Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention for learners with dyslexia in inclusive classes

By

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Supervisor: Dr Nkhensani Susan Thuketana

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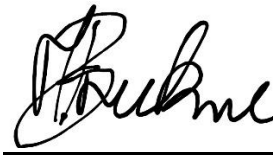
DECLARATION

I, Nomfundo Brukwe, declare that this dissertation, titled

“Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention for learners with dyslexia in inclusive classes.”

is entirely original. I have properly included and acknowledged all sources consulted. This dissertation, submitted in partial fulfilment of the Magister Educationis General degree at the University of Pretoria, has not been previously submitted for a degree at any other institution.



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To whom it may concern,

This letter confirms that the dissertation titled *Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention for learners with dyslexia in inclusive classes* by Nomfundo Brukwe was proofread and edited by All-done Editing Services.

The document was edited for grammar, punctuation, spelling, overall style and consistent use of South African English spelling conventions. All amendments were tracked using Microsoft Word's "Track Changes" feature, and consequently, the authors had the option to accept or reject each change. A complete edited copy was provided, but the final decisions as to which changes to implement, rested with the author.

Sincerely,

MSchutte

Marietjie Schutte

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ABSTRACT

According to the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016 report, South Africa ranked last among 50 countries in reading literacy, with only 78% of learners achieving the minimum benchmark for reading comprehension. This alarming statistic highlights the systemic issues in the educational system, which are exacerbated for learners with dyslexia who already struggle with writing and reading. The PIRLS study also revealed significant disparities in reading performance based on socio-economic factors, indicating that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds are at a greater risk of experiencing learning difficulties.

Context is essential when considering intervention strategies such as the RAVE-O programme, which provides targeted support for dyslexic learners in inclusive classrooms. The study suggested intervention strategies for dyslexic learners using the RAVE-O intervention programme, which emphasises retrieval, automaticity, vocabulary elaboration, and orthography. Non-probability purposive sampling was used to identify two inclusive schools in the Gauteng Province, one in the Ekurhuleni region and the other in Tshwane. Twelve Foundation Phase educators, six from each school, two being in managerial positions namely the Departmental Head and Headmistress were the study's primary participants. Learners were included as secondary participants, providing additional perspectives relevant to the research objectives. The study adopted a qualitative participatory action research (PAR) study design within an interpretivist paradigm. The conceptual framework from David Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Theory served as a lens by emphasising that learners seek to make sense of their interactions by attaching new knowledge to what they already know. The Asset-Based approach provided insights into the barriers within the learning context and identified the resources available to educators and learners and how to use them. The data was collected through focus groups, observations, document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The findings suggest that the Foundation Phase educators had a limited understanding of dyslexia. The findings further revealed that the District Based Support Teams (DBSTs) did not adequately support educators in offering training and resources to assist them with appropriate intervention strategies for the diagnosed learners. It is recommended that educators in inclusive schools receive training on dyslexia, including how to identify and observe

its signs in the classroom, steps to be taken before formal diagnosis, and how to provide intervention once diagnosed using the RAVE-O intervention programme.

The primary research question that guided the study was:

- How can the RAVE-O programme be used to support learners with dyslexia in inclusive Foundation Phase classes?

The following sub-questions guided this study:

- How do educators in Foundation Phase inclusive classes conceptualise dyslexia?
- How do Foundation Phase educators perceive their role in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia?
- What support do Foundation Phase educators in inclusive schools require to enhance the academic progress of dyslexic learners?
- What programmes do educators use as intervention strategies for learners diagnosed with dyslexia?

Keywords: Dyslexia, RAVE-O, Foundation Phase educator, Inclusive Classes, District Based Support Teams.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BDA	British Dyslexia Association
CADB-R	Cognitive Abilities Diagnostic Battery for Reading
CAPS	National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CATB-R	Computerised Cognitive Abilities Training Battery for Reading
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBSTs	District Based Support Teams
DH	Deputy Headmistress
DoE	Department of Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EPP	Educator preparation program
HOD	Head of Department
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
ISASA	The Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa
ISPs	Individual Support Plans
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
MDTs	Multidisciplinary teams
NCLD	National Center for Learning Difficulties
NILD	National Institute for Learning Development
PAR	Participatory action research
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
POSSuM	Phonology, orthography, semantics, syntax, and morphology
RADA	Red Apple Dyslexia Association
RAN	Rapid Automatized Naming
RAVE-O	Retrieval, Automaticity, Vocabulary, Engagement Orthography
SAIDE	South African Institute for Distance Education
SBST	School Based Support Team
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support
THRASS	Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skill
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
WCPM	Word count per minute

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH STUDY

South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994 marked its entry into the global movement advocating for educational equity. The new constitution sought to address the injustices of the apartheid era, fostering social justice and inclusion across various sectors, including education (UNESCO, 2005). In 2001, the newly established government adopted an inclusive education policy influenced by global discourses on social rights. This policy is encapsulated in the document titled Education White Paper No. 6: Special Needs Education – Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, 2001). The document provides a framework for schools to cultivate an inclusive environment for all learners, particularly those facing barriers to learning (Leseyane, Madende & Makgato, 2018).

Additionally, the policy outlines the necessity for educators to address the diverse educational needs of learners, including those with specific learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, which has presented significant challenges for teachers (Mahlo, 2017). Furthermore, the Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) policy complements the Education White Paper No. 6 by outsourcing support for learners with barriers to learning. This policy emphasises a collaborative approach, enabling schools to access external resources and expertise to better meet the needs of these learners. However, research indicates a persistent gap between policy formulation and its practical implementation, highlighting the challenges faced in realising the goals of inclusive education (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & van Deventer, 2016).

Dyslexia, the main focus of this study, is commonly known as a "hidden disability". The International Dyslexia Association (2015) defines it as a type of learning disorder that is neurologically based. The condition manifests difficulties in expressive and receptive language (Guide, 2019). Hoskins (2019) states that the system of language processes in the brain of a dyslexic individual is affected, which results in challenges with

accurate word fluency, recognition, spelling, and decoding. Learners with dyslexia face difficulties engaging in tasks that involve reading, spelling, and writing (Guide, 2019). According to Lawrence (2009), the above dyslexic challenges are accompanied by secondary effects. Lack of concentration, low self-esteem, working memory (forgetfulness), and lack of organisational skills (untidiness) affect the diagnosed learner, which results in them becoming irritated and impatient (Lawrence, 2009). Dyslexia is a lifelong disorder with no known cure. LeWine (2025) confirms that individuals with dyslexia experience persistent neurological differences that cannot be altered or remedied through medication or medical procedures, which is why no cure currently exists for the disorder. However, early detection and evaluation to determine specific needs provided by educators and specialists can improve success for diagnosed learners.

Educators' support strategies play a significant role in learners' development, and the lack of skills from educators exposes them to different scenarios triggered by learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. According to Naidoo (2019), reading instruction as a skill for educators is vital for dyslexic learners. Teacher training on understanding how reading develops, supporting learners' phonological processing, teaching phonics systematically, assessing risk for reading difficulties, and providing the appropriate support are the basic skills educators should acquire to support dyslexic learners (Naidoo, 2019).

Mbatha (2018) revealed the high dropout rate of learners diagnosed with Dyslexia in the Foundation Phase. The study further revealed that learners diagnosed with dyslexia do not only face cognitive difficulties but also emotional issues, poor self-esteem, and frustration (Mbatha, 2018). Leseyane (2018) echoed the issues after observing learners' negative experiences within the school environment because of a lack of early intervention. Obtaining literacy skills is not enough to accommodate learners with dyslexia, and educators need to acquire emotional intelligence within their intrapersonal and interpersonal space to help diagnosed learners.

With the above said, it is evident that without early intervention, learners with dyslexia will remain vulnerable and excluded from mainstream schools. Therefore, educators must be trained with the requisite information, skills, and values to teach dyslexic learners, especially in the current era where governments encourage Inclusive

Education (Kinsella, 2020). Developing strategies, policies, and programmes for continual professional development for educators will encourage skills acquirement for teaching learners with Dyslexia to access the prescribed curriculum (Kinsella, 2020).

The most effective dyslexic intervention programmes are based on approaches dating back to the 1920s (Horizon, 2022). The Orton-Gillingham model, named after an educator and neuropsychiatrist, was developed as a systematic reading intervention method (Horizon, 2022). The approach proved a successful foundation for intervention programmes designed for dyslexic learners (Sayeski, Earle, Davis & Calamari, 2018). The model incorporated multisensory engagements, instruction of phonics, personalised one-on-one practice, and continuous feedback.

In Texas in the United States of America teachers are equipped with the Educator Preparation Program (EPP) to identify dyslexic learners in the classroom by following appropriate instruction and assessment (Keys, n.d.). The EPP allows dyslexia screening to identify the specific learning disability (Texas Education Agency, 2018). The screening process tool "does not diagnose dyslexia but identifies predictors so that parents and teachers can provide early intervention effectively" (Texas Education Agency, 2018: 11). The programme permits time to be used wisely with early intervention throughout the diagnosis process. A related hypothesis by Köpfer and Óskarsdóttir (2019) compared Canada and Iceland, and discovered that educators were trained to address Special Educational Needs (SEN) learners and accommodate them with different strategies. The focus was on supporting and preparing the teacher to accommodate the SEN learner into school through inclusive education (Köpfer & Óskarsdóttir, 2019). This programme not only equips educators with the rightful skills but also provides them with the support needed when teaching learners with barriers to learning. Despite all the interventions, in a South African context, Olivier (2017) discovered that educators' experiences with diverse learner needs have been challenging because they did not feel prepared to support dyslexic learners.

The literature perused in the South African context suggests that the closest intervention programme to assisting learners with Dyslexia is THRASS. THRASS refers to "Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skill'' (Joubert, 2016: 180). This programme is based on improving memorisation and the multisensory approach

(Joubert, 2016). The programme can help dyslexic learners to a certain extent as it is structured to follow specific phonemic sounds. However, it still leaves gaps because children experiencing dyslexic difficulties present with diverse conditions and cannot benefit from “one-size-fits-all” interventions.

Furthermore, the programme was designed for typically developing children in mainstream classes. Olivier (2017) points this out by stating that dyslexia is individual-specific with specified symptoms. Generalising the impairment and using common interventions to manipulate the barriers bridge the social-justice rights for the diagnosed learners and their specific symptoms.

From the perspective above, the study proposed to use the RAVE-O programme to investigate dyslexic interventions for learners in inclusive Foundation Phase classes. RAVE-O is an abbreviation for Retrieval, Automaticity, Vocabulary Elaboration and Orthography (Wolf, 2009). The RAVE-O intervention programme incorporates fun and exciting activities to encourage dyslexic learners to improve their reading and writing skills (Glendinning, 2014). It is based on social contact and active participation from both the learner and educator. The programme acknowledges that learners diagnosed with dyslexia face not only phonological issues but also emotional issues (Glendinning, 2014). The programme serves as an intervention that advocates for thorough investigations into morphology, orthography, syllables, pragmatics, syntax, and semantics (Wolf, 2009). The researcher recognised RAVE-O as a beneficial intervention tool because it is adaptable to individual, pair work, and small groups and targets different learning difficulties dyslexic learners experience.

Against the above background, the study investigated the intervention programmes used by South African educators for dyslexic learners in Foundation Phase inclusive classes, compared with the RAVE-O programme.

1.2 RATIONALE

The rationale for this study was grounded on my personal, professional and academic reasons. The intertwining of my personal and professional reasons for conducting this study stems from my passion for learning support in education, which developed when I started teaching Foundation Phase in 2021. As a Grade 3 teacher at the time, I found it essential to equip learners with the necessary skills to prepare them for the next

phase. However, I encountered a learner who could not see clearly on the chalkboard and who was often labelled lazy and slow. From the standpoint of a teacher who truly cares, I knew his problem was not just an optic issue but more. As a South African university graduate, I was fortunate to have studied a learner support module. In the module, I learned never to rush diagnosis but to observe and identify the root cause of the problem. Observing the learner, I realised he struggled with reading, decoding, word recognition, and spelling. The observation revealed a slow reading pace, letter reversals (e.g., b/d), difficulty sounding out words from left to right, and guessing answers in reading comprehension tasks. The learner was assessed by an educational psychologist and subsequently diagnosed with dyslexia.

I encountered challenges in identifying the appropriate methods to support the learner. The report provided accommodations to use in the classroom, including oral testing, reducing workload, daily reading sessions, and a multisensory approach. However, there was a lack of resources and no standardised programmes available for learners following diagnoses provided by the school. Furthermore, during informal discussions with fellow educators, colleagues indicated that the school's lack of resources and absence of standardised learning support programmes often resulted in referrals of learners like him to LSEN schools. LSEN stands for learners with special education needs (Department of Basic Education, 2014). An LSEN school caters to learners who have special educational needs due to severe, learning difficulties, behavioural problems or physical disabilities (Department of Basic Education, 2014). I started enquiring about the literature on dyslexia and the programmes addressing the condition. The RAVE-O programme stood out due to its high success rate with learners diagnosed with dyslexia. Despite the challenges of limited resources and no standard programmes, the learner showed readiness through his improvement from the intervention provided and progressed to the next grade. No standard intervention programme was used at the school, but the educational psychologist suggested combining different support strategies. As part of the school management team, I was committed to redefining learning support within the inclusive classroom. This involves accommodating and addressing the diverse needs of learners to enhance effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, educators had to implement interventions tailored to each learner's abilities, creating varied pathways to demonstrate their understanding, regardless of their diagnosis. Additionally, I planned to provide training

for educators on the RAVE-O programme and recommend strategies specifically designed for learners diagnosed with dyslexia.

It is essential to establish a clear rationale for these initiatives. According to Moola (2015), a rationale comprises a set of reasons that elucidate why the researcher undertakes a study and how it contributes to the relevant field. By articulating this rationale, I aimed to emphasise the significance of targeted support and professional development by encouraging an inclusive educational environment.

Academically, my interest in this study arises from the existing gaps identified in the current literature. Dudovskiy (2022) states that a rationale justifies the study's contribution to eliminating the gap identified. This study's rationale focused on the challenges prevalent within the South African education system, which subsequently hindered the motivation for educators to support learners with dyslexia. I am fortunate to be an educator in the South African education system because I was able to identify frustration from educators, with a lack of intervention skills, which caused stress to learners with dyslexia. In support of the statement, Olivier (2017) mentions that educators' challenges become demanding and cause stress and frustration. Ravipati (2017), on the other hand, reiterates that according to the National Center for Learning Difficulties (NCLD), the lack of skilled educators affects learners with learning difficulties. Learners are three times more likely to drop out of school, with 18.1% of those with dyslexia compared to 6.1% for all other learners (Ravipati, 2017). South Africa remains a country with limited resources, limited educator training institutions, and few opportunities for professional development (Gina, 2017). It is for the above-mentioned reasons that this study intended to provide a strategy to enhance educators' skills to accommodate learners with dyslexia using the RAVE-O programme.

Catering to the needs of learners with dyslexia in mainstream schools requires educators to step out of their comfort zones and embrace differentiation (Abubakar, 2024). In this context, implementing the RAVE-O programme, a comprehensive and highly successful intervention for children with dyslexia, presents a significant challenge. Integrating RAVE-O into mainstream classrooms becomes a difficult task Without the right perception and support from the District-Based Support Teams (DBST). The RAVE-O programme, which connects neuroscience to the classroom,

aims to address the unique needs of learners with dyslexia by targeting reading challenges through new research on fluency (Wolf, 2009). However, the large gaps in practice and policy often hinder the effective implementation of such interventions in mainstream schools (Mfuthwana & Dreyer, 2019). Bridging this divide requires a concerted effort to provide educators with the necessary training, resources, and support to implement interventions like RAVE-O, ensuring that all learners, regardless of their unique needs, have access to quality education.

Most studies examining the support mainstream school educators receive from DBSTs tend to generalise their effectiveness in implementing inclusive policies within classrooms (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Du Toit et al., 2016; Mabaso, 2019; Makhalamele & Nel, 2016). Consequently, there is a notable lack of research focusing specifically on the support that Foundation Phase educators require from DBSTs in effectively implementing intervention for learners with dyslexia, particularly through the RAVE-O programme. This study aimed to fill that gap, providing groundbreaking contributions to the literature by highlighting the necessity of tailored training and resources for educators to successfully integrate the RAVE-O intervention, which has been shown to enhance reading fluency and comprehension in learners with dyslexia (Wolf, 2009).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Results from the Zero Dropout Campaign and other findings (Fraser, 2023; Kahn, 2024) reveal the issue of learners dropping out of school, particularly by Grade 4, is a significant concern in South Africa, primarily driven by a lack of effective interventions for struggling pupils in the Foundation Phase. The high dropout rates among Grade 4 learners in South Africa are largely attributable to insufficient intervention strategies addressing literacy and learning challenges. To combat this issue, it is essential for educational authorities to enhance support systems and implement effective, research-based interventions that cater to the diverse needs of learners. For this, it is vital to equip educators with the use of the RAVE-O programme to provide interventions for dyslexic learners in inclusive Foundation Phase classes.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to explore the implementation of the RAVE-O programme as an intervention for dyslexic pupils in inclusive Foundation Phase classrooms, with the goal of providing recommendations to the Department of Basic Education (DBE). These recommendations are intended to enhance existing intervention strategies and improve the access of curriculum for learners facing reading challenges in mainstream schools. Additionally, the study aimed to emphasise the importance of providing comprehensive training to Foundation Phase educators by training and observing them on the use of the RAVE-O programme in the inclusive classroom. Furthermore, the research sought to identify the specific support that Foundation Phase educators require from DBSTs to implement the RAVE-O programme in their classrooms effectively. The research questions were formulated to align with these objectives, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions and needs of educators regarding the integration of this evidence-based reading intervention.

1.4.1 Study objectives

- To determine the Foundation Phase educator's conceptualisation of dyslexia in inclusive schools.
- To examine Foundation Phase educators' perception of their role in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.
- To explore intervention programmes used to minimise learning difficulties for learners with dyslexia.
- To determine the support Foundation Phase educators, receive to enhance the academic progress of learners diagnosed with dyslexia.
- To train educators on the use of RAVE-O as a baseline programme, to suggest possible early intervention strategies for dyslexic learners in inclusive schools.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Developing solid research questions is critical in a research study. This study was guided by a primary research question and four sub-research questions. The questions determined the emphasis of the work and guided the entire process, ultimately answering the research problem (Neri de Souza, Neri & Costa, 2016). The

research questions especially played a vital role in guiding me to review the appropriate literature and provided the focus for data collection.

1.5.1 Primary research question

The primary research question that guided this study was:

How can the RAVE-O programme be used to support learners with dyslexia in inclusive Foundation Phase classes?

1.5.2 Secondary research questions

The secondary research questions that guided this study were:

- How do educators in Foundation Phase inclusive classes conceptualise dyslexia?
- How do Foundation Phase educators perceive their role in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia?
- What support do Foundation Phase educators in inclusive schools require to enhance the academic progress of dyslexic learners?
- What programmes do educators use as intervention strategies for learners diagnosed with Dyslexia?

1.6 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

Concept clarification is a process that engages critical thinking and enables a theory to develop a conceptualisation for adequacy (Kramer, 1993). It seeks to establish how various authors have defined concepts and how the current research will use the concepts to minimise confusion (Warwick Education Studies, 2016). The aim is to eliminate misunderstandings about the used concepts (Warwick Education Studies, 2016). In this section, I define the main concepts I used in this study being: RAVE-O programme, strategy, intervention, dyslexia and, foundation phase educator. These concepts were used to clarify their definition and application for the purpose of this study.

1.6.1 RAVE-O programme

RAVE-O (Retrieval, Automaticity, Vocabulary Elaboration, and Orthography) is a programme created by cognitive neuroscientists and educators at Tufts University in conjunction with Georgia State University and the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto (Wolf, 2009). Maryanne Wolf and Tufts University developed the programme in 2006 after a five-year observational, experimental study on learners in three big cities (Randleff-Rasmussen, 2010:7). The programme serves as an intervention that advocates for a thorough study of morphology, orthography, syllables, pragmatics, syntax, and semantics (Wolf, 2009). The intervention often considers repetition and its relationship to auditory memory for rapid retrieval (Wolf & Bowers, 1999). The programme targets vocabulary development as vital to rapid recall (oral and written language) and greater comprehension (Wolf, 2009). The RAVE-O programme also enhances word retrieval skills using various methods, including metacognitive strategies (Wolf, 2009).

The study observed how educators used the RAVE-O programme to suggest developmental approaches for learners experiencing dyslexia challenges. The suggestions encompassed alternatives to develop reading and writing competency in inclusive Foundation Phase classes. For this study, the researcher adopted the concept of RAVE-O as originally defined by Dr. Maryanne Wolf, the programme's creator. This meant that the study employed RAVE-O according to its established theoretical framework and instructional principles, without modifying or adapting it for a different purpose.

1.6.2 Strategy

According to Anilkumar (2022), a strategy is a method and technique used to reach a specific target market's end goal. In the education context, Anilkumar (2022) defines a strategy as educators' methods and techniques to support learners through their process of learning. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln defines a strategy as a tool to accomplish a task (Special Education and Communication Disorders, n.d.). In comparison, Booker (2019) brings in a more generic definition of responding to dynamic and hostile environment circumstances by coming up with a plan. For the study's purpose, I used Anilkumar's definition as it is more relatable to education and the study's context.

1.6.3 Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a hidden disability considered as reading and learning difficulty. Kumaş, Sümer Dodur and Yazıcıoğlu (2021) define Dyslexia as an inability in a person who does not have any definitive intellectual perceptual or sensory deficits. Despite average intelligence, it is an inherited disorder presenting reading, writing, and spelling challenges. Randleff-Rasmussen (2009:31) describes it as "a particular reading disorder that cannot be explained by low intelligence or insufficient instruction and is distinguished by particular difficulties in spelling, word recognition, and reading fluency". Snowling (2012) brings in the medical definition by referring to dyslexia as a neurodevelopmental condition with a genetic component. It affects the development of spelling and reading fluency due to challenges with word decoding. For this study, I used Kumaş, Sümer Dodur and Yazıcıoğlu's (2021) definition as it emphasises reading, writing, and spelling to be difficult for the dyslexic learner.

1.6.4 Intervention

Lynch (2019) defines intervention as steps an educator takes to help learners improve in their area of need and aim to eliminate the experienced barriers. Hawthorne (2021) describes intervention as a deviation from standard practice to offer support to learners experiencing barriers to learning. Hawthorne (2021) encourages educators to deliver the intervention in small groups or one-on-one. On the other hand, Lee (n.d) views intervention as methods followed to track the learners' academic progress. This study used Lynch's definition as it emphasises the educator's systematic removal of barriers to enhance academic progress, which is one of the study's objectives.

1.6.5 Foundation Phase educator

An educator is described as an individual who holds the requisite qualifications to teach, mentor, and convey knowledge on particular subjects to a group of pupils (Gross, 2024; Merriam-Webster, 2024). Moreover, an educator is a trained professional responsible for imparting values, skills, and knowledge to learners, supporting their overall development and preparing them to participate effectively in society (Senge, 2000). In South Africa, the Foundation Phase marks the first stage of formal education, covering Grades R to 3, and caters to learners aged six to nine years (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2011). For this study, the definition provided

by the Department of Basic Education regarding Foundation Phase educators, specifically those teaching Grades 1 to 3, was adopted.

1.7 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is a systematic synopsis of previously conducted studies (Andruss, 2020). It selects material from academic sources, such as articles and books, applicable to the particular field of study (Andruss, 2020). McCombes (2019) further states that a literature review is a way to analyse, clarify, and critically assess various sources related to a specific research topic. This preliminary literature review focused on the conditions of inclusive education in South Africa, particularly investigating interventions for dyslexic learners within the Foundation Phase, by first understanding the meaning of dyslexia. It explored educators' perceptions and roles regarding interventions in relation to the RAVE-O programme and the assistance they require from the DBST to implement learning support effectively. Furthermore, the preliminary literature highlights existing gaps in the literature relevant to the research topic. Notably, it underlines the importance of intervention strategies for enhancing educational outcomes for diverse learners, including those with dyslexia.

1.7.1 Defining and understanding dyslexia

Many people, nationally and internationally, misunderstand dyslexia and how individuals with the condition present. According to Aslam (2018), the concept 'dyslexia' is derived from the Greek words *dys-* (impaired) *and lexis* (word). Dyslexia is a condition that affects the skills to learn, which involve spelling and reading (Hulme & Snowling, 2017). Dyslexia is characterised by difficulties in fluent and accurate word recognition, as well as poor decoding and spelling skills (International Dyslexia Association, 2015). Dyslexia has resulted in many debates and discussions, leading to no consensus reached (Hoskins, 2019). However, literature centres the causes around genetics, brain malfunction, illnesses, or environmental factors (Hoskins, 2019). The Red Apple Dyslexia Association (RADA) classifies dyslexia under three types: Dyseidesia, Dysphonesia, and Dysnemkinesia. Dyseidesia is the inability to perceive whole words as visual gestalts and match them with auditory gestalts; Dysphonesia is a deficit in visual-symbol and sound integrations. At the same time, Dysnemkinesia is the inability to develop motor gestalts for written symbols and write them without reversals in the correct direction (RADA, 2015).

Dyslexia manifests in different ways at the learner's different developmental stages (Olivier, 2017). Learners with dyslexia will display most of their characteristics depending on their developmental age (Snowling, 2012). As mentioned in the introduction (cf. Section 1.1), Dyslexia remains different from person to person, and individuals' characteristics vary (Hoskins, 2019). Although reading is known as dyslexia's primary challenge, is just one of the condition's many characteristics. Dyslexic learners may lack concentration, experience multi-faceted effects on working memory, and may lack general organisational skills (Hoskins, 2019). In addition, Leseyane (2018) states that due to the characteristics above, learners with dyslexia mostly present an atypical route to learning as compared to their typical peers. Hence, the symptoms have to be diagnosed correctly.

In South African inclusive schools, recognising the diverse manifestations of dyslexia is essential. Understanding dyslexia is crucial for fostering an inclusive educational environment. As highlighted, dyslexia is not a reflection of intelligence; rather, it affects how individuals process written language, leading to unique learning paths that differ from their peers (Hulme & Snowling, 2017; International Dyslexia Association, 2015). Thus, educators must be equipped to understand and identify dyslexic traits in the Foundation Phase in order to follow through on observations and intervention strategies.

1.7.2 Educators' conceptualisation of dyslexia in classrooms

Internationally, multidisciplinary professionals are assigned to diagnose dyslexic learners (Andresen & Monsrud, 2021). However, policies related to the National Literacy Strategy and inclusion in the United Kingdom indicate that educators play a crucial role in identifying and preparing dyslexic learners for assessment and early intervention (Reid, 2015). Thwala, Christian and Okeke (2020) state that educators had negative experiences teaching dyslexic learners because of their lack of knowledge and familiarity with disabilities. The lack of knowledge resulted in educators' negative attitudes towards the learners. Thus, the study identified the needs of Foundation Phase educators in inclusive contexts and equipped them with the necessary knowledge and skills through the RAVE-O programme training, which was used to teach dyslexic learners in the classroom. Educators admitted that they were neither trained nor prepared to work with dyslexic learners (Thwala et al., 2020).

Therefore, the study outlined educators' perspectives on their experiences with dyslexic learners and used the RAVE-O programme to provide dyslexic interventions for learners in the Foundation Phase inclusive classes.

1.7.3 The role of the educator in the classroom

The Education White Paper 6 emphasises the pivotal role of the educator in teaching and supporting learners who are experiencing barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2001). Du Toit, Louw and Jacobs (2016) identified seven roles that the Department of Education suggests an educator in the South African context should demonstrate in the classroom.

The seven roles of the teacher (Du Toit et al., 2016: 36)

1. Mediator of Learning.
2. Designer and Interpreter of Learning materials and programmes.
3. Administrator, Leader and Manager.
4. Researcher, scholar and lifelong learner.
5. Community, citizenship and pastoral role player.
6. Learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist.
7. Assessor.

The above roles apply mainly in the inclusive classroom context. As an educator, the interpreter and mediator roles are essential when observing the barriers, the learner experiences. The observations conducted will be used as evidence needed for diagnosis (Hoskins, 2019). The diagnosis process is conducted when the educator refers the learner to a specialist for an assessment with the parents' approval and School Based Support Team (SBST) (Hoskins, 2019). The school, educators, and parents in the United States of America collaboratively conduct informal diagnosis and referrals of dyslexic learners (Keys, n.d.). Neurologists, educational psychologists, or any other qualified medical professionals can provide dyslexic diagnosis. According to Hoskins (2019), the formal diagnosis in South Africa is done by an educational psychologist and approved by professionals registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). While this process can be time-consuming, the Department of Basic Education (2014) further expects educators to provide individual learning programmes to limit the barriers to learners' experience in the classroom. The

lack of intervention programmes and limited support for Foundation Phase educators further exacerbates teachers' frustration and feeds their negative attitudes. Thus, the study examined educators' perception of their role in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.

1.7.4 Intervention programmes and strategies

According to the principles of inclusive education, educators must adapt the curriculum with their instructional methods and evaluation techniques to meet the varying needs of their learners in the classroom (Bruwer, Hartell & Steyn, 2014). The inclusive education policy aims to implement techniques and interventions to assist educators in dealing with various learning and teaching demands to alleviate transitory learning challenges (Bruwer et al., 2014). The most significant impediment to the implementation of inclusive education is, among other things, educators' lack of knowledge and skills regarding curriculum adaptation to accommodate learners' diverse educational needs (Dalton, Mckenzie, & Kahonde, 2012). The above emphasises the need for educators to narrow the learning gap to provide suitable intervention programmes and inclusive education principles.

Joubert (2016) suggests that teaching and learning strategies be scrutinised more on grouping, workstations, fun activities, and thematic approaches. Breaking down the set outcomes and a timeframe on when learners need to meet them will improve success for dyslexic learners. The current curriculum delivery outcomes and time constraints disable dyslexic learners, who may need more time and other dynamic strategies to grasp the concepts. It is crucial to ensure educators recognise dyslexia as a disorder and identify adequate interventions and resources for inclusive classrooms. The study determined support strategies that educators need to improve the academic progress of learners diagnosed with dyslexia through the use of the RAVE-O programme.

1.7.5 Role of the Department of Education in supporting dyslexic learners and educators in inclusive Foundation Phase classes

According to the National Department of Education, the inclusive education policy is critical in guiding the South African education system (Department of Education, 2014). It is a guideline for promoting equality and inclusion for all learners in the inclusive classroom (Department of Education, 2014). An investigation of the above

statement led to the discovery of the South African Sign Language CAPS curriculum. The document serves to help educators in special needs schools teach auditory-impaired learners (Education, n.d.). No studies in the literature indicated guiding strategies for all other learning impairments, including dyslexia, resulting in educators offering the curriculum without thorough guidance on how to assist learners experiencing difficulties associated with dyslexia.

In South Africa, the Department of Education provides educators with skills development workshops conducted by DBST officials (Department of Education, 2011). Workshops target subject knowledge and classroom management (Department of Education, 2011). However, very few workshops provide intervention strategies and teacher support. Nevertheless, the Department provides educators flexibility to apply for accommodations for learners experiencing barriers to learning (Kanevsky, 2011). These accommodations can include specialist support, scribes, extra time in assessments for learners diagnosed, or resources for activities (Kanevsky, 2011). Educators must recognise the significance of dyslexia and the necessary support for affected learners. Therefore, this study investigated the intervention strategies that educators employ in relation to the RAVE-O programme to improve learning outcomes for dyslexic learners. Furthermore, it examined the assistance educators receive from the DBSTs.

1.8 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

According to Patidar (2013), assumptions are realistic expectations, and researchers' beliefs are accurate but have no adequate evidence to support their stance. Assumptions provide a basis for developing theories and research instruments and influence the development and implementation of research (Patidar, 2013). Peligro (2015) adds that assumptions become a foundation for research progress because they provide a basis for conducting a study. A study must acknowledge assumptions and mitigation strategies that may influence the results (Peligro, 2015). The following working assumptions guided the study:

- There are no standard intervention programmes for learners diagnosed with dyslexia in the South African Foundation Phase context.
- Educators in South Africa do not know the RAVE-O programme.

- DBSTs do not adequately support educators in providing intervention for dyslexic learners in the classrooms.

Table 1.1*: Suppositions and biases*

Supposition	**Bias**	**Action to counteract the influence on the study**
Participants have an acceptable level of understanding of the meaning of dyslexia	Basic questions to be asked about intervention strategies and the support received from the DBSTs	Confirmability was important to ensure that I refrained from expressing my personal opinions on the findings. Instead, I focused on deriving results strictly from the collected data or by presenting the responses verbatim.

1.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework is a guide that builds and supports the study by providing structure to define how the researcher will philosophically, epistemologically, analytically and methodologically approach the study (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). The conceptual framework is the “blueprint” of the study that maps out how the research problem will be explored by enhancing the scientific status of the investigation (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). In selecting the conceptual framework for this study, the researcher was mindful of the aim of equipping Foundation Phase educators with RAVE-O programme training to use as an intervention for dyslexic learners in inclusive classrooms. The study sought insights using David Ausubel’s Meaningful Learning theory and was supported by the asset-based approach.

The Venn diagram illustrates the overlap between the three key concepts:

- **David Ausubel’s Meaningful Learning theory** focuses on connecting new information to existing knowledge in the learner’s cognitive structure. Key aspects include meaningful learning, cognitive structure, and subsumption.

- **The RAVE-O programme** is an evidence-based approach to developing reading fluency in struggling readers. It integrates phonics, vocabulary, grammar, and morphology to build automaticity and comprehension. RAVE-O supports dyslexic learners and those with Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) weaknesses.
- **The Asset-Based Approach** emphasises identifying and leveraging the learners' strengths, resources and capacities and their contexts to address the challenges. It enhances resilience by focusing on positive assets.

The overlapping area highlights the common ground between the theories – meaningful learning, support for dyslexic learners, and emphasis on existing knowledge and strengths. This conceptual framework provides a strong foundation for exploring the assets and support strategies used by educators for dyslexic learners in the RAVE-O programme. The study discussed the conceptual framework in detail in Chapter 2.

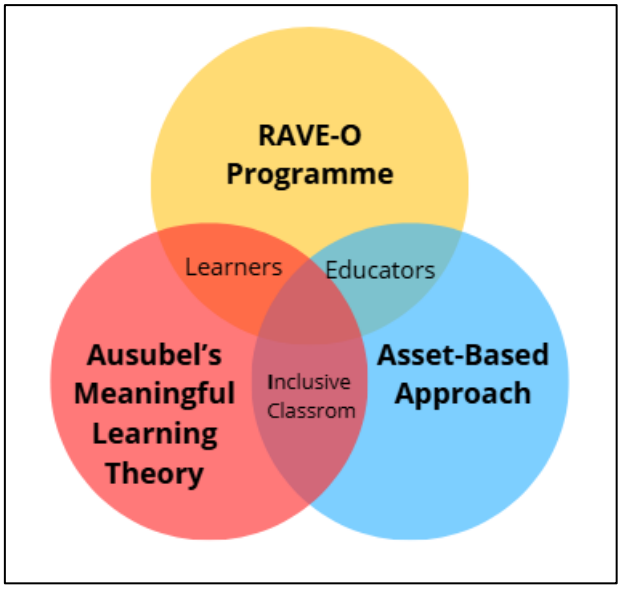


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework guiding the intervention of learners in inclusive classes

1.10 PRELIMINARY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Maree (2019) defines research methodology as procedures researchers use to collect data, describe, analyse and explain the phenomena. In support of this definition, Savini, Buck and Dickson (2014) describe research methodology as a plan that conceptualises methods, using theories to support the research study. In the following

section, I clarified the reasoning and justification for this research study's particular method(s). The basis and grounds for each research approach are illuminated.

1.10.1 Research design

According to Akhtar (2016), a research design is the structure that keeps all the aspects of research together. It outlines the procedures and processes for gathering, analysing, and reporting research findings (Akhtar, 2016). Burkholder (2019) states that research design provides a solid foundation for the entire study by using various approaches to solve the problem.

This research study used participatory action research (PAR) as its research design. PAR is defined as a collaborative mode of inquiry that seeks to find solutions to existing problems (Maree, 2019). The research design emphasises the process of identifying issues, collecting data and implementing solutions (Pain et al., 2011). PAR allows for a deeper understanding of the issues at hand (Kindon et al., 2007), particularly in the context of supporting learners with dyslexia through the RAVE-O programme in inclusive classrooms. By employing PAR, the research design allowed the researcher to foster a collaborative environment where educators and learners actively contributed to the research process. This design not only enhanced the relevance and applicability of the findings but also aimed to empower participants by building their knowledge and skills (Appel et al., 2017). The iterative nature of PAR ensured that the study remains responsive to the needs of dyslexic learners, ultimately leading to more effective interventions and improved academic outcomes.

To effectively use the PAR in the study, the design was implemented in five cycles. The cycles are discussed in further detail in Chapter 3. Figure 1.2 presents the PAR model used in the research study.

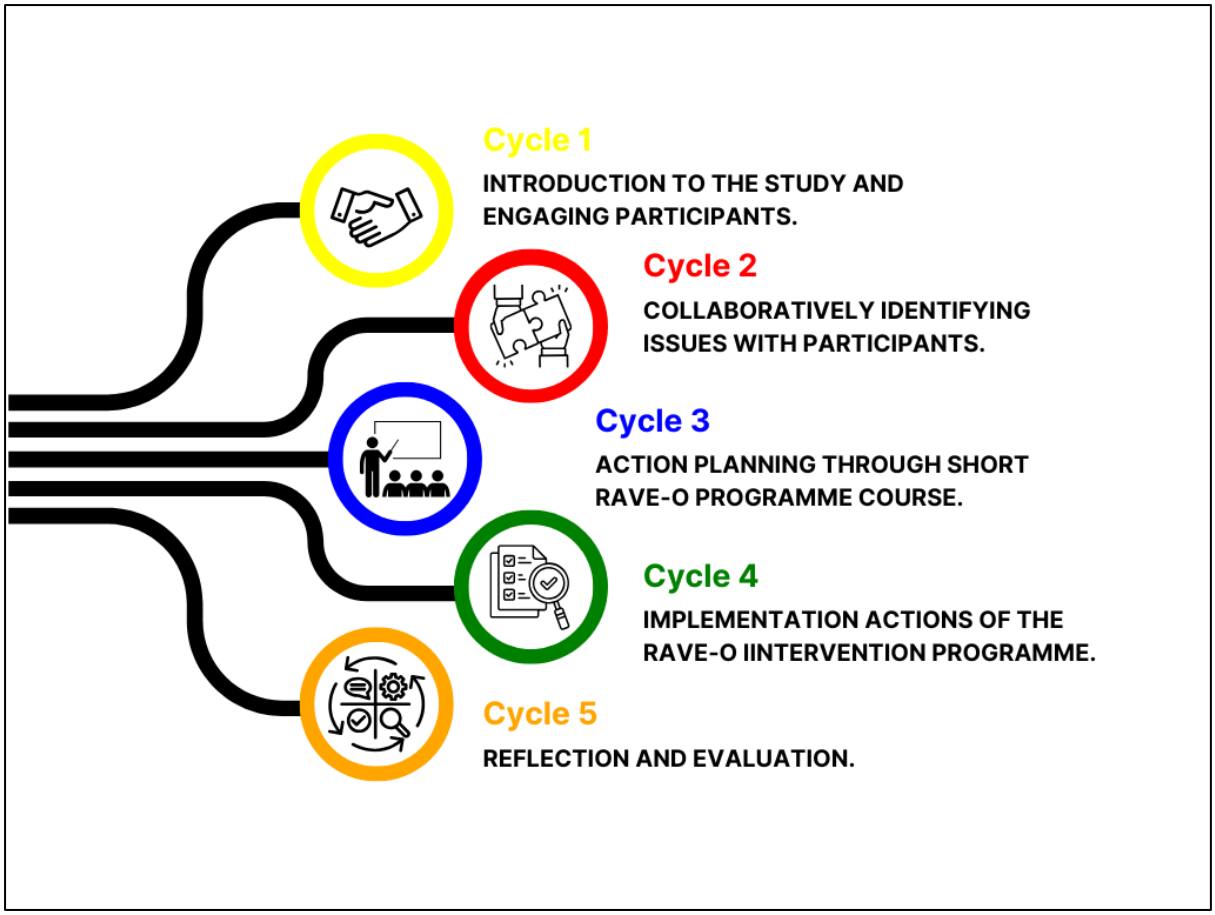


Figure 1.2: PAR model implemented in this study

Cycle 1: Introduction to the study and engaging participants – The researcher conducted two introductory sessions at the selected schools. Initially, educators were engaged in the process through an introduction to the research study, outlining its purpose, problem statement, rationale, and objectives. Additionally, the meeting provided an explanation of PAR, its application within the study, and the ways in which participants could contribute their time and involvement. The objective of Cycle 1 was to create a comfortable environment for participants, allowing them to ask questions and become acquainted with the researcher.

Cycle 2: Collaboratively identifying issues with participants – The researcher hosted the second session to collaboratively identify key challenges that educators face in teaching dyslexic learners. This involved a conversation where participants shared their perspectives and insights on their experiences with dyslexia and the current interventions and accommodations they put in place. This aligned with the PAR principle of valuing the knowledge of those affected by the issue (Baum et al., 2006).

Cycle 3: Action Planning – Cycle 3 saw the researcher providing the educators with a short course of RAVE-O. The researcher provided participants with a digital copy of the training kit with the presentation slides, training pack, additional materials, assessment, evaluation form and notes. The RAVE-O programme short course built on the issues identified in Cycle 2, and aimed to collaborate with participants to develop an action plan that outlined specific strategies for using the RAVE-O programme to support dyslexic learners. This plan included measurable objectives and methods for assessing progress (Pain et al., 2011).

Cycle 4: Implement Actions – Participants took up the task of implementing the action plan into practice. The action plan included using the RAVE-O programme in classroom lessons by integrating it in English lessons. This cycle saw the researcher getting involved as the participant-observer in the classroom. Assisting educators with the RAVE-O programme, modifying lesson plans to incorporate multisensory activities, and creating a supportive classroom environment that encourages participation.

Cycle 5: Reflect and Evaluate – After implementing the actions, the researcher gathered participants' feedback on their experiences. This was done through semi-structured interviews and reflective discussion session. The researcher evaluated the effectiveness of the RAVE-O programme in improving literacy skills among dyslexic learners and identifying areas for further improvement (Kindon et al., 2007). The reflective discussion session allowed participants' insights gained from the study to discuss their experiences and continued the cycle of action and reflection. This iterative process allowed for ongoing improvement and adaptation based on real-time feedback from participants (Chilisa, 2012).

1.10.2 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is described as a framework of shared beliefs and agreements among scholars regarding the presentation and resolution of challenges (Patel, 2015). Maree (2019:58) further states that "paradigms represent what we think about the world but cannot prove." Similarly, Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) highlight that a paradigm consists of key elements, including ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods within a research study. This study adopted interpretivism and

epistemology as a meta-theoretical paradigm to explore dyslexic interventions in inclusive Foundation Phase classrooms.

1.10.3 Research approach

Research approaches are categorised into qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Creswell, 2013). This study adopted a qualitative research approach to examine and assess the intervention programmes employed by educators to support learners diagnosed with dyslexia in inclusive settings. Chih-Pei (2017) explains that qualitative research seeks to gather in-depth data on a specific phenomenon to enhance understanding of what is being observed or studied.

1.10.4 Qualitative research approach

PAR and qualitative research are closely linked, as PAR is fundamentally grounded in qualitative methodologies. PAR emphasises collaboration between researchers and participants, allowing for a deeper understanding of social issues through the lived experiences of those involved (MacDonald, 2012). This approach values the subjective perspectives of participants, making it inherently qualitative in nature. Therefore, a qualitative methodological approach was adopted for this study, emphasising the importance of understanding individuals' subjective experiences. According to Liamputtong (2013) and Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research is inherently naturalistic and socially oriented, facilitating a deeper comprehension of social phenomena. This research study is multifaceted and socially driven, focusing on deriving meaningful interpretations from the data collected.

Firstly, the study aimed to investigate how the participants conceptualised dyslexia and perceived their role in teaching and supporting learners diagnosed with dyslexia (Olivier, 2017). Secondly, it required the participants to use RAVE-O as the intervention strategies employed to support learners diagnosed with dyslexia. Lastly, the study aimed to express the possible support they received and needed from the DBSTs to accommodate dyslexic learners.

1.11 RESEARCH METHODS

Surbi (2018) defines research methods as the researcher's strategies and instruments to gather the study's data. Maree (2019) affirms that the instruments enable the

researcher to gather data about the social reality from groups, individuals, texts, visual media, artefacts, and the internet. I used four research methods: Focus Groups, Interviews, Observations and Document Analysis in this study. Combining these methods enabled data crystallisation and triangulation, thus enhancing the study's trustworthiness (Ellingson, 2017).

1.11.1 Focus groups

Focus groups are defined as "a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher" (Cameron, 2005: 120), emphasising the relevance of group interaction and focused discussion in gathering qualitative data (Morgan, 1996). The research study focused on collaborating organised focus group discussions with participants from the two participating schools, to explore the challenges and successes of implementing the RAVE-O programme for dyslexic learners in inclusive classrooms. This method encouraged dialogue and collective analysis, encouraging a deeper understanding of the community's needs and perspectives (De Oliveira, 2023). The focus groups were conducted in Cycles 1, 2, 3, and 5, utilising Google Meet for virtual meetings. This format proved convenient for participants, as the two selected schools were located in different Gauteng regions. The focus groups took place after work hours, ensuring that the discussions did not interfere with the participants' teaching schedules and provided them with the flexibility to engage fully. Each meeting lasted a maximum of 60 minutes, allowing for focused discussions while respecting the participants' time constraints.

1.11.2 Interviews

Interviews are a means of acquiring information through an oral-based pre-planned set of questions (Maree, 2019). Kabir (2016) adds that interviews are the practice of obtaining meaningful data in which one person gets information from participants by asking and answering questions. Interviews incorporate elements of structured and unstructured closed and open-ended questions (Trigueros, Juan & Sandoval, 2017). The researcher explored semi-structured and follow-up types of questions. As the interviewer, I developed interview protocols to ensure consistency with all participants and that they all respond to the same questions (Marshall, 2016). The interviews lasted for 45 minutes with questions guided by the aims and objectives of the study. Interviews were conducted in Cycle 5 as a reflection and evaluation process to assess

how the RAVE-O programme worked in accommodating learners with dyslexia in the inclusive classroom. This reflective process aligned with the participatory nature of the research, as educators were engaged as co-researchers, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of the RAVE-O programme.

1.11.3 Observation

Observation is a structured process through which researchers utilise their senses and intuition to document participants' behavioural patterns and contextual factors (Maree, 2019). This method enables the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon without requiring participants to respond to predetermined questions (Trigueros et al., 2017). Maree (2019) identifies four types of observations: complete observer, observer as a participant, participant as an observer, and complete participant. For this study, the researcher adopted the participant-as-observer approach, allowing active involvement in the research process while collaborating with participants to design and implement intervention strategies for supporting learners with dyslexia (Maree, 2019). Observations were conducted over eight weeks across two different schools. In relation to the study's objectives, the primary aim was to observe how educators implemented interventions to mitigate the challenges faced by dyslexic learners, specifically using the RAVE-O programme as a support strategy. Each observation lasted 60 minutes per grade and was incorporated into Cycle 4 of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) model. Within this framework, the researcher engaged as a participant observer in the classroom, working closely with both educators and learners to gain insight into the implementation of the RAVE-O programme. Consent letters were provided to parents/guardians alongside learner assent letters to obtain permission for their children to act as secondary participants. Maree (2019:26) defines a secondary participant as "an individual who provides data or information in a research study but is not the primary subject of the research." This definition underscores the role of secondary participants in contributing valuable perspectives while not being the central focus of the study. As part of the data collection process, photographs and audiovisual materials were utilised. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, learners' photographs were taken with their faces blurred when included in the findings section.

1.11.4 Document analysis

Document or textual data analysis is a research technique that examines various forms of written communication to provide insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Maree, 2019). These documents may exist in digital or hardcopy formats and can be either published or unpublished (Maree, 2019). According to Form (2021), documents serve as pre-existing data that studies can utilise, comprising both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include materials such as meeting minutes, reports, and correspondence, whereas secondary sources consist of previously published works, including books, articles, and policy documents (Maree, 2019). Meetings were digitally recorded, which made them accessible to the research for the meetings as primary data source. The study looked into documents as secondary primary sources. This focused on policies and regulations, lesson plans, observation reports, and assessment records. The decision to use this technique was to provide the study with a broad range of data and work on factual findings from previous primary and secondary sources. Documents were analysed from Cycles 1 to 5. The researcher continuously reviewed and reflected on the documents to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the RAVE-O programme. This iterative process not only informed the action planning stages but also facilitated ongoing reflection and adaptation based on the insights gained from the documents.

1.12 RESEARCH SETTING

According to Given (2008), research settings refer to the physical, cultural, and social environments in which a study is conducted. Choosing a suitable setting for the study is vital (Given, 2008). Maree (2019) outlines the importance of obtaining permission to access the setting before conducting the study. For this study, the research settings were two mainstream primary schools, in the Gauteng Province. The decision to choose the settings was to ensure the crystallisation of data and to suggest contextual intervention strategies to the educators. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the school principals and educators through formal consent letters, while learners provided assent with the assistance and agreement of their parents or guardians, ensuring full ethical compliance.

1.13 TARGET POPULATION

Duggleby, Peacock, and Ploeg (2020) describe the target population as the group of individuals from whom a study collects data and derives conclusions. In this study, the target population comprised educators and learners from the selected schools. A total of twelve educators participated, each meeting the specified selection criteria (see Section 1.13.2.2). Learners were diagnosed with dyslexia and part of the inclusive mainstream classroom.

1.13.1 Sampling

Sampling is selecting units (people, organisations) from a population of interest (Chih-Pei, 2017). Maree (2019) adds that it is a method in which individual members of a population are chosen to form conclusions, identify regularities, and estimate attributes of the entire population.

1.13.2 Sampling strategy

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique. This approach involved selecting participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research (Chih-Pei, 2017) (see Sections 3.4.1.1 and 3.4.1.3). Participants are chosen with the "purpose" of representing a phenomenon, group, or type of relation to the criteria. The study used the following as inclusion and exclusion criteria for participation.

1.13.2.1 Sampling criteria for schools

According to Maree (2019), the selection of schools is just as crucial as choosing participants to ensure a purposive sample. The following inclusion criteria were applied when selecting schools:

- Schools were located within the Gauteng province, specifically in the Tshwane and Ekurhuleni regions, to facilitate the researcher's ease of access to the sites and to enhance data crystallisation.
- Two schools, registered with the Department of Education. If Private, they should also be registered under The Independent Schools' Associations of Southern Africa (ISASA).

- Selected schools using the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum were invited to participate.

The World Health Organisation (2015) emphasised that schools serve as significant environments where beneficial changes can be effectively introduced. The selection of different schools in Gauteng, under the two regions, was guided by the total number of schools. According to Schools4SA (2022), statistics show that Tshwane and Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipalities have over 100 schools combined. Therefore, it allowed the researcher more options when selecting the schools.

1.13.2.2 Sampling criteria for participants

Participants selected were educators teaching in mainstream inclusive schools. The study used the following criteria to select educators:

- Educators must have taught in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3) for at least two years.
- Educators must have experience in teaching learners with dyslexia.
- Female and male educators between the ages of 24 – 65 participated.
- The educators willingly agreed to participate in the study and provided their informed consent.
- Learners needed to be in the Foundation Phase inclusive mainstream classroom (Grade 1-3) and diagnosed with dyslexia.

1.14 DATA ANALYSIS

Maree (2019:191) describes data analysis as the process of "working with the data, organising it, breaking it down into manageable components, coding it, synthesising it, and searching for patterns." In qualitative research, data analysis focuses on identifying patterns, concepts, themes, and meanings (Nieuwenhuis, 2015). The analysis in this study began with categorising and organising the data to identify emerging patterns, key themes, and significant meanings (Nieuwenhuis, 2015). The following section provides a brief overview of the data analysis process for this descriptive study.

1.14.1 Thematic analysis

The qualitative descriptive design for this study followed the thematic analysis. These are ways of analysing textual data and elucidating themes (Vaismoradi, Jones &

Turunen, 2016). The aim was to distinguish the feature in the methodological process by describing social reality through theme development (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Furthermore, thematic analysis enabled the researcher to recognise and interpret the shared meanings and experiences among participants (Cooper, 2012).

Additionally, PAR integrates seamlessly with thematic analysis, as both approaches prioritise the voices and experiences of participants. Thematic analysis offers a systematic framework for identifying and interpreting patterns within qualitative data, aligning closely with PAR's focus on collaboration and participant reflection. By employing thematic analysis in a PAR context, the researcher captured the nuanced perspectives of participants regarding their experiences with the RAVE-O programme, allowing for a richer understanding of how it supports learners with dyslexia. This synergy not only enhanced the depth of the findings but also fostered a sense of responsibility among participants, as their insights directly informed the themes that developed from the analysis.

During the data analysis process, the researcher followed six distinct steps (Creswell, 2013:197).

Step 1: Transcribing and emphasising significant extracts.

Step 2: Identifying the primary themes.

Step 3: Coding within the identified primary themes.

Step 4: Determining the sub-themes.

Step 5: Coding within the determined sub-themes.

Step 6: Analysing and presenting the findings.

The rationale for employing the above data interpretation and analysis was to allow the researcher to study the data and uncover common themes, notably ideas and patterns. Using thematic analysis resulted in a complete and detailed report on the findings of the phenomenon under investigation regarding strategies to accommodate learners with dyslexia, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

1.15 QUALITY CRITERIA

Niewenhuis (2015) states that quality criteria ensure that a study conforms to trustworthiness through confirmability, dependability, transferability and credibility. The implementation of these aspects enhances the value to the quality of the study. Table 8.1 presents the four aspects of trustworthiness, as outlined by Nieuwenhuis (2016), and specifies the steps taken to ensure the study's trustworthiness:

Table 1.2: Four aspects of trustworthiness and the relevance to the study (Niewenhuis, 2015)

Aspects	Description	How it was maintained in the study
Credibility	Credibility is defined as the amount of trust in the accuracy of the research findings (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).	The researcher ensured credibility by frequently meeting with the supervisor to discuss the data. The generated field notes were shared with the participants to rectify any errors in interpretation. Participants shaped the study's findings to eliminate interpretation bias (Niewenhuis, 2015). According to Maree (2019), this procedure is known as triangulation and ensures the accuracy of transcripts.
Transferability	Moser and Korstjens (2018: 94) define transferability as "the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents."	The study used two settings and participants, as transferability was not the purpose. However, the methodology is detailed and may be used to investigate other settings with different characteristics.
Dependability	The study's dependability refers to "the consistency of findings throughout time." (Moser & Korstjens, 2018:135).	The study ensured dependability by keeping extensive and well-documented notes on all decisions taken during the research process, including any changes, data gathering and the analysis procedure.
Confirmability	Confirmability is concerned with demonstrating that the data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the enquirer's imagination, but rather plainly drawn from the data (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).	The supervisor monitored and examined the study to identify any biases. To further establish confirmability, the limitations of this study were disclosed, literature from different sources and authors was consulted, the identities of the participants were protected, and the participants' responses were presented precisely (verbatim).

1.16 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics in research refer to the researcher's conduct and how it affects participants, participants' families, the researcher, the research community, and the general public as research consumers (MacDougall, 2014). To ensure that ethical considerations were satisfied, I applied the principles of privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality in this study.

According to Haynes (2019), informed consent is more than just a signed form, but a process whereby the participant knows the research and its dangers. Bryman and Bell (2007) agree that "informed consent is a voluntary willingness to participate in the study." Haynes (2019) further adds that participants must provide informed consent.

The study ensured clear communication with the participants about the study, their role, and their right to discontinue and withdraw from the study at any time, with no consequences incurred.

Privacy and confidentiality were employed as ethical standards in research to preserve the privacy of study participants and the privacy of research sites while “collecting, analysing, and reporting data” (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Confidentiality includes excluding or altering any personal information relating to participants by removing identifiable information (Allen, 2017). Privacy refers to gathering data without attaching participants’ personal information (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The participants were ensured of their right to privacy by being kept anonymous. Pseudonyms were used to present the participants’ views and to report the findings. Photographs taken of learners during observation had their faces blurred out to keep them anonymous.

With the above-mentioned, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria (Ethics no: EDU 149/22). Furthermore, the researcher also obtained permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the study in the selected regions and schools. When permission was granted from both the University and the Department of Education, the researcher contacted the principals for permission to access the participating educators and gather the necessary data. In this study, the selected participating educators were named with numerals (for example, School A; Educator 1).

1.17 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

The study comprises five chapters, and the layout thereof is set out below:

- Chapter 1 introduces and outlines the study’s background. Furthermore, it details the rationale, purpose, and problem statement associated with the research. Subsequently, the key concepts utilised in the study are clarified. A preliminary literature review was provided, along with an overview of the conceptual framework employed in the research. The procedures followed in the collection and analysis of data are outlined. Finally, the ethical considerations pertinent to the study are presented.
- Chapter 2, presents a review of various literature concerning the history of dyslexia, its definitions and conceptualisations by educators both globally and locally. It then examines the literature on educators’ perceptions of their roles

in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia; explores the intervention programmes utilised, and discusses the support teachers require from the DBSTs in accommodating diagnosed learners. Additionally, this chapter provides a more detailed presentation of the conceptual framework employed in the study.

- Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology employed to address the research problem. The chapter encompasses the interpretive paradigm, qualitative approach, and multiple-case study design. Additionally, it presents the instruments and methods utilised for data collection and analysis.
- Chapter 4 presents empirical data, interpretation, and study's findings that emerged from the themes during data analysis. The identified themes and sub-themes are used as headings and subheadings to present and interpret the findings. It also reveals how the participants conceptualised dyslexia, their role in teaching and supporting diagnosed learners, the support they require from the DBSTs and how they perceived the RAVE-O programme in relation to the existing intervention strategies.
- Finally, Chapter 5 summarises the literature, empirical findings, and answers to the research questions. It also presents the outline of the findings, as they relate to the conceptual framework. I also present my recommendations for future research, the limitations of the study, and the conclusions based on the study's research questions.

1.18 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In Chapter 1, I introduced the study's focus on using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention for dyslexic learners in inclusive classrooms. The chapter also outlined the research questions that guided the investigation, explained the rationale and purpose behind the study, and detailed the problem it aimed to address. Additionally, I described the methodological approach, employing an interpretivist paradigm, a qualitative methodology, and a Participatory Action Research (PAR) design. The chapter concluded with an overview of the data collection and analysis processes. In the next chapter, Chapter 2, I discuss the literature review of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 introduced the RAVE-O programme with specific reference to dyslexia, and provided the crucial background of the learning disability, the aims and the purpose of the study. Furthermore, the research questions that guided the study were presented with a brief introduction of the conceptual framework that grounded the study. Chapter 2 provides a structured analysis of literature related to using the RAVE-O programme to investigate dyslexic interventions in inclusive Foundation Phase classes. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the history of dyslexia, and thereafter provides the definition, causes/aetiology. Subsequently, educators' conceptualisation of dyslexia in classrooms is analysed, focusing on global, African and South African literacies. The role of the educator is discussed in relation to the inclusive classroom. Additionally, the role of the Department of Basic Education is explored by looking into the policies, curriculum, and support provided for learners at district and school-based levels. Lastly, intervention programmes and strategies conclude the chapter by presenting international, African and South African literature focusing on assisting educators in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia.

2.2 HISTORY OF DYSLEXIA

Researchers have been studying dyslexia since the 17th century (Shaywitz, 2020). Dyslexia was first recognised by a German physician, Rudolf Berlin, in the 1870s. Following this recognition, a German neurologist, Adolf Kussmaull, referred to it as "word blindness" after observing patients who, despite receiving a good education and being intelligent individuals, were unable to read (Hoskins, 2019). During this time, studies about dyslexia were essentially written in medical journals until it was established that it also belonged in the education field. This educational context was identified through an article by W.P Morgan titled *A Case of Congenital Word Blindness* (Hoskins, 2019). In 1896, Dr. Pringle Morgan of Sussex, England, provided the earliest detailed account of dyslexia in his studies (Svensson, 2015). He described an intelligent young boy who encountered significant challenges in acquiring literacy skills, specifically in writing and reading (Svensson, 2015). Studies about this learning disability continued to be written under the term *Word Blindness* until the mid-1930s (Lawrence, 2009). Macdonald (2013) further elaborates that a scholar named Samuel

Orton perceived dyslexia as a neurological disorder, linking it to the psycho-educational discourse. This has led to the development of specific pedagogical methods aimed at minimising the symptoms of disability (Macdonald, 2013).

In recent years, this learning disability persists as controversial in the practice of education policies (Kirby, 2020). Dyslexia remains the most researched learning disability, with studies focusing on the impact on the diagnosed individual, causes, treatments and special intervention programmes (Hudson et al., 2011).

2.3 DEFINITION OF DYSLEXIA

According to Hoskins (2019), dyslexia is derived from the Greek words *dys*- which means absence or difficult, and -*lexia*, which means reading or words. Both these words formulated the word dyslexia as a prefix and suffix merged. Dyslexia is, therefore, a common learning disability which affects 5-10% of the worldwide population (Knight, 2018). This learning disability affects the spelling and reading abilities of individuals. It is a neurological disorder with genetic origins, characterised by difficulties in accurate and fluent word recognition, poor spelling, and decoding abilities (Hulme & Snowling, 2012). However, the above definitions are amongst many that formed part of the ongoing dyslexic debate on the definition. As it stands, the Rose Review's definition is the best practice coming to defining dyslexia in the context of teaching children with literacy difficulties (Kirby, 2020). The Rose Review defines dyslexia as:

> a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed. Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities (Rose, 2009:9).

Additionally, Olivier (2017:20) revealed three main types of dyslexia and seven overall patterns of the condition according to studies conducted by the Red Apple Dyslexia Association (RADA). The three main types (and seven patterns) of dyslexia are classified in Figure 2.1 (Red Apple Dyslexia Association, 2016).

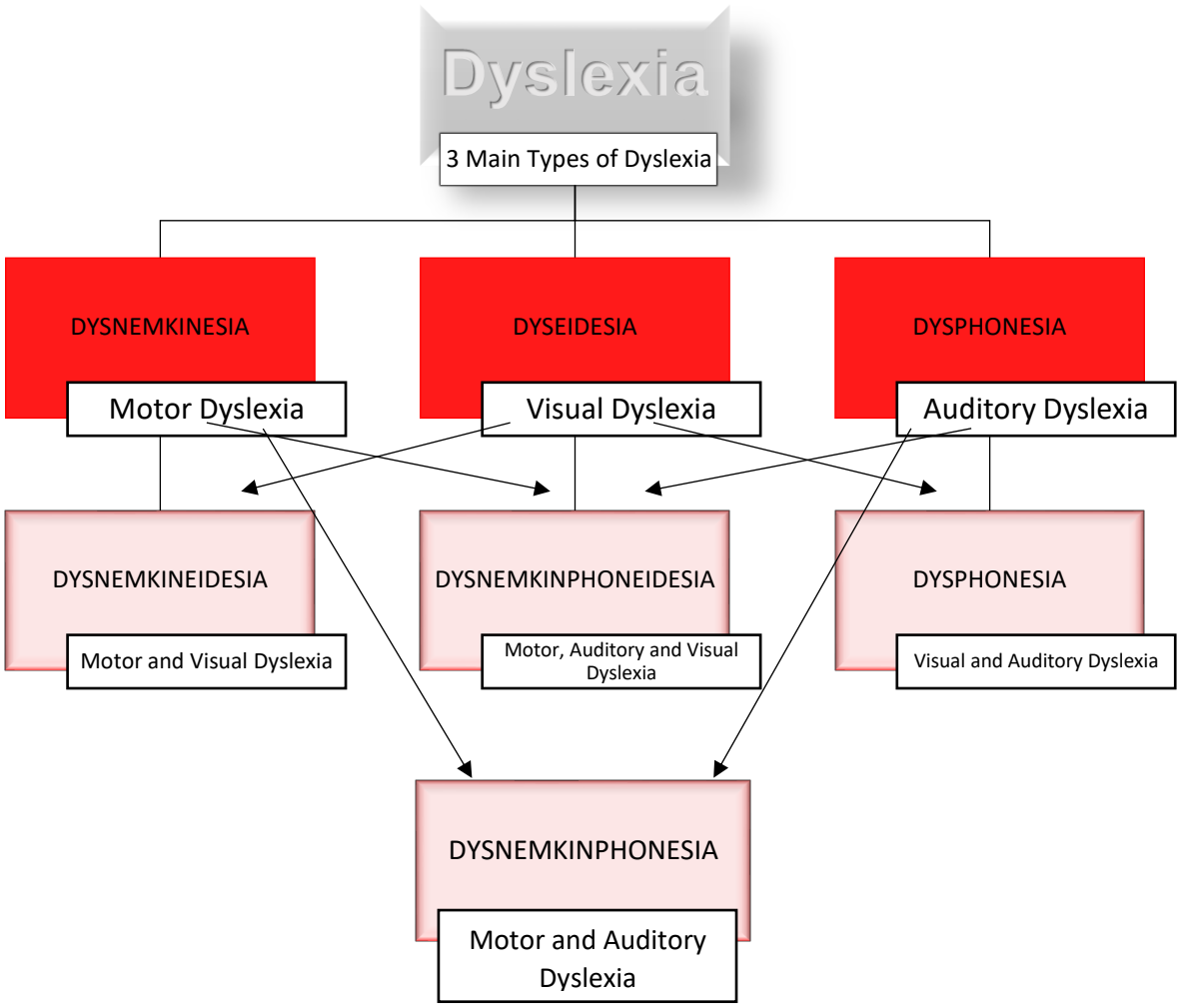


Figure 2.1: A visual representation of the three types of Dyslexia classified by the Red Apple Dyslexia Association

As illustrated in Figure 2.1, each type of dyslexia is represented by a different colour. The silver symbolises the ribbon colour worn to show support for dyslexic individuals, and red for the global campaign (Dyslexia, 2023). These 3 main types of dyslexia can correlate in an individual where they can have one of the three. Remer (2019) states that these would be identified as Dysnemkineidesia, Dysnemkinphoneidesia, Dysphoneidesia and Dysnemkinphonesia. The study focused mainly on dyslexia as a whole and foresaw the three main types of the condition in recognition of the RAVE-O programme as an intervention tool. Table 2.1 organises the types of dyslexia and provides examples that situate them within this study's context.

Table 2.1: Three main types of Dyslexia

Types of Dyslexia		Explanation	Implications for this study
Dysnemkinesia Motor Dyslexia	(Association, 2016) (Remer, 2019)	The challenge of recalling the correct movements required for writing. **Example:** • Symbol orientation – b/d, p/q. • Transposing words – angle/angel, from/form. • Spatial difficulties – left/right. • Poor sight recognition – reads and spells phonetically.	To support learners with dyslexia facing motor skill challenges, educators can implement several targeted activities. For symbol orientation, using hands-on materials like sand for tracing letters can reinforce correct formation. To tackle transposing words, colour-coded word cards and matching games can help clarify similar-sounding words. For spatial difficulties, movement-based activities like obstacle courses can enhance directional understanding. Lastly, to improve sight recognition, multisensory approaches such as visual aids and phonics games can connect sounds with letters, fostering both skill development and confidence in students.

Dysphonesia Visual Dyslexia	(Remer, 2019)	Individual struggles with a phonological component of language. **Example:** • Unable to decode words. Learners will learn the word deal and confuse it with seal. • Relies on memory, unable to spell and confuses similar-looking letters – aminal/animal.	To assist learners with dyslexia who struggle with phonological skills, teachers can use effective strategies. For improving decoding abilities, phonics-based instruction focusing on sound-letter relationships is essential. Activities like word sorting and using letter tiles can reinforce these skills. To address reliance on memory and confusion with similar letters, teachers can implement multisensory techniques, such as using coloured markers for differentiation and engaging in letter formation exercises. Additionally, practising word families and rhyming games can enhance phonemic awareness, helping learners distinguish similar words and improve spelling accuracy, thereby boosting their confidence in reading and writing.

Dyseidesia Auditory Dyslexia	(Lawrence, 2009) (Remer, 2019)	Challenges with recognising whole words and visual analysis, especially related to visual processing. **Example:** • Poor visual memory. • Spelling errors – writes rede/ready, enuf/enough. • Difficulty in processing and understanding spoken language.	To address poor visual memory, incorporating multisensory techniques, such as having learners trace words while saying the letters aloud, can help cement word recognition. Additionally, using flashcards with visual cues and engaging in memory games can strengthen visual memory skills. For spelling errors, educators can encourage using mnemonic devices, such as associating words with memorable images or stories, to aid in remembering the correct spelling. Providing opportunities for repeated exposure to high-frequency words and engaging in word study activities can also help learners develop a stronger visual memory for words, ultimately improving their reading and spelling abilities.

Dyslexia presents in various ways at different stages of a learner's development (Olivier, 2017). The characteristics of learners with dyslexia are typically observed in relation to their developmental age (Snowling, 2012). As mentioned in Chapter 1, dyslexia remains different from person to person, and individuals' characteristics vary (Hoskins, 2019). Reading, known as dyslexia's main challenge, is just one of the condition's characteristics. Dyslexic learners may struggle with concentration, experience multifaceted effects on working memory, and exhibit a lack of general organisational skills (Hoskins, 2019). In addition, Leseyane (2018) states that due to the characteristics above, learners with dyslexia mostly present an atypical route to learning as compared to their typical peers. Hence, the symptoms have to be diagnosed correctly. The reasons mentioned above provide crucial views of why learners with possible dyslexia must be identified sooner rather than later.

2.4 THE CAUSES OF DYSLEXIA

To date, the dyslexia debate has moved from not agreeing on a definite definition to little agreement on the causes (Olivier, 2017). The extensive research conducted from the 1800s to date, reveals that there are no exact causes of the condition, therefore it remains misunderstood (Bornman & Rose, 2017). However, recent studies show that some possible causes of dyslexia involve neurological, genetic and environmental factors (Dengem, 2024).

2.4.1 Neurological factors

According to Dengem (2024), the use of neuroimaging techniques revealed the functional and structural differences in the individuals' brains. The focus was on the areas responsible for phonological processing, word recognition and language sounds (Osborne, 2022). Neuroimaging revealed how learners with dyslexia use sight recognition and decoding to read (Kearns, Hancock, Hoeft, Pugh & Frost, 2018). The diagnosed individuals, encounter difficulties with the left hemisphere rear brain systems functioning properly (Olivier, 2017). Shaywitz (2007) further elaborates that the left hemisphere, also known as the "word form", has a major influence on fluent reading, coding of words and letter recognition. Therefore, neurologically, learners with dyslexia rely on memory-based systems more than avid readers as they grow older (Shaywitz, 2007). Dyslexic learners exhibit increased brain activity in the lower frontal regions, suggesting that these neural systems may compensate for disruptions in

other areas during the reading process (Shaywitz, 2007). However, it should be noted that neuroscience research findings are an ongoing investigation (Fisher, 2022). Furthermore, any information regarding neurological factors correlating with dyslexia in the educational context must be received with caution.

2.4.2 Genetic factors

Genetic factors suggest that learning disabilities run in families (Osborne, 2022). Genetic variations and mutations increase the risk of developing dyslexia (Dengem, 2024). The 2022 Nature Genetics journal revealed the most accurate suggestion on the link between dyslexia and genetics. The findings from the study pinpointed that 42 genetic variants correlated with dyslexia (Doust et al., 2022). In the genetic variations perused, 15 were shown to link with neurological conditions that affected thinking and language skills (Osborne, 2022). The rest of the 27 variations were new and not associated with cognitive qualities (Osborne, 2022). According to Luciano (2022), these genes may not necessarily be the leading cause of dyslexia; however, they may contribute to the condition when combined with certain environmental factors. Overall, genetic studies remain validated by the independent sample of 34,000 individuals tested on word recognition and reading skills, which shows that dyslexia can be inherited through genetics (Fisher, 2022).

2.4.3 Environmental factors

According to Dilnot et al. (2017), environmental factors that can contribute to dyslexia in children include intra-uterine development, health risks, family stresses, early medical complications, and home literacy environment. Osborne (2022) adds that perinatal complications, low weight during birth and exposure to certain toxins during pregnancy can also be potential environmental risks. These factors, combined with genetic and neurological influences, contribute to the development of dyslexia, emphasising the intricate interaction between genetic predisposition and environmental triggers in the expression of this learning disorder (Dilnot et al., 2017). Literature perused suggests that environmental factors can influence the development of dyslexia and its severity in the following ways:

2.4.3.1 Brain development

Irregularities in brain structure and function, especially in regions responsible for language processing, can contribute to dyslexia (Tanaka et al., 2011).

2.4.3.2 Environmental toxins

Exposure to toxins like lead, mercury, and pesticides during foetal development or early childhood may increase the risk of dyslexia (Schumacher et al., 2007).

2.4.3.3 Socioeconomic factors

Limited access to quality education, poverty, and cultural deprivation may exacerbate dyslexia (Felicia, 2024).

In conclusion, dyslexia can be understood from cognitive, behavioural, and biological perspectives. The challenges faced by learners with dyslexia extend beyond reading difficulties, as environmental, genetic, and cultural factors interact at each level (Olivier, 2017). The success of learners diagnosed with dyslexia largely depends on how well educators understand their needs and the appropriate interventions to implement. Educators must recognise the strengths and needs of learners diagnosed with dyslexia, adapting intervention strategies, learning styles, and support to ensure inclusion (Bell & McPhillips, 2011).

2.5 EDUCATORS' CONCEPTUALISATION OF DYSLEXIA IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Abraham (2014) and Černickaja and Sokolová (2024) concur that educators' conceptualisation of dyslexia in classrooms is a complex matter that encompasses various elements, including their attitudes, knowledge, and practices when supporting dyslexic learners. While educators generally possess a basic understanding of dyslexia and are aware of the challenges faced by diagnosed learners, there is a gap in information on certain aspects, particularly diagnostics and effective strategies for addressing dyslexia (Černickaja & Sokolová, 2024). Additionally, educators may hold misconceptions about dyslexia, such as associating it with below-average intelligence or believing that learners with dyslexia can improve their reading skills (Solheim et al., 2023). These misconceptions can have significant implications for the overall classroom experience of children with dyslexia, as educators' beliefs and practices

can influence the accommodations and support provided to these learners (Knight, 2018). Figure 2.2 summarises various countries globally, on how educators conceptualise dyslexia in their inclusive classrooms.

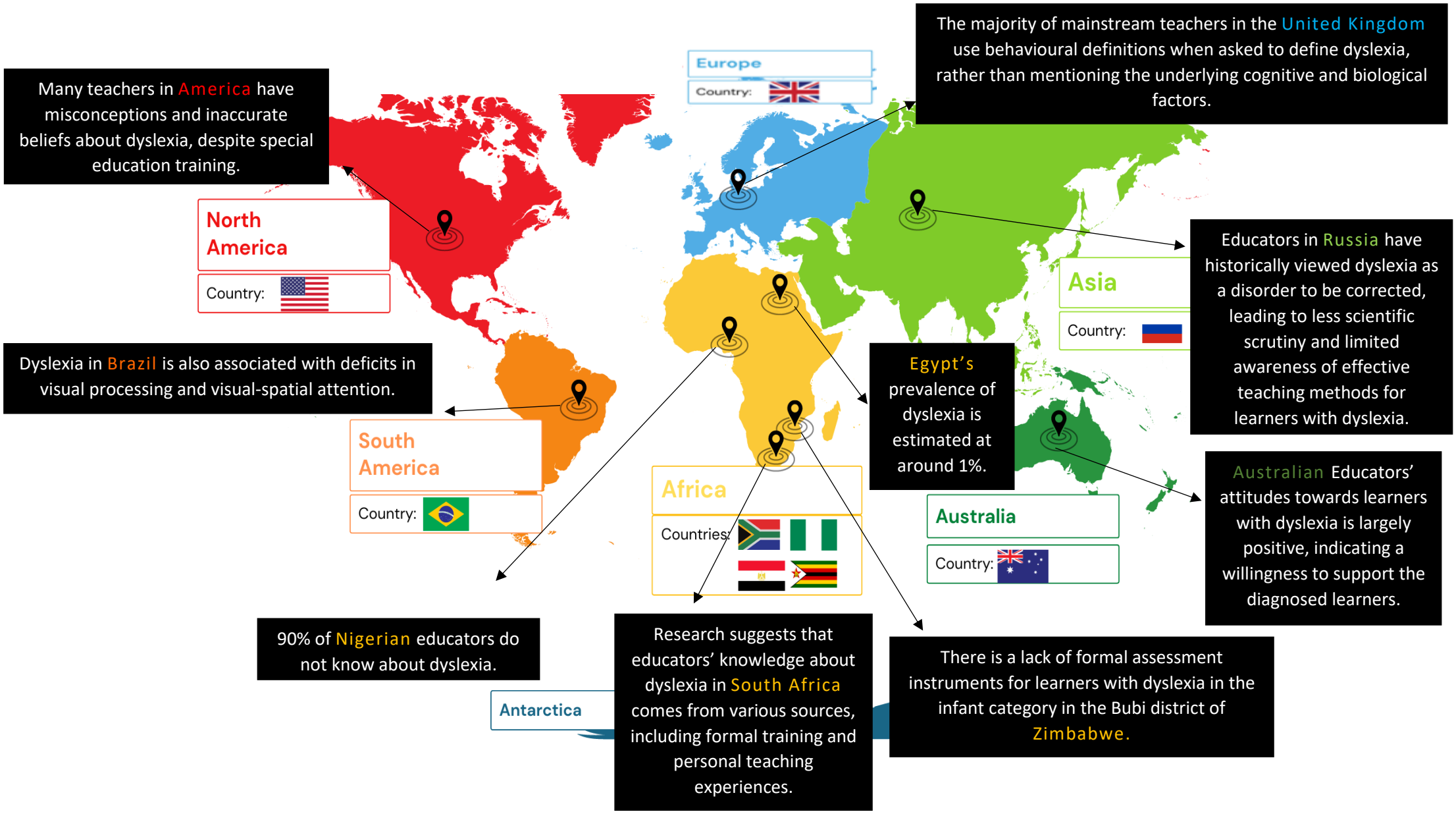


Figure 2.2: A visual representation of educators' conceptualisation of Dyslexia around the world that will be discussed in this section

2.5.1 International perspectives on educators' conceptualisation of dyslexia

Dyslexia is a global concern that spans diverse linguistic and literacy cultures, characterised by varying definitions, diagnostic methods, regulations, policies, and support systems for dyslexic learners (Maunsell 2020:93). Educators in the United Kingdom, America, Australia, Brazil, and Russia view dyslexia differently, and the perspectives will be discussed below.

Dyslexia in the United Kingdom (UK) affects approximately 10% of the population, with 4% being severely affected (Watson, 2023). The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) highlights the prevalence of dyslexia as a significant concern, emphasising the need for understanding and support for dyslexic individuals. The majority of mainstream educators in the UK use behavioural definitions when asked to define dyslexia rather than mentioning the underlying cognitive and biological factors (McPhillips et al., 2011). However, some studies have found that educators can provide more holistic definitions of dyslexia, touching on the biological, cognitive and behavioural levels, though understanding varies between individuals (McPhillips et al., 2011). While some UK educators demonstrate a more comprehensive understanding of dyslexia, the predominant conceptualisation among mainstream educators tends to focus on the behavioural symptoms rather than the underlying cognitive and neurological factors (Watson, 2023). Improving educator training is crucial to address these gaps in knowledge.

Dyslexia is a very common learning disability in the United States. It affects 5-15% of Americans, representing 14.5 to 43.5 million children and adults (Zauderer, 2023). Educators have misconceptions and inaccurate beliefs about dyslexia despite special education training (Abraham, 2014). This suggests a lack of proper understanding and knowledge about the nature and characteristics of dyslexia in the US. However, research also shows that educators generally possess a basic understanding of dyslexia and are aware of the challenges faced by dyslexic learners, often demonstrating positive attitudes towards including them (Černickaja & Sokolová, 2024). The conceptualisation of dyslexia among American educators appears to be mixed – some have accurate knowledge, while others hold misconceptions, and many feel underprepared to properly support dyslexic learners.

According to the Australian Dyslexia Association, dyslexia in Australia affects around 10% of the population, with estimates suggesting that up to 20% of Australians may be dyslexic (Australian Dyslexia Association, n.d.). Educators' conceptualisation of dyslexia in Australia is shaped by their beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards learners with dyslexia (Cernickaja & Sokolova, 2024). As a result, there is a lack of preparedness and support, which can lead to feelings of unpreparedness among educators and negatively affect their ability to offer adequate support to learners with dyslexia (Cernickaja & Sokolova, 2024). Nevertheless, educators maintain positive attitudes towards learners with dyslexia, showing a willingness to support them (Cernickaja & Sokolova, 2024). While educators have a basic understanding of dyslexia and are aware of its specifics, they require further support and training to effectively assist diagnosed learners.

Research conducted in Brazil indicates that dyslexia is linked to impairments in Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) in children learning to read in Portuguese (Silva et al., 2020). According to Dębska et al. (2022), 26% of children diagnosed with dyslexia show RAN deficits, which are identified as a key characteristic of reading difficulties. Phonological awareness deficits were also observed in 51% of children with dyslexia (Dębska et al., 2022). Furthermore, studies suggest that RAN impairments play a crucial role in diagnosing dyslexia in Brazilian Portuguese-speaking children, with RAN serving as a reliable predictor for dyslexia diagnosis (Silva et al., 2020). According to Signor and Claessen (2020), dyslexia is diagnosed in children aged 7 to 12 years, with problems in verbal comprehension, perceptual reasoning, working memory, and processing speed. It is associated with deficits in visual processing and visual-spatial attention, in addition to phonological processing difficulties (Silva et al., 2020). There is a recognition that the diagnosis and understanding of dyslexia in Brazil is still an ongoing challenge, with a lack of clarity around the exact number of people affected and the need for improved screening and intervention programmes (Deheza, 2022).

Russia has historically conceptualised dyslexia differently compared to Western approaches. According to Semenova (2018), 74% of learners in Russia viewed dyslexia as a disorder that needs to be corrected and rooted out, while 26% recognised it as a specific learning disability. This conceptual difference has led to dyslexia receiving less scientific scrutiny in Russia, with a limited number of academic papers published on the topic compared to other countries. Additionally, educators and

practitioners in Russia lack awareness regarding effective teaching techniques and methods for learners with dyslexia, resulting in the unintentional exclusion of these learners from the education process (Semenova, 2018).

Globally, there is an increasing focus on adapting teaching methods to cater to the needs of dyslexic learners, offering individualised support, and fostering inclusive learning environments (Mistry, 2016). Moreover, there is a growing call for enhanced collaboration, training, and resources for educators to effectively address dyslexia and provide adequate support to learners with this condition (Velichenkova & Rusetskaya, 2023). Educators play a critical role in the early diagnosis of dyslexia by recognising symptoms, evaluating learners, and recommending specialist assistance when necessary (Campos, 2022). The reviewed literature collectively highlights that educators worldwide still face the challenge of unlocking the potential of learners with dyslexia, providing appropriate interventions such as the RAVE-O programme, and ensuring a positive learning experience, despite their learning differences.

2.5.2 African educators' perspectives on the conceptualisation of dyslexia

The conceptualisation of dyslexia among educators in Africa varied in reviewed literature. The following countries' literature was perused with the intention of covering the continent's overall compass: Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa.

In Zimbabwe, there were remedial schools for learners with learning disabilities, including dyslexia, before independence. However, access to these schools was limited to White, Asian, and Coloured learners, excluding children from Black communities (Ndombo, 2019). After independence, the southern African country paid attention to learning disabilities and addressed issues through psychological services and special needs education systems. Assessing learners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools became crucial in providing effective support. However, a study found that there is a lack of formal assessment instruments for learners with dyslexia in the infant category based in the Bubi district of Zimbabwe (Nkomo et al., 2021). The prevalence of learners with learning disabilities, including dyslexia, is estimated to be around 20% of the entire population, with approximately 600,000 children having disabilities (Ndombo, 2019). Therefore, the lack of instruments discourages educators

immensely despite receiving training from the National Institute of Learning Development.

In Nigeria, dyslexia was first researched by Dr. Olusanya Bolutife, leading to the establishment of the Nigeria Dyslexia Association to provide support. Studies in the West African country revealed that 20% of the population is affected by the learning disorder (Ndombo, 2019). According to Abubakar (2024), there is a severe lack of understanding and awareness about the condition among educators and the general public. Lawal (2019) further adds that 90% of Nigerian educators do not know about dyslexia. To address this issue, experts recommend that the Nigerian government mandate dyslexia training for educators and require regular screening of all learners to identify learning disabilities early on (Lawal, 2019). Organisations like Dyslexia Nigeria are also working to raise awareness, provide assessments, and interventions to advocate for better support for those living with dyslexia in the country.

Egypt is noted for having a low prevalence of dyslexia, estimated at around 1%. This low prevalence is attributed to the Arabic language system used in the country, which differs from the alphabetic letter system in other countries (Elbeheri, 2022). The unique language structure in Arabic-speaking countries like Egypt makes it challenging to detect dyslexia among children. However, efforts are being made to raise awareness and debunk misconceptions about dyslexia in Egypt. The British Dyslexia Association (2023) identified Sherry Maher as Egypt's first certified dyslexia specialist in 2023. While challenges remain, the milestone for the Northeast African country is making progress in addressing dyslexia through awareness, testing, intervention programmes, research, and the development of qualified specialists to support individuals with this learning disorder (Egyptian Canadian Center for Knowledge Systems, 2018).

In South Africa, a study in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality identified a high percentage of Grade 3 learners with dyslexia, facing various challenges affecting their learning experience. These findings emphasise the critical need for teacher awareness and training to effectively support dyslexic learners in South Africa. According to Geertsema et al. (2022), educators in the country hold a blend of understanding and misconceptions regarding dyslexia. While they generally possess a basic understanding of the condition and are aware of the challenges faced by

learners with this learning disability, there is still a need for deeper, more comprehensive knowledge and training to address the specific needs of dyslexic learners more effectively. There are gaps in their knowledge, particularly regarding the diagnostic process and appropriate ways to support these learners (Geertsema et al., 2022). Research suggests that educators' knowledge about dyslexia in South Africa comes from various sources, including formal training and personal teaching experiences. However, a significant proportion of educators lack a deep understanding of the biological and cognitive aspects of dyslexia, which are crucial for effectively supporting diagnosed learners (Leseyane et al., 2018). Overall, educators in South Africa possess a mixture of accurate knowledge and misconceptions about dyslexia, which underscores the need for more extensive training and support. This would ensure that learners with dyslexia receive the appropriate assistance required to succeed academically (Geertsema et al., 2022).

The reviewed literature underscores the necessity of enhancing support and training for educators to improve their understanding of dyslexia and their ability to accommodate learners with the condition. This includes offering clear guidelines, professional development opportunities, and fostering an inclusive learning environment that acknowledges and respects learners with dyslexia (Černickaja & Sokolová, 2024). Educators are also encouraged to adopt diverse approaches to conceptualising dyslexia in the classroom by identifying and addressing the specific needs of their learners (Bell & McPhillips, 2011). As learners spend a significant portion of their time in the classroom, school management should strengthen support for their teaching staff, enabling educators to provide more effective assistance to their learners (Černickaja & Sokolová, 2024). Additionally, the Department of Education, in collaboration with District-Based Support Teams (DBSTs), should take an active role in raising awareness of dyslexia by providing educators with training on effective intervention strategies. Ultimately, how educators conceptualise dyslexia within the classroom is crucial in ensuring that learners receive the support and accommodations they need to achieve academic success.

2.6 THE EDUCATOR'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA IN THE CLASSROOM

The Education White Paper 6 emphasises the central role of the educator in teaching and supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2001). Harden and Crosby (2000:336) identified twelve roles of these teachers (see Figure 2.3). However, in the context of the study, Du Toit's seven roles were explored. Du Toit et al. (2016) derived seven roles that the Department of Education suggests an educator in the South African context should demonstrate in the classroom from Harden and Crosby. These roles were designed in the context of the South African education system. Figure 2.3 identifies the six main roles of a teacher.

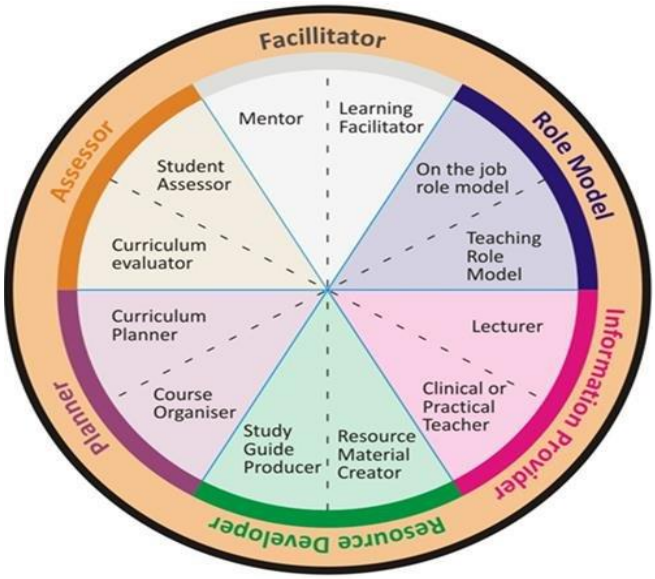


Figure 2.3 The twelve roles of a teacher (Adapted from Harden & Crosby, 2000 and modernised by Listyani, 2019)

2.6.1 The seven roles of the teacher (Du Toit et al., 2016:36)

2.6.1.1 Mediator of Learning

2.6.1.2 Designer and Interpreter of Learning materials and programmes

2.6.1.3 Administrator, Leader and Manager

2.6.1.4 Researcher, scholar and lifelong learner

2.6.1.5 Community, citizenship and pastoral role player

2.6.1.6 Learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist

2.6.1.7 Assessor

The seven roles, as listed in 2.4.1 above, are explained in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 The seven roles of the educator in relation to dyslexia

1. **The educator as a mediator of learning**

   In this role, the educator is expected to be a mediator of learning by facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills for learners with dyslexia. They are required to create an inclusive environment that supports individual learning needs and fosters academic growth (Campos, 2022).
2. **The educator as a designer and interpreter of learning**

   Educators should plan, design and interpret learning materials and programmes tailored to the specific needs of learners with dyslexia. They adapt teaching methods, resources, and assessments to enhance the learning experience and ensure accessibility (Harden & Crosby, 2000).
3. **The educator as an administrator, leader and manager**

   According to the Dyslexia Association of Ireland (2024), the role of administrator, leader, and manager in educators requires them to oversee the educational process for learners with dyslexia. They must provide guidance, structure, and direction to create a supportive learning environment that promotes academic success and personal development (Harden & Crosby, 2000).
4. **The educator as a researcher, scholar and lifelong learner**

   Teachers engage in continuous learning and research to stay updated on best practices for supporting learners with dyslexia. By being scholars and lifelong learners, they enhance their teaching strategies and contribute to the advancement of dyslexia education (Campos, 2022).
5. **The educator in community, citizenship and pastoral role player**

   Educators play a vital role in fostering a sense of community, citizenship, and pastoral care for learners with dyslexia. They are expected to promote inclusivity, empathy, and emotional support to create a nurturing environment that enhances learners' overall well-being (Toit et al., 2016).
6. **The educator as an expert in the learning area, subject, discipline and phase specialist**

As specialists in their respective fields, educators must focus on understanding the unique challenges of dyslexic learners within specific subjects or disciplines. They must tailor instruction to address the learning needs of learners with dyslexia, ensuring academic growth and success (Abraham, 2014).

7. **The educator as an assessor**

   Teachers serve as assessors by evaluating the progress and performance of learners (Harden & Crosby, 2000). Through ongoing assessment and feedback, they identify strengths, areas for improvement, and individualised strategies to support the academic development of learners with dyslexia.

The above roles apply mainly in the inclusive classroom context. As an educator, the interpreter and mediator roles are essential when observing the barriers, the learner experiences. The observations conducted are used as evidence needed for diagnosis (Hoskins, 2019). The diagnosis process is conducted when the educator refers the learner to a specialist for an assessment with the parents' and SBST's approval (Hoskins, 2019). This allows the educator to explore the administrative role as relevant documents and evidence will be required for the assessment to be conducted. Educators are responsible for identifying difficulties presented by learners, especially in the early diagnosis of dyslexia (School of Education, 2023). Educators are encouraged to provide appropriate accommodations and teaching strategies tailored to the needs of dyslexic learners (Mercer, 2002).

As an educator, after a formal assessment is completed and recommendations are given, you take on the lifelong learner role by researching and implementing the relevant accommodations needed to support the diagnosed learner in the classroom. According to Hoskins (2019), a formal diagnosis in South Africa is made by an educational psychologist registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). While this process may be time-consuming, it is crucial for understanding the learner's needs. Furthermore, the Department of Basic Education (2014) expects educators to design individual learning programmes that cater to the specific barriers' learners face in the classroom. This involves adapting teaching methods, using assistive technologies, providing additional support, and continually reviewing and adjusting strategies to ensure that the learner's needs are effectively met. Educators need to be flexible in their approach, finding methods that suit each dyslexic learner individually rather than expecting all of them to learn in the same way (Hodge, 2016). As revealed by Osbourne (2022), diagnosing and treating dyslexia early may help learners become skilled readers more quickly and mitigate further learning difficulties. By equipping themselves with the educator's roles, teachers can facilitate multidisciplinary interventions that enhance cognitive and intellectual development, ultimately improving the quality of life for dyslexic individuals.

Multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) play a significant role in the implementation of the Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) policy in South Africa. According to the SIAS framework, these teams are essential for providing comprehensive support to learners with barriers to learning, including dyslexia (SIAS,

2014). The SIAS policy emphasises collaboration among various professionals, including educators, psychologists, and health practitioners, to ensure that each learner's unique needs are addressed effectively (SIAS, 2014). The policy outlines a structured process where MDTs assess learners through a series of screenings and evaluations, allowing for the development of Individual Support Plans (ISPs) tailored to each learner's requirements (SIAS, 2014). This collaborative approach not only enhances the educational experience for learners but also encourages a holistic understanding of their challenges, promoting shared responsibility among stakeholders (Vergottini, 2024). By integrating diverse expertise, MDTs can create a supportive environment that facilitates better outcomes for learners, aligning with the overarching goals of inclusive education as stipulated in the SIAS policy (SIAS, 2008).

Against this background, my study entered the educators' domain with the intention of investigating how they perceive their role in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia using the RAVE-O programme.

2.7 INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES AND STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA

Bruwer et al. (2014) highlight that the principles of inclusive education require educators to adapt the curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment methods to accommodate the diverse needs of learners in the classroom. The inclusive education policy is designed to introduce strategies and interventions that support educators in addressing various teaching and learning demands, thereby alleviating temporary learning difficulties. Effective interventions can modify patterns of activation, as research has shown that learners' brain activation patterns can shift following targeted reading interventions (Kearns et al., 2018).

One of the most significant barriers to the successful implementation of inclusive education is educators' limited knowledge and skills in adapting the curriculum to meet the diverse educational needs of learners (Dalton et al., 2012). Consequently, it is essential for educators to bridge the learning gap by implementing appropriate intervention programmes and adhering to inclusive education principles.

Joubert (2016) suggests that teaching and learning strategies should be scrutinised more, with a particular focus on grouping, workstations, fun activities, and thematic approaches. Breaking down the set outcomes and a timeframe on when learners need

to meet them will improve success for dyslexic learners. The CAPS curriculum delivery outcomes and time constraints disable dyslexic learners, who may need more time and other dynamic strategies to grasp the concepts. It is crucial to ensure educators recognise Dyslexia as a disorder and identify adequate interventions and resources for inclusive classrooms. The study determined support strategies that educators need to improve the academic progress of learners diagnosed with Dyslexia, through the use of the RAVE-O programme.

2.7.1 RAVE-O

RAVE-O stands for Reading through Automaticity Vocabulary Engagement and Orthography Plus (Theory, 2022). It is a comprehension-based fluency and literacy programme that focuses on all aspects of word knowledge (Wolf, 2009). The intervention programme uses colourful and engaging tactile characters that live in RAVE-O town (Bellvista, 2024). RAVE-O has 16 units with 93 lessons for a maximum of 45 minutes (Bellvista, 2024) The intervention programme was created for learners between Grades 2-5 who are “at risk” for literacy difficulties as measured by the standardised assessments (Wolf, 2009). Research has shown that RAVE-O is different from other intervention programmes because it avoids repeated reading, focuses on all levels of word knowledge accuracy rather than speed and is structured to actively engage learners’ ideas and emotional connection to reading (Bellvista, 2024).

Table 2.3: How RAVE-O is used in ECE

Character	Role in the intervention	How to implement in ECE?
Mayor Mic	Mayor Mic stands for Many Interesting Connections. The character states that each word is related to many other words	Jam is the core word – How does it connect to jelly, bread, toaster, strawberry and milk?
Ms. Mim	Ms. Mim is a spider and stands for Many Interesting Meanings. Just like spiders have different legs, most words have many meanings.	Jam is the core word – What does it mean? Jam – Food (noun) Jam – Stuck (verb)
Treasure	Seeing words as treasure.	Jam, Ram, Pam.
Ender Benders	Ender Benders are the words at the end.	Jamm/ing/
TotD	Ticket out the door is an exit ticket to complete about what you learnt in the lesson.	What did you learn? What was your favourite part?
Magic-e	The magic-e teaches learners that when the “e” walks to the end of the rime, the vowel talks. The “e” remains silent and changes the sound of the vowel.	Huge Ate Cane Bite
S-car-go	S-car-go teaches us to add an “S” and go!	Slams (plural noun)
Fatrats	Fatrats help us understand compound words as “fat” words made up of smaller words.	Cup + Cake = Cupcake Tooth + Brush = Toothbrush
Harder Starters	Blends that are found at the beginning of the word.	Frog
Sam Sleuth	Sam Sleuth is an investigator that asks questions words: Why? What? Where? How? When? Who?	Where can we find Jam? How is Jam made?
Jam-Slam	Jam-Slam teaches us to slam the starters (letters in the beginning) with the rime (rest of the word)	Slam Skate
Double Trouble	Double Trouble shows us where to add another letter to make it past tense.	Jam – Jamming Tap – Tapping
Zap cat man	Zap Cat is a superhero who helps learners in the minute stories.	A minute story: The ram and the jam.
Think Thrice	Think thrice encourages learners to “Think ahead, Think back and Think for yourself.”	Thinking ahead by adding ed in a word: Jammed.

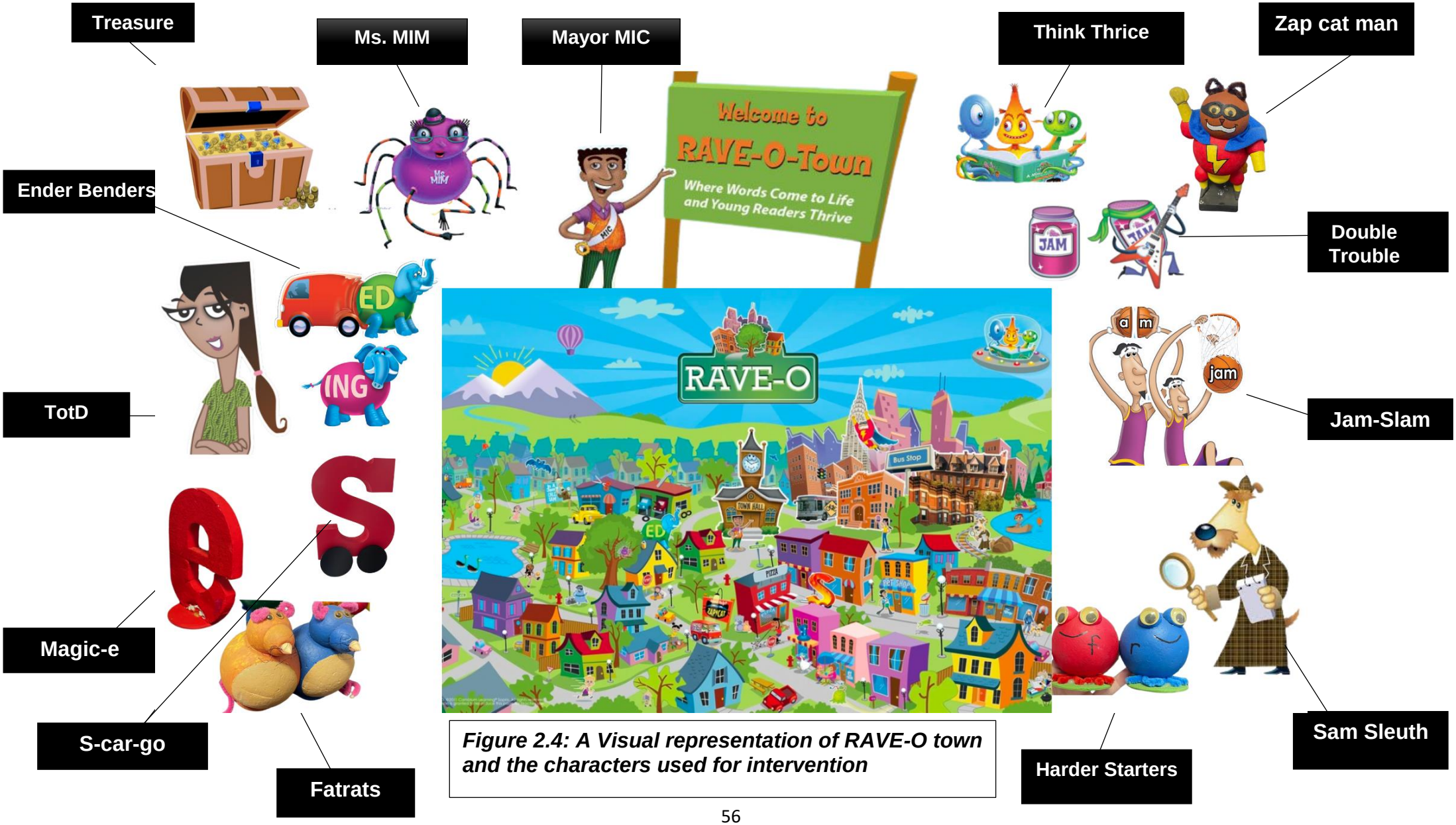


Figure 2.4: A Visual representation of RAVE-O town and the characters used for intervention

2.7.2 International perspectives on intervention strategies for supporting dyslexic learners

Anderson and Meier-Hedde (2011) state that global case studies show educators' view of dyslexia as non-existent. Educators blame learning challenges faced, as a result of dyslexia, as learners being lazy, parents neglecting children, and being slow (Anderson & Meier-Hadde, 2011).

In contrast, the literature perused shows that there are several effective intervention strategies for supporting dyslexic learners in inclusive classrooms from a global perspective used by educators. Multisensory teaching methods show a common thread globally, as the most suitable approach. The multisensory method allows learners to engage multiple senses, such as visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic simultaneously and can significantly improve literacy skills for dyslexic learners (Birsh, 2018).

This approach, commonly known as the Orton-Gillingham method (Gillingham, 1997), is widely used in many countries like the United States of America, Brazil and Australia. The Orton–Gillingham Method is used to teach children with dyslexia how to read. This method focuses on the connection between letters and sounds and is designed to be a systematic and explicit approach to teaching reading skills (Gillingham, 1997). Reif (2023) reported that America considers this approach as highly effective for learners with dyslexia. In addition, structured and personalised approaches, along with the use of assistive technology and tiered support models, play a vital role (Reif, 2023).

In agreement, Germano et al. (2014) also found that Brazil encompasses individualised support, multisensory approaches and visual and phonological processing approaches. In addition to these strategies, Brazil aims to make reading intervention programmes the core approach to enhancing phonological awareness to address the specific needs of learners with dyslexia (Germano et al., 2014). While Robertson (2016) argues that in Australia, the key is for educators to have access to the right training and resources to provide effective, evidence-based support for learners with dyslexia before they provide intervention.

The above literature concurs with research found in the UK focusing both on the development of strategic intervention and teacher training. According to Andresen and Monsrud (2021), the intervention strategies for learners with dyslexia in the UK

encompass a holistic approach that includes educational interventions, parental involvement, technology integration, workplace adjustments, and access to specialist educators and professionals to provide comprehensive support for individuals with dyslexia. The above-mentioned clearly indicates that, the effort is being made internationally to provide intervention for learners with dyslexia despite different approaches used.

As this study aimed to use the RAVE-O programme to investigate dyslexic interventions in Foundation Phase classes, it supports the global call for joint research projects to identify effective intervention strategies and to gain a better understanding of the causes and impacts of dyslexia. This can involve sharing data, methodologies, and findings to advance our understanding of dyslexia and its treatment. By collaborating globally, we can pool our collective knowledge, expertise, and resources to ensure that all dyslexic children receive the support they need to succeed and that educators are trained on intervention strategies.

In summary, a global perspective on intervention strategies for dyslexic children in inclusive classrooms highlights the importance of multisensory instruction, assistive technology, differentiated teaching, collaborative learning, and explicit phonics instruction, which is emphasised in RAVE-O, to support the diverse needs of all learners.

2.7.3 African perspectives on intervention strategies for supporting learners with dyslexia

The Africa Dyslexia Organisation (2022) advocates for advocacy around dyslexia so that the majority of the continent's population of educators, parents, learners, and policymakers can be well informed about the condition. Intervention strategies for dyslexia in various African countries, including Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa, vary based on available resources and educational approaches. The literature reviewed took into consideration the crucial individual country's contexts, educational systems, and available resources when implementing intervention strategies for dyslexia across the African continent.

In Zimbabwe, the National Institute for Learning Development (NILD) has been training educators since 2012, offering NILD Educational Therapy, which aims to help learners develop tools for learning differently (NILD, 2012). This early intervention approach is

seen as an effective tool for catching learning disorders before they become entrenched. In addition, other strategies used by educators in Zimbabwe include look and say, remediation, positive reinforcements, individualised instruction, games, and peer tutoring (Chipunza & Tafirenyika, 2016). However, as mentioned in Section 2.2.5, Zimbabwe lacks formal assessment tools for learners with dyslexia. Therefore, the development of formal assessment of learners with dyslexia in mainstream primary schools in Zimbabwe is emphasised. The aim is to involve a multi-disciplinary team that includes practitioners, such as parents, teachers, school heads, educational psychologists, speech therapists, and medical doctors (Nkomo et al., 2021).

In contrast to the aforementioned, it was noted in Section 2.2.5 that 90% of educators in Nigeria are unaware of dyslexia. Moreover, the aim regarding intervention strategies in Nigeria is first to raise awareness around dyslexia and train educators. Teaching educators how to identify and support dyslexic learners effectively through training programmes that emphasise the importance of understanding dyslexia and employing suitable teaching strategies (Writer, 2023). These intervention strategies taught to educators collectively aim to create a supportive and conducive learning environment for learners with dyslexia in Nigeria.

Intervention strategies used for learners with dyslexia in Egypt include computerised cognitive abilities training, adaptive systems, behaviour modification practices, remediation programmes, the Orton-Gillingham Method, gamification, understanding the neurobiological basis of dyslexia, and clinical trials. These strategies are designed to address the unique needs of learners with dyslexia, which include difficulties in spelling and reading (Farghaly et al., 2022). Understanding the needs of Arab learners with dyslexia for adaptive systems is crucial for developing effective interventions. This includes using individualised plans, providing teaching strategies and techniques that suit their learning styles, and exploring the use of ICT in supporting dyslexic learners' preferred learning styles (Al-Dawsari & Hendley, 2022). The integrated computer technology intervention strategy that stood out is called the Computerised Cognitive Abilities Training Battery for Reading (CATB-R). According to Al-Dawsari and Hendley (2022), CATB-R is a computerised program designed to improve reading skills in learners with dyslexia. This programme was used in a study involving Grade 2 learners in Asyut, Egypt, to identify domains of cognitive strength and weakness in learners with dyslexia (Al-Dawsari & Hendley, 2022). The findings revealed the prevalence of

dyslexia among the participants was found to be 13.9%, with a higher incidence in girls (15.8%) compared to boys (11.7%). Following the implementation of the CATB-R training programme, there was a notable improvement in the participants' reading abilities, as evidenced by a significant increase in their post-training scores on the Cognitive Abilities Diagnostic Battery for Reading (CADB-R) across all sub-items (Farghaly et al., 2022). In a more traditional approach, Egypt still encourages the use of remediation programmes. The development of remediation programmes for Arabic-speaking children with dyslexia is an ongoing and important intervention strategy that the majority of educators are familiar with. These programmes are designed to improve reading skills and address the specific needs of learners with dyslexia in Egypt (Elbanna et al., 2012).

Conversely, South African research emphasises the significance of multisensory approaches and phonics-based methods in effectively managing dyslexia (Karimupfumbi & Dwarika, 2022). The intervention strategies implemented for learners with dyslexia in South Africa adopt a multifaceted approach, involving multiple stakeholders. These strategies encompass policies, healthcare professionals, education specialists, District-Based Support Teams (DBSTs), and early intervention.

According to Olivier (2017), educational policies such as Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education have a direct impact on teachers' experiences with inclusion, as well as their ability to teach and support learners with dyslexia. The Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy complements Education White Paper 6 by providing a structured framework for identifying and addressing learning barriers. This ensures that all learners, including those with dyslexia, receive the necessary support to succeed in an inclusive educational environment.

Healthcare professionals, including educational psychologists and neurologists, as well as organisations such as the Red Apple Dyslexia Association, play a vital role in assessing learners, providing diagnoses, and implementing appropriate interventions. These professionals collaborate with teachers and parents to ensure learners with dyslexia receive effective support (Olivier, 2017). Similarly, education specialists, educational psychologists, and learning support professionals offer tailored assistance to both educators and learners facing learning challenges. The DBSTs provide collective support through workshops and seminars aimed at enhancing teachers'

ability to support learners with dyslexia (Olivier, 2017). However, these workshops do not specifically focus on structured intervention programmes for diagnosed learners.

Finally, early intervention is critical, particularly during the developmental stages of the brain's language areas, as it significantly improves learning outcomes. Specially designed fonts, such as Dyslexie, OpenDyslexic, and Lexia Readable, can help alleviate some of the challenges associated with dyslexia. These intervention strategies highlight the necessity of a collaborative and holistic approach that integrates educators, healthcare professionals, specialists, and supportive policies to effectively meet the needs of learners with dyslexia in South Africa.

In conclusion, the literature suggests that while there are some initiatives and resources available for dyslexia intervention in certain African countries, the availability and implementation of these strategies may vary across the continent. Continued efforts to raise awareness, provide training, and develop tailored resources are crucial to supporting individuals with dyslexia across Africa.

2.8 ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN SUPPORTING DYSLEXIC LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS IN SCHOOLS

According to the National Department of Education, the inclusive education policy is critical in guiding the South African education system (Department of Education, 2014). It is a guideline for promoting equality and inclusion for all learners in inclusive classrooms (Department of Education, 2014). An investigation of the above statement led the researcher to the discover the South African Sign Language CAPS curriculum. The document serves to help educators in special needs schools teach auditory-impaired learners (Education, n.d.). No studies in the literature indicated guiding strategies for all other learning impairments, including dyslexia, resulting in educators offering the curriculum without thorough guidance on how to assist learners experiencing difficulties associated with dyslexia. However, the Department of Education in South Africa plays a crucial role in supporting impaired learners and educators in schools, with efforts divided across four levels: policy, curriculum, district, and school levels and using the SIAS policy as a guiding document.

2.8.1 Policy

The Department of Education has introduced policies to promote inclusive education, ensuring that learners with dyslexia are accommodated. Education White Paper No. 6 (Department of Education, 2001) advocates for an inclusive educational framework in which learners with special needs, including dyslexia, should be integrated into mainstream schools wherever feasible. This policy underscores the importance of providing support for dyslexic learners within general classrooms rather than placing them in specialised schools (Geertsema et al., 2022). Schools are therefore encouraged to create a supportive learning environment that caters to the needs of learners with dyslexia. The Department of Basic Education (2011) highlights the necessity for educators to develop a clear understanding of dyslexic learners' needs (Makgato et al., 2023).

Despite the implementation of inclusive education policies in South Africa, learners with disabilities, including dyslexia, continue to face significant challenges (Geertsema et al., 2022). A major issue is the shortage of resources in South African schools, which affects the identification and support of learners with dyslexia, often resulting in delayed diagnoses and insufficient intervention (Geertsema et al., 2022). Moreover, Makgato et al. (2023) assert that a lack of parental involvement further impedes the Department of Education's efforts to support dyslexic learners. Additionally, many educators may not possess the necessary qualifications or training to effectively assist learners with dyslexia (Geertsema et al., 2022).

While the Department of Education has developed policies to support learners with learning disabilities and assist educators, their effectiveness is hindered by resource limitations, inadequate teacher training, and minimal parental engagement.

2.8.2 Curriculum

The Department of Education in South Africa plays a significant role in supporting dyslexic learners and educators concerning the curriculum. Geerstema et al. (2022) state that the department aims to provide accommodations for dyslexic learners within the curriculum, such as additional reading time, the use of recordings in the classroom, and audiobooks. Educators' awareness and knowledge of dyslexia are encouraged as it is crucial for effectively supporting dyslexic learners within the curriculum

(Geertsema et al., 2022). However, there are discrepancies regarding the effectiveness of the Department of Education's accommodations, with some sources indicating that the necessary accommodations are not always provided by educators and government officials, leading to challenges in the early identification of learning barriers for dyslexic learners (Geertsema et al., 2022). While the Department of Education in South Africa aims to support dyslexic learners and educators within the curriculum by providing accommodations and promoting inclusive education, there are challenges highlighted in some sources regarding the lack of resources, late diagnosis, and inadequate support for dyslexic learners, indicating areas that require improvement.

2.8.3 District level

At the district level, the Department of Education is responsible for ensuring that educators are equipped with the necessary skills and competencies to support learners with dyslexia. The study by Leseyane et al. (2018) recommends that educators should be equipped with sufficient skills, qualifications, and competencies relevant to dealing with dyslexic learners (Leseyane et al., 2018). This suggests that the district should provide training and resources to teachers to enable them to effectively support learners with dyslexia. Once educators are trained, they can be equipped to not only support learners with dyslexia but also be able to identify characteristics of a dyslexic learner and fill in the Support Needs Assessment Form also known as the DBE 120 form. The educator fills in this form with the parent's/guardian's agreement and relevant supporting documents for a request for accommodations or referral to another school for learners with impairments.

Moreover, the district is responsible for allocating a LSEN number to the learner and offering the learner placement in a special needs school or providing a letter for the approval of accommodations if the learner stays in the same school. However, this process has been said to take time as there may be a limitation of special schools around the area (Leseyane et al., 2018). Therefore, with the relevant skills of RAVE-O, during this waiting time, educators could use the programme as an intervention strategy to support the identified learner.

2.8.4 School level

At the school level, the Department of Education encourages schools to create a conducive learning environment that supports learners with dyslexia. Leseyane et al. (2018) suggest that schools should educate other pupils about the fact that, despite facing challenges with reading and writing, dyslexic learners can achieve academic success comparable to their peers. This awareness campaign aims to reduce stigma and promote acceptance among peers, which is essential for creating a supportive learning environment. This can be led by the SBST. The School-Based Support Team (SBST) plays a crucial role in coordinating the necessary support for learners, utilising the specific school's framework and policies in conjunction with departmental guidelines to help learners achieve their full academic potential. However, despite the Department of Education's initiatives to assist dyslexic learners, some studies indicate that educators may lack the requisite training and qualifications to effectively support these learners. This gap in expertise poses challenges in the early identification of learning barriers for dyslexic learners (Geertsema et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Geertsema et al. (2018) highlight that educators in South African private schools often have limited knowledge of dyslexia, pointing to a broader issue of insufficient understanding and management of dyslexic learners at the school level.

In summary, The Department of Education in South Africa plays a vital role in supporting dyslexic learners and educators through policies that promote inclusive education, curriculum accommodations, teacher training, and awareness campaigns. These efforts are crucial for ensuring that learners with dyslexia have equal access to education and can achieve their full potential.

Many educators expressed dissatisfaction with the support they receive from DBSTs for assisting learners with learning difficulties, including dyslexia (Nel et al., 2013). This includes those who participated in the current study. According to Nel et al. (2014), educators perceive DBSTs as inadequately trained and ineffective in providing the necessary support for learners with learning difficulties. Schoeman (2012) corroborates these findings, highlighting that DBSTs often lack the skills required to offer a comprehensive curriculum, assessment, and instructional support, which are crucial for developing effective learning programmes and materials.

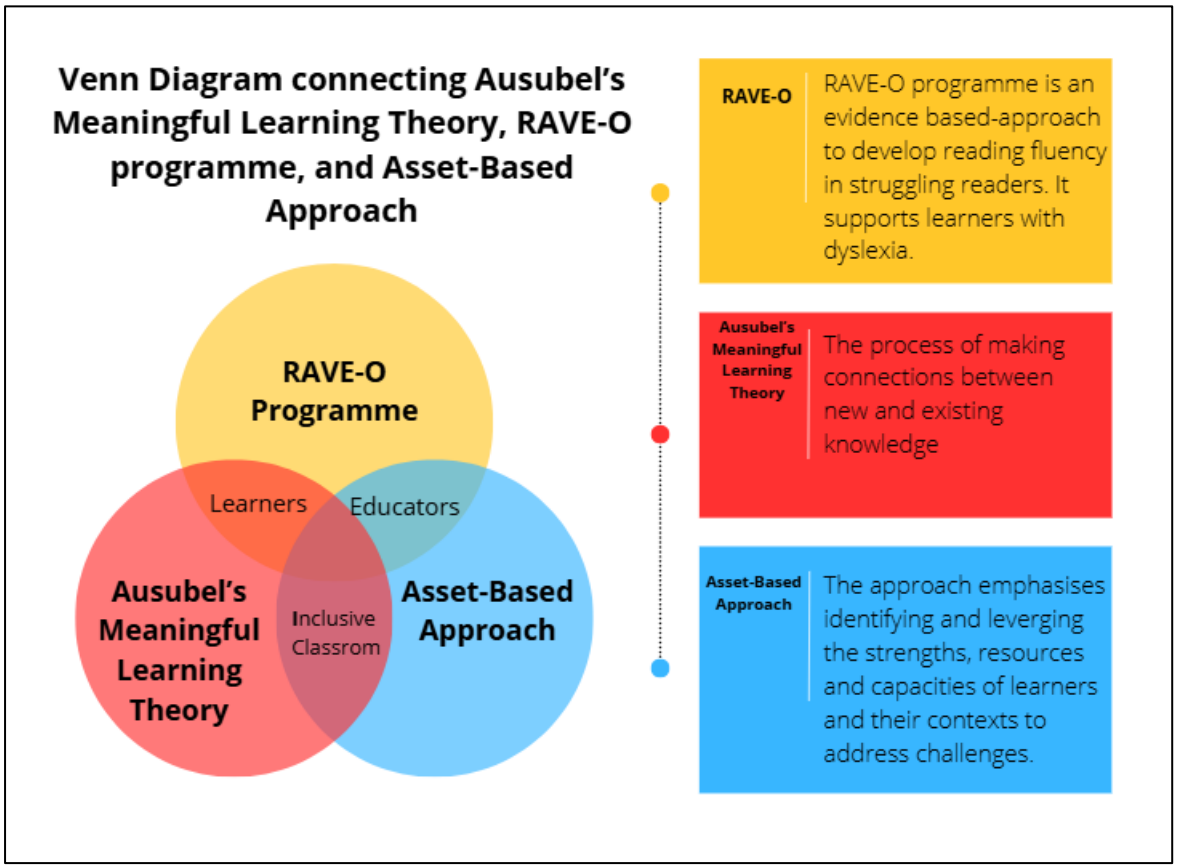
Despite numerous studies focusing on the general support needed for implementing inclusive education policies, there is a notable scarcity of research specifically addressing how DBSTs can assist teachers in differentiating assessments for learners with dyslexia, particularly in the Foundation Phase. This gap in literature underscores the need for targeted interventions like RAVE-O, an evidence-based programme designed to enhance reading skills among struggling learners, including those with dyslexia. By bridging the gap between the support educators need and the interventions available, RAVE-O can play a pivotal role in enhancing the educational experience for learners with dyslexia, ensuring they receive the tailored support necessary for their academic success.

2.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to McGregor (2019), a conceptual framework is a combination of theoretical viewpoints, concepts, and methodologies that are organised to clarify the phenomenon under investigation effectively. It acts as the lens through which the researcher analyses the phenomenon, investigates the research issue, and interprets the results (Scavarda et al., 2022). Consequently, employing a conceptual framework allowed me to connect established concepts and theories in innovative ways, integrate work from various fields, and offer insights at multiple levels regarding the phenomenon (Adom et al., 2018). In selecting the conceptual framework for this study, the researcher was mindful of the aim to investigate the intervention provided for dyslexic pupils in inclusive foundation phase classrooms by using the RAVE-O programme as a reference. The study sought insights using David Ausubel's meaningful learning theory and was supported by the asset-based approach.

Figure 2.5 illustrates the conceptual framework used in this study as a Venn diagram. Ausubel's meaningful learning theory emphasises how learners acquire new knowledge through the RAVE-O programme as an intervention. Educators explore various intervention strategies using RAVE-O, focusing on the strengths and resources available in an inclusive classroom through the asset-based approach. When addressing the need for effective interventions and equipping educators with the necessary skills, Ausubel's meaningful learning theory and the asset-based approach come together to create an inclusive environment for learners with dyslexia in the foundation phase classroom (Stanley, 2023; Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2021).

Figure 2.5: Visual representation of the conceptual framework used in this study



2.9.1 David Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Theory

The first learning framework underpinning this study focuses on the Meaningful Learning Theory by David Ausubel. David Paul Ausubel is an American psychologist focused on developmental and educational psychology (Fay, 2016). Ausubel was a cognitivist motivated by Jean Piaget's work (Theory, 2022). He believed that what learners already know determines what can be learned next (Fay, 2016). Ausubel argued that learners seek to make sense of their interactions by attaching new knowledge to what they already know (Datar, 2013). Hannum (2015) further states that Ausubel believed learning brings new knowledge to learners' cognitive structure and attaches it to prior knowledge. Ausubel developed three theories: meaningful learning theory, assimilation (subsumption) theory, and motivation theory (Learning, 2016). This study focused on the meaningful learning theory (Stanley, 2023). This theory is based on the learner's existing cognitive structure as the principal factor influencing the learning and retention of new meaning (Learning, 2016). David Ausubel's meaningful learning theory provides a framework for understanding how

learners, particularly those with dyslexia, can acquire new knowledge through interventions like the RAVE-O programme. According to Stanley (2023), meaningful learning theory involves subsumptions: derivative, correlative, superordinate, and combinatorial.

The following section explains Ausubel's four types of subsumption that occurred during the teaching and learning process and how they were correlated with the study.

2.9.1.1 Derivative subsumption

In derivative subsumption, new information is directly derived from or is an example of existing concepts in the learner's cognitive structure (Gregory, 2023). For example, when a learner with dyslexia learns a new word that follows the same phonetic patterns as previously learned words, it is a case of derivative subsumption.

2.9.1.2 Correlative subsumption

Correlative subsumption occurs when new information is related to existing concepts but is not an example of them. It involves modifying or elaborating on existing concepts (Theory, 2022). In the context of the RAVE-O programme, correlative subsumption happens when a learner learns a new word meaning that is related to but distinct from a known word (Bellvista, 2024).

2.9.1.3 Superordinate subsumption

Superordinate subsumption takes place when a new, more general concept is formed that can subsume or include previously learned concepts (Gregory, 2023). For instance, when a learner with dyslexia learns a new word family or morphological pattern that encompasses several previously learned words, it represents superordinate subsumption.

2.9.1.4 Combinatorial subsumption

Combinatorial subsumption involves relating new information to relevant, general concepts in the learner's cognitive structure that are not necessarily subsumed under a more specific concept (Gregory, 2023). In the context of the RAVE-O programme, combinatorial subsumption occurs when a learner connects a newly-learned word to their general understanding of language and reading.

By incorporating these four principles of the meaningful learning theory into the RAVE-O programme, educators are able to help learners with dyslexia build upon their existing knowledge, make meaningful connections between new and prior information, and develop a more comprehensive understanding of language and reading. This allows RAVE-O to serve as a meaningful intervention programme for diagnosed learners. David Ausubel's framework aligns with the asset-based approach, discussed in the next section, by recognising and building upon each learner's strengths and resources.

2.9.2 Asset-based approach

Assets in education refer to the qualities, skills, and talents that learners develop throughout their lives (Society, 2020). Eloff and Ebersöhn (2006) explain that an asset-based approach is centred on recognising strengths, emphasising skills, resources, and capabilities. This approach aims to overcome learning barriers by identifying and effectively utilising the resources available to both educators and learners (Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2006). Additionally, it fosters resilience by leveraging positive assets to address existing challenges.

The RAVE-O programme, as a structured literacy strategy, can be integrated into inclusive classrooms that aligns with the asset-based approach, which emphasises recognising and utilising each learner's strengths. The study used the asset-based approach to prioritise the strengths and potential of learners rather than their deficits (Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2006). In RAVE-O, there are characters around the RAVE-O town who are used to teach the learners, and all have their special abilities. When introducing RAVE-O, the participant-observer allowed the learners to express their talents orally and state which character they felt they resonate with the most. This allowed a sense of competence and confidence, which is crucial for learners with dyslexia who may often feel marginalised in traditional learning settings (Loots, 2011). RAVE-O is also designed to be engaging and enjoyable, significantly boosting learners' confidence and motivation (Bellvista, 2024). In Cycle 4, during the implementation of the RAVE-O intervention programme, educators were encouraged to create a positive learning environment, recognise the learners' potential and foster a love for reading, which is a core principle of the asset-based approach. Existing books from the schools were used as the existing resources and were adaptable by

RAVE-O. The participant observer asked learners to go through the books with a partner and identify any words they had learned thus far. The decision to also allow learners to work in pairs, think, and share was due to the limited number of books for all learners.

The participant-observer (in Cycle 3 – on action planning) structured lessons that were adaptable to meet learners' diverse needs using RAVE-O. This personalised approach mirrored the asset-based strategy of tailoring education to fit each learner's unique strengths and challenges (Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2006). Learners worked in small groups, which allowed a sense of community and support, essential elements of the asset-based approach, which values the contributions of all learners and promotes collective growth (Loots, 2011). Lastly, the researcher used RAVE-O to promote learners' incremental successes that enhanced their self-esteem. This aligns with the asset-based approach's goal of empowering them by recognising and celebrating their achievements, no matter how small. Learners were rewarded with a character from RAVE-O Town that best aligned with their strengths and achievements. For instance, learners who excelled with Ausubel's derivative subsumption received a certificate from the RAVE-O character called Mayor Mic (see Figure 2.4).

Considering the above views, the rationale for selecting the conceptual framework for this study was explored through existing knowledge and the support strategies educators use for dyslexic learners against the RAVE-O programme. David Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Theory and the Asset-Based Approach grounded the study and pointed out the assets that enhance the abilities of learners with dyslexia.

2.10 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, a literature review on using the RAVE-O programme to investigate dyslexic interventions in foundation phase classes was explored in-depth. It highlighted the evolution of understanding dyslexia from historical perspectives to contemporary conceptualisations, focusing on the multifaceted nature of the condition internationally. The review stressed the importance of educators' perceptions of dyslexia globally and locally, underscoring the need for tailored intervention strategies that consider the diverse needs of dyslexic learners. Additionally, it discussed the role of various countries in implementing effective interventions for dyslexia and the importance of collaboration between educators, researchers, and policymakers.

Furthermore, the literature review concludes by emphasising the crucial role of the DoE and DBSTs in supporting educators and dyslexic learners in the classroom by implementing evidence-based programmes like RAVE-O to enhance literacy skills and academic success. Lastly, this chapter explored the conceptual framework that supported the study. The following chapter details the methodology employed for data collection to address my research questions. It will also cover the research design, methods, and data analysis, along with the ethical considerations associated with the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, relevant literature was reviewed within the context of using the RAVE-O intervention programme to investigate and gain insight into educators' views on how they conceptualise dyslexia and perceive their role in the inclusive foundation phase classrooms. This facilitated an understanding of the available intervention programmes and the support strategies educators need to combat the gaps discovered in inclusive classes. I also discussed the conceptual framework relevant to guiding the study according to which literature is most suitable.

This chapter portrays the research paradigms, research design and methodology. The focus then shifts to qualitative research using focus groups, observations, interviews and document analysis in relation to PAR to collect data. Ethical considerations and limitations conclude this chapter. The research procedures and methods for this study are summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Summary of research design

RESEARCH PARADIGMS			
Research Methodology	Interpretivism	Epistemology	Qualitative research approach
RESEARCH DESIGN			
Participatory action research			
SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS			
Purposive sampling	Two schools that have inclusive classes. One in the Ekurhuleni and another in the Tshwane Region.		
DATA COLLECTION			
Focus groups	Observations	Semi-structured interviews	Document analysis
RESEARCH QUESTION	**METHODOLOGY**	**VALUE**	
How can the RAVE-O programme be used to support learners with dyslexia in inclusive Foundation Phase classes?	Focus groups on the introduction of the study and training on using the RAVE-O intervention programme. Semi-structured interviews with foundation phase educators and observations of the RAVE-O programme were used in the classrooms, with field notes documented and documents analysed.	To determine support strategies that Foundation Phase educators need to enhance the academic progress of learners diagnosed with Dyslexia and use of RAVE-O as a baseline programme to suggest possible early intervention strategies for them.	
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION			
Thematic analysis			
QUALITY CRITERIA OF RESEARCH			
Credibility	Transferability	Dependability	Confirmability
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF RESEARCH			
Informed consent	Prevention from harm	Anonymity	Confidentiality

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Research paradigms in qualitative research refer to the underlying philosophical and theoretical frameworks that guide the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These paradigms shape the researcher's worldview, influencing the methodology, data collection, and analysis methods used in the research study. The study used the

RAVE-O programme as an intervention for learners with dyslexia in inclusive classrooms; the interplay of different research paradigms is crucial to understanding its effectiveness. Positivism provides a foundational perspective by emphasising the importance of objective observations and measurements, which can be useful in assessing the programme's impact through quantitative data, such as standardised test results or literacy assessments (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, recognising the limitations of this approach, post-positivism critiques the notion of strict objectivity by acknowledging that researchers' biases and contextual factors can influence their observations (McGlinchey, 2022). This paradigm advocates for a more nuanced understanding that incorporates qualitative insights from educators and learners about their experiences with RAVE-O, thereby enriching the data collected and providing a fuller picture of its effectiveness.

Furthermore, pragmatism serves as a practical framework for this study, focusing on real-world applications and solutions tailored to the needs of dyslexic learners. By blending qualitative and quantitative methods, pragmatism enables researchers to explore how RAVE-O can be adapted and implemented effectively in diverse educational contexts (Dudovskiy, 2022). Together, these paradigms inform a comprehensive approach to evaluating the RAVE-O intervention programme, ensuring that both empirical data and participant experiences are considered in understanding its impact on literacy development in inclusive classrooms. However, the study used post-positivism as it focuses on the qualitative aspect of interpretivism. Interpretivism was chosen as the guiding paradigm because it aligns with the objectives of understanding the subjective experiences of educators and learners involved in implementing the RAVE-O intervention programme. By adopting an interpretivist approach through post-positivism, this research aimed to capture nuanced insights from participants, facilitating a deeper understanding of how dyslexic learners engage with educational interventions, specifically RAVE-O. This choice supports the study's objectives by prioritising participant voices and fostering collaborative knowledge creation within the educational setting. The research paradigms for the study are further discussed in the following sub-sections.

3.2.1 Research methodology

Methodology is a “research strategy that translates ontological and epistemological principles into guidelines that show how research is to be conducted and principles, procedures, and practices that govern research” (Nayak & Singh, 2021:11). Maree (2019) further mentions that research methodology includes procedures that researchers use to collect data, analyse, describe and explain the phenomena. Hays and Singh (2012) emphasise that research methodology includes aspects that relate to selecting the research questions, a paradigm, and suitable data generation procedures. The methodology for this study is grounded in interpretive and qualitative research.

3.2.1.1 Interpretivist paradigm

The purpose of this study was to use the RAVE-O intervention programme as an intervention strategy for dyslexic learners in inclusive classrooms by looking into how educators conceptualise dyslexia and the support they require from DBSTs to deliver the best-suited intervention. The interpretivism paradigm was most appropriate for examining the phenomenon within foundation phase inclusive classroom contexts, aligning well with the study's objectives. In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the educator’s experiences with intervention programmes for learners with dyslexia, I have chosen interpretivism as a meta-theoretical paradigm. Meta-theory addresses the fundamental beliefs about the world that “guide” individuals’ actions (Lor, 2017:7). Therefore, this study was conducted within the interpretivist paradigm because it is based on the beliefs of multiple realities that are socially and subjectively co-constructed between the participants and the researcher (Creswell, 2013). Interpretivism presumes that truth is multi-layered and dynamic, with various meanings for a single phenomenon (Maree, 2019). It aims to understand the participants’ experiences and perspectives of their lives. The lived experiences and interactions shape the understanding of the study and make meaning of the world in which participants and the researcher live and work (Creswell, 2013).

I selected the interpretivism paradigm for my study due to its alignment with the nature of my research questions and its epistemological stance. My questions (see Sections 1.5.1 and 1.5.2) focus on understanding the experiences and perceptions of Foundation Phase educators regarding Dyslexia, intervention programmes and

strategies, and the support they receive from DBSTs. Unlike positivist studies that emphasise quantitative measures such as "How many?" or "How often?", my research explored subjective experiences and insights. The interpretivism paradigm is particularly suited for this purpose, as it recognises that knowledge is socially constructed and that individual contexts shape reality. By adopting this approach, I can delve into the complexities of educators' experiences, generating rich, contextual data that aligns with the study's goals.

3.2.1.2 Epistemological presuppositions of interpretivism

The epistemological framework enhanced the study. Epistemology can be defined as the researcher's understanding of reality (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Epistemology focuses on how the researcher seeks to discover the truth in order to arrive at the objection (Maree, 2019). Epistemology in this research emphasises how participants understand and perceive dyslexic intervention strategies within inclusive foundation phase classrooms. This approach allowed me to engage with participants in their social environments through observations and semi-structured interviews, facilitating the collection of rich and detailed data regarding their insights on the topic (Thompson, 2022; Snowling, 2019). The semi-structured format was instrumental in gathering the necessary information to address the research questions effectively.

Moreover, knowledge gained through the interpretivist framework is contextualised and validated within the participants' social settings, emphasising that reality is shaped by specific contexts (Adubasim & Nganji, 2017). Consequently, my research questions were tailored to the specific context and demographic of the participants involved. For instance, one of my key research questions examined the support that educators receive from the Department of Education concerning learners with dyslexia, particularly through DBSTs. This question is particularly relevant to foundation phase educators in South African schools, where such support systems are notably absent in higher education institutions (Fourie, 2018).

3.2.1.3 Adverse aspects of the interpretivist paradigm

Opie (2019) has suggested that while it is crucial for researchers to grasp participants' perceptions, intentions, and emotions, the interpretivist approach may compromise solid verification. Critics argue that the consistency and objectivity associated with

interpretivism can be undermined by inherent biases linked to the researcher's involvement in data collection and interpretation (Yoshida, 2020). Saldana (2011) acknowledges that while bias cannot be entirely eradicated, it can be significantly reduced. Moreover, another critic, Yanow (2014), stated that the interpretivist paradigm's limited capacity to generalise findings, primarily due to small sample sizes, may hinder the study. However, the study's aim was not to generalise the findings but to investigate the dyslexic interventions in relation to the RAVE-O intervention programme and provide strategies for educators.

To address potential biases in this study, I prioritised ensuring the trustworthiness and quality of the research, as detailed in Section 3.7. This involved using multiple data collection techniques—such as focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and observations—to achieve methodological triangulation. Furthermore, I ensured accuracy by verifying the consistency of data across different methods. I also confirmed that the data and findings presented were based exclusively on the analysed information (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This comprehensive approach enhanced the trustworthiness of the research results, addressing criticisms often associated with interpretivist research.

3.2.1.4 Positive aspects of the interpretivism paradigm

The interpretivism paradigm in research offers several advantages, particularly in social sciences, education and psychology, by providing an in-depth understanding of social contexts and the subjective meanings individuals attach to their experiences (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). It enhances the validity of findings through qualitative methods like interviews and observations, allowing for flexibility in research design and a focus on individual experiences (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). By recognising multiple realities, interpretivism encourages the exploration of diverse perspectives, contributing significantly to theoretical development and yielding richer insights into complex social phenomena (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Overall, this approach is invaluable for comprehensively understanding human behaviour and social interactions.

As the primary instrument in qualitative research, the researcher's human intelligence and senses played a crucial role in data collection, information gathering, setting observations, and reality construction. In this study, the researcher had to navigate

their dual roles as an educator and qualitative researcher. Establishing a professional relationship with the participating educators was essential, as they were needed to view the researcher as an impartial investigator rather than an educator. The extended engagement with the participants and the collection of rich data enabled the researcher to provide relevant descriptions, a hallmark of qualitative research that distinguishes it from traditional enquiry methods.

Ultimately, the aim of employing interpretivism and epistemology as meta-theoretical paradigms for this study was to offer a perspective on how educators perceive their role with regard to teaching and supporting learners diagnosed with dyslexia. The study explored the challenges educators face in teaching learners diagnosed with the condition and, made sense of how educators overcome the challenges, in relation to using the RAVE-O intervention programme.

3.2.2 Research approach

The literature divides research approaches into qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The study used the qualitative research approach to explore and analyse challenges educators face when teaching learners diagnosed with dyslexia in inclusive environments and provide early intervention strategies using RAVE-O, the intervention programme. Chih-Pei (2017) states that qualitative research attempts to collect rich data regarding a particular phenomenon to understand what is observed or studied.

3.2.2.1 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research is a methodology that involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data to understand complex opinions, concepts or experiences (Rahman, 2023). Chih-Pei (2017) states that qualitative research attempts to collect rich data regarding a particular phenomenon to understand what is observed or studied. Bhandari (2023) adds that it is often used to gain in-depth insights into human behaviour and social interactions. The author further suggests that qualitative research has many real-world applications, particularly in fields such as education. It can be used to explore perspectives, evaluate social programmes, and develop new interventions to address social problems (Rahman, 2023). For this reason, the researcher aimed to use the qualitative research approach to investigate and analyse challenges faced by educators when teaching learners diagnosed with dyslexia in

inclusive environments and provide the RAVE-O intervention programme as a strategy to mitigate these challenges.

According to Lichtman (2023), social context is important in qualitative research as it provides valuable insights into why participants think and behave in a particular manner. It was crucial to view the data through a qualitative approach as a beacon for the study because it enabled the researcher to investigate the phenomena in the natural setting in which it occurred (Mohajan, 2018). As the researcher, I needed to spend time in the chosen inclusive foundation phase classrooms and have direct contact with the educators and learners to collect data as qualitative researchers are not likely to take the participants out of their natural setting (Creswell, 2013).

By utilising a qualitative approach in this study, it provided the benefit of direct physical interaction with participants at the research site, which significantly enhanced the depth of the data collected (Lichtman, 2023). As the participant-observer and certified RAVE-O practitioner, I was able to demonstrate the RAVE-O intervention programme as an intervention strategy (cycles 1-3), observe the implementation of it (cycle 4) and engage in semi-structured interviews (cycle 5), allowing me to explore the participants' perceptions more thoroughly. This interaction enabled me to capture non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, emotional responses, and body language, which added valuable context to their verbal insights. The combination of direct observation and in-depth interviews not only enriched the data but also fostered a more nuanced understanding of how educators perceive and implement the RAVE-O intervention programme in their teaching practices.

While qualitative research is regarded as valuable for in-depth and contextual understanding, it has several notable disadvantages that I needed to consider as the researcher. Subjectivity is a significant concern in the interpretation of qualitative data as it is heavily influenced by the researcher's perspectives and biases, which can lead to inconsistencies in analysis and conclusions (Lichtman, 2023). This subjectivity makes qualitative research challenging to duplicate, as different researchers may draw varying interpretations from the same data set (Maree, 2020). However, Sichula et al. (2022) argued that the criticism of subjectivity in qualitative research is often due to an unwarranted comparison with the quantitative approach. The author suggests that while complete elimination of bias may not be possible, researchers can significantly

reduce its impact through the use of triangulation and quality assurance measures (Sichula, 2018).

Additionally, qualitative research is also challenging when it comes to intensive labour and time constraints (Rahman, 2018). This process frequently involved online focus groups and in-person interviews that needed to be transcribed, and field notes from the in-person observations that needed to be aligned with the transcripts from the interviews. As the researcher, I addressed these challenges by using Google Meet for virtual focus group meetings and Google Forms for two interviews with the participants in management who were unable to meet due to their busy schedules. This effective use of technological tools embraced the Fourth Industrial Revolution of where the world is headed to when it comes to research. In addition to this, I used recordings for interviews and transcription software. Lastly, I established a structured framework (see *Section 1.14.1*) that allowed me to analyse the data in thematic analysis, which helped in sorting everything accordingly. By combining technological tools, concurrent analysis, and structured frameworks, researchers can mitigate the challenges posed by the intensive demands of qualitative research.

3.2.3 Research design

Research designs in qualitative research are strategies for answering research questions and gaining a detailed understanding of a specific context or phenomenon (Jain, 2023). It functions as a strategic framework that directs the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes aimed at addressing the research question (Creswell, 2013). Research design in qualitative research acts as a detailed plan for executing the study, ensuring that the results are trustworthy, valid, and aligned with the research goals. There are numerous research designs within qualitative research namely narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, participatory action research and case study (Maree, 2019). The study explored participatory action research (PAR) as both a strategy and a research design based on the interpretivist and epistemological assumptions motivated by the research paradigm. The following section discusses the research type.

3.2.3.1 Research strategy: Participatory action research

According to Zhao and Fan (2023) teaching is often structured within a hierarchical framework where instructional materials are developed externally and subsequently delivered to educators, who are expected to implement the prescribed curriculum. In the South African context, this process is guided by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), which formulates the national curriculum. The DBE then disseminates these guidelines to various provincial education departments, which in turn provide resources and conduct workshops for educators at the district level. This multi-tiered approach aims to ensure that teachers receive the necessary support and training to effectively implement the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), which have been in place since 2012 (Molapo & Pillay, 2018). However, challenges persist, including inadequate training, limited resources, and bureaucratic obstacles that can hinder effective curriculum delivery (DBE, 2020). As a result, while the hierarchical structure is designed to streamline educational practices, it has led to inconsistencies in how curricula are executed across different contexts within South Africa. This traditional model can limit the adaptability and relevance of educational practices, as it may not account for the unique contexts and needs of individual classrooms. In relation to the study, the individuals who are affected are learners diagnosed with dyslexia and educators who are not equipped to accommodate them in the mainstream classroom.

PAR challenges this conventional approach by fostering collaborative engagement among educators, allowing them to contribute their insights and experiences throughout the research process (Johson et al., 2022). By incorporating teachers' perspectives and expertise, PAR facilitates the development of more contextually relevant instructional strategies, such as implementing the RAVE-O intervention programme for learners with dyslexia. This participatory model not only enhances the effectiveness of educational interventions but also empowers educators to take ownership of their teaching practices, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for learners in the inclusive classroom.

The democratic engagement facilitated by PAR promotes relational empowerment among educators (Lawson, 2015). In this study, teachers played a vital role in integrating the RAVE-O intervention programme into their lessons while reflecting on

its efficacy in supporting learners with dyslexia. This involvement allowed educators to share successful strategies and assess these methods from multiple viewpoints, fostering a critical re-evaluation of their practices based on newfound insights (Teichert, 2013). Moreover, PAR positions research participants as co-creators of knowledge, aiming to inspire action, transformation, or intervention concerning the issues under investigation (Lawson, 2015). The objective of this study was to use the RAVE-O intervention programme as a practical framework for dyslexic learners that educators could apply within their inclusive classrooms. Recent literature indicates that collaborative research partnerships within educational settings enhance learners' outcomes while simultaneously fostering professional development among teachers (Teichert, 2013). Such collaborations not only enrich the collective knowledge within the profession but also enhance educators' skills and capacities for continuous learning within the educational community.

By utilising PAR, the researcher created an environment conducive to collaboration, where educators and learners actively participated in the research process. This collaborative design not only enhanced the relevance and applicability of the findings but also empowered participants by building their knowledge and skills (Appel et al., 2017). The iterative nature of PAR ensured that the study remained responsive to the needs of dyslexic learners, ultimately leading to more effective interventions and improved academic outcomes. The research was organised into five distinct cycles, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the implementation process.

Cycle 1 focused on introducing the study to educators through an introductory virtual session. During this session, the researcher outlined the study's purpose, problem statement, rationale, and aims while explaining how PAR would be utilised and how participants could contribute effectively with approved consent. This initial cycle aimed to create a comfortable atmosphere for participants to ask questions and engage with the researcher.

Cycle 2 involved a virtual meeting where we collaboratively identified key challenges educators face when teaching learners with dyslexia. Participants shared their insights and experiences regarding current interventions and accommodations through discussions in this cycle. This aligned with PAR's principle of valuing the knowledge of those directly affected by educational issues (Baum et al., 2006).

In Cycle 3, educators received a short course on the RAVE-O intervention programme. The researcher provided participants with a digital training kit that included presentation slides, assessment tools, and evaluation forms. This cycle focused on developing an action plan that outlined specific strategies for using RAVE-O to support dyslexic learners, incorporating measurable objectives and methods for assessing progress (Pain et al., 2011).

Cycle 4 saw participants implementing their action plans in practice. The researcher took on the role of participant observer in classrooms, assisting educators with lesson modifications to incorporate multisensory activities while fostering a supportive learning environment.

Finally, Cycle 5 involved gathering feedback through semi-structured interviews and reflective discussions. The researcher evaluated the effectiveness of the RAVE-O programme in improving literacy skills among dyslexic learners while identifying areas for further improvement (Kindon et al., 2007). This iterative process allowed for ongoing reflection and adaptation based on real-time feedback from participants (Chilisa, 2012).

The primary advantages of using PAR in qualitative research include its ability to foster collaborative engagement among participants, leading to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Kindon et al., 2007). By actively involving educators and learners in the research process, PAR enhances the credibility and reliability of the findings, as participants contribute their insights and experiences directly. This collaborative approach not only increases the research's relevance but also empowers participants, allowing them to take ownership of the outcomes (Appel et al., 2017). Furthermore, PAR promotes adaptability, enabling researchers to refine their strategies based on participants' real-time feedback, which can enhance the effectiveness of interventions like the RAVE-O programme.

However, PAR also presents certain challenges. One significant disadvantage is the potential for time constraints and resource limitations, as engaging participants in a meaningful way requires considerable effort and commitment (Chilisa, 2012). Additionally, ethical considerations can complicate the research process, including ensuring participant confidentiality and navigating power dynamics within collaborative settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These challenges can impact the overall quality and

clarity of the study's outcomes. To mitigate these disadvantages as a researcher, I adopted several strategies. First, I meticulously planned and executed a well-defined research design that streamlined data collection and analysis processes, ensuring efficient use of resources. I established clear criteria for participant selection to avoid bias and ensure that those involved were representative of the educational context being studied. Utilising technology for data management further facilitated organisation and efficiency in data collection.

Moreover, I prioritised ethical considerations by developing robust protocols for obtaining informed consent and maintaining participant confidentiality throughout the study. Regular peer debriefing sessions allowed me to seek feedback and gain different perspectives on the research process, enhancing both credibility and rigour. By fostering an inclusive environment where participants felt valued and respected, I navigated some of the complexities inherent in PAR while achieving meaningful insights into implementing the RAVE-O intervention programme for learners with dyslexia. I discuss the interpretation of the PAR's five cycles in detail in Chapter 4.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods can be defined as the researcher's strategies, processes, and instruments utilised to gather the study's data or evidence to answer the study's research questions (Surbi, 2018; Jansen & Warren, 2023).

3.3.1 Focus groups

Focus groups played a pivotal role in this research, defined as "a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher" (Morgan, 2012:165). This method emphasises the importance of group interaction and focused discussions in gathering qualitative data, allowing researchers to explore participants' thoughts, beliefs, and experiences in depth (Agan et al., 2008). Organised focus group discussions were conducted across Cycles 1, 2, and 3 with participants from both schools to investigate the challenges and successes of implementing the RAVE-O intervention programme for dyslexic learners in inclusive classrooms. These discussions fostered dialogue and collective analysis, enhancing understanding of the community's needs and perspectives (De Oliveira, 2023).

In Cycle 1, focus group discussions were designed to introduce educators to the research study. The researcher hosted a virtual meeting where participants were briefed on the study's purpose, problem statement, rationale, and objectives. This foundational cycle was crucial for establishing rapport among participants and ensuring they felt valued and informed about the research process.

Cycle 2 focused on collaborative identification of the challenges educators face when teaching learners with dyslexia. The virtual meeting provided a platform for participants to share their experiences, insights, and strategies related to dyslexia intervention. Educators discussed specific obstacles they encountered in the classroom, such as a lack of resources or inadequate training in specialised teaching methods. The rich dialogue facilitated by these virtual focus groups deepened understanding of the educators' perspectives and informed subsequent actions in the study.

In Cycle 3, focus group discussions transitioned to action planning for implementing the RAVE-O intervention programme. During these virtual meetings, educators received a comprehensive overview of the programme's components and methodologies. The discussions centred around tailoring the RAVE-O intervention programme to meet the specific needs identified in Cycle 2. The research and educators collaboratively developed an action plan that outlined measurable objectives for integrating RAVE-O into their English Home Language lesson plans. This cycle not only equipped participants with practical strategies but also encouraged a sense of ownership over their implementation efforts.

Utilising Google Meet for these virtual meetings proved advantageous due to geographical constraints; the two selected schools were located in different regions of Gauteng. Focus groups were scheduled after work hours to minimise disruptions to teaching schedules while allowing educators to engage fully in discussions. Each session was capped at 60 minutes to ensure focused dialogue while respecting participants' time constraints. This structured approach facilitated meaningful interactions among educators, encouraging them to share insights freely while promoting a collaborative environment conducive to learning and growth.

Overall, these focus group cycles were instrumental in shaping the research process by fostering open communication among participants, identifying key challenges in

teaching dyslexic learners, and collaboratively developing actionable strategies for effectively implementing the RAVE-O intevrention programme.

3.3.2 Observation

Observation is a systematic process through which researchers utilise their senses and intuition to record participants' behavioural patterns and contextual issues (Maree, 2019). This method enables the researcher to gain deeper insights and understanding of the phenomenon without relying on participants to respond to predetermined questions (Trigueros et al., 2017). Maree (2019) identifies four types of observation: complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, and complete participant. For this study, the researcher selected the participant as observer approach.

As a certified RAVE-O practitioner, the researcher was well-equipped to effectively instruct educators on implementing the programme. In Cycle 3 of PAR, she taught educators the necessary skills for utilising RAVE-O in their classrooms. Following this training, Cycle 4 began with the researcher observing the teachers as they implemented the programme, serving as a participant observer who was available to answer questions and contribute ideas that could enhance their lessons.

This observational phase took place over eight weeks, split between both schools. In the first three weeks, educators implemented the intervention programme while the researcher closely observed their lessons. She aimed to minimise disruptions to allow the intervention to unfold as intended while remaining accessible for support and guidance. Her presence was designed to facilitate a smooth implementation process and ensure teachers felt confident in applying the strategies learned.

In the final week of this cycle, educators were interviewed to gather feedback on their experiences with the RAVE-O programme. These interviews are discussed in greater detail in the subsequent section. This structured approach allowed for a thorough evaluation of both the implementation of RAVE-O and its impact on teaching practices within inclusive classrooms.

3.3.3 Interviews

The research study aimed to utilise the RAVE-O intervention programme to explore dyslexic interventions in Foundation Phase inclusive classrooms. In Cycle 5 of PAR,

the researcher assumed the role of interviewer, engaging with twelve participants through semi-structured interviews. These interviews were meticulously designed to investigate educators' conceptualisations of dyslexia, the intervention strategies they employed, their perspectives on the RAVE-O programme, and the support they received from the DBE.

According to Maree (2019), interviews serve as a means of acquiring information through a pre-planned set of oral questions, while Kabir (2016) emphasises their role in obtaining meaningful data through dialogue between the interviewer and participants. The researcher employed a blend of structured and unstructured questions, utilising both closed and open-ended formats (Trigueros et al., 2017). By developing comprehensive interview protocols, she ensured consistency across all interviews, allowing each participant to respond to the same core questions (Marshall, 2016).

Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and was guided by the study's aims and objectives, facilitating a rich exploration of educators' insights and experiences regarding dyslexia and the RAVE-O intervention programme. This approach not only provided valuable qualitative data but also fostered an environment where participants felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences.

The insights gained from these interviews were crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of the RAVE-O intervention programme and understanding its impact on teaching practices within inclusive classrooms. The feedback collected aimed to inform future iterations of the programme and contribute to ongoing improvements in dyslexic interventions. This reflective process aligns with the PAR framework, emphasising continuous learning and adaptation based on participant experiences and perspectives.

3.3.4 Document analysis

Document analysis, as defined by Maree (2019), is a technique that focuses on written communication to illuminate the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, document analysis was intricately linked to all cycles of PAR, as the researcher maintained a comprehensive record of informal documents derived from field notes

collected during virtual focus meetings, observations, and formal documents accessed, including the policies of the participating schools.

The analysis encompassed both primary sources, such as focus group meeting recordings and observation reports, and secondary sources, like school policies and lesson plans, which are essential for understanding the existing frameworks and practices in place. The researcher conducted an in-depth document analysis to gain insights into the learning support policies of the two selected schools. At School 1, the learning support policy outlined clear guidelines for accommodations for learners with dyslexia, including access to readers, scribes, and additional time for assessments. In contrast, School 2 lacked formal accommodations, placing the burden on educators to act as scribes and readers while also providing extra time for learners. This situation could lead to inconsistencies in support across different classrooms.

Additionally, lesson plans were reviewed, revealing that they often included limited accommodations specifically tailored for learners with dyslexia; instead, they focused primarily on general reading literacy lessons applicable to all learners. The researcher also accessed verified observation reports from educational psychologists, which facilitated the identification of learners with dyslexia and provided detailed recommendations for effective classroom strategies.

By examining these documents throughout each cycle of the study, the researcher was able to contextualise the RAVE-O intervention programme within the broader educational landscape. This analysis highlighted existing gaps in support for dyslexic learners and underscored the potential for targeted interventions in inclusive classrooms. Integrating document analysis with each cycle of PAR enriched the research findings and informed actionable strategies for enhancing educational practices.

Integrating focus groups, observations, interviews, and document analysis within the framework of PAR significantly enriched the study on implementing the RAVE-O programme for dyslexic learners in inclusive classrooms. The focus groups facilitated open dialogue among educators, allowing them to identify challenges and share insights regarding dyslexia interventions collaboratively. Observations provided a nuanced understanding of classroom dynamics and the practical application of the RAVE-O intervention programme, with the researcher actively supporting educators

as a participant observer. Semi-structured interviews further deepened the exploration of educators' perspectives on dyslexia and the effectiveness of the intervention, yielding valuable qualitative data that informed future practices. Additionally, the thorough document analysis contextualised these findings within the existing educational frameworks, revealing gaps in support and highlighting areas for targeted interventions. Collectively, these methodologies not only enhanced the depth and breadth of the research but also highlighted the importance of continuous reflection and adaptation in educational practices, aligning perfectly with the principles of PAR to foster meaningful change in inclusive education settings.

3.4 RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANTS

This section focuses on the research site and steps taken to select participants for the study.

3.4.1 Research site

The identification of the research site for this study was important because of the focus on the analysis of dyslexic interventions in inclusive foundation phase classes using the RAVE-O intervention programme. Dyslexic interventions should be implemented within the chosen schools. With the dyslexic diagnosis comes the dedicated educators who need the correct skills to implement learning support through interventions. Černickaja and Sokolová (2024) recognise the significance of involving educators in research on dyslexia. The study further emphasises the importance of individual support for learners with dyslexia (Černickaja & Sokolová, 2024). Educators are responsible for providing learning support despite their differences and need to ensure teaching, learning, and assessments are meaningful and accommodating to promote learner success, particularly in the context of language development, which is crucial for learners with dyslexia. This focus on language development underscores the study's importance in the research site, as it highlights the need for effective interventions like the RAVE-O intervention programme to enhance literacy skills and support diverse learners in achieving their academic potential. Therefore, the research sites chosen for this study were mainstream inclusive schools in the Ekurhuleni and Tshwane districts in Gauteng.

3.4.1.1 The selection of participants

The importance of participants in a qualitative research study cannot be overstated. Participants are the foundation of qualitative research, as they provide the data and insights that help researchers understand the phenomenon under study. Statistics Solutions (2024) provides notable reasons by indicating that participants are the source of rich, detailed, and contextual information that is essential for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Subedi (2021) adds that qualitative research often employs small sample sizes, typically ranging from a single case to 20 participants. This is because qualitative research focuses on in-depth exploration and understanding rather than generalisation to a larger population (Subedi, 2021). The participants for this study were practising Foundation Phase educators in inclusive classes. Participants' contributions were determined through non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling focuses on selecting participants through criteria relevant to the study (Chih-Pei, 2017). It is essential in qualitative research due to its flexibility, cost-effectiveness, ability to access hard-to-reach populations, and enhanced information richness (Williams, 2024). Participants were provided with adequate information regarding the study's aims and rationale, to allow them the opportunity to consent without feeling coerced. Furthermore, purposive sampling is crucial in selecting cases that will provide the most informative data rather than aiming for a broad representation of the entire population.

3.4.1.2 Sampling criteria for schools

Maree (2019) states that selecting schools is as important as selecting participants to ensure a purposive sample. The following inclusion criteria were used for the selection of schools:

- Two schools, which are registered with the Department of Education. If Private, they should also be registered under The Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA).
- Selected schools should be using the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum, and were invited to participate.

The World Health Organization (2015) emphasises that schools serve as significant environments where beneficial changes can be effectively introduced. The selection

of different schools in Gauteng, under the two regions, is guided by the total number of schools. According to Schools4SA (2022), statistics show that Tshwane and Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipalities have over 100 primary schools combined. Therefore, it allowed the researcher more options when selecting the schools.

3.4.1.3 Sampling criteria for participants

Participants selected should be educators teaching in mainstream schools with inclusive classes. The study used the following criteria to select educators:

- Educators must have taught in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3) for at least two years.
- Educators must have experience in teaching learners with dyslexia.
- Both female and male educators aged 24 – 65 were eligible to participate.
- Educators must provide informed consent to participate in the study.
- Learners needed to be in the Foundation Phase inclusive mainstream classroom (Grade 1-3) and diagnosed with dyslexia.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Maree (2019: 191), data analysis includes “working with the data, organising it, breaking it down into manageable components, coding it, synthesising it, and searching for patterns.” Qualitative data analysis aims to find patterns, concepts, themes, and meanings (Nieuwenhuis, 2015). The data analysis process starts with categorising and organising data to find patterns, significant themes, and meanings that emerge from the data (Nieuwenhuis, 2015). Averill (2014) states that the goal of qualitative data analysis is to uncover nuanced perspectives and offer a deeper understanding of complex social phenomena, contributing valuable insights to research in various academic disciplines. The section below discusses the data analysis processes used in this study.

3.5.1 Thematic analysis

The qualitative descriptive design of this study followed a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify patterns or themes within qualitative data. According to Dawadi (2020), thematic analysis involves

systematically organising and analysing complex data to uncover narratives and themes that capture the essence of the data set. This method is theoretically flexible and can be incorporated into various epistemological approaches, making it a versatile tool for exploring complex research issues (Delahunt, 2017). The aim is to distinguish the feature in the methodological process by describing social reality through theme development (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Additionally, thematic analysis enables the researcher to "see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences" (Cooper, 2012:162).

Joffe (2011) adds that the advantage of using thematic analysis is that it is an easy way to learn and implement information. The approach allows similarities and differences throughout the research process (Joffe, 2011). On the other hand, Braun and Clarke (2019) indicate that thematic analysis can be a limitation if the research does not include a conceptual framework. This limitation did not apply in this study as Section 2.9 clearly discusses the framework for the research.

The rationale for employing the data interpretation and analysis is to allow the researcher to study the data and uncover common themes, notably ideas and patterns. Using thematic analysis resulted in a complete and detailed report on the findings of the phenomenon under investigation regarding strategies to accommodate learners with dyslexia using the RAVE-O intervention programme. I discuss the themes that emerged from the data analysis process in detail in Chapter 4.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are adamant about protecting human beings when it comes to qualitative research studies. According to Arifin (2018), ethics involve the in-depth participation of participants' experiences and perspectives. The application of appropriate ethical principles is essential to ensure the protection and well-being of human subjects throughout the course of a qualitative study (Arifin, 2018). Creswell (2018) adds that participants need to be protected by researchers from any form of misconduct that can cause them or the represented institution harm. Therefore, the researcher needs to promote integrity by developing trust with the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The following ethical considerations were adhered to for the study's purpose.

3.6.1 Institutional approval and research site access

Before initiating data collection, I secured approval from several key entities to ensure the research adhered to ethical guidelines and principles. This involved applying for ethical clearance to the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria, which was reviewed to protect the rights and well-being of participants. I also obtained permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct research in their schools. School principals approved my approach to teachers, parents and learners, and informed consent was secured from all participants, who were made fully aware of the research process and their right to withdraw at any time. I proceeded with data collection only after receiving clearance from the Ethics Committee and the necessary permissions, demonstrating my commitment to responsible and ethical research.

3.6.2 Informed and voluntary consent

Before commencing data collection, I secured informed and voluntary consent from the identified participants. The primary participants in this study were educators, while learners served as secondary participants. Informed and voluntary consent involved disclosing the purpose of the study to ensure participants were well-informed and could make a voluntary decision to be part of it (Xu et al., 2020). I also informed participants about any potential discomfort or risks and how they would be addressed, allowing them to weigh the possible risks and benefits of involvement (Skidmore & Kowalczyk, 2023). To protect underage participants (learners) and adhere to privacy regulations, I did not take pictures of their faces and strictly followed the rules provided by the schools to promote safety. Importantly, I made it clear to participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. The participants signed consent letters after agreeing to participate voluntarily (Xu et al., 2020). To ensure the ethical involvement of underage participants, learners obtained parent consent forms through the schools' approval processes and also filled out learner assent forms prior to participating in the study. This careful approach ensured that all ethical guidelines were followed while promoting a safe and supportive environment for both educators and learners involved in the research.

Informed and voluntary consent is a fundamental ethical principle that establishes a contractual relationship of trust between the researcher and participants (Kovane et

al., 2022). It protects the rights of participants to decide for themselves whether to be part of the study. By obtaining informed consent, I ensured that participants made a voluntary decision to be involved in the research based on a clear understanding of what their participation entailed by explaining the rationale and problem statement (Skidmore & Kowalczyk, 2023).

3.6.3 Anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality

To protect the identity of research participants and maintain their trust, I strictly adhered to the ethical principles of anonymity, privacy and confidentiality throughout the study. Anonymity was ensured by using codes and pseudonyms to conceal participants' identities so that the information they disclosed during interviews and observations could not be traced back to them (Saunders et al., 2015). I did not share any identifiable participant information with anyone at the research sites or beyond except with my supervisor (Dube et al., 2014). Explaining these measures to participants and including them in the consent letter helped establish a relationship of trust, encouraging participants to feel comfortable sharing sensitive information without fear of exposure (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). Maintaining anonymity and confidentiality is crucial, as research has shown that participants may withhold important data if these ethical safeguards are not in place (Florea, 2020). By prioritising anonymity and confidentiality, I demonstrated my commitment to protecting participants' rights and promoting the integrity of the research process.

These ethical considerations become even more significant In the context of PAR. PAR emphasises collaboration and shared ownership of knowledge among participants, which can sometimes create tension with traditional notions of anonymity (Godfrey-Faussett, 2022). To address this tension, I engaged participants in discussions about how their identities would be protected while still allowing their voices to be heard in the research process. This approach aligns with the principle that ethical considerations in PAR should be flexible and responsive to the specific context of the research (Lenette, 2022).

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Trustworthiness serves as a fundamental quality assurance in qualitative research. Adler (2022) defined trustworthiness as the process that ensures research findings

are both conscientious and transparent. Moser and Korstjens (2018) argue that qualitative studies must be evaluated through key concepts, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, to uphold trustworthiness. These criteria are essential for demonstrating the rigour and integrity of qualitative research, as they help establish the reliability and applicability of findings across different contexts (Stahl & King, 2020). The subsequent section delves into each of these concepts, discussing their definitions and the specific measures taken in this study to ensure their application, thereby reinforcing the overall trustworthiness of the research

3.7.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the confidence in the truthfulness of the data collected during research. It is grounded in the logical consistency among the theoretical framework, research questions, data collection techniques, and analysis (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). To enhance the credibility of this study, I employed various data collection methods and instruments, ensuring thorough documentation of the triangulation process. Data was collected from two research sites involving 12 participants, including Foundation Phase educators, the Head of Department (HOD) and the Deputy Headmistress (DH). Furthermore, I conducted a thorough analysis of the data to ensure that the findings aligned with both the collected data and the established conceptual framework. This rigorous approach not only strengthens the credibility of the research but also reinforces the trustworthiness of the conclusions drawn (Morrow, 2005; Tracy, 2010).

3.7.2 Transferability

Transferability is one of the key criteria for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. Transferability in qualitative research pertains to the potential for findings from one study to be applicable in similar contexts (Stalmeijer et al., 2024). Unlike quantitative research, which seeks to generalise results to a larger population, transferability emphasises that the insights gained from a specific context can provide valuable lessons for other comparable settings (Daniel, 2019). Transferability was not the study's purpose, however, I provided a comprehensive and detailed description of the context, the phenomenon under investigation, and the participants involved. This thorough presentation allowed for the possibility of replicating the research findings in other settings, contingent upon the degree of similarity between the original and

receiving contexts (Guba, 1981). By ensuring clarity and depth in the contextual information, I aimed to facilitate the application of the study's insights to similar educational environments.

3.7.3 Dependability and reliability

Dependability in qualitative research refers to the consistency and reliability of the study's findings over time and across various contexts (Kakar et al., 2023). This criterion maintains detailed records of the research process, data collection techniques, and analytical procedures (Janis, 2022). To establish dependability in this study, I systematically documented the research design and method procedures set to follow through the research process. Furthermore, I provided a detailed discussion of the conceptual framework that served as the lens through which the study was analysed. By maintaining a clear process and demonstrating logical consistency between the research components, I aimed to enhance the dependability of the study's findings and conclusions (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

3.7.4 Confirmability and objectivity

Confirmability in qualitative research refers to the degree to which others can confirm or corroborate the findings and interpretations, ensuring that they are based on participants' perspectives rather than the researcher's biases or subjective interpretations (Niewenhuis, 2015). To enhance confirmability, researchers can employ several strategies, including the utilisation of triangulation by incorporating multiple methods and practising reflexivity to acknowledge and mitigate personal biases (Guba, 1981). In this study, I established confirmability by recording the focus groups virtual meetings, tape-recording interviews, transcribing them, and verifying the transcripts with my supervisor to ensure that the findings accurately reflect the participants' intended meanings. Additionally, I presented participants' responses verbatim during the data analysis process, which further supports the authenticity of the findings and enhances the study's credibility (Ghafouri et al., 2016).

3.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter outlined the methodology employed in using the RAVE-O intervention programme to investigate dyslexia interventions within inclusive classrooms during the Foundation Phase. Subsequently, it addressed the procedures utilised for data collection, the research design, and the research methods, along with the rationale

underpinning these choices. Following this, I elucidated the data analysis procedures and the strategies implemented to ensure the study's trustworthiness and adherence to ethical considerations. The subsequent chapter presents a discussion of the findings derived from the collected data.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 provided a comprehensive elaboration and justification of the methodology employed to collect the necessary data for addressing the research questions. I adopted an interpretive paradigm and a qualitative approach, which facilitated the implementation of PAR involving 12 Foundation Phase educators from two inclusive schools. Additionally, I outlined the data analysis procedures and quality assurance measures implemented to ensure the study's trustworthiness, followed by a discussion of the ethical considerations adhered to throughout the research.

Chapter 4 details how data was gathered through focus groups, observations, and semi-structured interviews, during which I acted as a participant observer. The focus is on the educators' perspectives regarding intervention strategies for dyslexic learners utilising the RAVE-O intervention programme. This discussion is organised around the five cycles of PAR. Finally, I analysed the themes identified through data collection and explore how they relate to the research questions posed in this study.

4.1.1 Data presentation and analysis using participatory action research

Data presentation and analysis in qualitative research are multifaceted processes that transform raw data into structured insights (Hecker & Kalpokas, 2024). It requires careful preparation, coding, thematic analysis, interpretation, and effective communication to ensure that the findings contribute meaningfully to the field of study (Ningi, 2022). The following sections present and analyse the collected data using PAR.

4.1.2 Research setting and participants

As discussed in Chapter 3, the two selected schools were inclusive primary schools in the Tshwane and Ekurhuleni Region based in the Gauteng Province. Six of the twelve educators who participated in the semi-structured interviews and observations were Caucasian females. There were two males, one black and one coloured. The last four participants were black female educators. All participants who were chosen were experienced educators in service for at least two years. Two of the participants from School 1, also served as the Deputy Headmistress and Head of Department in the Foundation Phase. All participants were South African nationals. The schools selected

were private schools and were not classified under any quintile as that is reserved for public schools (Grant, 2013).

4.1.3 Biographical data and codes of participants

In this study, participants were designated as “Educator” to ensure their anonymity, with each individual assigned a code from Educator 1 to Educator 12 for identification purposes. All participants willingly consented to participate in the study, and informed consent was obtained from both the educators and their respective principals, with signatures provided without any coercion or pressure. A total of 12 participants were involved, drawn from two schools where specific educators teaching Foundation Phase learners with dyslexia had been identified. I present an overview of the codes assigned to each participant, along with their qualifications, age range, years of experience, and the grades they taught and are currently teaching (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

Table 4.1: A summary of the educators at School 1

Participants	Codes	Gender	Qualification	Age Range	Years of Experience in teaching	Grade(s) taught in teaching career
School 1						
Educator 1	**E1 S1**	Female	BEd Foundation Phase	18-29	5-9 years	2
Educator 2	**E2 S2**	Female	Bachelor of Primary Education (HOD)	50+	10+ years	R-3, currently 3
Educator 3	**E3 S2**	Female	Higher Education Diploma (DH)	50+	10+ years	R-5 8-12 Art Currently, 2 and 3 STEAM
Educator 4	**E4 S2**	Male	BEd Foundation Phase BEd Hons. In special needs education	18-29	5-9 years	2 and currently 3
Educator 5	**E5 S2**	Female	BEd Foundation Phase (Grade Head)	40-49	10+ years	R-3, currently 3
Educator 6	**E6 S3**	Female	PGCE in Early childhood education	30-39	10+ years	00-4, currently 3

Table 4.2: A summary of the educators at School 2

Participants	Codes	Gender	Qualification	Age Range	Years of Experience in teaching	Grade(s) taught in teaching career
School 2						
Educator 7	**E7 S2**	Female	BEd Foundation Phase Bed Hons. In Educational Psychology	18-29	2-4 years	2
Educator 8	**E8 S2**	Male	BEd Foundation Phase BEd Hons. In Inclusive Education	30-39	5-9 years	2-4, currently 3
Educator 9	**E9 S2**	Female	BA Wits/Postgraduate certificate in Education Specialist in British Dyslexia Association (Spld BDA)	50+	10 years	000-6 Currently, provide learning support for Grades 1-7
Educator 10	**E10 S2**	Female	BEd Foundation Phase BEd. Hons. In AQA	18-19	2-4 years	R, 1 and 2, currently 2
Educator 11	**E11 S2**	Female	BA UNISA PGCE in Early childhood education	40-49	10+ years	R-4, currently 3
Educator 12	**E12 S2**	Female	BEd Foundation Phase	50+	10+ years	0000-7, currently 3

This chapter outlines the sequential cycles of the research study, detailing the PAR approach employed to engage educators in supporting learners with dyslexia through the RAVE-O intervention programme. In Cycle 1, introductory sessions were held to familiarise participants with the study's purpose and establish a comfortable environment for collaboration. Cycle 2 focused on identifying key challenges educators face , emphasising the importance of their insights in addressing dyslexia. Cycle 3 involved action planning, where educators received training on the RAVE-O intervention programme and developed strategies to implement it effectively. During Cycle 4, participants applied these strategies in their classrooms, with the researcher acting as a participant-observer to provide support. Finally, Cycle 5 consisted of reflective discussions and semi-structured interviews to evaluate the programme's effectiveness and gather feedback for continuous improvement. This iterative process fostered collaboration and adaptation, aligning with the core principles of PAR. Figure 4.1 visually presents the PAR cycles implemented in the research study.

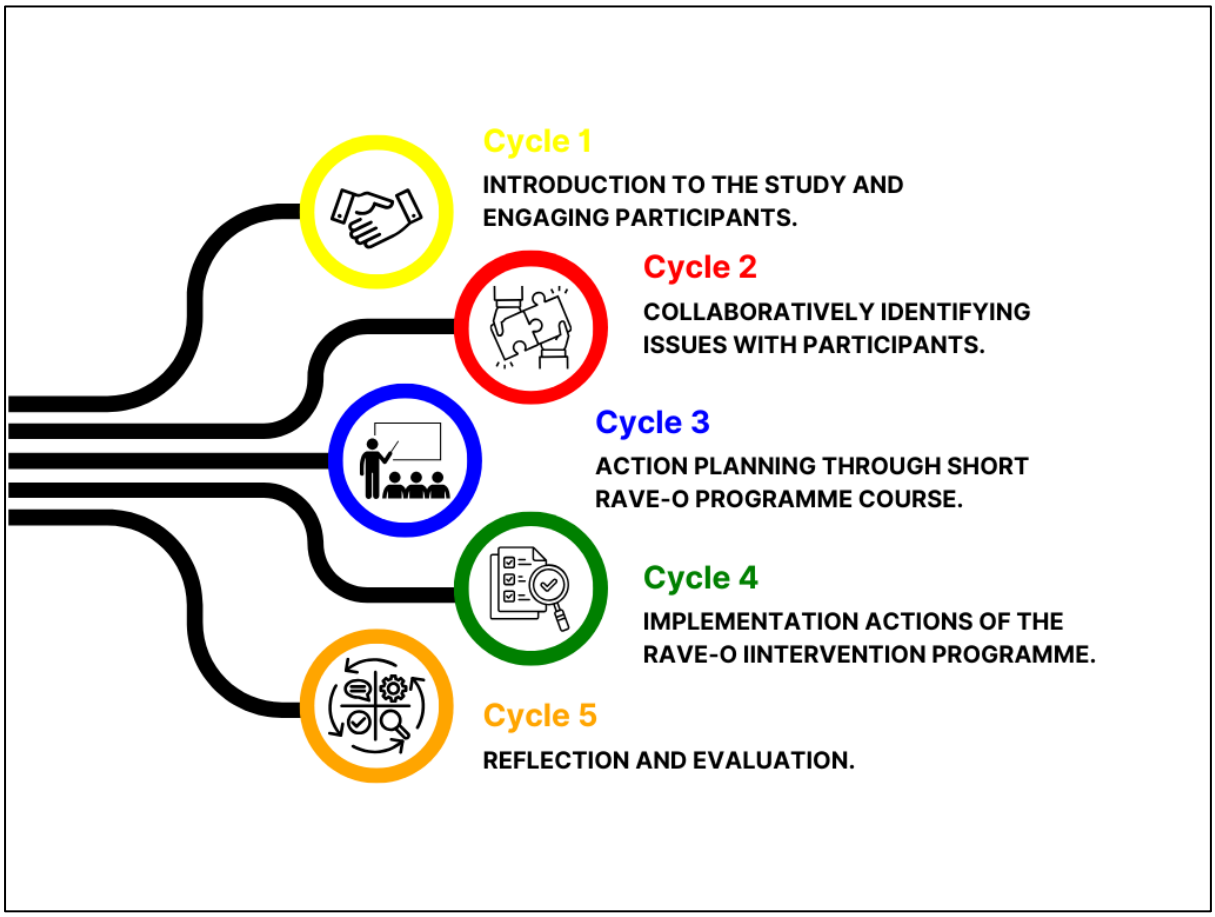


Figure 4.1: A visual representation of PAR

The above visual representation shows a comprehensive overview of the empirical data collected throughout the study, systematically organised by the cycles of research conducted from Cycles 1 to 5.

4.2 CYCLE 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AND ENGAGING PARTICIPANTS

PAR's first cycle, which aimed to introduce the study and engage the participants, is visually presented in Figure 4.2

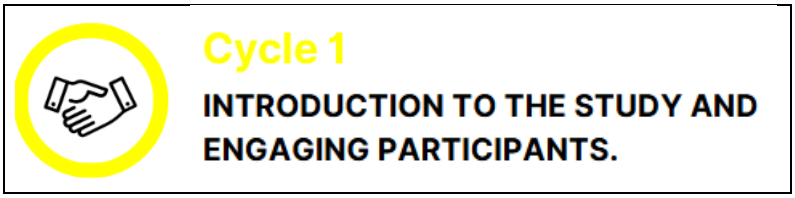


Figure 4.2: Visual Representation of Cycle 1

The first focus group session in Cycle 1, lasting one hour, was held virtually after work hours to accommodate the participants' schedules. Prior to the meeting, participants received an email containing consent letters, a summary of the study, and instructions on using pseudonyms when entering the Google Meet platform to protect their identities. Additionally, the video settings were configured to ensure that participants' videos were not displayed, further enhancing confidentiality and fostering a safe space for open dialogue.

During this introductory session, I aimed to engage educators from the two selected schools by providing a comprehensive overview of the research study. I outlined the study's purpose, problem statement, rationale, and aims. The discussion also included an explanation of PAR and how it would be utilised throughout the research process. This approach is characterised by its emphasis on collaboration and co-learning among participants (Macdonald, 2012).

The meeting's atmosphere was warm and welcoming, encouraging a sense of community among participants. Educators were encouraged to share their thoughts and experiences related to teaching learners with dyslexia. The tone was set to be inclusive and supportive, allowing for open communication. Participants expressed their initial feelings about dyslexia in the classroom, with many acknowledging the challenges they faced in identifying and supporting affected learners.

Questions posed by participants included:

> “What specific strategies can we use to support dyslexic learners in our classrooms?” (E2S1)
>
> “How do we ensure that we are adequately trained to implement these strategies?” (E9S2)
>
> “What resources are available to us through the Department of Basic Education?” (E8S2)

These enquiries led to engaging discussions, during which educators shared their insights and experiences. Many expressed a desire for more training and resources, emphasising the need for ongoing professional development (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2020). The educators also discussed their concerns about large class sizes and insufficient support staff, which hindered their ability to provide individualised attention to dyslexic learners.

The session concluded with an emphasis on collaboration and mutual support among educators. Participants left feeling more connected and empowered to contribute their knowledge and experiences throughout the research process (Field notes). This initial focus group set a positive tone for subsequent cycles of the study, aligning with PAR principles that value participant engagement and collective action (Baum et al., 2006).

Overall, this first focus group session not only introduced participants to the study but also laid the groundwork for a collaborative environment where educators felt comfortable sharing their challenges and aspirations in supporting learners with dyslexia.

4.3 CYCLE 2: COLLABORATIVELY IDENTIFYING ISSUES WITH PARTICIPANTS

The second cycle of PAR, which aimed to collaborate and identify issues with the participants, is visually presented in Figure 4.3

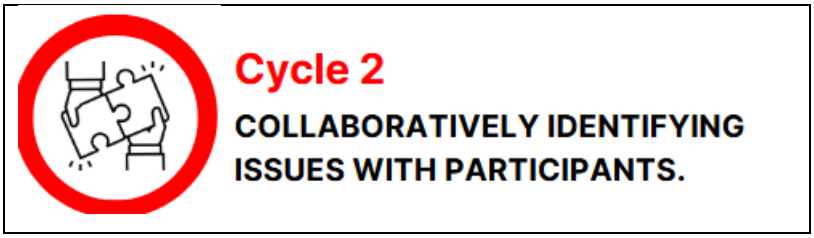


Figure 4.3: A visual representation of Cycle 2

The second focus group session, which also lasted one hour, was held virtually after work hours for the participants' convenience. As in Cycle 1, participants were reminded to adhere to the anonymity and safe environment rules established previously, ensuring that they continued to use pseudonyms and that video settings remained off.

The session's primary aim was to collaboratively identify the key challenges educators face when teaching learners with dyslexia. The discussion centred on participants sharing their perspectives and insights based on their experiences in the classroom. This aligns with the PAR principle of valuing the knowledge of those directly affected by the issue (Baum et al., 2006).

During the session, educators articulated several challenges they encountered, including:

Identification of dyslexia: Many participants expressed difficulty in recognising dyslexia early due to overlapping symptoms with other learning difficulties. E3S1 noted, "Sometimes it's hard to differentiate between dyslexia and other learning challenges like ADHD or general learning delays." (Field Notes). This concern is echoed in the literature, which highlights that early identification is crucial for effective intervention (Shaywitz, 2003).

Lack of resources: Participants reported a shortage of appropriate resources and training to support dyslexic learners effectively. E7S2 remarked, "We often have to create our own materials because the school doesn't provide enough specialised resources" (Field Notes). This resonates with findings from the literature indicating that inadequate resources can hinder effective teaching strategies for dyslexic learners (Reid, 2009).

Classroom dynamics: Educators discussed how large class sizes made it challenging to provide individualised attention. E12S2 stated, “With so many learners, I can’t give the one-on-one support that dyslexic learners need.” Research suggests that smaller class sizes can lead to better outcomes for learners with learning disabilities by allowing for more personalised instruction (Finn & Achilles, 1999).

Participants also engaged in a rich discussion about current interventions and accommodations they had implemented in their classrooms. Questions posed included:

> “What specific strategies have you found effective in teaching reading skills to dyslexic learners?” (E6S1)
>
> “How do we balance curriculum demands with the need for individualised support?” (E8S2)
>
> “What role do parents play in supporting their children’s learning at home?” (E11S2)

These questions prompted educators to share successful strategies such as using multi-sensory approaches and incorporating technology to enhance learning experiences. E7S1 shared, “I’ve started using apps that focus on phonics games; it engages my learners more than traditional worksheets” (Field Notes). This aligns with research suggesting that multi-sensory instruction can significantly benefit dyslexic learners by reinforcing their understanding through various modalities (Higgins et al., 2005).

The mood during this session was collaborative and reflective, with participants actively engaging in discussions and supporting one another’s insights. The atmosphere encouraged problem-solving and collective brainstorming about how best to address the challenges faced by dyslexic learners.

In summary, Cycle 2 provided a platform for educators to voice their concerns and share effective practices related to teaching dyslexic learners. The insights gained from this focus group not only informed subsequent cycles of the study but also reinforced the importance of collaboration among educators in addressing complex educational challenges.

4.4 CYCLE 3: ACTION PLANNING THROUGH SHORT RAVE-O INTERVENTION PROGRAMME COURSE

The third cycle of PAR, which aimed to train the participants on RAVE-O and equip them with an action plan, is visually presented in Figure 4.4

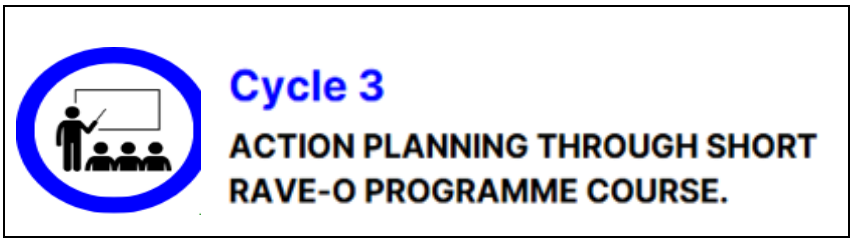
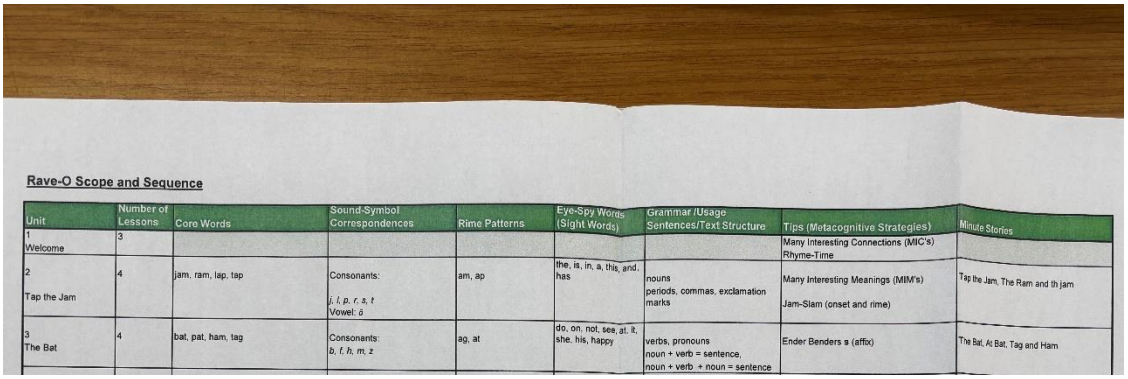


Figure 4.4: A visual representation of Cycle 3

Cycle 3 marked a significant shift from focus group discussions to a structured training session aimed at equipping educators with the necessary skills to implement the RAVE-O intervention programme effectively. This virtual meeting lasted one hour and 30 minutes, adhering to the same anonymity procedures established in previous cycles. Participants were reminded to use pseudonyms, and video settings remained off to ensure confidentiality.

Prior to the training, participants received an email containing a comprehensive training pack that included presentation slides, an outline of the first lessons, and additional resources such as worksheets. This preparatory material was designed to facilitate their understanding of Units 1 and 2 of the RAVE-O intervention programme. Unit 1 comprised three lessons focused on foundational decoding and reading skills, while Unit 2 included four lessons that built upon these skills. Educators were instructed to merge these lessons into their existing English curriculum while maintaining the core structure of the lessons. They were encouraged to incorporate their own teaching strategies and unique approaches without altering the essential components of the RAVE-O lessons. Figure 4.5 provides a detailed scope and sequence of RAVE-O lessons.



Rave-O Scope and Sequence

Unit	Number of Lessons	Core Words	Sound-Symbol Correspondences	Rime Patterns	Eye-Spy Words (Sight Words)	Grammar /Usage Sentences/Text Structure	Tips (Metacognitive Strategies)	Minute Stories
1 Welcome	3						Many Interesting Connections (MIC's) Rhyme-Time	
2 Tap the Jam	4	jam, ram, lap, tap	Consonants: *j, l, p, r, s, t* Vowel: *a*	am, ap	the, is, in, a, this, and, has	nouns periods, commas, exclamation marks	Many Interesting Meanings (MIM's) Jam-Slam (onset and rime)	Tap the Jam, The Ram and th jam
3 The Bat	4	bat, pat, ham, tag	Consonants: *b, f, h, m, z*	ag, at	do, on, not, see, at, it, she, his, happy	verbs, pronouns noun + verb = sentence, noun + verb + noun = sentence	Ender Benders s (affix)	The Bat, At Bat, Tag and Ham

Figure 4.5: RAVE-O Scope and Sequence of Lessons (Units 1-3)

During the session, participants actively engaged with the material, discussing how to adapt the lessons for their classrooms. Notable questions documented in field notes included:

> "How can we effectively assess learner progress using these lessons?" (E8S2)
>
> "What adaptations can we make for learners who are at different levels within our classrooms?" (E11S2)
>
> "Are there specific resources or tools that can enhance these lessons further?" (E4S1)

These enquiries highlighted educators' commitment to ensuring that all learners, particularly those with dyslexia, receive tailored support in their learning journeys. The importance of differentiated instruction is well-documented in educational literature, emphasising that effective teaching strategies must be responsive to individual learner needs (Mavidou & Kakana, 2019; Tomlinson, 2001).

The training session not only provided educators with a clear understanding of how to implement the RAVE-O intervention programme but also fostered a collaborative environment where they could share ideas and strategies. This aligns with research indicating that professional development should include opportunities for collaboration among educators to enhance instructional practices (Kang et al., 2013; Guskey, 2000).

By the end of Cycle 3, participants had developed action plans that outlined specific strategies for integrating the RAVE-O intervention programme into their teaching practices. These plans included measurable objectives and methods for assessing learner progress, ensuring that educators were well-prepared to support dyslexic

learners effectively (Pain et al., 2011). This structured approach not only addressed the challenges identified in Cycle 2 but also reinforced the collaborative spirit of PAR, emphasising continuous improvement through collective effort (Baum et al., 2006).

Overall, Cycle 3 served as a crucial step in empowering educators with practical skills and strategies necessary for implementing the RAVE-O intervention programme, reinforcing their ability to support learners with dyslexia in inclusive classroom settings.

4.5 CYCLE 4: IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS OF THE RAVE-O INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

The fourth cycle of PAR, which aimed to implement RAVE-O in the inclusive classroom, is visually presented in Figure 4.6

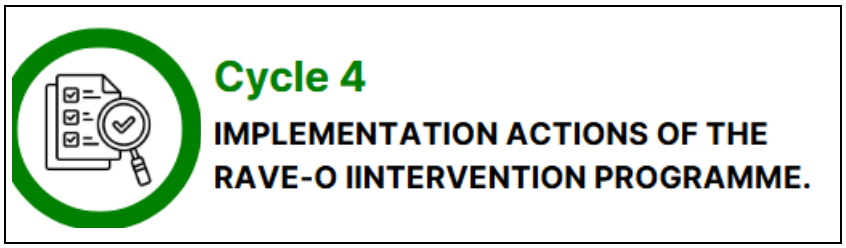


Figure 4.6: A visual representation of Cycle 4

Cycle 4 focused on the practical implementation of the RAVE-O intervention programme in classroom settings, providing an opportunity to observe how educators applied the strategies learned in previous cycles. This phase was critical for understanding the real-time dynamics of teaching dyslexic learners and assessing the effectiveness of the programme in enhancing literacy skills. The units and lessons from the RAVE-O intervention programme are explained in detail, highlighting how they were integrated into existing English lessons.

In this cycle, I visited both schools as a participant observer to witness lessons in action. My role was to assist educators, where possible, while minimising disruption and refraining from taking charge of classroom activities. Throughout this cycle, I recorded field notes detailing observations regarding instructional strategies and learner engagement with the RAVE-O intervention programme. As the researcher, I utilised an observation schedule to guide my observations, ensuring a systematic approach to data collection.

To facilitate a structured observation process, I developed guidelines divided into five categories: early intervention, resources used, challenges faced, the use of RAVE-O,

and the classroom culture. These categories aligned with the study's purpose of using RAVE-O as an intervention strategy for dyslexic learners. Table 4.3 provides an overview of these guidelines and questions used during the observation process.

Table 4.3: The observation guidelines for the research study

Observations	
Early Intervention Tasks	**Comments**
• What intervention activity has the teacher presented? • Is it teacher or learner-centred? • How is the intervention lesson presented? • How does the intervention progress? • What is the standardised intervention programme used?	
Resources	**Comments**
• What resources has the teacher used to present the lesson? • What resources do the learners use/need for the intervention? • What additional resources are made available/provided to the learners, or used?	
Perceived Challenges	**Comments**
• What challenges do teachers experience when presenting the intervention lessons? • How many challenges do the learners experience when engaging in the intervention lesson? • How do the teacher and learner overcome these challenges?	
RAVE-O	**Comments**
• How did the learners progress in the RAVE-O lesson(s)? • What resources were used to carry out the lesson(s)? • What challenges did the learners face with the lesson(s)? • How did the RAVE-O programme accommodate dyslexic learners? • What strategies were used that were different from the early intervention provided by the teachers?	
Culture in the classroom	**Comments**
• What is the culture in the classroom? • How do the learners behave? • How does the teacher respond and support learners who misbehave? • How does the teacher respond to learners who take longer to progress in the intervention lesson?	

As a participant observer, I provided educators with a short course (Cycle 3) on how RAVE-O works and observed them (Cycle 4) incorporating it into their classrooms. This dual role allowed me to gain insights into both the instructional strategies employed and the learners' responses to the intervention (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I assisted educators with utilising the resources provided by RAVE-O, ensuring they felt confident in implementing the programme effectively. Moreover, I made field notes to document my findings and triangulate my data, enhancing the reliability of my observations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Zulkifli & Hashim, 2019)

Following the training, the researcher obtained permission from the principal and Head of Department to review the documents containing the names of learners diagnosed with dyslexia. The documents analysed included educational psychologist reports and the school's learning support policy. School 1 also provided a list of accommodations for the diagnosed learners, which indicated which learners were assigned readers, scribes, and extra time for tests. Letters requesting parental consent and learner assent to participate in the study were sent home. Appendix E includes these letters, which clearly state the purpose of the study and outline the measures taken to protect the learners, such as covering their faces in photographs and using pseudonyms when referenced in the text. The researcher emphasised that they would work closely with the educators to ensure the learners' safety and enjoyment throughout the tasks. To avoid singling out dyslexic learners in the classroom, the RAVE-O lessons were integrated into the curriculum for all learners; however, there was a special focus on diagnosed learners, as they constituted the target population for this study.

4.5.1 Active engagement using RAVE-O intervention programme

The researcher was immersed in the classroom setting where RAVE-O was being implemented. This involved participating in lessons, assisting with activities, and interacting with learners and educators to understand the dynamics of the intervention.

4.5.1.1 Unit 1 – Lesson 1

In Unit 1, Lesson 1 of the RAVE-O intervention programme, learners were introduced to RAVE-O Town through engaging posters and tactile objects, creating an interactive learning environment. The main character, Mayor Mic, was highlighted as an essential figure in this introduction, serving as a focal point for the lesson. Educators displayed

posters of the town's characters in the classroom, while some participants utilised tactile characters to enhance engagement. For instance, participants E6S1 and E7S2 had tactile objects available, having previously completed a full training course on RAVE-O, while participant E8S2 used posters. As the participant observer, I encouraged educators to invite learners to the poster to locate characters by pointing at them. This activity not only sparked excitement and curiosity among the learners but also incorporated a small hourglass for time management, to challenge them to find the character quickly.

School 1 (E7S2)

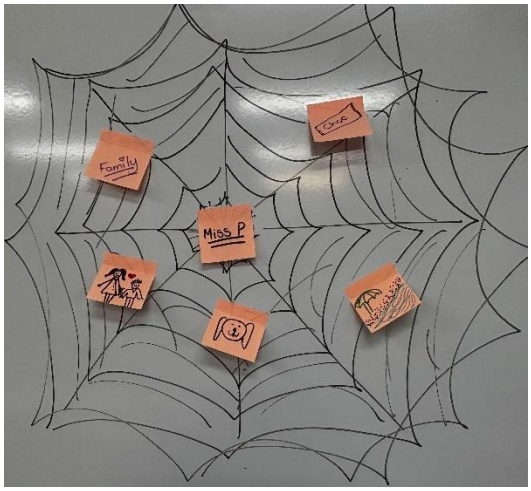
School 1 (E6S1)

School 2 (E8S2)

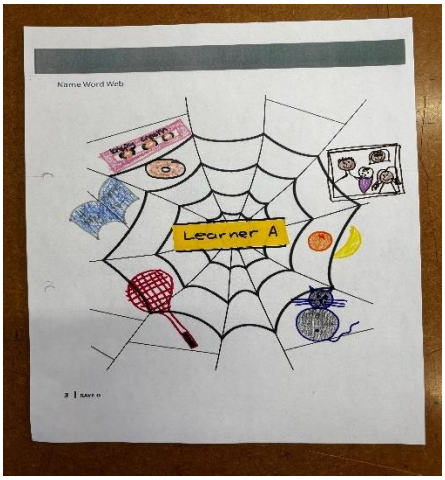
Figure 4.7: RAVE-O town display and characters in the classrooms

4.5.1.2 Unit 1 – Lesson 2

Lesson 2 started with a brief recap of Lesson 1. Learners then progressed to a developmental activity where they created a name web on an A4-sized worksheet. Each learner wrote their name in the middle and drew objects that represented their interests or personal connections. This interactive task promoted collaboration as learners discussed their name webs in pairs, sharing interesting connections with one another. For example, participant E3S1 illustrated her name web with drawings of a chocolate bar, her dog, and her two children, emphasising her love for family outings at the beach—connections that resonated with Mayor Mic's community spirit.



School 1 (E3S1)



Learner from School 2

Figure 4.8: Name web activity

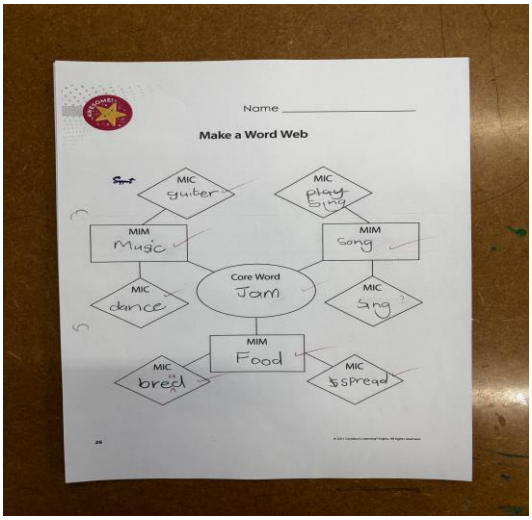
Similarly, participant E10S2 included images of her favourite book and a soccer ball in her name web, showcasing her passion for reading and sports. This activity aligns with RAVE-O's emphasis on building connections through personal experiences and enhancing literacy skills via multi-sensory learning (Higgins et al., 2005). Such interactive strategies are crucial for engaging dyslexic learners, as they provide opportunities for meaningful participation and promote positive associations with learning (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2020). Overall, this lesson exemplified how RAVE-O effectively integrates character-based storytelling and hands-on activities to create a rich learning experience for learners.

4.5.1.3 Unit 1 – Lesson 3

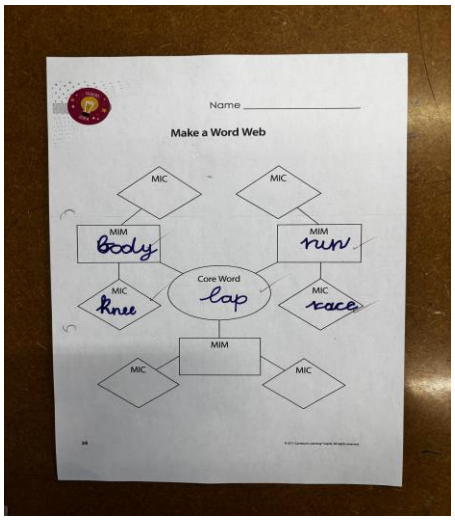
In Unit 1, Lesson 3 of the RAVE-O intervention programme, Mayor Mic introduced the character Ms. MIM, who symbolises many interesting meanings. Ms. MIM played a pivotal role in the web activity, assisting Mayor Mic as he unveiled a treasure chest filled with core words. The treasure chest serves as an important tool in this lesson, as it creates an element of excitement and curiosity, encouraging learner engagement and participation. As the participant observer, I advised educators to build anticipation around the chest by inviting a volunteer to select a word from it. The educators had four core words to choose from: Jam, Ram, Lap, and Tap. School 1 opted for “Jam”, while School 2 chose “Lap”. This core word became the foundation for the lesson’s development.

Learners were provided with a word web worksheet, placing the core word at the centre and exploring various interesting connections and meanings related to it. This exercise mirrored the earlier name web activity but focused on enriching vocabulary through association. Ms. MIM, depicted as a spider, emphasised that just as she has many legs, words can have multiple meanings. This metaphor reinforces the idea that language is multifaceted and encourages learners to think critically about their vocabulary. As they created their word webs, learners were reminded of the messages imparted by Mayor Mic and Ms. MIM regarding the importance of exploring language deeply.

The lesson concluded with an engaging exit ticket activity where learners answered random questions related to the lesson in order to leave the classroom. For instance, E4S1 asked, “What rhymes with jam?” and E7S2 enquired, “What rhymes with lap?” These questions not only reinforced the lesson’s content but also set the stage for the next lesson. This approach is particularly important for dyslexic learners, as it promotes active engagement and reinforces phonemic awareness through interactive activities (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2020). By using multisensory strategies such as word webs and character-driven narratives, educators can create a more inclusive learning environment that supports diverse learning needs (Higgins, et al., 2005). Such methods are essential for helping dyslexic learners develop stronger language skills and a positive attitude toward learning. Figure 4.8 below illustrates examples of these activities from learners in both schools.



SCHOOL 1 LEARNER ACTIVITY



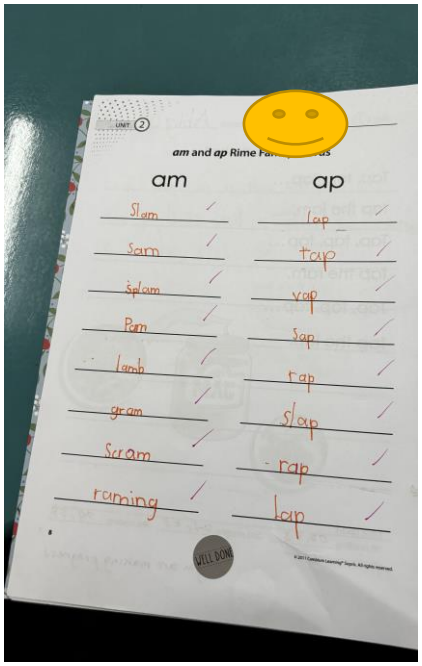
SCHOOL 2 LEARNER ACTIVITY

Figure 4.9: Core word web activity

4.5.1.4 Unit 2 – Lesson 4

In Unit 2, Lesson 4, the session commenced with a class discussion revisiting the core words from Lesson 3, during which learners were introduced to a new character, the Rhyme Time Clock. This character was not a conventional clock; instead, it chimed whenever words rhymed, emphasising the concept that words rhyme when they sound alike at their middle and end. In School 1, the core word “jam” was used as a focal point. Participant E1S1 illustrated the structure of the word by breaking it down into two colours: the starter “J” in yellow and the end “am” in blue. When combined, these components formed the word “jam”. The introduction of another character, Slam Man—a basketball player—reinforced this concept by likening the joining of word parts to a slam dunk. As learners were prompted to identify words that rhymed with “jam”, one learner responded with “ram”, prompting the Rhyme Time Clock to chime in recognition of the rhyming pair.

School 1 (E1S1)



Learner's Activity

Figure 4.10: Lesson 4 – Starter and rhyme pattern

In School 2, although the core word was "tap", the lesson structure remained consistent. A learner contributed "nap" as a rhyming word, demonstrating that both schools engaged in similar activities despite focusing on different core words. Following this discussion, learners were tasked with compiling a list of words that rhymed with their respective core words. As the participant observer and researcher, I suggested a "think, pair, and share" moment where learners could discuss their lists with partners, thereby encouraging connections and exploring interesting meanings together. This collaborative approach reinforced the messages from Mayor Mic and Ms. MIM, highlighting how all characters work together to enhance learning.

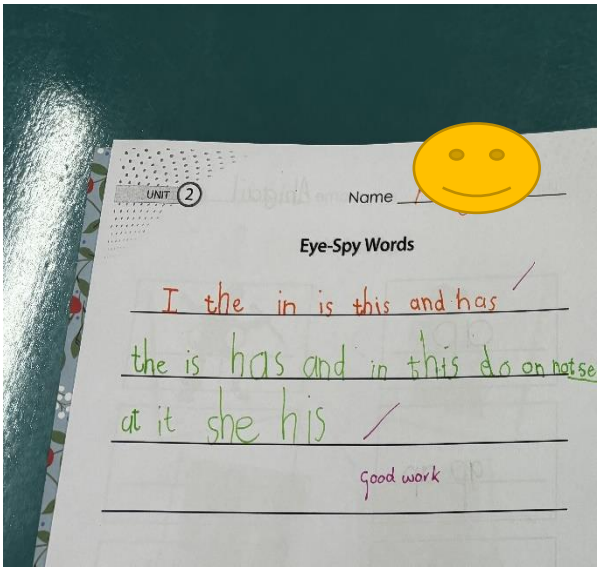
This structured lesson format benefits dyslexic learners by breaking down words into manageable components and encouraging peer discussion. Educators create an inclusive environment that supports diverse learning needs (Campos, 2022). Such strategies are essential for enhancing literacy skills among dyslexic learners and promoting positive attitudes toward language learning.

4.5.1.5 Unit 2 – Lesson 5

As learners transitioned from working with individual words to constructing sentences, this progression was essential for deepening their understanding of vocabulary connections and meanings. Research from the PIRLS 2021 study indicates that many learners struggle to read for comprehension, often due to a lack of understanding of the words they encounter. To facilitate this learning, the educator introduced a magnifying glass, accompanied by a new character, Sam Sleuth, a detective who uses the magnifying glass to identify “eye-spy” words, also known as sight words. Although Sam Sleuth is typically introduced in Unit 6 of the RAVE-O intervention programme, I adapted his presence for Unit 2 to familiarise learners with his character and purpose. Together as a class, learners identified eye-spy words from a provided list, including “the”, “is”, “in”, “a”, “this”, “and”, and “has”. They then used these sight words to write seven sentences incorporating their rhyming pattern words from Lesson 4.

During this activity, I observed a dyslexic learner seeking assistance from the teacher with spelling, which is permitted under the school’s spelling concessions policy. Other learners were encouraged to use dictionaries for support. When I enquired about the use of dictionaries for dyslexic learners, participant E6S1 mentioned that while they sometimes assist learners in finding words, it can be challenging given time constraints and the need to support multiple learners simultaneously. This observation highlighted the necessity for class assistants in inclusive classrooms to ensure that teachers can adequately support all learners without neglecting those with learning difficulties.

In School 2, the approach was similar but featured different teaching strategies. The teacher engaged her learners in a group discussion before writing sentences, allowing them to brainstorm ideas collectively. This collaborative method encouraged peer support and enhanced understanding among learners. Both classrooms completed their lessons within 45 minutes, demonstrating effective use of time while addressing the diverse needs of learners, particularly those with dyslexia. Such strategies are crucial for promoting literacy development in dyslexic learners by providing them with structured opportunities to practice writing and enhance their language skills (Adubasim & Nganji, 2017).



School 1 - Learner's Activity

Figure 4.10: Eye-spy (sight) words activity

4.5.1.6 Unit 2 – Lesson 6

Lesson 6 commenced with a warm-up activity in which learners each read one sentence aloud each individually. This exercise aimed to boost their confidence and prepare them for an upcoming assessment on minute reading stories. Participants wrote five sentences on the board, incorporating rhyming words, and learners were tasked with identifying the parts of speech. One notable sentence written by participant E12S2 was, "He is running around the track to get a fast lap time." This sentence served as a foundation for the lesson, and learners used a sentence builder worksheet to identify and categorise nouns, verbs, pronouns, helping verbs, adjectives (referred to as "describers" in RAVE-O), and prepositions (termed "VIPs" or "very important positions" in RAVE-O).

Figure 4.11: Sentence builder template and learner's activity

During a brief class discussion, participants revised the parts of speech by defining each category and providing examples. As the participant observer, I noted that dyslexic learners were actively engaged in this segment, demonstrating their ability to recall previously learned material despite the challenges they face. This engagement highlighted their intelligence and adaptability. The sentence builder worksheet was particularly well-received by dyslexic learners, as it provided a structured way to visualise sentence components, making the learning process more accessible.

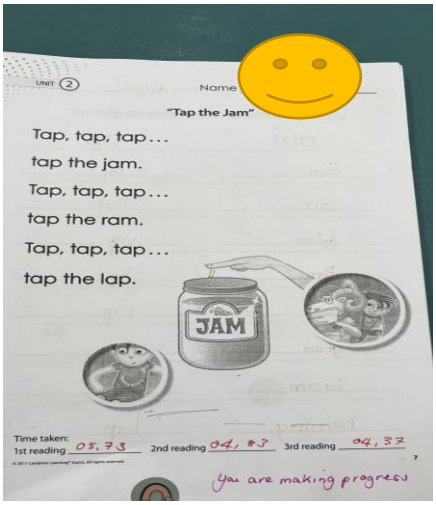
I observed one learner writing the letter "p" facing the opposite direction, prompting the educator to intervene. She guided him to write "p" on a whiteboard five times to reinforce its correct formation. This correction occurred while she adeptly managed other learners seeking her attention, showcasing her effective classroom management skills. Additionally, two other participants supported their dyslexic learners during this activity. Participant E3S1 wrote the sentence "She is spreading sweet jam on her toast." (Pronoun: She, Noun: jam, Verb: spreading, Preposition: on, Helping verb: is, Adjective: sweet). This allowed learners to use the sentence builder to break down simple yet effective components.

Meanwhile, participant E10S2 introduced the sentence "He is turning the old tap off slowly." (Pronoun: He, Noun: tap, Verb: turning, Preposition: off, helping verb: is, Adjective: old). Both participants created an inclusive environment where all learners could thrive, reinforcing their understanding of sentence structure through

collaborative efforts and peer support. This approach not only benefited dyslexic learners but also encouraged a sense of community within the classroom, which is essential for promoting literacy development (Marie, 2023).

4.5.1.7 Unit 2 – Lesson 7

In Lesson 7, the final activity served as a formal assessment for the learners, who were required to read minute stories and record progress on the fluency chart and the RAVE-O class assessment record form. Each participant provided each child a copy of the minute story, instructing them to begin reading from the first full sentence while omitting the title. The learners were timed, and participants marked errors on their copies, which could include omissions and substitutions. A double slash was noted after the last word read at 60 seconds, allowing participants to calculate the number of words read minus errors, a metric known as Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM). As the participant observer, I assisted by having some dyslexic learners read aloud to me, thereby alleviating the workload for educators managing multiple learners.

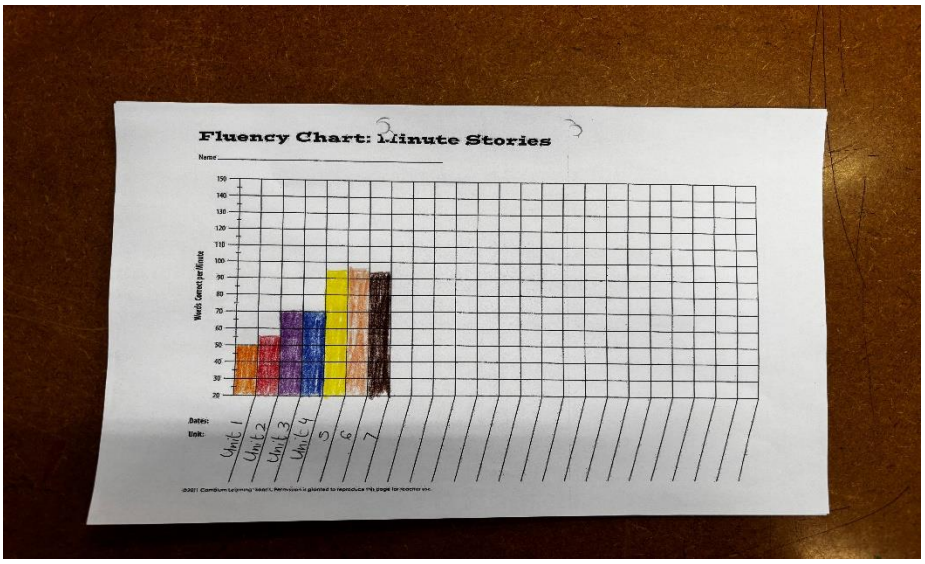


Teacher Copy (E3S1)

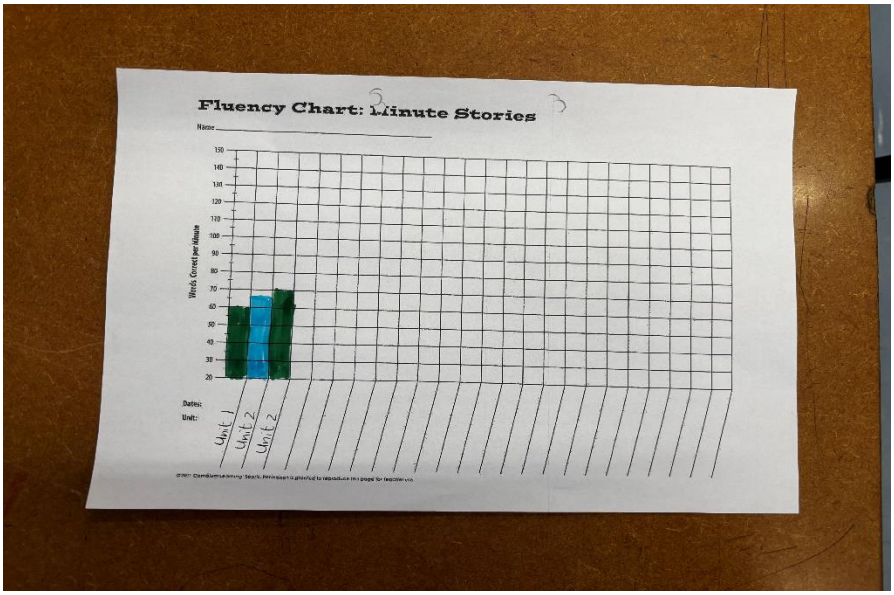
Figure 4.12: Minute stories

Figures comparing fluency charts from School 1 and School 2 illustrate steady and encouraging progress for two dyslexic learners: participant E3S1, who continued with RAVE-O after my observation, and E9S2 from School 2. The fluency charts allowed learners to colour in their progress, fostering motivation and self-awareness regarding their reading development. The fluency chart shows the progress learners make when

completing the units and lessons. The graph increasing is showing progress in the number of words learners can say within a minute.



School 1 (E3S1)

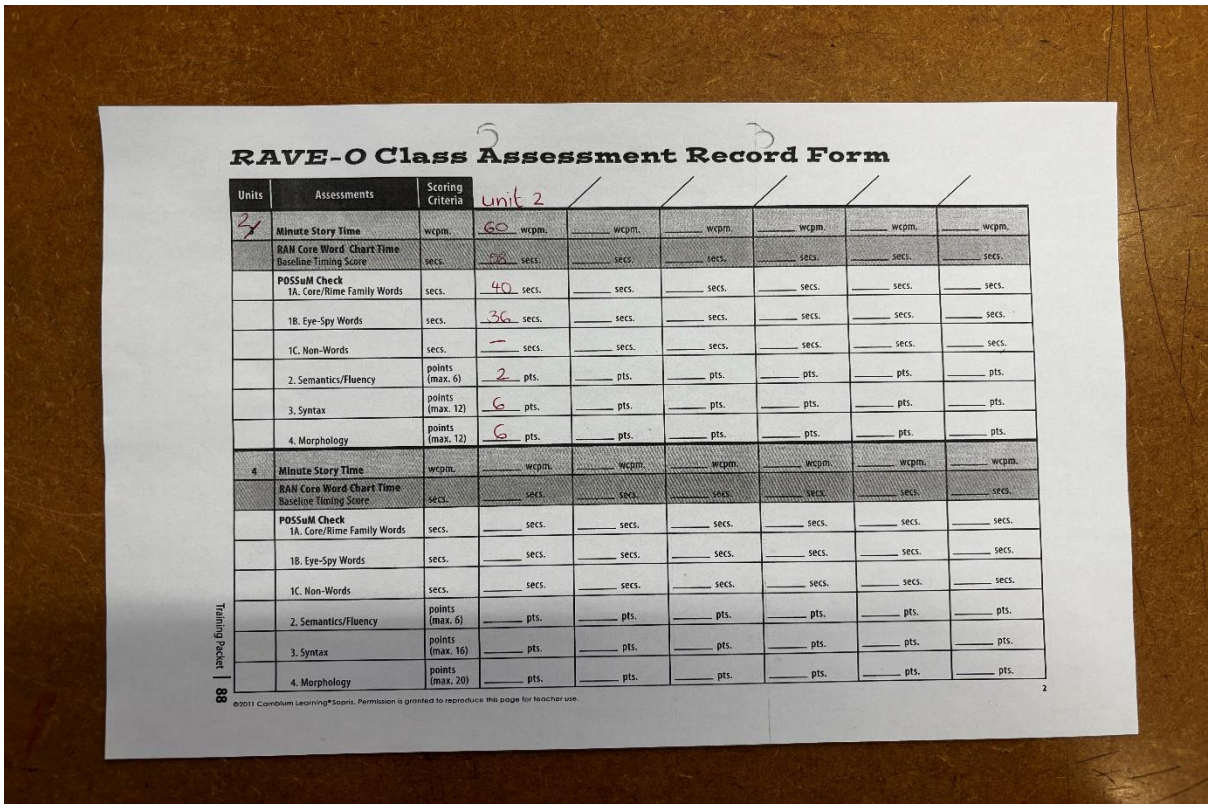


School 2 (E9S2)

Figure 4.13: RAVE-O fluency chart: minute stories

The class assessment record form served as a comprehensive record of all activities undertaken by the learners and functioned as an informal assessment tool. Participants found this form particularly useful; participant E11S2 noted that it facilitates the safekeeping of records detailing where each child started and their

subsequent progress. This highlights the effectiveness of RAVE-O in supporting literacy development.



RAVE-O Class Assessment Record Form

Units	Assessments	Scoring Criteria	unit 2					
2	Minute Story Time	wcpm.	60 wcpm.	____ wcpm.	____ wcpm.	____ wcpm.	____ wcpm.	____ wcpm.
	RAN Core Word Chart Time Baseline Timing Score	secs.	28 secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.
	POSSuM Check 1A. Core/Rime Family Words	secs.	40 secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.
	1B. Eye-Spy Words	secs.	36 secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.
	1C. Non-Words	secs.	— secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.
	2. Semantics/Fluency	points (max. 6)	2 pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.
	3. Syntax	points (max. 12)	6 pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.
	4. Morphology	points (max. 12)	6 pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.
4	Minute Story Time	wcpm.	____ wcpm.	____ wcpm.	____ wcpm.	____ wcpm.	____ wcpm.	____ wcpm.
	RAN Core Word Chart Time Baseline Timing Score	secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.
	POSSuM Check 1A. Core/Rime Family Words	secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.
	1B. Eye-Spy Words	secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.
	1C. Non-Words	secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.	____ secs.
	2. Semantics/Fluency	points (max. 6)	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.
	3. Syntax	points (max. 16)	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.
	4. Morphology	points (max. 20)	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.	____ pts.

School 2 (E11S2)

Figure 4.14: Class assessment record form

The assessments conducted throughout the lessons focused on the components of phonology, orthography, semantics, syntax, and morphology (POSSuM). Phonology involves awareness of sounds; for example, in Lesson 4, learners identified rhyming words such as “jam” and “ram”. Orthography pertains to knowledge of letters for writing, exemplified in Lesson 6 when the diagnosed learner correctly practised writing “p” on a whiteboard. Semantics relates to understanding word meanings; in Lesson 3, learners explored various meanings associated with their core words. Syntax involves word order and sentence structure; for instance, in Lesson 6, participants identified parts of speech within sentences like “He is running around the track.” Lastly, morphology refers to understanding how parts of words create meaning; in Lesson 3, learners learnt about the starter and rhyme pattern (e.g. J is the starter and am is the rhyme pattern, and they make Jam) through character-driven narratives.

Assessments focusing on POSSuM benefit dyslexic learners in several ways:

Enhanced phonemic awareness: By emphasising phonology, assessments help dyslexic learners develop critical sound recognition skills essential for reading (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2020).

Improved writing skills: Focusing on orthography equips learners with the necessary skills to spell correctly and write coherently (Higgins et al., 2019)

Expanded vocabulary: An emphasis on semantics allows learners to understand word meanings more deeply, which is crucial for reading comprehension (Reid et al., 2020).

Stronger sentence structure: By addressing syntax, assessments help dyslexic learners construct grammatically correct sentences, enhancing their overall writing abilities (Graham & Harris, 2019)

Understanding word formation: Morphology instruction supports dyslexic learners in breaking down complex words into manageable parts, aiding both reading and vocabulary acquisition (Carlisle & Stone, 2005)

Overall, these assessments align with RAVE-O's aims to provide targeted support for dyslexic learners by addressing their unique challenges in literacy development while fostering engagement and motivation through structured activities.

The interactive nature of RAVE-O, combined with its character-driven narratives and multi-sensory approaches, encouraged an inclusive environment where dyslexic learners can thrive. Learners' consistent engagement and motivation throughout the lessons reflect the program's success in building confidence and reinforcing essential literacy skills. Ultimately, RAVE-O served as a powerful intervention programme that not only addressed the specific challenges faced by dyslexic learners but also empowered them to achieve their full potential in reading and writing.

4.6 CYCLE 5: REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

The fifth cycle of PAR, which aimed to reflect and evaluate, is visually presented in Figure 4.15.

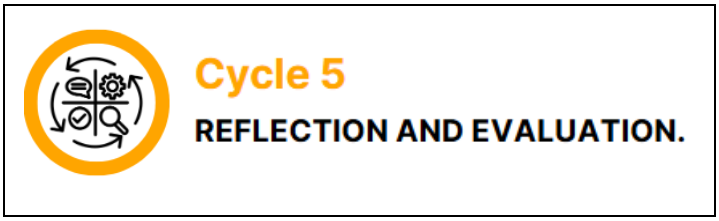


Figure 4.15: A visual representation of Cycle 5

Cycle 5 focused on reflection and evaluation, culminating in a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 of the 12 participants involved in the study. With the necessary permissions granted, I recorded these interviews individually to collect detailed feedback on their experiences with the RAVE-O intervention programme. This iterative process facilitated ongoing reflection and adaptation based on participants' real-time feedback (Chilisa, 2012). This enabled a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of the RAVE-O intervention programme in enhancing literacy skills among dyslexic learners (Kindon et al., 2007).

For the purposes of this study, data was generated through the use of semi-structured interview questions for each of the participating educators. Table 4.4 provides an overview of the specific questions and guidelines that were employed, as outlined in Appendix F. With the consent of all participants, the responses to the semi-structured interviews were recorded. The data obtained from these interviews was organised according to the various questions posed to the participants.

Table 4.4: The semi-structured interview questions

Background questions
Do you have a teaching qualification? If yes, please indicate what type of qualification was obtained.
How old are you?
What ethnic group do you identify yourself with?
What nationality are you?
What type of school are you in? Private or public school?
How many years have you been teaching learners with dyslexia?
What grade are you currently teaching?
Have you encountered a learner with dyslexia in your class?
Semi-structured Interview questions
1. What is your understanding of the term 'dyslexia'?
2. How do you identify a learner who potentially has dyslexia in the classroom?
3. What characteristics do you associate with dyslexic learners in your classroom?
4. What do you think are the responsibilities of Foundation Phase educators in ensuring that diagnosed learners are accommodated in the classroom?
5. What kind of support do you receive as an educator from the Department of Basic Education through DBSTs regarding learners with dyslexia? Please elaborate.
6. What training did you need to teach dyslexic learners, and what kind of training do you currently need to improve your skills?
7. What baseline programme do you use as an early intervention strategy for learners diagnosed with dyslexia?
8. What strategies do you use in teaching learners diagnosed with dyslexia in the classroom?
9. Do you think the curriculum accommodates learners diagnosed with dyslexia? Elaborate.
10. a) Have you heard of the RAVE-O literacy intervention programme for learners in the early grades? If yes, what is your understanding of the programme.
b) Do you think the RAVE-O programme can be beneficial for learners with dyslexia? If yes or no, please elaborate.

As outlined in Table 4.4, these questions and guidelines were utilised to conduct the semi-structured interviews. The interview questions were divided into two parts: those focusing on the background of each educator and those directly related to the purpose of the study. The background questions addressed the educators' qualifications, age range, ethnic group, nationality, type of school, years of experience, grades taught, and whether they had encountered a learner with dyslexia in their class. The questions pertaining to the study's purpose explored the educators' understanding of dyslexia, intervention strategies, their challenges faced and methods of supporting learners with dyslexia, and the support they receive from the DBE. Additionally, the curriculum perspective was explored in terms of how it supports diagnosed learners and what educators understood from the RAVE-O Intervention programme after implementation.

4.6.1 Data presentation and analysis: Semi-structured interviews with educators

Question 1: What is your understanding of the term 'dyslexia'?

In both schools, I asked the educators what their understanding of dyslexia was before asking them to describe the characteristics because, as seen in the literature review (see Section 2.3), there are still debates about the definition from different scholars.

E2S1, E3S1 in School 1, and E7S2, E8S2 in School 2 all nodded and stated that dyslexia is a learning difficulty where the child experience reading, writing and spelling difficulties.

E1S1 simply responded with uncertainty, "*I think a child who sees the words differently than others, like seeing letters backwards*."

E10S2 responded similarly to E1S1 by stating that, "*dyslexia is a neurological disorder that shows a child finding it hard to identify letter symbols with the sounds they make and this makes it hard for them to read words because they cannot recall sounds.*"

Participant E12S2 added to the discussion by explaining that, "*dyslexia is often misunderstood; it's not just about reading difficulties but also involves issues with processing language. Children with dyslexia may have trouble connecting sounds to letters and may struggle with phonological awareness.*"

Collectively, these responses illustrate a range of understandings among educators about dyslexia, highlighting both common misconceptions and a recognition of its complexity as a neurological condition that affects language processing.

Question 2: How do you identify a learner who potentially has dyslexia in the classroom?

In both schools, the educators generally described their identification of dyslexia in similar ways, emphasising writing, reading, and spelling skills affected by letter reversals, sound recognition and other characteristics.

E1S1 said, "*There is [sic] honestly a lot of things, but at the top of my head it's difficulty in reading and writing*."

E2S1, who is an HOD, gave a fully loaded answer but stating

> "*Well… if I break it down, when I see that the child does not want to read aloud or independently, poor spelling, not writing neatly, not able to produce written work that matches verbal abilities, low self-esteem*" *pauses* "*I also look into the family history because dyslexia often runs in families*." (E2S1)

E7S2 similarly said, "*The child not being able to read, untidiness, handwriting is not neat, learner cannot identify sounds and digraphs… yeah, that's what I look for.*"
According to E3S1, "*I believe that a child who experiences difficulty in any or all of the following: reading, spelling or producing written language, to have a form of dyslexia. Dyslexia, I feel, can range from mild to severe. This is how I would identify a child to potentially be dyslexic.*"'

E10S2 did not provide specific identifications but explained

> "*Due to teaching Grade 2, I serve as someone who screens for dyslexia and puts it forward to the following teacher, because many professionals to whom I have referred such learners don't have like to officially diagnose as dyslexic learners before they turn 10.*" (10S2)

Adding to this discussion, Participant E5S1 emphasised the importance of observing a combination of signs: "*I look for patterns like consistent difficulty with phonics and blending sounds. If a child struggles with these foundational skills and avoids reading activities, it raises red flags for me.*" In contrast, E9S2 noted a more holistic approach:

"*For me, it's about understanding the whole child. If I see a bright student who excels in verbal communication but struggles with written tasks and shows frustration during reading activities, I start considering dyslexia as a possibility.*"

These responses reveal both commonalities and differences in how educators identify potential dyslexia in learners. While many focus on specific academic challenges like reading difficulties and handwriting issues, others incorporate broader observations of behaviour and emotional responses. This comprehensive understanding aligns with current literature that emphasises the multifaceted nature of dyslexia identification (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2020).

Question 3: What characteristics do you associate with dyslexic learners in your classroom?

All the educators' general characteristics were similar and linked with the previous question on how they identify dyslexic learners in class.

According to E2S1, "*These children read at a slower pace, often sounding out words and struggling with fluency. They might skip, substitute or mispronounce words and sometimes guess words based on context rather than decoding them. They experience difficulty with spelling. Poor handwriting, where letters are poorly formed with inconsistent letter sizes and spacing. Common reversals of letters (e.g. "b" and "d") and numbers, and transposing letters within words (e.g. "form" instead of "from"). Trouble with reading comprehension. Difficulty with written expression."*

E3S1, who is the DH, adds

> *I look at the child as a whole, is the child a slow reader who confuses letter order in words, reverses numbers and letters or whole words, has not 'out grown' writing words in a mirror image, do they battle to sound out words. Also, a child who tries hard, becomes frustrated and is not performing to their full potential.* (E3S1)

E8S2 explained *"This would differ depending on age, but a young reader would be reluctant to read, guess words, not remember words they have memorised out of context. They would struggle with fluency, reading sentences word for word. Their sound/symbol correspondence would not be establishing."*

Participant E4S1 contributed by stating that dyslexic learners often "*…appear bright, highly intelligent, and articulate but are unable to read, write, or spell at grade level. They may be labelled as lazy or careless because their academic performance does not reflect their verbal abilities.*" E4S2 emphasised that these students might also demonstrate talents in areas like art or music but struggle significantly with reading tasks. This aligns with the understanding that dyslexic learners can have a *"spiky"* profile of strengths and weaknesses.

In contrast, E11S2 highlighted emotional aspects by saying, "*Many of these learners feel dumb or frustrated about their difficulties; they often hide their weaknesses with compensatory strategies. You can see them zoning out during lessons or becoming easily distracted.*" This response underscores the emotional toll that dyslexia can take on learners and reflects the need for supportive teaching strategies.

Together, these responses illustrate a comprehensive view of the characteristics associated with dyslexic learners in the classroom. While educators identified common academic challenges such as reading fluency and spelling difficulties, they also recognised the emotional and psychological impacts of dyslexia on learners' self-esteem and motivation. This holistic understanding is essential for creating effective interventions tailored to the needs of dyslexic learners.

Question 4: What do you think are the responsibilities of Foundation Phase educators in ensuring that diagnosed learners are accommodated in the classroom?

In both schools, the majority of the educators highlighted the importance of their responsibility, stating that identifying the characteristics of dyslexia, seeking early intervention, and providing accommodations are crucial.

In School 1, E1S1 remarked that, "*Our responsibility is important because we have to identify it early so that they can learn ways to cope and manage it*."

E2S1 further elaborated,

> *"Our responsibility really is the deciding factor, when it comes to early identification I recognise signs of dyslexia and referring learners for assessment. In differentiated instruction, I believe in adapting teaching methods to meet individual needs, such as using multisensory approaches. **

pauses and thinks * *Also, when providing accommodations like extra time, a scribe/reader, assistive technology and modified tasks to support learning can help a lot, I see it in my classroom right now. And lastly, collaboration through working with specialists, parents and colleagues to develop and implement support plans. Oh wait!* *laughs* *I feel like I am speaking a lot but creating a positive environment by fostering a supportive and encouraging classroom atmosphere to build the child's confidence and self-esteem. I'm done* *laughter*" (E2S1)

E3S1 explained the responsibilities,

> "*A junior foundation teacher has several key responsibilities towards a child diagnosed with dyslexia. These responsibilities include understanding dyslexia, creating a supportive, inclusive environment, building self-esteem, differentiating instruction/work, collaborating and communicating with parents, therapists and specialists in this field, utilising assistive technology for example, Dragon Naturally Speaking, ePen and carefully, providing concessions if necessary and ongoing assessment of progress."* (E3S1)

E5S2, from School 2, said, "*The teacher needs to provide the appropriate accommodations for the learner according to what they need*." While E6S2 added, *"Dyslexic learners need systematic and explicit teaching. They will need one-on-one input and constant encouragement. These learners will also need accommodation in class to assist them with reading and spelling activities."*

Adding to these responses, Participant E6S1 emphasised the need for continuous professional development: "*Foundation Phase educators must stay informed about the latest strategies for teaching dyslexic learners. This means attending workshops and training sessions to better understand how to accommodate these students effectively.*" This highlights an ongoing commitment to improving their skills as part of their responsibilities.

In contrast, E12S2 focused on the emotional aspect of teaching dyslexic learners: *"It's not just about academic accommodations; we also have to be aware of their emotional needs. Building relationships with these learners is essential so they feel safe and supported in expressing their frustrations."* This response underscores the importance of creating a nurturing environment alongside academic support.

From these quotes, it is evident that the Foundation Phase educators in both schools feel strongly about their responsibility in playing the *in loco parentis* role in the learners' lives and providing the appropriate accommodations for the learners' holistic progress.

Question 5: What kind of support do you receive as an educator from the Department of Basic Education through DBSTs regarding learners with dyslexia? Please elaborate.

The educators in both schools expressed a lack of support from the DBE. The most that DBSTs have done was to provide suggestions, when in essence, educators believe that they need hands-on support to ensure the best possible support for learners with dyslexia.

E7S2 agreed, "*We do not receive any support either [other than] suggestions on departmental visits, if they do occur. More often, the department refers dyslexic learners to special needs schools.*"

In School 1, E1S1 made the following remark, "*None that I'm aware of as we are a private school.*"

E3S1 added that, "*None, however, I take advantage of courses offered privately or by my school, often at my own cost.*"

On the contrary, E10S2 enthusiastically explained,

> "*Working in the private sector gives me access to multiple resources and tools that make things easier for me to support learners. I get to use books that are tactile in more than one way to practice handwriting. So, the pages have grooves in them that we write in with our pencil. Assistive devices, such as specially 3D printed reading bars, to limit distractions. The use of a well-equipped classroom, with a smartboard, projector, computer, and a well-equipped learning support team that is able to share advice and games and resources with teachers to support me with fresh ideas and strategies. We also have monthly meetings to discuss the progress of our learners with difficulties of any sort, we look at the situation together as a team and discuss possible solutions and ways forward. These meetings are attended by, the headmistress, head of learning support, phase HOD, the school educational psychologist as well as the grade's learning support teacher. This gives multiple*

perspectives on how to approach these situations to ensure the learner gets the best possible support."

Similarly, E11S2 shared their perspective:

> "*While I don't receive direct support from DBSTs, I find that collaborating with my colleagues has been invaluable. We often share strategies and resources among ourselves. It's essential to create an informal support network within our school since external support is lacking.*"

Both E4S1 and E11S2 emphasised the importance of collaboration and resource sharing among educators. While E4S1 highlighted the benefits of working in a well-resourced private environment that facilitates collaboration and innovative strategies for supporting dyslexic learners, E11S2 underscored the need for internal teamwork when external support is minimal. This comparison illustrates how educators can adapt to their circumstances by leveraging peer collaboration and resourcefulness in addressing the needs of learners with dyslexia despite systemic limitations in support from the DBE.

Question 6: What training did you need to teach dyslexic learners, and what kind of training do you currently need to improve your skills?

In both schools, the majority of the educators stated that they do not have any formal training on specifically working with learners diagnosed with dyslexia. At most, their minimal knowledge came from what they learnt when completing their teaching qualifications or courses they took for their personal growth and development.

E1S1 stated in frustration that, "*Unfortunately, there is no training. You kind of need to read up information about it to understand it in order to help. Training on how to help the child cope, as it is not something that can just be fixed.*" E5S2 agrees, "*There was no formal training received apart from the BEd honours degree in inclusive education where I learnt about the different learning disabilities such as ADHD, Dyslexia, etc.*"

E2S1 from School 1, as an HOD said,

> "*During my studies, we received minimal training on teaching children with learning difficulties. However, I have since attended courses through*

organisations like Professional Minds and schools like Bellavista, which provide education and training for teachers looking to better support dyslexic learners."

In contrast to the above, E3S1 expressed that, "*The only training I have had is through 35+ years of teaching experience, self-study and ongoing education through courses and advice from various therapists and other specialists in this field. I welcome constant, ongoing learning/education through the different fields I have mentioned above and need/welcome hands-on education.*"

From School 2, E10S2 was tearful as she explained how personal dyslexia is to her by stating, "*As a teacher coming from a family who has dyslexic people in (my grandfather, my mother and my brother), I have always taken it upon myself to make sure that I am up to date with research happening in the field, and that I equip myself with ideas and techniques from different sources, to be able to provide support. I have attended an advanced short course in dyslexia and support for learners by Dr Carine Steenkamp.*" In frustration, E10S2 further elaborated, "*To further my knowledge and understanding of dyslexia specifically, it makes the most sense to develop skills and understanding as a team. The entire team involved in a dyslexic child's learning should all be on the same page regarding support measures and how to implement them. I would personally like to engage with teachers around the world to learn from and get different perspectives from a wider scope of people. Staff development opportunities are often centred around discipline, engaging learners and wellness. But we shy away from using these opportunities to learn about specific learning barriers or difficulties. I have also attended a course in teaching and implementing the RAVE-O programme.*"

Question 7: What baseline programme do you use as an early intervention strategy for learners diagnosed with dyslexia?

Generally, most educators in both schools stated that there are no baseline intervention programmes in place for learners with dyslexia.

E1S1, a Grade 2 educator, explained that, "*Nothing at the moment. I try [to] use a different font on my worksheets*."

E5S2 added that there is no baseline programme:

"*However, I modify different activities and tests for dyslexic learners alongside their accommodations to assist them in class*."

While E2S1 stated,

> "*We don't use a baseline programme. We implement the systematic and explicit teaching of phonics to help children understand the relationship between letters and sounds. We also implement reading practice where we provide regular opportunities for guided and independent reading at the appropriate level to build fluency. We provide structured spelling and writing exercises that emphasise phonemic awareness and spelling rules.*" (E2S1)

Participants E9S2 and E7S2, from School 2, echoed similar sentiments regarding the lack of formal baseline programmes. E9S2 remarked, "*Unfortunately, we don't have a specific baseline programme in place. I try to integrate phonics into my lessons as much as possible, but it's more about what I can create rather than a structured programme.*" E7S2 added, "*We don't have an established programme. I focus on individualised strategies, like using visual aids and hands-on activities to help students grasp the basics of reading and writing.*"

Both E9S2 and E7S2 highlight the absence of a formalised intervention strategy, similar to other educators' responses (E1S1 and E2S1), while also emphasising their proactive efforts to create supportive learning environments through phonics integration and individualised strategies. This collective acknowledgement of the need for structured programmes reflects a broader concern among educators about the adequacy of support for dyslexic learners within the educational system.

Question 8: What strategies do you use in teaching learners diagnosed with Dyslexia in the classroom?

In general, the educators in both schools employ different intervention strategies to accommodate and support learners with dyslexia.

E1S1, from School 1, said she loves incorporating fun in activities by adding "*Different rhymes to remember the letters' direction and reminding learners about signs and numbers.*"

E3S1, the Deputy Headmistress, was excited about RAVE-O. According to her, "*I currently use the RAVE-O reading programme, all thanks to your training because previously I used basic phonics programmes, such as LetterLand or Jolly Phonics or a blend of both to teach children diagnosed with dyslexia.*"

E10S2, a Grade 2 educator, agrees:

> "*Creating space for them to practice their letter symbol and letter sounds recognition. I will also often provide these learners with a sensory board, so they are able to feel their letters with their fingers before writing it down, changing the sensory input that contributes to writing tasks. This decreases the amount of reversals because they have more than one sensory input to be able to support them. I often use increased font sizes and extra spacing between my words on worksheets and allow the learner to use a reading bar so that their focus is specifically on the line they're reading instead of getting lost in a piece of text. Verbally reading instructions or giving them worksheets/assessments broken down into only giving one question at a time allows them to eliminate any distractions that might contribute to their learning difficulties. I also implement RAVE-O as a phonological tool across all our learners and is integrated into RAVE-O into our English curriculum to create a better understanding among all learners and not only learners with barriers.*"

The learning support educator from School 2 explored, "*Explicit and systematic teaching with lots of repetition and scaffolding of concepts*." While E5S2 accommodated dyslexic learners by adding "*Modification in tests and activities is one way I help the learners with dyslexia.*"

Question 9: Do you think the curriculum accommodates learners diagnosed with dyslexia? Elaborate.

In both schools, the majority of the educators agreed that CAPS does not accommodate learners diagnosed with dyslexia.

In School 1, E1S1 stated that the CAPS curriculum does not accommodate dyslexic learners because "*…there isn't [sic]individualised resources.*"

The HOD and Grade 3 educator, E2S1 added:

> "*No!*" *Takes a deep sigh* "*…This is primarily due to large class sizes that hinder differentiated instruction and small group teaching. We do not have sufficient support staff/assistants in the classroom to meet the specific needs of these learners. Additionally, we don't have a structured literacy programme or the training, which accompanies these programmes, nor do we have the*

necessary assistive technology for our classrooms. Multi-sensory instructional resources, which are helpful for engaging children through visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile activities to reinforce learning, are not consistently available. Time constraints also prohibit implementation of the various strategies." (E2S1)

E3S1 and E4S2 both agree that the curriculum generally does not accommodate dyslexic learners. However, E3S1 said, "*I adapt the curriculum to suit my needs*" and E4S2 added, "…*modification to their needs is your best bet when it comes to accommodating the learners*."

Participant E8S2 echoed these concerns: "*The CAPS curriculum is quite rigid and does not allow for much flexibility. It often prioritises standardised testing over individualised learning paths.*" This response highlights a significant limitation in accommodating diverse learning needs within a standardised framework.

Similarly, E6S1 remarked, "*While I try to implement strategies that work for my dyslexic learners, I feel like I'm constantly battling against a curriculum that doesn't recognise their unique challenges. We need more resources and training to effectively support these learners.*"

Both E8S2 and E6S1 emphasise the rigidity of the CAPS curriculum and its failure to accommodate the specific needs of dyslexic learners. Their responses illustrate a shared sentiment among educators regarding the necessity for more flexible frameworks and additional resources to better support learners with dyslexia in their learning journeys.

Question 10a: Have you heard of the RAVE-O literacy intervention programme for learners in the early grades? If yes, what is your understanding of the programme.

Before the research study, three of the six educators heard about the RAVE-O programme. Now that the educators got to experience it as an intervention strategy, they are positive and excited about it.

In School 1, E1S1 said, "*Yes, I have been on training, but not yet implemented it in the class besides the time when we did observations together.*"

On the other hand, E2S1 expressed RAVE-O as a programme that "*…helps children develop a deeper and more automatic grasp of reading and writing.*"

E3S1, the most experienced educator of all the participants, answered:

> "*Yes. RAVE-O is a structured literacy intervention programme designed to help children, particularly those with reading difficulties like dyslexia, improve their reading fluency, comprehension, and overall literacy skills.*" (E3S1)

In School 2, E10S2 views RAVE-O as:

> "*…a multifaceted phonics programme that centres around the multiple characters that allows [sic] learners to easily understand the different concepts regarding phonics as well as being relatable to them. The programme also provides plenty of time for learners to consolidate their learning.*" (E10S2)

E7S2 and E12S2 collectively agreed that RAVE-O is "*a brilliant reading intervention programme.*"

Question 10b: Do you think the RAVE-O programme can be beneficial for learners with dyslexia? If yes or no, please elaborate.

All the educators agreed that the RAVE-O programme can benefit learners with dyslexia and stated the following reasons.

Both E1S1 from School 1 and E12S2 from School 2 agreed that it would be beneficial because it focuses on fluency.

With great enthusiasm, E2S1 said; *"Yes. Its comprehensive approach targets key areas of reading difficulty, which are crucial for dyslexic learners. By using multisensory activities and focusing on building fluency and comprehension, RAVE-O addresses the specific challenges faced by dyslexic learners, helping them improve their reading skills more effectively.*"

E7S2, the youngest participant, fervently remarked:

> "*Yes, it gives the learner a fresh perspective and a different way to link language concepts to something that they recognise and understand. This programme gives the learners, especially those who have barriers, tools to use in their understanding of language that are concrete enough for them to relate to, their*

memories are often very well developed to compensate for the barrier, this programme provides valuable links for learners to remember language concepts they are then able to use and implement." (E7S2)

E8S2, one of the male participants, cheerfully proclaimed: "*Yes, the RAVE-O programme can be beneficial for learners with dyslexia because of how exciting it is for learners, encourages small group learning and slow processing steps of getting to reading by starting with words, sentences then paragraphs.*"

Cycle 5 of the study involved conducting semi-structured interviews with educators to gather in-depth insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding the RAVE-O programme and its effectiveness in supporting learners diagnosed with dyslexia. This qualitative method allowed for a flexible yet focused exploration of key themes, enabling educators to articulate their thoughts on instructional strategies, challenges faced in the classroom, and the overall impact of the programme on their learners. By engaging educators in reflective dialogue, the interviews aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of how the RAVE-O programme was implemented and its role in addressing the unique needs of dyslexic learners within inclusive educational settings.

4.7 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS DATA

Document analysis played a crucial role throughout PAR's five cycles. It provided a systematic approach to reviewing and interpreting various documents relevant to the accommodation and support of dyslexic learners. According to Morgan (2022), document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents in qualitative research. It involves examining and interpreting data to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Dalglish et al., 2020). As a participant observer, I had access to a variety of documents that provided valuable insights into the intervention programmes and support systems available for dyslexic learners in the identified inclusive schools. These documents included key policy documents, such as Education White Paper 6, CAPS, and Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through CAPS. Additionally, I examined the educators' lesson plans, intervention plans, and the schools' academic and learning support policies.

To investigate the intervention programmes and the educators' support from DBE through the DBSTs, I employed a content analysis strategy to systematically examine and analyse the data from these documents. As I reviewed the relevant documents, I took note of all the concepts and themes related to intervention programmes and the roles of the schools and districts in accommodating dyslexic learners. This process allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the meanings and draw conclusions from the findings. I generated detailed field notes and organised them based on the content of each document. By reading through these notes' multiple times, I familiarised myself with the data and identified recurring themes and patterns. I then coded the data and merged similar themes together to extract the key findings that emerged from the document analysis.

The insights gained from this document analysis, combined with the data collected through focus groups, semi-structured interviews and observations, provided a comprehensive understanding of the intervention strategies employed in the inclusive schools and the support received from the DBE and DBSTs for dyslexic learners. Following these five cycles highlighted how document analysis enriched the research findings, offering a nuanced perspective on the effectiveness of RAVE-O as an intervention programme for dyslexic learners. This multifaceted approach underscores the importance of integrating various data sources to enhance the reliability and depth of qualitative research (Bowen, 2009).

4.8 THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Based on the responses provided by the participants in this study, I gathered sufficient data to employ inductive analysis for identifying themes and categories. The subsequent themes and sub-themes emerged from the data collected through focus groups, interviews, observations, and document analysis. These are presented in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Themes and sub-themes

Theme 1	**Educators' conceptualisation of dyslexia in Foundation Phase inclusive classrooms**
• **Sub-theme 1.1:** Educators' understanding of dyslexia	
Theme 2	**Educators' role regarding learners with dyslexia in inclusive classrooms**
• **Sub-them 2.1:** Educators' role in supporting dyslexic learners	
Theme 3	**Intervention programmes educators in inclusive schools use to support the barriers dyslexic learners experience**
• **Sub-theme 3.1:** Baseline intervention programmes for dyslexic learners • **Sub-theme 3.2:** Accommodations for dyslexic learners in the classroom under the CAPS Curriculum	
Theme 4	**Educators require support from the Department of Basic Education to assist learners with dyslexia**
• **Sub-theme 4.1:** Support participants require from the DBE through DBSTs	
Theme 5	**RAVE-O programme's support for learners with dyslexia in the inclusive Foundation Phase classes**
• **Sub-theme 5.1:** Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention strategy to support dyslexic learners	

4.9 RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.9.1 Theme 1: Educators' conceptualisation of dyslexia in Foundation Phase inclusive classrooms

This theme corresponds with the first sub-research question: How do educators in Foundation Phase inclusive classes conceptualise dyslexia? The following sub theme is presented for details regarding this theme: Sub-theme 1.1, Educators'

understanding of dyslexia. The data sources associated with this theme included semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

4.9.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Educators' understanding of dyslexia

The findings from the semi-structured interviews indicated that participants had a foundational understanding of dyslexia. Specifically, E2S1 from School 1 and E7S2 from School 2 defined dyslexia as a neurodevelopmental disorder, which affects a learner's ability to read, write and spell. Furthermore, E9S2 added that dyslexia often presents differently from learner to learner. This perspective offers a definition that aligns with existing literature and similarly reflects that dyslexia is a neurologically based learning disorder and remains different from person to person (Hoskins, 2019; International Dyslexia Association, 2015). Although most of the participants had a fair understanding of dyslexia. The insights from this study suggest that educators' understanding of dyslexia significantly influences their perceptions of learners. For instance, E6S1 reflected on how dyslexia hinders accurate and fluent reading and spelling, often leading to learners being labelled as slow (Lawrence, 2009). Such labelling is accompanied by the secondary effects they experience, such as low self-esteem, forgetfulness, untidiness, irritability and lack of concentration (Lawrence, 2009). E3S1 from School 1 shared the sentiment, noting that their brains process letters and words in a different way, which makes them fail to understand written words. This notion of feeling different affects the learners' emotional stability, which makes them feel frustrated in the school environment. Therefore, this leads to them dropping out of school. Du Plessis (2024) agrees that there is a high dropout rate of learners diagnosed with dyslexia. Consequently, no learner should be disadvantaged by their learning difficulty, particularly within the inclusive Foundation Phase classroom.

4.9.2 Theme 2: Educators' role regarding learners with dyslexia in inclusive classrooms

This theme corresponds to the second sub-research question: How do Foundation Phase educators perceive their role in teaching and supporting learners with Dyslexia? According to The Education White Paper 6 policy, it emphasises the central role of the educator as teaching and supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning (Education White Paper, 2001). Thus, it was essential for the study to look into the

educators' roles. The findings of this theme were drawn from the semi-structured interviews, the participant-as-observer, and data from documents. The details of this theme are discussed under sub-theme 2.1, Educators' role in supporting dyslexic learners.

4.9.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Educators' role in supporting dyslexic learners

The research findings, based on observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analyses, reveal a comprehensive understanding of the responsibilities of Foundation Phase educators in accommodating learners with dyslexia. Participant E1S1 emphasised the importance of early identification to enable learners to develop coping strategies, a sentiment echoed by Participant E12S2, who highlighted the necessity of recognising signs of dyslexia and referring learners for appropriate assessments. Literature supports this by stating that the formal diagnosis in South Africa is done by an educational psychologist who is approved by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) (Hoskins, 2019). Both participants underscored the significance of differentiated instruction, with E12S2 advocating for multisensory approaches and accommodations such as extra time, scribes, and assistive technology.

Participant E3S1 further elaborated on the educator's role in fostering a supportive environment, collaborating with parents and specialists, and utilising assistive technologies like Dragon Naturally Speaking. E8S2 from School 2 added that creating awareness and understanding of the problem in a way children can comprehend is crucial, as each learner requires different types of support. In agreement, Hodge (2016) explains how educators need to be flexible in their approach, finding methods that suit each dyslexic learner individually, rather than expecting all of them to learn the same way. E8S2 also emphasised the responsibility of extending one's own knowledge and using available tools to provide support for learners with dyslexia, as well as flagging the barrier, informing parents, and making referrals to relevant practitioners for formal diagnosis. As an educator, it is essential to observe the barriers that learners experience in the inclusive classrooms. These observations will be used as evidence needed for diagnosis (Hoskins, 2019)

E5S1 stated that the educator needs to provide appropriate accommodations based on the learner's needs, such as extra time. E6S1 expressed that dyslexic learners

require systematic and explicit teaching, one-on-one input, constant encouragement, and accommodations in class to assist with reading and spelling activities.

As the participant observer, the researcher noted the educators' dedication to understanding dyslexia and their willingness to collaborate with specialists, parents, and colleagues to develop and implement support plans. Furthermore, it was observed that educators understand their role in the classroom and are always willing to go above and beyond, as well as the create a positive and supportive environment to build learners' confidence and self-esteem. The document analysed for this section was the Education White Paper 6 policy, which emphasised the importance of educators supporting learners with barriers to learning and development, aligning with the participants' responses.

4.9.3 Theme 3: Intervention programmes educators in inclusive schools use to support the barriers dyslexic learners experience

This theme's findings suggest that most of the educators do not have intervention programmes in place as a baseline assessment to mitigate the barriers dyslexic learners experience. However, accommodations were noted in the findings. The details of this theme are discussed under two sub-themes: Sub-theme 3.1, Baseline intervention programmes for dyslexic learners and; Sub-theme 3.1, Accommodations for dyslexic learners in the inclusive classroom. These questions are supported by the third sub-research question; what intervention programmes do educators in inclusive schools use to support the barriers dyslexic learners experience? The data sources for this theme were the semi-structured interviews and document data.

4.9.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Baseline intervention programmes for dyslexic learners

The research findings based on the semi-structured interviews with the participants reveal a mixed approach to baseline intervention strategies for learners diagnosed with dyslexia in inclusive classes. Participant E1S1 stated that they currently do not use a specific baseline programme, but instead try to use different fonts on worksheets to support learners with dyslexia. Similarly, Participant E10S2 mentioned that while there is no baseline programme in place, they modify various activities and tests for dyslexic learners alongside providing accommodations to assist them in class. These

modification practices for dyslexic learners are seen in the Orton-Gillingham Method (Farghaly et al., 2022).

In contrast, Participant E2S1 described a more structured approach, implementing the systematic and explicit teaching of phonics to help the learner's brain understand the relationship between letters and sounds. Studies have demonstrated that learners' brain activation patterns can change as a result of reading intervention from the relationship between letter sounds (Kearns et al., 2018). They also provide regular opportunities for guided and independent reading at appropriate levels to build fluency, along with structured spelling and writing exercises that emphasise phonemic awareness and spelling rules. Additionally, School 1 has a learning support class where small group instruction takes place, offering targeted, personalised support and instruction for learners with dyslexia.

Participant E11S2 from School 2 explained that they do not have a baseline programme solely for early intervention regarding dyslexia, but they do teach RAVE-O from the beginning of Grade 1. They also integrate a speech and language therapist into their English curriculum during Grade 1 to provide functional support for learners. Literature supports specialists assisting educators in providing comprehensive support for learners (Marie, 2023). In Grade 2, they implement small group rotations to support learners more effectively, and learners with barriers are referred back to the speech and language therapist for regular one-on-one sessions. Participant E6S1 mentioned using the Conquering Literacy Programme, Instrumental Enrichment, and Time2Read phonics, but these are not specific to dyslexic learners. Research shows that using ICT in supporting dyslexic learners' is the preferred learning style (Al-Dawsari & Hendley, 2022). The document analysis of School 1's learning support policy revealed that accommodations such as scribes, readers, and extra time are provided based on educational psychologist reports for learners with dyslexia. This aligns with the research findings that suggest providing accommodations and modifying activities are essential strategies for supporting learners with dyslexia in inclusive classrooms.

The baseline intervention strategies used by the participants vary, with some focusing on modifying materials and providing accommodations, while others implement more structured programmes like the systematic teaching of phonics, RAVE-O, and targeted small-group instruction. The use of accommodations and modifications is supported

by research, which suggests that these strategies can help learners with dyslexia access the curriculum and demonstrate their knowledge and skills (Fletcher et al., 2019; Spear-Swerling, 2019). However, the findings also highlight the need for a more consistent and evidence-based approach to baseline intervention strategies for learners with dyslexia in inclusive classes.

4.9.3.2 Sub-theme 3.2: Accommodations for dyslexic learners in the inclusive classroom under the CAPS curriculum

Research findings from the semi-structured interviews indicate a consensus among participants regarding the inadequacies of the CAPS curriculum in accommodating learners diagnosed with dyslexia. Participant E1S1 expressed that the curriculum lacks individualised resources, which are crucial for meeting the diverse needs of dyslexic learners. Similarly, Participant E2S1 highlighted that large class sizes hinder effective differentiated instruction and small group teaching, further exacerbated by insufficient support staff and the absence of structured literacy programmes or necessary assistive technology. This aligns with research indicating that effective accommodations for dyslexic learners require tailored resources and smaller instructional groups to facilitate personalised learning experiences (Lai & Berkeley, 2012; Understood, 2022).

In contrast, Participant E3S1 noted a more adaptive approach, stating that while the curriculum may not accommodate dyslexic learners, they make adjustments to suit their instructional needs. This adaptability reflects a proactive stance that some educators take in the face of systemic limitations. From School 2, Participant E9S2 echoed the sentiment that the CAPS curriculum is primarily designed for the average child, thus failing to address the specific accommodations required for dyslexic learners. However, Participant E6S1 mentioned that with adequate support, dyslexic learners can develop coping strategies, suggesting that while the curriculum may not inherently accommodate these learners, effective support can enhance their learning outcomes (Campos, 2022).

The findings highlight a significant gap in the CAPS curriculum's ability to provide the necessary accommodations for dyslexic learners, supported by literature indicating that standardised curricula often overlook the unique needs of learners with learning disabilities (Obiakor et al., 2021). The lack of individualised resources, structured

programmes, and adequate training for educators contribute to the challenges faced by dyslexic learners in inclusive classrooms. Consequently, there is a pressing need for the CAPS curriculum to incorporate more comprehensive strategies and resources that align with the specific requirements of dyslexic learners, ensuring equitable access to education and improved academic performance.

4.9.4 Theme 4: Educators' required support in order to support learners with dyslexia

The results of this theme reveal that the support provided by DBSTs to educators is inadequate, highlighting the need for additional resources to effectively implement interventions for learners with dyslexia. DBSTs, being multidisciplinary teams with diverse expertise, play a vital role in enhancing schools' capacity to identify and address learning barriers (Department of Education, 2023). As outlined by the Department of Education and SAIDE, the primary role of DBSTs is to assess and provide ongoing support to educational institutions, enabling them to cater to a wide range of learning needs and promote inclusivity in education (Department of Education, 2023; SAIDE, 2023). These findings were derived from both document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Sub-theme 4.1, which explores the support required by Foundation Phase educators in inclusive schools to enhance the academic progress of dyslexic learners, is based on the fourth sub-research question and is discussed in more detail below.

4.9.4.1 Sub-theme 4.1: Support participants require from the Department of Basic Education through district based support teams

The research findings from the semi-structured interviews reveal a stark contrast in the support received by educators from the DBE and DBSTs regarding learners with dyslexia. Participant E1S1 mentioned that the support they receive is limited to resources like research and workshops, while Participant E11S2 stated that they do not receive any support from the DBE but instead take advantage of private or school-offered courses, often at their own expense. This lack of support from the DBE is further echoed by Participant E5S1, who explained that the only support they receive is suggestions during occasional departmental visits and that the department often refers dyslexic learners to LSEN schools.

In contrast, Participant E12S2, who works in the private school sector, highlighted the abundance of resources and tools available to support learners with dyslexia, such as tactile handwriting books with grooves, assistive devices like 3D printed reading bars, and well-equipped classrooms with smart boards and computers. Additionally, private schools have access to a dedicated Learning Support team that provides advice, games, and resources to teachers, as well as monthly meetings to discuss the progress of learners with difficulties, involving the headmistress, Head of Learning Support, phase HOD, school educational psychologist, and the grade's learning support teacher. This collaborative approach allows for multiple perspectives on how to best support learners with dyslexia.

Recent research studies have highlighted the importance of support from the DBSTs in assisting teachers to cope with a diversity of learning and teaching needs, as outlined in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education [DoE], 2001). However, the findings suggest that the DBSTs do not provide adequate support to educators, particularly in public schools, despite the policy requirements. This lack of support may be attributed to the perception that private schools do not face challenges in supporting learners with dyslexia, even though they do (Obiakor et al., 2021). The findings underscore the need for the DBE and DBSTs to prioritise the provision of resources, training, and collaborative support to all educators, regardless of the school setting, to ensure that learners with dyslexia receive the necessary accommodations and interventions to succeed academically (Tomlinson, 2015; Broderick et al., 2018).

4.9.5 Theme 5: RAVE-O programme's support for learners with dyslexia in inclusive Foundation Phase classes

This theme corresponds with the main research question: How can the RAVE-O programme be used to support learners with dyslexia in inclusive Foundation Phase classes? The following sub-theme is presented, for details relating to this theme: Sub-theme 5.1, Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention strategy to support dyslexic learners. The data sources under this theme were semi-structured interviews, observations and document data.

4.9.5.1 Sub-theme 5.1: Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention strategy to support dyslexic learners

The research findings based on focus groups, observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analyses indicate that the RAVE-O programme can be highly beneficial in supporting learners with dyslexia in inclusive Foundation Phase classes. Participant E1S1 agreed that the programme's focus on fluency is particularly valuable for dyslexic learners, while Participant E2S1 highlighted its comprehensive approach that targets key areas of reading difficulty, such as automaticity, vocabulary, engagement, and orthography. E12S2 added that by using multisensory activities and focusing on building fluency and comprehension, RAVE-O effectively addresses the specific challenges faced by dyslexic learners, helping them improve their reading skills more effectively.

Participant E11S2 noted that for RAVE-O to be beneficial, it must be used consistently and correctly, as it offers reinforcement and consolidation of concepts taught. E11S2 emphasised that RAVE-O is a structured literacy intervention programme designed to help children, particularly those with reading difficulties like dyslexia, improve their reading fluency, comprehension, and overall literacy skills. From School 1, Participant E4S1 stated that RAVE-O gives learners a fresh perspective and a different way to link language concepts to something they recognise and understand, providing valuable tools and concrete links for learners to remember and implement language concepts effectively.

Participant E5S1 highlighted the programme's exciting nature, encouragement of small group learning, and gradual progression from words to sentences and paragraphs, making it beneficial for learners with dyslexia. Participant E8S2 described RAVE-O as a brilliant, multifaceted phonics programme centred around relatable characters that allow learners to understand different phonics concepts easily. The programme also provides ample time for learners to consolidate their learning and teaches various skills and techniques to implement language rules, making it easier to understand and use.

As a participant observer, I observed RAVE-O being conducted in class during Units 1 and 2. The programme's engaging nature, multisensory approach, and focus on building fluency and comprehension were evident in the learners' enthusiasm and

active participation. Research literature supports the effectiveness of structured literacy interventions like RAVE-O in improving reading outcomes for learners with dyslexia. The need for RAVE-O to be implemented in schools as a programme for dyslexic learners is essential for their academic progress, as it provides a comprehensive and evidence-based approach to addressing their specific learning needs.

4.10 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, the collected data, along with its analysis and interpretation, are presented to address the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. The themes and sub-themes derived from the data summarise the study's findings. These findings illuminate how educators conceptualise dyslexia, the intervention programmes they implement, their perceptions of their roles in supporting learners with dyslexia, and the support they require from the DBE through DBSTs in facilitating the implementation of the RAVE-O programme as an intervention strategy for dyslexic learners. The subsequent chapter (Chapter 5) provides a summary, conclusions, and recommendations based on this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4, the researcher outlined the findings derived from the data analysis. These findings are organised according to identified themes and sub-themes. The perspectives, quotations, and responses gathered from the focus groups and semi-structured interviews with educators are presented alongside the researcher's observational notes. Additionally, the analysis incorporated relevant documents and policies identified during the study. This research specifically examined Foundation Phase educators' perspectives on how they contextualise dyslexia, their perceptions of their roles in teaching learners diagnosed with dyslexia, the existing gaps in the implementation of interventions for these learners, and the support they require from the DBE through DBSTs. The qualitative data analysis facilitated the identification of patterns and themes, allowing the researcher to derive insights and theories while achieving a profound understanding of the participants' meanings and experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation (Busetto et al., 2020).

Chapter 5 interprets the research findings in relation to the study's objectives (cf. Section 1.4.1) and seeks to address the research questions that guided this study (cf. Section 1.5). Additionally, it examines the relevant literature concerning the RAVE-O intervention programme and its application in dyslexic interventions within inclusive Foundation Phase classrooms (discussed in Chapter 2), and delineates the chosen conceptual framework (also detailed in Chapter 2).

5.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the following section, I address the primary and secondary research questions outlined in this study by analysing the findings derived from various data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis. Each research question is examined in detail, drawing on the insights gained from educators' experiences with the RAVE-O intervention programme and their perspectives on dyslexia. Additionally, I integrated supporting literature to contextualise these findings within the broader educational framework. This comprehensive approach aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how RAVE-O

can effectively support dyslexic learners in inclusive Foundation Phase classrooms and identify the key factors influencing educators' practices and perceptions.

5.2.1 Primary research question

5.2.1.1 How can the RAVE-O programme be used to support learners with dyslexia in inclusive Foundation Phase classes?

The study provided a comprehensive exploration of how the RAVE-O intervention programme can effectively support learners with dyslexia in inclusive Foundation Phase classes. Through a participatory action research approach, educators were trained on RAVE-O and subsequently implemented its strategies in their classrooms. The findings indicated that RAVE-O's multisensory approach, which incorporates phonological awareness, vocabulary development, and comprehension strategies, significantly enhances the literacy skills of dyslexic learners. Educators reported increased engagement and motivation among learners when using character-driven narratives and interactive activities associated with the programme. Furthermore, the document analysis revealed alignment between RAVE-O's objectives and the educational policies aimed at supporting diverse learners, such as Education White Paper 6 and CAPS. This synergy highlights the programme's relevance within the current educational framework, affirming its potential as an effective intervention for dyslexic learners (Reid et al., 2020; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2020).

5.2.2 Secondary research questions

5.2.2.1 How do educators in Foundation Phase inclusive classes conceptualise dyslexia?

The study revealed that educators conceptualise dyslexia as a complex learning difficulty that affects reading, writing, and spelling abilities. Through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, participants articulated their understanding of dyslexia as not merely a deficit but as a unique learning profile requiring tailored instructional approaches. Many educators expressed awareness of the diverse manifestations of dyslexia, highlighting the importance of individualised strategies to meet the needs of each learner. This view aligns with existing literature that emphasises the necessity for educators to possess a nuanced understanding of dyslexia to effectively support affected learners (Higgins et al., 2021; Snowling & Hulme, 2012).

5.2.2.2 How do Foundation Phase educators perceive their role in teaching and supporting learners with dyslexia?

Educators perceived their role as pivotal in creating inclusive learning environments that foster the academic growth of dyslexic learners. The study's findings indicated that educators feel a strong sense of responsibility to adapt their teaching methods and provide additional support to ensure that all learners can succeed. Participants emphasised the importance of collaboration with colleagues and specialists to develop effective intervention strategies. This perception is consistent with research indicating that teacher efficacy is crucial in addressing the needs of learners with learning disabilities (Graham & Perin, 2018). The educators' commitment to professional development through training programmes like RAVE-O further demonstrates their proactive approach to enhancing their instructional practices.

5.2.2.3 What support do Foundation Phase educators in inclusive schools require to enhance the academic progress of dyslexic learners?

The study identified several key areas where Foundation Phase educators require additional support to enhance the academic progress of dyslexic learners. Participants expressed a need for ongoing professional development opportunities focused on evidence-based intervention strategies and effective classroom management techniques for diverse learners. Additionally, educators highlighted the necessity for more resources, such as teaching aids and assistive technology, to facilitate differentiated instruction. This finding aligns with existing literature that emphasises the importance of providing educators with adequate training and resources to effectively support learners with dyslexia (Reid et al., 2020).

5.2.2.4 What programmes do educators use as intervention strategies for learners diagnosed with Dyslexia?

Throughout the study, it became evident that while many educators were aware of various intervention programmes available for dyslexic learners, there was a notable reliance on the RAVE-O intervention programme due to its structured approach and alignment with curriculum goals. Document analysis revealed that some educators also utilised supplementary resources such as phonics-based programmes and individualised reading interventions; however, these were often implemented alongside RAVE-O rather than as standalone solutions. The findings suggest that

while there is an understanding of multiple intervention strategies, RAVE-O emerged as a preferred choice due to its comprehensive framework and effectiveness in addressing the specific needs of dyslexic learners (Higgins et al., 2021).

The research questions posed in this study were thoroughly addressed through a combination of qualitative data collection methods including focus groups, observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The insights gained not only illuminated how RAVE-O can be utilised effectively within inclusive classrooms but also provided valuable perspectives on educators' conceptualisations of dyslexia and their roles in supporting affected learners. These findings contribute significantly to our understanding of effective practices for teaching dyslexic learners within Foundation Phase settings.

5.3 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The following section provides a concise overview of both the literature review and the empirical findings that emerged from this study. The literature findings are synthesised from the content presented in Chapter 2, while the empirical findings are extracted from the data that was collected, analysed, and interpreted in Chapter 4.

5.3.1 Summary of literature findings

In Chapter 2, the literature review encompasses key findings, including the conceptualisation of dyslexia (cf. Section 2.5), educators' perceptions of their roles in teaching diagnosed learners (cf. Section 2.6), and the intervention programmes implemented to support dyslexic learners (cf. Section 2.7), with a particular emphasis on the RAVE-O programme as the recommended intervention strategy. Additionally, it addresses the support educators require from the DBE in their efforts to teach dyslexic learners (cf. Section 2.8).

5.3.1.1 Findings relating to Foundation Phase educators' conceptualisation of dyslexia in inclusive schools

The research findings highlight educators' varying levels of understanding and misconceptions regarding dyslexia (cf. Section 2.5.1). While most educators in the study recognised dyslexia as a learning difficulty affecting reading, writing, and spelling skills, some held more specific or inaccurate beliefs (cf. Section 2.3). Participants associated dyslexia with seeing letters backwards, which is a common misconception.

They described dyslexia as a neurological disorder affecting letter-sound recognition, which is more accurate but still incomplete. These findings align with the literature review, which noted that educators often have a basic awareness of dyslexia but lack a comprehensive understanding, particularly regarding the underlying cognitive and biological factors (cf. Section 2.5.2).

The educators' descriptions of how they identify dyslexia in learners also varied in specificity and accuracy. Most focused on observable characteristics like difficulty reading aloud, poor spelling, untidy handwriting, and low self-esteem. Participants E2S1 and E3S1 provided more detailed lists of potential signs (see Section 4.4.3). However, E9S2 noted that many professionals are hesitant to officially diagnose dyslexia in younger children, which may limit early identification and intervention.

These findings underscore the need for more comprehensive training and support for educators to improve their understanding of dyslexia. As the literature review suggested, providing guidelines, resources, and professional development can help educators better recognise and accommodate the needs of learners with dyslexia (cf. Section 2.5.2). Fostering an inclusive environment that welcomes and supports them with diverse learning profiles is also crucial (cf. Section 1.7.1). By enhancing educators' knowledge and creating supportive school cultures, learners with dyslexia can receive the assistance they need to succeed academically.

5.3.1.2 Findings in relation to Foundation Phase educators' perception of their role in teaching and support learners with dyslexia

The findings from the research underscore the multifaceted roles of Foundation Phase educators in supporting learners with dyslexia, aligning closely with the literature on the educator's role as a mediator of learning, designer and interpreter of learning, and administrator (cf. Section 2.6.1). As mediators, educators are tasked with facilitating knowledge acquisition and creating inclusive environments that cater to individual learning needs (cf. Section 2.6). This role is evident in the participants' recognition of the importance of early identification and intervention, as highlighted by E1S1 and E2S1, who emphasised the need for appropriate assessments to support dyslexic learners effectively. Furthermore, educators are expected to design and interpret learning materials tailored to the specific needs of these learners, adapting teaching methods and assessments to enhance accessibility (cf. Section 2.6). This adaptability

was reflected in the participants' advocacy for multisensory approaches and accommodations.

Additionally, educators serve as administrators, leaders, and managers, overseeing the educational process and providing guidance to create supportive learning environments (cf. Section 2.6). According to Campos (2022), educators view themselves as lifelong learners, engaging in continuous professional development to stay informed about best practices for dyslexic support (cf. Section 2.6). This commitment to ongoing learning enables them to refine their teaching strategies and contribute to the advancement of dyslexia education. As noted, two participants expressed their role to attend courses, even at their own expense, to equip themselves with more knowledge and skills. Moreover, the educators' roles extend to fostering a sense of community and pastoral care, promoting inclusivity and emotional support for learners (Du Toit et al., 2016). By embodying these diverse roles, Foundation Phase educators not only enhance the academic growth of dyslexic learners but also contribute to their overall well-being and development, demonstrating a holistic approach to education that is vital for success in inclusive classrooms (cf. Section 2.6).

5.3.1.3 Findings relating to intervention programmes used to minimise learners' difficulties for learners with dyslexia

The research findings indicate a significant gap in the availability and implementation of baseline intervention programmes for learners with dyslexia within the observed schools. Despite the principles of inclusive education advocating for the adaptation of curricula and instructional methods to meet diverse learner needs (Bruwer et al., 2014), educators reported a lack of formalised intervention strategies (cf. Section 2.7). Participant E11S2 noted that they do not have intervention programmes at the moment but try to use different fonts (cf. Section 2.7.3) on worksheets, while E5S1 mentioned modifying activities and tests to accommodate dyslexic learners, reflecting a reliance on informal adaptations rather than structured programmes. These findings highlight a critical issue within the educational framework, as the absence of a standardised intervention programme can lead to inconsistencies in how dyslexia is addressed across different classrooms, ultimately affecting learners' academic outcomes.

In contrast, Participant E2S1 described a more systematic approach, emphasising the explicit teaching of phonics and providing opportunities for guided and independent

reading to enhance literacy skills. This structured methodology aligns with literature suggesting that effective interventions, such as the Orton-Gillingham method (cf. Section 2.7.2), utilise multisensory techniques to improve literacy outcomes for dyslexic learners (Birsh, 2018; Kearns et al., 2018). Educators can facilitate significant improvements in reading fluency and comprehension by focusing on the relationship between letters and sounds. Furthermore, while some educators, like E4S1, are integrating programmes such as RAVE-O and collaborating with speech and language therapists to provide functional support, the overall lack of a cohesive baseline programme remains a concern. This inconsistency can hinder the ability of educators to effectively support dyslexic learners, as they may not have access to the necessary resources or strategies to address the specific challenges these learners face.

The findings underscore the necessity for targeted professional development to equip educators with the knowledge and skills required to implement effective intervention strategies (cf. Section 2.7.2), thereby narrowing the learning gap for dyslexic learners. As highlighted by the literature, successful interventions can significantly alter learning trajectories, making it imperative for schools to adopt evidence-based practices that promote inclusive educational environments (Dalton et al., 2012; Joubert, 2016). Moreover, the need for collaboration among educators, specialists, and policymakers is essential to create a more supportive framework for dyslexic learners (cf. Section 2.7.3). This collaboration can lead to the development of comprehensive intervention programmes that incorporate a variety of teaching strategies, such as multisensory instruction, assistive technology, and differentiated assessments, which are crucial for meeting the diverse needs of all learners.

Additionally, the research findings reveal a pressing need for schools to establish clear guidelines and resources for implementing effective interventions. These guidelines include the creation of baseline programmes that are not only evidence-based but also adaptable to the specific contexts of each classroom. By fostering an environment where educators feel empowered to share best practices and collaborate on intervention strategies, schools can enhance their capacity to support learners with dyslexia. Ultimately, a concerted effort to address these gaps in intervention programmes will ensure that all learners with dyslexia receive the comprehensive support they need to thrive academically and develop the confidence necessary for lifelong learning.

5.3.1.4 Findings in relation to the support Foundation Phase educators require from the DBE through DBSTs, to accommodate dyslexic learners

The research findings highlight a significant disparity in the support received by Foundation Phase educators from the DBE and DBSTs when accommodating learners with dyslexia (cf. Section 2.8.3). School 1 Participants reported limited support from the DBE, which is often restricted to resources like research, workshops, and occasional departmental visits with suggestions. In contrast, School 2 participants have access to a wealth of resources, tools, and collaborative support systems to assist learners with dyslexia.

The above suggests that the DBSTs are not adequately fulfilling their role in supporting educators, as outlined in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education [DoE], 2001). This lack of support may stem from the perception that private schools do not face challenges in supporting learners with dyslexia, even though they do (Obiakor et al., 2021). The educators in both schools expressed a need for hands-on support from the DBSTs to effectively accommodate learners with dyslexia, rather than just suggestions during occasional visits (cf. Section 2.8.3). Furthermore, the DBE often refers dyslexic learners to special needs schools, which may not always be the best option for their academic and social development.

There is an urgent need for the DBE and DBSTs to prioritise the provision of resources, training, and collaborative support to all educators, regardless of the school setting. By bridging the gap between the support educators need and the interventions available, the DBE and DBSTs can play a pivotal role in enhancing the educational experience for learners with dyslexia (cf. Section 2.8.4). This support is crucial for ensuring that all learners with dyslexia receive the tailored accommodations and interventions necessary for their academic success, as outlined in the inclusive education policies (Tomlinson, 2015; Broderick et al., 2018). The findings emphasise the need for a more equitable and comprehensive approach to supporting educators in both public and private schools, ultimately benefiting learners with dyslexia across the education system.

5.3.1.5 Findings relating to the use of RAVE-O as an intervention programme for dyslexic learners

The RAVE-O programme serves as a promising intervention for dyslexic learners, particularly within inclusive Foundation Phase classrooms. The programme utilises engaging and tactile characters that help learners connect emotionally with reading, making the learning process more enjoyable and effective (cf. Section 2.7.1). The participant findings from the study reflect a positive shift in educators' perceptions of the RAVE-O programme after experiencing it as an intervention strategy. Initially, only three of the 12 educators were familiar with RAVE-O, but their first-hand experience led to enthusiasm about its potential benefits. Educators such as E2S1 and E4S1 highlighted the programme's ability to foster a deeper understanding of reading and writing, with E2S1 noting its comprehensive approach to addressing key areas of reading difficulty. E3S1, the most experienced educator, emphasised that RAVE-O is specifically designed to assist children with reading difficulties, including dyslexia, by improving their overall literacy skills.

Educators also appreciated the programme's multisensory activities and focus on building fluency and comprehension. E11S2 remarked on how RAVE-O provides relatable characters and concepts that help learners grasp phonics more easily, while E7S2 pointed out the programme's engaging nature and its encouragement of small-group learning. This collaborative environment is essential for learners with dyslexia, as it allows them to progress from words to sentences and paragraphs at a comfortable pace. Moreover, observations made during RAVE-O implementation in classrooms further supported its effectiveness. The programme's engaging and interactive nature led to enthusiastic participation from learners, indicating that it successfully captures their interest and motivates them to engage with reading. The research literature corroborates these findings, highlighting the efficiency of structured literacy interventions like RAVE-O in improving reading outcomes for dyslexic learners (cf. Section 2.7.1).

Overall, the findings suggest that the RAVE-O intervention programme is a valuable tool for educators seeking to support dyslexic learners in inclusive settings. However, for RAVE-O to be fully effective, it must be implemented consistently and correctly, as noted by E3S1. Additionally, the need for ongoing training and support for educators is crucial to ensure they can leverage the programme's full potential. By providing a

comprehensive and evidence-based approach to literacy instruction, RAVE-O can significantly enhance the educational experiences of learners with dyslexia, helping them to achieve their academic goals and develop a lifelong love for reading.

5.4 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK IN RELATION TO THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The effectiveness of the conceptual framework in this study is pivotal in understanding the intervention provided for dyslexic learners in inclusive Foundation Phase classrooms, particularly through the RAVE-O intervention programme. The framework facilitated the analysis of how established theories, such as David Ausubel's meaningful learning theory and the asset-based approach, can inform and enhance literacy interventions for dyslexic learners (cf. Section 2.9.1 and 2.9.2). By employing this framework, the research not only connected theoretical insights with practical applications but also illuminated the multifaceted challenges educators face in implementing effective interventions.

5.4.1 David Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Theory

The findings indicate that, when implemented within the framework of David Ausubel's meaningful learning theory, the RAVE-O intervention programme can be highly effective in supporting learners with dyslexia in inclusive Foundation Phase classrooms. Ausubel's theory emphasises the importance of building upon existing knowledge and making meaningful connections between new and prior information to facilitate learning (cf. Section 2.9.1). This aligns well with the RAVE-O programme's focus on engaging learners through multisensory activities and targeting key areas of reading difficulty, such as automaticity, vocabulary, and orthography.

Participants in the study highlighted several ways in which RAVE-O, when used in conjunction with Ausubel's principles, can benefit dyslexic learners. Participant E1S1 noted that the programme's emphasis on fluency is particularly valuable, as it helps learners develop a more automatic and effortless approach to reading. This relates to Ausubel's concept of derivative subsumption, where new information is directly derived from or is an example of existing concepts in the learner's cognitive structure (cf. Section 2.9.1.1).

Participant E2S1 emphasised that by using multisensory activities and focusing on building fluency and comprehension, RAVE-O effectively addresses the specific challenges dyslexic learners face, helping them improve their reading skills more effectively. This comprehensive approach aligns with Ausubel's meaningful theory, which suggests that learners seek to make sense of their interactions by attaching new knowledge to what they already know (cf. Section 2.9.1). On the other hand, Participant E7S2 highlighted how RAVE-O provides learners with a fresh perspective and concrete links to help them remember and implement language concepts effectively. This relates to Ausubel's concept of combinatorial subsumption, where new information is connected to relevant, general concepts in the learner's cognitive structure (cf. Section 2.9.1.4). RAVE-O facilitates meaningful learning by encouraging learners to make connections between new vocabulary and their existing knowledge of the world.

The participant observer's observations further support the effectiveness of RAVE-O when implemented within Ausubel's framework. The programme's engaging nature and multisensory approach were evident in the learners' enthusiasm and active participation, suggesting that it successfully captured their interest and motivated them to engage with reading. This aligns with Ausubel's belief that learning should be meaningful and that learners should actively seek to make sense of new information (cf. Section 2.9).

In conclusion, the research findings indicate that, when implemented within the framework of David Ausubel's meaningful learning theory, the RAVE-O intervention programme can be a highly effective intervention for learners with dyslexia in inclusive Foundation Phase classrooms. By building upon existing knowledge, making meaningful connections, and engaging learners through multisensory activities, RAVE-O provides a comprehensive and evidence-based approach to addressing the specific learning needs of dyslexic learners (cf. Section 2.7.1).

5.4.2 Asset-Based Approach

The findings from this study reveal that the RAVE-O intervention programme serves as an effective intervention for learners with dyslexia, particularly when framed within the asset-based approach. This approach emphasises recognising and leveraging the existing strengths, skills, and talents of learners rather than focusing solely on their

challenges (Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2006). The RAVE-O programme aligns with this philosophy by incorporating engaging characters and activities that allow learners to connect with the material on a personal level (cf. Section 2.9.2), encouraging a sense of competence and confidence often lacking in traditional educational settings (Loots, 2011).

Educators reported that the RAVE-O intervention programme significantly enhances reading fluency and comprehension, both of which are critical areas of difficulty for dyslexic learners. Participant E2S1 highlighted the programme's comprehensive approach, noting that it targets key areas of reading difficulty through multisensory activities. This aligns with the asset-based approach, as it not only addresses the specific needs of learners but also builds upon their existing knowledge and skills. For instance, through collaborative activities, learners were encouraged to identify words they had previously learned, reinforcing their understanding and promoting a sense of community and support among peers (cf. Section 2.9.2).

The implementation of the RAVE-O intervention programme also allowed educators to adapt lessons to meet the diverse needs of their learners, a core principle of the asset-based approach (cf. Section 2.9.2). Participant E12S2 emphasised how the programme provides learners with concrete tools to understand language concepts, making the learning process relatable and engaging. This adaptability is crucial in inclusive classrooms where resources may be limited, as it enables educators to tailor their instruction to fit each learner's unique strengths and challenges.

Moreover, the programme's design encourages incremental successes, which are vital for enhancing self-esteem and motivation among dyslexic learners. Participants noted that recognising and celebrating these small achievements, such as mastering new vocabulary or demonstrating improved reading using the fluency chart, aligns with the asset-based approach's goal of empowering learners (cf. Section 2.9.2).

Despite the positive feedback regarding RAVE-O, the study also highlighted challenges faced by educators, such as the lack of formal training and resources to support dyslexic learners effectively. Many educators expressed frustration with the limitations of the CAPS curriculum (cf. Section 2.7), which often does not accommodate dyslexic learners' specific needs. This underscores the necessity for

ongoing professional development and support from DBSTs to equip educators with the skills and knowledge needed to implement interventions like RAVE-O successfully.

In conclusion, the findings indicate that the RAVE-O intervention programme, when integrated with the asset-based approach, can significantly enhance the educational experiences of learners with dyslexia. By focusing on learners' strengths and providing engaging, multisensory instruction, RAVE-O not only addresses the specific challenges faced by dyslexic learners but also empowers them to achieve their full potential. The study emphasises the importance of continued support and training for educators to ensure the successful implementation of such interventions, ultimately fostering an inclusive learning environment where all learners can thrive.

The RAVE-O programme, when implemented within the framework of David Ausubel's meaningful learning theory and the asset-based approach, can be highly effective in supporting learners with dyslexia in inclusive Foundation Phase classrooms (cf. Figure 2.5). Ausubel's theory emphasises building upon existing knowledge and making meaningful connections, which aligns with RAVE-O's multisensory activities that target key areas of reading difficulty. The asset-based approach prioritises recognising learners' strengths, skills, and talents, mirrored in RAVE-O's engaging characters and activities that foster confidence and competence. By adapting lessons to meet diverse needs and celebrating incremental successes, RAVE-O effectively incorporates both Ausubel's principles of meaningful learning and the asset-based approach's focus on empowering learners through their strengths.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study aimed to use the RAVE-O intervention programme as an intervention strategy for dyslexic learners in inclusive Foundation Phase classes. I present my recommendations in this section, based on the findings of this study and the conceptual framework used.

5.5.1 Educator professional development and training

The findings from this study underscore the critical need for comprehensive educator development and training to support dyslexic learners in inclusive Foundation Phase classrooms effectively. Participants expressed a consensus on the necessity for enhanced training, as many educators reported feeling inadequately prepared to

address dyslexic learners' specific needs. To bridge this gap, targeted professional development workshops should be implemented, focusing on areas such as understanding dyslexia, implementing multisensory teaching strategies, and utilising structured literacy programmes like RAVE-O. Recommended workshops could include understanding dyslexia and its impact on learning, multisensory instruction techniques, implementing the RAVE-O intervention programme, differentiated instruction and assessment, and collaborative learning strategies. By prioritising these development training opportunities, educators can gain the necessary skills and confidence to implement effective interventions for dyslexic learners, ultimately enhancing their academic success and fostering an inclusive learning environment.

5.5.2 Implementing the RAVE-O programme as an intervention strategy

Implementing the RAVE-O programme as an intervention strategy is crucial for effectively supporting dyslexic learners in inclusive Foundation Phase classrooms, as evidenced by the findings of this study. The RAVE-O programme aligns with the principles of inclusive education by providing a structured literacy framework that addresses the specific challenges dyslexic learners face, such as difficulties with reading fluency and comprehension. Participants noted that RAVE-O's multisensory activities and engaging characters foster a positive learning environment, enabling learners to connect new knowledge with their existing cognitive structures, as emphasised by Ausubel's meaningful learning theory. Additionally, the programme encourages collaboration and peer support, which are essential components of the asset-based approach, allowing educators to leverage the strengths and talents of each learner. Despite the challenges posed by the CAPS curriculum, which often lacks the necessary accommodations for dyslexic learners, the RAVE-O intervention programme offers an adaptable and effective solution. By integrating RAVE-O into their teaching practices, educators can create a more inclusive and supportive classroom atmosphere that empowers dyslexic learners to thrive academically, ultimately enhancing their overall educational experience.

5.5.3 Support from the District Based Support Teams

To enhance the effectiveness of support for educators working with dyslexic learners, it is imperative that DBSTs provide more hands-on practical training sessions and increase their school visits. This study's findings reveal that many educators feel

inadequately equipped to address dyslexic learners' specific needs, often due to a lack of formal training and resources. Therefore, DBSTs should focus on delivering comprehensive training workshops that cover essential topics such as the implementation of the RAVE-O intervention programme, differentiated instruction strategies, and effective assessment practices. Additionally, there should be a streamlined administrative process for conducting assessments, ensuring that educators receive timely feedback and support when addressing challenges faced by dyslexic learners. Quick turnaround times in responding to educators' needs will foster a proactive approach to intervention, allowing for immediate adjustments in teaching strategies. By prioritising these aspects, DBSTs can significantly improve the quality of support provided to educators, ultimately enhancing the educational experiences and outcomes for learners with dyslexia.

5.5.4 Dyslexic awareness in inclusive schools

To enhance dyslexia awareness in inclusive schools, it is essential to implement comprehensive awareness campaigns that educate both staff and learners about dyslexia and its impact on learning. Schools can organise workshops and training sessions for educators to deepen their understanding of dyslexia, its characteristics, and effective teaching strategies. Additionally, schools should actively involve parents by hosting informational sessions that provide insights into dyslexia, its challenges, and ways to support their children at home. Practical activities such as "Dyslexia Awareness Days" can be organised, where learners participate in interactive sessions that promote empathy and understanding, such as role-playing exercises or storytelling that highlight the experiences of dyslexic learners. Moreover, creating informational materials, such as brochures and newsletters, can help disseminate knowledge about dyslexia within the school community. By fostering a culture of awareness and acceptance, schools can reduce stigma and promote inclusivity, ensuring that dyslexic learners feel supported and valued. These initiatives, combined with ongoing collaboration between educators, parents, and support teams, will significantly enhance the overall educational experience for learners with dyslexia.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings of this study investigating the intervention strategies using the RAVE-O programme for dyslexic learners in inclusive Foundation Phase classes, the researcher proposes the following recommendations for further research:

1. Training Foundation Phase Teachers: Future research should focus on developing and implementing training programmes specifically for intermediate phase teachers to equip them with the skills necessary to support dyslexic learners effectively, and ensure continuity in intervention strategies as learners progress through their education.
2. Training Rural Area Educators on RAVE-O: It is essential to conduct research on the implementation of RAVE-O in rural areas, providing targeted training for educators in these settings. This will help address the unique challenges faced by rural schools, such as limited resources and access to professional development.
3. Higher Education Teacher Training Institutions: Further studies should explore the integration of RAVE-O training into the higher education curriculum for learning support education students. This will prepare future educators with the knowledge and skills to implement effective interventions for dyslexic learners from the outset of their careers.
4. Exploring Parental Involvement: Research should investigate the role of parental involvement in supporting dyslexic learners using the RAVE-O programme. Understanding how parents can be engaged in the learning process and trained to reinforce strategies at home could enhance the effectiveness of interventions.
5. Longitudinal Studies on RAVE-O Implementation: Conducting longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of RAVE-O on dyslexic learners' literacy development will provide valuable insights into the programme's effectiveness over time and inform future educational practices and policies.

By pursuing these recommendations, future research can contribute to a deeper understanding of effective intervention strategies for dyslexic learners, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes in inclusive settings.

5.7 LIMITATIONS

Based on the findings of the study using the RAVE-O intervention programme for dyslexic learners in inclusive Foundation Phase classes, the following limitations were identified:

1. Small Sample Size: The study was conducted with a limited number of participants. A small sample size restricts the ability to draw broader conclusions about the effectiveness of the RAVE-O programme across diverse educational settings and populations.
2. Time Constraints: The research was conducted within a limited timeframe, which may have hindered the depth of data collection and analysis. Time constraints can restrict the ability to observe the long-term effects of the RAVE-O programme on dyslexic learners and may also limit the thoroughness of interviews and feedback from educators.
3. Limited Access to Resources: The study may have been limited by the availability of resources, such as access to the RAVE-O programme materials and technology needed for its implementation. Lack of resources could have hindered the ability to explore the potential of the intervention programme fully and may have affected the consistency of its application across different classrooms.
4. Resistance to Change: Implementing a new intervention programme like RAVE-O may have faced resistance from some educators who are accustomed to traditional teaching methods. This resistance to change could have impacted the educators' willingness to fully engage with the programme and may have limited the study's ability to assess its true effectiveness.

Addressing these limitations in future research could enhance the understanding of the RAVE-O programme's effectiveness and its implementation in various educational contexts.

5.8 SUMMARY

Chapter 5 of the study focused on the findings related to using the RAVE-O intervention programme for dyslexic learners in inclusive Foundation Phase classes. It highlighted the critical need for comprehensive educator development and training to effectively support dyslexic learners, emphasising the importance of targeted

professional development workshops. The chapter also answered the research questions and discussed the necessity of implementing the RAVE-O intervention programme as a structured intervention strategy, showcasing its alignment with the principles of David Ausubel's meaningful learning and the asset-based approach. Additionally, it addressed the role of DBSTs in providing adequate support to educators, recommending more hands-on practical training, increased school visits, and improved administrative processes for assessments. The chapter concluded by emphasising the importance of raising dyslexia awareness within schools to encourage a supportive learning environment, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes for dyslexic learners. Overall, the findings emphasise the need for ongoing support, training, and resources to ensure the successful implementation of the RAVE-O intervention programme and the effective accommodation of dyslexic learners in inclusive settings.

5.9 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The concluding remarks of this study emphasise the significant role of the RAVE-O intervention programme in providing effective intervention strategies for dyslexic learners in inclusive Foundation Phase classrooms. The primary aim of the study was to investigate how the implementation of RAVE-O could enhance the educational experiences of these learners, and the findings underscore the necessity of tailored support systems within the current educational framework. The literature review highlighted existing gaps in the support provided to dyslexic learners, revealing that while policies promoting inclusive education exist, the practical application of these policies often falls short due to inadequate resources, insufficient teacher training, and limited awareness of dyslexia among educators.

Through a combination of focus groups, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, the study gathered comprehensive data that illustrated the challenges faced by educators in implementing effective interventions. Participants expressed a strong need for professional development opportunities that focus on dyslexia awareness and the specific strategies encompassed within the RAVE-O intervention programme. This aligns with the broader literature, which suggests that educators often lack the necessary skills and knowledge to support learners with dyslexia effectively. Furthermore, the study identified the importance of

collaboration between educators and DBSTs to ensure that teachers receive the ongoing support and resources they need to implement intervention strategies successfully.

In conclusion, while the RAVE-O intervention programme demonstrates promise as an effective intervention for dyslexic learners, the study illustrates the necessity for systemic changes within the educational framework. Future research should focus on expanding the implementation of RAVE-O across diverse educational contexts, including urban and rural settings, and should explore the long-term impacts of such interventions on literacy development. Bridging the gap between research and practice, as well as between policy and implementation, remains a longstanding challenge within the education sector. By addressing the identified gaps in teacher training, resource allocation, and community involvement, educational institutions can create a more supportive and effective learning environment for dyslexic learners, ultimately enabling them to reach their full potential.

If they could, they would. It's up to us to help them try.

-Yvonne Luiz-

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APPENDIX A: TITLE REGISTRATION

Student no: 16108699
Our ref: Ms Zethu M Mjwara
Tel: (012) 420 2725
Email: zethu.mjwara@up.ac.za

2024-08-26

Miss N Brukwe
Ext 3
20 Graskop
Leachville
1541

Dear Miss Brukwe

TITLE AND SUPERVISOR APPROVAL

I have pleasure in informing you that your approved title and supervisor for **MEd General** are as follows:

Title:

Using the RAVE-O program as an intervention for learners with Dyslexia in inclusive classes

SUPERVISOR: Dr NS Thuketana

You are advised to acquaint yourself with Regulations in the publication "General Regulations and information".

Your registration as a student must be renewed annually before 28 February until you have complied with all the requirements for the degree. You will only be entitled to the guidance of your supervisor if annual proof of registration is submitted.

You are welcome to contact us at the abovementioned telephone number or email address if you have any enquiries.

Yours sincerely

for DEAN:
Faculty of Education
POS

APPENDIX B: ETHICS CERTIFICATE

Make today matter
www.up.ac.za

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Ethics Committee

24 April 2023

Dear Miss N Brukwe

The application for ethical clearance for the research project described below served before this committee on 19 April 2023:

Ethics Protocol No:	**EDU149/22**
Principal investigator:	**Miss N Brukwe**
Student/Staff No:	**16108699**
Degree:	**Masters**
Supervisor/Promoter:	**Dr NS Thuketana**
Department:	**Early Childhood Education**

The decision by the committee is reflected below:

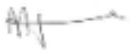
Decision:	**Approved**
Comments:	
Period of approval:	**Two years**

The approval by the Ethics Committee is subject to the following conditions being met:

1. The research will be conducted as stipulated on the application form submitted to the Ethics Committee with the supporting documents.
2. Proof of how you adhered to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) policy for research must be submitted where relevant.
3. In the event that the research protocol changed for whatever reason the Ethics Committee must be notified thereof by submitting an amendment to the application, together with all the supporting documentation that will be used for data collection namely; questionnaires, interview schedules and observation schedules, for further approval before data can be collected. The changes may include the following but are not limited to:
   - Change of investigator,
   - Research methods any other aspect therefore and,
   - Participants.

The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education does not accept any liability for research misconduct, of whatsoever nature, committed by the researcher(s) in the implementation of the approved protocol.

Best wishes



Prof Funke Omidire
Chair: Ethics Committee
Faculty of Education

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APPENDIX C: PERMISSION OF RESEARCH FROM SCHOOL

Date: _____

The Principal

RE: Provision of consent for school to take part in study

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Nomfundo Brukwe and I am currently enrolled as a master's student at the University of Pretoria in the Department of Early Childhood Education (ECE). In order to complete my degree, I am required to interview Foundation Phase teachers on my study titled: ***Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention for learners with dyslexia in inclusive classes.*** The research study involves investigating and gaining insight on educators' perspectives regarding Dyslexic interventions and how they enhance and differentiate curriculum access for diagnosed learners using the RAVE-O programme. I would like to invite your school to take part in the study.

This study involves collaborating with Foundation Phase educators through individual semi-structured interviews and observations during early intervention lessons. The focus will be on how educators support learners with Dyslexia when implementing RAVE-O strategies. Educators will be invited to participate in the data collection phase by engaging in interviews and observations, scheduled according to their availability. Interviews will take place at a convenient location within the school, while observations will occur in the classroom. Both interviews and observations are expected to last no more than one hour.

Please be assured that the names of the school and teachers will remain anonymous and confidential throughout the study. Semi-structured interviews will be recorded using a voice recorder to ensure accurate data collection. An observation sheet and research journal will be used to document findings from the intervention lessons. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and educators are free to withdraw at any time.

The study's findings will be shared with educators, allowing them to apply the insights in their classrooms to better accommodate learners with Dyslexia. Additionally, member checking will be employed to enhance the study's validity. This research is crucial for identifying ways to improve early intervention strategies for Dyslexic learners. Previous studies have emphasized the need for urgent attention for learners with Dyslexia, and this study aims to provide valuable information by using the RAVE-O as a baseline programme for early intervention.

The University of Pretoria will retain custody of all research findings and maintain a record that all necessary protocols for obtaining permission were followed. To confirm participation and acknowledge these protocols, please complete the attached request, which also serves as a joint acknowledgment with the University regarding the participation of selected educators from your school in the research study. You are most welcome to contact myself or my supervisor, if you have any queries regarding the study. The contact details are provided below.

Nomfundo Brukwe **Researcher**	**Dr NS Thuketana** **Supervisor**
U16108699@tuks.co.za	susan.thuketana@up.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Miss N. Brukwe

PERMISSION FOR EDUCATORS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

I, _____, hereby give permission to Nomfundo Brukwe to include selected Foundation Phase educators at my school to participate in her research study on ***Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention for learners with dyslexia in inclusive classes.***

_____ _____

Principal Date

APPENDIX D: CONSENT LETTER FOR EDUCATORS

Project Title: Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention for learners with dyslexia in inclusive classes.

Dear Teacher

RE: Provision of consent for educators to take part in study

My name is Nomfundo Brukwe and I am currently enrolled as a master's student at the University of Pretoria in the department of Early Childhood Education (ECE). The title of my study towards Master's degree is ***"Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention for learners with dyslexia in inclusive classes"***. The aim of the study is to investigate and gain insight on educators' perspectives regarding Dyslexic intervention, enhance and differentiate curriculum by using the RAVE-O programme as a baseline programme to suggest early intervention strategies for learners diagnosed with Dyslexia.

I am working under the supervision of Dr NS. Thuketana, from the Department of Early Childhood Education at the University of Pretoria.

As one of the participants, I kindly invite you to participate in this study. There are two parts to this research, an interview (using semi-structured interview questionnaire) and 6 intervention lesson(s) for observation. The interview will be scheduled as per your availability and will take place at a venue convenient to you. The interview should take approximately 45 minutes. The observation lessons will be divided into six class visits, where we observe the interventions provided for learners and introducing the RAVE-O programme as intervention strategy. The observation lessons will need your permission of perusing through documents and analysing how lesson plans are prepared for learner intervention and the diagnoses of the learners. This information will be kept confidential when disclosed to the researcher. Ethical principles will be followed to ensure the information maintains confidentiality and anonymity.

Confidentiality

Your participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the research study without any consequences or explanations. You can be assured that your decision will be respected. Confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed always by using pseudonyms to the participant

during the transcription phase. No participant names and personal information will be reported in my findings.

Risks & Benefits

We do not see any risks that will affect you and the learners in this study. Any problems that may arise may be brought to our attention and clarified to provide a comfortable platform for everyone. The study will benefit educators by educating them about more skills on how to provide intervention for learners diagnosed with Dyslexia using the RAVE-O programme. Further benefits of the study would contribute to academia and enhance the curriculum.

Secondary Data Clause

During this research study, you will be requested to grant permission for the researcher to record the semi-structured interview. The recordings are necessary to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the data transcription. The recordings will be securely stored at the University of Pretoria's Department of Education Research Offices, with access restricted to my supervisors and myself. All collected data will be used solely for academic purposes. In any future discussions or presentations about the study, your identities will be protected through the use of pseudonyms.

You are most welcome to contact myself or my supervisors, if you have any queries regarding the study. The contact details are provided below.

Nomfundo Brukwe **Researcher**	**Dr NS Thuketana** **Supervisor**
U16108699@tuks.co.za	**susan.thuketana@up.ac.za**

The results of this study will be shared with educators, enabling them to apply the findings in their classrooms to better support learners with Dyslexia. This research is crucial for developing enhanced early intervention strategies for Dyslexic learners. Previous studies have highlighted the need for urgent attention for learners with Dyslexia, and this study aims to provide valuable insights by utilizing the RAVE-O as a foundational programme for early intervention.

The University of Pretoria will retain custody of all research findings and maintain a record that all necessary protocols for obtaining permission were followed. To confirm your participation in the study and acknowledge these protocols, please complete the attached request, which also serves as a joint acknowledgment with the University

Yours sincerely,

Miss N. Brukwe

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

I, _____, hereby give consent to Nomfundo Brukwe to include me as a participant in her research study on ***Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention for learners with dyslexia in inclusive classes.***

_____ _____

Educator Date

APPENDIX E: LEARNER ASSENT LETTER

Assent letter: To be read to learners.

Project Title: Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention for learners with Dyslexia in inclusive classes.

My name is Nomfundo Brukwe and I am currently enrolled as a master's student at the University of Pretoria. I am working under the supervision of Dr NS. Thuketana, from the Department of Early Childhood Education at the University of Pretoria. I would really appreciate it if you could help me with my study titled "***Using the RAVE-O programme as an intervention for learners with dyslexia in inclusive classes***." The study aims to assist our education system by investigating and gaining insight on educators' perspectives regarding Dyslexic intervention, enhance and differentiate curriculum and use the RAVE-O as a baseline programme to suggest early intervention strategies for learners diagnosed with Dyslexia.

Will the project hurt?

No, the project will not hurt you in any way.

What if I have any questions?

You are allowed to ask any questions you have about the study. Although your parents consented for you to be in class during the research, you are free to refuse if you so wish.

Please tick yes/no on the space provided below if you give assent to be in class during the research.

	YES	NO
I will take part in the research study:		
I agree to have my photographs taken on the basis that my face is blurred:		

Yours sincerely,

Miss N. Brukwe

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

Interview questions for educators

Background questions
Do you have a teaching qualification? If yes, please indicate what type of qualification was obtained.
How old are you?
What ethnic group do you identify yourself with?
What nationality are you?
What type of school are you in? Private or public school?
How many years have you been teaching learners with dyslexia?
What grade are you currently teaching?
Have you encountered a learner with dyslexia in your class?
Semi-structured Interview questions
1. What is your understanding of the term ‘dyslexia’?
2. How do you identify a learner who potentially has dyslexia in the classroom?
3. What characteristics do you associate with dyslexic learners in your classroom?
4. What do you think are the responsibilities of Foundation Phase educators in ensuring that diagnosed learners are accommodated in the classroom?
5. What kind of support do you receive as an educator from the Department of Basic Education through DBSTs regarding learners with dyslexia? Please elaborate.
6. What training did you need to teach dyslexic learners, and what kind of training do you currently need to improve your skills?
7. What baseline programme do you use as an early intervention strategy for learners diagnosed with dyslexia?
8. What strategies do you use in teaching learners diagnosed with dyslexia in the classroom?

9. Do you think the curriculum accommodates learners diagnosed with dyslexia? Elaborate.
10. a) Have you heard of the RAVE-O literacy intervention programme for learners in the early grades? If yes, what is your understanding of the programme.
b) Do you think the RAVE-O programme can be beneficial for learners with dyslexia? If yes or no, please elaborate.

APPENDIX G: OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

Observation

Date: _____

Time: _____

Observations	
Early Intervention Tasks	**Comments**
• What intervention activity has the teacher presented? • Is it teacher or learner-centred? • How is the intervention lesson presented? • How does the intervention progress? • What is the standardised intervention programme used?	
Resources	**Comments**
• What resources has the teacher used to present the lesson? • What resources do the learners use/need for the intervention? • What additional resources are made available/provided to the learners, or used?	
Perceived Challenges	**Comments**
• What challenges do teachers experience when presenting the intervention lessons? • How many challenges do the learners experience when engaging in the intervention lesson? • How do the teacher and learner overcome these challenges?	
RAVE-O	**Comments**
• How did the learners progress in the RAVE-O lesson(s)? • What resources were used to carry out the lesson(s)?	

• What challenges did the learners face with the lesson(s)? • How did the RAVE-O programme accommodate dyslexic learners? • What strategies were used that were different from the early intervention provided by the teachers?	
Culture in the classroom	**Comments**
• What is the culture in the classroom? • How do the learners behave? • How does the teacher respond and support learners who misbehave? • How does the teacher respond to learners who take longer to progress in the intervention lesson?	