson, 2006; Williams, 2012). Teachers support learners with dyslexia by introducing the work more slowly and adjust the pace of verbal instruction as well as offering frequent revision opportunities especially before a test (Bell et al., 2011; Erkan et al., 2012; Lerner & Johns, 2012; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Pavey, 2007; Wadlington et al., 1996).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to implement one-to-one or small group instruction as a teaching strategy to provide additional support to the learner with dyslexia.
Teachers differentiated lesson activities according to the learner's capabilities in order to support the learner with dyslexia.	Teachers should adapt their lessons based on learners' reading level, developmental levels, interests, backgrounds and learning profiles (Department of Education, 2011; Engelbrecht, 2013a; Gordon, 2013).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to adapt and differentiate their lesson activities to accommodate the diverse needs of the learner with dyslexia.
Teachers use repetition, colour, mind maps, self-discovery and a buddy system as teaching strategies in their planning and organising of lessons.	Existing literature indicates that teachers are aware that all learners need different strategies and interventions as they are unique with different abilities, skills and knowledge, socio-economic backgrounds and personalities (Department of Education, 2011; Kendall, 2008).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia consider the needs of the learner with dyslexia when presenting their lessons.
Teachers applied different techniques and methods to address the needs of the learner with dyslexia.	Existing literature maintains that the unique needs of learners should be considered when designing learning	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to vary their

	programmes and lessons (Engelbrecht, 2013b).	teaching strategies to address the needs of these learners.
Subtheme 2.3: Spelling and reading strategies		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers supported learners with dyslexia in their spelling by means of phonics, letter/picture and sound correspondence, word families, syllabification, word analysis, and sequencing activities to teach them decoding.	Existing research reveals that the implementation of a systematic, multisensory, sequential phonics-based program that explicitly focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, sound-symbol correspondence, word families, syllables, morphology, syntax, and semantics is the most efficient way to teach decoding to learners with dyslexia (Allen, 2010; Bell et al., 2011; Erkan et al., 2012; Lerner & Johns, 2012; Marchand-Martella et al., 2013; Pavey, 2007; Shaywitz et al., 2008; Wadlington et al., 1996).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to implement spelling strategies such as phonemic awareness, syllables and morphology to support them in decoding words.
Teachers followed repeated oral reading as a reading strategy to reinforce the learner with dyslexia's reading fluency.	Existing literature indicates that reading fluency was most effectively taught through guided, repeated oral reading (Marchand-Martella et al., 2013).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to implement reading strategies such as repeated oral reading to support them with reading fluency.
Teachers applied direct and indirect vocabulary instruction as a reading strategy to build the learner with dyslexia's comprehension.	Existing literature indicates that comprehension was found to be best taught through both direct and indirect vocabulary instruction (Marchand-Martella et al., 2013).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to implement direct and indirect vocabulary instruction as a reading strategy to support them with reading comprehension.
Teachers reinforced text comprehension by means of analysing the passage and answering questions.	Existing literature indicates that text comprehension was taught most effectively through the use of cooperative learning, monitoring, questions answering, analysis, and summarisation (Marchand-Martella et al., 2013).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to implement reading strategies such as questions answering and analysis to support the learner with text comprehension.
Subtheme 2.4: Assessment strategies		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
With regard to the assessment of the workbooks and worksheets of learners with dyslexia, teachers accommodated these learners	Existing literature indicates that learners with dyslexia should not be penalised for spelling or mechanical errors. Only spelling that has been taught	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to accommodate these learners by implementing differentiated

by not penalising them for spelling and allowing them extra time to complete their work.	should be corrected. Existing literature further suggests that in the case of particularly weak spelling, a tick can be placed on words that are correct rather than place corrections on all the errors. Another strategy is to put a tick on a line where no errors are made and using a dot alongside the margin to indicate an error (Pavey, 2007).	assessment strategies when assessing their workbooks and work assignments.
With regard to the formal assessment of the learners' tests and examination papers, teachers accommodated learners with dyslexia through an auditory mode allowing learners with dyslexia to do their assessments verbally. They also accommodated the learner with dyslexia through additional time so that these learners can complete their papers.	Existing literature indicates that teachers can accommodate learners with dyslexia by using a large, easily readable font size when printing test papers. In addition, the testing time needs to be lengthened and oral tests and typed answers could also be considered as alternative options (Pavey, 2007).	Some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to implement differentiated assessment strategies to accommodate these learners in terms of formal tests and examination.
Some participating teachers differentiate assessments in terms of spelling, reading, and handwriting so that learners with dyslexia can demonstrate their knowledge.	Existing literature indicates that differentiating assessment involves a new way of thinking where teachers need an assessment approach that is flexible to accommodate learners' needs (Department of Education, 2011)	Some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are more likely to apply differentiated assessment strategies to accommodate the needs of learners with dyslexia.
Subtheme 2.5: Teaching and learning materials		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers use colour as a visual element to support learners with dyslexia with their spelling and reading activities. Teachers also found that visual cues assisted learners with dyslexia with their organisational skills.	Existing literature suggests that teachers can use graphic organisers to visualise the reading passage (Bell et al., 2011; Erkan et al., 2012; Lerner & Johns, 2012; Pavey, 2007; Wadlington et al., 1996).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to adapt learning materials by utilising colour and visual cues to accommodate the learners' different learning styles.
Teachers applied a variation of teaching aids such as video clips, pictures, books and real-life objects to address and accommodate the diverse learning needs of the learner with dyslexia.	Current literature indicates that learners with dyslexia access information differently, and it is more likely that the learner will benefit if the information is presented in a variety of styles. Teachers can use multi-sensory techniques based on aural, visual, tactile, and	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to apply multi-sensory teaching aids to address and accommodate these learners' learning needs.

	kinesthetic aspects and, therefore, replace or supplement textbooks, lecturing, and notes by music, movement, and visual elements such as pictures, diagrams, and charts (Bell et al., 2011; Erkan et al., 2012; Gordon, 2013; Lerner & Johns, 2012; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Pavey, 2007; Wadlington et al., 1996).	
To accommodate learners with dyslexia with regard to their handwriting and slow processing speed, teachers provided the learners with extra notes to assist them with copying work from the board.	Existing research suggests that teachers can accommodate learners with dyslexia in terms of their handwriting by reducing work that must be copied from the board, providing typed notes or photocopies, or by allowing peers to act as a scribe (Bell et al., 2011; Erkan et al., 2012; Lerner & Johns, 2012; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Pavey, 2007; Wadlington et al., 1996).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to accommodate these learners by providing notes to assist them with copying work from the board.
Teachers adapted learning materials by reducing and simplifying the learning content and learner activities to support and accommodate the learner with dyslexia.	Existing literature indicates that teachers might need to adapt learning materials for learners with learning difficulties. Pictures or diagrams could be replaced or supplemented by written descriptions and explanations. Also, the amount of information could be reduced, and unnecessary pictures of diagrams could be removed (Department of Education, 2011).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to reduce and simplify learning materials to support and accommodate the learner with dyslexia.
To accommodate learners with dyslexia in terms of their reading and copying work from worksheets, teachers provided worksheets with a larger print and font type. Teachers also provided extra copies of worksheets to assist learners with turning pages.	Existing literature indicates that learners with poor vision or learners experiencing reading difficulties might need a larger print to be able to read easily. Teachers can accommodate learners with dyslexia by using large-font textbooks not overloaded with grammatical structures (Bell et al., 2011; Department of Education, 2011; Erkan et al., 2012;	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to enlarge the font size on worksheets to support and accommodate learners with dyslexia in their reading.

	Lerner & Johns, 2012; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Pavey, 2007; Wadlington et al., 1996).	
Some teachers supported learners with dyslexia's reading by means of differentiated reading activities as they believed that learners with dyslexia should read according to their age level.	Existing literature implies that teachers need to be aware that learning materials might need to be adapted for learners with learning difficulties according to their abilities, interests and learning styles (Department of Education, 2011).	Some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to adapt reading material according to the learners' reading ability and reading age level.
Subtheme 2.6: Classroom management		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Special needs education teachers from the LSEN school offered discipline and structure in their classrooms as the learner with dyslexia tends to get lost in the class when there is a lack of structure.	Existing literature indicates that teachers with a linearist teaching style favour a structured environment where teaching and learning occur with maximum efficiency (Engelbrecht, 2013b; Miller, 2011). Skilled classroom management can support or impede the learning process for learners (Bishop et al., 2010).	Special needs education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to value structure and discipline in their classrooms as they may be aware of the impact of dyslexia on the learner with dyslexia.
Special needs education teachers from the LSEN school were transparent with learners regarding the consequences of bad behaviour or schoolwork not being done and applied pro-active strategies to prevent the learners with dyslexia from being off-task or failing to follow instructions.	Existing literature with regard to discipline and classroom strategies implies that learners are expected to follow instructions and to participate in organised learning activities in a socially appropriate manner (Kendall, 2008). To prevent the learners with dyslexia from being off-task or failing to follow instructions the teacher could sit or stand close to the learners and carry on with the lesson. Teachers might also clearly explain the consequences of not following instructions (Plevin, 2008).	Special needs education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to apply pro-active classroom strategies to prevent learners from being off-task or failing to follow instructions.
Teachers applied classroom strategies such as positive and motivating remarks in learners' workbooks as well as a merit system to reward learners for good work and to improve their self-image and confidence.	Existing research indicates that teachers need to adapt strategies all the time to successfully manage classroom discipline. A reward system works well in managing learners' behaviour (Kendall, 2008).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to implement positive classroom strategies and a merit system to reward learners for good work and socially appropriate behaviour.

Contradictions		
Subtheme 2.1: Lesson planning and organisation		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Some general education teachers from the ordinary schools did not change and adapt their lesson plans to suit the needs of the learner with dyslexia.	Current literature indicates that teachers need to be aware that learning materials might need to be adapted for learners with learning difficulties. For example, a learner with poor vision or a learner experiencing reading difficulties might need a larger print to be able to read easily (Department of Education, 2011).	Some general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are not likely to be prepared in adapting and changing their lesson plans to suit the needs of the learner with dyslexia. A possible explanation for this contradiction could be that some teachers are ignorant to the needs of learners with dyslexia.
Special needs education teachers from the LSEN school who were teaching Grade 4 learners were more flexible in managing their instruction time as the learners remain in the same classroom during the school day. General education teachers from the ordinary schools had sufficient instruction time construct into the periods on their timetables to cover the planned learning activities.	Existing research indicates that teachers lack adequate planning and collaboration time, as well as a lack of instructional time to cover all the requirements in the curriculum and, therefore, teachers may fail to modify work to accommodate the needs of learners with dyslexia (Fuchs, 2010; Gordon, 2013; Thompson, 2014).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be flexible in managing their instructional time to cover the curriculum requirements. A possible explanation for this contradiction could be that teachers' timetables provide sufficient instruction time to cover the planned learning activities.
Subtheme 2.4: Assessment strategies		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Some general education teachers from the ordinary schools did not differentiate assessments for the learner with dyslexia. They prepared the same assessments for all the learners as they expected the same from the learner with dyslexia as the mainstream learner.	Existing literature indicates that differentiating assessment involves a new way of thinking where teachers need an assessment approach that is flexible to accommodate learners' needs (Department of Education, 2011).	Some general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia do not likely apply differentiated assessment strategies to accommodate the needs of learners with dyslexia. A possible explanation for this contradiction could be that teachers might be ignorant to the needs of the learner with dyslexia.

Subtheme 2.6: Classroom management		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Some general education teachers from the ordinary	Existing research implies that although support is available in	Some general education teachers who are teaching and

schools had a teacher assistant in the classroom to assist them with managing their time more efficiently.	the form of speech therapists, occupational therapists, educational psychologists, as well as assistance from the principal and the Head of Department, teachers would like to have additional support in place such as assistant teachers as they believe this would help them to teach more efficiently especially concerning learners with learning difficulties (Kendall, 2008).	supporting learners with dyslexia have assistant teachers in their classrooms to assist them with the learner with dyslexia. A possible explanation for this contradiction could be that some ordinary public schools could financially support to employ teacher assistants. This is, however, an assumption that requires further investigation.
Silences		
Subtheme 2.3: Spelling and reading strategies		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Special needs education teachers from the LSEN school focused on vocabulary enrichment to improve the learner with dyslexia's reading comprehension.	Existing literature indicates that systematic, structured programmes which include reading skills activities such as word recognition skills, word attack skills, word identification and fluency skills can significantly improve core reading skills (Allen, 2010; Thompson, 2014).	This study reports on teachers' reading strategies to support and improve the learner with dyslexia's reading skills. Although existing literature discusses activities to improve reading skills, there were silences in the existing literature with regard to vocabulary enrichment as an added activity in reading programs.
Subtheme 2.4: Assessment strategies		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
To support and accommodate learners with dyslexia, teachers from the public schools applied for special concessions at the Department of Basic Education. However, teachers from the independent school, in collaboration with the School Management Team, used their own discretion as to allow the learner with dyslexia special concessions.	Current literature indicates that learners with dyslexia may require assistance with test instructions. It might be necessary to allow the learner to complete the test in another room (Pavey, 2007).	This study reports on teachers' assessment strategies with regard to formal assessments and tests. Although existing literature discusses assessment strategies in terms of concessions, there were silences in the existing literature with regard to applying for concessions within the South African education context.
Teachers from the independent school would prefer that assessments also focused on learners' strengths and not only on their weaknesses.	Current literature implies that it is important to recognise strengths in the learner with dyslexia such as a natural flair for music, dance, drawing or acting, or athletic talent, creative problem-solving skills and intuitive people skills	Although existing literature mentions that teachers should recognise strengths in the learner with dyslexia, there were silences in the existing literature with regard to assessing these learners'

	(Bornman & Rose, 2010; Farrell, 2012; Shaywitz, 2003; Snowling, 2013; Williams & Lynch, 2010).	strengths within a formal assessment context.

6.3.1.3 Addressing research question 1: How do Intermediate Phase teachers perceive their role with regard to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia?

The first secondary research question in this study sought to determine the participating teachers' perception of their role in the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. I first discuss Intermediate Phase teachers' attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia, followed by a description of the teachers' approaches to teach and support learners with dyslexia.

Existing literature implies that teachers are the key role-players in determining the quality of inclusion in their classrooms and should, therefore, monitor their own beliefs, attitudes and behaviours when responding to their learners to ensure that they meet all their learners' diverse learning needs (Engelbrecht, 2013a). Teachers are responsible for the successful identification, assessment, and instruction of learners experiencing barriers to learning which include the learner with dyslexia (Jusufi, 2014; Swart et al., 2002; Thompson, 2014).

The findings of this study indicate that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia demonstrate a relatively fair understanding of dyslexia as being a specific learning impairment which results in difficulties with language skills such as reading, spelling, and writing (Davis & Braun, 2010; International Dyslexia Association, 2012; Reid, 2011). Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia also display knowledge about the cause of dyslexia, describing it as a genetic, neurological inborn barrier (Lerner & Johns, 2012; Mather & Wendling, 2012; Shaywitz, 2003). Another important finding was that special needs education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are seemingly aware of the different types of dyslexia (Red Apple Dyslexia Association, 2016). With reference to the characteristics and comorbidities of dyslexia, it appears that both general education and special needs education teachers could identify ADHD, low self-esteem, and anxiety as comorbidities of dyslexia (Berninger, 2000; Pennington, 2003; Reid, 2011). Although the present findings seem to be consistent with other research (Allen, 2010; Ashburn & Snow, 2011; Jusufi, 2014; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Washburn et al., 2014; Williams & Lynch, 2010) which found that teachers have misconceptions regarding dyslexia, this study suggests that teachers doubt the misconception of learners with dyslexia having low cognitive abilities and low intelligence. Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia

could identify average and above average intelligence within the learner with dyslexia. A possible explanation for this finding could be related to teachers being encouraged to attend courses and in-service training.

Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seem to have certain beliefs and perceptions regarding these learners. They apparently perceive the learner with dyslexia as being different to the mainstream learner and believe that the learner, despite having dyslexia, has the potential to be successful in life. Existing literature (Hall, 2009; Ho, 2004; Riddick, 2000; Stark, 2015; Taylor et al., 2010) corroborate the findings of this study confirming that ignorance regarding dyslexia could result in teachers perceiving the learner as being naughty, lazy, not listening or not doing their work, and, therefore, teachers are labelling these learners according to their behaviour in the classroom. This finding also accords with existing literature (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Davis, 1992; Williams & Lynch, 2010), which showed that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia may perceive the behaviour of the learner with dyslexia as either disruptive or quiet and withdrawn. On the question of teachers believing that the learner with dyslexia could be successful in an ordinary school setting, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemed to have different opinions. On the one hand, special needs education teachers claimed that learners with dyslexia cannot be successful in ordinary schools since they were referred to an LSEN school. On the other hand, general education teachers from the ordinary schools believed that learners with dyslexia could be successful in an ordinary school provided that the learner receives the necessary intervention and support.

Another important finding was that teachers seemed to experience mixed emotions regarding the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia. Teachers who apparently have a better understanding and positive expectations of the learner with dyslexia demonstrate positive feelings such as sympathy and admiration towards these learners. At the same time, they also experience negative emotions such as frustration, guilt, emotional exhaustion, and feelings of being inadequate to teach the learner with dyslexia. This finding corresponds with existing research indicating that teachers often had feelings of exhaustion, frustration, disappointment, helplessness, inadequacy and a sense of failure (Gordon, 2013; Kendall, 2008). It is somewhat surprising that, in this study, some general education teachers seem to experience a lack of empathy towards the learner with dyslexia as they are inclined to be more objective regarding their feelings in terms of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Existing research recognises that teacher apathy towards the acknowledgement of dyslexia as an actual learning impairment is one reason

why general education teachers lack awareness concerning the identification and management of dyslexia (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005).

In the present study, special needs education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seem to be concerned about learners with dyslexia's ability to cope with the pace of work in the higher grades whereas general education teachers appear to be more concerned about and question their ability to teach and support the learner with dyslexia. As teachers become more aware of dyslexia as a specific learning impairment, general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are apparently concerned about the increasing number of learners being diagnosed with dyslexia. This finding confirms current literature stating that learners with mild to moderate barriers to learning are included in ordinary schools (Engelbrecht, 2013a).

The findings of this study also indicate that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to address the emotional needs of the learner by providing additional support in the classroom. Moreover, within an inclusive educational environment, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia appear to approach these learners in a gentle, caring and encouraging manner, and treat them fairly and equal to the other learners.

In short, the findings of this study indicate that Intermediate Phase teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia could demonstrate their cognitive, emotive, and behavioural attitude regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia. Next, I discuss the findings relating to the teachers' approaches to teach and support learners with dyslexia.

Existing literature emphasises the central role of the teacher in teaching and supporting learners who are experiencing barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2001) and, therefore, teachers should not only have the knowledge, but also have the confidence to apply their skills and knowledge in the classroom to provide the required support (Lessing, 2010). According to current literature, teachers should consider the unique needs of learners, including the learner with dyslexia when planning, designing and organising lessons and learning programmes. For this reason, teachers would benefit to be aware that learning materials might need to be adapted for learners with learning difficulties. So, teacher preparedness and creativity contribute towards maintaining effective classroom instruction (Department of Education, 2011; Engelbrecht, 2013b). The findings of this study indicate that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are mostly well prepared in the planning and presentation of their lessons. Since teachers should

adapt their lessons based on learners' reading level, developmental levels, interests, backgrounds and learning profiles (Department of Education, 2011; Engelbrecht, 2013a; Gordon, 2013), some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are seemingly prepared to adapt and differentiate their lesson activities to cater for these learners' diverse needs. However, some general education teachers apparently do not change and adapt their lesson plans to suit the needs of the learner with dyslexia. A possible explanation for this finding could be that some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia could be ignorant to the needs of these learners.

One unanticipated finding was that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be flexible in managing their instructional time to cover the curriculum requirements despite existing literature implying that teachers lack adequate planning and instructional time to cover all the requirements in the curriculum (Fuchs, 2010; Gordon, 2013; Thompson, 2014). This discrepancy could be attributed to the fact that Grade 4 learners remain in the same classroom during the school day, and that general education teachers from ordinary schools had sufficient instruction time construct into the periods on their timetables to cover the planned learning activities.

As far as general teaching methods and strategies are concerned, the present findings suggest that some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemingly prefer a linear teaching approach when presenting their lessons. Moreover, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to support these learners by means of rote learning and repetition which correlate with earlier studies (Bell et al., 2011; Erkan et al., 2012; Lerner & Johns, 2012; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Pavey, 2007; Wadlington et al., 1996). Another important finding was that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia appear to acknowledge that a multi-sensory approach based on aural, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic aspects is beneficial to the learner with dyslexia. This finding supports previous research into consistent multisensory instruction (Allen, 2010; Shaywitz, 2003; Snowling, 2013). Despite some teachers preferring a linear teaching approach, other teachers might prefer a holistic approach to learning as they value teaching and learning as being an interactive and enjoyable experience. This finding is in line with Miller (2011) describing that teachers with a holistic approach to learning focus on the emotional, creative, and aesthetic components of learning, and assume that enjoyable experiences lead to learning. Above all, it seems that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia not only apply cooperative learning, group work, and peer support as one of their teaching strategies

to implement curriculum differentiation but also implement one-to-one or small group instruction as a teaching strategy to provide additional support to the learner with dyslexia.

Moreover, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemingly vary their teaching strategies to address the needs of these learners as they are aware that all learners need different strategies and interventions (Department of Education, 2011; Kendall, 2008). They apparently consider the needs of the learner with dyslexia when planning and organising their lessons since they use repetition, colour, mind maps, self-discovery, and a buddy system as teaching strategies in their planning and organising of lessons.

With respect to teachers' approaches and strategies to teach and support learners with dyslexia in their spelling and reading, the findings of this study support the idea of a systematic, multisensory, sequential phonics-based program (Allen, 2010; Bell et al., 2011; Erkan et al., 2012; Lerner & Johns, 2012; Marchand-Martella et al., 2013; Pavey, 2007; Shaywitz et al., 2008; Wadlington et al., 1996). Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seem to implement spelling strategies such as phonemic awareness, syllables and morphology to support them in decoding words. This study also confirms previous research as to reading fluency as well as reading and text comprehension (Marchand-Martella et al., 2013). Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemingly implement reading strategies such as repeated oral reading to support them with reading fluency. They are also likely to implement direct and indirect vocabulary instruction as a reading strategy to support them with reading comprehension. Although existing literature describe a systematic, multisensory, sequential phonics-based program to support learners with dyslexia in their reading (Allen, 2010; Bell et al., 2011; Erkan et al., 2012; Lerner & Johns, 2012; Marchand-Martella et al., 2013; Pavey, 2007; Shaywitz et al., 2008; Wadlington et al., 1996), no data was found on vocabulary enrichment as an added reading activity. The findings of the present study suggest that special needs education teachers from the LSEN school seemingly believe that learners with dyslexia spell inconsistently and for this reason, they would rather focus on vocabulary enrichment to improve the learner with dyslexia's reading comprehension. To support the learner with dyslexia with text comprehension, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia might implement reading strategies such as questions answering and passage analysis.

Regarding the assessment of workbooks and worksheets of learners with dyslexia, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemingly accommodate these learners by implementing differentiated assessment strategies. Among others, they

allow learners with dyslexia extra time to complete their work and they do not penalise these learners for spelling. When assessing the learner with dyslexia during formal tests and examination, teachers who are teaching and supporting these learners implement differentiated assessment strategies such as allowing them to do their assessments verbally. Some teachers differentiate the assessments of learners with dyslexia in terms of their spelling, reading, and handwriting. Despite existing assessment policies (Department of Education, 2011) advocating a differentiated assessment approach that is flexible to accommodate learners' needs, some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemingly do not differentiate assessments for the learner with dyslexia. General education teachers from the ordinary schools apparently prepare the same assessments for all the learners because they expect the same from the learner with dyslexia as from the other learners. Current literature implies that learners with dyslexia may require assistance with test instructions as it might be necessary to allow them to complete the test in another room (Pavey, 2007). The results of this study show that general education teachers from the public schools evidently applied for special concessions at the Department of Basic Education whereas teachers from the independent school, in collaboration with the School Management Team, used their own discretion as to allow the learner with dyslexia special concessions. This finding indicates that there is seemingly little information available regarding the concession application procedures for primary schools within the South African education context. What is surprising is that general education teachers from the independent school seemingly believe that assessments should also focus on learners' strengths and not only on their weaknesses. Although existing literature suggests that teachers should recognise strengths in the learner with dyslexia (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Farrell, 2012; Shaywitz, 2003; Snowling, 2013; Williams & Lynch, 2010), there were silences in the existing literature about assessing these learners' strengths within a formal assessment context.

Prior studies have noted the importance of using graphic organisers to visualise the reading passage (Bell et al., 2011; Erkan et al., 2012; Lerner & Johns, 2012; Pavey, 2007; Wadlington et al., 1996). The present findings seem to be consistent with these studies which found that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia evidently adapt learning materials by using colour and visual cues to accommodate the learners' different learning styles. As mentioned in the literature review, learners with dyslexia access information differently, and it is more likely that the learner will benefit if the information is presented in a variety of styles (Bell et al., 2011; Erkan et al., 2012; Gordon, 2013; Lerner & Johns, 2012; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Pavey, 2007; Wadlington et al., 1996). The findings of this study indicate that

teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemingly apply multi-sensory teaching aids to address and accommodate these learners' learning needs. To accommodate learners with dyslexia with their handwriting, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia evidently reduce copying work from notes and from the board by providing these learners with notes and photocopies. Similarly, they reduce and simplify learning materials to support and accommodate the learner with dyslexia and probably enlarge the font size on worksheets to support and accommodate learners with dyslexia in their reading. Because teachers need to adapt learning materials according to the learners' abilities, interests and learning styles (Department of Education, 2011), some teachers might adapt reading material according to the learners' reading ability and reading age level.

Previous research of Bishop et al. (2010) points out that skilled classroom management can support or impede the learning process for learners. This study confirms that special needs education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to value structure and discipline in their classrooms as they might be aware of the impact of dyslexia on the learner with dyslexia. These teachers also seemingly apply pro-active classroom strategies to prevent learners from being off-task or failing to follow instructions. Consequently, one of the teachers' applied positive classroom strategies is a merit system to reward learners for good work and socially appropriate behaviour. This finding agrees with the findings of Kendall (2008) reporting that a reward system works well in managing learners' behaviour. Compared to earlier findings implying that teachers would like to have additional support such as assistant teachers in place to help them to teach the learner with specific learning difficulties more efficiently (Kendall, 2008), this study has found that some general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia have assistant teachers in their classrooms to assist them with the learner with dyslexia.

In this section, I reported on the findings regarding the Intermediate phase teachers' perception of their role in the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. These findings raise questions about teachers' challenges, assets, resources, and coping strategies in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. The next section describes the findings of Theme 3 and Theme 4 to address the second secondary question of this study.

6.3.2 Secondary Question 2: How can Intermediate Phase Teachers Overcome Challenges Within an Inclusive Education Environment to Effectively Teach and Support Learners with Dyslexia?

As far as the participating teachers overcoming challenges within an inclusive education environment is concerned, I positioned the results of Theme 3 and Theme 4 within existing literature to present the findings and to answer the second secondary question.

6.3.2.1 Findings related to teachers' challenges regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia

The results from Theme 3 were mostly supported by the current literature, with some evidence of contradictions and silences as captured in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Theme 3 positioned within existing literature

THEME 3 **TEACHERS' CHALLENGES REGARDING THE TEACHING AND SUPPORT OF LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA**		
Correlating Findings		
Subtheme 3.1: Challenges related to teachers		
Category 1: Teachers' teaching experience and knowledge		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
General education teachers from ordinary schools admitted to ignorance concerning dyslexia as well as having a lack of knowledge and teaching experience with regards to teaching and supporting the learner with dyslexia.	Current research evidence specifies that a major challenge to successfully implementing inclusive education in developing countries such as South Africa is a lack of teacher awareness to the needs of learners with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia (Thompson, 2014).	General education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be ignorant with regards to dyslexia and are likely to have a lack of knowledge and teaching experience in terms of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.
Because of general education teachers' lack of knowledge and experience in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, they subsequently had lower self-confidence, and questioned their ability to effectively teach and support these learners.	Existing research indicates that teachers feel inadequately prepared and incompetent to teach learners with dyslexia because they lack training in the field of dyslexia (Fuchs, 2010; Gordon, 2013; Thompson, 2014).	Because of a lack of knowledge and experience in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, general education teachers are likely to have lower self-confidence, and question their ability to effectively teach and support these learners.
Category 2: Teacher training and development		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
General education teachers from ordinary schools did not consider themselves as specialised remedial teachers	Existing literature states that although teachers are doing their best to teach and support learners with dyslexia, most of	General education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to lack the

as they are neither trained nor equipped to teach learners with dyslexia.	them are inadequately trained and qualified for this role and, therefore, do not have adequate capacity to address the diverse needs of these learners (Dunoon, 2015; Gordon, 2013; Stofile & Green, 2007).	qualification or training to teach and support learners with dyslexia.
Although in-service training and courses are provided, teachers considered the training as insufficient to teach and support learners with dyslexia.	Existing research indicates that general education teachers report that they do not have adequate training, support or knowledge in creating inclusive classrooms to be able to teach and support learners with dyslexia effectively (Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010; Hodkinson, 2006; Sicherer, 2014).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to receive insufficient training with regards to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.
General education teachers from ordinary schools expressed the necessity for further in-service training regarding the characteristics of dyslexia as well as practical suggestions on how to teach and support learners with dyslexia.	Current research states that teachers need more training in accommodating and adapting assignments, assessment techniques, as well as a variety of instructional strategies in order to meet the needs of learners with impairments (Fuchs, 2010). Schools should organise courses for teachers to inform them about learning difficulties and to enable them to teach learners with dyslexia in a supportive teaching and learning environment (Jusufi, 2014).	General education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to need further in-service training regarding the characteristics of dyslexia as well as practical suggestions on how to teach and support learners with dyslexia.
Subtheme 3.2: Challenges related to learners		
Category 1: Early identification of dyslexia		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
One of the reasons of failure to identify dyslexia during the learner's early childhood development could be attributed to parents and teachers' ignorance regarding the characteristics or symptoms of dyslexia.	Teachers are unable to deal effectively with the characteristics and identification of dyslexia (Thompson, 2014; Wadlington et al., 1996; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to fail in the early identification of dyslexia due to some parents and teachers' ignorance in terms of the characteristics or symptoms of dyslexia.
Poverty and parents' financial constraints contributed to learners not being diagnosed with dyslexia. Assessments conducted by health care	The lack of funding in ordinary public schools as well as poverty in South Africa are considered barriers to inclusive education, and, therefore,	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to experience challenges related to the early identification of dyslexia as

professionals such as neurologists and psychologists were expensive.	remains a challenge to the implementation of inclusive education (Pillay & Di Terlizzi, 2009). The services involved with special concessions are usually paid for by the parents which result in excluding poor learners from learning opportunities (Thompson, 2014).	some parents do not have the financial means to afford the necessary psychological assessments.
Category 2: Learner with dyslexia's motivation and learned helplessness		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers experienced challenges with regards to learners with dyslexia's attitude of 'learned helplessness' as they lack the motivation to excel in their school work.	Low expectations and an urge of parents, teachers, and caregivers to do everything for the learner result in a 'learned helplessness' which can be disastrous (Bornman & Rose, 2010, p. 24).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to experience challenges with regards to learners with dyslexia's lack of motivation and 'learned helplessness'.
Category 3: Individual assistance or intervention to learners with dyslexia		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Time constraints and the number of learners in the class contributed to teachers' challenges to provide individual assistance to the learner with dyslexia.	Teachers complained about spending much of their time doing paperwork leaving them with little time to spend on the instructional activities those learners with specific learning difficulties need in the general education classroom (Gordon, 2013). Overcrowded classrooms, insufficient time to plan with learning support teams, lack of a flexible timetable, and inadequately available support from external specialists are barriers to the successful implementation of inclusive education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to experience challenges in providing individual assistance to learners with dyslexia due to the number of learners in the class and time constraints.
Subtheme 3.3: Challenges related to the school environment		
Category 1: Curriculum delivery		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
The number of learners with special needs influenced the teachers' curriculum delivery style as they were aware of the varied ability groups in their classes and had to consider how to best assist these learners.	Teachers find it difficult to adapt lessons to suit all the learners' needs in the classroom and they have to be constantly creative to include those learners with specific learning difficulties (Kendall, 2008). Teachers also find it difficult to differentiate between	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be aware of the varied ability groups in their classes and are likely to experience challenges with regards to a flexible curriculum delivery style to assist the learner with dyslexia.

	learners with dyslexia and slow learners since learners with dyslexia can be found in ordinary schools as opposed to special schools (Thompson, 2014).	
Teachers experienced difficulties with the completion of written assessments of learners with dyslexia due to their slow working pace.	Many teachers express their concern and anxiety because they are unable to deal effectively with the daily assessment and intervention of learners with dyslexia (Thompson, 2014; Wadlington et al., 1996; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to experience challenges in terms of the completion of written assessments due to the learners' slow working pace.
Category 2: Learning environment		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Some teachers from the LSEN school and independent ordinary school did not have adequate support structures by means of either teacher assistants in their classrooms or the support from a multidisciplinary team to assist them with the learner with dyslexia.	As a developing nation, South Africa is not adequately equipped with resources and facilities required to meet the diverse needs of learners with specific learning difficulties. Ordinary schools do not provide necessary support structures such as multidisciplinary learner support teams for learners with specific learning difficulties (Pillay & Di Terlizzi, 2009). Teachers report a sense of powerless and helplessness as they feel they do not have the necessary support and skills to assist their learners (Kendall, 2008; Thompson, 2014).	Some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to experience challenges with regards to adequate support structures such as teacher assistants in their classrooms as well as a multidisciplinary team to assist them with the learner with dyslexia.
General education teachers from the independent ordinary school had inadequate teaching resources available in their classrooms to teach and support learners with dyslexia.	Teachers do not have the necessary support and available resources to implement inclusion successfully (Gordon, 2013). Many gaps in service delivery remain due to insufficient resources and inadequate budget allocations (P. Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Philpott & McLaren, 2011).	Some general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to experience challenges in terms of adequate teaching resources available in their classrooms.
Lack of individual attention due to large numbers of learners in a class was one of the reasons why learners with dyslexia	A large number of schools in South Africa still have overcrowded classes and lack physical spaces for learner discussion and equipment to	General education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to experience challenges regarding

were transferred to an LSEN school.	enable learner investigations to make learning interesting, relevant and challenging (Stofile & Green, 2007).	overcrowded classes, and consequently, learners with dyslexia are being referred to an LSEN school due to a lack of individual attention in ordinary public schools.
Subtheme 3.4: Challenges related to collaboration with external role players		
Category 1: Parents and relatives		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers experienced challenges in collaborating with parents as some parents were not supporting their child or the teacher. Teachers hold the opinion that parents either did not want to take responsibility in assisting their child with homework or they blamed the education system and the teachers for their child's learning difficulties.	There is a sense of teamwork and collaboration when teachers receive support from parents. Teachers can endure the teaching and supporting of learners with specific learning difficulties better when parents support the teacher. It is, therefore, a challenge for teachers when parents remain uninvolved in their child's learning difficulties and development (Kendall, 2008).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to experience challenges with some parents' cooperation in terms of collaboration and support.
General education teachers stated that some parents who have the financial means to pay for assessments rather prefer not to be confronted with their child's learning difficulties.	Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective and the socio-ecological model acknowledge that there are barriers in society and within the system that create barriers for learners trying to achieve their learning potential (Donald et al., 2006; Swart & Pettipher, 2012). Good family support is a protective factor that leads to better outcomes for these learners (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Williams & Lynch, 2010).	General education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to experience challenges with regard to some parents contributing to the learner's barriers to learning as they chose not to be confronted with their child's learning difficulties.
Category 2: Department of Basic Education and ISASA		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
General education teachers from ordinary schools had concerns regarding communication with either the Department of Basic Education or with the Independent Schools' Association of South Africa.	School-Based Support Teams need to be able to access support from the district and the community. Inclusive education cannot be implemented if district officials resist change, or are uncertain about their role, or lack the skills to perform it (Stofile & Green, 2007).	General education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia may experience challenges with regards to communicating with the Department of Basic Education or the Independent Schools' Association of South Africa.

Contradictions		
Subtheme 3.3: Challenges related to the school environment		
Category 1: Curriculum delivery		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Special needs education teachers from the LSEN school who were teaching Grade 4 learners were more flexible in managing their instruction time as the learners remain in the same classroom during the school day. General education teachers from the ordinary schools had sufficient instruction time construct into the periods on their timetables to cover the planned learning activities.	Existing research indicates that teachers lack adequate planning and collaboration time, as well as a lack of instructional time to cover all the requirements in the curriculum and, therefore, teachers may fail to modify work to accommodate the needs of learners with dyslexia (Fuchs, 2010; Gordon, 2013; Thompson, 2014).	The result of this study is in contradiction with current literature regarding teachers' challenges with regards to a lack of instructional time. In the present study, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be flexible in managing their instructional time to cover the curriculum requirements. A possible explanation for this contradiction could be related to unique circumstances of individual teachers and classroom contexts.
Category 2: Learning environment		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
General education teachers from the public ordinary school had adequate support structures by means of teacher assistants in their classrooms.	Although assistance is available from the principal and the Head of Department, teachers would like to have additional support in place such as assistant teachers as they believe this would help them to teach more efficiently especially concerning learners with learning difficulties (Kendall, 2008).	Some general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to have teacher assistants in their classrooms to assist them with the teaching and supporting of these learners. A possible explanation for this contradiction could be related to schools' unique circumstance in prioritising assistant teachers. Another possible explanation could be that some ordinary public schools have financial support to afford teacher assistants.
Silences		
Subtheme 3.1: Challenges related to teachers		
Category 2: Teacher training and development		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
General education teachers from the public schools were encouraged to attend courses and in-service training, and within certain financial limits, schools were prepared to pay for the courses. However, teachers from the independent	According to Eloff and Kgwete (2007), adequate pre-service and continued in-service teacher training are a prerequisite to the successful implementation of inclusive education. Thus, inclusive education is dependent on	Existing literature mentions that continued in-service teacher training is imperative for the successful implementation of inclusive education. However, there were silences in the existing literature with regards to the costs of these courses

ordinary school had to pay for themselves when attending courses, and due to financial constraints, they cannot afford to attend these courses as they were very expensive.	highly trained teachers in general education and special needs education (Thompson, 2014).	and teachers' financial constraints.
Another financial implication regarding online courses was the cost and access to the internet and data.		Within this study, some general education teachers studied online to further their knowledge regarding dyslexia. Current literature did not mention the availability of international courses or the costs thereof. There were also silences with regards to challenges such as financial implications to data usage and access to the internet.
Subtheme 3.3: Challenges related to the school environment		
Category 2: Learning environment		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Special needs education teachers from the LSEN school had adequate teaching and learning support resources but challenges such as ESKOM's load shedding or power interruptions, no internet access or lack of data available made it difficult to use the technological equipment effectively.	South African pre-service teachers were more concerned about the availability of resources and support services (Oswald & Swart, 2011). Sources such as inadequate support and resources are barriers to inclusive education which general education teachers face daily (Gordon, 2013).	Within the existing literature, there were no results available regarding teachers' challenges in using technological equipment to address the learning needs of the learner with dyslexia.

6.3.2.2 Findings related to teachers' assets, coping resources and strategies in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia

The results from Theme 4 were mostly supported by the current literature, with some evidence of contradictions as captured in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Theme 4 positioned within existing literature

THEME 4 **TEACHERS' ASSETS, COPING RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHING AND SUPPORTING LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA**		
Correlating Findings		
Subtheme 4.1: Teachers' demonstrated characteristics in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia		
Category 1: Care and Support		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers identified compassion and empathy as essential personality traits in successfully teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.	Current research indicates that positive emotions among primary school teachers include empathy, a sense of accomplishment, rewarding, encouraging, happiness, satisfaction and pride (Bishop et al., 2010; Kendall, 2008).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to acknowledge personal attributes such as compassion and empathy as significant to effectively teach and support these learners.
Teachers identified patience as vital in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.	Existing literature indicates that teachers demonstrate care by demonstrating patience, honesty, trust, humility, and courage (Engelbrecht, 2013b). Teachers in Lesotho and Guyana who were teaching learners with dyslexia had become more patient and were better at assessing the learner's abilities (UNESCO, 2001).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to care for these learners by demonstrating patience in their daily contact with the learners.
Special needs education teachers demonstrated care when appreciating learner inputs.	Existing literature identifies care as an encompassing attribute of effective teachers because learners need to see, feel, and experience it in their daily contact with their teachers. Teachers demonstrate care by listening to learners and valuing learner inputs (Engelbrecht, 2013b).	Special needs education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to demonstrate care by listening to these learners and appreciating their learner inputs.
With regards to protecting learners with dyslexia against bullying or labelling, teachers from public schools sought to keep a peaceful atmosphere in the classroom and tended to gently stop negative remarks from the learner with dyslexia's peers.	Current literature indicates that schools should be safe places where learners can learn and be nurtured in an emotionally safe environment. Caring teachers should protect learners against hurtful behaviours such as bullying and teasing (Engelbrecht, 2013b).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to care and nurture these learners by creating a safe learning environment where they are protected against labelling, teasing and bullying.
Teachers attempted to build a supportive relationship with all	Existing literature indicates that learners feel affirmed as learners and humans if teachers share	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to build and

learners, including the learner with dyslexia.	personal learning experiences, and complement these actions by interacting in a warm, personal manner (Engelbrecht, 2013b).	maintain a supportive relationship with these learners.
Teachers supported and motivated learners with dyslexia to excel in their schoolwork as they had high expectations for these learners.	Current research states that learners live up to their teachers' expectations, and therefore, teachers have the responsibility to motivate and affirm learners to reach their potential (Engelbrecht, 2013b). Positive teacher behaviour and motivational teaching strategies are imperative in the teaching, support, and accommodation of learners with dyslexia (Erkan et al., 2012).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to have high expectations for these learners and apply motivational strategies to support them in reaching their potential.
Category 2: Fairness and Respect		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers demonstrated a commitment to social justice and equality for all learners, including the learner with dyslexia as they praised and reprimanded the learners equally.	Existing literature states that teachers who are committed to social justice attempt to achieve equity and equality for all learners (Blecker & Boakes, 2010). It is important that teachers and learners should understand that fairness is not necessarily about equal treatment of learners but accounts for the necessary support provided to the needs of every individual learner in the class (Engelbrecht, 2013b).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to demonstrate fairness and respect by achieving social justice and equality for all their learners.
Teachers were sensitive to the needs and feelings of learners with dyslexia.	Current literature indicates that teachers who could demonstrate fairness and respect treat learners in a balanced and open-minded way that is considerate of their unique and diverse circumstances. Teachers who demonstrate respect are sensitive to others' feelings and avoiding situations that can unnecessarily embarrass learners (Engelbrecht, 2013b).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to treat these learners with respect as they are sensitive to the needs and feelings of these learners.
Teachers considered respect as a fundamental aspect in demonstrating fairness. They accepted and respected the learners for who they are, and	Existing literature regards fairness and respect as the foundation of effective teaching (Stronge et al., 2004). Teachers who display fairness	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to demonstrate fairness by accepting and respecting

they regarded aspects such as personal touch, a sense of belonging, mutual trust, forgiveness and a sense of humour essential in establishing a relationship with the learners.	and self-control respect each learner for whom he or she is and maintain good relations with both individual and groups of learners. All of these aspects foster mutual trust inside and outside the classroom which forms the cornerstone of respect. Teachers could add a personal touch to their lessons by calling learners by their names, showing interest in learners' feelings and opinions, accepting learners for who they are, and treating each learner as an individual (Engelbrecht, 2013b). Special needs education teachers displayed humour as humour is considered a helpful coping mechanism for stressful situations (Banu, 2013; Bishop et al., 2010; Kyriacou, 2001; University of Pretoria, 2010b).	these learners for whom they are.
Category 3: Positive attitude		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
In general, teachers demonstrated high self-esteem and optimism in their attitude towards teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.	Existing literature indicates that resilient teachers possibly have high self-esteem, personal control, and are generally optimistic as they tend to focus on the positive aspects of their lives (University of Pretoria, 2010b).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to focus on a positive attitude by demonstrating a high self-esteem and optimism in their teaching practice.
Teachers regarded passion and perseverance as key factors contributing towards a positive attitude.	Existing literature states that capacities such as passion, adaptability, and perseverance could be personal assets that teachers might need to overcome obstacles and to deal with challenges in their teaching profession (Eloff, 2006).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to display personal attributes such as passion and perseverance to demonstrate their positive attitude towards their teaching profession.
Category 4: Reflective mind and life-long learners		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers were open-minded and receptive to new information.	Current research indicates that reflective teachers are introspective and open-minded (Bishop et al., 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013b).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be receptive and open-minded to new information.
General education teachers were aware of their own	Existing literature indicates that teachers teaching learners with	General education teachers who are teaching and

teaching practices, and reflected on the benefits of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia within an ordinary school environment.	impairments personally benefit as teachers when they acquire new techniques for teaching and supporting these learners. Furthermore, teachers noted improvements for the learner with impairments in the inclusive classroom, and other learners had gained a better understanding of what it means to be impaired (Fuchs, 2010; UNESCO, 2001).	supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to reflect on the benefits of teaching and supporting these learners within an ordinary school environment.
Teachers identified responsibility and dedication as part of their reflective practice.	Existing research indicates that reflective teachers are responsible (Bishop et al., 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013b).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be responsible and dedicated to their teaching practice.
Teachers were willing and able to admit their mistakes.	Existing research indicates that reflective teachers have the ability to view situations from multiple perspectives and are willing to admit their own mistakes (Bishop et al., 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013b).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be able and willing to admit their mistakes.
Subtheme 4.2: Teachers' coping resources and strategies		
Category 1: Physical activities		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers partook in various physical activities ranging from low-level exercise such as gardening, cooking and training with dogs and cats to adrenalin seeking adventures such as scuba diving and skydiving.	Existing literature indicates that teachers could apply physical palliative strategies to relieve any built-up tension and anxiety. They could engage in enjoyable activities such as gardening, listening to music, playing a musical instrument, or practicing a hobby (Austin et al., 2005; Banu, 2013; Kyriacou, 2001; University of Pretoria, 2010b).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to engage in enjoyable, physical activities to assist them in dealing more effectively with challenges associated with teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.
Category 2: Social support		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers built social support structures as they relied and trusted their spouse, family, and friends for emotion-focused and problem-focused social support.	Current literature states that social support structures play a noticeable role in reducing the effects of stress on teachers' health and well-being. While emotion-focused social support strategies provide teachers with opportunities for moral support, sympathy, and understanding (Antoniou et al., 2009),	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to build social support structures as they rely on their spouse, family, and friends for emotion-focused and problem-focused social support.

	problem-focused social support provides a useful means for teachers seeking advice, information or assistance. Teachers could build a strong support network to discuss problems and express feelings to others (Antoniou et al., 2009; Banu, 2013; Kyriacou, 2001; University of Pretoria, 2010b).	
Category 3: Meditation and relaxation		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
General education teachers were involved in activities such as reading, writing, and meditation to lower their stress levels.	Current research indicates that teachers experience lower levels of stress when they engage in low-level exercise, or practice meditation and relaxation, or pursue hobby activities (Coetzee et al., 2009).	General education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to engage in meditation and low-level exercise to decrease their stress levels.
Subtheme 4.3: Supportive school environment		
Category 2: School's assets and resources		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Independent schools informed teachers about courses and workshops held by independent service providers which the teachers could then choose to attend.	Existing literature states that schools are systematically organised, problem-solving organisations where all teachers are expected to participate in both the teaching and learning process (Obiakor et al., 2012).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to attend courses and workshops held by independent service providers.
Teachers could depend on their colleagues and management support structures for support in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. The LSEN school's care group applied social support strategies to assist teachers in alleviating work-related stress.	Current literature indicates that through collaboration, teachers can serve as a resource to one another by developing their teaching skills, developing learning materials together, and having access to teaching and learning materials as well as supportive administrators (Bishop et al., 2010; Department of Education, 2011). Schools with a positive atmosphere of social support enable teachers to share concerns with each other (Kyriacou, 2001).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to depend on collaboration with their colleagues and management support structures for support to teach and support these learners. Some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be supported by schools demonstrating care and social support to their teachers.
Teachers valued independent service providers such as counsellors, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and remedial therapists as part of	Existing research indicates that developing skills of support, collaboration and consultation are imperative for an inclusive education system as no	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to rely on independent service providers for collaboration and

their support structure in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.	teacher, parent, learner, education support professional, or volunteer should have to handle significant challenges on their own (Stofile & Green, 2007; Swart & Pettipher, 2012). This includes teamwork and collaboration between administrators, teachers, support personnel, and healthcare professionals such as psychologists, speech therapists, and occupational therapists (Gordon, 2013).	developing a support structure to assist them in teaching and supporting these learners.
The School Governing Bodies of public schools financially support the schools' management teams with regard to purchasing stationery and teaching aids, paying teachers' expenses of in-service training, and employing additional teachers and teacher assistants to support teachers in coping more effectively with challenges relating to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.	Existing literature states that school principals have a responsibility to set the tone of the school and help the school to become and maintain a supportive and caring community (Swart & Pettipher, 2012). The SGB has the ability to assist the principal with school-related events as it is involved in the recruiting, appointing and wages of teachers over and above the existing teachers appointed by the Department of Education at the school (Department of Basic Education, 2015).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be assisted by their schools' SGB and management teams in terms of financial support and coping strategies to effectively alleviate challenges relating to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.
Category 3: Community assets and resources		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers were privileged to collaborate with a multidisciplinary team comprising of health care professionals within the community.	Existing literature states that teachers experienced with the inclusion of learners with impairments have identified collaboration, administrative support and ongoing training as resources for supporting and sustaining inclusive education in schools. Resources should not only include those existing within the school itself but also those existing within the community, such as neighbouring schools, district offices, special schools and universities (Bornman & Donohue, 2013; Swart & Pettipher, 2012).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to form collaborative partnerships with healthcare professionals and other human resources within the community.

Teachers identified after school care and transport services available to the school as assets provided by the community to support learners with dyslexia.	Existing literature indicates that resources should not only include those existing within the school itself but also those existing within the community (Swart & Pettipher, 2012).	Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to identify assets and resources existing within the community that is available to support these learners.
Contradictions		
Subtheme 4.3: Supportive school environment		
Category 1: Classroom assets and resources		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Teachers were privileged to have technical teaching devices such as a computer, visualiser, television, and smart board available in their classrooms.	Existing literature states that a large number of schools in South Africa still lack the equipment to enable learner investigations to make learning interesting, relevant and challenging (Stofile & Green, 2007).	The result of this study is in contradiction with current literature regarding teaching equipment available to teachers. A possible reason for this contradiction could be related to the fact that urban public schools have the advantage of sources and resources available to equip teachers with sophisticated, modern technology to assist them in their teaching. This is, however, an assumption that requires on-going research.
Teachers had other teaching and learning resources such as posters, dictionaries, readers, textbooks, study guides, and the Department of Basic Education's workbooks available in their classrooms.	Existing research indicates that general education teachers face barriers to inclusive education such as inadequate support and resources on a daily basis (Gordon, 2013).	The results of this study are in contradiction with current research in terms of inadequate teaching resources. A possible reason for this contradiction could be related to the fact that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be able to identify teaching and learning resources available in their classrooms. Another possible reason for this contradiction could be related to the fact that the schools participating in this study were previously privileged schools within relatively wealthy suburbs. Furthermore, urban schools could have the advantage of service providers assisting schools in providing the necessary resources to

		teachers. This assumption requires further investigation.
Category 2: School's assets and resources		
Results	**Existing knowledge**	**Findings / New insights**
Schools supported teachers with in-service training provided by the School-Based Support Team and independent service providers in the community.	Existing research indicates that many general education teachers do not have adequate training, support or knowledge in creating inclusive classrooms to be able to teach and support learners with dyslexia effectively (Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010; Sicherer, 2014).	The result of this study is in contradiction with current literature with regards to inadequate teacher training and support. In this study, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to be supported by the schools providing in-service training by School-Based Support Teams and independent service providers in the community. A possible reason for this contradiction could be related to schools' unique circumstances in realising the value of adequate in-service training.
Teachers from public schools reported on courses and workshops provided by teacher unions in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education.	Current literature indicates that many teachers express their concerns about the lack of training to adequately support learners with special educational needs and how to individualise programmes (Bornman & Donohue, 2013).	The results of this study are in contradiction with current research in terms of the lack of teacher training to support learners with special educational needs. A possible reason for this contradiction could be related to the collaboration between teacher unions and the Department of Basic Education to provide courses and workshops to teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.
General education teachers from public schools benefitted from the assistance of a teacher assistant in the classroom.	Current research indicates that teachers would like to have additional support in place such as assistant teachers as they believe this would help them to teach more efficiently especially concerning learners with learning difficulties (Kendall, 2008).	The result of this study is in contradiction with current literature regarding additional teacher support in the classroom. A possible reason for this contradiction could be related to the fact that some public schools could financially afford to employ teacher assistants.
Public schools supported teachers in providing the financial needs to attend in-service training as well as to	Existing literature states that the lack of funding in ordinary public schools as well as poverty in South Africa are considered	The results of this study are in contradiction with current research with regards to inadequate funding in public

purchase stationery and teaching aids.	barriers to inclusive education, and, therefore, remains a challenge to the implementation of inclusive education (Pillay & Di Terlizzi, 2009).	schools. A possible reason for this contradiction could be related to the fact that the participating schools are situated within a relatively middle class to wealthy suburbs. These schools have, therefore, the financial support from parents paying school fees. In addition, urban schools might have the advantage of parents and organisations within the community donating funds to the schools. However, this is a mere assumption that requires further investigation.

6.3.2.3 Addressing research question 2: How can Intermediate Phase teachers overcome challenges within an inclusive education environment to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia?

The second secondary research question in this study sought to determine how the participating teachers could overcome challenges in their everyday teaching to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia. I first discuss the challenges Intermediate Phase teachers might experience followed by a description of the teachers' assets, resources, and coping strategies in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.

The first and foremost challenge Intermediate Phase teachers could experience relates to their teaching experience and knowledge. Current research of Thompson (2014) considers a lack of teacher awareness to the needs of learners with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia as a significant challenge to successfully implementing inclusive education in South Africa. The present finding corroborates this statement since general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia evidently admit to ignorance concerning dyslexia and, consequently, might have a lack of knowledge and teaching experience in terms of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Moreover, general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemingly have lower self-confidence, as they question their ability to effectively teach and support these learners. This finding confirms those observed in earlier studies (Fuchs, 2010; Gordon, 2013; Thompson, 2014).

Another challenge which teachers might experience concerns their training and teacher development. General education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia apparently often lack the qualification or training to teach and support learners with

dyslexia. This finding is consistent with current literature claiming that although teachers are doing their best to teach and support learners with dyslexia, most of them are inadequately trained and qualified for this role (Dunoon, 2015; Gordon, 2013; Stofile & Green, 2007). Furthermore, findings of this study correlate with previous studies (Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010; Hodkinson, 2006; Sicherer, 2014) suggesting that, although in-service training and courses are provided, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemingly receive insufficient training in this regard. In accordance with the present findings, existing studies have acknowledged general education teachers' need for further in-service training to teach and support learners with dyslexia (Fuchs, 2010). This study's findings suggest that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia might benefit from in-service training concerning the characteristics and manifestation of dyslexia as well as practical suggestions on how to teach and support learners with dyslexia. According to previous studies (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007; Thompson, 2014), continued in-service teacher training is imperative for the successful implementation of inclusive education. However, in reviewing the existing literature, no data was found on challenges relating to the financial implications of in-service training which result in impeding teachers to attend these courses due to their financial constraints. In the same vein, some general education teachers who studied on-line to further their knowledge regarding dyslexia also experience challenges about the cost of these courses as well as challenges regarding internet access and the cost of data usage. Yet, this finding has not previously been presented in the existing literature.

The second significant challenge Intermediate Phase teachers could experience, concerns the learner with dyslexia. The findings of the present study seem to be consistent with other research (Thompson, 2014; Wadlington et al., 1996; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005) which found that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia probably fail in the early identification of dyslexia not only because of teachers' ignorance about the characteristics or symptoms of dyslexia, but due to parental ignorance as well. Another challenge related to the early identification of dyslexia could be attributed to parents' financial constraints as some parents do not have the financial means to afford the necessary psychological assessments. This finding confirms findings of previous research (Pillay & Di Terlizzi, 2009; Thompson, 2014), in which poverty in South Africa and a lack of funding in ordinary public schools are considered as barriers to inclusive education. As far as the learner with dyslexia's motivation and learned helplessness is concerned, this study's finding is consistent with those of Bornman and Donohue (2013) who argue that low expectations and an urge of parents, teachers, and caregivers to do everything for the learner result in a learned helplessness. For this reason, some teachers who are teaching

and supporting learners with dyslexia could experience challenges regarding learners with dyslexia's lack of motivation and learned helplessness. Just as existing literature states that teachers complained about challenges contributing to barriers in implementing inclusive education effectively (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Gordon, 2013), present findings match those findings confirming that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to experience challenges in providing individual assistance to learners with dyslexia due to the number of learners in the class and time constraints.

A third challenge that Intermediate Phase teachers might experience relates to the school environment. The present findings seem to be consistent with previous research (Kendall, 2008) which found that teachers find it difficult to adapt lessons to suit all the learners' needs in the classroom. Present findings suggest that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are possibly aware of the varied ability groups in their classes and might experience challenges regarding a flexible curriculum delivery style to support the learner with dyslexia. Moreover, many teachers express their concern and anxiety because they are unable to deal effectively with the daily assessment and intervention of learners with dyslexia (Thompson, 2014; Wadlington et al., 1996; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005). This study corresponds in the same way explaining that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia most likely experience challenges regarding the completion of written assessments due to the learners' slow working pace. In contrast to earlier findings stating that teachers lack adequate planning and collaboration time, as well as a lack of instructional time to cover all the requirements in the curriculum (Fuchs, 2010; Gordon, 2013; Thompson, 2014), this study has found that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia appear to be flexible in managing their instructional time to cover the curriculum requirements.

As far as the learning environment is concerned, some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seem to experience challenges regarding adequate support structures such as either teacher assistants in their classrooms or a multidisciplinary team to assist them with the learner with dyslexia. These findings appear to confirm earlier findings (Kendall, 2008; Pillay & Di Terlizzi, 2009; Thompson, 2014) reporting that ordinary schools do not provide necessary support structures and, therefore, teachers consider themselves as powerless because they do not have the necessary support and skills to assist their learners. However, contrary to the previous findings of Kendall (2008), some general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia in ordinary public schools seemingly have teacher assistants in their classrooms to assist them with the teaching and supporting of these learners. Another

challenge that some general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia might experience is adequate teaching resources available in their classrooms. By comparison, this finding corroborates existing literature which indicates that teachers do not have the necessary resources available to implement inclusion successfully because of inadequate budget allocations (P. Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Gordon, 2013; Philpott & McLaren, 2011). Moreover, general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to experience challenges regarding overcrowded classes, and consequently, learners with dyslexia are being referred to an LSEN school due to a lack of individual attention in ordinary public schools. This finding agrees with that of Stofile and Green (2007) showing that a large number of schools in South Africa still have overcrowded classes and lack physical spaces for learner discussion and equipment to enable learner investigations to make learning interesting, relevant and challenging. It is somewhat surprising that, although general education teachers daily face inadequate support and resources (Gordon, 2013; Oswald & Swart, 2011), no findings in existing literature was noted in teachers' challenges concerning the use of technological equipment to address the learning needs of the learner with dyslexia. Present findings suggest that special needs education teachers from the LSEN school had adequate teaching and learning support resources but challenges such as load shedding and power interruptions from the South African Electricity Supply Commission (Eskom), and no internet access or lack of data available made it difficult to use technological equipment effectively to teach and support learners with dyslexia.

The last challenge that Intermediate Phase teachers might experience concerns collaboration with external role players such as the learner with dyslexia's parents and family members, and either the Department of Basic Education or the Independent Schools' Association of South Africa. Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia probably experience challenges about some parents' cooperation in terms of collaboration and support. Findings in this study acknowledge that teachers might believe that parents either did not want to take responsibility in assisting their child with homework or that they blamed the education system and the teachers for their child's learning difficulties. These findings support those mentioned by Kendall (2008). Similarly, general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seem to experience challenges concerning parents contributing to the learner's barriers to learning because they chose not to be confronted with their child's learning difficulties. Teachers likely assume that some parents who have the financial means to pay for assessments rather prefer not to be confronted with their child's learning difficulties. In accordance with the present findings, existing literature has pointed out that good family support within the

socio-ecological model is a protective factor against barriers within the system which leads to better outcomes for learners with dyslexia trying to achieve their learning potential (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Donald et al., 2006; Swart & Pettipher, 2012; Williams & Lynch, 2010). Finally, as far as support from the Department of Basic Education or the Independent Schools' Association of South Africa is concerned, School-Based Support Teams need to be able to access support from the district and the community (Stofile & Green, 2007). Findings of the present study confirm the findings of previous studies indicating that general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia could experience challenges regarding communication with the Department of Basic Education or the Independent Schools' Association of South Africa.

With respect to teachers' assets, resources, and coping strategies in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, Intermediate Phase teachers demonstrate certain characteristics in their teaching practice. There are similarities between this study's findings and existing literature (Bishop et al., 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013b; Erkan et al., 2012; Kendall, 2008; UNESCO, 2001). To begin with, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemingly acknowledge personal attributes such as compassion and empathy as significant to effectively teach and support these learners. First of all, they are likely to care for these learners by demonstrating patience in their daily contact with the learners. Secondly, special needs education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia appear to demonstrate care by listening to these learners and appreciating their learner inputs. Thirdly, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seem to care and nurture these learners by creating a safe learning environment where they are protected against labelling, teasing and bullying. Moreover, they probably build and maintain a supportive relationship with the learner with dyslexia. Finally, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia might have high expectations for these learners and apply motivational strategies to support them in reaching their potential.

Another significant characteristic contributing to teachers' assets is their ability to demonstrate fairness and respect towards the learner with dyslexia. Present findings corroborate with existing literature (Banu, 2013; Bishop et al., 2010; Blecker & Boakes, 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013b; Kyriacou, 2001; Stronge et al., 2004; University of Pretoria, 2010b), in which teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are likely to demonstrate fairness and respect by achieving social justice and equality for all their learners. They seemingly treat learners with dyslexia with respect as they are sensitive to the needs and feelings of these learners and accept and respect them for whom they are. Furthermore, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia appear to

believe that aspects such as personal touch, a sense of belonging, mutual trust, forgiveness and a sense of humour are essential in establishing a relationship with the learners. The findings of this study also indicate that despite challenges in the teaching profession, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemingly possess personal attributes such as passion and perseverance, and display optimism and a high self-esteem to demonstrate their positive attitude towards their teaching practice. These findings are consistent with those described by Eloff (2006) and the University of Pretoria (2010a).

With regard to reflective teaching, the findings of this study show similarities to those of existing literature (Bishop et al., 2010; Engelbrecht, 2013b; Fuchs, 2010; UNESCO, 2001) indicating that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seem to be receptive and open-minded to new information. General education teachers furthermore likely believe that they personally benefit from teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia within an ordinary school environment. Equally important, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are possibly able and willing to admit their mistakes and might be responsible and dedicated in their teaching practice.

Prior studies have noticed the importance of mental and physical palliative strategies to reduce the effects of work-related stress and burnout on teachers' health and well-being (Antoniou et al., 2009; Austin et al., 2005; Banu, 2013; Coetzee et al., 2009; Kyriacou, 2001; University of Pretoria, 2010b). This study produced findings which corroborate the findings of a great deal of prior studies in this field. Present findings suggest that, to reduce their stress levels, Intermediate Phase teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia apparently engage in meditation and enjoyable, physical activities ranging from low-level exercise such as gardening, cooking and training with dogs and cats to adrenalin seeking adventures such as scuba diving and skydiving. For social support, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seem to rely on their spouse, family and friends for emotion-focused and problem-focused support.

As far as classroom assets and resources within a supportive school environment is concerned, findings of this study differ from those of Stofile and Green (2007) who state that a large number of schools in South Africa still lack equipment. Present findings suggest that some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia have adequate teaching equipment available. A possible reason for this contradiction could be related to the assumption that urban public schools have the advantage of sources and resources available to equip teachers with sophisticated, modern technology to assist them in their teaching. Contrary to the research of Kendall (2008) explaining that teachers would like to

have additional support in place such as assistant teachers, this study suggests that general education teachers in ordinary public schools seem to benefit from the support of a teacher assistant in their classrooms. Another finding in contrast to earlier findings relates to teaching resources in the classroom. Existing research indicates that general education teachers face barriers to inclusive education such as inadequate support and resources (Gordon, 2013). However, this study suggests that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia have adequate teaching resources available in their classrooms. A possible reason for this contradiction could be related to teachers who are seemingly able to identify teaching and learning resources available in their classrooms. Another possible reason for this contradiction could be related to the fact that the schools participating in this study were previously privileged schools within relatively wealthy suburbs. Furthermore, urban schools could have the advantage of service providers assisting them in providing the necessary resources to teachers. This assumption, however, requires further investigation.

With regard to the schools' assets and resources to support teachers in the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia, the present findings confirms existing literature (Obiakor et al., 2012) stating that schools are systematically organised, problem-solving organisations where all teachers are expected to participate and attend courses and workshops. Although existing research indicates that many general education teachers do not have adequate training, support or knowledge to be able to teach and support learners with dyslexia effectively (Bornman & Donohue, 2013; Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010; Sicherer, 2014), the result of this study implies that the schools are likely supporting teachers in this regard by providing in-service training through School-Based Support Teams and independent service providers in the community. Above all, the present findings suggest that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia possibly receive courses and workshops provided by teacher unions in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education. In addition, present findings agree with other literature (Bishop et al., 2010; Department of Education, 2011; Gordon, 2013; Stofile & Green, 2007; Swart & Pettipher, 2012), in which teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia could depend on collaboration with their colleagues and management support structures for support to teach and support these learners. Earlier research (Kyriacou, 2001) notes the importance of a positive atmosphere and social support at schools where teachers could share concerns with each other. The present study found that special needs education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are seemingly supported by LSEN schools, demonstrating care and social support strategies to their teachers. In addition, as part of their support structure, teachers seemingly value and rely

on collaboration with healthcare service providers such as counsellors, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and remedial therapists to assist them in teaching and supporting the learner with dyslexia. Another important finding corroborating existing literature (Department of Basic Education, 2015; Swart & Pettipher, 2012) was that teachers are probably supported by their schools' SGB and school management teams in terms of financial support and coping strategies to effectively alleviate challenges relating to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Concerning the role of the SGB within a supportive school environment, the present study points out that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are seemingly supported by schools where the SGB could financially support the school. Surprisingly, although a lack of funding and poverty in South Africa exist (Pillay & Di Terlizzi, 2009), the findings of this study suggest that public schools appear to have adequate funding. A possible reason for this contradiction could be related to the fact that the participating schools are situated within relatively middle class to wealthy suburbs. These schools have, therefore, the financial support from parents paying school fees. In addition, urban schools might have the advantage of parents and organisations within the community donating funds to the schools. However, this is a mere assumption that requires further investigation.

Finally, present findings seem to be consistent with existing literature (Bornman & Donohue, 2013; Swart & Pettipher, 2012) which found that teachers' assets and resources should include those existing within the community. Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia could probably identify assets and resources existing within the community that is available to support them in teaching and supporting these learners. Above all, these teachers appear to benefit from collaborative partnerships with independent health care professionals and other human resources within the community.

In this section, I reported on the findings concerning Intermediate Phase teachers' challenges, assets, resources, and coping strategies in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. To conclude the present study's findings, I address the primary research question in the following section.

6.3.3 Primary Research Question: How do Intermediate Phase Teachers Experience the Teaching and Support of Learners with Dyslexia?

Prior to my research, the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa's previously known mainstream classrooms has raised concern among teachers as they've become aware of the increasing number of learners who are experiencing learning difficulties, including learners with dyslexia. As mentioned before, this study set out with the aim of providing a rich, in-depth description of Intermediate Phase teachers' experiences

regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia and in Figure 6.2, I illustrate my understanding thereof.

Upon entering the research field, it seemed clear that teachers are the key stakeholders in determining the quality of inclusive education in their classrooms and, therefore, play a central role to the teaching and supporting of learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. Teachers have certain cognitive, emotive, and behavioural attitudes which could shape, influence, and inform their applied teaching approaches and strategies when teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Present findings suggest that Intermediate Phase teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia could demonstrate a relatively fair understanding of dyslexia, and appear to be knowledgeable regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment. They also seem to perceive the learner with dyslexia as being different to the mainstream learner and believe that the learner, despite having dyslexia, has the potential to be successful in life. As was expected, teachers who have a better understanding and positive expectations of the learner with dyslexia demonstrate sympathy and admiration towards these learners but at the same time might experience frustration, guilt, emotional exhaustion, and feelings of being inadequate to teach and support the learner with dyslexia. Furthermore, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemingly address the emotional needs of these learners not only by providing additional support in the classroom but also by approaching them in a gentle, caring and encouraging manner, and treat them fairly and equally i.e., the same as the other learners. However, ignorance regarding dyslexia could result in teachers labelling learners with dyslexia according to their behaviour in the classroom.

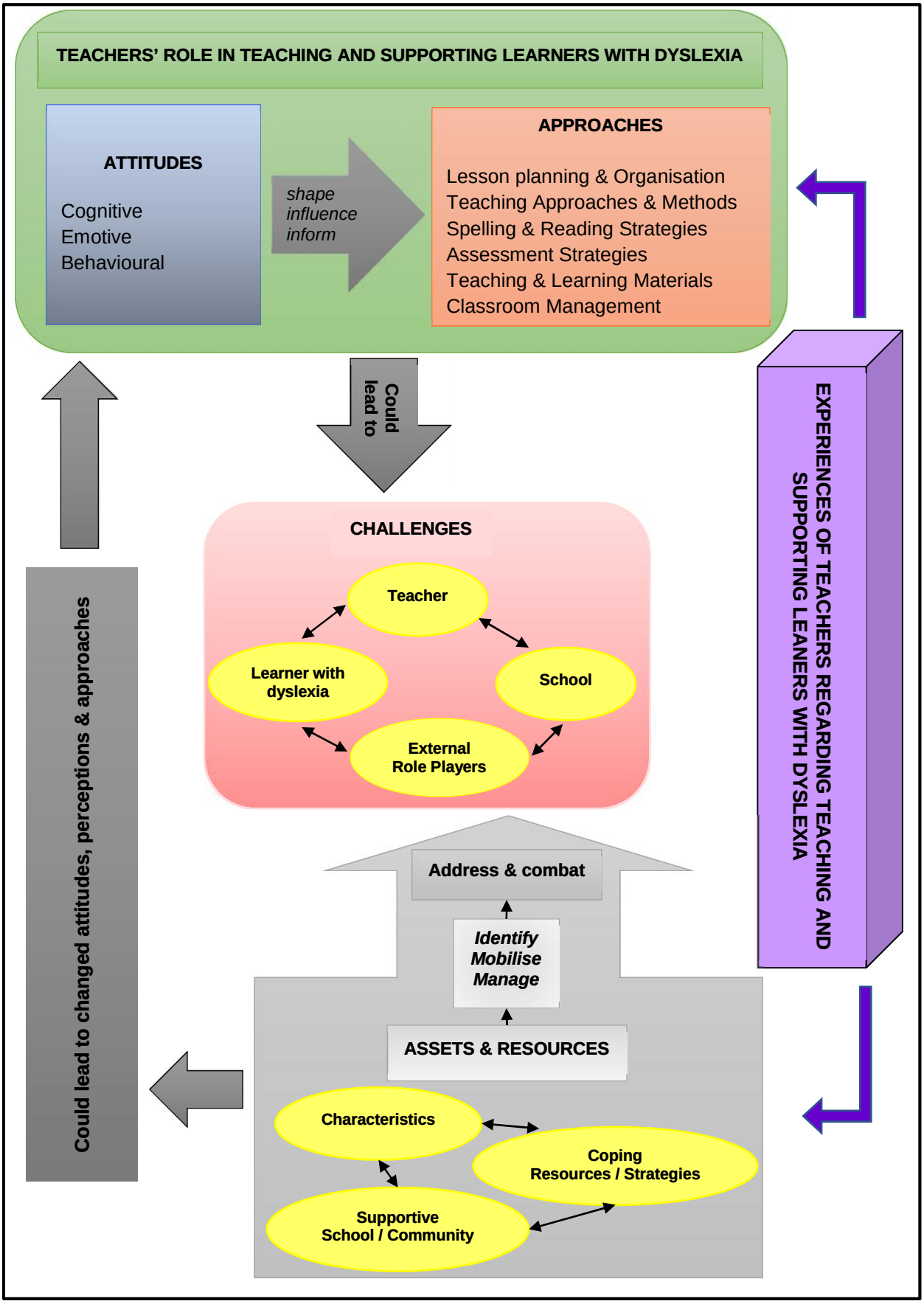


Figure 6.2: **Experiences of teachers regarding teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia**

As noted before, teachers play a fundamental role in the implementation of inclusive education in their classrooms and, consequently, their attitudes regarding dyslexia and the learner with dyslexia could influence and inform their approaches when teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. To provide for these learners' needs, teachers should have both the knowledge and the confidence to apply their teaching skills in the classroom. Present findings point out that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia are mostly well prepared and seemingly consider the needs of the learner with dyslexia when planning, organising, and presenting their lessons. However, ignorance regarding the needs of the learner with dyslexia might lead to teachers not being able to change and adapt their lesson plans to include these learners in learning activities. While some teachers might prefer a linear teaching approach when preparing and presenting their lessons, other teachers prefer a holistic approach to learning. Despite teachers' different curriculum delivery styles, they seemingly acknowledge a multi-sensory approach as beneficial to the learner with dyslexia, and vary their teaching strategies to address the needs of these learners. To teach and support learners with dyslexia in their spelling and reading, teachers seem to implement strategies such as syllables and morphology, repeated oral reading and direct and indirect vocabulary instruction. In addition, teachers appear to address and accommodate the learner with dyslexia's different learning styles by adapting learning materials and applying multi-sensory teaching aids. Contradictory to previous research, the present findings suggest that teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seem to be flexible in managing their instructional time to cover the curriculum requirements. As far as classroom strategies is concerned, some teachers value structure and discipline in their classrooms, and apply pro-active classroom strategies to reward learners for socially appropriate behaviour. When assessing the work of learners with dyslexia, some teachers support these learners by implementing differentiated assessment strategies.

Following Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective, teachers are aware of the complex relationship between the learner, the teacher, the school, and external role players within the education environment. It is likely that, whenever a barrier arises in any one of these different systems, teachers could experience challenges when applying their teaching approaches and strategies. The present findings note that general education teachers could lack the qualification or training to teach and support learners with dyslexia. These teachers evidently admit to ignorance concerning dyslexia and, therefore, might have a lack of knowledge and teaching experience in terms of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Although in-service training and courses are provided, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia might benefit from more specialised in-service

training concerning the characteristics of dyslexia as well as practical suggestions on how to teach and support these learners. Not only do teachers experience challenges regarding the learner with dyslexia's lack of motivation and learned helplessness, but they also experience challenges in providing individual assistance to these learners due to time constraints and the number of learners in the class. In terms of challenges related to the school environment, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia might experience challenges regarding a flexible curriculum delivery style to address the diverse needs of these learners. Teachers appear to be concerned and anxious because they believe that they cannot effectively deal with the completion of written assessments in addition to the daily assessment and intervention of learners with dyslexia. Other challenges that some teachers might experience concerns adequate teaching resources available in their classrooms. Teachers could experience challenges in using technological equipment effectively to teach and support learners with dyslexia due to either power interruptions or no internet access or lack of data available. Teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia also might experience challenges regarding collaboration with external role players. Teachers seemingly believe that some parents either do not want to take responsibility for their child's education or they blame the education system and the teachers for their child's learning difficulties. Furthermore, parents either do not have the financial means to afford the necessary psychological assessments or those who could financially afford these assessments rather prefer not to be confronted with their child's learning difficulties. As far as support from the Department of Basic Education or the Independent Schools' Association of South Africa is concerned, general education teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia could experience challenges regarding communication with these educational institutions.

Referring to the asset-based approach as discussed in Chapter 3, teachers could identify, mobilise, and manage assets, resources, and coping strategies to address and combat the aforementioned challenges in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Present findings indicate that Intermediate Phase teachers value certain characteristics such as compassion, empathy, fairness, and respect as significant to enable them to be more resilient in their teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia. Furthermore, despite challenges in the teaching profession, teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia seemingly possess personal attributes such as a positive attitude, passion and perseverance in their everyday teaching. To reduce their stress levels and maintain a positive attitude, teachers apply coping strategies such as meditation and enjoyable, low-level physical activities. They also seemingly rely on their spouse, family and friends for emotion-focused and problem-focused support. It is also worth noting that a supportive

school and community environment within an inclusive education context is committed to provide the necessary care and support strategies to assist teachers to resist the challenges of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Despite findings from previous studies indicating that many schools still lack equipment, some teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia could identify adequate teaching and learning resources and teaching equipment available in their classrooms. Notwithstanding the fact that previous research acknowledges a lack of additional support in teachers' classrooms, present findings point out that general education teachers in ordinary public schools who are teaching and supporting leaners with dyslexia seemingly benefit from the support of a teaching assistant in their classrooms. Furthermore, teachers could rely on collaboration with their colleagues, management support structures, and health practitioners to support them in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Teachers also have opportunities to attend in-service training provided by School-Based Support Teams, independent service providers in the community and teacher unions in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education. With respect to the role of the SGB within a supportive school environment, the findings of this study suggest that, although a lack of funding and poverty exist in South Africa, public schools appear to have adequate funding to financially support teachers in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.

To conclude, in their role of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, teachers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioural attitudes could shape, influence, and inform their teaching approaches and strategies. With Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective in mind, teachers are likely to encounter challenges within the different systems such as the learner with dyslexia, the school environment, external role players in the community, and teachers themselves when applying differentiated teaching approaches and strategies. The asset-based approach within the positive psychology framework allows teachers to identify, mobilise, and manage available assets and resources to address and combat the challenges they could experience in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. This in turn could lead to a change not only in teachers' attitudes and perceptions regarding learners with dyslexia, but also in their applied teaching approaches and strategies to teach and support these learners.

6.4 REVISITING WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

Based on my review of existing literature, theories and the findings from previous research, as well as my own knowledge, professional experience, and involvement in supporting learners with spelling, reading, and language difficulties, I formulated initial working

assumptions for the present study. This part of the dissertation discusses these initial assumptions in relation to the findings.

Working assumption 1: Although most teachers are qualified and attend in-service training, not all of them have adequate knowledge, skills and experience to provide effective teaching and support for all the learners in their classrooms, including learners with dyslexia. Above all, teachers could, despite their qualifications and in-service training, believe that they may lack experience, confidence, and classroom support to teach and support learners with dyslexia. As evident from the data in the present study, general education teachers reported to receive insufficient training in the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia in their classrooms despite the availability of in-service training and courses. They seemingly admit to ignorance concerning dyslexia and, consequently, might question their ability to teach and support the learner with dyslexia since they believe that they have inadequate knowledge and teaching experience to teach and support learners with dyslexia. This working assumption is supported, since teachers might benefit from in-service training concerning the characteristics of dyslexia as well as practical suggestions on how to teach and support these learners. Moreover, present findings confirm that general education teachers appear to have lower self-confidence because they question their ability to effectively teach and support these learners.

Working assumption 2: The teachers' ability and skills to teach and support the learner with dyslexia may be influenced by their attitudes regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment. Both the present study and existing literature (Bishop et al., 2010; Ho, 2004; Kendall, 2008; Plevin, 2008; Stark, 2015; Thompson, 2014; Washburn et al., 2014) correlate with this working assumption. Findings of this study suggest that teachers' cognitive, emotive, and behavioural attitudes could inform and influence their approaches and strategies in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Intermediate Phase teachers' teaching approaches and strategies include lesson planning and organisation, general teaching approaches and methods, spelling and reading strategies, assessment strategies, teaching and learning materials, and classroom management.

Working assumption 3: Teachers' attitudes regarding dyslexia could lead to stigmatisation and labelling of learners with dyslexia. Both the findings of this study and existing literature (Hall, 2009; Ho, 2004; Riddick, 2000; Stark, 2015; Taylor et al., 2010) confirm that teachers' apparent ignorance regarding dyslexia could lead to teachers labelling learners with dyslexia as being naughty, lazy, not listening or not doing their work. This working assumption is supported, since a diagnosis of dyslexia, teacher awareness

regarding dyslexia, and understanding the learner with dyslexia might change teachers' attitudes regarding the behaviour of these learners.

Working assumption 4: Some teachers' limited knowledge regarding dyslexia and possible misconceptions and prejudice toward the learner with dyslexia may cause them to become frustrated in teaching learners with dyslexia. The present findings and existing literature (Bornman & Donohue, 2013; Klehm, 2014; Osmond, 1993) correlate with this working assumption. Teachers who have a better understanding and positive expectations of the learner with dyslexia are more likely to demonstrate positive feelings such as sympathy and admiration toward these learners. Although teachers seemingly experienced feelings of affection toward learners with dyslexia, they might also experience negative emotions such as frustration, guilt and emotional exhaustion when teaching and supporting these learners.

Working assumption 5: The teaching of learners with dyslexia could be demanding as these learners require intensive, structured and systematic instruction to make progress in their spelling and reading skills. It is therefore quite possible that teachers may experience challenges in the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia. Present findings match this working assumption, confirming that teachers are likely to experience challenges in providing individual assistance to learners with dyslexia due to the large number of learners in the class and time constraints. Moreover, teachers are seemingly aware of the varied ability groups in their classes and might find it difficult to adapt lessons to suit all the learners' needs in the classroom. Many teachers express their concern and anxiety because they believe that they are unable to effectively deal with the daily assessment and intervention of learners with dyslexia as well as the completion of written assessments due to the learners' slow working pace.

Working assumption 6: Teachers' awareness of their own attributes, strengths, and assets may support their teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia. Findings from the present study confirm that teachers could define personal attributes such as care and support, fairness and respect, a positive attitude, having a reflective mind and being life-long learners as significant to effectively teach and support learners with dyslexia. Present findings support this working assumption because despite challenges in the teaching profession, teachers appear to have a positive attitude as they demonstrate personal attributes such as optimism, passion, and perseverance. Moreover, resources within a supportive school environment and applied coping strategies might contribute toward teachers' ability to deal more effectively with the challenges associated with teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.

6.5 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This multiple case study aimed to offer detailed accounts regarding the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers who are teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia in an inclusive classroom setting. Consequently, it could enrich the current knowledge base within the field of dyslexia by providing insight into South African teachers' cognitive, emotive, and behavioural attitudes with regard to dyslexia as a specific learning impairment and the learner with dyslexia. Dyslexia awareness amongst teachers and concerned parties in the entire educational environment could lead to gaining more knowledge regarding dyslexia as a specific learning impairment. As a result, misconceptions and misdiagnoses could be avoided.

Furthermore, the significance of this study could be in prompting a search for more knowledge regarding teachers' experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. In gaining more insight into teachers' applied teaching and support strategies to assist and accommodate the learner with dyslexia, teachers, healthcare professionals and the community could strive towards an inclusive education system as stated in *The South African Schools Act Number 84* (Department of Basic Education, 1996) and *Education White Paper Six: Special Needs Education* (Department of Education, 2001) where all learners, including those who are experiencing barriers to learning will equally be educated.

In addition, the information gained might contribute to new knowledge in the field of education and psychology as the findings highlighted the everyday challenges faced by teachers in terms of the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. Equally important, teachers, educational psychologists, and researchers could be enlightened into the coping resources and strategies contributing to teacher resilience in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. It is likely that, in the long term, a better understanding of teachers' challenges regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia, as well as the assets, coping resources and strategies contributing to teacher resilience could assist other teachers in terms of improving classroom instruction and enriching the overall classroom environment.

Once the study is approved for publishing, the goal is to disseminate the findings to local school districts. Teacher workshops related to the characteristics of dyslexia and practical suggestions to support learners with dyslexia could be held at the beginning of the school year to provide me the opportunity and sufficient time to distribute and explain the findings which could lead to more efficient teacher development and support to teachers dealing with learners with dyslexia.

6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations of this study relate to the level of transferability, the response of participating teachers and my role as researcher.

6.6.1 Transferability of the Study

As this study focused on teachers' experiences with regard to the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia, my aim was to gain insight into teachers' experiences at specific schools in a specific context. Thus, one of the limitations to the transferability of this study relates to the sampling strategy. The present study was limited in scope since I used six Intermediate Phase teachers who were employed at three different primary schools within the local school district. As the findings were a matter of the participating teachers' opinions (Ary et al., 2002), they cannot be transferred to all teachers in all classrooms in different schools. Therefore, the results and conclusions may not be generalised (Nieuwenhuis, 2013a) and applied to other teachers in different geographic locations. However, working from a qualitative, interpretivist stance, the purpose was to enter the teacher's domain to obtain a rich, in-depth understanding of their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) and not to generalise the findings.

Furthermore, the present qualitative study's framework could be broadened if other teachers from different geographic locations were included. However, due to the multiple case study's boundaries (Yin, 2014) of time and place (Creswell, 2013), it would be beyond the scope of the present study to involve teachers teaching in rural areas and informal settlements. As urban schools are generally known for a better quality of education and more professional teachers (Jusufi, 2014), this study's data could be richer if schools in rural areas and informal settlements were involved to determine if there is a difference between the teachers' experiences in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. However, I purposively select primary schools based on geographical accessibility within the Gauteng province.

Although I am not positing a gender or race bias, the demographic composition of the present study was heavily skewed toward the white female population. Future studies should consider balancing the number of multi-racial male and female teachers in their samples so that they are more equitable.

As such, this study may enlighten other teachers of the participating teachers' experiences in terms of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia and, therefore, teachers from different contexts need to decide to what extend the results from this study are applicable

in their specific schools and classrooms. However, in my opinion as a researcher, this study could possibly be transferable to teachers in similar contexts and circumstances. For this reason, I intended to describe these cases in detail for other teachers to decide on the level of transferability to their own classrooms and contexts.

6.6.2 Response of Participating Teachers

The Head of Department from two schools and the Principal from one school functioned as gatekeepers to the participating teachers and assisted me to set up interviews with them. This could have led to a possible Hawthorne effect (Cohen et al., 2011; Maree, 2013; Seabi, 2012) in the sense that the participating teachers might have felt obliged to portray a more positive description of their experiences than they would have if I could contact them directly and their identities were not known to the respective gatekeepers.

Certain limitations include the participating teachers' response bias which is similar to the Hawthorne effect (Seabi, 2012). Although it was assumed that the participating teachers would answer the interview questions truthfully, it was possible that they would be unwilling to reveal their true feelings about the learner with dyslexia because they did not wish to seem intolerant. Moreover, the participating teachers could have responded to the questions in the semi structured interview in such a way in which they believed I wanted them to respond. To overcome this limitation, I attempted to establish rapport with each participating teacher and encouraged openness by promising them complete confidentiality and not to discuss their responses with the gatekeeper or any other colleagues at their schools.

Another limitation of the study relates to the participants' reflective journal. Although the participating teachers were requested to keep a reflective journal to voice their experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia, only one teacher reflected on her feelings, thoughts, experiences, and ideas. Time constraints and the burden of administrative duties could be a possible explanation for preventing participating teachers to use the reflective journal as an additional data source.

6.6.3 Role of the Researcher

Other limitations of this study relate to objectivity and subjective influences (Creswell, 2008; Jansen, 2013). Despite being a researcher in this study, I am also a teacher and learning support specialist. Thus, it was important to distinguish between these various roles. As a researcher and a learning support specialist, I had a special interest in the study and became a nonparticipant observer during the data collection phase (Creswell, 2013). I

established a research partnership with the participating teachers when they shared and demonstrated their experiences regarding the teaching and supporting of learners with dyslexia. Since it was important to be aware of my own subjective opinions and to avoid affecting the participating teachers' opinions regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia, I interviewed and observed them without intervention or manipulation (Ary et al., 2002; Cohen et al., 2011; Hatch, 2002) within their classroom settings (Lichtman, 2006). Moreover, I aimed to capture my reflections and subjective experiences in my research journal instead, and to focus on the participating teachers' experiences during the research (Lichtman, 2006; Seale, 2002). Equally important, I made use of numerous strategies such as member checking, crystallisation, rich descriptions, reflection, peer reviewing and supervision debriefing, and an audit trail to contribute to the quality criteria of this study (Ary et al., 2002; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2008, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Hittleman & Simon, 2006; Janesick, 2000; Lichtman, 2006; Richardson, 2000).

In the present study, it was imperative to distinguish between my role as a learning support specialist and a researcher. Therefore, both the participating teachers and I considered myself as a researcher and not a learning support specialist or a teacher when I conducted this study. As a researcher, I had several roles to attend to and, consequently, aimed not to confuse these roles or to transfer personal and subjective experiences to the participating teachers within any of my roles. I attended to these roles as an ethical, professional, reflective researcher, and as a nonparticipating observer. My reflections guided my thoughts and actions, and supported the rationale behind my decisions and attention to the different roles (Ary et al., 2002; Creswell, 2013; Janesick, 2000; Richardson, 2000).

The aim of this study was to gain insight into teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia and, therefore, it was imperative to consider the teachers' experiences through their own findings and not my own. Being a learning support specialist, I am passionate with regard to the support of learners with specific learning difficulties which include the learner with dyslexia. As a result, I at times found it challenging to set my personal, preconceived views aside and focus on the participating teachers. However, reflection assisted me in distinguishing between my own subjective interpretation of the teachers' feedback and the actual insights and opinions that the teachers brought to the study. Moreover, in observing the participating teachers, I aimed to be open towards the participating teachers' views. At the same time, I attempted to guard against observer bias (Seabi, 2012) as I did not want to become too closely involved with the participating teachers in the current study.

6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study revealed the extent of teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia in their classrooms. Having assessed the themes that emerged, I suggest the following recommendations for practice, training and future research in the fields of education and educational psychology.

6.7.1 Recommendations for Practice

One of the long-term goals in establishing an inclusive educational system in South Africa was to include among others Special Schools (LSEN Schools) and designated full-service and other schools (Department of Education, 2001). As described in *Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (ibid.), the role of Special Schools as Resource Centres suggests a new way of thinking in the sense that special education resource teachers and mainstream teachers should include traditional special class and aid class teachers who would no longer be attached to a permanent class. As the focus should be on supporting all teachers in curriculum adaptation and classroom management, traditional special class and aid class teachers would become learning support instructors to assist teachers to support the diverse needs of all learners (Department of Education Directorate: Inclusive Education, 2005). In light of the abovementioned goal to establish an inclusive educational environment, as well as recommendations based on the findings of this study, I suggest the establishment of a Special Needs Support Unit in every school in the country irrespective of being a Special School, Resource Centre, full-service school or an ordinary school. This kind of unit could comprise of a group of support personnel who are responsible for the academic, social and emotional well-being of the learners experiencing specific learning difficulties. With regard to the academic well-being of learners, I recommend the employment of learning support teachers qualified to teach and support the learner with dyslexia in a more individualised and structured programme; one that the ordinary classroom teacher cannot provide. It should be the learning support teacher's sole responsibility to intervene with learners who are experiencing reading, spelling and comprehension difficulties. In addition to learning support teachers, occupational therapists, and speech and language therapists, the Special Needs Support Unit could include an educational psychologist to deal with learners experiencing social and emotional difficulties. It should be the government's responsibility to oversee and employ this kind of multidisciplinary team as part of every public school's staff establishment, as these support services should not be restricted to LSEN schools or to learners whose parents can afford to pay independent service providers. However, I admit that this recommendation may currently not be realistic within our South African

context because inadequate funding and poverty are considered as barriers to implementing inclusive education (Pillay & Di Terlizzi, 2009; Thompson, 2014).

With reference to Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective and the asset-based approach, I further recommend support structures within the different systems. For instance, teachers could establish a support group at school where they meet once a month to pro-actively discuss and exchange ideas to support each other with the challenges they might experience regarding learners experiencing barriers to learning such as dyslexia in their classrooms.

6.7.2 Recommendations for Training

Findings from this study suggested that although teachers from ordinary public and independent primary schools seemed to be aware of the reading and spelling difficulties of learners with dyslexia (Bell, 2013; Gwernan-Jones & Burden, 2010), they did not consider themselves knowledgeable enough with regard to teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Although the sample size is small and criterion-based, and the findings cannot be generalised to the experiences of all teachers, some suggestions for improving their experiences in terms of teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia in their classrooms can be made:

- A recommendation is that pre-service training in dyslexia and other learning difficulties in the context of inclusive education should be part of the core modules in the pre-service training curricula and, therefore, should be compulsory; it should not be offered as an optional module. This recommendation is based on the assumption that if prospective teachers are better prepared during their training, they would feel more confident and equipped to deal with learners with special educational needs such as dyslexia.
- Based on the need for continued in-service training and support, a recommended action for teacher training programs would be to ensure that teachers are properly trained and given the information they will need to identify and address the needs of learners with dyslexia in their classrooms. A further recommendation is that in-service training in dyslexia and other special educations needs areas should be made compulsory not only for language teachers but for all subject teachers. It is imperative that all subject teachers are equipped to teach and support learners with dyslexia as this specific learning impairment does not only impact the learner in language subjects.

- In addition, I recommend that teacher training programmes and in-service teacher training include content on positive psychology and the asset-based approach. Teachers trained in the theory on the asset-based approach, resilience and psychosocial support would be better equipped to promote resilience in schools and support learners experiencing barriers to learning.

6.7.3 Recommendation for Future Research

Further research in the field of dyslexia is needed as teachers' experiences have only been recently published in the literature (Bell et al., 2011; Gordon, 2013; Grönblad, 2013; Jusufi, 2014; McGuyer, 2011; Sicherer, 2014; Thompson, 2014; Washburn et al., 2014; Williams, 2012). Based on the current study's findings and generated working assumptions, I suggest the following investigations for future research:

- As the present study reported on the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers, future research could further explore the experiences of teachers in the Senior Phase[20] and Further Education and Training Phase[21]. According to existing literature as discussed in Chapter 2, dyslexia cannot be cured and persists through adulthood. Therefore, more research could clarify the experiences of high school teachers as these may considerably differ from primary school teachers.
- Further research could include more public and independent schools as well as a diversity of both male and female teachers representing South Africa's population dynamics in the sampling to ensure that the findings are not gender, race or school specific. Moreover, possible comparative studies between urban schools, previously disadvantaged schools and schools in rural areas across the country could deepen researchers' and teachers' current knowledge base in the field of dyslexia.
- In today's world of innovative educational technology, non-experimental research designs could investigate and explore how Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers can utilise new assistive technology as part of their applied teaching strategies to affect cognition and improve the reading skills of learners with dyslexia.
- Further research could be conducted to explore the possibility of teachers implementing an asset-based approach as a strategy to teach and support learners experiencing barriers to learning including the learner with dyslexia.

[20] Secondary school-going children between the ages of 13 years and 15 years in the Senior Phase (Grade 7 to Grade 9).
[21] Secondary school-going learners between the ages of 16 years and 18 years in the Further Education and Training Phase (Grade 10 to Grade 12).

- As teachers should be able to respond to the diverse needs of all learners in terms of curriculum differentiation (Department of Education, 2011; Engelbrecht, 2013a), future research could investigate how learners with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia could benefit from teachers implementing multi-level teaching in their classrooms to teach and support learners with dyslexia.
- Participants in the present study were primary school teachers. Possible future research could be conducted to explore the way in which participants in other healthcare professions may intervene and support learners with dyslexia.
- Another suggestion for further research could be an exploration of how parents and caregivers of learners with dyslexia feel regarding teachers' attitudes and how they experience their children's progress in the general classroom setting.
- Since there seems to be a lack of research concerning learners with dyslexia, future research could investigate the conditions of these learners and their rights of inclusion not only in the educational setting but also in society.

6.8 PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Against the background of inclusive education, the present study attempted to demonstrate teachers' experiences concerning the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. In using meta-cognition and revisiting my thoughts as researcher, I conclude this study with some reflecting thoughts.

6.8.1 My Aim for This Study

As a teacher and learning support specialist, I was motivated to conduct this study because I was aware of the challenges that teachers face when learners experiencing specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia are integrated in their classrooms. With inclusion being a concern for many years, I was inspired to conduct this research with the ends of supporting teachers who are dealing with these learners. Thus, the aim of this study was to explore and describe six Intermediate Phase teachers' experiences regarding the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia. The present study did not only contribute to existing literature on dyslexia as a specific learning impairment but also had a positive impact on both the participating teachers and myself as researcher as we became aware of how teachers' cognitive, emotive, and behavioural attitudes could shape, influence, and inform their applied teaching approaches and strategies when teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia. Moreover, we became aware of how positive psychology and an asset-based approach allow teachers to identify, mobilise, and manage available assets and resources to address and resist the challenges they could experience in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.

6.8.2 What Really Excited Me

As a researcher, I found the interviewing and observational process to be a motivating experience. It provided a perfect opportunity to hear the teachers' thoughts as they openly discussed their experiences with regard to the learners with dyslexia. Moreover, it was inspiring to see such passion and dedication in sharing their positive attitude and resilience in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia despite of the challenges they experienced within an inclusive classroom setting.

6.8.3 Challenges I Experienced

Throughout the research process, I noticed that timeframes sometimes might be adjusted to overcome the obstacles that were presented. One specific obstacle that I experienced was the challenge to locate an independent primary school which conformed to meet the present study's sampling criterion. Thus, locating an appropriate independent primary school took considerably more time than what I had anticipated and lengthened the time I had spent during the data collection process. In addition, because of the participating teachers' school duties and extramural activities, it was very difficult to schedule interview dates and times once the participating teachers gave me consent. In my position as a researcher, I had to be patient and accommodate their daily plans.

During the data collection process, I was concerned with regard to my verbal and nonverbal communication skills. Consequently, I was attentive that my facial expressions, body movements, and voice inflections would not influence any responses from the participating teachers. Moreover, the collection of data took substantial time and as a novice qualitative researcher, I found the transcription of the audio data and the consequential analyses of six participants' personal interviews a tedious and time-consuming process. Hence, it took self-discipline and dedication to follow through and complete the process. In addition, the participating teachers interpreted some of the questions in a different way than I had anticipated, and therefore I did not obtain the answers that I would have expected. However, I considered it as part of the research process as their responses contributed to rich data I otherwise would not have obtained.

Referring to Chapter 4, I mentioned participants' reflective journals as one of the strategies to collect data. However, I considered it as one of the limitations of this study since it was not a liable data collection strategy. Participating teachers found it difficult to keep a reflective journal due to their already tight schedules and the burden of administrative duties. Fortunately, one participant kept a reflective journal throughout the course of the research.

Another challenge I experienced was to report and discuss the huge amount of data gathered to fit within the page restrictions of the dissertation. Consequently, I had to exclude some information to adhere to the requirements of the dissertation. Moreover, as this study was written in a narrative style, it was sometimes difficult to put my thoughts into words since I consider English as my second language and I do not perceive myself as a particularly good writer.

6.8.4 What I Would Have Done Differently

As I reflect on my journey as researcher, I could have read more and planned the research steps in more detail. Furthermore, I could write more personal reflections since I increasingly discovered the power of how reflections guided my thoughts and actions. On the contrary, acknowledging these important aspects of research assisted me to grow as a researcher and to prepare me to conduct future research.

6.8.5 I Would Still Want to Explore

In concluding my research, this study guided me to ask some questions in relation to the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia: *How do teachers in the Senior Phase experience the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia? How do teachers from previously disadvantage schools and schools in rural areas experience the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia? How could teachers in the Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase use assistive technology to improve the reading skills of learners with dyslexia? How can a teacher's implementation of an asset-based approach benefit the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia? How can learners with dyslexia scholastic benefit from multi-level teaching in an inclusive education setting?* As described in the previous section, I believe that numerous studies could be conducted to gain a deeper understanding of dyslexia as a specific learning impairment.

6.8.6 Personal Gain

This study contributed to both my personal self-knowledge and my professional development as a researcher, teacher and learning support specialist. Despite many challenges, barriers and sometimes frustration on my road, the research process became a dedicated journey that taught me patience, self-discipline and perseverance, and enhanced my skills as a researcher. I am thankful for the schools and participating teachers' invaluable contributions as they made this study a reality.

6.9 CONCLUSION

This study provided valuable information concerning how Intermediate Phase teachers experience the teaching and support of learners with dyslexia in their classrooms. The perceptions of six Intermediate Phase teachers based on their experiences were analysed from a multiple case study perspective and compared with studies and expert opinions in the related literature. Findings of the present study may contribute further to the understanding about the everyday experiences of teachers dealing with learners with dyslexia.

In this chapter, a discussion of the identified themes was provided along with suggestions, based on the research findings, to improve teachers' experiences of dealing with learners with dyslexia in their classrooms. Findings further suggested the need for continuing in-service training for teachers who have learners experiencing specific learning difficulties in their classroom. Contributions and limitations of the study were explored, and recommendations were suggested for future research practice, and training.

To conclude, in an educational setting where teachers experience several challenges in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia, my hope is that more dyslexia awareness among teachers, healthcare professionals and parents as well as District-Based Support Teams and School-Based Support Teams assisting teachers with practical teaching strategies could provide the necessary support to teachers trying to make a positive difference in the lives of learners with dyslexia.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendices: Refer to compact disc

APPENDIX A: **References related to the literature review**

A1: Analysis of resources used in the literature review

A2: Addendum to Chapter 2: Literature Review.

APPENDIX B: **Documents related to the data collection and document strategies**

B1: Example of interview protocol

B2: Example of observation protocol

B3: Participating teacher's reflective journal

B4: Research journal

B5: Field notes

B6: Examples of participating teachers' lesson plans

B7: Examples of lesson and assessment activities done by the learner with dyslexia

APPENDIX C: **Documents related to data analysis and interpretation**

C1: Verbatim transcript of interview – P 1-6

C2: Thematic data analysis – P 1-6

C3: Observation protocol – P 1-6

C4: Example of letter and comment form concerning participant's verification

APPENDIX D: **Official documentation**

D1: Approval of application – University of Pretoria

D2: Ethical clearance certificate – University of Pretoria

D3: Research approval letter from Gauteng Department of Education

D4: Example of permission letter from Primary Schools

D5: Example of Participant's consent letter and form

D6: Example of Parental permission letter and form

D7: Example of Learner's assent letter and form