

## DECLARATION

I, LEAH NEVILLÉ KHENSANI NTSANWISI hereby declare that the dissertation submitted to the University of Limpopo (*Turfloop Campus*) for the degree of Masters of Education by research, has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University, also that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all the sources cited have been indicated and acknowledged.

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**L. N. K NTSANWISI**

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**DATE**

## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family and daughters –

Nina-Khulu,  
Manelisi and  
Fezeka

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to all who made this study possible. I particularly owe gratitude to the following:

- The Almighty God, for providing me with health and patience throughout this study,
- The Ritavi District Education Department for allowing me to conduct the study in their schools,
- The participants (*fellow teachers*) in the study for their invaluable contribution,
- My husband - Mlungisi for his love, support, and always believing in that one day, I will complete my studies. And, my daughters Nina-Khulu, Manelisi and Fezeka for being the '*the backup team*' that typed and retyped the dissertation,
- My father and mother for their love and constant encouragement and
- My Supervisor - Dr. M. J. Themane for his patience, thoughtfulness, encouragement, support and guidance throughout this study.

## ABSTRACT

Teaching in the Lower Primary School level, currently referred to as the Foundation Phase, exposed me to many challenges in my day to day interactions with learners. One of the challenges was the difficulty to identify barriers to learning experienced by learners. I resorted to more experienced teachers for assistance. Some helped but the majority of them shared the same challenge: lack of knowledge regarding barriers to learning. This, experience led to the present study.

The most important thrust of the study was to investigate how Grade 3 teachers identified barriers to learning

The study employed both in the main the Qualitative approach and to a lesser extent, the Quantitative approach. One Education Circuit was decided upon as a single unit of study. The research design therefore, is a case study of thirteen schools which form a single unit. Only Grade 3 teachers within the Foundation Phase were chosen as a sample due to the scope of the study, time constraints and limited finances. In view of the fact that I was a Grade 3 teacher at the time of the study, most of the Grade 3 teachers at the Circuit were well-known to me because we had attended many workshops together. I decided to include all these teachers in the sample – hence convenient sampling technique was eventually adopted.

The findings of the study reveal that the kinds of challenges faced by South African teachers were not only unique to this country. Elsewhere in the world, some teachers had grappled with this problem. Many teachers interviewed, explained that it was difficult to identify different forms of barriers to learning under the present material conditions even though the majority claimed that they were able to identify barriers to learning. Teachers also stressed the need for in-service training in the area of special needs education.

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