

EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS REGARDING ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR
ACADEMICALLY GIFTED LEARNERS

NICOLETTE WESTENBERG
NPDE (NWU), ACE (NWU), Bed HONS (NWU)
20491824

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Promoter: Dr. S.J. Kwatubana
Co-Promoter: Dr.T.J. Makhalemele

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work titled "Exploring Perceptions Regarding Academic Support for Academically Gifted Learners" is my original work and that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Nicolette Westenberg

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I would like to thank God for being with me through this journey and for giving me the ability to be able to study. All honour and glory to Him!

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to Mrs Sharlene Venter, who believed in my ability to pull through, even when times were tough. She was an inspiration to all, never faltering in her faith even when times were extremely difficult.

May her soul rest in peace.

To my dad, Ettienne Westenberg, for giving me the gift of life. I thank you.

May your soul rest in peace.

ABSTRACT

Key words: gifted education, giftedness, gifted learners, academic giftedness, identification, support, Institutional Learner Support Teams, high academic performance, potential, attributes of gifted learners

The main aim of this study was to explore academic support of gifted learners as rendered by the Institutional Learner Support Teams. This study was conducted in primary schools in the Johannesburg South education district of the Gauteng province in South Africa. This was a qualitative study which employed interviews for teacher participants and a draw and write technique for learner participants.

A literature review revealed that gifted learners are at risk in that although they have potential they can perform poorly. The reasons indicated in the literature include: emotional instability, bad behaviour, being neglected by teachers, vulnerability to stress, poor social skills and others. In supporting gifted learners there are certain strategies that need to be in place such as implementation of policies guiding such support, collaboration with different stakeholders, employing teaching approaches that are accommodative of gifted learners and others.

Selection of sites was done randomly, having four schools participating. Sixteen teachers and forty learners participated in this study. The study revealed that teachers were using traditional methods in identifying gifted learners and that they were able to identify attributes of giftedness. Teachers were also aware that gifted learners cannot perform well if not supported. There was support given by teachers in class. This was in the form of extra work and enrichment activities. Teachers were struggling with differentiating the curriculum to accommodate gifted learners, this was due to lack of resources and training. There were no policies specifically to support gifted learners all focus was on learners with learning barriers. The Institutional Learner Support Teams were only supportive when gifted learners were not performing well.

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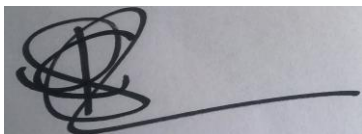
**RE: CONFIRMATION OF EDITORIALS-NICOLETTE WESTENBERG
DISSERTATION**

This letter serves as confirmation that student Nicolette Westenberg's dissertation entitled **Exploring Perceptions Regarding Academic Support for Academically Gifted Learners** was edited at **The Dissertation Guy** and we are satisfied it now meets academic publication standards.

In editing the **Magister Educationis in Learn Support** dissertation, particular attention was paid towards remedial amendments with regards to

- Syntax,
- Spellings, (English UK) and
- Standardisation of academic writing (including language and in-text and bibliographic referencing)

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Charlton C. Tsodzo', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Charlton C. Tsodzo, PhD

Team Leader

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The concept of giftedness is a complex phenomenon that does not lend itself to only one definition, but has a diversity of definitions (Olthouse, 2014:122). Earlier attempts at defining giftedness referred to being healthy, having incredible energy and having the intellectual capability to make positive change (Gross, 2004:25). A more modern attempt at defining giftedness views it as inherent potential that is either latent or realized for above ordinary achievement in various levels of life. It is regarded as an interrelated system of human ability that is biologically rooted within the individual (Kokot, 2011:511). Jung, Barnett, Gross and McCormick, (2011:183) define intellectual or academic giftedness as having the possession of and using gifts such as talent and ability that have naturally been bestowed upon an individual. When using these gifts, it places an individual among the top ten percent of their peers in academic achievement (Jung *et al*,2011:183). Gross (2004:25) cited Renzulli who indicates that a child is considered gifted when there is an interaction between three clusters namely, human traits: above- ordinary academic ability, task commitment and creativity.

According to McCoach and Siegle (2003:144), academically gifted learners are one group of exceptional learners who are not normally considered at risk for academic failure or problems in schools. However, Gross (2004:25) argues that the underachieving gifted learner has not been taken into account when noting the basic human traits indicated above. The reasons for their underachievement as indicated in the literature, include low academic self-perception, negative attitude toward school, negative attitudes toward teachers, low motivation and self-regulation, and low goal valuation, which could affect the performance of the academically gifted learner (Rinn, Plucker & Stocking, 2010:4). The authors McCoach and Siegle (2003:144) argue that the underachievement of academically gifted learners is an area of concern and frustration for parents and teachers alike.

Academically gifted learners might become frustrated when things do not go their way and teachers and friends might not understand this (Kokot, 2011:514). Owing to the differences between academically gifted individuals and their peers, gifted learners may face problems when trying to cope with day-to-day stress and conflict may arise (Kokot, 2011:515). Though some have the ability to cope well with challenges that they face, when the stressful situations are not handled well, they might withdraw socially and this in turn might cause bigger problems such as depression and rebellion (Kokot, 2011:514). Another problem highlighted by Subotnik *et al.* (2011:11) is that academically gifted learners have to re-learn work waiting for other learners to catch-up, they do not receive the necessary challenges they need to move forward.

Academically gifted learners need support to help them cope with the sensitivity that comes with being gifted (Subotnik *et al.*, 2011:5). Based on the challenges highlighted in the foregoing paragraphs, academic support will therefore play a role in helping academically gifted learners to achieve to their full potential (Swart & Pettipher, 2011:4). Researchers Newman (2000) and Wentzel (1997) have established a positive relation between perceived support from teachers and the amount of effort learners put toward their schoolwork. This could mean that the more academic support is given to learners, the higher the learners' academic motivation is.

In Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), it is stated that support programs must be put in place to assist learners. The primary role of the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) as suggested in White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) is to put in place properly co-ordinated learner support services by identify those who are at risk within schools and classrooms, regardless of their ability. An ILST consists of the principal or any other member of the School Management Team, teachers with skills and knowledge in learner support, volunteers because of their interest in supporting learners and the referring teacher. The biggest responsibility that the ILST has, is to work together with the DBST and other institutions that render support in order to maximize the support that the learners might need (Landsberg, 2011:73).

Giftedness is regarded as a barrier to learning by some researchers, because various extrinsic barriers exist that could cause a breakdown in the learning process (Nel, Nel & Hugo, 2012:17). The identification of barriers to learning is a function that the ILST must be able to perform as well as identifying strategies needed to intervene when barriers arise (Landsberg, 2011:73). The ILST must further ensure that resources are used adequately within the school and that all stakeholders participate in the support structure in the school (Department of Basic Education, 2010:10).

On the international front, New South Wales in Australia has implemented a pilot program a few years ago testing learners from week one to week five of their schooling careers in order to establish what academic support can be given to academically gifted learners in Language and Maths (Wellisch& Brown, 2012:151). When broad information about a learners' ability is obtained early on, it is easier to establish programs that will suit the needs of the individual learners (Wellisch&Brown, 2012:151).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problems experienced by academically gifted learners are that they become bored easily due to the fact that they may already have encountered the material being taught (Kokot, 2011:514). When the curriculum is inappropriate, the negative outcome that ensues is boredom within the gifted child (Siegle, 2015:60). When a teacher has to repeat things for other learners to understand, the gifted learner might switch off and start doing his or her own thing in the classroom. Because of this, learners who are academically gifted need time to discover, explore and express their interests within and outside of the classroom (Kokot, 2011:519). The scholar Gallagher (as cited in Siegle, 2015:60) felt that teachers are the solution for many factors that hamper achievement, including boredom that gifted learners experience. The belief is that gifted learners must just make it on their own, but it is not always the case as many gifted learners underachieve due to factors such as boredom and a defective curriculum (Siemer, 2009:546).

According to Wellisch and Brown (2013:43), some of the problems that academically gifted learners experience can be linked back to early childhood and the effect their mothers had on them. If the mother of the child had depression, it might result in the academically gifted learner being at risk and demonstrating characteristics such as bad handwriting, feeling stressed, being disruptive in a classroom setting or being stubborn. Some other negative traits that they might experience are that these learners might lean towards depression, anger and isolation (Wellisch & Brown, 2013:43).

Depression in academically gifted learners may happen because of the fear of failure and because they are socially maladapted (Wellisch & Brown, 2013:44). It might also occur because academically gifted learners tend to get labelled in a negative way by other learners (O'Connor, 2012:293). As noted by the author, they are often called "nerds" or "teacher's pets" and are taken advantage of by their peers. Furthermore, O'Connor (2012:293) cited Freeman in saying that academically gifted learners who are labelled have more emotional problems, which is more likely to lead to depression than in learners who are not labelled.

Another problem that academically gifted learners might encounter is that of perfectionism (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010:21). Although perfectionism can be healthy, academically gifted learners tend to exhibit unhealthy perfectionism that make them neurotic and they might feel that they never perform well enough. They have very high standards and if their standards are not met, they develop social difficulties such as social isolation, anxiety and other inter-personal problems. Wellisch and Brown (2013:43) also mention that there are two types of perfectionism, namely adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism. A learner who exhibits adaptive perfectionism is committed to perfection, but is also secure and able to cope with failure. The academically gifted learner who exhibits maladaptive perfectionism sets unrealistic high standards on themselves and when failure results, they might become depressed. What should be noted in this regard is that academic giftedness is different from a disability and should be treated as such. Therefore, the focus of this research will be on the support of learners' above-ordinary academic

ability. Gifted learners do have problems that they encounter that shall be discussed in the next chapters.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Before beginning with a study, a clear picture of the outline of the study must be kept in mind. Therefore, a research question is needed to guide the study in the direction it must go (Fouché & de Vos, 2011: 79). The following research questions guide the study.

1.3.1 Primary research question

The proposed study will be guided by the following primary question:

What are the perceptions of the ILST members and learners regarding academic support for academically gifted learners?

1.3.2 Secondary research questions

In order to fully understand the primary research question, some secondary research questions can be explored:

- What is the essence of academic giftedness?
- What academic support can be rendered to academically gifted learners?
- How are gifted learners identified?
- What policies are implemented to guide the support for academically gifted learners?
- What recommendations can be made to the ILST to enhance academic support for academically gifted learners?

1.4 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the research is to explore perceptions regarding academic support for academically gifted learners in selected primary schools in the Johannesburg South District.

1.4.1 Objectives for the research

- To explore the essence of academic giftedness.
- To explore academic support rendered to academically gifted learners
- To establish how academically gifted learners are identified.
- To establish the policies that are implemented to guide the support of academically gifted learners by the Institutional Level Support Team.
- To make recommendations to the ILST in order to enhance academic support of academically gifted learners.

1.5 THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

The research was conducted in Johannesburg South in the Gauteng province in the Republic of South Africa. Johannesburg is located in north-central South Africa and is one of the country's largest growing cities (BusinessTech, 2015). It covers an area of 1100 square kilometres and has the nickname "Egoli", meaning "Place of Gold". Johannesburg was founded in 1886 after gold deposits were discovered by an Australian prospector, George Harrison. It is still the mining capital of the South Africa and the home to many multinational mining companies. Johannesburg has a lot of transport options and the closest city to Johannesburg is Pretoria to the northeast of the country. The city has a total population of 24 120 000 people living in a 1100 square km area, which is the highest population for any city in the country. It is ranked 126 in the world population rankings (BusinessTech, 2015).

The City of Johannesburg is a key contributor to the economic growth of Gauteng Province and the South African economy at large, with its growth rate being above the national as well as other provincial rates (Karuaihe, 2013). The city's high economic growth rate makes it the economic centre of the country, hence its tendency to attract high populations as people look for various economic opportunities.

The schools that were part of the research are situated in region F of Johannesburg. According to the City of Johannesburg's web page (City of Johannesburg, 2007), Region F combines Johannesburg's inner city and has a lower density and to the south-eastern corner, the metropolis of Johannesburg South is found. It is seen as

an area of contrasts, ranging from degraded residential areas to more stable areas (City of Johannesburg, 2007), as well as more upper-income areas. The schools were not in the upper income area and there is drug related problems in the community. The demographic information sees a population of 433054 people, according to Census 2001 Statistics SA. It is stated that the figure is not accurate, because of the people in the inner city that live there on a temporary basis was not known at the time of the Census (City of Johannesburg, 2007). Region G (the Deep South, Ennerdale and Orange Farm) is seen as the place where poverty has increased the most from 2009-2012 (Karuaihe, 2013).

The demographics in the inner city of Johannesburg and the Southern parts are contrasting due to the differences in income. Some people who owe a higher income, have moved to the Northern suburbs and some lower income individuals have moved into region F. Dilapidated buildings and houses are prevalent in the area (City of Johannesburg, 2007). According to the City of Johannesburg Municipality, Johannesburg is ethnically diverse and the home of many different individuals. The education percentages as indicated in the 2011 census indicated that 2.90% has no schooling, 19.20% has tertiary education and matric was obtained by 34.7 % of the population.

1.6 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

1.6.1 Paradigmatic perspective

The study followed an interpretivist paradigm with a qualitative approach. According to Jansen (2007:21), interpretivism is grounded in the way people perceive their environment and how they create meaning about their experiences. To achieve understanding and meaning of a certain phenomenon, the individuals create inter-subjective meanings within the environment. In order to understand human behaviour within this paradigm, one must look at the context, conventions and norms in order to understand participant's meanings better. The scholars Atkins and Wallace (2012:23) describe interpretivism as an investigation of people as individuals or groups in order to identify their histories. In interpretivism, the first

person is used more often. I will use the word “I” within the research and will also see the people within the research as participants rather than subjects of research.

I interacted closely with the participants in order to establish how they supported academically gifted learners in their schools. Throughout the research, I attempted to understand phenomena through the meanings that the participants assigned to them (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:59). Interpretation of what is being said is important as the word “interpretivism” means to interpret meaning (Jansen, 2007:21). The interpretivistic paradigm was chosen because of its advantages, which are indicated by Nieuwenhuis(2007a:60). One of these advantages is that the researcher is part of the research and therefore, when he/she is present, the participants might feel the need to elaborate more willingly as opposed to them filling in impersonal questionnaires. The participants can ask questions to get clarity on the situation if they do not understand. Thus, the data collected is rich and focuses in what is needed for the research.

As much as there are advantages, there are also limitations of the paradigm, including that there is a risk of bias and the subjectivity of the researcher might pose a problem during the research (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:60). Research bias and subjectivity is somewhat inevitable when conducting qualitative research, but to curb this, I will rely more on what the participants say in order to rule out some of the bias that might occur as suggested by Mehra(2002). They might correspond through letters or e-mail instead of face-to face to eliminate some bias (Mehra, 2002). Newby (2010:380) further suggests that to rule out bias in qualitative research one might increase the amount of research sites visited. Bias can be eliminated further by asking good interview questions, giving feedback if there might be a problem and by allowing enough time to carefully test interview questions by conducting pre-tests (Ziniel, 2011).

1.6.2 Research Methodology

Methodology can be defined as the approaches used to collect and analyse data (Newby, 2010:658). The proposed study follows a qualitative research design in order to perceive the role of the ILST with regards to supporting academically gifted learners in selected primary schools in Johannesburg South. Qualitative research is used as a way to explain and explore meanings that individuals have about their surroundings and the world they live in (Creswell, 2009:4). According to Nieuwenhuis (2007a:51), qualitative research is concerned with understanding processes of social and cultural contexts in order for the researcher to understand the world of the participants better.

When conducting a qualitative research study, some strengths and limitations may be experienced (Anderson, 2010:3). The strengths of qualitative research as indicated by Anderson(2010:3) include that issues arising from within the research can be studied in depth and specific details can be taken from the research. When new information arises within research and the framework does not suit the research, it can be changed to accommodate needs, thus an emergent design. Data obtained from participants are sometimes stronger than when quantitative data and cold facts are used. Even though findings that are collected from a few individuals cannot be generalized to suit a larger population with similar characteristics, findings can be transferred to other settings in order to improve situations within those settings.

The limitations experienced within qualitative research according to Anderson (2010:3) include that the quality of the conducted research relies strongly on the researcher and the research skills the researcher demonstrates. Rigor on the part of the researcher is hard to maintain, because qualitative data analysis is a time consuming process that needs constant cross checking for facts (Anderson, 2010:3). Insights into the research process and the validity process will be used in this research to clarify these concerns within qualitative research as suggested by Newby (2010:455).

1.6.3 Research strategy

According to Creswell (2009:231), phenomenological research can be defined as a strategy that is qualitative during which the human experiences about a phenomenon is described and captured by the researcher. Creswell (2009:233) further defines research design as the procedure and plan for research that turns the broader assumptions that a person may have, into descriptive and detailed data that can be used to answer the research question. Specific methods, assumptions and strategies of inquiry are used to analyse data within a research design. This study will follow a qualitative approach by conducting a qualitative phenomenological design.

Phenomenological research is an approach used to see how the world can be understood (Newby, 2010:661). The focus of the research is mostly the meanings participants have about the world as a set of related systems. The procedure of phenomenological research entails studying a small group of individuals by using a variety of data collection tools in order to answer the research question (Creswell, 2009:13). Data collection tools that were used in phenomenological research were individual interviews, document analyses and draw and write technique (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b: 90). Documents included policies, agenda's, minutes of meetings, or anything relevant to the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b: 82). The use of multiple sources of data in phenomenological design is important. The rationale for the use of documents as data gathering strategy is to provide confirmatory evidence of the information that will be obtained from interviews. The type of data that will be collected will be textual.

1.6.4 Participation Selection (Sampling)

Sampling is a process that is used to select a portion of the population for study and research purposes (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:79). Purposive sampling is mostly used in qualitative research to identify and select information (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2013:1). When using qualitative methods to obtain data, the researcher makes use of a smaller sample of the population that has to do with

the purpose they have in mind (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b: 79). Purposive sampling also includes the setting in which the research takes place, as well the events and activities that take place. The purposive sampling is used to significantly reduce the population to a sample size that has significance to the study (Newby, 2010: 667).

Within this study, stratified purposive sampling was used to select participants. Stratified purposive sampling means that participants are identified by means of a preselected criterion that identifies the participants as being useful towards the research (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:79). Participants were therefore identified for the study based on three strata, namely teachers, managers and learners.

The members of the ILST were targeted as participants in this study. The reason was that although teachers also support learners, the ILST is the only officially appointed committee that provides learners with support in schools. Any teacher who was a member of the ILST that volunteered to participate was considered. I also had to include gifted learners in my study. I felt that I could not talk about them and yet not give them an opportunity to say how they would like to be supported.

1.7 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection strategies and data collection procedures employed in the study will be discussed below.

1.7.1 Data collection strategies

- **Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews**

As posited by Creswell (2009:179), interviews are used as a qualitative data collection strategy. In an empirical study therefore, the participants would be asked to answer open-ended questions as part of data collection making use of semi-structured interviews. The open-ended, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews also allow the researcher to probe for answers when needed. Furthermore, there are advantages in the interviews being conducted face-to-face interviews, as it is useful when the participants cannot be observed directly by the researcher and that the

participants can provide more in-detail information. The researcher would also have some control over the questions being asked (Creswell, 2009:179). The limitations of face-to-face, semi-structured interviews however include the fact that indirect information is often provided by the interviewees. Not all participants may be equally articulate when the interviews are being conducted and because of the researcher's presence, the responses received might be biased, because of the fact that some interviewees might say what they think the researcher wants to hear (Wilson & Fox, 2013:119). I requested the participants to be honest by all means possible as one of the means of overcoming such challenges. I also made use of further probing to avoid miscommunication and misinterpretation during the interviewing process.

- **The draw and write technique**

The 'draw and write' technique is becoming increasingly popular as a qualitative way of collecting data, especially when working with children (Horstman, Aldis, Richardson & Gibson, 2008:1001). Drawing is a way of taking the focus away from the person doing the research. The learner who draws the pictures do not need to interact with the researcher face to face and this can take some tension away from the participant. The draw and write technique was first introduced as a research method in health studies to find out how children felt about different aspects of health care (Lima & De Lemos, 2014: 147). The technique improves response validity and the learner participants answer questions better than when quantitative methods are used (Lima & De Lemos, 2014:148). A limitation of the draw and write technique is that different ways of asking questions and using different stimuli can influence the way participants draw their pictures (Horstman, *et al.*, 2008). When researchers use different stimuli across the research field, it might not yield the same results. I guarded against this by using one question and explaining the question across all the research sites in the same way to the participants.

1.7.2 Data collection process

In this study the following data collection process as characterised by Creswell (2009:178-183) was followed:

As indicated in the foregoing paragraphs, I purposefully selected a site in which the research took place and participants relevant to the study. At a set date I met with the participants in their natural setting (Creswell, 2009:175), which is their own classrooms or any other area within the school determined by them. I conducted one-on-one interviews with the participants after tuition period because I did not want to disrupt classes.

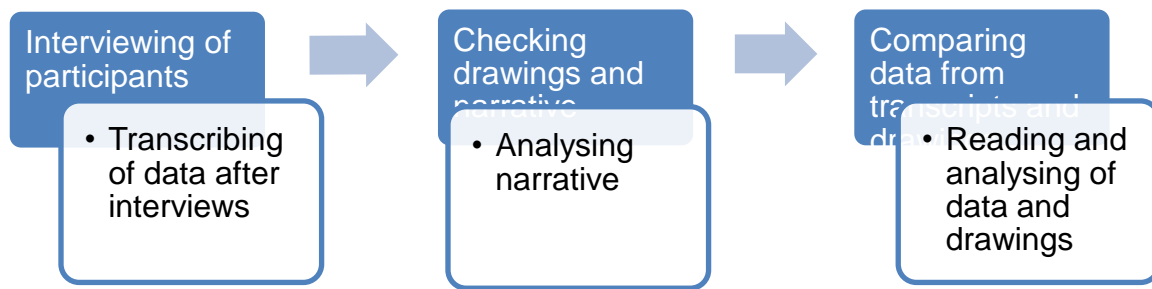
I made use of an interview schedule (*cf.* Appendix D) with the main questions that I guided the interview process. Creswell (2009:183) adds that there should be small breaks between questions to allow participants to think and for the interviewer to record the responses.

I recorded the information from the interviews using a digital recording device with the consent of the participants. I also made notes about important developments. Data collected from interviews and field notes were transcribed after every interview when the information was still fresh in my mind.

The learners identified, drew a picture about their current support needs and wrote a narrative about their pictures.

The process of collection of documents relevant to the study was supposed to be done concurrently, that was immediately after the interview. Data from the documents would have been reviewed concurrently with analysis of data from interviews. I was planning on using policy documents that speak to including and supporting academically gifted learners in schools and minutes of meetings held in ILST meetings, but it was not available at the schools that were interviewed.

Figure 1: Data Collection Process



1.7.3 Data analysis and interpretation

Creswell (2009:183) explains that the process of data analysis involves the way in which the researcher will make sense of the text or other visual data, which has been collected. The data must be understood and I had to go deeper into understanding the data in order to make deductions. Data analysis is an on-going process that involves continuous reflection by the researcher in order to make sense of the data collected. The researcher must therefore ask analytical questions and must be able to make interpretations of what is being read (Creswell, 2009:184).

Data analysis in this research is mostly an inductive process and concerns starting from the bottom and analysing the data through processes (Creswell, 2009:185). The steps below were followed in this research as suggested by Creswell (2009:185).

Step one: I prepared and organised the data gathered by means of interviews for analysis by first transcribing interviews from the recordings made and typing field notes. I organised the data according to participating schools (referred to as School A or B or C) and the participants were numbered and given pseudonyms (example, Participant 1) to safeguard confidentiality. The documents were then scrutinised for information relevant to the research.

Step two: I read through all the transcribed data to form a general sense of what the data is about. All the transcriptions from the interviews and data from documents were read thoroughly and additional notes were made during this step. The notes made were about the general feel of the research.

Step three: In this step, coding of the data was done. This means that the data was organized into segments and chunks of text in order to get important information from the data. All the information taken from the interviews, documents and field notes were open coded by writing the codes underneath one another and then highlighting specific information contained in what has been read. Axial coding followed where codes were related to each other to form categories. Where themes from the interviews and documents are similar they were supported by quotations from both these data sources. Where themes are different they were still included in the report.

Step four: I used the coding process to generate themes. This analysis shed light on the perceptions of the participants regarding academic support for academically gifted learners.

Step five: The general themes were presented and supported by quotes from the participants' responses. These quotes were presented "verbatim". .

Step six: Interpretation of the analysis was done in this step and the research question was answered. New questions that could lead to further research might also be formulated within this stage (Creswell, 2009:191).

1.8 THE ROLE OF RESEARCHER

In qualitative research, the researcher is seen as being part of the research and is not as objective to the research as in the quantitative approach (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:79). The researcher is subjective to the meanings that the participants may have with regards to the research being conducted and plays a role in the data

gathering process. Any changes within the real-world setting must be recorded by the researcher in qualitative research.

Challenges with regard to the role of the researcher are that there might occur boundary conflict, relationships and possible breeches in confidentiality when research is undertaken (Atkins & Wallace, 2012:50). The lack of rigour when conducting research is also criticised by some. I strived to be professional and just when conducting the research as advised by Atkins and Wallace (2012:51).

I am a young white Afrikaans female who is currently a teacher at a primary school in Johannesburg South. I have studied learner support and have found that a lot is said about learners with barriers to learning, but very little is said about support that can be given to gifted learners. My personal connection with the research site is that I am also a primary school teacher and have some experience with regards to learners who are gifted. The participants I am going to interview will not be known to me, thus ruling out some of the research bias that may occur. I had to guard against my assumptions clouding my interpretations

Some of the assumptions that I had were that teachers are just happy when a learner is able to cope with work given and does not give them problems. I also had a preconceived idea that policies and special programs have not been put in place to support gifted learners in schools. I was afraid that the research participants might view me as young and inexperienced, in that way they might not want to respond to questions truthfully and might feel that I am wasting their time. This would have had a negative effect on research findings as I progressed I realised that all novice researchers have these fears.

1.9. QUALITY CRITERIA

Trustworthiness according to Shenton (2004:63) has some subdivisions that are used to ensure the quality of research being undertaken and they are: credibility (as opposed to internal validity), transferability (as opposed to external validity or generalizability), dependability (as opposed to reliability) and conformability (as opposed to objectivity). Trustworthiness is of great importance when conducting any

qualitative research (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c:113). Apart from the quality criteria that Lincoln and Guba (2000) developed, there are other ways to check the quality of research (Schurink, Fouche & de Vos, 2011:421). Strengths and limitations can be evaluated with transferability, dependability and confirmability as quality measures.

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007c:114), multiple coders can be used when analysing qualitative research. This will create a bigger sense of trustworthiness, because multiple coders can check their coding and compare it. The coders are mostly independent coders. Research participants and another Master's student were requested to also code the data. Findings are the essential outcome of the study and analysis of data process. Participants did crosschecks and the researcher noted comments made about the research. As suggested by Nieuwenhuis (2007c:115), another Masters' student was requested to check the codes in order to control and minimize any bias that might occur. This student had already gone through the process of coding and analysis. My supervisors also monitored the process closely as I had to continuously report to them on the progress.

- Credibility

Credibility assures that the study that is undertaken, measures what it is supposed to measure (Shenton, 2004:64). The findings of the researcher must be congruent with that of reality and in order to achieve this, the researcher can use research methods that are well established. When the correct measures are used, the research can become more credible. In order to ensure this, I triangulated data from teachers and managers, documents and learners. Another way of trying to achieve credibility used in the study was to assure the participants beforehand that there were no right or wrong answers, but that they just had to be honest when answering the questions and that they were free to stop participating if they felt the need to. Prolonged engagement with the research site and member checks are other ways of ensuring that the research is credible (Schurink, *et al*, 2011:420).

- Transferability

When research findings are transferable, it means that they can be applied to other research with similar circumstances (Shenton, 2004:65). A thorough description of the research participants is provided in chapters 4 and 5. The description of research participants was done in order for others to be able to make the transfer to similar contexts with similar participants.

- Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability or consistency of the inquiry processes used over time (Shenton, 2004:71). To enable dependability, the methodology included the research design and implementation thereof, describing to the reader how it was planned and executed as well as the operational detail, namely what was done while gathering the data. When research is conducted quality assurance must take place, therefore, I requested a knowledgeable person in the field of giftedness to be a dependability auditor in the peer review process, who will check for consistency in my research report. My research supervisors assisted me in this regard. Towards the finalisation of the report parts of it were taken back to the participants to check whether the correct deductions were made.

- Confirmability

The concept confirmability refers to steps taken to ensure that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2004:72). An audit-trail and data-orientated approach were used in order to achieve confirmability. The findings of the research must be objective enough so it can be confirmed by someone other than the researcher (Schurink, *et al*, 2011:421). In doing so, the emphasis is placed on the data itself and not the traits that the original researcher has. Another researcher can confirm my findings to increase trustworthiness.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

During the writing of a research proposal, the researcher must anticipate that there will be ethical issues that might arise from conducting the research (Creswell,

2009:87). Research participants need to be protected during the research process and there were a few steps that I used to safeguard ethical correctness.

I applied for ethical clearance from OPTENTIA of the North West University in order to proceed with this research (NWU-HS-20150101) (*cf.* Appendix B). Furthermore, permission was obtained from the education district (Johannesburg South) (*cf.* Appendix A) of the schools in which the research would be conducted. Permission was requested from principals, coordinators, and members of the ILST in order to conduct the study.

The schools were asked for consent before research was undertaken. When the schools had given permission for the research to be conducted all participants signed an informed consent form beforehand (*cf.* Appendix C). Copies of informed consent were taken to the schools by another individual who is not the researcher, but the recruiter. The informed consent indicated what the research is about, the participants required for the research, the purpose of the research, who will benefit from it as well as the notification of risks, confidentiality agreements and assurance that a person can withdraw from research at any time. The letter of consent was read, explained and signed by participants who agreed to participate. The names of the contact persons, namely myself and the study leaders were also indicated in the informed consent form. The planned visits were scheduled at a suitable time that is, after teaching hours in order to avoid disturbing classes. I realised that the teachers and learners were tired after the school day and to deal with that risk, breaks were arranged during which the participants rested for few minutes in between questions and refreshments were served after the interview had been conducted and drawings were completed.

Confidentiality is of great concern in research and must be adhered to. Participants were told that the data will be kept confidential and the data gathered was only be used for research purposes. Transcripts of the data collected as well as the documents used are kept in a locked cupboard for a period determined by the university. Names of schools and participants are not revealed in this report. Instead, pseudonyms were used to represent schools and participants (*cf.* 5.2). The consent

forms are not kept with the transcribed data and the memory card containing the recordings of the interviews is also locked away.

Participants were at liberty to withdraw from the research at any stage of the research (Creswell, 2009:91). I requested permission from other schools where permission to those initially chosen was denied I continued doing this until I had a sufficient number of schools.

1.11 THE LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER 1

Overview of the study

Chapter one provides the introduction and rationale of the study. The research question, research problems and the purpose of the research are in chapter one.

CHAPTER 2

The essence of academic giftedness

This chapter elaborates on the essence of academic giftedness and academic support provided to gifted learners.

CHAPTER 3

Essence of support for academically gifted learners

The support processes, policies and interventions for academically gifted learners will be discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Research methodology

Within this chapter, the research method will be described in detail.

CHAPTER 5

Research results

In chapter 5, the raw data will be analysed and interpreted

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusions of the research as well as the recommendations are contained in chapter 5.

1.12 CONCLUSION

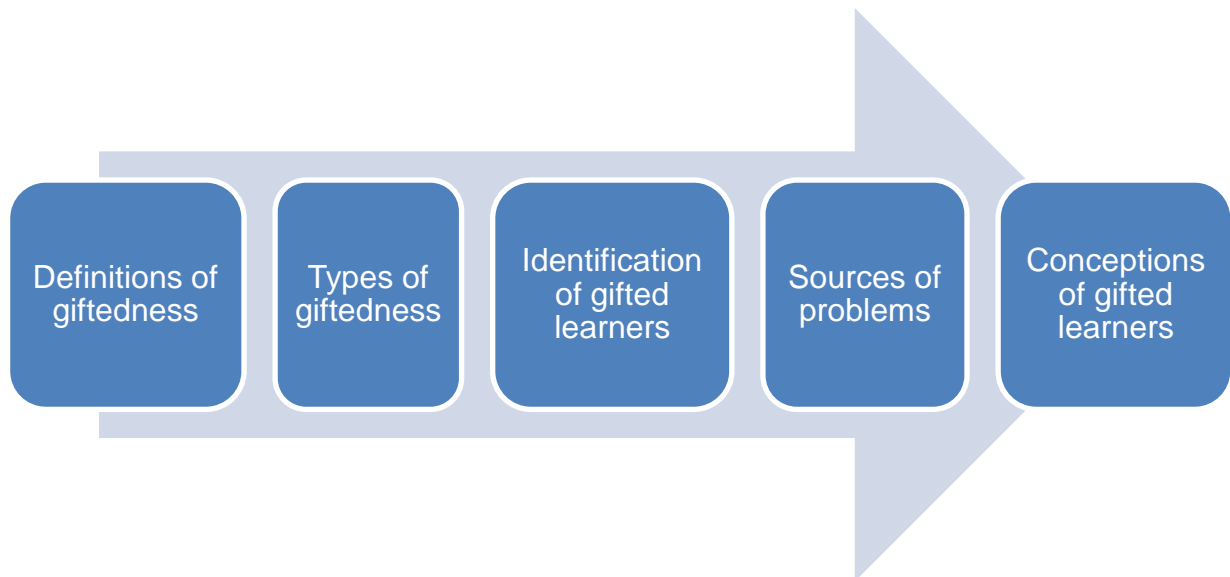
Within this chapter, the overview of the study was set out. The introduction and rationale were discussed; the problem statement was also presented with the research question that guided the research. The aims and objectives were explained and the context of the research was described. The research methodology used within this research was explained, starting with the paradigmatic perspective, the research methods, data collection strategies, sampling, and data analysis. The role of the researcher and the quality criteria was discussed and the chapter concluded with ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 2: THE ESSENCE OF ACADEMIC GIFTEDNESS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 focussed on the rationale for the study as well as the research methodology employed in this study. In chapter 2, the essence of academic giftedness is discussed. The focus is on conceptualisation of giftedness, identification of gifted learners, the challenges that gifted learners face, the types of giftedness and the source of challenges encountered by gifted learners. The conceptions of gifted learners are discussed at the end of the chapter. The figure below indicates the outline of this chapter.

Figure 2: Outline of Chapter 2



The definitions of giftedness are explained in the first part of the chapter, followed by types of giftedness. It will be followed by how to identify gifted learners and what poses problems for these gifted learners. The conceptions that people have about gifted learners will follow.

2.2 DEFINING GIFTEDNESS

The question that is frequently raised is what giftedness is and how it can be defined. Giftedness has many definitions and the question of the nature of giftedness has been asked by many in order to see what giftedness is and what it entails (Carman, 2013:53). The lack of a proper definition of giftedness has made studies involving identification of gifted participants difficult (Siegle, 2013:7). One definition for the term “gifted” came from Clark (2002), who indicated that giftedness is a label for concepts that are biologically rooted in a variety of brain functions that indicates superior ability.

Renzulli (2011:82) indicates that definitions of giftedness can be placed along a continuum that ranges from conservative to more liberal. This means that there are degrees of giftedness, some learners can be more gifted than others, and some may not be gifted at all. From this perspective, giftedness is seen as a generic, innate quality of an individual that needs to be recognized and revealed through some type of cognitive assessment or IQ test (Robinson, Zigler & Gallagher, 2000). As much as there are researchers who believe in testing or evaluating giftedness there are those who believe gifted individuals can be identified without such tests.

Another definition includes factors such as high performance ability in intellectual, reasoning and specific academic aptitude that allows these individuals to perform at their optimal (Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius & Worrel, 2011:5). From this definition it can be deduced that giftedness is associated with primarily general intelligence. Machu and Navratilova (2014:176) further state that giftedness is a set of abilities that enables an individual person to perform better than other people in the society.

Other authors believe that giftedness is more than just academic performance but also mention such aspects as creative and productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts abilities and psychomotor abilities. These types of intelligences are classified by Renzulli (2011) as creative productive giftedness. Within the theory of Positive Disintegration (TPD) (Dabrowski, 1972) gifted learners have been identified as having sensitivity of neurons that can cause over-excitability in them. These sensitivities can also show development potential in the learners and

they will have a need and love for, amongst others, problem solving (Wellisch & Brown, 2013: 44)

Gifted children are seen as children or youth that have been identified at a pre-school level, primary school level or secondary school level as children or youth that have and demonstrate the potential for high performance in academics, creative arts or leadership capabilities that require extra individualized programs that might not be offered by the school (Crepeau-Hobson & Bianco, 2011: 102). This could mean that a person can possess types of intelligences.

The term giftedness relates to being bestowed by wonderful or precious gifts, which might be as a result of environmental, social or internal factors (Besjes-de Bock & de Ruyter, 2011:199). The environmental factors of being gifted are influenced by parents, the school and the community, whereas social factors such as musical talent also play a role (Besjes-de Bock & de Ruyter, 2011). As a consequence of this, some values have been identified by various authors as reported by Besjes-de Bock and Ruyter (2011: 199) that play a role in giftedness.

Although debate still exists on whether giftedness results from practice or if it is inborn, studies undertaken by Terman in the 1920's reveal that many academically gifted individuals are either an only child or the first born (Wakefield, O'Reilly & Pass, 2014:2). He attributes this to the children learning from adults rather than peers and that caretakers give more opportunities and resources to these children. Within their article, Besjes-de Bock and De-Ruyter (2011:200) identified five values of gifted learners that are evident in developmental models. There are many ways in which giftedness is conceptualised and five developmental models have been identified under which is the biological model, the domain specific model, the achievement orientated model, the cognitivist model and the social cultural and multi -dimensional models.

2.2.1 Models of giftedness

There are six models of giftedness that have been identified and they will be discussed in more detail below

2.2.1.1 The biological model

General intelligence is seen as an inborn quality within the biological model (Besjes-de Bock and De-Ruyter, 2011:200). When intelligence levels are observed, the limits in progress of different individuals can be seen. The biological model indicates that above average intelligence is seen as valuable and that it has a value in society. Giftedness can then be seen as having social value.

2.2.1.2 The Domain- specific model

Within the domain specific model, multiple intelligences are not seen as static abilities. It is seen as an independent cognitive system (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2008:73).

Domain-specific approaches accept that there is a biological model that serves as a value of giftedness, but does not focus on the academic ability within individuals only (Besjes-de Bock and De-Ruyter, 2011:200). It is said that different people have different abilities and talents, not only an academic ability. These abilities or talents can be as a result of inborn nature with the ability to do well, or it can be because of a personal interest in something such as music.

2.2.1.3 The achievement- orientated model

This model was created by Siegle and McCoach (2005) and is seen as an interaction between constructs that identify the factors that work towards achievement or underachievement (Ritchotte, Matthews & Flowers, 2014: 186). Gifted achievers are seen as able to achieve well if they value three factors, namely goal valuation, self-efficacy and environmental perceptions. The environment, parents, teachers and peers influence them in a positive way in order for them to achieve their goals (Besjes-de Bock & De-Ruyter, 2011:201). If a learner does not have a high rating in one of the constructs, it might lead to underachievement (Ritchotte, Matthews & Flowers, 2014: 186). Underachievement is discussed in later in this chapter.

2.2.1.4 Cognitivist model

According to Ertmer and Newby (2013:50), cognitive theories place its focus on the way learners learn and how information is processed. Brain capacities, and not the intrinsic value of giftedness, are looked into within this model. It is said that brain functions enable someone to have intelligent behaviour and this in turn has personal value to the person (Besjes-de Bock & De-Ruyter, 2011:201). Within this model, it is also believed that being a success in life is a result of one's own decisions. Deliberate intervention, teaching of learning strategies and enhancing cognitive skills are all used within this model.

2.2.1.5 Social cultural model

Cultural models are made up of "culturally derived ideas and practices that are embodied, enacted, or instituted in everyday life" (Fryberg & Rhys, 2007:1). Being gifted and having gifted abilities are valued by a specific society within the social cultural model. Giftedness is sometimes determined by what a society is in need of and it has a technical value to the society (Besjes-de Bock & De-Ruyter, 2011:202). When a learner is gifted, it might be seen as beneficial to a society, because the gifted learner can be an advantage to them by working for the community.

2.2.1.6 Multi-dimensional model

Due to scholars trying to minimize conflict in the views of developmental models, the integrated model is preferred by some (Besjes-de Bock & De-Ruyter, 2011:202). All the values of giftedness are combined within this model and the multi-dimensional model tries to defend the support that gifted learners receive from special programmes. Talent and the development thereof is seen as necessary within this model for it contributes to correct personality development. It interacts with personality traits, which are seen as a person's reaction to a situation over time as part of the behaviour of that person (Sharma, Bottom & Elfenbein, 2013:301).

2.2.2 Values of giftedness

There are five values of giftedness that are prevalent in gifted research and these are discussed.

2.2.2.1 Numerical value of giftedness

The numerical value is the first value that gets assigned to giftedness. The numerical value that is assigned to giftedness is when IQ tests are done. It might instil a feeling of pride and joy in the person who scores highly. Empirical data and standards have been needed because there is some uncertainty regarding the neutrality of the numerical values of giftedness (Besjes-de Bock & de Ruyter, 2011:199). When speaking about numerical values, it refers to descriptions and can have an emotion attached to it (Cigman, 2006). Intelligence tests and assessments are part of the numerical value that has been assigned to giftedness and although numerical values refer to descriptions, it also has an emotional effect on the people who are gifted and those around them.

There has been a reason to believe that intelligence tests are very biased compared to normal academic tests (Ford, 2004:1). The outcome of academic tests may be dependent on a few factors such as low motivation and background of the learner, but intelligence tests are seen to be able to measure abilities yet to be learnt, which is not accurate (Ford, 2004:1). The biggest drawback of an intelligence test is that it cannot measure intelligence when scholars cannot find an adequate definition of it (Gottfredson, 2008: 40).

2.2.2.2 Utility value of giftedness

A utility value has also been assigned to giftedness. Under this value, it is found that being gifted is seen as an advantage or something that can be profitable in the long run (Besjes-de Bock & de Ruyter, 2011:199). Giftedness is understood as a possible means of doing work well in schools as well as benefitting the society in some way or another, either in short term achievements or long-term economic benefits for society (Besjes, de Bock & de Ruyter, 2011). Being satisfied with accomplishments, whether

in the short or long term can also be seen as part of the utility value of giftedness. This might evoke emotions such as pride and joy, but within the utility value, emotions are not of much importance (Besjes de Bock & De Ruyter, 2011:199).

2.2.3 Social value of giftedness

Being exceptional or having exceptional ability has been admired since very early times. Social values guide the way giftedness is perceived. Not all people in different cultures view giftedness the same and some do not recognize it in other people (Besjes-de Bock & De Ruyter, 2011:199). Social value is the value that people attach to being gifted. They see people having a certain status in society (Besjes-de Bock & De Ruyter, 2011:199). Being intellectually gifted has a social value by means of it benefiting technology, science and the artistic community. From a scientific point of view, high ability is a feature of high intellect (Sastre-Riba, 2013:120).

2.2.4 Personal value of giftedness

When individuals value giftedness within themselves, giftedness carries a personal value for that individual. Certain behaviours that gifted learners manifest are enjoyed by the gifted learners themselves and by their parents (Besjes-de Bock & de Ruyter, 2011:199). Winning prizes or achieving extraordinarily will have a positive impact on the individual. Most of the values of giftedness are considered to be positive, but some are also negative, as discussed in paragraphs below. When a learner is considered highly gifted, it also has personal value for the learner, because it has an influence on how the gifted learner acts and the influence the gifted learner has on others (Sastre-Riba, 2013:119).

2.2.5 Intrinsic value of giftedness

Intrinsic motivation can be seen as the will to be moved or motivation that which directs behaviour (Rahmanian, 2009:16). Scholastic intrinsic motivation is when the learner is motivated by an activity, even when the activity yields no immediate award for the learner (Rahmanian, 2009:17). This is seen as a positive aspect of

giftedness, because it comes from within the learner and it is not affected by outside eventualities. Learners who are intrinsically motivated have a will to achieve more and when feedback is given to learners about their progress in the classroom, their intrinsic motivation will fuel further learning, for they would like to use what they have learnt (Hackney, 2010). They enjoy activities that interest them and in so doing, bring the intrinsic value of giftedness out.

2.4 TYPES OF GIFTED INDIVIDUALS

In their article, Wellisch and Brown (2013:44) cited Roeper by saying that he found that there was five types of gifted learners. These types were identified as the perfectionist, the child/adult, the winner of the competition, the self-critic and the well-integrated learner. In 1988, Betts and Neihart stated that there were six profiles for gifted learners which also include behavioural aspects, as well as needs and feelings (Betts & Neihart, 1988) these were the successful, the challenging, the underground, dropouts, double-labelled and autonomous. The classification of types of gifted learners was updated in 2010 and now incorporates the successful, the creative, the underground, the at-risk learner and the twice/multi exceptional learner (Wellisch & Brown, 2013:44).

2.4.1.1 The successful

The successful is described as a learner that achieves highly, seeks teacher approval, avoids risks and doesn't go beyond what the curriculum requires. The successful always accepts what is said and gets good grades (Neihart & Betts, 2010: 1). The successful is liked by teachers and admired by peers, but struggles when it comes to assertive skills and creativity.

2.4.1.2 The creative

The creative type of gifted learner questions rules and authority and has a way of expressing themselves that teachers might not like. They get bored easily and might come into conflict with their peers (Neihart & Betts, 2010: 2). They need to learn flexibility and have support for their creativity and they can benefit from having systems put in place that can keep them on track.

2.4.1.3 The underground

The underground gifted learner is described as someone who is unsure of the direction they would like to take and who might denote the talent that they have received. They reject challenges and might move from one peer group to the next. They do not connect with the teacher or peers (Neihart & Betts, 2010: 3). They need more support for their abilities as well as the opportunity of being heard. They need role models that are cross-cultural as well.

2.4.1.4 The at-risk learner

The “at risk learner” often seeks thrills and pursues outside interests. The learners that fall inside this group are creative, but produce work of an inconsistent nature. At risk learners might isolate themselves and have low academic achievement (Neihart & Betts, 2010:4). At risk learners need to have an individualized program and might benefit from counselling.

2.4.1.5 The twice/ multi exceptional learner

The twice multiple exceptional learner can make connections easily, but demonstrates inconsistent work. They seem to be below average and their emotional functioning seems like that of a younger learner. They need to learn how to persevere and get tested for additional problems such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. They need coping strategies to be implemented for them (Neihart & Betts, 2010:5).

2.5.1.6 *The autonomous learner*

The autonomous learner seems to have social skills, can work on his or her own and is good self –regulators. They set decent goals for themselves and aim to achieve it (Neihart & Betts, 2010:6). They do, however, need more support from teachers and parents and feedback on their strengths can prove valuable to them.

2.5.1.7 *Twice exceptional or at risk*

Gifted learners who were identified as being *twice-exceptional* and *at-risk* displayed characteristics one would not normally associate with gifted learners. These qualities include bad handwriting, anger, frustration and being disruptive in class as well as feeling stressed and depressed and isolating themselves from others (Wellisch & Brown, 2013:44). It is important to understand that these characteristics can have negative consequences for academic gifted learners. One of these negative effects is underachievement.

It is possible for academically gifted learners to underachieve due to a range of contributing factors such as an inconsistent pattern of achievement, daydreaming in class, discrepancy between ability and achievement and a lack of concentration, amongst others (Snyder, Malin, Dent & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2013:230). Underachievement occurs when there is a discrepancy between how a learner can achieve and the level of achievement (Snyder, Malin, Dent & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2013:230). When gifted learners underachieve, it is a problem to society because of achievements that have been missed and talents that have not been developed. When a gifted learner is underachieving, there is a risk that they might not be identified as being gifted and this can result in the learners not getting the necessary support that they need to achieve. When schools are not meeting their needs, the underachievement will result in social and emotional problems (van der Meulen, van der Bruggen, Spilt, Verouden, Berkhout & Bogels, 2014: 287). Siegle and McCoach (2005:22) stated that underachievement has four underlying causes. Underachievement might stem from learning barriers, problems from the environment, the way learners feel about themselves and lastly a lack of self – regulation.

From the foregoing paragraph it seems that even though there are many positive characteristics that a gifted learner might display, there are also some negative characteristics that may have an impact on the gifted learners' performance (Kokot, 2011:514). Sometimes these negative attributes might overshadow the positive attributes, or characteristics that the gifted learner displays. Some negative traits that gifted learners might portray are (Kokot, 2011:514):

- Becoming careless and omitting details and resisting guidance from teachers and parents
- Losing contact with reality when going into a dream world of their own
- The possibility of becoming a misfit or non-conformist exists
- Being sarcastic and rude to others
- Getting frustrated when things do not go the way they want it to
- Being stubborn and refusing to change direction

2.3 IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED LEARNERS

Before any strategies for differentiation and support can be put in place, identification of gifted learners is of utmost importance and the class teacher is tasked with coming up with ways to identify gifted learners (Reid, 2011:30). The teachers must work together with parents and caregivers to devise identification strategies and all areas of giftedness, as discussed in this chapter, must be taken into consideration (Reid, 2011:30). The following sections discuss sources of evidence when identifying gifted learners.

2.3.1.1 Rating scales and observation

Teachers are able to use observation and checklists within the classroom to identify gifted learners (Heller, 2004:309). According to Heller (2004) teachers are able to nominate a certain number of learners that they deem to fit a list of characteristics of giftedness. Then, more precise tests are employed to determine the individual talents that the learner might possess. After this, individual plans are made to assist in formulating training programs for gifted learners. Checklists are available in different books as resources to help identify gifted learners. Parents of the learners

can also be asked to elaborate on how they perceive the learner at home and this proves to be a great help in identifying giftedness at an early stage (Elder, 2013:12). Wakefield *et al.* (2014) stated that children' giftedness can be assessed in ways other than observation.

2.3.1.2 Academic and school records

All academic records that exist of a learner can be checked to see how the learner performed previously and if there is a link in the abilities that the learner portrays (Elder, 2013:12). When interviewing the gifted learner's parents, notes can be made of what is said about the behaviour and background of the learner and added to the records of the learner. Whenever the learner does well in any area, the information must be updated (Elder, 2013:12). In South Africa, a profile of the learner is used to document all areas of the scholastic life of the learner. It is supposed to have a photograph of the learner, the name, surname, identity number, gender, date of birth and home language of the learner. Full scholastic records from all the grades must be included and all support rendered and achievements must be included for reference (Curro, 2016). Medical records, the clinic cards, the days learners are absent for every grade, the behavioural problems and any other information that is relevant. When the learner progresses to another grade the profile must be handed in to the teacher for the next grade.

2.3.1.3 Formal assessments

Lewis Madison Terman from Stanford University created tests to assess giftedness in the 1920's (Wakefield, O'Reilly & Pass, 2014:1). He used scores from the Stanford-Binet scale to assess the Intelligence Quotient of learners to identify academically gifted learners. The minimum required by him to be considered gifted, was a score of 140, and only about 1% of learners were expected to score this. Depending on the definition of giftedness used, different percentages of the population are considered gifted when administering the IQ tests.

Formal assessment tests used for identification of gifted learners is most likely to be Intelligent Quotient (IQ) tests, but this happens in other countries, not in South

Africa(Palmer, 2011). When learners in South Africa are tested, it is normally done privately and only if the parents feel that it is necessary to do so, because the school might not have identified the learner as being gifted and put measurements in place yet (Palmer, 2011). These tests are preferably administered by registered psychologists in order to identify gifted learners. The IQ tests give information with regards to entering gifted programs in other countries (Matthews, 2006). Standardised tests may also be used to see on what level a learner has mastered reading and comprehension and mathematical skills. When these tests are used together, a clearer picture can be formed of gifted learners (Elder, 2013:12).

2.3.1.4. Full evaluations

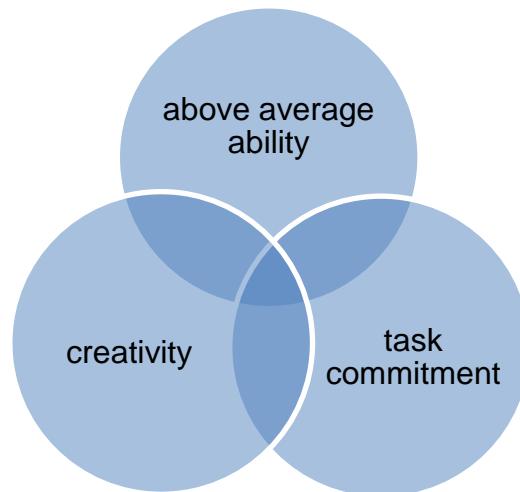
Evaluations on schools are seen as utilising areas such as school reviews and inspection in order to determine the quality of education in a school as institution (Khosa, 2010:2). National evaluations are done to see how well teaching and learning takes place in the country in order to draw up plans to better education and it is different from country to country. A full evaluation implies that a learner is looked at and evaluated from many different perspectives in order to identify the learner as gifted and this is often one of the best ways to identify gifted learners (Elder, 2013:12). The perspectives that can be looked at is that of general intelligence, intelligence that is more specific to a domain, creativity, leadership abilities as well as visual and performing arts (Board of Education, Wisconsin, 2013:9). All other tests are integrated and looked at within a full evaluation and from there, the parents can be consulted and other teachers can be informed of the behaviour and expertise that the learner exhibits and how proper plans can be put in place to fully use the gifts and talents that the learner has.

2.3.1.5 Use of three ring conception of giftedness

Although no single criterion can be used to identify a gifted individual, research has shown that three interlocking traits or clusters have been identified when looking at some creative or productive gifted people (Renzulli, 2011:83). These traits are: above average ability, task commitment and the ability to be creative (Renzulli, 2011:83). General abilities, such as processing information and integrating thought

processes and developing abstract thinking is part of Renzulli's model of giftedness. The commitment that an individual has to complete a task and the perseverance that go with it is another cluster that he identified. Lastly, creativity and the willingness to take risks is also part of the three-ring conception of giftedness (Sousa, 2009:14).

Figure 3: Three ring conception of giftedness



Renzulli's three-ring conception. From: A Practical System for Identifying Gifted and Talented Students.

2.3 CHALLENGES ACADEMICALLY GIFTED LEARNERS ARE FACED WITH

Life consists of a network of relationships, with oneself and the world around us (Kokot, 2011:511). Academically gifted learners must therefore be challenged by outside reality and the relationships they have must nurture and challenge them in everyday life (Kokot, 2011:511). There are some conditions and aspects that are necessary for academic giftedness and it forms part of the learner's total self.

2.3.1 Emotional challenge of giftedness

When giftedness emerges, confidence, self-awareness, courage, perseverance, security, energy and intensity are evident within the learner. Gifted learners might feel uncomfortable with the idea that they are different from other learners and they

might struggle to feel a sense of belonging, either in the class or in a social circle (Elder, 2013:8). Emotional changes happen in adolescence and have an influence on the gifted learner and might make the learner feel vulnerable. There is also an agreement that gifted learners are more independent and will not conform to rules and regulations, they tend to be friends with older learners or peers that are gifted and might be popular at first (Heylighen, 1992). They also have good leadership abilities (Bisland, 2004:25). Because of this, learners might think and feel in a different manner and their feelings and emotions might be intensified. Their cognitive ability leads to a wider range of emotional responses and they must be taught to deal with their emotions in a fitting way.

Eight areas of vulnerability exist within gifted learners (Elder, 2013:8). These are uneven development, alienation, self -definition, inappropriate environments, adult expectations, perfectionism, role conflict and intense sensitivity (Roedell, 1984). Uneven development, or asynchrony, of the cognitive and emotional domains of the gifted learner may lead to the learner not being able to deal with tension that arise due to processes not working correctly in the learners' brain (Silverman, 2002).

When teachers and parents expect a high level of achievement from the gifted learners, the learners might think that they must maintain this high level of achievement at all times, which might lead to gifted learners trying to hide the difficulties they might experience because of this and it gives a deranged sense of ability (Pfeiffer & Stocking, 2000:85). Gifted learners feel the need to excel at all times and this places an emotional burden on them. The lack of proper differentiation and curriculum adaptation within a classroom may also lead to distress in some gifted learners, because they need to be challenged (Elder, 2013:9).

Perfectionism also plays a role in causing vulnerability in learners. They place unrealistically high expectations on themselves and this can be emotionally taxing. Perfectionism is discussed in a different sub-heading in this chapter. Alienation from their peers or friend groups may also lead to emotional problems, because gifted learners feel that they are different and do not fit in. Gifted learners are also not always aware of what role they must play when they deal with others and this leads to role conflict (Gross, 2011). Over-excitability also causes a problem in emotional aspects, because gifted learners are often born with the sense of heightened

emotions (Bainbridge, 2016). They might react very differently from others and this might not always make others feel comfortable around them.

2.3.2 Moral and ethical challenges of academic giftedness

Learners with high academic performance have been shown to have a bigger moral compass than those of their average peers (Tirri, 2010:59). Morality is defined as a way of putting your personal values before anything else (Freeman, 2008: 1). Personal morality indicates the way gifted individuals behave and how their outlook is different from other learners their age (Freeman, 2008:3). With this comes an increased motivation, sense of character and sensitivity. Even though an academically gifted learner may have a greater awareness of morality, it is not possible to predict if the learner will act in a moral way (Tirri, 2010:59). The gifted are sometimes viewed as having a higher morality than others, or a fragile one.

2.3.3 Forced choice dilemma

The forced choice dilemma can be seen as a problem that academically gifted learners face (Jung, *et al* 2011:182). The forced choice dilemma can be seen as the choice that academically gifted learners make between achieving well in school and fitting in with a peer group. This causes social difficulties in the form of hostility and rejection from a peer group altogether, depending on what choice the academically gifted learner made (Jung, *et al*, 2011:184). Research into the subject has been undertaken in a few countries such as the United States and Australia and some kind of “anti-intellectualism” trend has been spotted whereas learners will lay down their academic giftedness in order to be accepted by their peers (Jung, 2011:184). A fulfilment of one area such as peer acceptance does not lead to fulfilment in academic success for all academically gifted learners and this might lead to the forced choice dilemma. Stormont, Stebbins and Holliday(2001:413) also states that adolescents that are gifted and talented might try to hide their talents and gifts in order to be accepted and in order to find intimacy from the peer group or close friends. Elder (2013:9) states that it is a conflict of roles in the way that the gifted learner does not know what role he or she should fulfil when they are with different people. They often do not know if they must be sporty or smart to fit in.

2.3.4 Questioning authority

Gifted learners like asking questions about everything they encounter in order to better understand the world, but they might also question authority and have arguments about why they must do certain things (Kokot, 2011:516). They might try to argue their point, much to the dismay of teachers. When addressing these issues, the gifted learner must be made aware that other human beings also have feelings and they must understand that being over-argumentative is not good for relationships.

2.3.5 Difficulties with social self esteem

Learners who are academically gifted might rate themselves as having low social self-esteem when it comes to comparing themselves with peers (Stormont, *et al.*, 2001:413). This can mainly be because of the differences between their social and intellectual selves. The gifted learner might feel alienated and distanced from a peer group because he or she perceives themselves as different and other learners pick up on it. It leads to alienation from peers, which in turn hampers the self -esteem of gifted learners (Elder, 2013:9).

2.3.8 Vulnerability to stress

Stress is a factor in the lives of gifted learners and is worsened by their uneven development and that they feel things deeply. The stress they experience might lead to suicide attempts and thoughts of suicide when not treated correctly (Kokot, 2011:517). Sometimes, gifted learners are asked to make difficult decisions that are not always possible for them and this places them under immense stress. Adults sometimes expect too much of gifted learners, because they have an above average reasoning ability. Adults must guard against this (Kokot, 2011:517).

2.3.6 Female adolescents who are gifted

Even though female adolescents go through the same changes during adolescence physically, they do not develop in the same way mentally as their peers (Stormont, *et al*, 2001:414). Women who are gifted might deal with issues such as perfectionistic tendencies, high emotional sensitivity, underachievement and the fear of being labelled as being different than others (Stormont, *et al*, 2001:414). Social comparisons are made easier by gifted learners than other learners and they rely on what others tell them. Gifted adolescent females are more vulnerable to what the society expects from them when they become older and might feel the need to hide their abilities from their peers in order to fit in (Stormont, *et al*, 2001:414).

2.3.7 Sensitivity

Gifted learners have the ability to feel emotions more deeply than other people and this leads to super sensitivity that has a negative impact on the learner and those around them (Kokot, 2011:515). Gifted learners have empathy with other people or animals and might actually be able to feel their pain. Criticism affects them and it leads to problems in behaviour that others might not be able to understand.

2.3.8 Perfectionism as a characteristic of academically gifted learners

The authors Christopher and Shewmaker (2010:21) raised an enquiry as to whether perfectionism in gifted learners led to more emotional problems than in gifted learners who did not exhibit perfectionistic tendencies. Their study focused on the relationship between academic, social and emotional difficulties and perfectionism, with findings showing that there were conflicting views between how some people viewed gifted characteristics. The results of the study indicated that those gifted individuals who rated themselves highly in being perfectionistic also rated themselves highly when it came to having depression, but the researchers did not conclude that perfectionism causes depression (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010:26).

There are two types of perfectionism, as indicated by Christopher and Shewmaker (2010:21). One type of perfectionism is perfectionism in oneself that leads to self-

motivation and the ability to push oneself to achieve better results. This perfectionism is considered as healthy. The second kind of perfectionism occurs when other people in an individual's life sets expectations for that person in order to achieve more and sometimes these expectations can be unrealistic. Elder (2013:9) agrees with this statement in his book saying that perfectionism is a source of vulnerability in gifted learners. Research into perfectionism in gifted individuals has shown that there are three conclusions that can be made (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010:22). It is possible that perfectionism can lead to pathological problems, perfectionism in gifted individuals can lead to higher achievement and attributions of perfectionism have a variety of continuums.

Perfectionism has been viewed in a negative light due to the fact that it may lead to developing pathological problems within a gifted individual (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010:22). The high standards set for oneself and from teachers and parents can be destructive. This may lead to stress, depression and anxiety. When gifted learners become depressed, they do not seek social support, not even from the people closest to them and the lack of social support might lead to even bigger problems such as suicide.

When the academically gifted learner does not seek social support from peers, it is seen as a maladaptive aspect of perfectionism. This places strain on relationships and perfectionism has been linked to destructive approaches to problem solving and anxiety and depression is a result of these destructive problem-solving techniques (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010: 220).

Gifted learners are seen as high achieving and it is not surprising that some of them start to have perfectionistic tendencies that might lead to depression (Owens, 2015:3).

Perfectionism can range from healthy to completely neurotic (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010:23). The healthy type of perfectionism can lead to perseverance and high achievement, whereas the neurotic type of perfectionism can be linked to being unable to feel satisfaction due to not being "good enough" as an individual in their own eyes. Depression, eating disorders and negative relationships are a direct result of neurotic perfectionism. In a study, three types of academically gifted

individuals were identified. These three types were dysfunctional perfectionists, healthy perfectionists and non-perfectionists (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010:23). A dysfunctional perfectionist had tendencies that ranged from being anxious and competitive in a negative way. They were also socially detached from others and chose their own company. Healthy perfectionists, on the other hand, behaved agreeably and were mostly well adjusted. They also kept an eye on their goals and were not neurotic like the dysfunctional perfectionists. When an academically gifted learner was regarded as non-perfectionists, they were seen as disorganised and undisciplined (Christopher & Shewmaker, 2010: 23).

Strategies that can be implemented to help a learner who is a perfectionist are as follows (Kokot, 2011:516):

- The gifted learner can be helped to set priorities in order for him or her to know what aspects of school work is more important and should be dealt with first.
- Reasonable and realistic expectations can be set. This will help the learner to not expect more than is necessary to expect.
- The teacher and parent can refrain from criticising the gifted learner because they feel hurt easily.
- The teacher can show that caring about the gifted learner is not a direct result of the learners' performance
- A safe environment can be created whereby the learner knows that winning is not everything.
- Strengths and successes of the learner can be focused on
- Goals that do not require perfection can be set and rewarded.

2.3.12 Gifted learners get labelled

Academically gifted learners sometimes get labelled by teachers, without the teachers actually knowing that it results in stress and anxiety for the gifted learner (O' Connor, 2012:294). Academically gifted learners are more stereotyped and picked on than learners who perform well in sport or arts. The situation can become stressful to these learners in their pursuits to fit in with peers. Sometimes adults have unrealistic high expectations from gifted learners and gifted learners feel the need to achieve more and more. The gifted learner will then try and mask their fears

that they might have by trying to please teachers and parents and this leads to teachers not picking up on emotional difficulties that a gifted learner might have (Elder, 2013:8).

2.3.9 Stigmatization of gifted learners

Stigma can be described as the difference between one's virtual social identity and an individual's actual social identity, as mentioned by Goffman in 1963 (Cross, Coleman & Terhaar-Yonkers, 2014: 31). Stigma causes an individual not to fit in with the beliefs that a group might have for the certain individual and a label is then placed on the individual, in this case, the academically gifted learner (Cross, *et al*, 2014:31). The academically gifted learner does have coping strategies that differ from learner to learner, but it is not always affective when dealing with stigmatization.

Academically gifted learners do get treated differently from other learners who are good in sport or who have exceptional musical talent (Geake & Gross, 2008: 217). Some learners are even advantaged when they excel in other aspects than in academics. Geake and Gross cited Colangelo (2002) by saying that academically gifted learners tend to hide the fact that they are gifted and feel pressurised by the community and peers to do so.

Schools have policies that have been implemented to state that special programs are put in place, but not for academically gifted learners. These policies include White Paper 6 and the SIAS policy. WP6 focuses on inclusion and SIAS focuses on the screening and identification of learners in order to render support. The main focus of these policies are Language barriers that are addressed by bridging classes by trained staff members or classes that are focused on the individual that is disabled. Extra programs for academically gifted learners are often frowned upon or completely rejected. Learners who are gifted in sport or music are somehow favoured by teachers when it comes to implementing support programmes. Developing sporting talent or musical genius is seen as something that can benefit the community, but developing high intellectual ability can be seen as a selfish endeavour, only benefiting the individual that is academically gifted (Geake & Gross, 2008:218).

Furthermore, academically gifted individuals are viewed stereotypically by saying that they have certain characteristics that do not appeal to teachers who need to work with them. Academically gifted learners are said to be arrogant and self-centred as well as over confident in their abilities that make it unpleasant to work with them (Geake & Gross, 2008:218). Teachers who have these stereotypical views of academically gifted learners are unlikely to want to offer up their time to develop the learners further. Hostility towards academically gifted learners is not country or culture specific and varies from place to place. Some academically gifted learners have social and cultural restrictions as well (Geake & Gross, 2008:218).

2.6 RELATIONSHIPS NEEDED FOR GIFTEDNESS

In order for an academically gifted learner to do well, the learner must have certain relationships that work towards developing giftedness (Kokot, 2011: 512). These relationships include:

2.6.1 The relationship with people closest to the learner

These people include the people who care for the learner, whether biological parents or guardians that take care of the learners' basic needs such as food and shelter and education and who enrich the lives of the learner by reading stories to them or giving them opportunities to develop their intellectual capacity through play (Kokot, 2011: 512). Eyre (2011:27) believes that the role of the family is important when it comes to higher achievement abilities. The best that a family can do for a learner is to have a stable, loving and encouraging home, in which the learner feels comfortable enough to excel.

The parents can teach the learners good learning skills and how to think for themselves as well as stimulating their minds with a wide variety of learning materials. It is said that gifted learners do not necessarily come from gifted families, but families have the ability to nurture children to develop gifted attributes (Eyre, 2011: 27). Middle class families play a big role in motivating their children and can also develop their abilities through informal teaching. Eyre (2011: 27) also states that middle class families tend to buy homes close to higher performing schools to benefit their children and will be more likely to take them on educational excursions.

Learners from a poor socio-economic background have a backlog when it comes to being gifted and the effects that poverty has on intelligence scores are more pronounced (Kitano, 2003: 295). The reason for this might be because of a lack of resources for academic stimulation within the poorer socio-economical communities.

2.6.2. The relationship with the school and teachers

When the school environment stimulates the learner enough and creates opportunities for the learner to experience cultural places like museums and libraries in order to learn, the academically gifted learner might be able to further their abilities (Kokot, 2011:512). Academic achievement can be helped along by good learner and teacher relationships at school (Capern & Hammond, 2014: 47) and it benefits the socio-emotional development of the learners.

2.6.3 The relationship with objects

Some learners who have a high intellectual ability might not perform as well as other learners do on the sports field and may harbour attachments with other objects such as pens and paintbrushes that might make them feel more at ease handling them (Kokot, 2011:512) As a teacher, one must take note of which objects gifted learners hold dearest. Look at what activities the child enjoys and what objects the child feels is very valuable. It might be a toy or something that has significant meaning to them.

2.6.4 The relationship the learner has with themselves

It takes courage and confidence to develop the potential for giftedness and the relationship that a gifted learner has with him or herself plays a big role in how the gifted learner can achieve (Kokot, 2011:512). When the gifted learner accepts and understands themselves, they are able to achieve more because they have knowledge of and they accept themselves. The desire to achieve should come from within the learner (Eyre, 2011:30). Learners need to be made aware that nothing needs to stand in their way. Not their families, the place they live or the school they attend. They determine their own success through hard work and perseverance (Eyre, 2011:31). The relationship with themselves is of benefit, because if they have

a good relationship with themselves, they will be able to know how they react in different situations, what makes them happy and how they can get along with others more affectively.

2.7 ATTRIBUTES OF ACADEMICALLY GIFTED LEARNERS

To distinguish between an intelligent individual and a gifted individual, one must take into account at what stage in their life certain milestones were achieved (Kokot, 2011:513). According to Heller (2004:309), there are some indicators that are likely to be conducive to giftedness, such as quick comprehension skills, quick to pick up concepts that are taught, working ahead of the peers in their class, being creative and having an advanced vocabulary for their age. These indicators are discussed below.

2.7.1 Using advanced vocabulary at an early age

When developing high potential for learning, early development of language is important. Academically gifted learners have strong verbal abilities and they begin speaking earlier than other children and are able to use the skills to become avid readers (Shaw, 2009).

2.7.2 Curiosity and observing the world

A gifted learner might ask questions that relate to higher order thinking and they will be able to remember things well. The gifted learner will also observe details that others might not observe starting at a very young age (Fioriello, 2016). They are excellent observers of the world around them and are keen to learn (NAGC, 2011).

2.7.3 Information retention

Details of past experiences can be recalled by a gifted learner in such detail that it is astonishing. The gifted learner has the ability to retain information about past experiences. Gifted learners have very good memories and might recall information that others have forgotten (Fioriello, 2016). The author Manning (2006:66) indicated

that one of gifted learners' cognitive abilities is the ability to retain information for long periods of time. This might be because of their brain capacity or that they have a very good memory. This also helps them in their academic lives, because it might help them to study for tests.

2.7.4 Increased concentration for longer periods of time

Gifted learners might become engrossed in their surroundings or the projects that they are doing that everything else seems meaningless to them. When listening to something, they will listen more attentively than some of their peers and can concentrate on one thing for a longer amount of time (Manning, 2006:66). This is also one of the cognitive abilities that a gifted learner possesses.

2.7.5 The ability to understand concepts that are complex and to think abstractly

Gifted learners might have the ability to think more abstractly about things than their peers and react differently to scenarios than others (Clark, 2008). When asked to write about a specific topic, the average learner might focus on materialistic aspects, while the gifted learner will think broader and more "out of the box". According to Elder, (2013:7) the gifted learner has more complex ideas and rationalization than peers of his or her age and has a broad range of interests that are not the same as other learners of the same age. The gifted learner has the ability to think abstractly and can infer well, according to Kingore (2004).

2.7.6 Changing interests

Gifted learners are believed to have many changing interests and it is because of this that they may leave their schoolwork or chores unfinished due to the variety of things they create for themselves to do (Manning, 2006: 67). This might be because of the gifted learners having wide interests in the world around them and that they would like to explore different aspects of it.

2.7.7 Self-criticism and strong critical thinking skills

Gifted learners have the ability to notice the difference between what someone says and what that person does and are also very critical of themselves and how they behave towards others (Mendaglio, 2012:66). They are very critical of themselves because they are self-aware and that might lead to low self-esteem, but is not identical to it (Mendaglio 2012:66). Furthermore, they may also become disappointed if someone did not keep their word.

Gifted learners may also prefer the company of older learners and share in hobbies that older learners might like as well as showing empathy to others in a way that is far above their emotional maturity and they have an advanced sense of humour that other learners of the same age do not exhibit (Elder, 2013:7).

2.7.8 Perceptiveness

Gifted learners have the ability to perceive things that other people might not (Kokot, 2011:516). They might be able to see that people do not do as they say they would and they might also see that some people show different faces to the world. This might upset them, because truth is very important to gifted individuals and the pretentious nature of some aspects in society might bring them to believe that the world is not fair. As indicated in the paragraphs above, this in itself manifests emotional problems within the gifted learner and must be handled by talking to the learner and explaining why some things happen.

2.7.9 Imagination

Gifted learners have a wonderful imagination, but may sometimes drift off and be seen as lazy and as daydreamers, which is not true. The gifted learner might just forget reality with the vast world that they have in their minds (Kokot, 2011:517).

2.7.10 Good mathematical abilities

It is possible that academically gifted learners might have mathematical giftedness, according to Matthews and Farmer (2008:475). Mathematical giftedness relates to abilities that have been set out pertaining to maths and can be tested. If a learner scores highly in these tests, there is a possibility that the learner might do well in later life (Matthews & Farmer, 2008:475).

2.7.11 Motivation

Gifted learners will have a will to be involved, commitment to tasks and they will have the ability to self-actualize their aspirations. They are also open to different experiences and beliefs. There are a few factors that contribute to achievement and motivation is one of them (Siegle & McCoach, 2005:22). When learners are motivated, they find some value from what they do in school and how they go about in their schoolwork. They enjoy what they do and also expect to do their best within the environment that they work in. It is possible that gifted learners might become demotivated and as a result, underachieve, but with the correct support from teachers, this can be dealt with. There are some motivational theories and differences that are evident that could lead to more or less motivation (Clinkenbeard, 2012:622).

2.8 CONCLUSION

Within this chapter, the essence of academic giftedness was looked into and definitions of giftedness and ways to identify academically gifted learners were discussed. The different attributes and characteristics of academically gifted learners were elaborated on and the stigmatization of gifted learners concluded the chapter. In Chapter 3, support and support structures will be discussed that will benefit academically gifted learners, as well as policies pertaining to support.

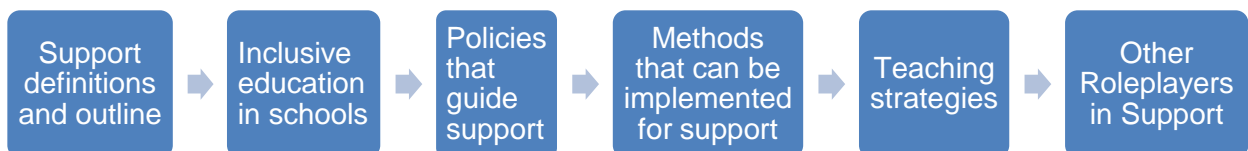
CHAPTER 3: SUPPORT FOR ACADEMICALLY GIFTED LEARNERS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, the essence of academic giftedness was discussed with the focus on what literature says about academic giftedness as well as the way academically gifted learners conduct themselves and learn in the classroom. Among the main points discussed includes the values of giftedness, the aspects of giftedness as well as how to identify gifted learners. In this particular chapter, support for academically gifted learners will be discussed. The support that is found within South African schools well as in other countries at international scale will also be elaborated on. The role of the Institutional Level Support Team and policies that guide the support for academically gifted learners will also be looked into. All these discussions will feed into the focus of this chapter, which is on academic support for academically gifted learners.

The figure below summarises the contents of this chapter:

Figure 4: Summary of Chapter 3



The definition of support starts off chapter 3, followed by inclusive education in schools as well as the policies in South African and international schools that guide support. The methods of support that can be implemented as well as the teaching strategies that can be implemented will be discussed. The other role players in gifted education conclude the chapter.

3.2 DEFINING SUPPORT

Learning support encompasses assessing learners' skills and knowledge and adapting the curriculum in such a way that differentiation in lesson plans can be developed and learner needs addressed (Nel, Nel & Lebeloane, 2012:76). Academic support indicates a wide variety of techniques that can be used in the classroom that will support learners in going through the curriculum at an accelerated pace or to do better in school (Abbott, 2014). When used in practice, academic support might refer to all the strategies that are used to support learners such as after school programs, holiday programs or any additional learning programs that benefits one group of learners or the whole school (Abbot, 2014).

Social support is defined as support from different resources and support from members close to a person as well as material support (Lee, Olszewski-Kubilius, Makel, & Putallaz, 2015: 265). The concept of support acknowledges the potential of learners each to grow at their own pace towards a maximum level of independence in learning. High levels of support can be achieved by using strategies and collaboration between the systems to which the learners belong, and their various forms of participation in the process of teaching and learning (Bouwer, 2005:48) to enable each learner to reach a level of achievement with his/her own unique abilities. In this study the focus will specifically be on academic support.

South Africa can be seen as somewhat lacking when it comes to providing adequate support to learners with barriers to learning, especially in rural schools (Nel, Muller & Rheeders, 2011:39). The shortage that is experienced in resources in some schools make it very difficult to support learners adequately and there are some things that need to be looked into, like allocation of resources and modifying learning objectives, when maximum support needs to be rendered (Gous, Eloff&Moen,2014:539).

3.3 INCLUSION IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Inclusion is seen as a multifaceted and controversial concept that needs to be understood. It means different things to different people and is more than just special needs or disabilities that need to be accommodated for (Swart & Pettipher, 2011:4). Inclusion was accepted in 1994 at the Salamanca World Conference of Special

Needs in Spain and has since become a strategy that has been accepted globally (Motitswe, 2014: 259). According to Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010:2), it is sometimes easier to define what inclusion is not than to define inclusion. People have different views about inclusion, but a way of defining it would be to say that inclusion involves the full participation of all learners within a classroom in all learning aspects (Loreman, *et al*, 2010:2).

Definitions of inclusive education are understood differently, changing from context to context (Gous, *et al*, 2014: 537). The definition that the Department of Education lends to inclusion, is one where it aims to include all learners, regardless of age or gender, and to let them learn in an environment that is conducive to achievement. All learners have the right to learn and all learners can achieve (DoE, 2001:16). Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel and Tlale (2015:1) state that inclusive schools are therefore about belonging, nurturing and educating all students, regardless of their differences in ability, culture, gender, language, class and ethnicity. Inclusion is the development of democratic participation and a belief that all learners are able to achieve and can be accommodated within a mainstream school (Nel, 2013:6). Inclusion is about the belief that community members have the right to participate in and have equal opportunities to education (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandegou 2011). Within an inclusive classroom, the attention is on the operation of classrooms and to create a sense that everyone belongs and that everyone inside the community must support one another. Its basic aim is to identify barriers to learning and to implement support structures to help and minimize these barriers to learning (Motitswe, 2014:260).

The teachers' role in inclusion is very important, but in order to benefit completely, the teachers need to be trained in inclusive practices, devise strategies that can be implemented to identify needs correctly and optimally benefit from support from the Institutional Level Support Team (DoE, 2005:32). The scholar Makoelle (2014) warns against simply placing learners in a mainstream school in the absence of adequate measures to respond to their needs. He further indicates that is contrary to the aspirations of full inclusion. The Department of Education of South Africa looked into developing policies and programmes that provide guidance for inclusive schools and needs. Under these practices are whole school development, professional

development and better classroom practices as well as parental communication and links with the community (Nel, Muller & Rheeders, 2011:39).

3.3.1 Whole School Development (WSD)

One of the tactics in the implementation of inclusive education is that of WSD according to Swart and Pettipher (2011:21). The objective of a whole school approach is to generate inclusive cultures in a school environment and all the activities related to the school (DoE, 2001). The WSD is a process of evaluating the work of the school from outside, by development teams (Setlalentoa, 2012:235). It is brought in from the Department of Education to be the ‘cornerstone of the quality assurance in schools’ (DoE, 2001). The scholars Naidoo, Singh and Cassim (2015:134) summarise the various components of WSD into two broad categories which are the Human Resource Development - including the attitudes of staff, their experience, training and the management of the process; and the infrastructure, which covers areas such as physical facilities as well as learning aids for learners with special needs.

The goal of whole school development is to assess the quality of work that the schools offer as well as the resources they use and if they strive to be better in their educational onset (Setlalentoa, 2012:235). After whole school evaluation is done, strategies for improvement are drawn up to implement in the school (Risimati, 2007:2). Whole school development aims to improve the educational achievements of all learners and the school is able to achieve success (DoE, 2001).

3.3.2 Professional development

Professional development indicates strategies that are put in place to develop staff of a school (DoE, 2001). The process of whole school evaluation speaks to the implementation of professional development and aims to train teachers adequately,

Professional development is an important aspect of inclusion. The authors Treder, Morse and Ferron (2000) cited by Royster, Reglin and Nonfo Losike-Sedimo (2014:3) indicate that teachers who participated in effective training programs to

increase their knowledge of what should be going on in inclusive classrooms and acquired the teaching skills, classroom management skills, confidence, and time management skills, have significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusion.

Teachers need to be trained to collaborate with each other, and this is done through pre-service and in-service teaching (Swart & Pettipher, 2011: 23). They must be trained to have a common vision and to be able to work with a diverse range of learners. They must have a deep understanding of issues and must try and improve the inclusion effort. There are a few strategies that can be implemented to develop teachers. (Felder & Brent, 1999:11), mentioned that teachers can write the objectives for each lesson and see to it that the learners are able to obtain the outcomes by the end of a lesson. A few other strategies that they mentioned include using active and co-operative learning in class and to assess the teaching quality in the classroom (Felder & Brent, 1999:14). It is unfortunate that the professional development programmes continue to struggle to prepare teachers to work in education systems where exclusion tends to be ubiquitous as indicated by Slee (2010).

3.3.3 Collaboration

Collaboration in schools is at the heart of inclusive education. Collaboration, which is also of importance in an inclusive setting, is defined as being a “style of direct interaction between at least two co-parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work towards a common goal” (Friend & Cook, 2009:5). Brownell, Adams, Sindelar, Waldron and Vanhover (2006) and Ritzman, Sanger and Coufal (2006) view professional collaboration as a beneficial tool for helping teachers and other professionals to serve students with disabilities and according to Cross, Traub, Hutter-Pishgahi and Shelton (2004) collaboration has been deemed as the best practice. Collaboration is needed between systems like the school and home in order to assist in creating academic excellence (Oswald & Rabie, 2016:7). The researcher Heward (2013) is of the opinion that schools rely on support services, such as special education teachers and other professionals of varied backgrounds to work closely with one another, making collaboration a “crucial dimension to the planning,

delivery, and evaluation of special education and related services. It is also a means to achieving inclusion (Friend, 2011:27-28).

The school environment plays an integral part in the way a learner perceives education and if they will reach their potential. The collaboration between teachers and special needs teachers are important so skills and knowledge can be shared (Reilly, 2014:13). The scholar Bouillet (2013:95) argues that support structures that promote inclusive education are coordinated both within and between various sectors such as education, health, social services and others and teams of support personnel. There are five characteristics pertaining to collaboration (Miller & Burden, 2007:4), a vision that is shared between teacher for successful teaching and learning; a commitment that is shared for collaboration; caring communities; positive interaction between all stakeholders; and showing leadership and understanding.

In order for inclusive education to be effective, policies had to be developed and implemented.

3.3.4 Policies guiding support in South African schools

The government of South Africa did an audit after the democratic elections to see where South African schools were in terms of policies (Umalusi 2014). The following policies that guide support were developed.

3.3.4.1 South African Schools Act

The South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act 84 of 1996) played a crucial role in changing the way South African schools are managed. The main point that the SASA makes is that past injustices must be dealt with so that all learners may have an opportunity of getting proper schooling and that all inequality is abolished from schools. Uniform standards and goals were set out in the South African Schools Act and the aim was to make schools across South Africa able to have the same quality education (DoE, 1996).

3.3.4.2 Education White Paper 6

White Paper 6 (WP6) was implemented in 2001 (DoE, 2001). The intention of White Paper 6 was to implement inclusion in South African schools and to use strategies that would be effective to make inclusion a reality. The WP6 indicates that all learners have the ability to learn and that all learners need support (Oswald & de Villiers, 2013:2). The aim of the WP6 is to safeguard the respect for learners and that no learner must be discriminated against on any grounds. To achieve this, attitudes, beliefs and the teaching curricula must be changed to accommodate all learners within the inclusive classroom (DoE, 2001:6).

There were some challenges with the implementation of WP6 (Donahue & Bornman, 2014:7). One of these challenges was that of the funding of inclusive classrooms. In WP6 it is stated that it will be cost effective to implement inclusion in schools, but seeing that special classrooms and other infrastructure must be built, the statement was not realistic (Donahue & Bornman, 2014). Even though WP6 has been implemented 14 years ago, very little progress in the implementation of inclusion has been made, with the result that many children are still disadvantaged (Aziz, McKenzie, Watermeyer, Waterhouse, Beere, Japhta, Fish, Khumalo & Swift, 2016:2). Learners with disabilities are marginalised and this frustrates these learners and their caregivers.

3.3.4.3 The SIAS policy

The Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy was implemented in 2008 and the aim of the strategy was to completely change the process of identification and assessment and to provide programs that will support learners at various levels of learning (DoE, 2008:6). The main focus of SIAS is to increase participation from role players with regard to inclusion and to provide transparent guidelines on enrolling learners in special schools. Stakeholders in education, such as the schools and districts were asked for their inputs in order to develop these supportive strategies (DoE, 2008:3).

The situation that prompted the implementation of the SIAS strategy was that of incorrect identification of learners with barriers that led to learners being placed in schools for learners with disabilities unnecessarily (DoE, 2008:7). There are no identification methods available at schools and there is also a lack of involvement from parents. The SIAS policy aimed to train teachers and all stakeholders in schools on how to implement the strategy within the two to five years and wanted to work together with other departments to make implementation a smoother process (DoE, 2008:7). Teachers were still being trained on how to implement the SIAS policy in Gauteng schools in (GDE, 2016/2017).

3.3.4.4 The CAPS document

The Curriculum, Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS), was implemented by the Department of Education, but not as a new curriculum, but rather as a curriculum that builds on the National Curriculum Statement (du Plessis, 2013:1). It focuses on what is taught and not on how it is taught (DoE: 2011). The rationale within the CAPS document is similar to that of the NCS document in the sense that both the policies conveys the skills and knowledge that is necessary in South Africa (du Plessis, 2013:2).

According to the DoE (2001) the recent curriculum transformation in South Africa has integrated the principle of inclusive education. The implication is that, curriculum implementation should be flexible with regard to teaching methods, assessment, pace of teaching and the development of learning material (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2015:3). The current Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) do not support the requirements of a flexible curriculum as stated in Education White Paper 6 according to Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013).

3.4 THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL SUPPORT TEAM (ILST)

In Education White Paper Six, it is stated that, in order to achieve an inclusive education system, ILSTs must be established in all public schools (DoE, 2001). The ILSTs are tasked with identifying barriers to learning and implementing support for learners at risk within a school. The ILST's play an important role, together with the

parents and other community members, to form part of the inclusive education plan (DoE:2001).

The main functions of the ILST are to co-ordinate support relating to the teacher, the learners, the curriculum and the school itself (Landsberg, 2011:73). Another important function of the ILST is to assist in the drawing up of support strategies in the classroom and providing support to teachers (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & van Deventer, 2016:531). The ILST focuses on forming networks of operative communication between all stakeholders, like teachers, learners and other community members (DoE: 2001). The ILST adapts current learning programs if need be and devise new strategies that can be implemented by the teacher in class. Parental involvement must also be ensured by the ILST as well as strategies that can prevent socio-economical problems, such as drug abuse, HIV/AIDS and others (DoE, 2001).

When the ILST receives reports from the teachers about implementation of support within the classroom, the members of the ILST draw up formal reports that indicate what has been done to support the learners and the parents must be involved in the process of implementation of strategies (DoE, 2008), for optimal benefit. The composition of the ILST depends on the special needs within a school and also the size of the school and the expertise available in the school. The school can draw information from the community in order to find the necessary expertise to support learners within the school.

The composition of the ILST mostly consists of, according to the Department of Education (2008)

- The principal as ex-officio member. The principal plays a very important role in the support structure of the school, because he or she must draw up and implement policies that are necessary for the smooth running of the school. In the case where a principal cannot be part of the ILST, the deputy principal can be the part-time member, because he or she is part of management.
- A referring teacher that is usually the class teacher who works with the learner
- A teacher who is competent in learner support and has good co-operation skills.

- Teachers who have a specific skill or level of proficiency, for example a teacher that is very good in teaching maths can assist a learner who has problems with maths
- A member of the District Based Support Team depending on what the needs of the learner in question are
- The parents of the learner
- Learner representatives at higher and further education levels

Schools are supposed to have functioning ILST's, but where an ILST is absent, the District Based Support Team must support the schools in order to establish an ILST within the school. The main function of the District Based Support Team is to develop other programs and to check the effectiveness of implemented programs. They also support and train teachers when cases are referred by the ILST, the District Based Support Team helps the ILST with support implementation and might send a District Based psychologist as part of intervention (DoE, 2008).

When identifying barriers and implementing support, there are role players who must work together to implement policies and programs to achieve the best results. The role players according to the policy guidelines in South Africa include parents or care givers of learners, the teachers, principals and different health professionals such as therapists and psychologists as well as the ILST of the school all play an integral part when it comes to supporting learners with special needs (Nel, *et al*, 2012:47). According to Mkhuma, Maseko and Tlale (2014:444), the process of identifying learners who experience barriers to learning is a critical step towards the provision of effective support. However, Ntsanwisi (2008) reported on a research conducted in Limpopo with the Foundation Phase teachers. The findings revealed that teachers lacked the necessary training in the skills needed to identify barriers to learning and instead depended on test scores as criteria for identification.

3.5 CLASSROOM STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ACADEMICALLY GIFTED LEARNERS

When administering support for a gifted learner, some general guidelines must be adhered to (Elder, 2013:14). All learners' right to an equal education must be recognized and the curriculum must be adapted to suit the needs of all learners within a classroom. When it comes to changing or adapting the curriculum, some teachers are fearful, because it involves a lot of planning and work from their side (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2005:213). Equity is of concern when support must be given to learners. Teachers can put a few strategies in place that will assist not only themselves as the teachers, but also their classes as well (Smutny, 2011:31). The strategies are discussed in paragraphs below.

3.5.1 Allowing choice

When allowing a gifted learner to choose the subject in which he or she wants to do extra work, it allows them to delve deeper and get better information for better understanding of concepts of interest (Smutny, 2011:31). Choices can be given to learners throughout the day, including choices of food and activities that they might like (Dunlap & Liso, 2004:2).

The academically gifted learner may choose the materials or project that they would like to do and they can be allowed to search for more information. This will provide them the opportunity to make an informed choice as to what they would like to do (Dunlap & Liso, 2004:2). When a range of texts is given, academically gifted learners may be asked to do research into a more difficult book than their classmates. The scholar Smutny (2011:31) also indicated that they can also use a variety of creative ways to get an expected answer.

Choice is important, because learners have a tendency of being better behaved when they are able to choose what they would like to do (Dunlap & Liso, 2004:2). Being able to make their own choices installs a feeling of responsibility in the learners and they might think before they make choices that affect themselves and others (Stonehouse, 2009:3). Offering choice is a good way of getting academically gifted learners to pay attention (IDOE, 2010:16). Not all learners learn at the same

level and different levels of learning are appropriate for different learners at different times in the learning process.

3.5.2 Integration of technology

Technology can be incorporated into the classroom in order for academically gifted learners to explore things and do research when doing a project on a specific topic. The Internet can open a world of knowledge for gifted learners and they might even be able to communicate with other individuals that have the same interests as them in order for them to feel less alone and isolated. Technology serves as a differentiated instruction medium and can be seen as a creative outlet (Periathiravadi & Rinn, 2012:153). The learners of today are familiar with smartphones, mp3 players and tablets and it is important for the school to keep up with advancements in technology (Periathiravadi & Rinn, 2012:153). Siegle (2005) identified six different types of technology-supported learning activities for gifted and talented students: information resources, e-books, interactive projects, online classes, publishing platforms, and mentoring resources. These resources are available in public schools in South Africa. Recently in 2015 the Department of Basic Education issued tablets to learners in schools in Gauteng in an attempt to create digital classrooms. This initiative started as a pilot project, which spread to the distribution of tablets to more schools in 2016.

Contemporary learning, as mentioned by Elder (2013:14), realizes that the world and technological systems are ever changing, and so should the resources within the classroom. The learners should be exposed to different ways of thinking and using technology in the 21st century to develop their talents. When technology is used local and global communities are fostered and the mind of the learner is opened to endless possibilities. The scholar Atwell (2008) indicates that the gifted learner has access through the Internet and online learning to a wide variety of information. The learner can be creative and analyse the information to benefit their brain capacity. It also motivates academically gifted learners and lends new skills such as observation and analysis of surroundings (Klopfer, Osterweil, Groff & Haas, 2009: 6). Learners can access information quickly and learn through playing.

3.5.3 Personalized learning

Personalized learning is not a new concept. It aims at making the subjects and the curriculum as enticing as possible to learners by giving them access to a curriculum that suits their learning styles (Powell & Kusama-Powell, 2011:7). Personalized learning is used as a strategy to support gifted learners (Lauder, 2011:18). It is an important strategy, because not all learners learn at the same pace and not one teaching method or strategy can fit all learners (NJDoE, 2014:5). Learners partner up with their peers, teachers and parents to optimise the learning experience and to use everything they learn to their own benefit. Within the community, they are also supported to use their diversity as individuals when learning (Elder, 2013:14)

3.5.4 Working together

Academically gifted learners benefit from working with intelligent peers and it is important for them to share ideas and to learn from one another. Extra projects can be given and the learners can be supervised and sometimes-individual projects may also be given in order to enhance learning (Smutny, 2011: 32). Gifted learners can benefit from spending time together with like-minded peers and can be grouped in a way that will benefit them (Bate & Clark, 2013:50). They can feel “normal” when they are grouped with other gifted learners and it gives them an opportunity to share ideas and interests. Grouping gifted learners has been seen as a way to motivate such learners, making them feel challenged as well as understood and thus can help them achieve to the best of their abilities (Chessor, 2013:1335). Gifted learners benefit from being grouped together, as studies show (Bate & Clark, 2013:50). Gifted learners are also able to learn the process of how to learn when they are grouped together (Riley, Sampson, White, Wardman & Walker, 2015: 28).

Some key points for grouping gifted learners are as follows according to Riley, *et al.* (2015):

- It is important for the well-being of academically gifted learners to be grouped together.

- Gifted like- minded peers might have the same thinking processes that might benefit them when they can discuss it together.
- Gifted students want choice and control that comes from grouping
- Grouping patterns have benefits when the outcomes are adequate from the learners.

The Policy document of Indianapolis (IDoE, 2010:10) reiterates this by saying that placing gifted learners together helps in the effective instruction of these learners. When academically gifted learners do work together, the focus is on the process and not on the end result. Collaboration is very important and academically gifted learners might become carried away and lose themselves in the process (IDEO, 2010: 16). Teachers must guard against this.

3.5.6 Pace

Pace indicates the way in which teachers can spread out a lesson so it can benefit all learners (Alber, 2012). It takes skill to be able to pace a lesson well for all learners to understand what is meant and in order for them to finish tasks. Alber (2012), mentions that there are some steps that can be taken to ensure that a lesson goes smoothly:

Learners learn at different paces and it is good to accommodate academically gifted learners by applying accelerated learning. Accelerated learning can give options to the learners by affording them more difficult tasks and more engaging activities can also be given to them (Smutny, 2011:33). Most educational systems are focused on the pace of an average learner and fail to work at the pace of a gifted learner (van der Meulen, Van der Bruggen, Spilt, Verouden, Berkhout & Bögels, 2014:289). Academically gifted learners have already mastered the work of grade level and should be allowed to work at an accelerated pace. In order to do so, curriculum adaptations are to be implemented. The scholars Olszweski-Kubilius and Thompson (2013:398) state that the pace of learning is just as important as what is being taught when supporting the gifted learner.

3.5.7 Determining Prior knowledge

It is important to determine what the prior knowledge of the learner is in order to know what the learner has not mastered yet and in order for the new information to be integrated with the previous learning (Coleman, 2005:30). In this way, the academically gifted learner can be helped to master other aspects than those of peers and boredom can be prevented by organising new and exciting activities for the gifted learner (Smutny, 2011:33). The repetition of activities should be avoided at all costs and gifted learners should be afforded the chance to go through study material quicker than their peers and incorporate what they learn into their prior knowledge (van der Meulen *et al*, 2014:289).

3.5.8 Goal setting

It is said that goal setting is rooted in psychology and constant goal setting will lead to action by the one setting the goals (Morisano & Shore, 2010: 252). When setting goals, the learners are able to achieve more and this builds confidence because the task becomes more manageable (Morisano & Shore, 2010:255). Perfectionism as indicated in Chapter 2, plays a role in academically gifted learners' lives and when goals are set, the learners might set more realistic goals that will benefit them in the long run (Smutny, 2011:33). Goal setting is very important in order to know where the gifted learner is heading and in order to get what is needed (Swicord, 2015). The gifted learner must find out what their interests are and pursue them by setting clear goals.

3.5.9 Creativity

Creativity is seen as an elusive factor of giftedness (Van Tassel-Baska, 2004). Creativity is not just about creating new things from nothing; it is also a pattern of thought and can be taught (Smutny, 2011:34). The notion of creativity has evolved over the years and is said to have emerged from suppressed desires, being a state of self-actualization or the capacity to relate to others in ways that will not be judged (Van Tassel-Baska, 2004). Feedback on the creativity of a learner is important in a school setting. The academically gifted learner can be asked to rethink concepts and ideas and to create different ways in seeing similar things. In order to develop creative thinking, stories can be used and the learners can think of alternative

endings or they can use their imaginations to create new concepts or ideas. They can also exhibit their art and perform their ideas and use their talents in order to improve creative thinking in the classroom.

3.5.10 Learning independently

Teachers should give academically gifted learners an opportunity to work on their own and to research different topics more in depth (Department of Education, New Brunswick, 2007:21). The skills for independent learning must be developed and learners can be supervised. Different sources for the topics can be found and better organisational skills can be worked on in order to meet set deadlines and encourage the learner to work harder (Smutny, 2011:34). Gifted learners do not learn the same as their peers and must be afforded the opportunity to learn independently. They must be given opportunities to work at a more advanced level, because they already know most of the learning content that is expected from their grade level (van der Meulen, *et al*: 2014:292).

3.5.11 Following interests

Academically gifted learners can be inspired to follow their interests. The teacher can give the learners the opportunity to keep a portfolio with everything inside that interests them and learners can also be asked what their interests are. It is important to motivate learners in order to develop their interests and talents (Smutny, 2011:35). When a learner shows an interest in something, there will be more enjoyment when doing the activity and it is thus a good way of getting learners motivated (Weimer, 2009).

3.5.12 Self- assessment

Learners can learn through assessing themselves to see where they can improve and to see what they do well. They should be allowed to evaluate themselves from time to time and a list with criteria can be given to them to help them see what it is that needs to be assessed (Smutny, 2011:35).

3.5.13 Career guidance

There is a belief that academically gifted learners do not need career guidance, since they are able to understand what the process of career guidance entails, but this is untrue (Muratori & Smith, 2015:173). It is important to help gifted learners in selecting a career (Xolo, 2007: 202). The author states that learners don't know in which direction they would like to go someday if they do not get the correct career guidance (Xolo, 2007: 203). In the CAPS document, Life Orientation learners are taught to follow certain careers of interest. The topics taught are under career and career choices. Life Orientation teachers are able to answer some questions that learners might have.

3.5.14 Use of libraries as resource centres

In 2001, the National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS) was established in South Africa and consists of an advisory board that informs the Ministers of Education, amongst others, about important matters regarding libraries and services in order to stimulate the sectors of development in the country (National Library of South Africa, 2015:8).

Libraries in schools did not function very well after 1994, but in the 22 years since, the Department has aimed to improve the libraries in South African schools (NLSA, 2015: 21). School libraries form part of the educational process and classroom libraries also have a collection of books in a variety of languages as well as newspaper subscriptions in some schools (NLSA, 2015:22). Through reading and quality education and access to books and other developmental resources, the gifted learner can learn and be stimulated in order to achieve more. Eyre, (2011:26) indicates that the environment plays a big role in higher achievement, even though we are not exactly sure how the environment works in on the brain, we do know that it has an effect on the learner and how the learner learns. When the foundation is laid well, the learner is able to retain information better and has the opportunity for higher achievement later in life.

3.6 TEACHING STRATEGIES APPROPRIATE FOR ACADEMICALLY GIFTED LEARNERS

Within the classroom, there are many strategies that can be used in order to support gifted learners (Kokot, 2011:520). Through identification of academically gifted learners, a program or instruction to suit the child can be formulated and these strategies are as diverse as the learners and their diverse needs (Wakefield, O'Reilly & Pass, 2014: 3). Modifications can be made to the school curriculum and many other accommodations can be made.

3.6.1 Grade acceleration

Acceleration occurs when a learner is working through the lower levels of the curriculum at a faster pace than the peers of the learner (Kokot, 2011:520). This will mean that the learner might be able to go to the next grade if the learner has learnt all the concepts of the current grade. Grade skipping may occur without special materials or programs. The acceleration programs can be individualized or it can be "total". When it is individualized, the gifted learner can be helped on a one-to-one basis with the curriculum tailored to suit him or her. If the acceleration is "total", it will mean that the learner will progress to the next grade or do two years' worth of work in one year (Davis, Rimm & Siegle, 2011:132).

Accelerated integrated learning will allow the learner to study the same themes or topics as all learners in the class, but in more detail and in depth in order to learn more than what is expected. Resources can be used and proper planning and assessing is very important in this stage in order to help the gifted learner. When integrated properly, it might be done successfully. Within the policy of guidelines and support for gifted learners of Wales (2004), schools should consider acceleration by implementing a policy and being able to realize what acceleration means on a whole school level. Within this policy gifted and talented children have the ability to learn much faster than their peers that are the same age as them (Wales, 2004:4). Acceleration is a strategy that allows learners to go through the curriculum at a much faster pace. Wakefield, *et al* (2014: 3) suggests grade skipping and early admission

as content acceleration. Two school years can also be done in one year if the need arises.

3.6.1.2 Subject acceleration

Grade skipping is seen as full acceleration, whereas subject acceleration is seen as partial acceleration (Davis, *et al*, 2011: 134). Within subject acceleration, each learner is allowed to learn at their own pace and go through the subject curriculum faster. The curriculum can be streamlined so that the material that has previously been learned by the learner can be taken out from the curriculum in order for it to be less to get through. Pre-testing can determine where the learners are with regards to their learning and the curriculum can then be adapted accordingly (NSW DoE, 2004:4). Learners can be accommodated by individualizing some of their work and allowing them to do their own research on a topic. Students who have the same abilities can also be grouped together in order to learn from one another and that the group work will be equally distributed (DoE, 2004:4), when applying subject acceleration, the academically gifted learner may also be given access to subjects that are designed for older learners in higher grades. Another type of acceleration is content based and that means that a learner can be allowed to move quickly through some subjects such as English or Maths, but not through other subjects. The flexibility of the curriculum plays a big role in subject or content acceleration (Sambu, Kalla & Njue, 2014:233).

When enrolling in high school, gifted learners may start receiving credit for courses at college and use the credit when they study for an undergraduate degree. This is also a form of acceleration that benefits gifted learners (Sambu, Kalla & Njue, 2014:233). These courses will be taken for part of the day when in high school, but the learners and institutions should make sure that the learners do not repeat the content when going to college (Davis, *et al*, 2011:136). This happens in international countries not in South Africa. Grade 12 learners that are gifted in South Africa take more subjects than others. Instead of having seven subjects, which is the average number of subject that can be taken at grade 12 in order to get a certificate, other learners exceed this by far. They will have 9 to 10 subjects and those that really

excel can get distinctions in all these subjects. Such learners are at an advantage when they apply in institutions of higher learning. Not only do they get access easily to their fields of study they also have more options at their disposal because diverse subjects they passed at matric level.

3.6.2 Enrichment

Enrichment is activities that are additional to the curriculum that can support the learner (Council of Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment, 2006). When supplementing the ordinary curriculum with activities that can challenge the learner, enrichment is achieved. The gifted learner is able to explore concepts more deeply and learn more about concepts or subjects (Kokot, 2011:521). Enrichment can extend to assigning a mentor to an academically gifted learner in order for an area of interest to be developed (Pleiss & Feldhusen, 2010). The following are forms of enrichment that can be applied in the classroom:

3.6.2.2 *Direct instruction as a form of enrichment*

Direct instruction is a teacher-centred approach where the teacher delivers the learning content in a structured manner to facilitate learning. The author Kokot (2011:522) provides a warning that the teacher must be careful that the learning process does not involve merely recalling facts, but that it is structured in line with Bloom's Taxonomy that enables academically gifted learners to extend their knowledge of the topic. Bloom's Taxonomy has different levels that acquire learners to think broader than merely recalling facts. The six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy are knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Clinkenbeard, 2012:627). Throughout each of these levels, learners are increasingly asked to think more and to use different skills to enhance their mental abilities. This works well for academically gifted learners, because they become bored when they have to recall mere facts instead of thinking about deeper answers (Kokot, 2011:523).

3.6.3 Sophistication

Sophistication is a strategy used by teachers to help the gifted learners see the underlying principles, theories and systems of work done by their peers (Kokot,

2011:521).Content sophistication can refer to the way content can be made more abstract for the learners and that basic concepts can be considered more fulfilling (Wakefield, *et al*, 2014:3). Gifted learners thrive on subject sophistication as a form of teaching, because it involves using higher order thinking skills and the ability to see perspectives to interest them (Coleman, 2001). Coleman elaborates by saying that when gifted learners are expected to answer more extensive knowledge questions, they become more interested in the learning process.

As an example, when learners do a comprehension test, the gifted learners might inspect other forms of the story, like the characters and how they interact. They might be able to write their own story based on what they have read or come up with their own ending of the story.

3.6.4 Differentiation

Differentiation of lesson plans refer to adapting lesson plans to enable gifted learners to learn at their own pace and find different ways of reaching a desired outcome in education through teacher support (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). When differentiation is used, lesson plans, assessment methods and teaching strategies are all adapted to make learning a more enjoyable experience for gifted learners (Sambu, Kalla & Njue 2014:233).

The way the curriculum is designed has a big influence on the achievement of the academically gifted learner (Reid, 2011:31). Reid (2011:31) indicates that the teacher must devise strategies to develop the learners' full potential. One textbook alone is not enough to adequately challenge the gifted learner to achieve and variety of materials such as presentations and outside resources can be used to implement differentiation successfully in classrooms (ESL, 2015).

There are some problems that prevent teachers from implementing differentiation effectively, as discussed by Van Tassel–Baska and Stambaugh (2003:212). The degree of differentiation that is needed for the gifted learner as well as the way it can be implemented in classrooms seem to be problematic. This is due to a lack of proper learning material, overcrowded classrooms and the diversity of learners

(Oswald & de Villiers, 2013:12). Oswald and Rabie (2016:3) also place the blame for the lack of implementing differentiated teaching on teachers that are not appropriately trained. They further add that several factors in the education system militate against its effective application. These include teachers' lack of knowledge and skills needed to manage differentiated activities, discomfort with the process, lack of planning, limited teaching time and large class sizes (Oswald & De Villiers, 2013).

The advantages of differentiation in modern classrooms include that learning is extended beyond the classroom and learning can take place any time and at any place. Learners can also work with others outside of the classroom in order to optimally achieve and they are not limited to the learners in the class, but can collaborate with other learners and even mentors outside of school (Elder, 2013:18).

Within differentiated teaching, the teacher must try to get the learner into the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) from where meaningful learning can form connections with previous learning (Tomlinson, Brighton, Hertberg, Callahan, Moon, Brimijoin, Conover & Reynolds, 2003:126). The learners' abilities must be looked into to see what kind of differentiation must be implemented for the learner (Tomlinson, *et al*, 2003:129).

3.6.5.Strategies for differentiation

Strategies for differentiation deal with how learners learn, what learners learn and how learners demonstrate their learning (Elder, 2013:19). A differentiated curriculum refers to experiences of learning structured around the interests, needs and abilities of gifted learners (Davis, *et al*, 2011:197). The following table indicates some strategies that can be used for differentiation, as adapted from Elder (2013:19).

Table 3.1: Strategies for differentiation

What students learn	How students learn	How learners demonstrate their learning
The curriculum content including ideas and concepts	Content presentation and construction of meaning	Demonstration of what is learnt according to learning styles
Setting of clear learning goals	Supporting learners to set their own learning goals	Giving learners the opportunity to show how they learn.
Organizing content across varied themes and multiple disciplines	Providing opportunities so learners can choose how they learn.	Provide opportunities so learners can show their level of mastery.
Provide content that challenge learners to move from what they already know to higher levels of understanding	Support learners to take increased responsibility of their learning process	Design tasks and assignments that deal with real life problems that enable learners to understand the world outside
Allow for multiple entry points to cater for prior knowledge	The pace of learning can be accelerated so that enrichment can be offered and repetition minimised.	Give learners opportunities to work on projects in which they have a deep interest.
Curriculum can be added in greater depth, not more of the same	Scaffold learning for gifted learners and other learners	Create a variety of assignments at different levels (tiered assignments)

Adapted from Elder (2013:19)

3.7 OTHER ROLEPLAYERS

3.7.1 The role the school counsellors can play in support

In inclusive education, there is a role that psychologists, or counsellors, play in South Africa (Engelbrecht, 2004:23). They must have some specialized insight and skills that are necessary to guide and support learners inside schools. These school

Psychologists are employed by the Department of Education in order to render services to learners and teachers (Moolla, 2011: 2).

The school counsellor plays a role in supporting academically gifted learners, or high ability learners (IDoE, 2010:10). The school counsellor must understand that learners that are academically gifted learners are different, but that they are still children. The counsellor must listen attentively at the needs of the high ability learner, or academically gifted learner and note how they perceive goals and issues. The school counsellor can become a promoter of school policies and programs that might benefit the academically gifted learner and promote the needs of the high ability learners.

Collaboration with other staff who have talents or abilities beyond the usual can be a positive endeavour for the school counsellor in order to lead and create possibilities for the high ability learners. Collaboration should go beyond professional collaboration and extend to collaboration with parents and the community (Coleman, Gallagher & Job, 2012:34). A guidance plan can be developed that deal with specific cases that the high ability, or academically gifted learners, might deal with. The use of other means of support such as film and technology that can support academically gifted learners can be made available as a support strategy.

3.7.2 The role of parents in support

The parents of academically gifted learners also have an important role to play when it comes to support (IDEO, 2010:15). Parents sometimes expect their children to achieve highly and do not always support them in the best way (Al-Shabatat, Abbas & Ismail, 2009: 121). There are instances where parents deny having gifted children or where parents overstate their children's abilities (Davis, *et al*, 2011:444). Parents must be actively involved in the lives of their children and the teachers must have a good relationship with the parents, because they are partners in education and plays a significant role in the lives of their children (O'Brien, 2005).

When parents have learners of a high ability, or an academically gifted learner, they can according to the IDoE (2010:15) support their children by allowing the child to

make decisions on their own in order to nurture independence. The parents can learn to listen to the learner without wanting to control their lives. The parents can provide community service or action of some kind that can benefit the community so a sense of belonging can be found.

Promoting positive friendships in areas of interests is a good way in supporting the academically gifted learner and encouraging positive behaviour with others and finding mentors in a suitable interest is a good idea. From the above, learning and teaching strategies are vast and all of them can be used in order to support the academically gifted learner in the classroom.

3.8 CONCLUSION

The chapter looked at the different definitions of support and how support is implemented in South African schools through inclusive practices. The functions of the ILST were discussed and the various methods of support that can be implemented in the classroom for academically gifted learners have been looked into. In Chapter 4, the research methodology that was used in the research will be discussed.

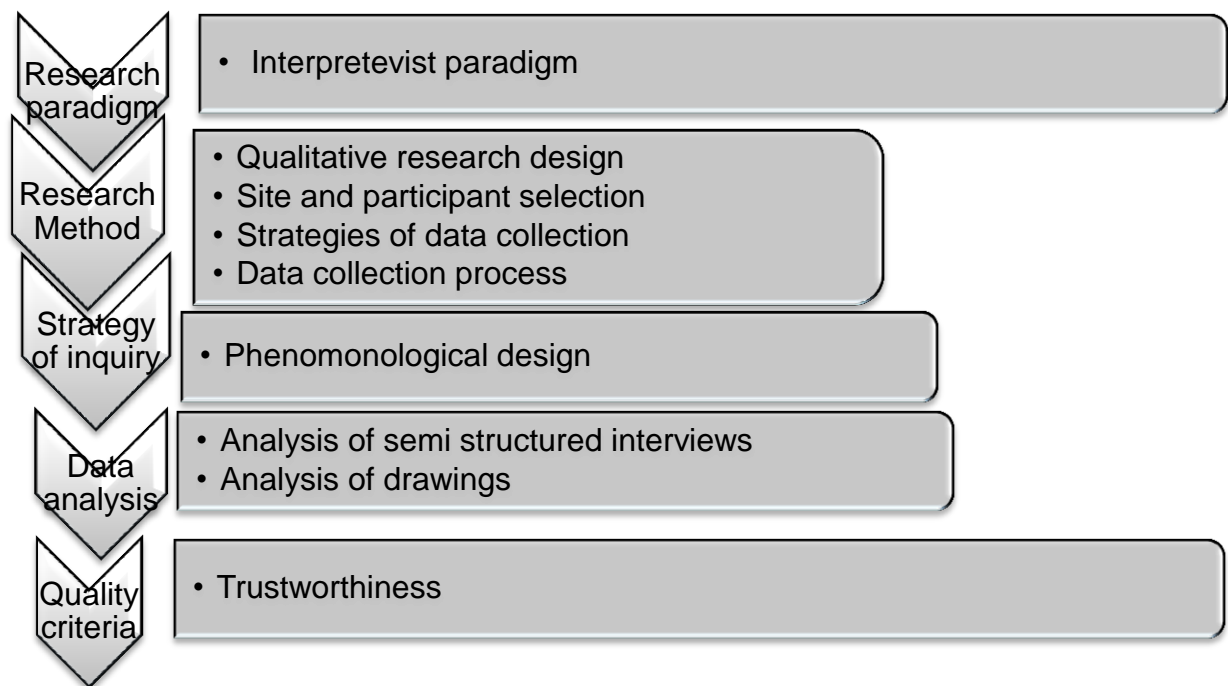
CHAPTER 4:RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research study was to investigate the perceptions of academic support for academically gifted learners and the role the ILST plays in supporting these learners within selected primary schools in the Johannesburg South Education District (D11). In Chapter 3, the emphasis was on the support that can be rendered to academically gifted learners and the ILST as a structure within schools to implement such support. In chapter 3, the structure of support in schools and the stages inclusive education has come through was discussed. The role of the Institutional Level Support Team and to what extent they assist academically gifted learners were also discussed, as well as all the measures that can be put in place to accommodate academically gifted learners in classrooms.

The research methodology within the research encompasses how the research will be done and the steps that will be followed to complete the research (Newby, 2010:51). The methodology is concerned with how research tools are used and how research rules are implemented (Newby, 2010:51). Within this chapter, the research paradigm will be discussed in detail and also why the particular research paradigm is employed. The research method, the data collection tools, sampling methods and procedures and the selection of sites will be elaborated on. The chapter will conclude with the data analysis procedure as well as how the data will be interpreted. The quality criteria and ethical considerations for the study will be outlined at the end of the chapter. The figure below summarises the content of this chapter.

Figure 5: Outline of Chapter 4



4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

In essence, a paradigm can be defined as beliefs or ways the world is seen that becomes a worldview based on relationships and the way faith and nature is experienced (Nieuwenhuis, 2011: 47). A paradigm is about theories that individuals have about the world, but cannot necessarily prove. The meaning that participants have might only be understood through language (Fouche & Schurink, 2011:310). As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Interpretivist paradigm is used within this study. Interpretivism, as the name suggests, is the study of interpretation (Nieuwenhuis, 2011:58). Interpretivism is used, because it is the best way to understand parts of the whole. First, the parts within the research are “broken up” and then constructed again in order to make meaning of it. There are a few assumptions on which the interpretivist perspective is based as explained by Nieuwenhuis (2011:59).

4.2.1 Human life is understood from within

Human life cannot be observed from the outside. Interpretivism focuses on the experiences people have and how they interact socially with others in order to

understand their everyday life. Within this study, the researcher spent time in the field with the participants in order to try to understand their experiences and how they create meaning from them. The data collected in this study was about the perceptions that the participants had about academic support for academically gifted learners.

4.2.2 Social life is a human product

Reality is not determined by itself, but is part of a social construction (Nieuwenhuis, 2011:59). By putting people in social situations, a researcher can learn the way that people behave and meanings can be taken from this behaviour. I spent time with every participant in a safe natural setting. In school A, I interviewed the four participants one by one in the principal's office, because it was quiet and safe. The follow-up interviews in school A were done in one of the two participants' classrooms. In school B, I interviewed four participants in the office building that was safe for them. The 2 follow up interviews were conducted in the HOD's office in the administrative block. In school C, there was a separate room that was used for staff meetings where I conducted 3 interviews. The principal of school C preferred to be interviewed in his office. In school D, the library, which is not in use, was used as an interview room where I interviewed all four participants, one by one.

4.2.3 The beginning of meaning can be taken from the human mind

By looking into the wealth and complex nature of support of gifted learners within research, I started to understand the meanings that my participants had about how they render and view support for academically gifted learners in their classrooms as well as how they experience gifted learners. My understanding of the support for academically gifted learners improved from what I thought initially.

4.2.4 Humans are affected by the knowledge of the social world

Interpretivism sees multiple realities of phenomena, not just one single aspect of it. Realities can differ from time and place and there is a two-way relationship between theory and practice. Theories are abstract, but they can be used to make links to the concrete and to understand meaning. The intersubjective meanings that participants have are of utmost importance to construct and understand the meanings that

participants create about certain phenomena. Everything that the participants said were recorded and used in the research, because it was their realities, even though it changed from person to person, because no participant views support for academically gifted learners exactly the same as another.

4.2.5 The social world does not exist separately from human knowledge

Before entering the research field, I had some ideas of what the participants might have to say about academic giftedness and how support is rendered to them. This emphasises the belief that the world does not exist separately from what I know about support for academically gifted learners. The biggest aim of interpretivism is to present a way of seeing a situation and to analyse the study to give insight or understanding into the ways people construct their world and meanings. The description a researcher obtains from the research is very rich and yields descriptive data that is favoured in qualitative research. I chose the interpretivist research paradigm, with the hope that the data obtained from participants would be rich and descriptive and that it would aid in the answering of the research question. The advantages and limitations of the interpretivist paradigm were discussed in chapter 1 (*cf.* 1.5.1).

4.3 RESEARCH METHOD

There is a differentiation between three research methods as laid out by Creswell (2009:4), namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed method designs. The research method explains the approach that the research will take. Qualitative research is a way of exploring and perceiving how individuals see the world. The research process involves speaking to the individuals and asking questions that will address the issues under research. Qualitative research is an inductive process and emergent, meaning it can change throughout the stages. The main focus in qualitative research is the meanings that individuals have about phenomena (Creswell, 2009:4). In this research I tried to understand how participants perceived academic support of academically gifted learners. In line with the interpretivist paradigm, qualitative research takes place in a natural setting (Ivankova, Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011:259). I interviewed the participants at their schools at a place that was

convenient to them. The schools were their preferred naturalistic setting. I chose this design, because I wanted to find out about a certain phenomenon, in this case, academic support given to academically gifted learners in selected primary schools in Johannesburg South. The participants shared their experiences of the phenomenon and I was able to create meaning from the data in order to answer the research questions. The research also takes place in a natural setting. The qualitative research design is also more flexible and can change if need be in order to obtain better and more descriptive data. It is an emergent research design (Creswell, 2009:175). A pilot study was conducted with primary schools in order to see if the research can be undertaken. The pilot study guided me into changing my research questions and to use probing to the benefit of the study.

4.4 STRATEGY OF INQUIRY

Strategies of inquiry are different types of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods that provide direction for the procedures that are going to be followed (Creswell, 2009:234). Within qualitative research, there are a few strategies of inquiry, namely ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological research as well as narrative research (Creswell, 2009:13). Strategies of inquiry differ in terms of their research focus, for an example ethnography is concerned with studying cultural groups in their entirety, grounded theory derives theory from the data gathered, case studies explore event or activities in detail, phenomenology focuses on the essence of human experiences and the narrative research investigates live stories of individuals or groups.

In this study, I made use of the phenomenological strategy of inquiry. I used this inquiry, because the goal of the study was to understand lived experiences of participants (Delpont, Fouche & Shurink, 2011:305). A number of participants, four teachers and ten learners from each of the four schools (n=56), were studied. Information was directly obtained from the participants through semi-structured interviews, and drawings. I used multiple data collection methods in order to aid in triangulation. Triangulation is the process of using different sources of data and different participants, types of data or methods of collecting data in order to compare

everything in qualitative data (Creswell, 2012:629). When triangulation is done correctly, it will ensure that the findings of the study are accurate, because different methods were used to obtain the same result. It aids in credibility (Creswell, 2012:259). The process of data collection is discussed in sections below.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

4.5.1 Selection of sites

Selection of sites that are most likely to directly benefit the study and where the issue under investigation is most likely to be (Creswell, 2009: 175) should be the primary consideration. In selecting the primary schools for participation in this research, the Head of the Curriculum in the Johannesburg South Education District was consulted. This unit is regarded as the Curriculum and Learning Implementation (CLI) in the Gauteng province. A list of primary schools that perform well academically and those that were underperforming was supposed to be obtained from the district, but the person in charge at the district did not have the lists and just sent a list that had Primary schools in JHB South on them. Primary schools are regarded as performing if they do well in Annual National Assessment (ANA) especially in grades 1, 3 and 6. I did not work with schools and participants that were known to me.

The sites that are selected for research are four primary schools in the Johannesburg South Education District (D11). Four schools were randomly selected from the list on the basis that they are not known to me in order to uphold ethical protocol. I contacted the chosen schools and the principals of the three were not willing to participate in the study. I went to a few more schools I had chosen from the list and the principals were either busy in a meeting or couldn't be reached. I kept on approaching other schools from the list and after a while I had four schools that were willing to participate. The schools that were visited were all fee-paying public schools, even though they are not in an affluent area. An overview of the schools was obtained for research purposes. The information from these schools follows.

School A

School A was a primary situated in Johannesburg South. It is located in a poorer socio-economic area. The grades were ranging from Grade RR (Pre-reception, 3 - 4 year olds) to Grade 7. There were up to five classes per grade with numbers of learners between 40 - 45 per class. The total number of learners in the school was just over 900 and the school grounds seemed very well maintained. The school did not have a functional library on the school grounds and the learners had to walk to the local library that was down the road if they wanted to take out books to read. The principal of school A was very friendly and accommodating and was very well-organised. He arranged for me to meet with his ILST members and also agreed to partake in my study. The teacher participants who took part in my study were also very accommodating and friendly. The academically gifted learners were taken from Grades 4 - 7 and were chosen on the basis of achieving 75% or more. Ten learners were identified by the principal and teachers of the grades 4 - 7. The learners were willing to participate with parental consent. My overall impression of this school was one of a well- functioning school with a good School Management Team in charge.

School B

School B is a primary that is in a poor socio-economic area. The grades were from R to 7 and the number of learners per class ranged from 35 - 40, with up to 4 classes per grade. There were just over 1100 learners in the school. When I approached the school, the deputy principal was able to assist me with the study since the principal was away on leave. The deputy principal arranged a meeting with the co-ordinator of the ILST for me to request her permission to participate. After agreeing I approached each member of the ILST members. All members of the ILST were willing to take part in my study. The school was well-organised and the safety procedures in the school seemed to be in place. The academically gifted learners were identified by teachers: learners who were getting 75% and above in all their subjects. The co-ordinator of the ILST arranged with the learners to see me the next day. The school grounds were kept neat and the discipline in the school seemed very good.

School C

School C is situated in the Johannesburg South Education district. It is located in a poor socio economical area, as is the case with the other three schools. The grades

range from R to 7 and it was still a parallel-medium school. The meaning of a parallel medium school is that there are still classes in the school where learners learn in their mother tongue, but who will hear the second language spoken outside of the classroom (Williams, 2007:25). The learners in classes were ranging from 30 - 40 per grade and there were 2 - 3 classes per grade. This was a Quantile 5 school, which means it is a fee-paying school. The school had a functioning media centre on the school grounds, which made reading for leisure and conducting research easier for the learners at the school. When I approached the school with my research proposal, the principal was very willing to help me. The teachers were friendly and they were also eager to partake in the research. The school was neat and well-organized. The security measures were tight at the gate. The academically gifted learners were identified by the principal as gatekeeper and these were the top achievers in grades 4 - 7.

School D

School D was also located in a poorer area and the learners lacked school necessities. I noticed from the surroundings that it was not a safe area. The grades were from R to 7 and classes are between 35 - 40 learners with a total of 3 classes per grade. The total number of learners in the school was 955 and it was a fee paying, government school. When approaching the school with my research the first time, there were no teachers at the school. Because the school was not as safe as others, the teachers had a tendency of leaving immediately after school. I phoned the principal and made an appointment and she helped me by asking the ILST coordinator to arrange for a meeting with the members of the ILST. The principal herself was unable to meet the time due to other commitments. All the teachers were extremely friendly and patient; even though they had a lot of things they still needed to do after the completion of exams. The research was conducted during May and June. In the middle of June, mid-year exams are written, but I was allowed to conduct research in this time, because I received consent from the Department of Education.

4.5.2 Participant selection

When sampling in qualitative research, criterion and purposive sampling is mostly used (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:79). Participants are chosen purposefully in order to aid in answering the research questions. There are criteria that these participants must adhere to in order to participate in the research. Within my study, I purposefully chose the participants according to criteria. The inclusion criteria were that: participants had to be teachers in the identified schools who were permanently employed by the Department of Education; and that these participants had to be members of the ILST. There were four teachers chosen from each school, which means 16 teachers in total. Amongst the participants in each school, the principal as an ex-officio member of the ILST was also interviewed. The principals and deputy principals were participants who also served as the gatekeepers. The gatekeeper can allow or deny entry into the research site and is also able to give the researcher the names of participants within the school. Some teachers had a lot of experience in working with academically gifted learners and others were not. Having such a mix of ideas was an added advantage.

As indicated earlier, ten learners from each school participated in the research. The only inclusion criterion was that learners should have been achieving 75% and above in all their subjects. These learners were selected by their teachers and principals in other schools assisted in this regard. The total number of learner participants was 40. All parents of these learners were invited to school, the research objectives were explained and the ethical considerations were made clear to them.

Stratified purposive sampling was used to select participants that were most likely to assist in the research question (Nieuwenhuis, 2011:79). The definition for stratified purposive sampling was discussed in chapter 1 (cf. 1.6.4). The procedure used for stratified sampling is one of dividing the population by the stratum (males and females) and then sampling within each of the groups to ensure that the participants are more proportional (Creswell, 2012:144).

Data was gathered from three strata: principals, members of the ILST and learners as indicated in chapter 1. The advantages of having different strata is that every stratum within purposive sampling can be compared for results and I was able to compare what the principals had to say with what the ILST members and learners had to say about support for academically gifted learners. I could compare the results and use it in my findings.

The following table depicts participant distribution:

Table 4.1 Total number of participants.

School	Number of participants	
	Learners	Teachers
A	10 6 males, 4 females Grade 4-7 Ages 9-13 3 grade 7 learners, 3 grade 6 learners, 3 grade 5 learners and 1 Grade 4 learner.	4 Principal; ILST co-ordinator; 2 ILST members
B	10 6 females, 4 males Ages 9-13 3 Grade 7 learners, 4 Grade 6 learners, 2 Grade 5 learners, 1 Grade 4 learner.	4 ILST co-ordinator; 3 ILST members
C	10 4 females, 6 males Ages 9-13 2 Grade 7 learners, 3 grade 6 learners, 2 Grade 5 learners and 3 Grade 4 learners.	4 Principal; ILST co-ordinator; 2 ILST Members
D	10 5 males, 5 females	4 ILST Co-ordinator; 3

	Ages 9-13 2 Grade 7 learners, 4 Grade 6 learners, 2 Grade 5 learners, 2 Grade 4 learners.	ILST members
4 schools	40 learners	16 teachers

From the above table, the total number of teacher participants is 16. The genders of the teacher participants are as follows: 13 females and 3 males. Males were from schools A, B and C. School D did not have any male participants that were part of the research.

4.6 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

The process of collecting data in qualitative research is an on-going process that is cyclical and iterative in nature (Nieuwenhuis, 2011:81). Qualitative studies are guided by data saturation and this can occur at any stage of the research, thus it is a process that continues. Data saturation refers to the point when no new ideas come forward from the data that has been collected (Nieuwenhuis, 20011:82). Data saturation is reached when no further information comes forward for the categories that have been made (Creswell, 2012: 433). Theoretical data saturation was reached through analysing the results after transcribing and coding the data of the drawings and the interviews. The participants had similar ideas about support and also agreed that there were no definite policies for the academically gifted learners in their schools.

In qualitative research, the researcher is imperative in the research and the way the researcher sets the stage for debate, the researcher will have an influence on the quality of the data collected during the data collection process (Creswell, 2009:178). I played the main role in collecting data from the participants and I had to choose the settings carefully, in order to obtain rich and meaningful data from the participants. Within this qualitative study, the collection of documents, interviews and the draw and write technique were used as data collection strategies. The strategies for collection of data from teachers were used sequentially, that is, after participants of

the school were interviewed documents were collected. Some of these documents might have been mentioned during the interview.

4.6.1 Interviews

Interviews are two-way conversations during which the interviewer, or researcher, ask questions in order to understand and learn about ideas, beliefs and opinions as well as lived experiences of the participant in order to use the data for research purposes (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:87). Within qualitative research, the research questions used are broad and the researcher is able to probe the participant for answers if need be (Creswell, 2009:4). The research questions were compiled by myself and my supervisors and were reviewed and approved by the ethics committee before interviews took place. The questions were open-ended, so probing could take place when necessary.

When interviews are held correctly, they are a very important source of information that can greatly benefit the researcher. Interviews were appropriate for this study as they allowed me to gather descriptive and rich data that was beneficial in answering the research question. My aim with these interviews was to understand the perceptions that the ILST had with regards to academic support for academically gifted learners.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were used within this research. Researchers use semi-structured interviews to get clarity on the beliefs that teachers have about certain phenomena (Greeff, 2011:351). A semi-structured interview is open-ended and it allows for probing. One-on-one interviews is seen as very time consuming and is a process where the researcher asks participants individually for answers that have been determined previously (Creswell, 2012: 218). There is more flexibility when this method is used, because follow ups can be made and the participant can discuss the meanings in more detail. A set of predetermined questions is important when doing semi-structured interviews.

A list of questions that is written in order to guide interviews is called an interview schedule (Greeff, 2011:352). An interview schedule is constructed in a similar way to a questionnaire's format (Delport & Roestenburg, 2011:186). The interview schedule is drawn up with a set of questions that is asked to the participants while their responses are recorded by the researcher. It guides the process of the interviews. I first developed an interview schedule with seven questions (*cf.* Appendix D). This interview schedule was approved by the ethics committee of the North-West University (Vaal Campus). The interview questions were about the behaviour of the academically gifted learners, how to identify the learners, policies and workshops that were in place and the support that the ILST rendered to support the learners. As the questions were semi-structured they allowed for probing when needed. Probing is important, because additional information is obtained in order to explore what the participants have to say about the phenomenon. Probes may ask for clarification on what was said or elaboration in order to make better sense of what the participants mean (Creswell, 2012:221). The questions were also likely to change during the course of the interview and it was possible for me to ask questions differently and to ask for more detail, thus making semi-structured interviews the perfect data collection strategy for this study.

I obtained permission from the participants to record the interviews. I made notes about the interviews while the participants were answering the questions and I was able to check their body language and record that too.

The disadvantage I noticed was that not all participants were willing to give broader answers, but would answer "yes" or "no" and I had to probe and come up with different kinds of questions to solicit information from the participants.

4.6.2 Process of conducting the semi-structured interview

In order to be successful at interviewing, Nieuwenhuis (2007:88) gave some steps that I followed:

“The most important thing to do when starting with interviews is to find the person who is the most qualified to answer the interview questions relating to the research question. The person who is most qualified will be able to answer the questions asked with the most detail”. I did this by asking the principal to identify the ILST members as they were the ones in the forefront of providing support to gifted learners. I also focussed on learners that were known to be academically gifted by their teachers.

“The aim of the research must be clearly communicated to the person being interviewed and the interviewer must make sure that the person being interviewed is, in fact, comfortable with being interviewed”. I had to first tell the participant what my research was about and I asked them if they understood before I started with the interviews. I also asked them if they were comfortable with being recorded.

“The aim of interviews is to collect rich and meaningful data about the phenomenon and the researcher can do interim data analysis in order to see if the research is on the right track”. While I was busy conducting the interviews at the schools, I would start transcribing the data that evening. This helped me in understanding the data and staying focussed when interviewing participants.

“The strategy of questioning is very important and yes or no questions must be avoided”. I avoided leading questions instead I relied more on probing to get rich data. A variety of questions must be used in order to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon. Knowledge questions, feeling questions and value questions are all good examples of the type of questions that can be asked in an interview. The interview questions were approved for the research and “yes” or “no” questions were avoided. When I needed clarity about an answer, I asked a follow up question. I also went for follow up interviews.

“Good listeners are able to conduct good interviews”. I avoided taking over the conversations with the interviewees; instead I tried to the best of my ability to listen to what was being said. As non-verbal communication is also important, I observed

the cues of the interviewees and maintained eye-contact and an upright posture at all times. I tried my best to listen well to everything each of the participants said and I showed genuine interest in their responses. I tried to conduct myself in a professional manner and I was courteous and polite at all times. I tried to keep the interview questions short and to the point, so the interviews would not become long and strenuous. I understand that teachers are tired at the end of the day. I thanked each of my participants by the end of the interview and told them that I was really grateful for the time they have given to me.

4.7.2 Documents

When documents are used as a data collection strategy, it will shed light on the phenomenon in question by presenting a written communication about the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:82). Documents might be published or unpublished and can take on many forms such as annual reports, journals, newspaper articles amongst others. Documents might also be primary or secondary sources of data collection. Primary sources refer to data that is unpublished and is original documents and secondary sources refer to data that has been published and might not be completely true and factual anymore.

The documents that were examined in this research included policies with regard to the academic support for academically gifted learners as well as the minutes of meetings that were held by the ILSTs. These documents were used concurrently with the interviews in order to make sure that the data can be crystallized.

The problem that I encountered was that there were no documents in schools at the time I was conducting research to support academically gifted learners. There was no evidence of any specifically drafted policy on the matter and the participants interviewed had never come across such a policy. I had to turn to a third method of data collection and that method is one of drawings from learner participants. It is discussed under the next heading.

4.7.3 Draw and write technique

The draw and write technique as a data collection method was discussed in chapter 1 (*cf.* 1.7)

When using the draw and write technique, there are some methodological issues that are evident (Horstman, *et al.*, 2008:1002). There are four main areas within these methodological issues, but in each one, the researcher must facilitate that the child feels safe. I asked the teachers whom I interviewed to identify ten academically gifted learners from the school. Each learner was asked to draw a picture about a question that have been set out for them in order to indicate the level of support that they would like to receive from the school with regard to academic giftedness. They were afforded an opportunity to write about the picture they had drawn and in order to explain it. The question I asked them was to make a drawing about the support needs of academically gifted learners in the school. They had to draw about how they think the academically gifted learners can be supported. After making the drawing, they had to write a narrative explaining their drawing. The total number of learners that participated in the draw and write technique was 40.

4.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Regardless of what data collection strategies are used, there are four common sense effects that were applied to enhance the quality of the data that is collected as suggested by Punch (2014:161):

- I considered the foundation and logistics of the data collection proposed before I started with the research and planned carefully for it.
- I anticipated the data collection procedures and conducted a pilot study in order to test the instrument that I was going to use to collect the data.
- I made sure that the process followed when participants were approached was ethical and above board as well as professional. I was aware that if this was compromised, it might have had a negative effect on the quality of the collected data.

The procedures for collecting data were as follows:

First and foremost I had to get permission from the North West University to go and conduct research. OPTENTIA granted me permission to conduct the research (NWU-HS-20150101), after the research was presented to them and clearance obtained.

After consent was given, I had to ask for permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct research in public primary schools. For this, I had to submit all the necessary documentation, including my proposal and ethics clearance to 111 in Commissioner Street, Johannesburg. I obtained permission to conduct research in Departmental schools in the District (*cf.* Appendix A). I filled in the form about steps that I would be taking in the research. Permission was granted and soon after I approached the schools. I obtained the list of schools with addresses and contact numbers from the District and from there I chose schools that could possibly assist me in my research question.

When the schools had been contacted and permission to conduct research had been granted, I went to the schools at the set date and explained to the principals, as gate keepers, what my study was about and that I would like to interview the ILST members and the principal if he was willing to. The interviews were conducted where the participants felt comfortable. The preferred places were the classrooms and staffrooms. As indicated in the foregoing paragraphs some schools were not willing to give me permission to conduct research in their schools. I had to find other schools from the list to assist me. The consent forms were given to the schools that were willing to take part for perusal before the set date of the interviews.

I used the interview schedule for the semi-structured interviews and made use of the recording device on my cell phone to record their answers. I also made additional notes about the participants' answers. I probed the participants when something was unclear or needed to be elaborated on. I transcribed the data after each session of interviews. After the interviews had been conducted and I was satisfied with the information, I thanked the participants for their time.

After conducting interviews with the teachers I had to focus on learners. I explained to the learners what I expected from them and why I was conducting the research. I explained why they were needed and that I would like to participate in the draw and write technique as one of my strategies of data collection. I had already obtained consent from parents when I started focussing on the learners. It was important to also obtain a verbal consent from the learner participants. I gave them papers with a question on it with enough space to draw and write. I gave them an hour to draw their pictures and write what their pictures were about. The question was about the support needs in their schools that academically gifted learners feel they are in need of. After the drawings were made I had to focus on documents.

I requested for copies of documents that were relevant to my study from each of the principals. I intended to use the documents concurrently with the interviews and drawings during the analysis process. Unfortunately, no documents pertaining to academic giftedness were available. There is a need for such policies in schools. I thanked the principal, the members of the ILST and the learners of each school for helping me with the data and I explained to them that additional interviews might be needed if the data I collected was not rich enough, and that I might have to conduct follow-up interviews if needed. I ended up conducting follow up interviews with some of the participants in order to get more information. They were always friendly and willing to help. I transcribed the interviews verbatim after listening to the recordings. I listened to the recordings more than once to make sure that I did not miss any information that had been recorded during the interviews.

4.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis comprises of making sense of the text and images that have been collected in the data collection process (Creswell, 2009:183). In order to analyse the data, it must be prepared in such a way that deeper understanding of the data can be achieved. The data must be represented and later also interpreted in order to understand the deeper meaning (Creswell, 2009:183). Data analysis happened concurrently with data collection, because notes can be made while data is collected

in order to achieve a better understanding of what is said by the participants. It is mostly open-ended data that is collected because I followed the suggestions by Creswell (2009:185) when analysing data in this research

Step 1: Organisation and preparation of data for analysis

Within this step, I transcribed all sixteen interviews and typed up notes that I made during interviews. I made the data ready to be analysed by sorting it into similar piles and making sure that the data is easily accessible.

Step 2: Reading through all the data

In order to obtain a general understanding about the data, I read through all the transcripts thoroughly and submersed myself in the data. I made more notes alongside the data in order to gain a deeper understanding of the overall feel of the data.

I picked one drawing and started reading it and made additional notes on it to see which codes were emerging. The notes helped me to better understand under which code I must put the drawing. When all the drawings had been checked, a list of topics was made from which similar topics were added together. These topics were put into columns (*cf.* Appendix F) together with those from the interviews. The topics and codes were abbreviated and written next to the pieces of text. I checked if new codes were emerging from this. The next step was to turn the topics into categories and code the categories within this step.

Step 3: The coding process.

Once all the data had been read through several times and transcribed, coding was the next step in data analysis. The data was organised into segments or pieces that had meaning and was compared to one another to see an emergent theme. Some of the codes that emerged could be setting and contextual codes, perspectives of

participants, process codes and activity codes, amongst others (cf. Appendix F). All eight steps used in coding proved very helpful to me.

Step 4: Description of the setting

I described the setting for research (cf. 4.5.1) as well as emergent themes (cf. 5.3) and categories in a rich, descriptive way. Multiple perspectives from participants were used to assist in the analysing of the data.

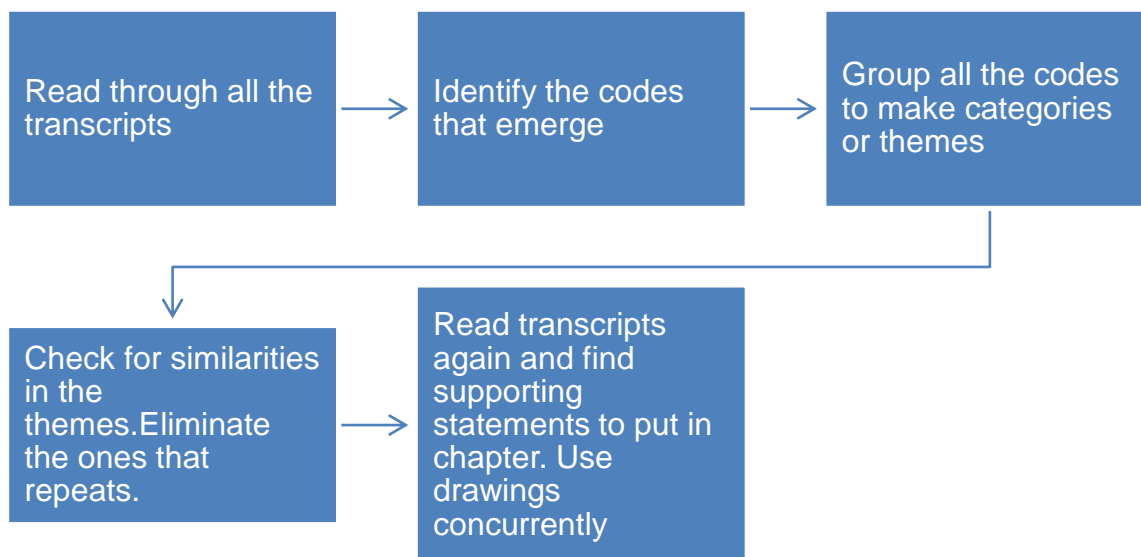
Step 5: Using the description to aid representation

The theme and description was written up as a narrative in order to describe the representation of the research. Drawings and tables were used with the narrative to convey the findings of the research.

Step 6: Interpretation

I had to ask myself questions in order to interpret or make meaning of the research. I am aware that the findings must challenge or confirm past research in order to be legit and that they must be pulled through to literature in order to confirm what has been said. I have done this to the best of my ability in Chapter 5. The diagram below depicts the process used to code data in this research.

Figure 6: The coding process



Adapted from Creswell, 2009

Content analysis can be used in qualitative and quantitative data and it may be used inductively or deductively (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008:109). The purpose of the study guides which process is made use of. When there is too little information about phenomena under study, it is recommended that the Inductive approach is used. Categories are derived inductively from the data and are based on prior knowledge.

The purpose of the inductive method is to let research findings emerge from the themes that are inherent in data (Thomas, 2003:2).

Table 4.2 Inductive analysis process

Transcripts	Codes	Categories	Themes
I had 63 pages of transcripts after recording the interviews.	Identification of codes was done after the transcribing of the interviews. Many codes were identified	The codes were grouped into categories. There were a few categories.	5 themes were identified in the end

The five themes that were identified in Chapter 5 included the following:

- Inadequate methods of identification- I was not expecting teachers to be able to identify gifted learners. I think they were doing a good job, as just being able to differentiate learners is an important step towards support.
- Attributes of the gifted learners. It showed me how well the teachers knew their learners. I think they have interest in the learners' performance and academic development.
- Gifted learners at risk – The risks mentioned were only negative behaviour and low performance. It was interesting to find that the teachers without training in identifying gifted learners could acknowledge that even if the learners were not doing well they were still gifted.
- Support for academically gifted learners– As I did not expect them to be able to identify gifted learners, I also did not expect them to be supporting these learners.
- Policies guiding the implementation of support for the gifted – I was not surprised that there were no policies in schools and that only those learners who experience learning barriers.

4.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In quantitative research, reliability and validity are fundamental parts of the research process. Within qualitative research, the researcher is the key data gathering individual and qualitative researchers do not refer to reliability and validity, but to credibility or transferability, applicability, dependability and confirmability (Schurink, Fouche & de Vos, 2011:419).

The practice that is generally acceptable is that using multiple ways of gathering data leads to greater trustworthiness within the study (Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2007:38). Within this study, semi-structured interviews and drawings were used as data collection methods in order to make the study more trustworthy. As indicated in the foregoing paragraphs, documents such as policy documents and minutes of meetings are another data gathering technique, but could not be used in this study,

due to unavailability thereof. I decided to use drawings of the learners instead of documents to substantiate my findings.

4.10.1 Transferability

When research is deemed transferable, it is seen as the research being able to yield the same results in different settings as it did in the setting of the original research (Mertens, 2010:310). Thick descriptions of the research setting must be given so that the readers of the research will be able to know the background as well as any contextual factors that might be a factor in the research. I gave a rich description of the research sites in order to make it clear as to which context my research took place. When readers of the research learn about these settings, they might be able to see if the findings are transferable to other contexts and underneath other circumstances.

4.10.2 Credibility

Credibility is seen as the substitute for internal validity, which is used in quantitative research (Maree, 2007:37). Subjects within the research have to be identified correctly and described in order to maintain credibility. I collected data from multiple sources in order to try and triangulate my findings within the research. I used drawings and the interviews to make sure that multiple data sources were used. I also have evidence of the schools I have visited and the information given to me.

4.10.3 Dependability

Research is deemed dependable if all information are made clear from the beginning of the research and that any changes that might have occurred, are noted and recorded by the researcher. The changes that occurred in my study, was mainly the questions that were not the same as the initial questions asked in the pilot study and that I had to change my data collection methods to drawings, for documents were not plausible within the study. That is how I ensured that my data was dependable.

4.10.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the assumption that every researcher brings their own unique ideas to a study (Trochim, 2006). The researchers' inputs must be kept to a minimum in order for the research to be confirmable. Another person who has already obtained their Master degree may also help in checking that findings are correct. I am also working closely with my experienced study leaders and they will guide me with the process of research.

Negative or contrasting findings were presented to ensure that the research is seen as more valid. Pointing out some things that were said in contrast will promote the validity of the findings.

4.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order for the study to be valid and ethical, some aspects had to be taken into consideration. Owing to the fact that I was working with human participants, I was careful to conduct the research in an ethical manner, an important aspect asserted in studies (Creswell, 2009:89).

The title of the study was registered with the ethics committee of the North West University, OPTENTIA. All ethical considerations have been brought before the committee and ethical clearance has been obtained (NWU-HS-20150101).

All prospective participants of the study were given a consent form that had to be explained to them in order to understand the study and give their consent to the study. When the participants gave consent for the research to be conducted, I went to the research sites at the agreed upon date and explained the study to them again and made sure that they had given their consent for the research.

I recorded the semi-structured interviews that I was conducting with the participants, but only if consent had been given to me to do so. The recordings were kept safe on a memory card that will be locked away in a safe location. The recordings were

transcribed verbatim by myself and I made sure that they were correctly transcribed by listening to the recordings again to check if anything was missed. I did not share the information from the interviews, drawings or documents with anyone, except the study supervisors and for study purposes.

A small break in between questions were anticipated for in order for the participants to rest and regroup their thoughts, but was not really necessary. All written notes from the interviews and drawings were kept safe and not used for anything but study purposes. This was done in order to uphold ethical protocol.

The schools interviewed will not be named in the study. I used alphabet letters when referring to these schools. They will only be known as school A, B, C and D. All participants were lettered and numbered. They are not known by their names. The teachers and principals were named 1A - 4A, 1B - 4B, 1C - 4C and 1D - 4D depending on their schools. The learners were lettered and numbered as L1 - L10. If a teacher preferred to use a pseudonym, a pseudonym was used, but in order to ensure privacy of participants, no real names were used in this study.

As confidentiality is of utmost importance, the information given to me was not conveyed to anyone except the relevant people to the study. Plagiarism was guarded against and no sources that were used were allowed to go uncited. All information was properly cited.

4.12 CONCLUSION

Within this chapter, the whole research process was discussed as well as the procedures that lead to the data being captured. The research paradigm was explained, followed by the research design and the research method. All the aspects of the study were discussed in detail and the site and participant selection was made transparent. The chapter concluded with trustworthiness aspects and ethical considerations. Within the next chapter, the analysis and interpretation of the data will be presented.

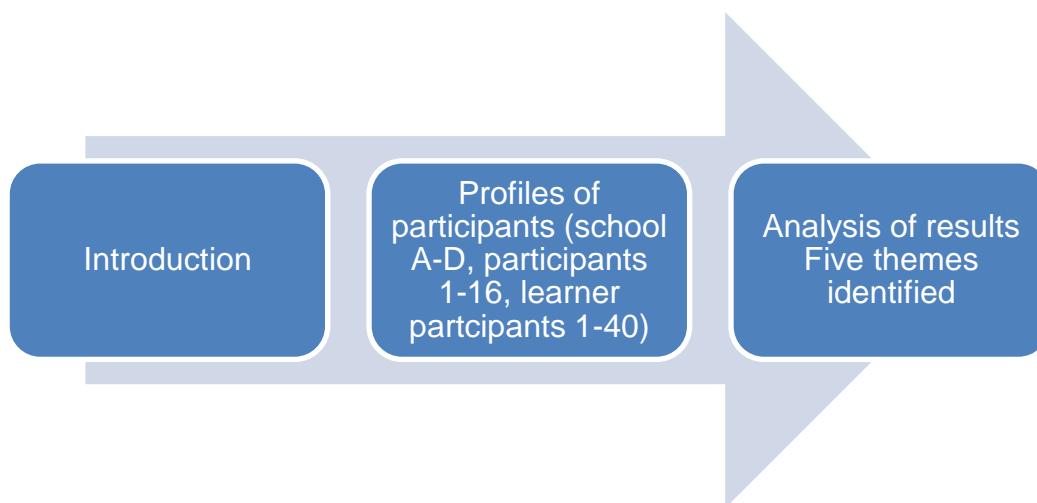
CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTON

Within this chapter, the results of the study are presented and interpreted. The study was conducted through interviews (*cf.* Appendix D) and drawings to explore the provision of academic support for academically gifted learners that the ILST offers to them. Five themes have been identified within this study. Each theme is supported by quotes from the participants and drawings from the learner participants. The analysis and interpretation is made and the statements are supported by literature.

Figure 7: Outline of the chapter 5

The chapter starts with the introduction. The outline of the profiles of the participants is given and the analysis of the five themes is given in detail in the chapter.



5.2. PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

School A: Profile of teacher participants

	Age group	Gender	Position	Teaching experience
Participant 1 A	50-60	Male	Principal	36 years
Participant 2 A	50-60	Female	ILST member	34 years
Participant 3 A	40-45	Female	ILST co-ordinator	19 years
Participant 4 A	50-60	Female	ILST member	36 years

Participant 1 A

Participant 1 A is a principal as at the time of the study in a school in Johannesburg South and is 60 years of age. He has been teaching at the particular school for 20 years. He has been a principal for the past 10 years. He studied at the teaching college and finished his four-year Higher Education Diploma in 1978. His specialisation was in Senior Primary subjects/learning areas. During his military service in 1980, he taught in libraries and schools in Soweto, South of Johannesburg for 8 months. He taught Biology and geography to teachers who had not matriculated yet. In 1981, he went to a school in Katlehong location and taught Afrikaans and Bible studies for grade 9 and 10 learners. The classes were very big and in the beginning, they had to teach 110 learners in a class. Later, mobile classes were brought to the schools and the number of learners went down to 75 in a class. Even though there were a large number of learners in a class, the discipline of these learners were excellent.

In 1981, he started to teach Afrikaans, Life Skills and Health studies at a school in Brixton and did soccer and athletics as extra-curricular activities. In 1985, he was promoted to Head of Department and started working in a school in Meyerton in Midvaal, South Africa. In 1997, he was promoted to Deputy Principal at his current school and taught Maths and Science subjects. He was further promoted to principal in 2006 at the current school. While in this position he furthered his studies and obtained Advanced Certificate in Education.

Participant 2 A

Participant 2 A has a Master degree in Educational Administration, planning and policy studies (MEd EAPPS). She started teaching in 1982 after obtaining a diploma in education. At the moment, she is teaching Natural Sciences, Technology and English at her current school. She is part of the ILST at the time of the study.

Participant 3 A

Participant 3 has been at her current school for 10 years. She taught at two other prior to starting at the school where she taught at the time of the study. She was a post level one teacher. She has a Diploma in Education She started her BEd degree and passed 5 modules, but had to stop due to financial constraints. She is the ILST co-ordinator in her current school.

Participant 4 A

Participant 4 A is a female teacher who has been teaching for the past 36 years. She is part of the ILST of her current school. She studied for her Higher Education Diploma for 4 years and did her MBD (Minimal Brain Dysfunction) course. She started teaching in 1980 and has taught all foundation phase grades. She also has experience in teaching Learners with Special educational needs. She is currently the Foundation phase Head of Department at her school. She oversees 5 grade 1 classes, 5 grade 2 classes, 3 grade 3 classes as well as 2 LSEN classes, 3 Grade R classes and 1 Grade RR class.

School B: Profile of teacher participants

	Age group	Gender	Position	Teaching experience
Participant 1 B	40-45	Female	ILST member	19Years
Participant 2 B	50-55	Female	ILST member, Foundation Phase co-ordinator	29 Years
Participant 3 B	50-55	Female	ILST co-ordinator	29 years
Participant 4 B	30-35	Male	ILST member	13 years

Participant 1 B

Participant 1B studied for four years at the teaching college in Pretoria as part of her teaching qualification. She has a 4 year Higher Education Diploma. She started teaching after she qualified. It is currently her 19th year of teaching. She taught grade 2's for four years, grade 3 for two years and has been teaching grade up to the time of the study. She has been at her current school for 19 years and is a post level one teacher. She is a member of the ILST.

Participant 2 B

Participant 2 B was a female teacher and has been teaching for 29 years. She was part of the ILST in her current school up to the time of the study. She wasteaching Grade 3, Foundation Phase subjects and she was the Foundation Phase HOD. She had her Higher Education Diploma and had been at her current school for 15 years. She was the Foundation Phase co-ordinator for the ILST.

Participant 3 B

Participant 3 B was a female teacher and had been teaching for 29 years. She was an HOD in her current school. She was the ILST co-ordinator 4. She studied for her 4 year Higher Education Degree. She taughtAfrikaans Grade 5 and History Grade 6. She had been at her current school for 24 years.

Participant 4 B

Participant 4 B was a male teacher that had 13 years of teaching experience. He had a Bachelor in Education (BEd)degree as well as an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE). He had an Honours Degree specializing in Education management. He was part of the ILST and had been at his current school for 3 years.

School C: Profile of teacher participants

	Age group	Gender	Position	Teaching experience
Participant 1 C	40-50	Female	ILST member	10 years
Participant 2C	40-50	Female	ILST member	20 years
Participant 3C	40-50	Male	Principal	25 Years
Participant 4C	60+	Female	ILST co-ordinator and HOD	40 years

Participant 1 C was a female teacher who was part of the ILST. She had 10 years of teaching experience and had her BEd degree in Education. She taught Grade 3 and had been at her current school for 5 years.

Participant 2 C was a female teacher who was a member of the ILST. She had 20 years of teaching experience and taught Maths to Grade 4's. She had her Higher Diploma in Education. She had been at her current school for 20 years.

Participant 3 C was the principal of the school. He had a BEd degree and had been in education for 25 years. He taught in various schools before becoming a principal. He was an ex-officio member of the ILST, and acted as a gatekeeper in the research.

Participant 4 C was a female teacher who was the ILST co-ordinator. She had her Higher Diploma in Education and had been teaching for 40 years. She taught Maths and Afrikaans to Grade 7 learners and she was living her passion for Maths.

School D: Profile of teacher participants

	Age group	Gender	Position	Teaching experience
Participant 1D	40-50	Female	ILST co-ordinator	15 years
Participant 2D	50-60	Female	ILST member	29 years
Participant 3D	40-45	Female	ILST member	11 years
Participant 4D	30-40	Female	ILST member	2 Years

Participant 1 D

Participant 1 D was a female teacher who had 15 years of teaching experience. She was currently the ILST co-ordinator in her school. She taught grade 2, foundation phase subjects. She had her BEd degree and was currently busy with her Honours degree. She had been at her current school for 3 years and she was the Foundation Phase HOD.

Participant 2 D

Participant 2 D was a female teacher who had 29 years of teaching experience. She had been at her current school for 29 years. She was the ILST co-ordinator in the previous cycle, but was now only a member of the ILST. She taught Grade 5 and 7,

Afrikaans. She had a Higher Education Diploma and a further Diploma in special needs. She was a post level one teacher in her current school.

Participant 3 D

Participant 3D was an ILST member and had 11 years of teaching experience. She taught Grade 4 English. She had her BEd degree.

Participant 4D

Participant 4 D was a female teacher who had two years of teaching experience. She was teaching grade one, foundation phase subjects. She had a BEd degree and was member of the ILST. She had been at her current school for two years and was a post level one teacher.

5.3 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

THEME 1

INADEQUATE METHODS OF IDENTIFICATION

Individual teachers identify the academically gifted learners

Five participants from three different schools have mentioned that the identification of academically gifted learners was done by the individual teachers during class time.

*“They are identified by the **individual teachers** (2A); normally we do that as a teacher within our **class** (3A); **in the classroom**, because in the school I won’t really be aware that a child is gifted, but in **my class room**, you know that a child is gifted (4D); we don’t really have a formal system, we just spot them in **class** (1B). Those are the learners who stand out by normally being very active, I wouldn’t say **they are all active**. Sometimes they might be the **quiet ones** that are basically **introverts**, so it is difficult to spot them. The easiest way to spot them is **through their results**. But more than that, they also show **more insight in the work** that they deliver and insights into discussions (3C)”*

It can be applauded that in these schools the identification of academically gifted learners is done by the individual teachers in the classroom. Learners can be supported effectively if correctly identified. This is an important step and the most crucial in accommodation of diversity in the classroom. In the literature, it is stated that classroom teachers play an important part when it comes to identifying gifted learners and that it is necessary to identify them in order to implement support strategies (cf. 2.4).

Identification through performance in the subject/ learning area

Five participants from schools A, B, C and D indicated that they identify the learners who are academically gifted in the classroom by their performance in their subject/ learning area.

*“They usually excel in all the **learning subjects** (2 A); from the **work** that we do in class, we can easily identify the gifted ones as they perform well in their subjects (3A); we have just completed our **exams** and when we look at analysis of the results, we are identifying them (3C); (I identify them) when they **perform in the classroom**, the way they are answering things, the way they are so creative when they show that it is not teacher-centred learning, they are also involved (1D); those kids that are gifted...I will teach them and they won't be having a problem and let us say you will teach them the phonics. And while you are still teaching them the phonics, they will start to **formulate the words**, before you can even think of asking a question, **they know the answer** (4 D)”*

Teachers seemed to have developed their own techniques to identify the academically gifted learners as there is no standardised method in South Africa. However, they seem to be using one identification method. These teachers also believed that a learners' performance, exam results and the way they answer questions in class is reflective of an academically gifted learner. The two methods mentioned by participants were observation and use of learning assessment results which was the same as use of traditional intelligence and achievement tests. The focus therefore, is only on performance at low-level basic skills as there is no indication of learners being tested in high-level skills. The concepts of

identification do not mention specific IQ but only high potential as evidenced by observations and learner grades.

This renders limited options to express oneself using any other modality other than pen and paper. However, one positive thing about these responses is that learners are allowed to exhibit their skills in the classroom. Literature indicates that many techniques can be used to identify giftedness and talents of learners. The observation method is one of the methods that can be used to identify gifted learners, as well as assessments and learner records. It seems therefore that these participants were not aware of any other methods.

THEME 2

ABILITIES OF ACADEMICALLY GIFTED LEARNERS

- *Finishing work faster and understanding work quicker*

Eight participants from all four schools indicated that academically gifted learners finish their work quicker than the other learners in class.

*“They **finish before the time** (1A); whenever written work is done, **he is fast and neat** (1B); but the gifted learners, they will **finish up** everything (1C); he is always very **quick to finish** his work (2C); it is the learners who **finish their tasks**, before anyone else finishes (3D). These learners do their work **very fast** and need to be occupied (2A); these gifted **learners finishes the work** in 5 minutes (3A), they are **quick to finish their activities** in a few minutes, they grasp quickly. Because you did it yesterday, if you mention it again, they know exactly what is going to be done. (4D)”*

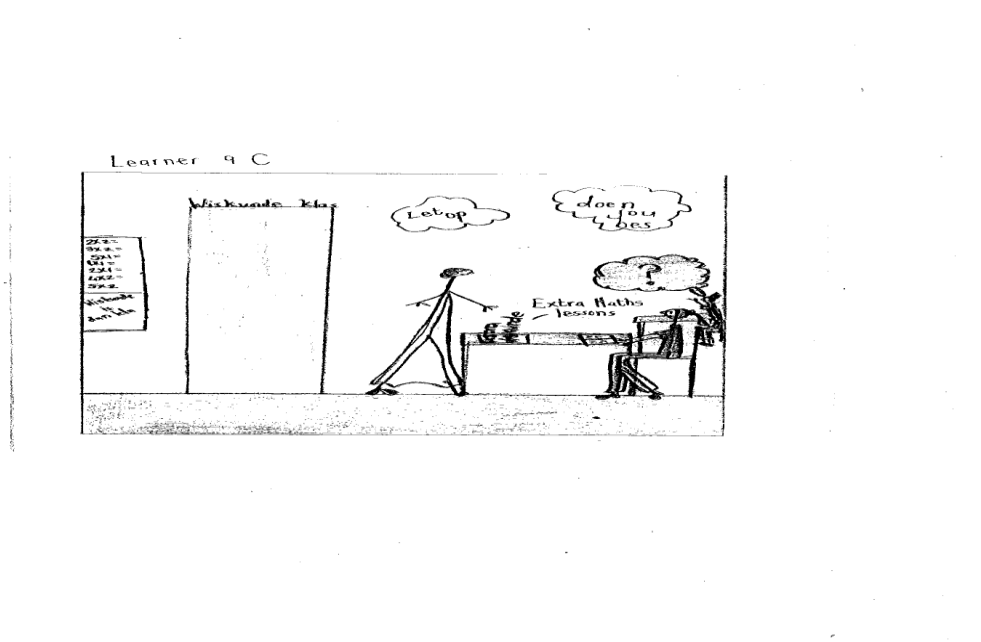
The comments above indicate the efficiency of academically gifted learners in comparison to the rest of the peers in the classroom. The participants all noted that academically gifted learners are very fast when they complete their work and do not require the same amount of time that the other learners do. It should also be noted that though they are fast in completing their work, some of them were also neat. The pace learners in class learn at is mostly average and this might indicate that the activities were too easy for the academically gifted. This could create problems if

learners are not given more difficult work if they are done with their activities. Literature supports this by stating that academically gifted learners work at an accelerated pace than their peers in the classroom (cf. 3.5.6).

The following drawing from a learner participant supports what these teachers mentioned in the above statements.

In her drawing, there are learners sitting in the maths class with books in front of them. They are listening to the teacher, but some of the learners do not seem to understand. This is indicated through a question mark and the learner raising their hands. There are calculations on the board and labels like “*let op*” (pay attention) and “*doen jou bes*” (do your best).

Figure 8: Drawing by learner 9C



Learner 9C mentioned this in her narrative:

“wanneer die juffrou ons werk gee, verstaan ek en begin dadelik en is somer gou klaar. Dan doen ek ekstra wiskunde om my slimmer te maak. Ek doen dieselfde in ander klasse met ander vakke. Ander kinders verstaan dan nie die maklike werk nie end it verstreur dit my, maar ek het geleer om dit te iegnoereer en aan te gaan en verder te leer dat ek beter in my vakke kan doen. Ek sou dit baie warder as kinders net die maklike werk kan verstaan.”

In her narrative, she explained that she understood the work much quicker than other learners in the class and that she finished her work before other learners. She said she would appreciate it if other learners could also understand the work and not disturb her.

This supports what the teachers said about academically gifted learners finishing their work at an accelerated pace and that they understand the concepts that are taught at a much quicker pace than others. It is true that academically gifted learners learn at an accelerated pace than their peers and that they may be left feeling bored and unchallenged or frustrated by the situation. It is interesting that this learner participant mentions her wishes for other learners not to disturb her. This could indicate that gifted learners also get frustrated as all other learners when there are disruptions. Smutny (2011:33) supports what the teachers said and what the learner had depicted in her drawing by indicating that gifted learners are capable of mastering the outcomes faster than other learners (*cf.* 3.5.6).

- *Good general knowledge*

Four of the participants from two different schools indicated that academically gifted learners have a good general knowledge. Amongst those participants one highlighted the fact that they mostly do not think about the question.

*“Their **general knowledge** is good. If you ask a question, they don’t think about it (2 B); her **general knowledge** also showed me that she was gifted (3B); what stood out about them was their depth of **general knowledge** (4B); she has a very good **general knowledge** (1D)”.*

From the above statements it is noted that the academically gifted learners were seen as individuals that have a good general knowledge when compared to their peers. The participants stated that these learners do not necessarily have to think about their answers that they give and that they seem to know a lot about topics. This could be due to curiosity and quest for knowledge. Knowledge is taken and integrated into existing knowledge and in turn this spurs on academic giftedness. The literature supports what is said about academically gifted learners having a sense of knowledge (*cf.* 2.7.6).

- *Willingness to work alone*

Two participants from two different schools indicated that academically gifted learners are willing to work on their own.

*“There are children, who love to **work with the teacher**, they **don’t give the teacher a problem**, and when they are done with what they are doing, **they will find something else to do**. Their behaviour is just conducive to learning. They just do their work alone without anybody running after them (2A); he is also a learner that can work on his own. - And he will always start immediately (2C)”*

The participants mentioned that academically gifted learners were able to keep themselves occupied when they were done with their work. They were able to find an activity that they can do. Ability to work alone shows autonomy, such learners are leaders in their own right. This might be a reflection of a growing understanding that one’s own academic abilities will be judged at some point in life coupled with a desire to compete against others. Willingness to take such intellectual risks could help in the discovery of their full capabilities. Literature supports this statement by stating that there is an autonomous type of gifted learners who can work on their own (cf. 2.5.1.6) without being supervised.

- *Helping other learners and teachers*

Three participants indicated that they found that academically gifted learners help learners in class. The teachers also indicated that the learners help them in class by minding the other learners.

*“They are **helpful** around the class. Even with the other learners, they help” (2A); they **can even mind the class for you**. They **can take the stick**, while I am out, the minute I come back, I will find the **class reading**. They **can control the class for you** (3 A); that girl was **so brilliant** in such a way that I was taking her as my tutor in the class room. **And she was so supportive**(1D)”*

Participants elaborated on academically gifted learners being able to take initiative in the classroom and help the teacher and other learners without being asked to do so. This is another sign of leadership attributes. They were very helpful in the classroom and even assumed the role of the teacher if they got a chance. This could be their way of contributing to the advancement of learning and a way of avoiding boredom. Wellisch & Brown (2013:44) amongst others, support this statement by indicating that giftedness does not only pertain to academic achievement, but that there are various aspects of giftedness of which leadership abilities is one (*cf.* 2.2)

- *Perform well in mathematics*

Four teachers from 3 different schools indicated that academically gifted learners excel in Maths.

*“Veral met Wiskunde was hy **verskriklik baie sterk**. Hy het **konsepte baie vinnig gesnap** en sy **leesvlak en sinne wat hy geskryf het was heelwat beter** as die ander kinders s’n. sy werk was **amper foutloos**” (4A); he is very good in mathematics and takes a very big interest in **mathematics** (2C); I teach mathematics, so he was **very gifted when it came to mathematics**. (4C); we had a child that was really, really **excellent in his Maths**, and he is a Doctor at the moment (2D)*

The above responses indicate that the participants felt that the academically gifted learners excel particularly in maths. This might mean that the academically gifted learners are inclined to using their right side of their brain, where analytical thoughts are. The range of considerations of giftedness in these responses extends to those with logical-mathematical talent. It can be applauded that mathematically-gifted learners are identified at an early age by participants, however the support for the development of such a gift might be lacking. In the literature, we find that there are instances where individual learners perform very well in maths in their primary education and may excel in mathematical subjects in later years. It is indicated as having mathematical giftedness (*cf.* 2.7.10)

- *Desire to learn*

Seven participants from four schools indicated that the learners who are academically inclined are eager to learn.

*“And they were running around trying to get to that position first... Where I gave the children who were good academically inclined children, the opportunity to take the animals home over the weekend, they were **queuing up** (1A), this individual learner is **eager to work** (2A); her whole **perception towards academics** came out very closely to me. She was **dedicated, she was hard working**. She always did **something extra**. She enjoyed it so much (3B); so in his case, he **was one of the high points in my career** and I haven't had many of them, because he **was really an outstanding learner** (4C); their **ability to interact in higher order questioning** and how they **always wanted to find out more...**Just the **holistic development** of the child, they **are way ahead of their years** in terms of academics and their mind set. (4B); I see that these learners become **very eager** for the next round, because now they've got your attention (3C). I know that **she will make abig change** once she is done with her Medical Doctor studies (1D).”*

From the above quotes academically gifted learners were willing and eager to work hard and to go out of their way to get things done. This might stem from the internal motivation to do well and to achieve. This can also come from the relationship that the academically gifted learner has with themselves and how they perceive themselves and their abilities. It seems that these learners have developed achievement-oriented behaviours. Commitment to task is a sign of motivation. This could mean that to them learning is for its own sake or for their internal personal satisfaction. It is interesting that participants also mentioned hard work. People might think that gifted learners achieve without putting much effort. It makes one wonder if learners spoken about here are actually “gifted” or just “hard workers”. Hard work predicts success, and these learners start at such an early age to value persevering in order to succeed. Literature supports this statement by indicating that the desire to learn does not come naturally, but comes from within the learner and should be nurtured (cf. 2.6.4).

- Curiosity

One teacher participant indicated that a gifted learner was very curious about topics such as maths.

*“The traits that he had was the fact that he was **very, very curious** about mathematics. **He never accepted anything that I told him.** You had to go and prove it to him. **He was very well behaved in my class.** Most children will accept blindly what you tell them, but in his case, **he will question you** and some people might think, you know, **he is questioning your authority. It is not the case (4C)**”.*

The participant mentioned that gifted learners are curious about the world around them and that this particular learner never accepted anything that was said to him. He wanted the teachers to prove it to him. Curiosity is one of the valuable habits of mind. Intellectual curiosity is a common quality that may serve as a protective factor that may enable learners to succeed in spite of having to live or learn in environments that are not conducive to the nurturing of their academic gifts. Fioriello, (2016) indicates that gifted learners have a keen sense of curiosity and can start observing from a young age (cf.2.7.2).

- **Verbal attributes**

“He is verbally strong. Whenever written work is done, he is fast.He understands concepts, you explain it to him once and he gets it...he is one of those easy learners (1B)”

It is of concern that only one participant came up with this attribute of giftedness. It seems that teachers in these schools do not develop such talents. Learners benefit from activities that develop fluency and advanced expressive abilities(cf. 2.7.1).

- *Memory*

One teacher participant mentioned that gifted learners remember from day to day what needs to be done in class

“Besides the assessments and their academic way, definitely in the way they act. They can even tell you, especially the Grade ones, they will tell you “Mam, we haven’t done phonics” Then you can tell that the child knows what we must cover on Mondays, Tuesdays and so forth (3A)”

From the above quote, the academically gifted learners seem to have good memories and they can recall what must happen on certain days of the week. They will remind the teacher when they need to do a task in class. It is a characteristic of a gifted learner to have a very good memory. This attribute could be accredited to the fact that gifted learners process information more efficiently than those that are not gifted. The NAGC (2011), supports this by stating that gifted learners have above average thought processes that lead to abstract thinking and can remember things well (*cf.* 2.7.2).

The participants mentioned some attributes of academically gifted learners such as their ability to do well in subjects, good general knowledge and hard work. They also stated good memory and verbal communication skills. The academically gifted learners have a desire to learn and some of them are helpful towards others and show leadership abilities. Participants from all four schools specified a number of positive attributes of academically gifted learners.

THEME 3 GIFTED LEARNERS AT RISK

- *Negative behaviour*

Seven participants from all four schools indicated that they experience negative behaviour from academically gifted learners from time to time.

*“Normally they listen, but in one or two cases they become naughty (2A); They do **disturb other learners** (3A); they can become quite **naughty** (1B); they **lack discipline...they don’t follow the class rules** (1C);. if you do not take note of them, they become **disruptive** in a sense (3C); **they will make noise**. They will do something else, they will **make noise in the class** (3 D); they sometimes have that **negative behaviour** that they want to tell you, no mam, I want to sit with that one. They know themselves, if they can they want to group together (4D).”*

From the above quotes, it is highlighted that the negative behaviour that comes to the fore the most, is disrupting the class and making noises in the classroom. Some participants found that academically gifted learners do not always follow the class rules. They also want to choose who they want to sit next to in class, not taking the

other learners into consideration. There is inconsistency regarding the positive attitude towards others discussed above and the negative behaviour discussed under this theme. There could be a number of aspects that lead to such a behaviour including boredom, not being challenged, teachers not attending to the needs of learners and others. Betts and Neihart supports this statement by indicating that there are different types of gifted learners who were identified and one of these types is the “creative’ gifted learner who might disrupt the class and exhibit behaviour the teacher might not like (cf. 2.4.1.2).

Three of the participants from three different schools have identified that academically gifted learners are sometimes troublesome towards other learners.

*“They can become **bullies** if you don’t keep an eye. Because the child knows I can do my work and I finish my work and the teacher says everything is good (3A);both learners I can think of can be a **bit of a bully**. Not a severe bully, but can lash out and be a bit physical with the others. They can be a bit arrogant, because they know they are smart. (1B)there are kids in my class that undermines each other. Who don’t want to sit with each other because they think that they know. And they always think that if they are sitting with someone else, somebody else is not clever (4D)”.*

From these responses, one can perceive that academically gifted learners might become bullies and feel that they are better than other learners. They have a tendency to challenge the learners and they seem to be successful in avoiding punishment. Bullying is not always physical, but can be emotional in nature whereby the learners can make the learners feel worthless. Furthermore, they think highly of themselves in some cases and can act out toward other learners that they might feel are inferior. These bad tendencies could be attributed to their peer group affiliations, they see others doing it to establish and protect their positions. These acts can lead to perceived popularity.

The participants indicated that they were aware of what the possible reasons are for the negative behaviour that is portrayed by the academically gifted learners.

Lack of challenging work

Four participants from two different schools cited the lack of challenging work as the reason that academically gifted learners behave negatively in the classroom.

*“They’re not challenged enough, so that’s why they could even start “playing up”. They are not challenged enough by what they have in front of them (1A); the handwriting is quite bad and they don’t feel like doing the easy work, they actually do it so badly and you know that they could have done it better. It is **not challenging** for them (1B)... because the work, now they’re done with it and then they **don’t have challenging enough work (4 B).**” it is because he is **not being challenged**. You always have to cater to those learners, just to **challenge** them a bit (3B).”*

Participants found that the work that was given to the learners in the classroom was not challenging enough for them and that is why they started acting out. The work might have been of a lower level to suit the majority of the learners in class and might not be able to cater for the academically gifted learner. The academically gifted learner needs work that will challenge them to an extent in order for them to not get up to mischief. Tasks that are not challenging are not motivating. These responses indicate that in these classes there was inadequate or inappropriate challenge. There is a need for consistent and challenging work that helps in the development of academic gifted learners. Literature supports this statement by stating that the lack of proper differentiation and stimulation may account to learners not being challenged and becoming naughty in class (*cf.* 1.1).

Lack of planning for enrichment

Five participants indicated that academically gifted learners behave badly when their work is done.

*“They do disturb others **when they are done** (3A); if they act out in such a way, their **work is done** (3B); ...because the **work, now they’re done** with it and then they become naughty (4B); normally those that are **finished with their work** and are not controlled. (3D), when we give them assessments, maybe the assessments will be like for 15 minutes or 20 minutes, those kids,*

if it is on the board, before you are finished writing the date, they already know what comes after (4D)."

The participants indicated that the academically gifted learners act out when their work is done. They finish the work much quicker than their peers. This might be an indication of the work that is not challenging enough for them. There is no indication of strategies in place to deal with this situation. There are indications of frustrations in these responses that the work learners are given is easy for them. Such situations could result in frustrations for the teachers as well as gifted learners. What is evident in these responses is lack of appropriate curriculum modification techniques. This might be due to a lack of training. Literature indicates that it is necessary for academically gifted learners to be challenged by adapting the curricula and learning process to help to solve scholastic problems that the learners might have (*cf.* 3.6.5).

Not stimulated/ boredom

Ten participants from all four schools have indicated that boredom was experienced by academically gifted learners.

*"Your child that is **fidgiting and seems to be bored**...could even start 'acting up' (1A); **different activities that you can give so that they don't get bored.** When they **get bored**, they might end up being mischievous (3A); They can become quite naughty **when not stimulated** (1B); but you also get, in the higher grades, learners who, **of boredom they experience** especially because the curriculum doesn't make provision for them, they tend to **become bored** and this may lead to some **disciplinary problems** (3C); so if you get a child like that and then you namely see this child is **bored**... (4C);**boredom**, because they are not stimulated (4B);she becomes **bored** and disrupts the classroom (1D); they are getting naughty, **because they are bored** (2D); you find that, they **become bored** when they don't have anything to do (3D); they don't want to sit and get **bored**(4D)."*

The participants have all indicated that academically gifted learners become bored. A main factor contributing to this boredom might be the lack of stimulating work in the classroom and that the curriculum does not provide adequate support for the

academically gifted learners. The tasks do not satisfy the need for achievement. Learners that are not stimulated are easily bored and boredom can negatively affect motivation. Negative behaviour stems from this boredom that the learners experience. Misbehaving could be their way of finding something interesting to do. The literature indicates that in order for a learner not to be bored, the prior knowledge of the learner must be taken into account in order to see what the learner already knows in order to build and expand on that knowledge so boredom can be addressed (*cf.* 3.5.7).

- *Underperforming academically gifted learners*

Three participants from two different schools stated that academically gifted learners underperform at times.

“I’m just saying this child now does things, and if I hear how he performed in a test, I wonder what is going on. He is supposed to be one of the top pupils and he doesn’t do well (1B); a few learners I have actually came across now, their IQ’s seem to be quite high, but they don’t perform (3B); this child has got potential, but the child is not meeting it (3C).”

It seems that, even though academically gifted learners do well in most instances, there are cases where these learners underperform and do not live up to their full potential. Lack of motivation or difficult home or school circumstances might be possible reasons for these occurrences. These responses show that participants were aware of gifted learners that were under achievers. The literature suggests that learners might underperform due to a variety of reasons and this is attributed to a discrepancy between performance and potential. There are other factors that affect achievement other than ability. It might be such factors such as day dreaming and inconsistent work that impacts negatively on the gifted learners’ performance. The curriculum not being adapted to suit their needs is also a reason why academically gifted learners might underperform in schools (*cf.* 2.5.1.7).

Twelve participants from all four schools mentioned that the learners at risk in the schools get the most focus. The academically gifted learners are not receiving the necessary attention all the time.

*“Because the emphasis is so much on the **weaker learner** (1A); the ILST is mostly there for the **learners at risk** (2A); and then I still have to cater for the **learners at risk** (3A); die GDE is meer gefokus op die “**learners at risk**” (4A); We are so focused on the **weaker ones** (1B); unfortunately, we only think of the **weaker ones**, let’s put it that way, the **struggling ones**. They gave us a booklet to fill in for the weaker learners, but nothing about gifted learners (2B); only support for **learners at risk** that I know of (4B); because there is so many learners on the **learners at risk** list that we actually concentrate on them (2C); but we know already from term one that we must identify **learners at risk**, so we are moving in that direction, identifying, focusing more on the **learners at risk** (3C); the interesting thing about education is that it is all about the **learners that struggle** (4C); we do have a policy for the **learners at risk** (3D); because remember now, most of the time, we focus on the **learners at risk** (4D).”*

The participants all indicated that the learners at risk are focused on instead of the focus being on the academically gifted learners. The learners at risk are identified early in the school year and the academically gifted learners are not formally identified like the learners at risk. The policies that are drawn up, focus on the learners at risk and the teachers are supposed to pay more attention to them. This is all good and well, but some support must also be given to the academically gifted learners. Literature supports that the Department of Education does focus on inclusive practices and has put a lot of inclusive policies into practice. The focus of these policies is not on gifted learners, but on learners who are at risk due to learning difficulties (cf. 3.3).

From the above responses, we find that the positive behaviour of gifted learners outweigh the negative behaviour that they display. Most of the negative behaviour stems from not being stimulated in the classroom or from work that is not challenging enough for the gifted individuals. We also find that some of the participants came across gifted underperforming learners. This might be because of the work in classes being on the incorrect level, or that the gifted learners might not get the necessary attention or motivation that they deserve.

THEME 4 SUPPORT FOR ACADEMICALLY GIFTED LEARNERS

- *Support from teachers*

Teachers play a very important role in supporting academically gifted learners, because they spend a lot of time with the learners on a daily basis and can have an influence on how they achieve. Teachers can directly implement support in the classroom after identifying academically gifted learners. According to the SIAS (2008), teachers have to approach the ILST if they feel that their strategies are not yielding good results. The following findings indicate the support teachers give to academically gifted learners.

Thirteen participants from all four schools indicated that extra work in the classroom is given as support for academically gifted learners.

*“Especially in my Maths and Science classes, I gave them some **extra work** to do and you could actually purchase a set of worksheets. What was nice about these worksheets is it has a memorandum, so children can be able to mark for themselves (1A); that **extra work** that we should give to these learners (2A); I need to accommodate and really assist this child with **extraactivities** (3A); met hom moes ek gereëld en op 'n daaglikse basis vir hom **ekstra werk** gereed hê. Dan moes ek vir hom **addisionele take** en werkkaarte gee om hom besig te kon hou (4A); there is always **extra work** in class, I have Grade 2 books (1B); I will give him **extraworksheets** or work to do from the booklet (2C); the curriculum will dictate to you to have **additional work** for them (3C); And how I dealt with them was to give them some **additional work** (4B); as far as support went, I gave him a few ANA questions that he could do on his own. In my class I had textbooks and booklet I inherited from previous teacher and he would work through them (4C); I will give her the **extra work** to do. But the extra work in such a way that it must be conducive to learning (1D); in those days we had special and*

***extra work** ready for them (2D); I find another task and I give them some **more work** (3D); I give them **extra work** to do (4D)."*

Extra work in the form of worksheets, ANA question papers and books at a higher level of learning seem to be popular ways of supporting academically gifted learners in the classroom. The extra work should be conducive to learning, not just to keep these learners busy. I think teachers opted for the easiest way out of a tricky situation. This could be because of lack of knowledge regarding other means of supporting gifted learners. This could be an argument of convenience. Another participant mentioned that the learner could do the work in their own time after they were done with the work they should have done in class. In the literature, the choice can be given to academically gifted learners on if they would like extra reading material or a more difficult book than the one their peers have. Allowing choice is a way of supporting academically gifted learners in the classroom (cf. 3.5.1).

Thirteen participants from all four schools indicated that they use additional reading as a support method for academically gifted learners.

*"The only programs that we have is a short program whereby the staff members will ask the children to do **additional reading** (1A); I gave them **additional reading** to do at a slightly higher level than the other learners and I think we can create a club, a reading club (3A); without any assistance from anyone, they can just go there and get their work. Like a **reading corner**. We usually compete in **reading with the local library** (2A); ek het ook in my klas heelwat boekies beskikbaar gehad en as hy nie meer 'n werkkaart wou doen nie, het ek vir hom 'n **boekie laat kies om te lees** (4A); so I am trying to get them **reading** and to go to the media centre(1B); I do use them to do the reading (2B); what I do is, I have **additional books** and I have **literature stories and I bring additional material**. With regards to **books and material**, I either bring or I get from the school to put it in the classroom and when they are done with their work, **they access the material** for reading (4B); or you can give him a piece to read, you can give him a **media book** and he will sit reading (2C); the book club we have started is for the **children to read** for pleasure and for relaxation and to enhance their reading skills as well (3C); so he was usually busy with his work and usually **reading the***

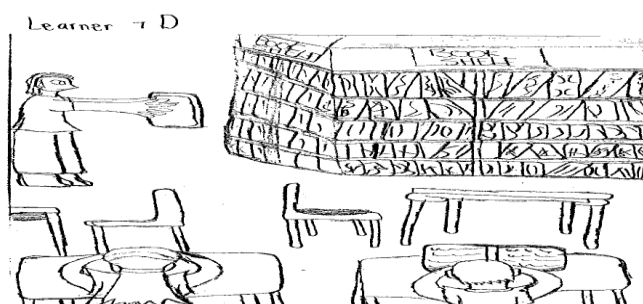
books and the reading material that we have available in class (4C); that's why we have the reading corner (1D); and then after that I will give the child extra reading parts to do (2D); for them to do reading (3D)."

The teachers from the above schools all feel that additional reading is a good way to support academically gifted learners. What is not clear in these statements is whether the extra reading that is suggested is on a higher level or the same level of all other learners in class. Reading at a higher level than peers and doing advanced questions about the characters in the story would be more valuable. The use of just extra work and more reading activities is an indication of a lack of a specialised advanced curriculum that accommodates such learners. However, when we look at literature, we will see that additional reading is indicated as a support method (cf. 3.5.14).

To support this statement, three learner participants have drawn libraries and books that indicate additional reading.

In the drawing by learner 7D, there is a learner standing next to a bookshelf full of books. The learner is either taking a book from the shelf or returning the book to the shelf. There are children sitting at desks busy with reading material in front of them.

Figure8: Drawing by learner 7D



In his narrative explanation, learner 7D wrote:

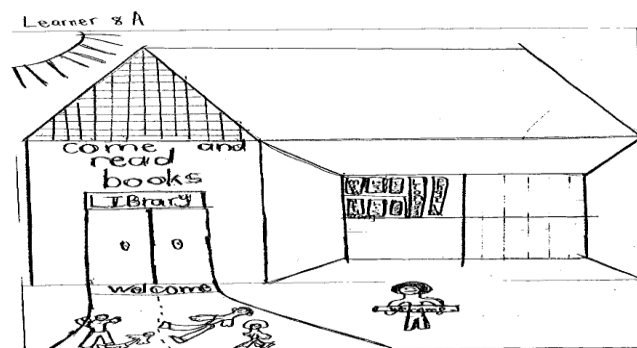
'I drew a library with children inside reading and learning more about things. I would like for students to get the opportunity to get libraries in their schools and my school so we can learn a lot more to increase our knowledge and mind skills. The picture has some children sitting down and reading some books and that can help with our reading skills.'

The learner felt that the learners his school would greatly benefit from a library, because school D did not have a functioning library. The learner stated that, if libraries could be opened for them, they would be able to increase their ability to read and their knowledge of the world.

The above narrative support what the teachers have said above about additional reading that can benefit the academically gifted learners. Having libraries or resource centres could be beneficial for both the learner and the teacher. These libraries can be used as activity centres for self-initiated activities where teachers help learners to locate valuable resources for enrichment.

Another participant, learner 8A, drew a picture of a big library with a welcome sign that welcomes people to the library. Inside the library, different books were drawn. There are learners who walk to the library.

Figure 9: Drawing by learner 8A



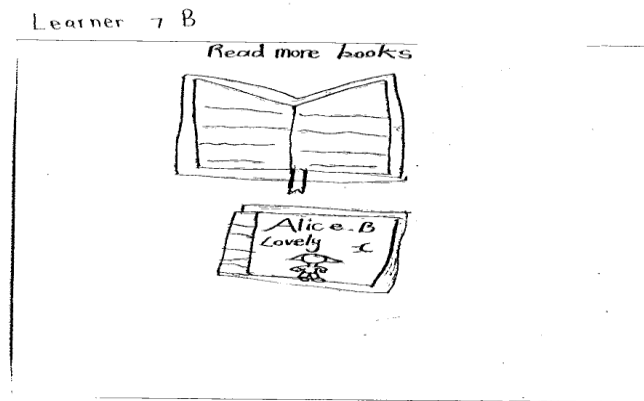
In his narrative explanation he wrote:

'The picture that I drew is about me and my friends going into the library that just opened. We are going to read books and study for examinations.'

The learner felt that a library would benefit him and his friends and that they could study for their exams and read books in the library. School A did not have a library on the premises and the learners had to walk quite a distance to get to their local library. It is interesting that in this era of rapid technological developments learners still emphasise the importance of libraries in developing knowledge. One would think that they would opt for computer laboratories. Schools have computer laboratories and vast information is available in multi-media sites. What is more thought-provoking is the fact that even their teachers never mentioned technology as a support strategy.

Learner participant 7B drew a picture of two books and wrote a caption reading "read more books". The picture conveys the message that reading is important to the learner.

Figure 10: Drawn by Learner participant 7B



The narrative by learner participant 7 B is as follows:

'I think we should read more books, because it helps you to relax and expands the brain, plus it's also educational so it can help some people pass. It expands some people's vocabulary so we can learn new words. So reading is fun, because you can find new mysteries and adventure and is education and quiet so teachers wouldn't get annoyed. In my conclusion, we should promote reading.'

The learner felt that reading makes a person to relax and can expand the mental capacity of a person and expand knowledge. The learner also understood that it does not annoy teachers when learners read and thus, reading should be promoted. For teachers, this is a valuable resource that can enhance self-directed learning, which is a pre-requisite for gifted learners.

The above narratives support what the teachers have said above about additional reading that can benefit the academically gifted learners. It will benefit school A and

school D to have a functioning library, because school A does not have one on the premises and the learners have to walk to the local library if they want to take out books. School B and school C have media centres with books that they can read. Literature also supports what is said by indicating additional reading as a support strategy and that books are seen as good resources that can benefit the learners in schools (*cf.* 2.6.2 and 3.5.1).

Nine participants from all schools indicated that they give enrichment work to the learners. Enrichment can be in the form of extra lessons in class after the learners have completed their work.

*“I would support them by giving them **enrichment** in the form of higher level work (2A); **enrichment** can be done when we give them extra worksheets at a higher level to do (3A); **I have Grade 2 books**. If I find something interesting, like a block buster or a numeracy problem, I will give it to him to figure out. We are **giving enrichment work** to the children (1B); now with Bloom’s taxonomy, it actually helps those kids, because you can always give them some **enrichment** to do.. All our textbooks have a separate little book that is **enrichment** and also support, which is nice (3B); you give them extra work, you do **enrichment with them**. In some cases they go for **extra lessons or enrichment**, but usually in this area, it is all about money. And if you go to a person that will provide you **with enrichment**, you must pay and I don’t think that comes cheaply (4C), I used to give her **enrichment**. I taught her in grade 6, I used to give her the work for grade 7, (1D); yes, we had lots and lots of **enrichment things** that we could give to the children in those days. (2D); yes, more difficult work (3D); I will give them **something that is at least, a little bit more**, not difficult, but at **another level of their learning**. If we are doing three sound words, they will have to do four sound words (4D).”*

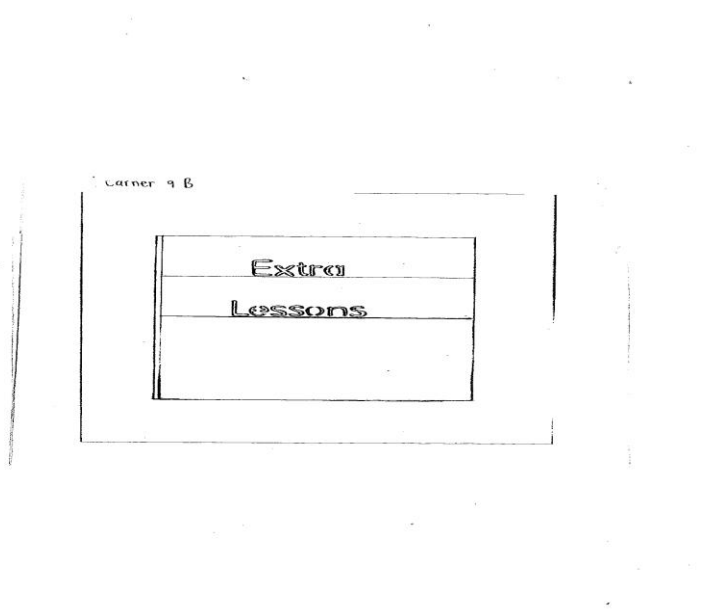
The participants understood enrichment and extra work for academically gifted learners as the same thing. They give them work that forms part of enrichment, based on a higher level of learning. One of the participants believed that if enrichment activities are provided from outside of school for academically gifted learners, they will cost a lot of money and not all parents can afford it then. The message from the participants is also clear that the teachers in their classrooms give

enrichment to the learners more than from any other source. Within the literature, we find that enrichment allows for much deeper understanding and that more information is available to the learners through enrichment. It is a good support strategy for the academically gifted (*cf.* 3.6.2.2).

The following drawings support what has been said about enrichment and extra work being able to support academically gifted learners.

Learner participant 9 B drew a picture of a book and wrote “extra lessons” on it. The picture does not have any other.

Figure 11: Drawing by learner 9B

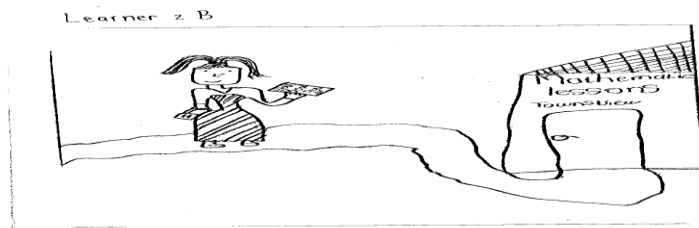


Learner 9 B's narratives is as follows:

'I would like to have extra lessons because I enjoy being at school and learning more things. It could help with work, because now and then I get mixed up with some things for Afrikaans. I only speak English at home and at school. I don't really speak Afrikaans but my teacher teaches us Afrikaans. I am good with some things when it comes to Afrikaans but the children in my class can't speak it and can't understand it. I do like school and all the work I do but it could also help me if we can do extra lessons and leave some of the books at school because my bag is really heavy and hurts my back. Extra lessons can also help me with my exams and tests I need to do. It can boost up my marks and help me with the subjects. I would enjoy extra murals for all my subjects because I enjoy plenty of work and like to be taught more things as well. So I can get a good education and make my family proud and happy'

Learner participant 9B was of the opinion that extra lessons in aspects she might struggle with will greatly help her. She felt a need to achieve to the best of her abilities to make her family proud. She was willing to do a lot of extra classes because she enjoys school and what it entails. With this participant there are self-imposed demands of higher performance. This could be motivated by a fear of failure that would be devastating to the learner. This could be caused by both internal and external pressures. Learner participant 2B drew a lady with a maths book walking to a building. The writing on the building says: mathematics lessons. This might be the mathematics teacher that is going to give extra lessons to the learners in the building.

Figure 12: Drawing by learner 2B



The narrative explanation of learner 2B's drawing is as follows:

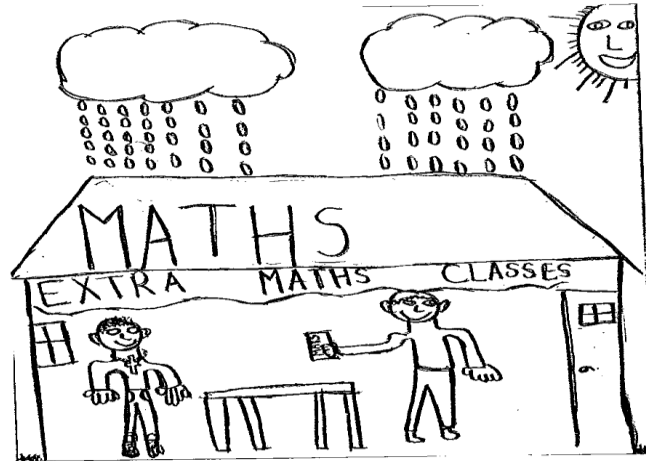
“As academically gifted learner, I need extra mathematics lessons because I sometimes struggle with math quizzes and questions. I mostly want to learn how to do adding, subtracting and multiplying fractions. When the teacher talks about it, I suddenly get very twisted and confused, so I sometimes ask the teacher to re-explain to me for I did not understand. I do go for extra maths lessons but it would be nice if we had one here at school. Where my friends and I can help each other where we all don't understand. Thank you for reading this paper”

It seems that the learner would like to have extra maths lessons at school and that it will benefit him and his friends. The participant did not always understand all the concepts. He states that there are no extra maths lessons at his school and that he will be happy if maths extra classes can be done at his school, so that traveling and time costs can be minimized. It can be applauded that there are learners who are also willing to go an extra mile regarding their education. This sub-theme is consistent with other sub-themes above that indicate desire to learn, hard work and being motivated to achieve as some of the attributes of gifted learners.

Learner participant 5A drew a picture of himself being in a class and on the outside of the building the male learner mentioned “extra maths classes”. There is a teacher with him in class who has a maths book.

Figure 13: Drawing by learner 5 A

Learner 5 A



'I wrote about me in extra maths classes. Because maths that's the subject I need support for. I will appreciate that. And maths is not so hard. I must just try my best I will get there. And must try my best.'

The learner participant also believed that extra maths lessons would benefit him. He indicates that maths is not so hard. It seems that academically gifted learners do struggle from time to time with some concepts that they might need support for. In supporting such learners teachers have to first identify the areas of support. With this learner and others above the reasons for their under achieving cannot be associated with negative attitudes toward school, negative attitudes toward school work, low motivation or even self-regulation, they prepared to put more effort. Another important aspect in these responses is the ability of learners to admit to their lack of

understanding. This is an important step towards dealing with problems and challenges in their lives

Seven participants from all four schools indicated that they use peer teaching as a support method for academically gifted learners. Peer teaching involves that the academically gifted learner helps other learners in class when they are done with their own work.

*“Apart from that, I used them, but very minimal, to do some **peer teaching**. So if there were children who had difficulty with a specific sum or calculation or experiment, I let them explain the work, which I found very effective, because if they learn from their friends they almost pay better attention than to the teacher (1A); I would support them by giving them enrichment and to **assist other children** (2A); I will maybe give them responsibilities. Just to assist others, like peer teaching. Go to that learner who is not doing the work, and get that learner to assist that learner (3A); I use them as **peer teachers**...to flash the words (1B); I make use of them to **assist with peer development in class**. I will make sure that the way they are seated is that they can be able to **assist others**. That way it also gives them a chance to **enhance their leadership capabilities** (3C); and to **help the peers**. And they learn something from her, maybe because she is the peer (1D); I think we can implement something like **peer support**. At times, I involve them in **peer teaching** (3D).”*

It seems that the teachers believe that peer education provided by gifted learners can benefit other learners, because they seem to understand the work better. One teacher was of the opinion that it enhances leadership abilities in academically gifted learners. One of the participants rearranged the class so that learners could be seated in such a way that it becomes easier for them to help their peers. This might help the academically gifted learners to expand their knowledge of how to solve problems and explore different ways of problem solving.

Two teachers from two different schools mentioned that they make provision for academically gifted learners in their lesson plans. They indicated enrichment activities for the learners:

“Even the lesson plans that we make accommodate the gifted child and the challenged learner (2A); in every lesson plan, we have to accommodate the weaker learners and the gifted learners. We have activities that they can do (2D).”

The lesson plans are supposed to make provision for academically gifted learners as much as they accommodate learners at risk. Since only two teachers mentioned making provision in their lesson plans for the learners, it might indicate that this is not a common practice. It might mean that teachers must take the time to make more provision for academically gifted learners. If gifted learners are not considered when planning is done, this could mean that they are neglected. Within the literature, the above statements are supported through indicating that the curriculum needs to be adapted in order to accommodate gifted learners. The ILST must support the teacher in this process (*cf.* 3.5.3).

Five participants from all four schools mentioned that motivational support was rendered to academically gifted learners. Motivational support was implemented in the form of star charts or prize giving.

*“You could get star charts to **stimulate and motivate** the learners, I had, almost like the Grade 1’s and 2’s, I **had a star chart, a class list** and a bar graph, I coloured it as they completed the worksheets and it was this competition to see who was able to do the most worksheets (1A); the only thing we have now, is only the merit day, only that, to motivate them (1C); I think the misconception that we also might have is that such learners get **acknowledgement with merit day** and that, but it doesn’t justify the fact that they do not get stimulation from different programs that we have (3C); at my previous school, we had a **Veritas** program as a **reward system** based on the performance of these kids. They would be taken out to educational places like museums and Eskom national science expos. (4B); normally we give them the..., at the end of the year, we do the **awards for them** so that they can get a **certificate**; we take the best learners according to the subjects and the best learner in the classroom. We also motivate them by putting them on the RCL (1D).”*

Motivation plays a very big role in achieving well and can be intrinsic or extrinsic in nature. Merit days, prize-giving and motivational charts were all cited by the teachers when talking about available motivational support. The motivational days are held to encourage academically gifted learners to keep up their hard work that they do throughout the year and it gives them a sense of achievement. The external motivation that they receive might in turn flame a sense of internal motivation that might inspire them to greater heights. Literature supports the above statements by indicating that motivation supports learners in such a way that they are more willing to work and do their best to achieve (cf. 2.7.11).

Five teachers from three of the participating schools indicated that extra-curricular support could be implemented for the academically gifted. Some of the teachers indicated that they had already started with these programs at school.

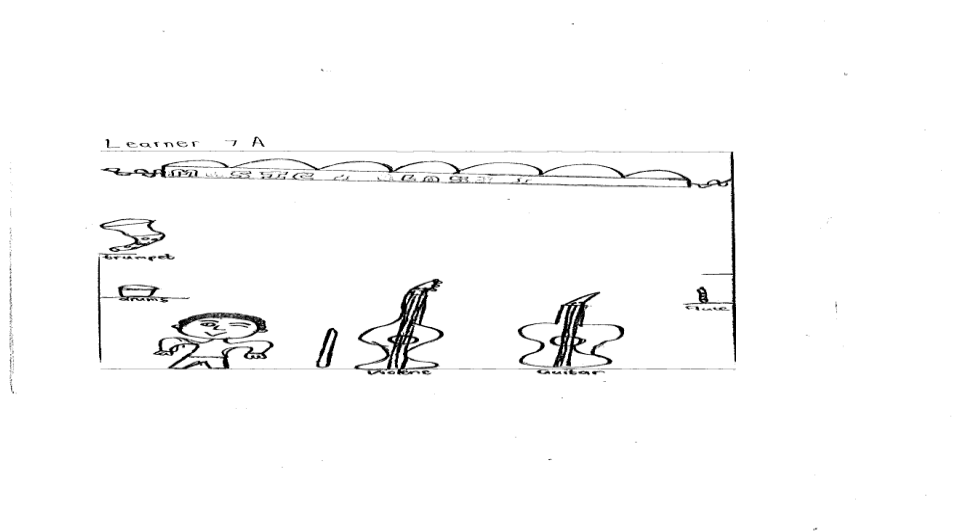
*““They are always taking part in competitions. There are different competitions for different subjects, the **science quiz**, the **astro quiz**, the **maths challenges**. We usually compete in reading with the local library. The gifted children will be part of the **sporting activities** in the community. They can join any sport like **swimming**, like **tennis**, they tend to benefit from that (2 A); dan het ons ook kultuur **en debat voering** en dit is ook beskikbaar wat ook kinders afrig en wat ook goed is vir hulle debatvoering en redenasie vermoë (4A); I think they must have an **extra mural**. I think there can be one for them like dissecting things or **getting experiments** for them to do. I think they can **learn music**. Maybe how to play an instrument (1B); and the **Eisteddfod's and writing competitions**. I had kids from my previous school who wrote and published their **poems** Like **Woolworths competitions**. Whatever we find in terms of **competitions and public speaking**, we get into that where they do really well. (4B); one will definitely encourage them to participate in **cultural or sport activities** but these are also limited to the resources of the school (3C).*

It seems that the participants really wanted to encourage learners to partake in extra mural activities that they were interested in. In some of the schools, programs for extra mural activities were established (Schools A and C), but the participants from

school B felt that more could be done to support the learners. One participant felt that the school's resources were a bit limited when it came to arranging extra mural activities. Extra mural activities play a major role in effective intervention intended to cultivate capabilities and develop self-esteem and self-efficacy in gifted learners especially those that underachieve.

Learner participant 7A drew a picture of himself in a music class with some musical instruments surrounding him. There is a flute and a violin as well as a trumpet, drums and a guitar in the picture. The boy in the picture looks very happy. There is a sign that says "music classes" against the wall.

Figure 14: Drawing by learner 7 A

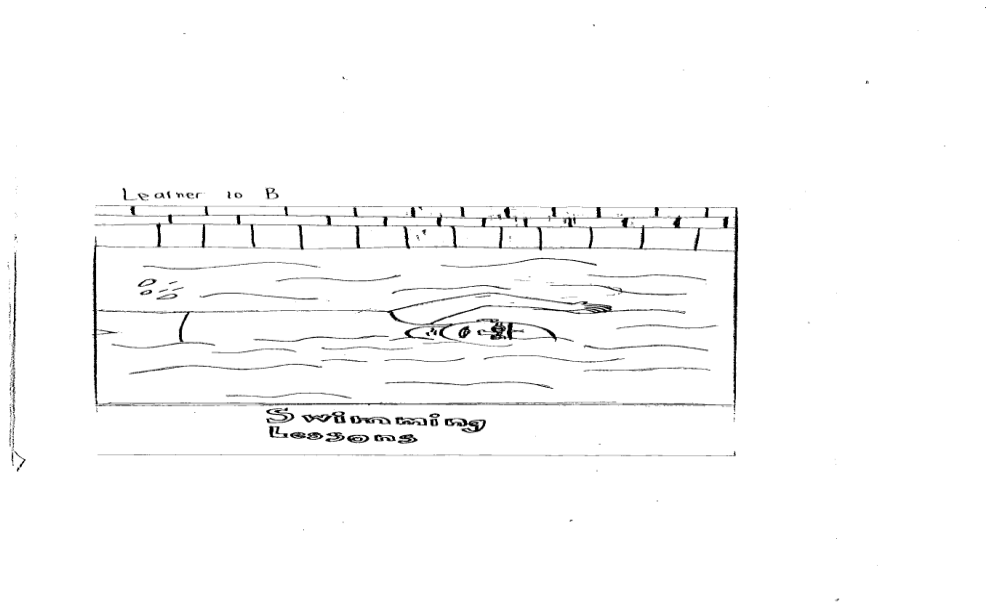


“A music class would be great because I can learn how to sing and play different instruments. I love music because it is part of creative arts. I like to sing and dance. I am good at creativity. It is fun to be creative. My two favourite instruments are guitars and violins. I can sing many different songs. In music classes I learn how songs must be played and how to make my own lyrics. I would like music classes.”

The learner was of the opinion that he would be happy if he could learn how to play different instruments as an extra-curricular activity. He aspired to make his own lyrics to songs and believed that a music class would be of great help.

Learner participant 10 B drew a picture of a boy swimming in the water and underneath it, he wrote “swimming lessons”.

Figure 15: Learner participant 10 B



“What I have drawn in the picture was based on swimming lessons. I would like the school to add some swimming lessons so that they can teach people and learners how to swim. The reason why I chose it was because a lot of situations happen every day of children drowning I want children to know the safeties of swimming and that they should not go into swimming pools, rivers, dams, etc. without supervision.”

This statement supports what the teachers have said about extra-curricular activities that can be used as support for academically gifted learners. These responses indicate that academically gifted learners can be adventurous; they do not want to be confined to class. Their willingness to learn new skills is admirable.

Three of the participants spoke about Bloom’s taxonomy that can support academically gifted learners because the level of questions are challenging for them.

“Some questions based on what they have read (higher order questions) (2A); they say your worksheets are always based on the same thing, but now

*with **Bloom's taxonomy**, it actually helps those kids. What we also do in our tests, at this stage, we make sure that, once again, we use **Bloom's Taxonomy**. So you know that you have your low order, middle and higher order questions, so that the kids know that this is what is expected and that there are some challenging ones for them. (3B); yes, naturally **Bloom's taxonomy** was used... But with **Bloom's taxonomy**, implemented correctly, thankfully it will challenge them (4B)"*

From the above responses, we find that some participants view Bloom's taxonomy as helpful when making assessments. The levels of questions can be higher for the academically gifted in order to challenge them. It is troublesome that so few participants mentioned this tool as something that they are aware of and use on a regular basis. Literature supports the statement made about Bloom's taxonomy. The levels of questions challenge the learners to think more in depth before answering (cf. 3.6.2.2)

One participant said that she played a parental role in the life of some academically gifted learners who might not come from the best circumstances.

*"We focus more on these learners who need support. It is those learners, we check if they are **vulnerable and then maybe we find that a learner is very good, but the learner maybe can't** get food from home, cannot get love from home, we make sure that we support and motivate, at least, he or she feels that there are some people who are taking care of her or him. **We play a parental part here**. We should also focus as teachers on learners who are gifted. They also need care. So they must not feel like we are not taking care of them (1D)"*

The parental part that the teacher plays is of importance in the life of all learners. As highlighted above, some learners might be academically gifted, but can underperform. The participant suggested that teachers must take good care of learners. Feeling loved, cared for and accommodated would contribute towards the good performance of gifted learners.

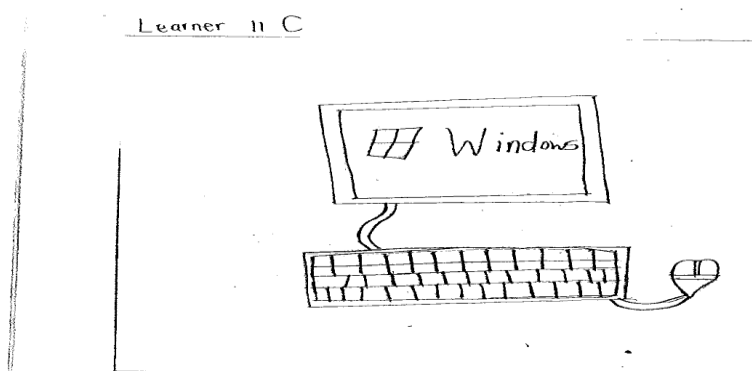
Three teacher participants from three different schools mentioned that technology is used or should be used as a support method in the school.

*“And also trying to use some **technology, Power point presentations, whiteboards and smart phones**. I think these kids have a thirst for knowledge. So they actually go and access it for themselves (4B); not at the moment, because if you put programs in place, usually it **needs technology**, you know, if you have a computer system where you put in on the **computer** and use it as a program. We have looked into it, but it is so expensive to put those programs in place (4C); no! (Enrichment doesn’t only have to be worksheets). **Television** is excellent. **Cell phones too these days (2D).**”*

From the above quotes we find that the participants mentioned that technology should be used as a support strategy in schools and that enrichment for learners is not only supposed to be based on worksheets and books. They believed that the use of smartphones and computers is a way of the future. The Internet can also be used for support. These statements indicate a gradual shift from the negative attitudes that teachers had towards the use of technology in schools. One of the three participants indicated an important point that it is expensive to implement technology in schools, which can pose a problem to schools who are not financially well off. In the literature, technology is noted as a factor that can open doors of opportunity and knowledge to academically gifted learners. It can be used in the classroom for projects and at home for research (*cf.* 3.5.2).

To support this statement, learner 11 C drew a picture of a computer with Windows program on it.

Figure 16: Learner participant 11 C

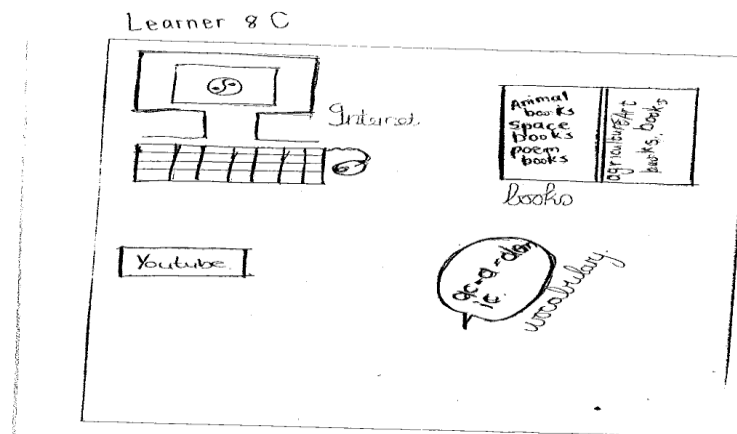


'I would like it if we had a computer room and computers to work on. It would help because we could practise maths on it. We can write and practice English as well.'

The learner mentioned that a computer room at school would be beneficial to them in order for them to practice English and Maths. In the foregoing paragraphs both teachers and learners mentioned libraries as one form of providing support, it is good that they also realise that going digital could be beneficial.

Learner participant 8C concurs with the statements above. In the drawing, there is a computer with the word "internet" written next to it, as well as a "YouTube" logo. The learner also drew books and a speech bubble, which indicates vocabulary.

Figure 17: Learner 8 C



'My motto is working hard in class and putting every effort in my work and working to my fully ability. At home the Internet and books are my second hand if I need anything. I would need for my schoolwork or projects. I would stay up many nights and work on sums I don't understand or makes sums up according to that question. I like reading and it boosts brainpower of intelligent. Pen to paper is the best way to study. I will always do the best of what others want of me.'

The learner mentioned that the Internet at home could help a lot when studying. The learner can be dedicated and do his best. It could be that the learner would appreciate if computer rooms with Internet access could be installed in schools. There are many problems that are encountered by schools with regards to computer

rooms such as burglary and theft, unavailability of Internet and insufficient computers to accommodate learners in a school. The learner included that pen and paper is also a good way to study.

Two participants from two different schools indicated that they use puzzles and other games to support the learners in class.

*“I don’t really have space, but you know what I do, I have this green table, I put it there in the back, and I put **puzzles** there. When they are finished with their work, they go there and do puzzles (4D); and then those **tangrams** as well. I am going to make my own, because they are extremely expensive. It is cut out cards and you cut out the pattern like that and then you can make shapes with the triangles that you cut out. They love doing that and they love **puzzles** (1B).”*

From the above responses, we see that the teachers use educational games to support the academically gifted learners. Because they work at an accelerated pace, they are allowed to go to a designated area and build puzzles and tangrams. The problem with allowing this is space. One participant mentioned that she did not have space or a designated area where learners can play games. This can be because of classes accommodating 40-45 learners when the class was designed for only 25-30 learners. The second participant indicated that tangrams as an educational toy is very expensive to buy, but that she was willing to make her own in order to support learners. The puzzles and the tangrams help with mathematical skills such as positioning and reasoning. In the literature, educational games are also said to alleviate loneliness that a learner might experience and that games like checkers or chess might also benefit a learner emotionally and not just academically.

One participant from school D mentioned that an awareness day should be arranged to support all learners experiencing barriers to learning including the academically gifted learners.

“With the ILST, maybe if we can have that day for them to say, we are celebrating gifted learners. So that they can understand gifted learners (4D).”

The participant was of the opinion that parents and other individuals in the community do not understand gifted learners and that an awareness day should be held for them at the school to help people understand what academic giftedness is all about. It would be a day to celebrate these learners. This is a good idea as people are not aware of giftedness and what it entails. When parents are aware of the traits, it would be easier for them to support their children. As indicated in the literature gifted learners are also at risk, they therefore need all the support they can get.

Two participants from school D felt that it was important to explore the direction in which the academically gifted learner wants to go after the schooling years.

*“We must find out in **which direction** that child wants to go. So that you could lead that child (2D); sometimes we have some gifted learners in the school, they don’t even know what to do when they complete their studies, so the best thing to do is to motivate them and help them with their **career choices**. So they can know which career they must choose (1D).”*

The participants pointed out that it is good to have knowledge about which career path the learners want to take, in order for the teachers to guide them and prepare them for their journey ahead. It might help these academically gifted learners to focus on what they want to do and how to get it. This will keep them motivated to excel in their work having a goal in mind. Personal development plans are developed by learners can guide them on their career paths and be a support structure for them as indicated in the literature (cf. 3.5.13).

- *Support from other stakeholders*

Six participants from all four schools indicated that the unions had workshops that they conducted from time to time to support academically gifted learners

“Just the unions that provide the workshops to teachers on how to handle and to prepare any extra work for the gifted learners (2A); daar is van die SAOU, die vakbond. Daar is nou werksinkels wat aangebied word op die program oor akademiese begaafdheid, maar ongelukkig is dit baie ver, in Garsfontein in Pretoria in die SAOU se auditorium daar (4A); it was from the unions (1B); the

unions help out more (4B); I think from the Union side more than from the Department. When I look at this, you notice that most of workshops are from the Unions (3C); the Unions do give! Lots and lots of things (2D).”

From the above quotes it can be deduced that the unions are more focused on supporting teachers with workshops. The problem with such workshops is that the members of the union get a discount when they attend whilst non-members do not. If a non-member wants to join, they must pay the full amount of the workshop. This could mean that it is only members of these unions that benefit and the rest of the teachers who do not belong to any union would be left out their children will suffer. Notices for the workshops arrive late at schools and then not all members can attend. It is a good initiative that shows that unions are concerned about the development of their members.

Parents play an integral part in the lives of their children. When asked who the other role players in the lives of the academically gifted learners are, it was evident that some parents play a supporting role in the lives of their children, but that there are also instances where parents did not play such a big role as they are supposed to.

Six teacher participants indicated that there is a lack of parental involvement in their schools.

*“Ons is regtig in ’n minder bevoorregte area waar die kinders in die eerste plek baie min stimulasie kry by die huis voor skool en **onbetrokkenheid van ouers** wat ook die kinders se leervermoë en akademiese prestasie baie negatief beïnvloed, want die hulp wat hulle moet kry by die huis omdat hulle juis sukkel is **bitter min** (4A); I think the main factor is time. I also think the other factor is lack of **commitment from parents** (4B); some of the **parents are not willing to level** with us. I think the problem is from the **parents’ side**. Some learners in the classroom can be seen that they have wrong information **from the parents** (1C); we **don’t have a lot of parentssupporting us**. (2 C); those are just additional resources we sometimes **refer parents** to. We don’t **really get feedback from them** on whether it really enhances the child or not. You do find certain instances where some **parents** just don’t have the time or*

*care about them, as long as the child is in school and gets a report card, they are happy with it (3C); our parents **are really, non-existing**. They don't care. Here and there, there is a parent that will look after the children. **But very few (2D)**"*

From the above information, it is found that the parents do not always play a role in the lives of the learners. Some believe that it is because of the socio-economical problems in their communities. Another factor is time constraints parents need to work to bring money home and they might come home very late and not be able to play a role in their children's lives. They do not give feedback about programs and some are just happy that their child is attending school and getting a report card, according to one participant. Other role players such as parents play a decisive role in giftedness, according to literature (*cf.* 2.2).

Nine participants indicated that parents as well as other family members at times do play a supporting role in their children's lives.

*"Then, **if those parents can financially afford it, they will take their children to the libraries so they can go get books that obviously cater for their level of reading** or they will **buy their children an extra story book**. The parents, basically a few of them, **help to stimulate the learners (1A); they help with the homework** and give **parental assistance when asked (3A)**; maar meestal is dit **ouer broers en susters waar daar nie 'n volwassene is om te help nie (4A)**; the parents, definitely. I mean, with gifted kids you never have a problem with parents. **Parental support is always positive, I have experienced. Older brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, in the case where they stay with uncles and aunts, also support them (4B); yes, they give support tome and the learners. And then even when there are things they don't understand on the homework for learners, they will tell me and ask, even in the class (1C); we do have support from parents, we can do with some more support, but those who really understand that his/her child is gifted, they tend to play along** and they play their part (3 C). I also called his parents in and I spoke to them, because he had to go to high school the next year and I wanted him to go to a high school where he could develop further (4 C); I think the **parents play a very big role in helping the***

*learners. I would say...you know when these children are gifted, what parents can do is to, maybe when they are buying **books** and **playing stuff**. (3D); I don't know at home, but because you can see that child is doing well, **maybe it also starts at home**. You can see it in the homework. The **homework is done properly and accurately every day**. It means that the parents are **also taking part**. (4D)"*

It seems some parents do play an active role in their children's lives as opposed to those mentioned above. Eight participants mentioned that the parents buy their children books and take them on educational trips and some care about their future. It is not only the parents that are involved but also some family members especially those of children without the parents. Within the literature, it is that parents must play a role in the implementation of support in general and also support the teachers when personalized learning plans are implemented (cf. 3.5.3).

Only one participant indicated that parents don't know how to handle their academically gifted child.

Participant 3B said: *"I don't know what to do with my child"*.

It should be taken into consideration that in certain instances parents of academically gifted learners do not know how to support their gifted children. This might be because they cannot identify giftedness in their children and are unable to deal with it.

One participant from one school mentioned that the school uses NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) to support them. According to this participant the ILST plays an important role to organise the NGOs to provide support to both the school and learners.

*"...we don't get any direct information from them and what we normally do is, whatever we can, **we use NGOs or service providers under the ILST**. The ILST runs a program called CAP (community outreach program), we got the calendar of that. So any information that we have, **or NGO's** that we know of, we connect with them, we make use of them (3C)."*

The participant indicated that the Department of Education did not always support the school as it should and then they started involving NGOs to support the school and the learners. They established a community outreach program to try and get the parents to play an active role in the children's lives and improve their skills. This initiative would be very helpful if more schools can approach NGOs for help and form their own programs. The ILST plays a major role in identifying structures in communities that can assist schools. Collaboration with other stakeholders in communities strengthens the efforts of the school to render support to learners at risk.

Two participants from two different schools mentioned that individuals from the community financially supported to academically gifted learners.

*“There are people who give **bursaries** for the academically gifted learners, even though I don't know them by name (2A); there are two learners who get **bursaries** from, Dr. P and Professor C (1D).”*

Bursaries are important, because they might help to fund learners and help them with school necessities. Financial support goes a long way as an external motivation for learners to work harder and to achieve better. It is a very good thing that there are people in school D who are willing to support learners. The learners who do not have the financial means or who come from poor communities, struggle to get education no matter how talented they are.

Seven participants mentioned an aftercare programme in their area that provided support to learners.

*“One aftercare lady comes after school sometimes, but it is mostly for the learners who struggle, not so much for the academically gifted children (1A); some can't even afford it. The aftercare I know of is **Kip**. The bright ones go there, but mostly from other schools. Here, I've never heard of anyone going (2 B); the parents who have money would normally take their children to extra classes or a place like **Kip**. They try to challenge the learners. Also Kumon for extra maths support as well as Master Maths. But other than that, not really (3B); we have some **other aftercares**, but maybe if someone wants to go there, they must pay extra money (1C); we don't have a lot of parents supporting us,*

*but aftercares help (2C); we do encourage parents to make use of external service providers; that can assist. I know one of the external service providers we are currently using is **Kip**, a learning centre, and you know, those are just additional resources we sometimes refer parents to (3C); you know what, our children used to go to **Kip**. I don't know of a child that is going at the moment (2D).*

The above participants highlighted the involvement of aftercare to support the academically gifted learners. Kip (not his real name) was mentioned a few times as the owner of an aftercare centre where academically gifted learners went to for extra support. Aftercares are seen as expensive extras, some parents cannot afford to pay their children. Aftercares mostly assist learners with homework and can stimulate the learners with more educational activities. Some aftercares arrange for educational excursions for learners during holiday times and make an effort to implement educational projects that stimulate learners. The academically gifted learners might really benefit from aftercares, because of the extra stimulation that they might not receive from school. The number of learners attending aftercares is significantly smaller than the classes are at these schools. It is unfortunate that parents have to resort to such measures to help their children as the schools are not doing enough.

- *Poor support from the ILSTs and the DBST*

Thirteen participants mentioned that the ILST was not supportive towards academically gifted learners, but willing to support the learners who were struggling academically:

*“The SBST, the **support they offer are to the learners who struggle (1A); the ILST is mostly there for the learners at risk. The gifted learners are never spoken of. It is only the weaker ones (2A);** op die huidige oomblik is daar meer hulpverlening hoedanigheid aan die “**learners at risk**” as aan die ander. Dis basies waarop die ILST fokus (4A); the **focus is mainly on the weaker learners. In the Foundation Phase, the support from the ILST is minimal. They keep on forcing us to focus all our attention and time on the weaker learners, and it is needed, but what about the gifted ones that need extra support? (1B); we didn't. Unfortunately, we only think of the***

weaker ones, the struggling ones (2B); at this stage, we focus a lot on the learners at risk (4B); actually, as the ILST, we concentrate on the learners with problems. I must be honest with you, we don't really... I think there can be a lot more done for the gifted learners. Because there are so many learners on the learners-at-risk list that we actually concentrate on them (2C); you will find that the ILST is focusing more on the problem areas, learners with special needs. So that is definitely a shortcoming when it comes to making provision for the gifted child (3C); the support is mainly, to deal with the learners who need assistance (4C); we focus more on these learners who need support (1D); no, there isn't something for that (2D); no, there is no role (that the ILST plays in supporting academically gifted learners)(3D); we focus more on the learners at risk because they are the ones who get a lot of attention (4D)."

From the above responses the ILST is concerned about learners at risk and but not for the academically gifted learners. The participants felt that this is a problem that the education system and schools have to address. Furthermore, it is indicated that the Department of Education put pressure on teachers to provide support to learners who perform below average but there is no focus on the gifted learners. They are ignored. This neglect could be due to the fact that people do not see giftedness as a barrier to learning. It only when gifted learners perform badly that they are given the attention they deserve. It could also happen that the ILST itself does not understand giftedness and how to deal with gifted learners. In the literature, the role of the ILST is to support all learners within a school once identified as having barriers (cf. 3.3).

However, there is one participant from school C who indicated that she receives support from the ILST when she needs it.

"When you have a problem that you need support with, they call and have a meeting with you and show how you can support them in class. And when you go to your class, at least you have the back up from them. But it is mostly for the learners who struggle. You must pay attention to those who struggle (1C)"

Even though the participant gets ideas from the ILST for supporting learners, she noted that the support is mainly for the learners at risk. The academically gifted learners are therefore ignored. It is concerning that only one participant indicated receiving support from the ILST for gifted learners. This indicates that academic giftedness learners are perceived as strong enough to deal with their issues on their own. This is not fair to learners.

One participant commented on the challenges that they experienced regarding the DBST

*“And the **challenges we have from the Department, the ISS unit, who is supposed to cater for that need and the admin for it, we are all making use of external service providers instead. The ILST uses the teachers for addressing needs in grey areas instead of the gifted learners. As far as the Department is concerned, programs are diverted to so called disadvantaged communities. The Department plays a silent part in this whole matter (3C)”***

The participant feels that the department puts pressure on the teachers when it comes to support for learners who are not doing well. They do not make provision for the academically gifted learners as much as they make provision for the learners at risk. There are no programs the academically gifted, the gifted education has not yet materialised in South African schools.

THEME 5 POLICIES THAT SUPPORT THE ACADEMICALLY GIFTED

- *Unavailability of documents to support learners*

Upon asking the schools if they had policies that guided the support of academically gifted learners, it became evident that these policies were scarce. Policies are developed by the Department of Basic Education to guide the teachers on executing

their daily tasks. Even though there is an inclusion policy, it does not focus on the academically gifted. The following policies were mentioned:

Five teachers from two different schools indicated that they had knowledge about the SIAS policy that was due for implementation.

*“No, none for academically gifted children, but I know the **new SIAS policy**, we’ve sent 8 of our staff members to where the GDE actually gave them full in-service training on the forms that we are going to **implement in the future** (1A); the only policy in place now, is **SIAS**. That is where they talk about learners who are gifted. **SIAS has not been implemented yet**. In this **SIAS program**, there must be that policy that stipulates that gifted learners must be catered for (2A); the **SIAS training is showing** how to help learners. Only now that **SIAS has been implemented** have we touched on it (3A); no, unfortunately not. Like I said, they are only working on how to give support. We went **on SIAS training where they gave us a booklet** to fill in for the weaker learners, but nothing about gifted learners (2 B); I know that it is going to change soon, because we are **starting with SIAS** (3B).”*

All participants in the above quotes mentioned that SIAS was to be implemented soon. The SIAS training was conducted during the course of the year and teachers had to go to workshops where they spoke about implementation of the policy. According to the participants, the only touches on the subject of giftedness and does not focus on how teachers can support gifted learners. In the literature, we find that SIAS is aimed at identifying barriers to learning and does not focus on the gifted learners (cf. 3.3.4.3).

Fifteen of the participants from all four schools mentioned that there were no policies in their schools that focus on the gifted learners or support for them. The focus is mainly on learners at risk.

*“We have an SBST policy, per say, which focuses on inclusion and inclusion is supposed to cater for all children but we as a school is **not really focusing on the children who do well** (1A); the policies that have been put in place mostly focuses on the learners who struggle, **not the academically gifted learners** (3 A); weet jy, ek sal **nie soseer sê vir die begaafde kind nie, nee***

*(4A); **not that I am aware of.** The policies are mostly in place for the weaker learners (1B); **not for the gifted** (2B); our policy is the ILST policy. It just mentions them, **but the focus is not on them.** It is just a school-based policy (3B); **no, nothing** (4 B); **no** (policies for gifted) (1C); they didn't really; they always say you must give **them a policy yourself.** I didn't really get policies from them (2 C);**notspecifically, no.** We don't have a specific policy that deals with that. Some of these issues that might arise or be found and distributed amongst various different policies, but **not focusing directly on the gifted child him or herself** (3C); **no,** what we do we do as individuals (4 C); We only have the policy concerning behaviour and problems (1 D); **not that I know of** (2 D); **not for that gifted ones** (3D);**not that I know of** (4D).”*

Out of the above responses, we can see that there are no definite policies that have been put in place that focus on gifted learners and their needs. The main focus of policies on inclusive education is on learners at risk. Gifted learners are not regarded as at risk, except when they under perform. All the participants mentioned having other kinds of policies that are put in place at schools, but none of them focus on the academically gifted. The policies that are in place in schools pertain to discipline and to the execution of daily tasks pertaining to the curriculum, but not to gifted learners.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Five themes were identified from the data gathered by means of interviews and drawings. From the above information, I can deduct that teachers are able to differentiate between learners that were academically gifted learners in their classes and those that were not. This differentiation is imperative for the support of these learners. Even though there is no formal system in any of the schools and without formal training teachers tried. Teachers were able to identify the abilities of academically gifted learners from those that were not gifted. Several attributes were mentioned including those that are cognitive and social. However, it was highlighted by participants that these learners were at risk as some were underperforming. It was found that academically gifted learners were mostly supported by teachers in their classrooms through enrichment and additional reading. Extra- curricular activities in the form of music and sport were recommended. Policies guiding

teachers on how to handle and support academically gifted learners are non-existent in schools. The focus in schools is mostly on learners at risk. The ILST plays a role in supporting the learners at risk more than supporting the academically gifted learners. In the next chapter, summaries and recommendations will be made on how to deal with the findings of this research and how to strengthen support for the gifted learner in schools.

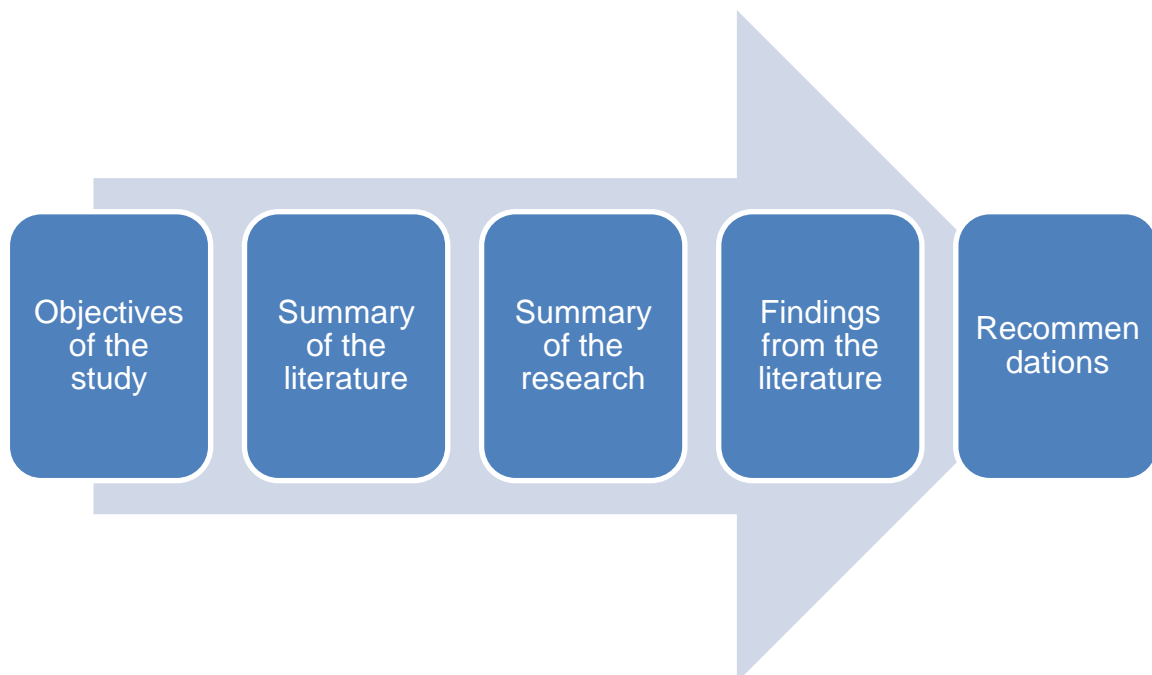
CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5, the data that were collected through interviews and drawings were analysed and interpreted by means of inductive qualitative data analysis. Five themes were identified. The aim and objectives of the study are revisited in this chapter, literature is summarised and the findings of the empirical research presented. Recommendations conclude the chapter. The following figure summarises the content of this chapter.

Figure 18: Summary of chapter 6



6.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES REVISITED

The aim of this study was to explore perceptions regarding academic support for academically gifted learners in selected primary schools in the Johannesburg South District. The following table indicate how the objectives set at the beginning of the study were met.

Table 6. 1: Objectives

Objective 1	Objective addressed	Achieved/ not achieved
To explore the essence of academic giftedness	In chapter 2, the essence of academically gifted learners was elaborated on. The definitions of giftedness were discussed, as well as the types of gifted learners, attributes and risks. In Chapter 5 participants indicated how they conceptualised giftedness	Achieved
To explore academic support rendered to academically gifted learners	In Chapter 3, support for academically gifted learners was discussed.	Achieved
To investigate how gifted learners are identified	In Chapter 5 participants elaborated on their identification methods	Achieved
To investigate the policies that are implemented to guide the support of academically gifted learners by the Institutional Level Support Team.	In Chapter 5, the ILST members from schools were asked about policy documents	Achieved
To make recommendations to the ILST in order to enhance academic support of academically gifted learners.	In Chapter 6, recommendations are made	Achieved

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

Within this section, the literature review is summarised. The intention of the summary is to have a clear outline and to comprehend what the study is about.

6.3.1 Summary of chapter 1

Chapter 1 aimed at introducing the concept of academic giftedness by means of various definitions. The problem statement highlighted problems that academically gifted learners face, such as depression, underachievement and sensitivity, boredom and lack of challenging work. This chapter also mentioned the research methods employed in this study. The initial outline of the study was indicated.

6.3.2 Summary of chapter 2

Chapter 2 focused on the essence of giftedness. The chapter looked into the different definitions of giftedness, types of gifted learners and the behaviour that gifted learners portray. The vulnerabilities and strengths of gifted learners were elaborated on and the three-ring conception of Renzulli was discussed. The reason for discussing giftedness in-depth, was to orientate the reader on the background of the phenomenon of giftedness, in order for the reader to understand why support is needed for learners who might not be seen as at risk because of their high performance in class and the fact that they have a potential to excel.

6.3.3 Summary of chapter 3

Chapter 3 consisted of the support strategies that can be rendered to academically gifted learners. The different definitions of support were outlined in the chapter. The inclusive education system in South Africa was discussed as a background to the chapter. The policies that guide the support of learners at risk were elaborated on. These policies lead to the establishment of the ILSTs that are mandated to be at the forefront in providing support to learners and teachers in schools. The teaching strategies that can be applied in the classroom were discussed. The role players that could be roped in to form collaborations with teachers including the parents and psychologists concluded the chapter.

6.4 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

Within this section, the summary of the research chapters will be conveyed. Chapter 4 pertains to the methodological aspects of the research, whereas chapter 5 focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data.

6.4.1 Summary of chapter 4

The interpretivist paradigm was used within the research. This paradigm considers that people create meaning from their environments (*cf.* 4.2). A qualitative research method (*cf.* 4.3) was used together with the interpretivist paradigm and the phenomenological strategy of enquiry (*cf.* 4.4). The strategy of inquiry complemented the qualitative research method as participants' meanings were sought to be understood.

The sample of teachers for this research was made up of sixteen participants (n=16). This sample included principals from four selected primary schools in the Johannesburg South District as well as ILST co-ordinators and members of the ILST who were all teachers. There were forty learner participants (n=40) who drew pictures about their support needs. The teacher participants were individually interviewed by using semi-structured interviews and the responses were recorded and transcribed. The profiles of schools that participated in this research and those of learners are discussed in this chapter.

After all the transcriptions were made, coding of segments of data began (*cf.* 4.3). After coding, the codes were grouped into categories that were also grouped to form themes and five themes were identified (*cf.* 4.9).

6.4.2 Summary of chapter 5

The profiles of the participants were included first, after which the interpretation and analysis of the coded data followed. Five themes were identified and then cross-referencing was done with the literature. The themes answered questions that were posed in chapter 1, the themes and the research questions they answered are depicted in the table that follows below:

Table 6.2: Themes and research questions

Research questions	Themes
What is the essence of academic giftedness?	Theme 2: Attributes of giftedness Theme 3: Gifted learners at risk
What academic support can be rendered to academically gifted learners?	Theme 4: Support for academically gifted learners
How are gifted learners identified?	Theme: 1 Inadequate methods of identification
What policies are implemented to guide the support of academically gifted learners by the Institutional Level Support Team?	Theme 5: Policies that guide support

6.5 FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL DATA

The data that was gathered yielded the following about the research questions that guided the study.

What is the essence of academic giftedness?

From the data, academically gifted learners are seen as having abilities that are different from their peers such as: good memories, finishing their work faster, understanding work quicker, supportive in class, willingness to work on their own and to help the teachers and peers, with good mathematical ability, and a curiosity and a desire to learn.

There are gifted learners who do not perform well although they have abilities. Several reasons were mentioned such as the bad behaviour being naughty, lack discipline, don't follow class rules, being disruptive and bullying others. The negative behaviour was also attributed to the lack of challenging work, the lack of planning for enrichment, lack of stimulation and that the focus is on the learners at risk instead of the academically gifted learners. These are some of the aspects that teachers have to try to rectify in their teaching.

What academic support can be rendered to academically gifted learners?

Teachers supported the learners in class by providing extra work, extra reading, adapting lesson plans and differentiated instruction through the use of Bloom's taxonomy. Other strategies outside of class included motivation in the form of issuing certificates, have award ceremonies, career guidance as well as extra-curricular activities. Participants also indicated use of other resources such as technology, educational games and libraries. Other stakeholders that provided support were teachers' unions who organised workshops, parents also played a support role in some schools by paying for their children to attend after care. Community members rewarded learners with bursaries.

There was not much support from the ILST as a committee except to focus on learners with learning barriers and involving the NGOs.

How are gifted learners identified?

The participants identified the academically gifted learners in their classrooms by using observations and by looking at scholastic results. They mentioned certain attributes of gifted learners such as their ability to show more insight into their work and that they excel in all learning areas. They are very active in class, but can also be quiet introverts. They show insight into class discussions and can formulate words before others. They make it feel as if it is not teacher centred learning, because they participate in class.

What policies are implemented to guide the support of academically gifted learners by the Institutional Level Support Team?

Policies such as WP6 and SIAS are implemented by the DoE with the focus on inclusive education; all participating schools were having these policies. Teachers

were being trained on the SIAS policy. There is however, no policies that address directly the challenges of academically gifted learners, and the two policies were not adjusted to accommodate these learners.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF FINDINGS

Identification of academically gifted learners

Before a support strategy can be implemented, it is necessary to identify the academically gifted learners first. None of the schools had a formal identification method and a suggestion would be to implement a formal identification tool in order to identify academically gifted learners. A formal checklist can be drawn up and used when observing gifted learners. This checklist must include the cognitive, emotional and intellectual abilities of a learner, amongst others. All areas of development must be considered.

To avoid labelling learners or discriminating against other learners teachers should undergo training. The same way teachers are trained to identify learners with learning barriers; the issue of the gifted learners should also take a centre stage. There must be a focus on gifted education; this should not only be on paper.

Support for academically gifted learners

The teachers seem to have ways of supporting the academically gifted learners in their classes, but this is not enough, it needs to be strengthened so that it is not just done by few individual on a voluntary basis. The Department of Education has to prioritise the academic support of academically gifted learners by providing teachers with additional material for enrichment. The learning material must be age appropriate.

Only two of the schools had a functioning library and the other two did not even have a media centre. It would be beneficial if schools can have libraries with better, recent resources. Libraries are expensive and the challenges with setting them up are the shortage of teacher librarians. Parents who are not employed can be requested to assist. These parents can be trained and hired as librarians and paid a stipend. A cluster of schools can have one qualified librarian who can work as an overseer who supervises and monitors activities in these libraries. These libraries can have few

computers that are connected to internet for research purposes. Learners can take turns access the library. Learners must also be taught to use their cell phones for educational purposes. Learners can volunteer to be library monitors; this would give gifted learners an opportunity to sharpen their leadership skills.

Pull-out classes can be established where the learners can go to once a week in order to experience new learning content at an advanced level. As learners with barriers have remedial classes and teachers attend to them on an individual basis, such can be done also for the gifted. This would mean that the teacher training should also pay attention to producing teachers who are able to support gifted learners. The ILST members also need training in order for them to be able to support teachers and provide them with the necessary information and resources they need.

One participant mentioned that an awareness day can be held for the academically gifted. This might be done in conjunction with all stakeholders in the schools. Parents and community members need to be aware of such information. Parents can only support their children when they are equipped with the necessary information.

Policies guiding support

None of the schools had a policy that guided the implementation of the support for gifted learners. The principal, together with the School Management Team, School Governing Body and the ILST, must draw up a formal policy with identification methods, areas of need and support that can be rendered. This policy must be adopted by the Governing Body and can be implemented in the school thereafter.

6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations can be made for follow-up research:

- A detailed look at how policies can be drawn up that will be effective for rendering support for academically gifted learners.
- A study can be conducted on sustainable support programs for academically gifted learners.

6.8 CONCLUSION

In this study, the perceptions of academic support for academically gifted learners were explored. This investigation started with the rationale and the problem statement. When I started with the literature review on the essence of giftedness I was interested to understand how gifted education is dealt with in other countries. I found out there are differences in how it is implemented. For instance, learners are not tested for IQ in South Africa and checklists are not used. This to me meant that instead of South African education adapting to global trend regarding gifted education, it has to make traditional methods of identification effective. How do we identify gifted learners as teachers without labelling them remains an area of enquiry. However, I am more knowledgeable now than I was when I started with this research. This study opened my eyes to a lot of things that I was overlooking as a foundation phase teacher. I am going back to my class equipped with this knowledge, and also with a positive perception on the importance of identifying learners in order for them to be supported. I am hoping that the findings in this research help teachers in South African public schools. I am hoping to publish the results and continue talking about these issues in our gatherings and workshops.

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Addendum A
Permission from GDE



GAUTENG PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference no. D2016 / 369 A
Enquiries: Diane Bunting 011 843 6503

GDE AMENDED RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	15 January 2016
Validity of Research Approval:	8 February 2016 to 30 September 2016
Previous GDE Research Approval letter reference number	D2016 / 056 dated 30 April 2015
Name of Researcher:	Westenberg N.
Address of Researcher:	12 Manie Steyn Street; Meyerton; 1960
Telephone / Fax Numbers:	079 038 7221
Email address:	nickywestenberg@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Exploring perceptions regarding academic support for academically gifted children
Number and type of schools:	FOUR Primary Schools
District/s/HO	Johannesburg South

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. However participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned, the Principal/s and the chairperson/s of the School Governing Body (SGB,) must be presented with a copy of this letter.
2. The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and co-operation of the GDE District officials, principals, SGBs, teachers, parents and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid;

David Makhado
2016/01/17

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management ER&KM)

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpp.gov.za

3. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal and/or Director must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
4. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded by the end of the THIRD quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
5. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
6. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written consent from the SGB/s; principal/s, educator/s, parents and learners, as applicable, before commencing with research.
7. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilizing his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institution/s, staff and/or the office/s visited for supplying such resources.
8. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research title, report or summary.
9. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management, with electronic copies of the Research Report, Thesis, Dissertation as well as a Research Summary (on the GDE Summary template).
10. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
11. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director/s and school/s concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

[Handwritten signature]

Dr David Makhado

Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 2016/01/17

Addendum B
Ethics certificate



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRWA
NGORWES-UNIVERSITEIT

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: (018) 299-4800
Faks: (018) 299-4810
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

**Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory
Committee**

Tel: +27 18 299 4849
Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF PROJECT

Based on approval by Humanities and Health Research Ethics Committee (HHREC), the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IRERC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-IRERC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: Exploring perceptions regarding academic support for academically gifted learners.	
Project Leader: N Westenberg	
Ethics number:	N W U - H S - 2 0 1 5 - 0 1 0 1
Approval date: 2015-10-10	Expiry date: 2018-10-10
Category:	N/A

Special conditions of the approval (if any): None

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-IRERC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project,
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the NWU-IRERC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-IRERC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-IRERC retains the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the NWU-IRERC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
 - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

The IRERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRERC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Linda du Plessis

Digitally signed by Linda du Plessis
DN: cn=Linda du Plessis, o=IRERC,
email=Linda.DuPlessis@nwu.ac.za,
c=ZA
Date: 2015.10.08 08:15:27 +0200

Prof Linda du Plessis

Chair NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC)

Addendum C
Consent form

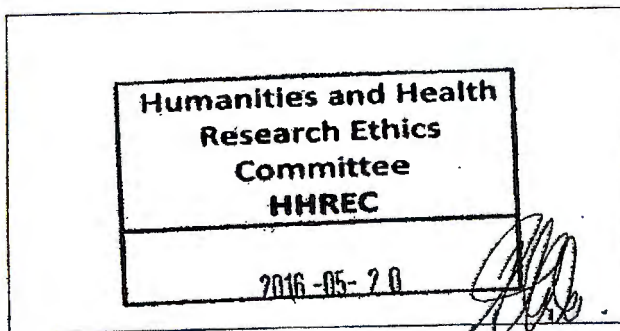


NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
VAAL TRIANGLE CAMPUS

PO Box 1174, Vanderbijlpark
South Africa, 1900

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

DATE 10 October 2015



**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM FOR
INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS
IN THE JOHANNESBURG SOUTH SCHOOL DISTRICT.**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS REGARDING
ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR ACADEMICALLY GIFTED LEARNERS.**

REFERENCE NUMBERS:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Ms. N. Westenberg

ADDRESS: 12 Manie Steyn Street Meyerton 1960

CONTACT NUMBER: 079 038 7221

You are being invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my Masters studies that focuses on exploring perceptions regarding academic support for academically gifted learners. I will look into how academically gifted learners are supported by Institutional Level Support Team members in primary schools. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

1

This study has been approved by the **Humanities and Health Research Ethics Committee (HHREC) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University (NWU-HS-2015-0101)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the International Declaration of Helsinki and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that we (the researchers) are conducting research in an ethical manner.

What is this research study all about?

- *This study will be conducted in four selected primary schools in the Johannesburg South school District. Johannesburg South District has been chosen for convenience and the four primary schools have been selected from a list obtained from District on a random basis. The research data gathering process will involve individual semi structured interviews and documents. These documents will include existing policy documents that inform the researcher about support rendered to academically gifted learners in schools and minutes of meetings held with regards to supporting learners.*
 - *The researcher is being supervised throughout the study especially regarding interviews by two study leaders..*
 - *Approximately sixteen (16) participants will be included in this study. Because this is a qualitative study, follow up interviews might be conducted in order to get clarity.*
 - *The aim of this research is:*
 - *to explore perceptions regarding academic support for academically gifted learners in selected primary schools in the Johannesburg South District*
 - *The objectives are:*
 - to explore how academic giftedness is conceptualised in the literature;
 - to explore academic support rendered to academically gifted learners;
 - to determine the support the Institutional Level Support Team provides to academically gifted learners;
 - to determine policies guiding academic support for academically gifted learners;
 - to investigate the implementation of policies guiding the support of academically gifted learners by the Institutional Level Support Team; and
 - to make recommendations to the Institutional Level Support Team in order to enhance academic support of academically gifted learners.

Why have you been invited to participate?

- *You have been invited to participate because you are an ILST member of a selected primary school in the Johannesburg South district.*
- *You have also complied with some of the following inclusion criteria:*
 - *You are an educator who is an ILST member at a selected primary school in the Johannesburg South district*
 - *You are a referring educator.*
 - *You are a principal therefore, an ex-officio member of the ILST.*
 - *You are the co-ordinator of the ILST*

- You will be excluded if you are not a member of the ILST or a principal as ex-officio member of the ILST.

What will your responsibilities be?

- You will be expected to answer the questions as truthfully as possible and be on time for the scheduled interviews.
- The interviews will take about 1 hour and you will be expected to have no other commitments during the time of the interview.
- The interviews will not be conducted during school hours but after school.
- You will have to decide on the venue for the interview before the time (it can be your class, or a boardroom or any other room that is private.)
- If there is a need for a follow up interview you will be contacted to clarify some of the information that is not clear.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

- Your participation will hold no direct benefit for you
- The indirect benefits for you as a participant will probably be some insight into giving support for gifted learners that can help educators.

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research and how will these be managed?

- The risks in this study, and how these will be managed, are summarised in the table below:

<i>Probable/possible risks/discomforts</i>	<i>Strategies to minimize risk/discomfort</i>
Because you will be interviewed for about an hour after school, some tiredness might occur Intrusion into the school might be considered a risk, because documents will be under scrutiny. The ILST might feel at risk due to intrusion of the school.	A break can be arranged in order to minimize tiredness if need be Refreshments will be given afterwards Confidentiality will be maintained at all times and any information gathered for the purposes of the study will remain private and confidential. Nothing recorded during the interviews will be shared.

- However, the benefits (as noted above) outweigh the risk.

Who will have access to the data?

- Anonymity (that is, in no way will your results be linked to your identity) will be ensured by giving you a pseudonym and not using your name in any way and by alphabetising the participating schools. The consent form that you have filled in will not be stored with the data generated. Confidentiality (that is, I/we assure you that we will protect the information we have about you) will be ensured by not speaking to anyone about the data captured or any information that you have given to us, except promoters and the coder in the research.

- *Reporting of findings will not include your names or the names of the participating schools.*
- *Only the researcher, the coder and study leaders will have access to the information generated during the research. Data will be kept safe and secure, hard copies and the memory card used during data capturing will be locked in cupboards in the researcher's office and electronic data will be password protected.*
- *Audio-recorded data will be transcribed by me (i.e., I will not talk to anyone about any aspect of the data except my study leaders). As soon as data has been transcribed the memory card will be kept safe in a locked cupboard in the supervisor's office.*
- *Data will be stored for a minimum of five (5) years at the North West University.*

What will happen to the data?

The data from this study will be reported in the following ways: It will be used in a Master's dissertation for postgraduate studies and be published in an article and the findings might be presented in a conference.

In all the reporting, you will not be personally identified. This means that the reporting will not include your name and the name of your school or any details that might identify you or your school.

Will you be paid/compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

No, you will not be paid/compensated to take part in the study, but you will benefit indirectly through gaining understanding on how to support learners that are academically gifted. There will be no costs involved in participating in the research.

How will you know about the findings?

- The general findings of the research will be shared with you by the means that you will have chosen, whether through e-mail, mail or personal delivery of the research findings to you. Please fill in your details in order to receive the findings when the research has been completed.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Ms. Nicolette Westenberg at 079 038 7221 or nickywestenberg@gmail.com if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.
- You can contact the study leaders, Dr. S. Kwatubana at 016 910 3062 or Dr. Makhalemele on 016 910 3075.
- You can contact the chair of the Humanities and Health Research Ethics Committee (Prof Tumi Khumalo) at 016 910 3397 or Linda.theron@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher. You can also contact, the co-chair, Prof Werner Nell (016 910 3727 or Tumi.khumalo@nwu.ac.za). You can leave a message for either Tumi or Werner or with Ms Daleen Claasens (016 910 3441)
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in a research study entitled: **Exploring perceptions regarding academic support for academically gifted learners.**

I declare that:

- I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I understand that what I contribute what I say could be reproduced publically and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....
Signature of participant

.....
Signature of witness

- You may contact me again Yes No
- I would like a summary of the findings of this research Yes No

The best way to reach me is:

Name & Surname: _____

Postal Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

In case the above details change, please contact the following person who knows me well and who does not live with me and who will help you to contact me:

Name & Surname: _____

Phone/ Cell Phone Number /Email: _____

Declaration by person obtaining consent

I (*name*) declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use a interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....
Signature of person obtaining consent

.....
Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher

I (*name*) declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use a interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....
Signature of researcher

.....
Signature of witness

Addendum D
Interview schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS REGARDING ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR ACADEMICALLY GIFTED LEARNERS.

1. Please tell me about any academically gifted learner or learners that you have taught in your life. What characteristics stand out about them and how did you support them when they were in your class?
2. Please elaborate on programs that have been put in place by the school as institution to support these academically gifted learners?
3. What is the role of the Institutional Level Support Team on supporting educators who work with academically gifted learners?
4. What type of problems do you experience with academically gifted learners in school?
5. Please elaborate on policies that are put in place to support academically gifted learners in the school
6. Are there any workshops given to ILST members on how to support gifted learners by the Department of Education? Please elaborate?
7. Who are the other role players who support academically gifted learners within or outside of school and how do they support the academically gifted learners?

Addendum E
Transcripts

Transcriptions

School A

Participant 1 A. Principal. Male. Pseudonym: Mr. Visser

Interviewer: Please tell me about any academically gifted learners that you have taught in your career. What characteristics stand out about them and how did you support them when they were in your class?

Mr. Visser: When I think of my previous school, because at *** I haven't really come across many gifted children. Especially in my Maths and Science classes, I gave them some extra work to do and we were lucky at ### primary that Clever, some call it Cleaver, but it is C-l-e-v-e-r from Pretoria, you could actually purchase a set of worksheets and what was nice about these worksheets is you have a memorandum, so you could get the children to mark them and to stimulate and motivate the learners, I had, almost like the Grade 1's and 2's, I had a star chart, a class list and a bar graph, I coloured it in as they completed the worksheets and it was this competition to see who was able to do the most worksheets. In the science class, I gave the stronger ones the opportunity to go and do research about the experiment and I used them to actually demonstrate the experiment to the rest of the children and they were almost running around trying to get that position. In the science lab, I had a living science lab. I had an angora rabbit, a hamster, a hot water fish-tank, I had a cold water fish tank, I had a pet rat and at one stage I even had a hamster there. Maybe I said that too. Where I gave the children who were good academically inclined children, the opportunity to take the animals home over the weekend and they were also queuing up. Apart from that, I used them, but very minimalistically, I used them to do some peer teaching. So if there were children who had difficulty with a specific sum or calculation or experiment, I let them explain the work to their friends, which I found very effective, because if they learn from their friends, they hear it from another person and they almost pay better attention than to the teacher.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. My second question is to please elaborate on any programs that have been put in place in your current school that you know of in the school that you are teaching in now. Do you have any programs at the moment?

Mr. Visser: The only programs that we should have or may have or could have is a short program were the staff members will ask the children to do additional reading and I hope it isn't to clean the classroom because they finish before the time and so forth (laughs). I know that some of the teachers actually give positive points to the children that forms part of the disciplinary system. If they've completed work before the time. But there is nothing substantial, definitely not generated into policy, that we as a school do. It will be individual teachers who have taken the initiative to do that.

Interviewer: Thank you, Sir. What is the role of the Institutional Level Support Team on supporting the learners and the teachers who work with the learners? Do they play a role?

Mr. Visser: If you talk about the IDSO's...

Interviewer: The ILST...

Mr. Visser: It is the Institutional Development and support, I would rather say, it is almost zero...

Interviewer: Almost zero? I mean, the Institutional Level Support Team, the School Based Support Team.

Mr. Visser: The SBST, the support they offer are to the learners who struggle.

Interviewer: So there is no support for the learners who are academically inclined from the SBST?

Mr. Visser: Not for the stronger learners at our specific school, because there are 20/43 failing. There is definitely an over emphasis on the weaker learners.

Interviewer: What type of problems do you experience with academically gifted learners in school, if you see any problems with them?

Mr. Visser: Again, from my previous school, your child that is fidgeting and seems to be bored, perhaps the child is finished with the work first and they're not challenged enough, so that's why they could, and I'm going to use the term, could even start "playing up". They are not challenged enough by what they have in front of them.

Interviewer: Do you find that they come to the principal's office more often when they start acting up like you say?

Mr. Visser: As a school, and on the whole, if I think that we have 986 children, I never see more than 3 children throughout the course of the term. So that tells me that the staff, and the children (laughs), are behaving well. Or the staff are able to contain the children in class. The extreme cases are socio-economical and not so much academical.

Interviewer: Are there any policies in place? I have spoken to you earlier about the policies, but please elaborate on that?

Mr. Visser: We have an SBST policy, per say, which focuses on Inclusion and Inclusion is supposed to cater for all children, but as I have said previously, I know that in our school, because the emphasis is so much on the weaker learner, because there is about 50 % of the learners in all the classes where they are not doing well, emphasis is on uplifting the learners who struggle academically and not really focusing on the children who do well.

Interviewer: Are there any workshops given to the ILST members by the D.o.E or any other support?

Mr. Visser: No, none for academically gifted children, but I know the new SIAS policy, we've sent 8 of our staff members over a period of 16 weeks, every second Saturday, where the GDE actually gave them full In Service Training on the forms that we are going to implement in the future. And if I may give my own opinion, the forms is a booklet which I feel might even discourage staff members from reporting cases.

Interviewer: That's fine, I understand that. So nothing about giftedness, focus is more on the learners that struggle?

Mr. Visser: That's right.

Interviewer: Who are the other role players that support academically gifted learners that you know of? Maybe the parents or aftercares?

Mr. Visser: what I've certainly seen in the past, is that you will find learners who find their readers in two weeks instead of taking the whole term. Then, if those parents can financially afford it, they will take their children to the libraries so they can go get books that obviously caters for their level of reading or they will buy their children an extra story book.

Interviewer: Okay, so the parents are extra role players?

Mr. Visser: The parents, basically a few of them, help to stimulate the learners.

Interviewer: Anyone else you can think of?

Mr. Visser: One aftercare lady comes after school sometimes, but it is mostly for the learners who struggle, not so much for the academically gifted children.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, sir. That is all I wanted to ask. I really appreciate it.

*** current school name

previous school name

Not mentioned due to confidentiality.

Participant 2 School A

Female ILST member Pseudonym: Mrs. Cele

Interviewer: Please tell me about any academically gifted learners that you have taught in your life. What characteristics stand out about them and how did you support them when they were in your class?

Mrs. Cele: There are children who love to do work, who love to work with the teacher, they don't give the teacher a problem, they will do their work, and when they are done with what they are doing, they will find something else to do. I would support them by giving them enrichment and to assist other children.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. Please elaborate on programs that have been put in place by the school as institution to support these academically gifted learners.

Mrs. Cele: I don't know of any, but the workshops that we go to, are always emphasising work for the gifted and work for those slow ones. They emphasise. Even the lesson plans that we make is for the gifted child and for the slow learner.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. What is the role of the ILST when supporting academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Cele: The ILST is mostly there for the slower learners. The gifted learners are never spoken of (Laughs). It is only the slow ones.

Interviewer: Is there anything you can say about the support?

Mrs. Cele: Not at that level.

Interviewer: What type of problems do you experience with academically gifted learners in the school or in your class that you can tell me about?

Mrs. Cele: Usually the gifted learners don't give a lot of problems.

Interviewer: Do they behave themselves most of the time?

Mrs. Cele: They are well behaved.

Interviewer: Do they never act out?

Mrs. Cele: No.

Interviewer: Please elaborate on any policies that have been put in place to support these gifted learners?

Mrs. Cele: The only policies that are being put in place now, is when we went for SIAS. There is where they talk about learners who are gifted. SIAS has not been implemented yet.

Interviewer: Are there any workshops given to the ILST members from the D.o.E that speak to academic giftedness?

Mrs. Cele: Not specifically for the gifted children. They are just included in workshops, but they are not focused on.

Interviewer: Who are the other role players that support academically gifted learners and how do they support them?

Mrs. Cele: There are people who give bursaries, even though I don't know them by name, for the academically gifted learners.

Interviewer: Are there any libraries around?

Mrs. Cele: There is a library down there, children always go there. It is close to the school, but not in the school grounds. Here we have a library, but there isn't up to date books. We wish we could have up to date books so the children don't have to cross the road and go out there.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, mam. I appreciate your time.

Participant 3

Female. ILST member. Pseudonym: Mrs. Mtethwa

Interviewer: Please tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have had in your teaching career and what characteristics stand out about them? How did you support them when they were in your class?

Mrs. Mtethwa: There are Grade 1's that know their sounds and phonics and are able to know the words you are yet to teach.

Interviewer: Okay, so they are very forward?

Mrs Mtethwa: Very forward, yes. (laughs)

Interviewer: What else do you see them do when they are done?

Mrs. Mtethwa: They go and disturb others.

Interviewer: So they start reading earlier than the others?

Mrs. Mtethwa: Yes, and they will start saying the sounds p-o-t before the lessons.

Interviewer: How did you support them?

Mrs. Mtethwa: I gave them additional reading to do and a slightly higher level than the other learners.

Interviewer: Are there any programs that have been put in place by the school to support the academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Mtethwa: The SIAS training is showing how to help learners.

Interviewer: Does it help the gifted learners?

Mrs. Mtethwa: It touches on the support, but it focuses on the learners that struggle.

Interviewer: What is the role of the ILST to support the educators who work with gifted learners?

Mrs. Mtethwa: If I have any challenges, I speak to the ILST and we help each other get ideas on how to help the child.

Interviewer: Do they help you physically or bring in help from outside?

Mrs. Mtethwa: They don't come and help. They just give ideas that can be implemented in class. I will take the ideas and implement them.

Interviewer: Have you ever asked for support with an academically gifted learner?

Mrs. Mtethwa: No.

Interviewer: What type of problems have you ever experienced with academically gifted learners in school? Any problems?

Mrs. Mtethwa: No, most of them are well behaved.

Interviewer: So you don't find that they have problems?

Mrs. Mtethwa: They do disturb learners when they are done.

Interviewer: Please elaborate on any policies that have been put in place to support these academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Mtethwa: The policies that have been put in place mostly focuses on the learners who struggle, not the academically gifted learners. Only now that SIAS has been implemented have we touched on it.

Interviewer: What do you feel can be done by the ILST as such to put more focus on academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Mtethwa: I think more focus must be given to them. If we could make our library functional, then they can go borrow books to learn to read after they are done with their work.

Interviewer: So is the library not functioning at the moment?

Mrs. Mtethwa: No, we don't have any library.

Interviewer: Did you use to have one?

Mrs. Mtethwa: Not in a while.

Interviewer: Anything else you think can be done for them?

Mrs. Mtethwa: Enrichment can be done.

Interviewer: Are there any other role players that you can identify that support academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Mtethwa: Yes, the parents.

Interviewer: What do the parents do?

Mrs. Mtethwa: They help with the homework and give parental assistance when asked.

Interviewer: Anyone else?

Mrs. Mtethwa: The aftercare centres assist them.

Interviewer: How do they assist?

Mrs. Mtethwa: Especially in grade 1, prewriting must be done. Then tracing and then writing independently. Some after cares assist with that.

Interviewer: Anything else you can think of that they can be assisted with or anything else you can tell me about the academically gifted learner from your past experience?

Mrs. Mtethwa: Maybe they can be taken to the libraries as well to go and read on their own or borrow books. The local library.

Interviewer: Is the local library far from here?

Mrs. Mtethwa: No, it isn't far.

Interviewer: Anything else you'd like to share with me?

Mrs. Mtethwa: No, nothing comes to mind.

Interviewer: Thank you very much mam.

Participant 4

Female ILST member pseudonym: Mrs. van der Merwe

Interview transcribed verbatim

Interviewer: Thank you for seeing me, mam. The first question I would like to ask you is to please tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have taught in your career and how did you support them?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Ek het 'n... kan ek maar Afrikaans praat?...seun gehad wat bo die ander kinders was, veral met Wiskunde was hy verskriklik baie sterk. Hy het konsepte net so vinnig gesnap en sy leesvlak en sy sinne wat hy geskryf het, was heelwat beter as die ander kinders in die klas s'n en die spelfoute was minder. Sy werk was amper foutloos. Sy mondelinge werk en woordeskat was baie goed in vergelyking met die ander kinders in die klas. Maar dan moet ek ook sê, al het hy kop en skouers bo die ander vir my uitgestaan, kan dit ook wees omdat hy 'n blanke, Engels sprekende kind was wat uit 'n Engels sprekende huis gekom het. Hy was een van twee. Hulle het die voorreg gehad om in hulle moedertaal onderrig te word. Die ander kinders se huistaal is nie Engels nie. Dit was hulle addisionele taal en Afrikaans was hulle derde taal. Dit maak 'n verskil om in mens se eie taal te leer en te presteer.

Interviewer: Het u enigsens gevoel u moes hom ondersteuning gee? Hoe het u dit gedoen?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Ja, met hom moes ek gereëld en op 'n daaglikse basis vir hom ekstra werk gereed hê. Ek het meesete van die tyd ondervind as ek vir hulle werk gegee het, het van die kinders die datum en opskrif geskryf, dan is sy werk al klaar. Dan moes ek vir hom addisionele take en werkkaarte gee om hom besig te kon hou terwyl die kinders werk. Ek het ook in my klas heelwat boekies beskikbaar gehad en as hy nie meer 'n werkkaart wou doen nie, het ek vir hom 'n boekie laat kies om te lees.

Interviewer: Is daar enige programme wat deur die skool in plek gestel is om die begaafde leerders te help?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Nee.

Interviewer: Hoekom dink u is dit so? Wat is die rede?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Weet jy, as ek jou eerlik moet sê, as mens 'n klas van 40 het, is die grootste deel van die klas kinders wat sukkel en kinders wat gemotiveer moet word en ons moet hulp verleen aan daardie kinders. Ons is regtig in 'n minder bevoorregte area waar die kinders in die eerste plek baie min stimulasie kry by die huis voor skool en onbetrokkenheid van ouers wat ook die kinders se leervermoë en akademiese prestasie baie negatief beïnvloed, want die hulp wat hulle moet kry by die huis omdat hulle juis sukkel is bitter min. Dis die grootste tendens by die skool. Die gevalle waar daar werklik ouer betrokkenheid is, is baie min. maar jy kan ook sien dat die kinders wat meer hulp kry, meer uitstuig. Hulle voel ook meer geborge by die huis as gevolg van ondersteuning.

Interviewer: Wat is die rol wat die ILST speel in verband met ondersteuning?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Op die huidige oomblik is daar meer hulpverlening hoedanigheid aan die "learners at risk" as aan die ander. Dis basies waarop die ILST fokus.

Interviewer: So daar is nie werklik hulpverlening aan hulle nie?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Nee, hulle is baie min in die skool, as daar sulke gevalle is. Die meeste is een of twee in die klas. Die fokus op hulle is baie min.

Interviewer: Het u al enige problem ondervind met 'n akademiese begaafde leerder? In die skool of in die klas.

Mrs. van der Merwe: Ek kan nie sê dat ek met hom 'n probleem gehad het nie, en ek het hom regtig besig gehou en hom regtig nie 'n kans gegee om probleme te gee nie.

Interviewer: Enige ander in u loopbaan wat dalk het?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Die kinders waarvan ek weet, ek weet dis uit jou studie uit, maar die leerders wat meestal gedragsprobleme gee is die swakker leerder omdat hy nie kan cope met die werk nie en hy sit met die boek voor home n jy probeer die kind help, maar dis asof hy nie die intelligensie vermoë het om te kan cope nie. Hy sal eerder potlode rond gooi en wil rondloop omdat hy nie kan nie.

Interviewer: So daar is geen problem met akademiese begaafde leerders nie?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Nee, nie wat ek ondervind nie.

Interviewer: Is daar enige beleide wat in plek gestel is om die akademiese begaafde leerders te help?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Weet jy, ek sal nie soseer sê vir die begaafde kind nie, nee. Maar ons het wel in die dissiplinêre leers, het ons 'n demerit form waar hulle demerits kry vir swak gedrag. Ons het ook 'n meriete vorm waar hulle merietes kan kry vir goeie gedrag en vir goeie werk en akademiese prestasie waar hulle meriete punte kan opbou.

Interviewer: So daar is geen beleide nie?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Nee.

Interviewer: Is daar enige werksinkels wat aangebied word deur die Onderwys Departement wat fokus op die akademiese begaafde leerders?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Daar is van die SAOU, die vakbond. Daar is nou werksinkels wat aangebied word op die program oor akademiese begaafdheid, maar ongelukkig is dit baie ver, in Garsfontein in Pretoria in die SAOU se ouditorium daar.

Interviewer: So dis spesifiek gefokus op die akademiese begaafdes? Maar van die GDE glad nie? Net die unies? Wat is die kostes daaraan verbonde?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Vir SAOU lede, dit wissel van werksinkel na werksinkel, is dit gewoonlik R75, maar vir nie-lede is dit dubbel die bedrag.

Interviewer: So die GDE is meer gefokus op die “learners at risk”?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Ja, dis reg.

Interviewer: is daar enige rolspelers wat akademiese begaafde leerders help? Binne die skool of buite die skool waarvan u weet?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Weet jy, wat nogal positief is, is Mnr. D wat nou hier begin het. Hy het nou begin met skaak, wat baie stimulerend is vir die bou van kinders se intelligensie. Dan het ons ook kultuur en debatvoering end it is ook beskikbaar wat ook kinders afrig en watook goed is vir hulle debatvoering en redenasie vermoë.

Interviewer: Enige ander rolspelers buite die skool? Byvoorbeeld die ouers?

Mrs. van der Merwe: As jy kyk na die rol van die ouers, die klein persentasie van ouers in die klas , en hulle is bitter min, mens kry van hulle wat help met die huiswerk, maar meestal is dit ouer broers en susters waar daar nie ’n volwassene is om te help nie.

Interviewer: Is daar enige nasorgsentrums? Het u ’n idee oor enige?

Mrs van der Merwe: Ons het briewe uitgestuur om te kyk of daar van die ouers se kant af belangstelling is in die nasorg. Maar die briefies wat ons terug gekry het wys min belangstelling. Omdat die ekonomiese omstandighede van ons ouers so swak is, stel hulle nie belang as hulle sien hulle moet betaal nie. Hulle sal eerder sien dat die kinders rond hardloop in die strate en sonder toesig is. Ons het probeer om een op die been te bring, ek was ook een van die onderwysers wat gehelp het, maar die persentasie van die kinders wat betaal het, was bitter min. Ons het elke middag hulle van kos voorsien. Omdat die ouers nie betaal het nie, moes ons dit los. Dit het heeltemal op ’n verlies uitgewerk. Die skool moes op die oueinde van die dag sluit.

Interviewer: Enige biblioteke?

Mrs. van der Merwe: Daar is ’n bibloteek, maar ek was nog nie daar nie. Dis naby aan die polisie stasie. Ons het nie ’n biblioteek personeellid hier by die skool nie.

Interviewer: Baie dankie vir u tyd. Ek waardeer dit.

School B

Participant 1 B

Female

ILST Member

Pseudonym: Mrs. James

Interviewer: Please tell me about any academically gifted learners you have had in your school. How did you support them and what stands out about them?

Mrs. James: If I think of one now, it is D.N. He is in grade 3 now. He is definitely gifted. He is verbally strong. Whenever written work is done, he is fast. He understands concepts, you explain it to him once and he gets it. I'm not saying others are not gifted, but he is one of those easy learners. He is definitely gifted.

Interviewer: How did you support him in class?

Mrs. James: There is always extra work in class, I have Grade 2 books. If I find something interesting, like a block buster or a numeracy problem, I will give it to him to figure out. If you give them challenging things, they loved it. They were not out of the ordinary. They can become quite naughty if they're not being stimulated. I'm not saying other teachers are not... I'm just saying this child now does things, and if I hear how he performed in a test, I wonder what is going on. He is supposed to be one of the top pupils and he doesn't do well.

Interviewer: Please elaborate on any programs that have been put in place by the school to support the gifted learners?

Mrs. James: At this stage, we don't have a program, although we are giving enrichment work to the children.

Interviewer: So no formal programs?

Mrs. James: No, there should be, but the focus is on the weaker ones all the time. No focus on the academically gifted. Classes are very big. The children are very weak and then there are those that are gifted, if you can say, that are left behind.

Interviewer: I understand, it is a problem. What is the role that the ILST plays in supporting these learners and the teachers who work with them?

Mrs. James: The focus is mainly on the weaker learners. In the Foundation Phase, the support from the ILST is minimal. I don't know if there is something else in the other phase. We have spoken about this before, we even went to District. They keep on forcing us to focus all our attention and time on the weaker learners, and it is needed, but what about the gifted ones that need extra support? They say: "do what you can do, do what you can do." But they force us to only focus on the weak ones. It is very frustrating.

Interviewer: What type of problems do you experience with academically gifted learners? Do they act out sometimes?

Mrs. James: Both learners I can think of can be a bit of a bully. Not a severe bully, but can lash out and be a bit physical with the others. They challenge you and sash

you out. They can be a bit arrogant, because they know they are smart. They try to get away with things.

Interviewer: Are there any policies that have been put in place by the school or GDE that are for the academically gifted learners?

Mrs. James: Not that I am aware of. The policies are mostly in place for the weaker learners. The discipline policies are also in place.

Interviewer: Are there any workshops that are given to the ILST members with regards to academically gifted learners from the Department?

Mrs. James: No, not that I have ever...but I must say I have seen, but when it comes out it is fully booked. I think I've seen it once or twice.

Interviewer: Was it from the GDE or from the Unions?

Mrs. James: It was from the unions. I could be incorrect. I am not 100% sure.

Interviewer: Are there any other role players inside or outside of school that support academically gifted learners that you are aware of?

Mrs. James: I know there is a program that is running, but the other educator can tell you about it.

Interviewer: What about the parents? Do they take them to extra classes?

Mrs. James: No.

Interviewer: How about the library?

Mrs. James: It is functional, but also serves as a classroom. To me, it should have just been a library. The learner I knew went to get books in grade 1 and 2.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Mrs. James: We are so focused on the weaker ones... I am glad you're doing this.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. And for your time as well.

Participant 2 B

Female ILST member Pseudonym: Mrs. Jackson

Interviewer: Mam, my first question to you is to please tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have taught in your teaching career. What

characteristics stand out about them and how did you support them when they were in your class?

Mrs. Jackson: To be honest, I never came across a gifted learner. A bright learner, yes, but not gifted.

Interviewer: What characteristics would you say they have?

Mrs. Jackson: They are quick to calculate mentally, their general knowledge is good, if you ask a question, they don't think about it. They are spontaneous.

Interviewer: And how did you support them in your class. Say for example they were finished with their work, how would you support them?

Mrs. Jackson: To be very honest, I don't really support them, but I do use them to do the reading and help the other learners to explain the difficult parts or for comprehension.

Interviewer: So you used them as a peer teacher?

Mrs. Jackson: Yes, but over and above that I used them to flash the words, but I should be doing more than that.

Interviewer: I understand. Please elaborate on any programs that have been put in place to support academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Jackson: We don't really. We only have for the weaker learners. We don't generally have gifted learners. Maybe a few years ago, but at this stage, not really.

Interviewer: I understand. So the support is just for the weaker learners?

Mrs. Jackson: Yes.

Interviewer: What is the role of the ILST or SBST when it comes to supporting the academically gifted learners and the educators that work with them? Do you play a role?

Mrs. Jackson: We didn't. Unfortunately, we only think of the weaker ones, let's put it that way, the struggling ones.

Interviewer: What type of problems have you ever experienced with academically gifted learners, or with the brighter ones? How do you experience them? Is there anything you've seen them do?

Mrs. Jackson: No, never. Generally, I don't have a problem with them. Sometimes with the weaker ones.

Interviewer: So your discipline is very good?

Mrs. Jackson: Yes. (Laughs). Even in the school. The learners know how to behave most times.

Interviewer: So you've never seen or heard of anyone complaining about the gifted learners?

Mrs. Jackson: No.

Interviewer: Please elaborate on any policies that have been put in place, policies that the Department has given you or that the school has made that supports academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Jackson: Not for the gifted. We have discipline policies, dress code policies, etc. but not for the gifted. We have a bullying policy, a bullying committee, we counsel the learners on bullying, but don't have anything on gifted learners.

Interviewer: Are there any workshops that the GDE give to you about academically giftedness?

Mrs. Jackson: No, unfortunately not.

Interviewer: And from the Unions' side?

Mrs. Jackson: No, unfortunately not. Like I said, they are only working on how to give support. We went on SIAS training where they gave us a booklet to fill in for the weaker learners, but nothing about gifted learners. We went for four Saturdays and nothing was said about the gifted learners. Even when there is a workshop, it focuses on group reading. SIAS don't even talk about them.

Interviewer: Who are the other role players that you have inside and outside of school that support academically gifted learners? The parents maybe?

Mrs. Jackson: Some can't even afford it. The aftercares I know of is Kip Magrath. The bright ones go there, but mostly at other schools. Here, I've never heard of anyone going.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have encountered in your career? Or any bright learner that stood out for you?

Mrs. Jackson: We should be giving them more, which we don't. I do have activity cards that are laminated, but I don't do enough. I take the cards out and use it for them, which I have used for many years.

Interviewer: That is all I have for you, mam. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Jackson: It was nice meeting you. Good luck with your studies.

Interviewer: Thank you mam. Have a good afternoon.

Participant 3 B

Female H.O.D ILST co-ordinator. Pseudonym: Mrs. Edwards

Interviewer: Mam, my first question to you is to please tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have ever encountered in your teaching career. What characteristics stand out about them and how did you support them when they were in your class?

Mrs. Edwards: Okay, let me start with... ja... It was definitely a girl. I don't know why it was specifically a girl, but she was in Grade 7 and it was the first time that I actually taught her and you know what, her whole perception towards academics came out very closely to me. She was dedicated, she was hardworking. She always did something extra. She always did extra. If you ask her to do something, she would always do something on top of that. She won't just stop there. That was the major characteristic that I thought, she was definitely gifted, because her general knowledge also showed to me, you know, that she was gifted. And then how you support that learner is, you always, they always say your worksheets are always based on the same thing, but now with Bloom's taxonomy, it actually helps those kids, because you can always give them some enrichment to do. And you know what, it was always given and it was always done. She enjoyed it so much. She just showed the love. She was, you know, she had her mind set on achieving the best and that is what she went after.

Interviewer: That is good to know. Do you have any programs in class or school that are focused on academically gifted learners that have been put in place that you are aware of?

Mrs. Edwards: You know what, all our textbooks, I teach Afrikaans Grade 5. All our textbooks, what are nice about them, it has a separate little book that is enrichment and also support, which is nice that you can use. You know, also your worksheets, you always have to cater to those learners, just to challenge them a bit. And what we also do in our tests, at this stage, we make sure that, once again, we use Bloom's Taxonomy and that it is in place. So you know that you have your normal questions, your middle and your higher, so that the kids know that this is what is expected and that there are some challenging ones for them. That's what we do at this stage.

Interviewer: So the booklet is a separate booklet?

Mrs. Edwards: Yes. And all the worksheets are also made that way.

Interviewer: No extra programs?

Mrs. Edwards: Not at this stage.

Interviewer: Thank you. What is the role of the ILST in supporting these learners and the educators who work with them? What role do they play?

Mrs. Edwards: Well, you know what, we try to cater for them as well, we try not to focus on our weaker learners only, but if we do come across something like gifted learners or stuff like that, we like to attend courses or workshops and try to implement it with them as well.

Interviewer: Okay, so you try to support them?

Mrs. Edwards: Yes, we try.

Interviewer: What type of problems have you ever experienced with academically gifted learners in the school or in your class in the past years that you can think of?

Mrs. Edwards: You know what, I think they become a behaviour problem because they are not challenged enough. They are not kept busy. Quite often you get this child and this child is extremely naughty. A few learners I have actually come across now, we actually had them assessed and their IQ's are quite high, but they don't perform. The parents say: "I don't know what to do with my child". It is because he is not being challenged. He is not really being challenged and it is because some of our kids also have emotional issues. And that hampers their academic progress.

Interviewer: Do they bully others?

Mrs. Edwards: They normally just act out. They are not bullies. They are not aggressive. They just act out because, you know, they can. And if they act out in such a way, their work is done. That's when they start acting out.

Interviewer: Are there any policies that have been put in place by the school or the GDE that speaks to academically gifted learners that you are aware of?

Mrs. Edwards: I don't know. I can't really think now. I know there was once training for gifted learners, but that was a few years ago. Not recently. Our policy is the ILST policy. It just mentions them, but the focus is not on them. It is just a school based policy.

Interviewer: Do you have access to it all the time?

Mrs. Edwards: Yes. I have an ILST file and it is all in there. I know that it is going to change soon, because we are starting with SIAS.

Interviewer: I wanted to ask if I may please have a copy of the ILST policy?

Mrs. Edwards: Ja.

Interviewer: Then I will just take it afterwards. Thank you. Are there any workshops that have been given by the GDE or unions that you are aware of that focus on academically giftedness?

Mrs. Edwards: Not lately. No, not as far as I know. And we are quite aware. Whatever comes around, we always try to attend, because it is always important to keep on growing.

Interviewer: Can you please tell me about that training that you have attended a few years ago. Can you still remember what it was about?

Mrs. Edwards: You can identify them like this, this is how they behave. But I must be honest, it was just an introduction session.

Interviewer: Was it given by the Department?

Mrs. Edwards: I don't know. It was a long time ago.

Interviewer: Who are the other role players that support academically gifted learners that you are aware of?

Mrs. Edwards: The parents who have money would normally take their children to extra classes or a place like Kip Magrath. They try to challenge the learners. Also Kumon for extra maths support. As well as Master Maths. But other than that, not really.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about academically gifted learners that come to mind?

Mrs. Edwards: Just that the academically gifted learners get lost in the system. We don't always know about them. They go missing.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time, mam.

Participant 4 B

Male ILST member. Pseudonym: Mr. Patel

Interviewer: Sir, my first question to you is to please tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have ever encountered in your teaching career and how did you support them and what characteristics stood out about them?

Mr. Patel: Okay, there were a lot that I have encountered in my career and what stood out about them was their depth of general knowledge and their ability to interact in higher order questioning and how they always wanted to find out more. And how I dealt with them was that additional work was given to them, so for example, if we were doing a novel, a presentation will be done about the aspects of that novel.

Interviewer: So, you would ask them questions that got them thinking?

Mr. Patel: Yes.

Interviewer: So Bloom's taxonomy was used?

Mr. Patel: Yes, naturally Bloom's taxonomy was used.

Interviewer: And anything else that stood out about them that you can think of?

Mr. Patel: Just the holistic development of the child, they are way ahead of their years in terms of academics and their mind set. So I find that fascinating.

Interviewer: Please elaborate on any programs that have been put in place by the school to support these learners that you can recall?

Mr. Patel: Okay. At my previous school, we had a Veritas program and what that was, was a reward system based on the performance of these kids. They would be taken out, but they won't just be taken out on an excursion, it would be to educational places like museums and interesting things like we used to go to the Eskom national science expo and would go all the way up to Pretoria, so that for us was like measures in place. And the Eisteddfod's and writing competitions. I had kids published at my previous school and poems that they wrote were published. And book covers that they designed for Galloping Footprints, the name of the book. They got their poems published.

Interviewer: And in this school?

Mr. Patel. No, not here. What I have sent through, we never got a reply, actually.

Interviewer: I see. How long have you been here?

Mr. Patel: 3 years this year.

Interviewer: So in three years you have given them some support?

Mr. Patel: Yes, like Woolworths competitions. Whatever we find in terms of competitions and public speaking, we get into that where they do really well. So in terms of public speaking, we are involved every year and those are the things that we do.

Interviewer: Thank you. You have given some insight.

Mr. Patel: And also trying to use some technology. Powerpoint presentations, white boards and smart phones.

Interviewer: Do you have white boards at school?

Mr. Patel: Yes.

Interviewer: In every class?

Mr. Patel: No.

Interviewer: And the Power Point presentations?

Mr. Patel: The kids actually present.

Interviewer: That's very nice. What is the role that the ILST members play when supporting these learners?

Mr. Patel: I must be honest. At this stage, we focus a lot on the learners at risk, I must be honest. There is a lot of focus, and not to try and pass the blame, but we get a lot of pressure from the Department for the learners at risk compared to what we do for our gifted learners. A lot of pressure from the Department.

Interviewer: Do you feel that if you could, would you give support to these learners?

Mr. Patel: Yes, sure, I would love to. I think of the things I used to do when I started teaching. We did magazines and we did many novels where the kids write their own novels and we got it published and the parents had a publishing evening and we used to have like a dinner and the kids would present their novels and when I think of all those things and now, I just, I must be honest, I can't afford to do it anymore.

Interviewer: Is it because of time or because of money?

Mr. Patel: I think the main factor is time. I also think the other factor is commitment from parents, because I am talking about a time when parents would bring their children to come to school on a Saturday for these projects and also safety is a major concern.

Interviewer: Is your school not very safe? Or the area?

Mr. Patel: The area.

Interviewer: Where was the area you taught in previously?

Mr. Patel: This was in the Northern Cape. It was a mining town. Small town, everything was fine. A lot of support from the mines there as well. Finance was not a problem. All the kids I taught had parents that work in the mines. So that helped.

Interviewer: So when you have the time and the finance you could actually focus more on the gifted learners? And if it was safer around here?

Mr. Patel: Yes.

Interviewer: What type of problems have you ever experienced with these learners that you know of?

Mr. Patel: Boredom, because the work, now they're done with it and then they don't have challenging enough work. But with Bloom's taxonomy, implemented correctly, thankfully it will challenge them.

Interviewer: Anything else that you can think of that might trouble them? Do they go and disturb others or bully them?

Mr. Patel: No, I haven't experienced that.

Interviewer: So your discipline in class is very good?

Mr. Patel: No, I don't have disciplinary problems.

Interviewer: Are there any policies that have been put in place by the school or by the Department that you know of that speak to academically gifted children.

Mr. Patel: No, nothing.

Interviewer: But policies do exist? What are they for?

Mr. Patel: Only support for learners at risk that I know of. What I do is, I have additional books like I have 366 questions of things that they would ask and the answers are in there. And I have literature stories, I have Shakespeare for those who took an interest in it. I brought Shakespeare into the class and I bring additional material. And our school, thankfully, is well-resourced. With regards to books and material, so I either bring or I get from the school to put it in the classroom and when they are done with their work, they access the material.

Interviewer: Okay, so that is a nice idea for learners to be enriched. Are there any workshops given by the Department of Education for the ILST members with regard to academically gifted learners?

Mr. Patel: No, not that I know of.

Interviewer: By the unions, maybe?

Mr. Patel: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you please elaborate on that?

Mr. Patel: space is a problem with that, because it books out very quickly. Like there were courses on how to teach and how to handle gifted learners, but when we sent our names in, there was no space, so it was already fully booked. The unions help out more.

Interviewer: Who are the other role players that you can identify in or out of school that support academically gifted learners?

Mr. Patel: The parents, definitely. I mean, with gifted kids you never have a problem with parents. Parental support is always positive, I have experienced. Older brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, in the case where they stay with uncles and aunts, also support them.

Interviewer: What else can you think of? The library, or...

Mr. Patel: I think these kids have a thirst for knowledge. So they actually go and access it themselves. Mostly now by internet, not so much the library. I am a bit old school, so I bring in books.

Interviewer: I understand. I do like books. The school library is existent, but not 100% functional?

Mr. Patel: It is functional. We have library monitors, kids go in and take out books. During lunch breaks the library is open for the children. So we have charts and posters and resource material. No, our library is fully functional.

Interviewer: I am glad to hear that. Anything else you can tell me about the gifted learners or learners in general that you would like to add?

Mr. Patel: No.

Interviewer: Thank you for your time.

School C

Participant 1 C

Female ILST member Pseudonym: Mrs. Moriri

Interviewer: Mam, the first question I would like to ask you, is to please tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have had in your career. And what was the characteristics that stood out about them and how did you support them when they were in your class?

Mrs. Moriri: Now, I have T.M and last year I had P.A. Those two learners are so good. Behaving, good in academics, even if they don't understand things, they come to you and ask, "mam, why are things like this, we can't understand this or that." And then I will phone the parents

Interviewer: So you ask the parents for support?

Mrs. Moriri: Yes, they give support to me and the learners. And then even when there are things they don't understand on the homework, they will tell this to me and ask, even in the class.

Interviewer: How did the parents support them and how did they help you?

Mrs. Moriri: P.A's mother sent her to extra classes and T.M's mother is helping her at home.

Interviewer: My second question I would like to ask you is, are there any policies that have been put in place that support these learners? Either by the Department or District?

Mrs. Moriri: No.

Interviewer: Not any?

Mrs. Moriri: No.

Interviewer: Please elaborate on any programs that have been put in place by the school as an institution to help these academically gifted learners? Any programs that you can think of that benefit them?

Mrs. Moriri: If maybe they can make something like extra classes, you know what, something like an activity that can enrich them.

Interviewer: Are there any of those at the school now, or not at the moment?

Mrs. Moriri: No.

Interviewer: So you feel that you must have extra classes and activities?

Mrs. Moriri: The only thing we have now, is only the merit day, only that, to motivate them. Only at the end of the year.

Interviewer: What is the role of the ILST when supporting these learners and educators who work with academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Moriri: They play a role.

Interviewer: What do they do?

Mrs. Moriri: When you have a problem that you need support with, they call you and they have a meeting with you and they show you how you can support them in class. And when you go to your class, at least you have the back up from them. But it is mostly for the learners who struggle. You must pay attention to those who struggle.

Interviewer: What type of problems do you experience with the academically gifted learners in your school? Have you ever experienced any problems with them?

Mrs. Moriri: Discipline.

Interviewer: And?

Mrs. Moriri: Some of the parents are not willing to level with us.

Interviewer: Can you elaborate on the discipline? What do the learners do?

Mrs. Moriri: They don't follow the class rules and can't work without supervision.

Interviewer: Do you find that it is just the academically gifted learners who do that?

Mrs. Moriri: Ja.

Mrs. Moriri: No.

Interviewer: Not any?

Mrs. Moriri: No.

Interviewer: Please elaborate on any programs that have been put in place by the school as an institution to help these academically gifted learners? Any programs that you can think of that benefit them?

Mrs. Moriri: If maybe they can make something like extra classes, you know what, something like an activity that can enrich them.

Interviewer: Are there any of those at the school now, or not at the moment?

Mrs. Moriri: No.

Interviewer: So you feel that you must have extra classes and activities?

Mrs. Moriri: The only thing we have now, is only the merit day, only that, to motivate them. Only at the end of the year.

Interviewer: What is the role of the ILST when supporting these learners and educators who work with academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Moriri: They play a role.

Interviewer: What do they do?

Mrs. Moriri: When you have a problem that you need support with, they call you and they have a meeting with you and they show you how you can support them in class. And when you go to your class, at least you have the back up from them. But it is mostly for the learners who struggle. You must pay attention to those who struggle.

Interviewer: What type of problems do you experience with the academically gifted learners in your school? Have you ever experienced any problems with them?

Mrs. Moriri: Discipline.

Interviewer: And?

Mrs. Moriri: Some of the parents are not willing to level with us.

Interviewer: Can you elaborate on the discipline? What do the learners do?

Mrs. Moriri: They don't follow the class rules and can't work without supervision.

Interviewer: Do you find that it is just the academically gifted learners who do that?

Mrs. Moriri: Ja.

Interviewer: Is it because they are finished with their work?

Mrs. Moriri: Sometimes they are not even done. The ones that are struggling, they are not even finishing their work. You must be after them, if you want them to complete their tasks. You must be there and check them. But the gifted learners, I am telling you, mam, they will finish up everything and then when you come back, they will ask: "mam, we are done, what can we do next?" But those who don't...
(Sigh)

Interviewer: Who struggle?

Mrs. Moriri: (nods)

Interviewer: So they give you more problems than the gifted learners? Would you say the gifted learners don't really give you disciplinary problems?

Mrs. Moriri: I think the problem is from the parents' side. If and maybe you know your child is at school and then you as a mam, you might have a problem with my child and then you complain down to me. As the parent I must take action immediately. Not to say: "what did you do my child?" etc. Some other learners in the classroom can see that they have wrong information. From the parents.

Interviewer: I understand. The next question I have for you mam, is if there are any workshops that have been given by the GDE or unions that you know of that is about academically gifted learners in specific?

Mrs. Moriri: No.

Interviewer: What do they focus on when they give workshops to you?

Mrs. Moriri: How to give learners support and how you must be friendly to them in the class and to be a good teacher, but not anything about the gifted learners. The other concern about the workshops was about discipline, you know what, don't touch them. We had a lot of workshops like that.

Interviewer: Are there any other role players that you can identify that help gifted learners? Like you said in the first question that parents help. Is there anyone else that you can identify inside or outside of school that support them? Except for the parents who take them to extra classes? Do you have a library?

Mrs. Moriri: We do have one, a media centre.

Interviewer: Is it functioning?

Mrs. Moriri: Yes.

Interviewer: And also, is there anything else you can tell me about a gifted learner that you know of. Anything else you maybe encountered in your years of teaching? Is there anything you would like to tell me about them as learners?

Mrs. Moriri: No, not really.

Interviewer: Okay, you feel that the media centre might be helpful so that they can go do extra reading and then the parents also support them. And is there any places that maybe come and take them for extra classes, maybe like an aftercare or something like that?

Mrs. Moriri: We have some other aftercares, but maybe if someone wants to go there, they must pay extra money.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time, mam.

Participant 2 C

Female. ILST member. Pseudonym: Mrs. Botha

Interviewer: My first question to you, mam is to please tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have encountered in your life, in your teaching career. What is the characteristics that stand out about them and how did you support them when they were in your class.

Mrs. Botha: I have one this year, especially. It is a boy and when we do mathematics, he is always very quick to finish his work and then I will give him extra worksheets or work to do from the booklet.

Interviewer: What stands out about him, what characteristics?

Mrs. Botha: He is very good in mathematics and takes a very big interest in mathematics. He is also a learner that can work on his own. Or you can give him a piece to read, you can give him a media book and he will sit reading it while I am busy with the others. And he is finished with his work. And he will always start immediately.

Interviewer: That's a good characteristic to have. Can you please elaborate on any policies that have been put in place regarding academically gifted learners that you are aware of by the Department or by the school itself?

Mrs. Botha: They didn't really, you know, they always say you must give them a policy yourself. I didn't really get policies from them, other than the ones you know of.

Interviewer: What do they focus on more?

Mrs. Botha: The work that we must do, yes, the learners at risk and the curriculum coverage that you must cover in your term. So that is what they focus on more. And then the statistics that must be in at the end of the term and ja, they tell you about

the academically gifted learners sometimes, but they don't really give you extra work for those learners. That's our responsibility.

Interviewer: What programs have been put in place by the school as institution to support these academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Botha: We don't really have for the gifted learners, you know, we have more for remedial learners. For the learners who have problems. But not really for the gifted learners. We don't have a lot of gifted learners, I must say, in the school. Especially the Afrikaans learners, I will say. There is a few of them only.

Interviewer: What is the role of the ILST when supporting academically gifted learners and the educators that work with them?

Mrs. Botha: Actually, as the ILST, we actually concentrate on the learners with problems. I must be honest with you, we don't really... I think there can be a lot more done for the gifted learners. Because there is so many learners on the learners at risk list that we actually concentrate on them.

Interviewer: Have you ever experienced any discipline problems with these learners that are academically gifted in any way?

Mrs. Botha: No, I don't have discipline problems. I have never had discipline problems. I know there are people who do, but no.

Interviewer: So if they finish their work, they are quiet and keep themselves busy?

Mrs. Botha: Yes.

Interviewer: And they don't act out?

Mrs. Botha: No, there are teachers that have extra work. But he is a child, you know, if he does anything, usually when he is finished with his maths test first, that he lies on his arms, because in that case, you can't give them extra work. They are busy with a task. But in mental maths the other day, they give you 10 minutes to complete it. He was done in 6 minutes time and he is also the child whose name I must give to the Department. In 6 minutes time, he was finished.

Interviewer: That's brilliant. What was his score out of 30?

Mrs. Botha: 29/30

Interviewer: That's brilliant, that's very good.

Mrs. Botha: The next test we wrote, was a test we practiced for and he was finished in 8 min. and he also got 29/30. He only had one mistake. He is very, you know, special in his maths.

Interviewer: That's very good to hear. Are you aware of any workshops given by the Department or by unions that is about academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Botha: SAOU, they give a lot of workshops for, not really gifted learners, but for special needs.

Interviewer: So not focused on gifted learners?

Mrs. Botha: Not that I know of. More for special needs. They have workshops for Autism, visual impairments and auditory impairments and things like that. I like to attend any psychological things, any problems or ADHD. We have quite a lot of ADHD.

Interviewer: Any role players that you can think of or know about inside or outside of school that support these learners? Maybe the parents?

Mrs. Botha: We don't have a lot of parents supporting us, but aftercares help. But not especially for the gifted learners.

Interviewer: I understand that.

Mrs. Botha: But we do have an after care centre.

Interviewer: And your media centre, is it fully functional?

Mrs. Botha: Yes, our media centre... we also have more remedial programs there.

Interviewer: So it is fully functioning? Learners can go there and take out books?

Mrs. Botha: Yes.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the gifted learners or how you experience them?

Mrs. Botha: Well, I would actually like to see them going to, you know, I know when my children went to school, they came to the school to take them to a centre every week. you know, for an hour or two. I don't know what centre that was, but I think if you have a person or an institution or a centre for the gifted learners, and you can get all your gifted learners together in a place and let them do extra work, or extra, you know, 'meer uitdagende werk', for them. That will be actually good. Because I think we are concentrating so much on the learners with educational needs that we look over these learners too much.

Interviewer: I agree with you, mam. Thank you for your time.

Participant 3 C

Male Principal Pseudonym: Mr. Kingston

Interviewer: Please tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have taught in your career and how did you support them when they were in your class? And what characteristics stand out about them?

Mr. Kingston: Okay, academically gifted in my career... well, normally the learners are, most of them who were my students, who are, looking at the normal curriculum that we covered, those are the learners who stand out by normally being very, I wouldn't say they are active, but not all. Sometimes they might be the quiet ones that are basically introverts, so it is difficult to spot them. The easiest way to spot them is basically through the results that you get. But more than that, they also show more insight in the work that they deliver and insights into discussions. Those are the ones who basically, normally will try to think before they respond. But you also get, in the higher grades, learners who, of boredom they experience especially because the curriculum doesn't make provision for them, they tend to become bored and this may lead to some disciplinary problems. Where, not because they are by nature such learners, but if you do not take note of them, they become disruptive in a sense. They want more attention. In my case, I have been teaching in various communities, from your informal settlement and in so-called coloured communities, and now at ***, which is a very integrated community. It is a total different experience for me here. What I have experienced here in relation to the learners where I come from, across the colour lines, is that you find them across the board. However, the way they present themselves differ. For example, you find that, from my experience, a learner of colour who is gifted, you know, it is almost as if those learners have a different approach in class and they are very mindful of competition as to who and how and especially white kids, for example, for them it is a natural thing, you know, to be in the environment where they want to excel and they are excelling by nature. Whereas the other learners will basically always see it as a challenge and they have to go above and beyond that point of improving themselves. I am not sure if I am on point with your question?

Interviewer: Yes, you are sir, thank you. And how did you support them when they were in your class? When you taught them and when they were finished with their work? Did you give them extra work to do?

Mr. Kingston: Well, in most cases, to be honest, your curriculum does not really... it does not make provision for support and thereby it comes down to the educator to make provision for that. And in most cases, what I would support them with, I know that the curriculum will dictate to you to have additional work for them all or work on a higher level for them, which, in looking at the class to teacher ratio, it is not always possible. So in a sense these learners are a bit, how can I put it, disadvantaged. That you don't really do everything that you should be doing for them. However, those are the ones that I would basically accommodate by giving them extra challenges in my learning areas, Life Orientation and EMS. Those are the ones I would normally identify as group leaders to give them that experience, not experience, opportunity, just to keep them occupied in their groups when they have

to do group assignments or what the case might be. I also make use of them to assist basically with peer development in class. So I will make sure that the way they are seated is that I can use them to assist others and by doing so, not to occupy them, but it also gives them a chance to enhance their leadership capabilities. That basically comes back to how I assist them in giving them additional work, or, not really additional work, because then it becomes a burden. One: you have to do it in a way that they actually feel that they are appreciated more and get responsibilities. It will not be directly in a class context, those are the types of learners that you actually have in the groups that are, they might be in certain activities, where you can actually task them to lead the group. "Okay, you, I want you, Johnny to just take lead on this and you have these discussions in your group. While the others are busy, you start working on that". So that learner basically becomes the mentor for the other learners, but is also preparing him or herself for what is expected. I see that these learners basically become very eager for the next round, because now they've got your attention. Once they've got your attention, it is almost as if they have your respect. And then they become easier to deal with and to work with them. We do, from a school perspective, we do encourage parents because the school cannot make provision in our time allocation. We do encourage parents to make use of external service providers, you know, that can assist. I know one of the external service providers we are currently using is Kip Magrath, a learning centre, and you know, those are just additional resources we sometimes refer parents to. However, we don't really get feedback from them on if it really enhances the child or not. In most cases, it just suffers a natural death, because it is costly, that's where the problem comes in.

Interviewer: I understand. Thank you, sir. Are there any policies that have been put in place by the ILST that you know of that speaks to the academically gifted learners?

Mr. Kingston: Not specifically, no. We don't have a specific policy that deals with that. I can just quickly check on the policy, but there is the ILST basically (Checking for the file.) There is not a specific policy that deals with the gifted child, for example. But we do have in our code of conduct and so forth, policies that deal with, you know, homework policies and those academic policies and all of that. It doesn't specifically talk to identifying the learner or taking the child to another level where you can basically have a group of learners with such potential to get additional, extended attention through service providers, either by the Department or by the school. Now the policy, is in fact, not in that detail. Some of these issues that might arise or be found and distributed amongst various different policies, but not focussing directly on the gifted child him or herself.

Interviewer: May I please have a copy of that policy, if I may please? I will use it for my documents. Just a copy. Thank you.

Mr. Kingston: No, problem.

Interviewer: Thank you sir. What is the role of the ILST when it comes to supporting these learners? Do they play a role, or do they not really help the academically gifted learners?

Mr. Kingston: You will find that the ILST is focusing more on the problem areas, learners with special needs. And the challenges we have from the Department, the ISS unit, who is supposed to cater for that need and the admin for it, we are all making use of external service providers and because of the cost factor as well, the ILST basically rather uses the teachers for addressing needs in grey areas instead of the gifted learners. So that is definitely a short coming when it comes to making provision for the gifted child. And just an example, we have just completed our exams and when we look at analysing the results, in doing that, you are identified, but the Department, it is not their responsibility, but we know already from term one that we must identify learners at risk, so we are basically moving in that direction, identifying, focusing more on the learners at risk and getting them to a level and to refer them to LSEN classes. That we, totally in most cases, ignore the learners who basically stand out. I think the misconception that we also might have is that such learners get acknowledgement with merit day and that, but it doesn't justify the fact that they do not get stimulation from different programs that we have. One will definitely encourage them to participate in cultural or sport activities but these are also limited to the resources of the school.

Interviewer: Thank you, sir. What type of problems do you experience with academically gifted learners? Like you have said in your first answer that they might become bored and things like that? But do you find, that as a principal, there is many children who come to you that are maybe gifted because they disrupt the class or something? Or do they mostly do their work?

Mr. Kingston: Well, I can think of one or two examples where learners become problematic, because when it is brought to my attention, it is a discipline problem, but if you investigate it, that is where the second thing comes to mind, the external factors that they are involved in, the social issues and so forth. It comes back to the fact that, if the child, and even the teacher will say, "Mnr, this child has got potential, but the child is not meeting it."

Interviewer: So they are underperforming basically.

Mr. Kingston: Yes. In some cases we do find that some educators might misinterpret the child's behaviour and think that it is a disciplinary issue when it is basically a social issue. The child becomes disruptive, because of there not being enough stimulus in class for the child.

Interviewer: Are there any programs that have been put in place by the Department or the school itself that speaks to academically gifted learners?

Mr. Kingston: No. I can't think of any specific programs and that is also why it is with the policy that is not clear on that. As far as the Department is concerned, we have not been... what I have learnt is that the Department do have programs and the programs are diverted to so called disadvantaged communities. And looking at our learners, the learners that we have in our school, we do have learners who come from disadvantaged communities and even though they rank us as a quantile 5 school, but most of those, if you go to the Department, they will say it is for specific schools, for township schools, even. Even Matthew Goniwe for staff development, you will find out and they will tell you. I once went to them and said, you know what, I found this book and I see that it is very informative for teachers to do and to prepare themselves for certain challenges, and they told me, Mnr, the quantile rating doesn't make you qualify for that. They only budget for...for...

Interviewer: Non- fee paying schools?

Mr. Kingston: Yes, so we are disadvantaged in a sense from the Department's side. We are not exposed to the programs that we can make use of. So we just move on with the flow and we tend to... because they are performing, you console yourself with that fact, but this is an injustice to the child, because we are not catering for them, for the total needs of the children.

Interviewer: Thank you, sir. Are there any workshops that have been given by the Department of Education or by the Unions that you are aware of for academically gifted learners?

Mr. Kingston: I think from the Union side more than from the Department. When I look at this, your notices from unions for teacher development or staff development, most of them are from the Unions. The Department plays a silent part or role in this whole matter. Only when we are, you know, challenged, then they will give x, y and z. We have requested some staff development from the Department on diversity, for example, last year already and up until now there is no feedback on that. It is only when a problem arises that it becomes a highlight, so without cutting blame or putting the Department in a negative position, the thing is, we don't get any direct information from them and what we normally do is, whatever we can, we use NGO's or service providers under the ILST. The ILST runs a program called CAP (community outreach program), we got the calendar of that. You can have a copy of that if you like.

Interviewer: That will be nice, thank you.

Mr. Kingston: Basically, the program that the ILST is running is a community outreach. We focus on community outreach programs where we have a karate class or so forth and now we tried music classes, but it didn't help much because of none interest from the parents or the learners. We currently have, but it is more for the parent community, skill development. The program that we have is not directed to, specifically for these learners. So any information that we have, or NGO's that we

know of, we connect with them, we make use of them. The NGO's we mostly make use of is our government departments, social services like clinics and so forth. But even they have limited resources and it is unfortunate that we have learnt in the past that you do have people who talk to them, but because they don't come from an educational background, they don't know how to address them. They will try different lines and the learners will just sit there and you really walk out of that thing thinking it was a waste of time. We are not very keen on making use of these people we know do not come from an educational background.

Interviewer: I understand that. Then my last question to you, sir, is, who are the other role players that you can identify that maybe help the people or the learners? Example, parents: do they actually help or who else can you identify that help them. Is there a library and is it working?

Mr. Kingston: Our school has started two programs. The one is, and it might address some questions of earlier on, we have got a book club now that we have started. We do have a media centre, but it is part of the curriculum. The book club we have started is more for the children to read for pleasure and for relaxation and to enhance their reading skills as well. We also started a science club and this is also where all the learners are invited to participate and to ensure that all the learners are there and that the necessary arrangements are made for them. Those are the two programs that we currently have in our school to assist. When you look at the list of learners, especially at the science club, it is mostly the learners who have the potential to be gifted, and they are the ones who find it fascinating. So those are the programs that we currently have. We do have support from parents, we can do with some more support, but those who really want to understand that my child is gifted, they tend to play along and they play their part. However you do find certain instances where some parents just don't have the time or care about them, as long as the child is in school and gets a report card, they are happy with it. Other role players...as I said, aside from the NGO's, one would say the Department can be a role player. We have different organisations where you must basically register with them or pay a registration fee, to be part of that and we know when it comes to finances, our financial situation becomes a problem. And if you put that burden on the parents, you can forget about it. Even programs like Kip Magrath. What would happen in the past, we would have the lady come and she would drop off some pamphlets and we give them to the parents. Or there are people who come in with additional maths programs, but it wasn't successful. That's why we do it differently now. Instead of just giving info to the parents and hoping they would grab on to it, we are using our analysis from our results and we are using our parent days to direct the parents to those people, so that person will sit in the foyer or in the office somewhere and then we go directly and talk to the person and ask: 'what can you offer my child?' What I like about this interview, is that it actually makes you aware of the shortcomings as well and how you can do things differently. Your study is needed.

Interviewer: I appreciate that you help me out. Thank you very much. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Mr. Kingston: I would like to get more info about it, because, like I said, the teaching career...the teachers are so... and this is one of the frustrations I can vouch for, because I teach myself, people have become... the department wants results but we can't give quality results, because we have become pencil pushers. It is just 'due date, due date, due date'. At the end of the day...I went to the Foundation Phase teachers and I asked them, why is it that, if the children are with you, you do the basics with them, they read and write, bla bla bla, and when they get to Grade 4, and the higher it goes, it is a downward slope. They forgot everything they have learnt, and you know, initially you want to blame people and say, you know, it is you, you are not doing your job. But if you listen to what people are saying, the times have changed so much, we are doing an injustice to the children. The Grade 1 child comes to school and the first six weeks of grade 1 will be like an induction, you will do specific things and focus on specific things and lay the foundation for 6 weeks. But now, with the new curriculum, within the first week already, you must move to the next and the next. The Department has lost sight of that, and this is my unqualified opinion, that the challenges we have is not because of bad teachers. We have teachers who need some work and can change their work ethic, but because of the process of education, you want to change something, but the approach is different. You don't listen to the people working with the problem, you don't take their advice. And looking back at my schooling and how I had to learn how to spell and read, besides from corporal punishment, now the whole modus operandi was different. We are bombarding children basically with information. We are of the opinion that at a certain age the children must have a certain volume of information, but we forget that the system they want to implement, work in countries where you have total parent commitment, you don't have the social- economical challenges we have. Even if there are those challenges, the approach from the community towards education is totally different from our school approach and that is why the current system is failing us. And it will keep on failing until we get to a stage where we go back to basics. We hear about cutting down on administrative things, but it just gets worse and worse and nobody listens. And I've complained to whoever would want to listen to me.

Interviewer: Shame, sir.

Mr. Kingston: I would really like to know more about the topic, so that we can implement programs for the teachers, to make them more aware, of not only the problem child, but also the gifted child. That might make all the difference to our approach.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Kingston: It is a pleasure.

Participant 4 C

Female ILST Co-Ordinator Pseudonym: Mrs. Stewart

Interviewer: Please tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have had in your career and how did you support them when they were in your class and what characteristics stand out for you?

Mrs. Stewart: That's a good question. I've had a learner last year, T. Very gifted, very intelligent. I teach mathematics, so he was very gifted when it came to mathematics. The traits that he had was the fact that he was very very curious about mathematics. He never accepted anything that I told him. You had to go and prove it to him. Which is a good trait to have when you want to be a mathematician one day. As far as support went, I usually gave him, we had the ANA question papers and the ANA booklet that they sent out. Usually I gave him a few ANA questions that he could do and he also went on his own and he went and he did work on his own. And I had textbooks that I had in class and usually he worked through all of them and I had a booklet I inherited from teachers before me, many years ago, he would work through. I also called his parents in and I spoke to them, because he had to go to high school the next year and I wanted him to go to a high school where he could develop further and so they wanted to send him to one of the high schools in the area and they were looking at sending him to a private high school where the classes are smaller and he might get more attention from the educators. Unfortunately, our system does not make provision for very gifted learners. We mainly work with the learners that are average, maybe a little bit above average and we struggle with the learners that we have to teach, you know, the ones that are below average and they find it very difficult to cope with basic work. So unfortunately, because we have 42 learners in a class, it really becomes a struggle to pay attention to those who are really gifted. I haven't had many, I think back now, I have only had this little boy in Grade 7 last year. And what you do is, you adjust your teaching methods to work with those who are average and you pay a lot of attention to those that are below average because you have to get them to pass the grade. So in his case, he was one of the high points of my career (laughs) and I haven't had many of them, because he was really an outstanding learner. So the support system that we have currently is not really for those who are gifted, it is mainly aimed at the average and below average learners.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. What policies are put in place by the school as an institution that speak to them? Are you aware of any that are put in place?

Mrs. Stewart: No, what we do we do as individuals. It depends on you as a teacher. So if you get a child like that and then you namely see this child is bored and what you do is, you give them extra work, not extra work, you do enrichment with them. And you will give them a more difficult question and my main, the thing that I feel bad

about is that we did not have any computers. Because if you had a computer, you can immediately put them on a program. You can get hold of programs and he can work on his own. But we don't have a policy that addresses gifted learners.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. What is the role of the ILST or the SBST in supporting these learners in this school?

Mrs. Stewart: The support is mainly, as I have said before, to deal with the learners who need assistance. Mainly, we don't have many learners that are really gifted, so it has never come, I have never dealt with that. And being part of the SBST, I have never ever dealt with that. Because they are so far and few, you don't find them.

Interviewer: What type of problems have you ever experienced with gifted learners? Like you have said now, this one learner, have you ever experienced discipline problems with him?

Mrs. Stewart: No.

Interviewer: How was he? His behaviour?

Mrs. Stewart: He was very well behaved in my class. I taught mathematics and Afrikaans. So he really enjoyed the mathematics. So he was usually busy with his work and usually reading and he was busy doing his work. I never had any problems with him. Other teachers might have different perceptions of the child, because he will question you. And he will not accept what you tell him if he doesn't agree with you. So you will have to prove it to him. So in some cases educators might experience that as being disrespectful. I never thought that. I encouraged him to question, because that is probably the most amazing thing of a child, to question what others say and doesn't accept it blindly. Most children will accept blindly what you tell them, but in his case, he will question you and some people might think, you know, he is questioning your authority. It is not the case. But many times have I experienced the non- gifted learners and I say that in inverted commas, that they have discipline problems. Usually you find it in when they don't understand and they get bored because they don't understand the work.

Interviewer: So it is not really the gifted learners? You would rather say the learners who struggle with the work?

Mrs. Stewart: I have never ever experienced behavioural problems in gifted learners. Never.

Interviewer: Are there any programs that have been put in place by the school as such to support these gifted learners? That you are aware of?

Mrs. Stewart: Not at the moment, because if you put programs in place, usually it needs technology, you know, if you have a computer system where you put in on the computer and use it as a program. We have looked into it, but it is so expensive to

put those programs in place. So what we do usually, is the books and the reading material that we have available in class that we have collected over the years and we give that to the learners. But I don't think it is enough.

Interviewer: Are there any workshops that are given by the Department of Education or by the Unions that support these academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Stewart: No, I don't think so. The interesting thing about education is that it is all about the learners that struggle. Because in the end, you have to get them to pass the grade. So usually workshops are aimed to assist and support those learners.

Interviewer: The learners at risk, basically. Do you know of any role players in or outside of school that support these academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Stewart: In some cases they go for extra lessons or enrichment, but usually in this area, it is all about money. And if you go to a person that will provide you with enrichment, you must pay and I don't think that comes cheaply.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to elaborate on about academically gifted learners that you have encountered?

Mrs. Stewart: There is nothing.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. That is all my questions for you.

School D

Participant 1 D

Female. H.O.D. ILST co-ordinator Pseudonym: Mrs. Manda

Interviewer: Mam, my first question to you is to please tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have ever taught in your life and how did you support them and what characteristics stand out about them?

Mrs. Manda: Mmm... I once taught a learner by the name of N.P. at Soweto. That girl was so brilliant in such a way that I was taking her as my tutor in the class room. If I can't reach some of the learners, she used to help me to reach those learners. And they understood her better. And now she is at WITS, she is doing her... she wanted to be a Doctor, she is learning to be the Doctor.

Interviewer: So a medical Doctor?

Mrs. Manda: A medical Doctor, yes. Because this is her third year this year. It is the learner from an informal settlement because she is from Soweto, and where she is

living...eish...I know that she will make a big change once she is done with her medical doctor.

Interviewer: How did you support her when she was in your classroom? What did you do for her? If she was done with her work?

Mrs. Manda: I used to give her the enrichment with like maybe the work, it will be done tomorrow. She was always ahead with the work and I used to give her maybe the work for the second class, because I taught her in grade 6, I used to give her the work for grade 7, I used to give her Grade 7 work.

Interviewer: So a higher level, basically.

Mrs. Manda: Yes. And she was so supportive. Even teachers at school they relied so much on her.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. Please elaborate on any programs that have been put in place by the school as an institution to support these learners that you are aware of.

Mrs. Manda: In this school?

Interviewer: Yes, in this school. So if you have any programs that support academically gifted learners or anything that you can tell me about that have been put in place for them?

Mrs. Manda: Mmm...normally we give them the, at the end of the year, we do the awards for them so that they can get a certificate, we take the best learners according to the subjects and the best learner in the classroom. The outstanding learner in the classroom. And when they do grade 7, they normally get a bursary. That bursary we get it from, Dr. P., and Professor C.

Interviewer: Professor C?

Mrs. Manda: Mmm. Do you know her?

Interviewer: No, I don't. Is he family of the school founder?

Mrs. Manda: This is the father, ya.

Interviewer: So she gives a bursary to the grade 7's at the end of the year?

Mrs. Manda: Yes, so the grade 7 can get the uniform in grade 8.

Interviewer: That is very nice. Anything else that you have in place?

Mrs. Manda: Um, we motivate them by putting them on the RCL. Those are the responsible learners. If there is no teacher in the class, then she will just go and take care of the class. Maybe for, not more than 5 minutes. During the assembly, we even

say to them they must motivate others instead of the teacher to do the assembly, we will call that learner to do the assembly. But guided by the teacher.

Interviewer: What is the role of the ILST in supporting these learners? What role do you as the co-ordinator play in supporting these learners?

Mrs. Manda: Mmm... I have to check with the educators. If I see that this learner the support, I just give them the work from previous classes to do, but I must give a program. Let us say for example they are doing measurement, and the learners are struggling with the measurement, then I involve myself by giving them, maybe, work from grade 2. Then just to motivate...

Interviewer: I mean, the academically gifted learners, does the ILST cater for them or who do they focus on more?

Mrs. Manda: We focus more on these learners who need support. It is those learners, we check if they are vulnerable and then maybe we find that a learner is very good, but the learner maybe can't get food from home, cannot get love from home, we make sure that we support and motivate, at least, he or she feels that there are some people who are taking care of her or him. We play a parental part here.

Interviewer: That's very good. Is there anything specific that you put in place for the gifted learners, or is it just if you see the need, you help individually?

Mrs. Manda: If you can check, maybe that learner doesn't have a uniform, we try by all means to give that learner the uniform and if he doesn't get food at home, some learners just come here at school, with empty stomachs, so there is a soup kitchen where we give them the food in the afternoon or so we give them a loaf of bread. So they can go and enjoy it at home.

Interviewer: That's nice. When you have academically gifted learners, like let us say the girl that you were speaking about, did she have any behaviour problems that you can know of?

Mrs. Manda: No...

Interviewer: Any academically gifted learner that you can think of in your career? Do they have any problems?

Mrs. Manda: If I may talk about the one I have experienced, last year, is it fine?

Interviewer: Yes, that is fine.

Mrs. Manda: She was a gifted learner who was supposed to get the award, but due to her behaviour, she didn't get anything, because she was doing drugs.

Interviewer: O... I see... so she went to drugs, she didn't... Was she doing well at school and then all of a sudden... or?

Mrs. Manda: She was an outstanding learner.

Interviewer: What happened? Do you know?

Mrs. Manda: But she didn't change, like, in class, she was outstanding, but the behaviour was bad.

Interviewer: Did the behaviour just change over time? Or was it suddenly?

Mrs. Manda: It was in the last term. I think she was telling herself that now I'm going to high school. Maybe the peer pressure or whatever, ya.

Interviewer: So that is the only behaviour you can think of?

Mrs. Manda: Yes.

Interviewer: Are there any policies that the school has, that speak to academically giftedness, as such? For example, the ILST, does the policy talk to them or...

Mrs. Manda: We have the policy concerning behaviour and problems, who are experiencing these problems, ya. Then we also, we even call the parents, we call the parents so we can communicate with the parents, but before we talk to the parents, we will take it to the disciplinary committee and talk to them. If we see that the behaviour is proceeding, there is no difference, then we call the parents. The parents must also come in.

Interviewer: I understand. But a policy that talks to the academically gifted. Do you have one of those? Not a behaviour policy, but a policy that says if you have an academically gifted learner, how do you help them in class, how do you go around in identifying them...

Mrs. Manda: No, let me write it down, because I think it might also help me remember. (Writing down a note to maybe implement such a policy.)

Interviewer: Are there any workshops that the Department of Education give to you regarding academic giftedness? Not workshops about behaviour or learner support, but workshops that focus on academically giftedness?

Mrs. Manda: Mmm...

Interviewer: Do they actually call a workshop in which they say it will be about academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Manda: We are normally called, but we don't focus on the academically gifted learners, we focus on all learners, most specifically career guidance. Ya, we are just called to come in and motivate them.

Interviewer: So no workshops for academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Manda: No.

Interviewer: Have you ever heard that the unions give workshops about academic giftedness?

Mrs. Manda: No.

Interviewer: Are you aware of any other role players that are in the school or outside of the school that support the academically gifted learners? Any role players that maybe come and give extra classes or who help the learners.

Mrs. Manda: (Shakes her head)

Interviewer: Maybe the parents? Parental involvement?

Mrs. Manda: With gifted learners, it is like we are ignoring them. The way I see it, it is like we are ignoring them. We only motivate them by giving them the certificates, only at the end of the year.

Interviewer: Anything else you would like to tell me about the gifted learners that you have had in your career? That stands out for you?

Mrs. Manda: I have only, there was a learner, I remember the parents came to me to ask if they could take that learner to the school with disabled people, because he was cripple, in his one leg, but he was very brilliant. We told that parents that, no, that if the learner is like this, it doesn't mean that you must take him to a special school. He belongs here. And he was doing very well and then the parents understood then they leave the child here at our school. So that learner, I think he is doing second year now also. Engineer or whatever.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, mam. That's all the questions I have for you. Thank you.

Participant 2 D

Female ILST member Pseudonym: Mrs. Wentz.

Interviewer: Mam, will you please tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have taught in your life. What characteristics stand out about them and how did you support them when they were in your class?

Mrs. Wentz: It is not now, it is many many years ago, we had a child that was really really excellent in his Maths, excellent. Language very very good. And he is a Doctor at the moment.

Interviewer: How did you support him when he was in your class? Did you give him enrichment to do?

Mrs. Wentz: Yes, we had lots and lots of enrichment things that we could give to the children in those days. You know, and he was working very fast also. So, you had to have something for him to do.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. What programs is put in place by the school as an institution to help these academically gifted learners? Any programs in this particular school?

Mrs. Wentz: We have got with every lesson plan, we have got for the weaker learners and for the gifted learners. We have got activities that they can do.

Interviewer: Is that the only programs that you have or does the school have anything else? Maybe an excursion or anything like that?

Mrs. Wentz: Ya, we do have a quarterly excursion.

Interviewer: Where do you take them for the excursion?

Mrs. Wentz: Different places. Mostly here in Johannesburg, you know, close by.

Interviewer: I see. Thank you mam. What is the role of the ILST, which you are part of, in supporting the learners that are academically gifted? What role do they play? Do you have a specific role in the ILST?

Mrs. Wentz: No, there isn't something for that.

Interviewer: Do you support the educators who work with them or is it completely that you only focus on learners at risk?

Mrs. Wentz: You know what, when we meet and there is something that is coming up, then we come up with suggestions. Because we have others teachers also with lots and lots of experience.

Interviewer: What type of problems have you ever experienced with learners who are gifted? Have you ever experienced any problems with them throughout your teaching career?

Mrs. Wentz: Ja, you know what, sometimes, they are getting bored and then they are getting naughty. You know? Because they are bored. It is not because they are really really naughty children, it is because they don't work properly.

Interviewer: So if they don't get enough work, they get bored...

Mrs. Wentz: Ja.

Interviewer: Naughty to what extent? Do they question authority or what do they do?

Mrs. Wentz: Ja, or they will tease other children or just walk around or things like that.

Interviewer: Are there any policies that guide the teaching of academically gifted learners in this school that has been put in place?

Mrs. Wentz: Not that I know of.

Interviewer: Are there any workshops that are given by the Department or the unions that support the academically gifted learners that you know of?

Mrs. Wentz: Ja, ja, ja.

Interviewer: Can you please elaborate on that for me?

Mrs. Wentz: It wasn't now, recently, it was a few years ago. I can't even remember... now what was that... You know what, the Unions do give! Lots and lots of things. Ja, ja. When they sent out their list of things there is, ja.

Interviewer: Have you ever attended one of them?

Mrs. Wentz: Ja, I did.

Interviewer: What did they talk about? Did they talk about support?

Mrs. Wentz: Ja, things like that, ja.

Interviewer: What kind of support do they recommend for these learners?

Mrs. Wentz: In the field that the child must be developed in.

Interviewer: So if they excel in maths, you try to develop them in maths?

Mrs. Wentz: Ja, ja.

Interviewer: Who pays for the union workshops? Do the union members go for free, or how does it work?

Mrs. Wentz: The school pays for them.

Interviewer: Okay, but the Department of Education doesn't offer the workshops?

Mrs. Wentz: No, no.

Interviewer: Are there any other role players that play a part in the supporting of these learners that you are aware of? Maybe inside of the school or outside of the school? Not only teachers, but anyone else that you know of?

Mrs. Wentz: Ja. We have got a councillor L that is helping a lot.

Interviewer: I see, what does she do?

Mrs. Wentz: You know, she helps. If we need money, she will provide. If we need clothes, she will provide.

Interviewer: Is it for all the learners, or only for the academically gifted?

Mrs. Wentz: The gifted. No, actually she is giving to everyone.

Interviewer: And the school just asks her, basically?

Mrs. Wentz: Ja.

Interviewer: So anyone else that you can think of? How is the parents' role that they play? Do they actually care about the children? Or do they write them off?

Mrs. Wentz: Our parents are really, non-existing. Really, really. They don't care. Here and there, there is a parent that will look after the children, But very few.

Interviewer: Anyone else? Aftercare centres, do you have aftercare centres?

Mrs. Wentz: No.

Interviewer: And the library? Is it functioning?

Mrs. Wentz: (Shakes head)

Interviewer: Not either?

Mrs. Wentz: You know what, our children used to go to Kip Mcgrath.

Interviewer: And now? Not anymore?

Mrs. Wentz: I don't know of a child that is going at the moment.

Interviewer: So it is like an aftercare?

Mrs. Wentz: Ja, ja. But I don't know if they go there anymore.

Interviewer: So it is for extra classes and things like that?

Mrs. Wentz: Ja.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to tell me about a gifted learner that you have taught throughout your teaching career? That you want to speak about? Anything that stood out about them, or anything that you can tell me?

Mrs. Wentz: (Laughing) It is so quick. No, I can't think at the moment.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. That is all the questions I have for you at the moment.

Participant 3 D

Female ILST member Pseudonym: Mrs. Gumbi

Interviewer: My first question to you, mam is to please tell me about any academically gifted learner that you have had in your teaching career. What characteristics stand out about these learners to you and how did you help them when they were in your class?

Mrs. Gumbi: We do have learners that are academically challenged. And then what we do, we support them in the class, we give them support work.

Interviewer: I mean, the academically gifted learners, meaning they are more academically inclined. You don't struggle with them. Their average is above 75%. Not the learners that struggle in class, like the learners at risk, but the learners who are good in academics. Do you know of any of those learners?

Mrs. Gumbi: Yes, we do have.

Interviewer: Okay, can you tell me about them?

Mrs. Gumbi: Um... it is the learners that they finish their tasks, before anyone else finishes in the class and they are focused and they know what they are doing.

Interviewer: And how do you support them? Are you able to support them and what do you do to support them in your class?

Mrs. Gumbi: I do support them, because you find that, when they, since they are fast learners, ne, they become bored if you are busy with the rest of the class. They become bored, they won't have anything to do, so. I find another task I give them some more work.

Interviewer: So more difficult work?

Mrs. Gumbi: Yes, more difficult work.

Interviewer: And is there anything else that you do, except for the more difficult work? Do you maybe make them help the other learners? Or what do you do?

Mrs. Gumbi: Exactly, mam. That's what I do. I, at times, I involve them in peer teaching.

Interviewer: I see. Thank you, mam. My second question is, are there any programs that have been put in place by the school as institution that support these learners that you are aware of?

Mrs. Gumbi: Yes. There are.

Interviewer: Can you elaborate on that for me, please?

Mrs. Gumbi: We have this learner support program in class where the teachers concerned, the teachers for specific subjects or the class teachers will have to support those learners who are in need.

Interviewer: I am talking specifically about the academically gifted learners. Do you have any...

Mrs. Gumbi: O...

Interviewer: Yes, I am talking about the academically gifted learners. The learners at risk is not part of my study.

Mrs. Gumbi: For the gifted ones?

Interviewer: Yes, for the gifted ones. The ones who finish quickly and the ones who are always ahead.

Mrs. Gumbi: No. Not that I remember. In the whole school.

Interviewer: What is the role of the ILST in supporting these learners and also the teachers that work with the academically gifted learners? What is your role in supporting them?

Mrs. Gumbi: With the gifted one?

Interviewer: With the academically gifted one.

Mrs. Gumbi: No, there is no role.

Interviewer: What do you think your role must be in supporting them? Maybe implementing something in order to support them? Is there something you can think of that can benefit them?

Mrs. Gumbi: I think we can implement something like peer support. Like when they have time, we put up a specific time, maybe for them to do reading, the ones that are fluent in reading will tell those who do not read and then the ones who are good in mathematics would help. So that they help each other. The gifted ones helping the learners at risk.

Interviewer: How would you support the gifted learners themselves? How do you feel we can support them? Let us say for example, you say they got bored, how would you prevent them from not getting bored?

Mrs. Gumbi: Aaa, by giving them more work and learning material that is going to challenge them.

Interviewer: Have you ever experienced other behaviour problems by academically gifted learners except for the boredom, have you ever experienced anything else? That they might get out of hand? When they are finished with their work, what kind of behaviour do they give?

Mrs. Gumbi: When they are finished with their work, they will make noise. They will do something else, they will make sounds, in the class.

Interviewer: The academically gifted learners specifically or do you think it is all the learners?

Mrs. Gumbi: Normally those that are finished with their work and are not controlled. They do get out of hand.

Interviewer: And have you ever experienced that they might back chat you? Or that they are arrogant?

Mrs. Gumbi: No.

Interviewer: Are there any policies that have been put in place by the ILST that speaks to the academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Gumbi: Not for that gifted ones.

Interviewer: What policies do you have? Do you only have one that focuses on the learners at risk? Or how does the ILST policy address it?

Mrs. Gumbi: We do have the one for the learners at risk.

Interviewer: So not for academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Gumbi: Not that I know of.

Interviewer: Are there any workshops given by the Department of Education or the Unions that support these academically gifted learners? That you have ever heard of in your teaching career?

Mrs. Gumbi: No. Never.

Interviewer: Are there any other role players that you have found that support the academically gifted learners, except now for the teachers? Do you think that the parents support them in the school? Or is there anyone else you can think of that support them?

Mrs. Gumbi: I think the parents can play a very big role in helping the learners.

Interviewer: How can the parents play a role?

Mrs Gumbi: Mmm...I would say...you know when these children are gifted, what parents can do is to, maybe when they are buying stuff for them, buying books, buying playing stuff, I think they should focus a lot on stuff that is going to help them.

Interviewer: Okay, any other role players that you know of, is the library working at the moment? Or do you have after cares that support these learners? Or not really?

Mrs. Gumbi: (Shakes head)

Interviewer: Anything else you would like to tell me about the academically gifted learners that stand out for you?

Mrs. Gumbi: What I can say is that, those learners are the learners that are behaving well in class. They won't be angry, they are courteous in class. Gifted learners never gave me any problems. They do not have temper, they don't have attitude.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. That is all I need. Thank you.

Mrs. Gumbi: Thank you.

Participant 4 D

Female. ILST member. Pseudonym: Mrs. Lindi

Interviewer: Have you ever taught an academically gifted learner and what stands out about these academically gifted learners to you and how did you support them when they were in your class?

Mrs. Lindi: Okay, those kids that are gifted, you know, I will teach them, you know and they won't be having a problem and let us say you will teach them the phonics. And while you are still teaching them the phonics, they will start to formulate the words.

Interviewer: Are you a grade 1 teacher?

Mrs. Lindi: Yes.

Interviewer: How did you support these learners? When they were done with their work, and they understand the concepts, how did you support them?

Mrs. Lindi: Because they are at another level than the other learners in the class, I will give them something that is at least, a little bit more, not difficult, but at another

level of their learning. If we are doing three sounds words, they will be having to do four sound words.

Interviewer: I see, so basically enrichment that you would give them?

Mrs. Lindi: Yes.

Interviewer: What else do you find that stands out about them? Except for grasping a concept easily, what else do you find they do?

Mrs. Lindi: They will be like, before you can even finish the question, they know what to say.

Interviewer: So they are very knowledgeable?

Mrs. Lindi: yes.

Interviewer: Does the school have any programs that they have put in place to support academically gifted learners? For example, if the learners are doing very well, do they go on excursions or anything that the school does for them?

Mrs. Lindi: No, no excursions for the academically gifted.

Interviewer: So how do you support them? Only by certificates or so?

Mrs. Lindi: Yes. Even as a teacher, you acknowledge the child. You make the child realize that, he has got a talent.

Interviewer: There is not specifically any programs?

Mrs. Lindi: No, they will be having some competitions from grade one, they have mental maths and they compete against each other.

Interviewer: And this is from District?

Mrs. Lindi: Yes, but we do it at school level.

Interviewer: What is the role that the ILST plays when supporting the learners and the teachers who work with the academically gifted learners? Or do they only focus on the learners at risk?

Mrs. Lindi: We focus more on the learners at risk. Because they are the ones who get a lot of attention.

Interviewer: so no focus really from the ILST side on the academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Lindi: No support.

Interviewer: Please tell me about behaviour that these learners might have. For example, have you ever had behaviour problems coming from academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Lindi: no, but you know when, like you will be trying to bring other type of learners like the lower ones, the average ones to the level that you are at with the whole class. And those ones, the gifted ones, they will be taking over the whole lesson!

Interviewer: How do they take over the lesson? Are they bossy or how do you experience them?

Mrs. Lindi: There will be one that will be feeling bad and they don't want to raise up their hand, they will be, like okay, and then, the rest of the class, when they can't answer the question, they will be looking at that one. And expecting the gifted one to answer. (laughs)

Interviewer: They try to do all the answering?

Mrs. Lindi: Yes.

Interviewer: Are there any policies that have been put in place by the ILST members that speak to academic giftedness?

Mrs. Lindi: Not that I know of. Maybe there are, but not that I know of.

Interviewer: what policies do you have that the ILST has?

Mrs. Lindi: Intervention policies for the learners at risk.

Interviewer: Also, are there any workshops that the Department of education or that the unions give that focus on academically gifted learners?

Mrs. Lindi: Not that I know of. I have never attended any.

Interviewer: What other role players are there with regards to academic gifted learners? That you are aware of? The parents in the school, do they actually support the learners or not really?

Mrs. Lindi: I don't know at home, but because you can see that child is doing well, maybe it also starts at home. You can see it in the homework. The homework is done properly and accurately every day. It means that the parents are also taking part.

Interviewer: And other role players outside the school? Maybe the after care centres? Do you know if there are any around here?

Mrs. Lindi: Yes, there are but I am not sure if the children attend, but there are after cares.

Interviewer: So there are after cares, but you are not sure if they help the learners?

Mrs. Lindi: Yes.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the gifted learners that you have taught in your life, that stand out to you?

Mrs. Lindi: They take care of their academic lives.

Interviewer: Thank you, mam. I appreciate your time.

Addendum F
Coding

Codes

1 A	2 A	3 A	4 A	1 B	2 B	3 B	4 B
Identificati on of gifted learner.	Behaviour or character of learner	Behaviour or character of learner	Identificati on of gifted learner	What learners do as support (programs)	Identific ation of gifted learner	Identific ation of gifted learner	Identifi cation of gifted learner
Educator gave extra support	Educator gave extra support	Educator gave extra support	Behaviour or character of learner	Method of support	Behavi our or charact er of learner	Determi nation of gifted learner	Behavi our or charac ter of learne r
Willingnes s to spend money	What learners do as support (programs)	Method of support	Educator gave extra support	Negative behaviour of gifted	Lack of support from educato r	Educat or gave extra support	Educa tor gave extra suppo rt
Reason for giving support			What learners do as support (programs)	Reason for negative behaviour	What learner s do as support (progra ms)	Method of support	What learne rs do as suppo rt (progr ams)
What learners do as support (programs)				Educator concern	Educat or concer n	What learner s do as support (progra ms)	Metho d of suppo rt
Behaviour or character of learner				Feelings learner had about enrichment		Feeling learner had about enrich ment	
				Educator gave extra support			Educat or feeling about gifted learner s

1C	2 C	3 C	4 C	1 D	2 D	3 D	4 D
Identificati on of gifted learner.	Identificati on of gifted learner.	Educator unsure of how to word things	Behaviour or character of learner	Behavio ur or characte r of learner	Identificati on of gifted learner.	Behavio ur or characte r of learner	Identificati on of gifted learner.
Behaviour or character of learner	Educator gave extra support	Behaviour or character of learner	Educator gave extra support	Educato r gave extra support	Where learner is now	Educato r gave extra support	Behaviour or character of learner
Educator gave extra support	Behaviour or character of learner	Negative behaviour of gifted	What learners do as support (programs	What learners do as support (progra ms)	Educator gave extra support	What learners do as support (progra ms)	Method of support
Parental support role	What learners do as support (programs)	Reason for negative behaviour	Parental support role	Outcome of correct support	Behavio ur or character of learner	Negativ e behavio ur of gifted	Educator gave extra support
Learner willing to ask for help	Feelings learner had about enrichmen t	Educator experiece in teaching	Outcome of correct support	Present situation of gifted		Reason for negativ e behavio ur	What learners do as support (program s
Other role players		Identificati on of gifted learner	Curriculum doesn't offer support	Method of support			
		Presentatio n of gifted	Teaching situation in schools.	Educator feeling about gifted learners			
		Feelings learner had about enrichmen t	Identificati on of gifted learner.	Backgrou nd of learner			
		Curriculum doesn't offer support	Adjusting of teaching for all learners				
		Educator gave extra support	Educator feeling about gifted learners				
		Method of support					
		Reasoning behind lack of support					
		Outcome of no support					
		Educator					

							means of support
1 C	2 C	3 C	4 C	1 D	2D	3 D	4 D
Educators' idea for support	No support programs	No support programs	No support programs	Educator role in support	Educator role in support	Support in place	No programs
No current support program	Learners at risk	Departmental programs got diverted	Technology as means of support	Motivational support	Learners at risk	Learner at risk	No knowledge of excursions
Motivational program	Identification of gifted learners	Environmental problems	Financial problems	Financial support from outside	Educational excursions	No programs for gifted learners	Educator role in support
		Principal tries to no avail	Educator role in support				District competitions
		Outcome of lack of support	Concern from educator side				

		Concern for gifted learner					
		Reasoning to try and cope with lack of support					

1 A	2 A	3 A	4 A	1 B	2 B	3 B	4 B
ILST support	ILST role	ILST role	Learners at risk	Role of ILST	Role of ILST	Role of ILST	Educator response
Learners at risk	Focus on learners at risk	Learner needs	ILST role	Learners at risk	Educator feeling regarding lack of	Learners at risk	Learners at risk

					support for gifted learners		
Environmental support	no support from ILST	Method of support	No support from ILST	Unsure of support in other phase	Learners at risk	Identification of gifted learners	Feeling of struggling
	Disadvantaged gifted learners	Support not asked for gifted learner	Identification of gifted learners	Role of District		Help from outside	Departmental role
				Concern for gifted learners		Educator role	Concern for the gifted
				Educator feeling regarding lack of support for gifted learners			Educator role
							Early teaching years
							Method of support
							Learner's role of support
							Parental role
							Environmental concerns
							Previous teaching experience
							Feeling about previous school
1 C	2 C	3 C	4 C	1 D	2 D	3 D	4 D
Educator role	ILST role	ILST role	Role of ILST	Unsure of ILST role	Lack of support from ILST	Lack of support from ILST	ILST role
ILST role	Learners at risk	Learners at risk	Learners at risk	Learners at risk	ILST role	Learner role in support	Learners at risk
Learners at risk	Educator feeling	Departmental challenges	Identification of gifted learners	Educator role in support	Educator support	Learners at risk	Support need of learners at risk
	Concern for gifted learners	Educator concern		Educator playing parental role in		Method of support	

				child's life			
		Educator concern		Feeding scheme			
		Identification of gifted learners					
		Referring of learners at risk					
		Support challenges					
		Educators misconception					
		Educator concern. Lack of support					

1 A	2 A	3 A	4 A	1 B	2 B	3 B	4 B
Negative behaviour of gifted learners	Educator doesn't experience problems	Educator doesn't experience problems	Educator experiences minimal problems with gifted learners	Negative behaviour of gifted learners	Educator doesn't experience problems	Negative behaviour of gifted learners	Negative behaviour of gifted learners
Reasons for negative behaviour		Negative behaviour of gifted learners	Reason behind not experiencing problems	Reasons for negative behaviour	Learners at risk gives more behaviour problems	Reasons for negative behaviour	Reasons for negative behaviour
Behaviour as a whole		Reasons for negative behaviour	Learners at risk gives more behaviour problems		Discipline measures in place	Parental dependence	Method to counteract negative behaviour
Socio-economic factors						Gifted underperformers	Educator doesn't experience a lot of problems with the gifted
1C	2 C	3 C	4 C	1 D	2 D	3D	4D
Negative behaviour	Educator has little to no problems	Negative behaviour	Minimal negative behaviour	Cautious educator approach	Negative behaviour	Negative behaviour	Minimal negative behaviour

Lack of parental involvement	other educators experience problems	External factors	Good behaviour of gifted learners	Extreme negative behaviour	Reasons for negative behaviour	Reasons for negative behaviour	Educators role in class
Learners at risk have more problems	Method for maintaining discipline	Underperforming gifted learners	Teacher perceptions differ	Gifted learner characteristics			Negative attribute of gifted learners
Educator doesn't have big problems	Characteristic of gifted learner	Reasons behind negative behaviour	Teacher perception of behaviour	Peer pressure			Classroom behaviour
Parents themselves poses problems	Good behaviour of gifted learners		Learners at risk, average learners				Class realizes who is gifted

1 A	2 A	3 A	4 A	1 B	2 B	3 B	4 B
Policy, but not for gifted	Support strategy, but not for gifted	Learners at risk	No known policies	No known policies for gifted	No known policies for gifted	Unsure	No known policy for the gifted
Learners at risk	In implementation phase	Support strategy	support strategy	Learners at risk	Disciplinary measure	Policy, but not for gifted	Focus on learners at risk
Identification of gifted learners		Educator thought on support	Disciplinary measure	Disciplinary measure	Other policies are in place	Focus is not on gifted	Educator support
Policy places emphasis on learners at risk		Method of support				Support strategy	A well resource d school
1 C	2 C	3 C	4 C	1 D	2 D	3 D	4 D
no known policy for the gifted	Lack of policies from the department	No gifted policy	No gifted policy	No gifted policy	No gifted policy	No gifted policy	No gifted policy
	Educator doesn't have a lot of policies	Policy, but not for gifted	Educator support	Disciplinary procedure described		Focus on learners at risk	Focus on learners at risk
	Learners at risk	Policies are in place in the school	Technology suggested as support	Parental communication			
	Departmental admin	Educated idea on how a					

		gifted policy might look.					
	Touches on giftedness, no focus						
	Educator role of support						

1 A	2 A	3 A	4 A	1 B	2 B	3 B	4 B
No workshops for gifted	No workshops for gifted	No workshops for gifted	Union support	No workshops for gifted	No workshops for gifted	No workshops for gifted	No workshops for gifted
Support strategy	No focus		Logistical issues	Logistical issues	Support strategy	Identification of gifted learners	Union support
INSET from department			Financial issues	Union support	Focus on learners at risk		Logistical issues
Concern about administrative issues							
1 C	2 C	3 C	4 C	1 D	2 D	3 D	4 D
No workshops for gifted	Union support	Union support	No workshops	No workshops for gifted	Union support	No workshops for gifted	No workshops for gifted
Focus on discipline and how to be a good teacher	Focus on learners at risk	Department plays a silent role	Aimed at learner at risk	Focus on learners at risk	No recent workshop		
Focus on learners at risk		Workshop only when challenges arise		Focus on career guidance	Support in development in the field of the learners		
		School uses NGO's for help					

1 A	2 A	3 A	4 A	1 B	2 B	3 B	4 B
Parental support	Financial support from outside	Parental support	Small percentage of parental support	Program, but no information available	Aftercare renders support	Aftercare renders support	Parental support
Library as support, but not on school property	Library as support, but not on school property	Library as support, but not on	Older brothers and sisters render	no aftercares	Financial constraints	Financial constraints	Support from other family members

		school property	support				
Aftercare as support		Aftercare as support	Lack of interest in aftercare	No extra classes		Learner gets challenged	Gifted characteristics
			Financial constraints	Library not functional		Educator concern.	Support from internet
			Lack of parental care				Fully functional library as support
			Library as support, but not on school property				
1 C	2 C	3 C	4 C	1 D	2 D	3 D	4 D
Media centre as support	Lack of parental support		Extra classes as enrichment	Lack of parental support	Councillor gives support	Parental support	Parental support
Aftercares	Aftercares as support		Financial constraints	Educator concern	Financial support	No other known support	Aftercares as support
Financial constraints	Media centre as support			Motivational support	Lack of parental support	Gifted characteristics	Gifted characteristics
	Remedial programs			Character of gifted learner	Library not functioning		
	Wish for educational excursions				Learners don't go to aftercares		
	More challenging work for gifted learners						
	Educator concern						