

**Factors limiting township learners
from discovering and developing their talents.**

by

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

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ABSTRACT

“Everyone deserves enough in order to be more”

Discovering and developing one’s talents significantly increases the likelihood of one leading a meaningful and fulfilling life, realising success in the world, and breaking out of the cycle of poverty. It should be the responsibility of schools to provide opportunities for learners to discover and develop talents that they are passionate about. This passion will then create a self-reinforcing cycle in which learners are more motivated to work hard in school and further develop their talents. Therefore, discovering and developing one’s talents should be seen as both a *means* to improved education and an *end* of education itself.

This research paper sought to identify the factors limiting township learners from discovering and developing their talents and to make recommendations as to how to mitigate these factors. The researcher used the partnership between the Masinyusane Development Organisation, a local education non-profit organisation, and School A, a secondary school in the township of New Brighton, Port Elizabeth as a case study.

Data from the study were carefully analysed and it was concluded that the township learners are not being provided the opportunities necessary, particularly in the schools, to discover and develop their talents. This has resulted in poor academic performance, high drop-out rates, low levels of motivation, confusion with regards to career development, and missed opportunities to break out of the cycle of poverty.

The researcher believes this research sheds light on the issue and lays a foundation from which to provide South African township learners with greater opportunities to discover and develop their talents. These opportunities will assist learners in improving their school performance, ensuring that they embark on career paths they will realize success in, and ultimately, in breaking out of the cycle of poverty that traps so many of them.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

4 January 2012

I, Marthina Hendrina Nel, Coordinator: Language Proficiency of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, have edited the language used in the M Thesis in Development Studies by Mr Jim McKeown entitled: '***Factors limiting township learners from discovering and developing their talents.***'

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND, PROBLEM STATEMENT, RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the historic democratic elections of 1994, South Africans, particularly Black South Africans, had great hopes for the future. A strong effort was put forth to overcome the vast inequalities created by over half a century of apartheid oppression. Perhaps nothing was more damaging, in terms of human capital and development, than the inferior education non-white South Africans had been receiving.

It is widely recognised that education is a key pillar to the success and development of a society (World Bank, 2002:5). Educated citizens are generally more empowered to harness their talents and skills in creative and effective ways to benefit society and live meaningful lives. Education is therefore considered by many as the key strategy to correcting the imbalances of the past in South Africa. The newly elected government understood the aforementioned line of thought, pouring significant sums of money into education (Macfarlane, 2011:15).

Fast-forward seventeen years. The majority of Black learners are still attending schools that are vastly inferior to city and former 'White' schools (Bloch, 2009:1). As South Africa continues to urbanise, most of these inferior schools are located in the townships (i.e. the impoverished urban areas on the periphery of the city). One of the most disturbing statistics is that almost 60% of all school going learners will drop out of school before even writing their final Grade 12 examinations (Saunders, 2011:42). Of those that do write these examinations, approximately one out of three Black learners from Eastern Cape townships will pass their Grade 12 examination in any given year (Economist, 2010a). As a result, only 5% of the Black population, which constitutes 80% of the total South African population, that enters the schooling system in South Africa at present will progress to earn a university degree (Economist, 2011:1).

This research contends that a major reason for this poor school performance is the lack of recognition and understanding of the individual talents and the subsequent development of those talents among township learners. To succeed at school and in life, one must find something one is passionate about, be motivated to work hard to improve, and be able to conceive of a path forward to success. This is especially true for township learners, who face a litany of challenges as a result of their environment. These learners know that their schooling is inferior, they observe that few people around them have succeeded in life, and consequently they struggle to develop a positive future vision for themselves. To overcome these hurdles, they need the motivation and drive that one possesses when one is passionate about developing a talent.

The bottom line is that in the South African townships today, the majority of the learners drop out of school before graduating from high school. The majority of these learners fail to enter the labour market. This fact that the youth are not being afforded an education that helps them earn employment or realise their potential places enormous strain on society. Covey (2005:10) once made the following comment about organisations something that applies directly to South African society today, “Can you imagine the personal and organizational cost of failing to fully engage the passion, talent, and intelligence of the workforce? It is far greater than all taxes, interest charges, and labor costs put together!” The current South African education system is failing to fully engage the passion, talent, and intelligence of the nation’s learners.

Researchers (Makhuphula, 2011; Economist, 2010b; Dalton, 2005) have identified a host of problems contributing to the problem, including poorly trained teachers, decrepit infrastructure, impoverished families, dysfunctional government departments, language barriers, and general corruption. However, while improvements in these areas would be beneficial, they alone will not be sufficient to bring about real change. As this research will endeavour to demonstrate, the South African education system needs to create more opportunities for learners to discover *and* develop their talents.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

All of the issues noted above contribute to the high academic failure rate amongst township learners. In recognition of this, the Department of Education has embarked on various initiatives. Absent from much of this debate have been the learners themselves. The researcher considers this a huge oversight, for without motivated, driven and focused learners, gains will be limited.

The researcher furthermore contends that a major reason for their lack of motivation, drive and focus is that township learners are neither adequately equipped nor given the opportunity to discover their own talents and passions. They simply zombie-walk through the system, without reflecting on their own strengths and weaknesses, and then choose a path that will not necessarily lead them to fulfilling and exciting careers or lives. The result is a learner population that lacks motivation, vision and sense of a way forward. If one cannot see the light, then one is not likely to be journeying in the right direction, let alone fighting to overcome the many obstacles that will present themselves along the way.

As a member of a non-profit organisation working in schools in the townships of Port Elizabeth, the researcher is in daily contact with hundreds of learners. He is often struck by the fact that the vast majority of these learners seem to have no idea what they want to do with their lives. While uncertainty is a part of life, it is often caused by the presence of too many opportunities and choices. However, the majority of learners from the townships suffer from too few opportunities. They may have dreams, but they do not know what steps to take to realise these dreams. Without knowledge of the path, one intuitively knows that one will not reach the destination. This leaves learners with feelings of confusion, helplessness and, ultimately, apathy.

An example will help illuminate this issue. The field workers of Masinyusane, the non-profit organisation through which this research was conducted, established that the majority of the 2010 Grade 12 learners from School A wanted to pursue a career in accounting. This was rather unexpected, given that the pass rate in Accounting over the previous two years had been zero percent! Not one student passed accounting, yet it was by far the most popular career choice. Why was this the

case? Why would learners want to pursue a career they had apparently realised no success in?

One contributing factor to the uncertainty prevailing among township learners is that they are generally unaware of their own gifts and talents. As a result, the majority of township learners intend to pursue further education, learnerships or careers that are unrelated to these gifts and talents. Lees (2007:79) suggests that, “one of the greatest reasons people fail to achieve is that they only ever see half the skills they actually possess.”

Even if a learner identifies a talent, limited options are available to develop it. This is especially true in the townships of Port Elizabeth, in which this research took place. Sports leagues are barely functioning, with only the occasional game here or there. Coaches are lacking and practice sessions are held on a sporadic basis only. Debate societies, chess clubs, dance groups or poetry, reading, science or math clubs are essentially non-existent. This lack of opportunities will be one of the overriding themes of this research. One wonders how many potential lawyers, poets, choreographers, artists and physicists never materialised because the learners failed to capitalise on or develop the talents they never realised that they possessed.

There are a variety of reasons for the lack of talent discovery and development amongst township learners. From the standpoint of the education system, the curriculum is inadequate, there is too great a focus on the final examinations, and the township schools themselves are often dysfunctional. From a learner standpoint, the realms of talent, creativity and motivation are not sufficiently understood or developed. On a societal level, there are a lack of role models, mentors and professionals from which the learners can learn. Finally, the social dynamics of widespread poverty underpin everything and create multiple barriers to personal development. Chapter Two, the Literature Review, will examine each of these issues in much greater depth.

This research used the partnership between the Masinyusane Development Organisation, a local education non-profit organisation, and School A, a secondary

school in the township of New Brighton, Port Elizabeth as a case study. School A has traditionally been one of Port Elizabeth's poorest performing and most disadvantaged schools. The school's pass rate is perennially below 50%. It produces very few graduates who enroll at university and it is plagued by many of the challenges listed above (Masinyusane Development Organisation, 2011b).

This research contends that the situation at School A is representative of the broader township communities. The education system is failing South African learners on multiple levels. One way to turn the tide is to invest in ways to facilitate talent discovery and development amongst the youth. As will be argued, it should be the responsibility of schools to assist learners in discovering and developing the talents they will passionately pursue. This is one of the surest ways to ensure that learners will work hard, enjoy their future careers, and overcome the obstacles that life presents. In addition, if learners were more motivated and passionate about a talent they were learning and developing at school, their academic performance would improve. The researcher therefore contends that talent discovery and development is not only a *means* to improved education, but should be seen as an *end* in itself.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the primary and secondary research questions that were developed in response to the problem statement above:

1.3.1 Primary Research Question

What factors are limiting township learners from discovering and developing their talents?

1.3.2 Secondary Research Questions

- *What opportunities do the learners have to discover and develop talents?*
- *What level of exposure do the learners have to different career opportunities?*
- *How can learners be assisted in discovering and developing their individual talents?*

- *How can learners be motivated towards setting and achieving realistic career options?*

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The following are the primary and secondary research objectives that were developed from the research questions above:

1.4.1 Primary Research Objective

- *Identify the factors that are limiting learners from discovering and developing their talents.*

1.4.2 Secondary Research Objectives

To identify:

- *Opportunities that learners have to discover and develop talents.*
- *The level of exposure learners have to different career opportunities.*
- *Ways to assist learners in discovering and developing their individual talents.*
- *Ways to motivate learners to set and achieve realistic career options.*

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

A thorough review of literature is needed to “provide the reader with a picture of the state of knowledge and of major questions in the subject area being investigated (Bell, 1999: 97). A brief overview of Chapter Two, which constitutes the literature review of this study, is presented below.

1.5.1 Education and Development

Development consists of providing people with opportunities to live lives they deem meaningful (ul Haq, 1996:15). One of the most effective ways of achieving this is through education. Education, in its broadest sense, consists of much more than simply academic schooling. It entails unlocking learners’ talents and abilities, opening learners’ minds to various bodies of knowledge and ways of thinking,

showing learners future options, and instilling a longing to continue to grow and learn. The schools in the townships of South Africa are failing dismally in the aforementioned responsibilities.

1.5.2 Education in South Africa

- **Academic Performance**

Angie Motshekga (Economist, 2010a) recently admitted that the education system in South Africa is “in crisis” and will take 20 years to fix. Graeme Bloch, an education expert (Economist, 2010a:1), suggests that a staggering 80% of schools in South Africa are dysfunctional. According to various international reports, learners from Black public schools in South Africa are producing some of the worst results in the world (IAEEA, 2006; IES, 2003). The 2010 Port Elizabeth township school Matriculation pass rate was 35%, despite the fact that the pass level for most subjects is a mere 30%. This figure excludes the 10% to 20% of learners who dropped out during their Matric year, missed an exam, or were misregistered (Masinyusane, 2011b).

Academically the Eastern Cape is perennially one of the poorest performing provinces in the country. The situation is exacerbated in the townships. MEC Mandla Makhuphula (2011:1) recently cited a shocking litany of concerns regarding education in the Eastern Cape, including decrepit infrastructure, departmental corruption, over-expenditure, and pitiful academic performance.

Not only the primary and secondary education systems are facing a crisis. Universities are lowering their entrance requirements and standards to boost statistics. Jonathan Jansen, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State, states that at least three quarters of South African universities are “fraudulent and bad, not really universities at all” (Economist, 2010a).

- **Curriculum Shortcomings**

While a strong academic foundation in literacy and numeracy is important, it is equally important to develop the creative and social aspects of the brain. Gardner

(1983) proposes that there are at least eight independent forms of intelligence. Robinson (2009:13), Renzulli (2000:100) and Root-Bernstein (1999:317) all agree that the current education system focuses too heavily on only a few of these intelligences, to the neglect of others. As all learners have different strengths and capacities, the education system, with its overemphasis on certain intelligences, is favouring some learners over others.

Equally concerning is the emphasis placed on end-of-year exams. To begin, these exams generally fall short of measuring all aspects of a learner's intelligence (Fraser & Streshly, 2000:19). In addition, the overemphasis on exams often leads to teachers teaching to the exams versus the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on memorisation as opposed to critical thinking and analysis.

1.5.3 Talent

Research (Robinson, 2009; Rath, 2007; Renzulli, 2000) has shown that people that focus on what they do best are much happier, more efficient, and more motivated to succeed. The same holds true for learners. There are two critical steps for this to happen. First a learner needs to discover his or her talents. Then he or she must work to develop them.

Too often, learners fail to discover their talents (Rath, 2007:29). Robinson (2009:xi) observes, "too many [learners] never connect with their true talents and therefore don't know what they're really capable of achieving. In that sense, they don't know who they really are." Discovering these talents is critical for learners' motivation, their self-confidence and for determining their future (Lees, 2007; Bolles & Christen, 2006; Covey, 2005; Maree & Ebersohn, 2002). It is essential to ensure that the learners are given opportunities to identify the talents that they possess and will be passionate about pursuing.

Once a talent is identified, a learner must work hard to develop it. There is little empirical evidence (Levitt & Dubner, 2011:177; Coyle, 2009:692; Renzulli, 2000:100) to suggest that anyone is born with exceptional talent. Mastery, or at least competence, requires years of dedicated practice and experience. Ericsson

(2007:4) estimates it takes one ten thousand hours of 'deliberate practice' to achieve mastery in any given field. This requires tremendous dedication and will be achieved only if one is highly motivated. But first, one must be given the opportunity to find the talent one intends to master.

1.5.4 Creativity

One of the ways to discover one's talents is to explore one's creative capacities. Every learner is born with incredible creative capacities. As with almost all other capacities, these need to be exercised for one to maximise their talent. Unfortunately, most learners' creative capacities appear to decline each school year, as the system fails to provide them with opportunities to develop them (Robinson, 2009:5). It is therefore very important that learners are given opportunities to tap into their various creative capacities at a young age.

1.5.5 Motivation

Motivation is critical to a learner's success both academically and from a talent development standpoint. Woolfolk (2010:411) defines motivation as "an internal state that arouses, directs, and maintains behaviour." It is widely recognised that there are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is "the natural human tendency to seek out and conquer challenges as we pursue personal interests and exercise our capabilities" (Woolfolk, 2010:377). We do it because we find the activity itself satisfying and rewarding. Extrinsic motivation, by contrast, is when we do something for some reason other than the task itself (Woolfolk, 2010:377).

Discovering a talent that one is passionate about can raise one's motivation.

Developing that talent becomes a goal one strives to achieve and one therefore becomes more willing to put in the time and effort necessary to realise that talent.

Colvin (2008:279) observes that this drive comes from the fact that, "being good at whatever we want to do – playing the violin, running a race, painting a picture, leading a group of people – is among the deepest sources of fulfillment we will ever know."

Regardless of the reason for motivation, if learners are to overcome the obstacles of township life, succeed in school, and put in the effort to develop a talent they are passionate about, they will need to be highly motivated.

1.5.6 Role Models and Mentors

Discovering and developing one's talent often requires the inspiration, assistance or encouragement of others (Robinson, 2009:175). This could be someone who inspires us from afar, someone who pushes us to greater heights, someone who sees something in us, someone who brings out the best in us, or someone we admire and strive to be like. This person is usually referred to as a role model or mentor, and often tends to be a parent.

A role model is someone who "models" behaviour, good or bad, demonstrating values, ways of thinking, and ways of acting (MGSLG, 2009:5). Mentors have a much closer relationship with the persons they are mentoring. They perform four important roles regarding learners' talent development and academic success: recognition, encouragement, facilitation, and stretching (Robinson, 2009:179).

1.5.7 Parents

Parents often serve as role models and mentors to their children. Parents that are engaged, nurturing and generous provide their children with much greater opportunities to succeed in life. Parents' actions are very important, as children learn more through emulation than from any other means. Habits as simple as eating healthy, reading often, and spending time with their children can have a profound effect on these children's future development.

Due to poor social circumstances, parents' lack of education, and the scourge of HIV/AIDS, parents in South African townships are sometimes unable to provide the level of support their children need to excel in school.

1.5.8 Exposure to Careers

Maree and Ebersohn (2002:157) summarise Super's early work, suggesting that there are five stages in career development. The first two - growth and exploration - are particularly relevant to this study. During the growth and exploration stages, people learn about different career paths and work on developing work habits and attitudes that will allow them to pursue that path. The researcher presupposes that progress in these two stages is severely lacking for learners in the townships. One of the best ways to gain exposure to careers is through role models, mentors and parents.

1.5.9 Poverty and Environmental Risk Factors

All children deal with risk. However, repeated exposure to risk significantly increases the likelihood of stunted development for any learner. Garbarino, Dubrow, Kostelny and Pardo (1992:3) have discovered that once a learner faces more than two serious risk factors, such as the death of a parent or a violent episode at home, the chances of underdevelopment increase drastically. Life in South African townships is not easy and learners that grow up there are much more likely to face risk factors.

Furthermore, we must not underestimate the significant demoralisation and psychological difficulties faced by the impoverished (Gibson, Swartz & Sandenbergh, 2002:131). Impoverished learners are more likely to struggle with issues of self-confidence and motivation which, as noted earlier, are critical to learners' success.

Eliminating many of these risk factors will take time and effort. In response, this research suggests countering the risk factors with positive influences and opportunities centered around assisting learners in discovering and developing talents that they will pursue with drive, passion and love.

1.5.10 Summary

A large volume of research exists on each of the above issues. What is lacking, is an understanding of which areas are most damaging to learners' future success.

Would intervention in one area be enough to overcome the disadvantages present in others? Is any specific combination of factors particularly devastating to learners? This research aims to shed more light on these areas.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:20), the research design “describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained.” The researcher must pursue means to obtain the most valid and credible data to analyse and ultimately answer research questions.

1.6.1 Grounded Theory

Thomas (2003:8) defines grounded theory as “creating theory during the process of gathering information.” The benefit of such an approach is that theory is “discovered” during the data collection process, rather than developed through preconceived notions. Thus the “strength of such an approach is its ability to provide an interpretation of events that suits the particular conditions of those events, rather than the researcher imposing a theoretical perspective on the data that fails to accommodate the events’ conditions” (Thomas, 2003:10). While this researcher noted numerous phenomena contributing to the aforementioned research question, every attempt was made to pursue a grounded theory approach in identifying factors limiting learners from discovering and developing their talents.

Thomas (2003:147) further notes how theory refers to both “(a) an identified set of components that account for how some phenomenon occurs and (b) a description of how these components interact in order to produce the phenomenon.” The aim of this paper is to identify these components and illustrate the web of connections that link them together.

1.6.2 Case Study

A case study, the Masinyusane Development Organisation's partnership with School A, was utilised as the basis of this research. A case study is defined as "an in-depth analysis of a single entity" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:344). The entity to be analysed, through the lens of Masinyusane's work, are the learners at School A. Such in-depth analysis of the learners at a specific school allowed the researcher to expound upon the issue of learners identifying and developing their talents across township schools.

One of the benefits of a case study is that it is more intimate. It allows the researcher to emphasise features or attributes of a particular group (Brubaker & Thomas, 2008:114). This benefit is particularly important, as this research seeks to uncover learners' talents, future plans and motivation levels.

1.6.3 Mixed Method (Quantitative and Qualitative)

This researcher used a mixed method research approach, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods throughout the course of the research. The complexity of the topic required the researcher to view the situation from both perspectives. Thomas (2003:1) states that qualitative methods "involve a researcher describing kinds of characteristics of people and events" without emphasis on comparing or measuring them. A qualitative approach would allow the researcher to capture intimate details about the learners' growth and development. On the other hand, quantitative methods focus on capturing data that is measurable and exact. This provides objectivity, which will help ensure that valid conclusions are developed. Mixed method approaches, by their more comprehensive nature, often result in a more complete investigation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:25).

Quantitative analysis was relied upon to collect and organise much of the background data. Information, ranging from parental employment to student performance, was extracted, categorised and analysed from the wealth of data accumulated by Masinyusane's field workers.

In conjunction with the quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis was employed to capture feelings, perceptions and attitudes. This data was captured in the form of questionnaires and interviews conducted by Masinyusane staff over the previous two years.

1.6.4 Delimitating Research

Identifying one's passions and talents is a complex and dynamic process. There are many factors at play. In-depth studies of the aforementioned issues, such as parenting, were beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, the research sought to shed light on specific factors, or combinations thereof, that were limiting learners from identifying and realising their talents.

The research consisted of analysing and evaluating a wealth of Masinyusane data about the learners, ranging from Grades 8 to 12, at School A. One school only was chosen to facilitate research, enable more intimate interactions, and to attempt to eliminate the additional variables that would arise from using learners at multiple schools. At the time of this study, School A had approximately 250 registered learners. After identifying and implementing effective interventions at one school, those strategies may be used at other schools across the townships.

1.6.5 Data Collection

Before embarking on choosing appropriate data collection methods, Bell (1999:99) suggests that the researcher asks, "What do I need to know and why?" Only then should the researcher begin to determine what methods will yield the most reliable and valid data. Reliability is here defined as "consistency," and validity is defined "as the extent to which the data empirically represents the concept it purports to measure" (Punch, 2009:245-247).

In this study, the researcher began by acknowledging that a significant amount of background data was needed to analyse 'why' the learners acted and believed the way they did. From that perspective, a comprehensive plan of data-mining was put together. A combination of questionnaires and social worker interviews, both

conducted over the previous two years, was used to capture most of this background data. This included data on parental employment, family education levels, family employment levels, intended areas of study, dream jobs, skills, talents and knowledge of careers.

Once the foundation was built, the researcher could begin to embark on the 'why.' This consisted of analysing the patterns and trends in the background data and incorporating many of the 'softer' aspects that need to be acquired through a 'qualitative' study.

The field worker's interviews with learners and parents proved vital to this study. The researcher was at first seeking to discover the possible factors preventing talent discover and development, which required the respondents to 'lead' him to those causes. This required reading and coding 101 *Learner Profiles* (see Appendix A) and interviews, as well as listening to over fifteen interviews conducted and recorded by a Masinyusane field worker over the previous two years.

1.6.6 Data Analysis

It was previously noted that both quantitative and qualitative methods had been used to analyse the research data. This helped ensure the capturing of a holistic view of the phenomenon that was being studied. The researcher was in possession of so much data that Masinyusane had collected at School A over the previous two years that he had to utilise multiple methods of coding and categorisation.

There were a number of concerns about leveraging the work of the field worker and Masinyusane staff for the purpose of this research. Most of the data captured, with the exception of interviews with Masinyusane staff, was second-hand in nature. The researcher had to remain cognisant of shortfalls in the data collection methods used by Masinyusane. For example, the potential bias during interviews caused by the "eagerness of the respondent to please the interviewer, a vague antagonism that sometimes arises between the interviewer and respondent, or the tendency of the interviewer to seek out the answers that support his preconceived notions" (Borg, 1981:87).

To alleviate these concerns and ensure that valid conclusions would be developed from the data, the researcher leveraged the strategy of triangulation. This consisted of comparing and cross-checking data from questionnaires, learner interviews, parent interviews, and the researcher's own interviews with Masinyusane staff.

1.7 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

For the sake of clarity, the following terms used in this study are defined as follows:

- **Talent**

Talent is the ability to repeatedly accomplish something at a high level of competence; encompassing a person's abilities, gifts and aptitudes.

- **Townships**

Townships refer to the underdeveloped urban areas that were historically, under Apartheid's racist laws, reserved for the so-called non-whites. They are usually located on the periphery of South African cities, and most are marked by extremely high levels of poverty, unemployment, crime and HIV/AIDS levels. Originally designed as low-cost housing areas for migrant Black workers, many townships still suffer from a legacy of underdeveloped housing and infrastructure. In Port Elizabeth, an estimated 20% of township residents still live in informal housing, usually wooden or corrugated iron shacks (Masinyusane, 2011a).

- **Township Schools**

Schools in South Africa's townships are state-run and mostly attended by Black or mixed-race learners. They are severely under-resourced, are in a poor state of repair and generally possess vastly inferior facilities. More than half of all learners in township schools either have no textbooks or have to share them (Bloch, 2009:4). The overwhelming majority of township schools have no libraries, computers or science laboratories. Many learners are involved with or suffer from violence, drug

abuse and sexual abuse (Economist, 2010b:1). In Port Elizabeth, the 2010 matric pass-rate in township schools was a mere 35% (Masinyusane, 2011b).

- **Township Learners**

For the purposes of this research, township learners will refer to Black isiXhosa-speaking learners from Grades 8 to 12 who attend a secondary school in a township area.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

All attempts to alleviate poverty and/or redress the imbalances of the past will prove futile if the township learners continue to receive such a poor education. This research could potentially shed light on the issue, frame the current situation from a different perspective, and hopefully spark ideas for improving the situation.

Life in South African townships is difficult. Learners' best chance of success is if they discover a talent that they can become passionate about and commit to developing. By identifying factors that prevent talent discovery and development, the research laid the framework from which effective interventions fostering talent discovery and development could be implemented. The researcher, in his capacity as Executive Director of a local non-profit organisation, cooperated with other non-profit organisations and high schools to implement interventions.

In addition, the Masinyusane Development Organisation used the findings of this research to restructure and enhance its own programmes at School A. The organisation has continued to measure the effectiveness of these programmes and expand on the ones with the most impact. Finally, Masinyusane has undertaken to use this research as the foundation from which to launch an action research study identifying the interventions that are most effective.

1.9 SUMMARY

Learners at township schools in South Africa are all too often not discovering, realising or capitalising on their gifts and talents. As a result, these learners are de-

motivated and confused with regard to their academic and future education and career plans. This has contributed to dismal academic results and the extremely low proportion of township learners enrolling at tertiary institutions.

The researcher sought to identify the factors limiting township learners from discovering and realising their talents. Once such factors were identified, interventions were suggested to address these factors and lay a foundation for further research regarding the effectiveness of those interventions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW ON EDUCATION AND TALENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the literature, theories and latest research surrounding the issues of education and talent development in South Africa. The purpose of the literature review is to familiarise readers with the literature on the research topic, analyse the current trends in research, and explore current conversations surrounding the research topic. As will be seen, the fields of education and talent are fluid, both subject to constant change. The researcher purposefully focused on the latest developments, particularly with regard to talent, as science continues to provide more insight into the subject.

The chapter will begin with an overview of the links between education, development, and talent. Following that, an overview of talent and its various components will be presented. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on the literature surrounding the environmental factors that affect learners' talent discovery and development – role models, parenting, and exposure to career options.

2.2 EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

If South Africa is serious about redressing the imbalances of the past and alleviating the poverty of the present it must drastically reform its education system. Human capital is a nation's most valuable natural resource. To ensure the development of a nation, investing in its people must be the first priority. Former American President John F. Kennedy echoed this sentiment, stating, "Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource" (Brown, 2011:10).

One of the most effective ways of investing in human capital is through education. However, education alone is not enough; a country needs to provide *effective* education to all of its people. Furthermore, to redress inequality, a country must

focus on ensuring that its most disadvantaged people receive the highest quality of education.

Effective education consists not only of teaching traditional academics, most notably literacy and numeracy skills, but in assisting learners in identifying what their opportunities are in life. A critical aspect of this involves helping them to identify and then develop their own talents.

2.2.1 Development

There is no shortage of definitions of development. Furthermore, the meaning of the word has changed and evolved (Rapley, 2007:27; Todaro, 2000:13). Fifty years ago, development in a country was generally measured in terms of economic progress; i.e. raising people's incomes. After acknowledging the shortcomings of an income-only approach, 'development' has begun to encompass social factors, such as health and education. For example, the World Bank's Human Development Index, a widely cited tool that measures countries' development status, places equal weight on levels of income, education, and health (World Bank, 2011:29).

Though no consensus on the meaning of development does (or will ever) exist, the researcher has aligned himself most closely with development practitioners Sen and ul Haq. ul Haq (1996:14) states, "the basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choices." Sen (1999:17) takes a similar view, defining development as enhancing people's freedom and opportunities to live lives that they deem meaningful. To live a life deemed meaningful, this researcher contends that people must discover, develop and utilise their talents. This research investigated, through the lens of education, the opportunities available or lack thereof, as well as barriers to township learners discovering and developing their talents and reaching their full potential.

2.2.2 Education

Education entails more than simply academic schooling. A person is constantly learning and his education includes what he learns through social interactions and

everyday experiences (Brooks, 2010:1350; Postman, 1995:x). It consists of strengthening different aspects of the mind, developing critical thinking and building upon one's imaginative and creative capacities. It involves providing the knowledge and skills needed to be economically successful, independent, and free (Hirsch, 1996:18). Perhaps most importantly, it consists of showing learners the opportunities available to them and inspiring them to pursue these. As the poet W.B. Yeats (Coyle, 2009:1922) once said, "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

The human brain is a complex organ, consisting of multiple types of intelligences. Gardner (2008:4) proposes that there are at least eight independent forms of intelligence, namely linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistic, personal, social and existential. As will be discussed, schools in the townships focus heavily on linguistic and mathematical intelligences, while neglecting most of the other equally important types of intelligence.

Every learner has varying capacities in each of the aforementioned intelligences. This has created an endless debate (Richardson, 1998:5) about the degree to which these intelligences are the result of genetics (nature) or one's upbringing (nurture). The consensus lies somewhere in the middle. Given that at least some degree of our intellectual capacities may be strengthened by means of proper stimulation, the responsibility lies with the educational system to bring about that strengthening in an effective manner. It therefore becomes important to first identify a learner's talents and intelligences and then build upon those (Fuller, 2004:42). At the same time, a learner's individual weaknesses should be identified and an attempt made to overcome these. In an ideal world, every learner would have a customised educational plan catering to his or her individual needs, something that has been widely written about and included in the South Africa Department of Education's White Paper on Inclusive Education (Department of Education, 2001:5).

2.2.3 Linking Education with Development

On an international level, endless research has shown the enormous private and social returns gained from education (World Bank, 2007). Educated individuals earn

greater income, have more economic opportunities, and live longer, healthier lives. On a social level, an educated society tends to have less crime, take better care of the environment, and suffer less from poverty.

There exists a strong correlation between a nation's development and its educational levels (Todaro, 2000:327). For example, China's unprecedented economic growth over the past 30 years has often been attributed to its significant investments in public education over that same time-span (Sen, 1999:36). If South Africa is to follow a similar development path, it must succeed in education.

On an individual level, development consists of providing people with, firstly the freedom and opportunity to participate in society and live meaningful lives and, secondly, the opportunity to discover and develop their gifts and talents. Gordon Brown, a former Prime Minister of England and current Co-Convener of the Global Campaign for Education's High Level Panel (Brown, 2011:4), states that, "Education holds the key to expanded opportunity. It gives people the power to escape poverty, to influence decisions that affect their livelihoods, and to lead more secure and fulfilled lives."

In his best-selling book *Outliers*, Malcom Gladwell (2008) found that, in addition to hard work, the primary factor in the success of the world's most accomplished people was an abundance of opportunities. Society first provided these individuals with opportunities, and they possessed the necessary character traits to take advantage of them. If the goal is to build a more equitable world, "we need to replace the patchwork of lucky breaks and arbitrary advantages that today determine success – the fortunate birth dates and the happy accidents of history – with a society that provides opportunities for all" (Gladwell, 2008:268). The following section will examine education and opportunity in South Africa.

2.3 EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's current educational system is deeply unequal. There are enormous gaps in learners' performance levels when race and income are considered. The South African education system is a perfect example of what Farmer (2005:23) calls

structural violence within societies. The social system, in this case the education system, is set up to favour some over others. Those 'others', in this case learners in the townships, suffer from the failures of the system and are rarely given the opportunities needed to receive a high quality education. This lack of education drastically reduces their opportunities and prospects in all other aspects of life.

2.3.1 South Africa's Poor Performance

Angie Motshekga, South Africa's Minister of Basic Education, recently stated that South Africa's education system was in crisis and that this would take decades to fix (Economist, 2010b:1). Education experts have noted that the majority of the country's schools, especially those in township areas, are dysfunctional (Economist, 2010a:1). While enrolment rates at South African schools have improved drastically, the quality of education is very poor relative to the rest of the world (McKinsey, 2010:20).

Furthermore, the poor academic performance is spread across all grades. Studies by the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement and the Institute for Educational Sciences ranked South African primary school learners amongst the worst in the world, including Africa, in maths, science and languages. According to the most recent Annual National Assessment (ANA) data, in 2008 the average literacy scores of Grade Three and Grade Six learners were respectively 35% and 28% (Macfarlane, 2011:42). The scores in maths for the same grades were 28% and 30%. A troubling trend is that math and literacy scores continue to decline with each passing year. At the secondary level, the results are no better. In 2010, the mean math score for learners who wrote their Matric examinations was a mere 23.7% (Saunders, 2011:42).

Perhaps more troubling than the poor results is the fact that so few learners finish school. In South Africa, school is compulsory until Grade 9. However, approximately 60% of learners fail to complete even that grade (Saunders, 2011:42). Less than 15% of all learners that begin Grade 1 are expected to graduate from high school and receive their Matriculation Certificate. The fact that so few learners successfully complete even Grade 9 indicates not only the poor quality of the

education system, but perhaps also that it does not meet learners' needs and requirements.

A recent study by the Economist (2010b:1) found that of the minority that reaches university, about one in ten Black learners - approximately one third of the total - will drop out during their first year of studies. Another 20% will drop out the next year. A mere 33% will graduate with a three year degree within five years. The learners from township areas are seemingly unequipped to cope with university life and the corresponding academic rigour. One recent study by Higher Education South Africa, South African universities' representative body, found that less than 10% of all learners had the necessary math skills to succeed at university, while barely 50% were academically literate (Economist, 2010b:1).

2.3.2 Issues within Education in South Africa

If the goal is personal development and education is the means to that development, the question arises on which aspects should education focus.

There needs to be a dual approach to improving the education system. To begin, the current system needs to be implemented much more effectively, especially in the townships. At the same time, the improved implementation of South Africa's current academic system, although very much needed, will still be insufficient. Not enough is being done within the current system to cultivate all aspects of a given child's talents and potential. The South African Department of Education (Department of Education, 2001:5) itself acknowledges this, noting, "the curriculum and education system as a whole have generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population, resulting in massive numbers of drop-outs, push-outs, and failures."

The scope of this research will not entail detailing all the shortcomings of the current education system. However, it is helpful to have an understanding of many of the disadvantages learners in South African townships face to have an appropriate perspective when considering the issue of identifying and developing their talents. As noted above, improving the effectiveness and equality of the current system must

be a priority. The following provides a brief overview of the environment in which most township schools operate and the issues that plague them.

2.3.3 Poverty in the Townships

The townships in Port Elizabeth are very impoverished. New Brighton, the township in which this research took place, is home to high rates of unemployment, rape, drug/alcohol abuse, and violent crime (Masinyusane, 2011:3). On top of this, the community has been devastated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, with infection rates estimated to be over 30% in the population group aged 15 to 49 years old (Masinyusane, 2011a:1).

Other researchers (Landsberg, 2005:28) have noted that the disintegration of family life, the decline in moral and value systems and negative peer group influence have compounded the situation. South African townships tend to lack the social cohesion of typical communities, as they are subject to constant change. The rapid rate of urbanisation (i.e. migration from rural to urban areas), families being shuffled around as municipalities build RDP houses, and families simply moving from one relative's place to another have created an unstable environment.

The confluence of these factors creates a culture of poverty in which one can easily become trapped. According to Brooks (2010:1021), all children develop a narrative of their life and tend to follow this closely. This narrative is influenced tremendously by one's environment. Dweck, the eminent social psychologist, agrees (2008:157) stating, "The view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life." When learners grow up with nothing and are surrounded by poverty and abuse they are easily susceptible to developing a mindset in which they do not believe in their own ability to succeed and achieve in the world.

Furthermore, Farah's (Farah, Noble & Hurt, 2006:280) pioneering research has shown that stress levels are higher in impoverished children than in middle-class children. This has a very detrimental effect on brain development, affecting language, memory, pattern awareness, and numerous other cognitive abilities.

Garbarino *et al.* (1992:3) embarked on parallel research studies discovering that once a learner faces more than two serious risk factors, such as the death of a parent or violent episodes at home, the chances of underdevelopment increase drastically.

It is within this environment that township schools are expected to perform. Based on the enormous challenges posed by this environment, it is little wonder that these schools are struggling. The following section will highlight some of the greatest challenges, apart from the impoverished surrounding communities, that township schools face.

2.3.4 Township Schools

- **Teachers**

First and foremost, an education system is only as good as its teachers. A recent study (McKinsey, 2007:5) of the top education systems in the world listed as the two most important factors in a nation's educational progress (1) getting the right people to become teachers; and (2) developing them into effective instructors.

It is widely accepted that teaching entails far more than imparting knowledge. In fact, 90% of what learners write in tests will be forgotten within a month (Brooks, 2010:1460). Based on this, teachers should focus on teaching learners to think critically, teaching them to teach themselves, and lighting a fire of intellectual curiosity.

Dweck (2008:120) states that learners tend to have two mindsets: a fixed mindset or a growth mindset. Those with a fixed mindset believe that abilities are carved in stone. As a result, they tend to avoid risk and situations in which they may appear stupid. In contrast, learners with a growth mindset believe that intelligence and talent are cultivated and therefore seek out opportunities to grow, learn, make mistakes, and stretch themselves. In her words (Dweck, 2008:3599), "great teachers believe in the growth of the intellect and talent, and they are fascinated with the process of learning." One of the roles of teachers is to convince their learners to

adopt the growth mindset.

Unfortunately, the quality of teaching in South Africa, especially in the townships, appears to be falling short of the objectives state above. Research has shown that many South African teachers are ill-equipped to teach their subjects and spend a “disturbingly low” amount of time in class (Macfarlane & Chaykowski, 2011:13). For example, Chisholm (2005:214) has established that South African teachers in township schools spend only 46% of formal school time on teaching and learning, with as little as 10% of the time spent on teaching in some schools.

With reference to talent discovery and career development, Stead (2005:13) observes that township learners receive almost none as a result of poor teacher training. Even when a teacher has received the necessary training, he or she rarely receives any materials to help impart the relevant information to the learners.

- **Leadership**

The poor school performance in township areas may be partly attributed to poor leadership and school governance. The Eastern Cape Department of Education has been beset by allegations of mismanagement, corruption and incompetence (Motshekga, 2011:1). At school level, school management teams often cannot fulfil the functions allocated to them. At the time of the writing of this research, the Eastern Cape Department of Education was in complete disarray, with a political battle for its leadership underway (John, 2011:1). Without proper management and leadership, it is little surprise that school results are so poor.

- **Infrastructure**

Schools in the townships suffer from severely neglected infrastructure, or no infrastructure at all. Many schools continue to operate without water, electricity or proper sanitation. Almost every school this researcher has visited, suffers from broken windows, missing doors, and a shortage of desks and chairs. In one study, Van der Walt (2008:1) reports that 20% percent of Eastern Cape schools lack

electricity, while 18% do not have running water. Many learners are therefore forced to learn in dark and dingy classrooms. These environments are not conducive to learning and negatively impact on learner performance.

- **School Culture**

When speaking with principals of successful schools in Port Elizabeth, the researcher was repeatedly told that school culture mattered above all else; learners and educators alike needed to expect success and carry themselves with professionalism. Unfortunately, this culture of success is rarely present in township schools. There is widespread evidence of violence and sexual abuse in some schools. Despite being illegal in South Africa, the practice of corporal punishment continues (Mail & Guardian, 2006:1).

There have been countless suggestions how the current situation in township schools may be remedied. These include improved teacher training, lowering teacher-student ratios, introducing new technologies, implementing Outcomes-based Education, eliminating Outcomes-based Education, building better infrastructure, bringing back school inspectors, and more social development. While many of these suggestions would be welcomed, they still fail to address a major shortcoming of the system: *South Africa's township schools are too heavily focused on a rigid academic curriculum and do not offer enough opportunities for learners to discover and develop their talents.*

2.3.5 The Curriculum

As noted above, not enough is being done within the current system to cultivate all aspects of a given learner's talents and potential. The high school curriculum has two major flaws, namely it is heavily geared towards words and numbers; and it is too geared towards the end-of-year standardised exams. Both flaws serve as significant barriers to learners identifying and developing their talents.

Before continuing, it is important to acknowledge that a strong academic foundation is critical to academic success. Learning is a cumulative process that builds upon

itself (Hirsch, 1996:225). Root-Bernstein (1999:317) provides a helpful metaphor of a tree. After building a strong academic foundation (or trunk), educators may begin to explain how all the branches, twigs and leaves emerge from it. The foundation is critical. However, it is not enough.

Sir Ken Robinson, Britain's famed academic reformist, believes, "educational systems are too preoccupied with certain sorts of critical analysis and reasoning, particularly with words and numbers. Important as those skills are, there is much more to human intelligence than that" (Robinson, 2009:13). Renzulli (2000:100) notes that, "Above average ability (intellectually, academically, and in ability to learn), task commitment (motivation), and creativity are the hallmarks of society's most productive people."

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on the creative and motivational aspects of education. South African youth need to be taught to think, to exercise different aspects of their brains, and to innovate. They should be actively learning *and* creating. "The purpose of education should be understanding rather than simply knowing; its focus should be the active process of learning and creating rather than the passive acquisition of facts" (Root-Bernstein, 1999:316).

The result of the current system is that we neglect much of Gardner's proposed intelligences. Root-Bernstein (1999:12) notes that by insisting on only using words and numbers, "our schools and universities insist on cooking with only half the necessary ingredients. By half-understanding the nature of thinking, teachers only half-understand how to teach, and students only half-understand how to learn."

By strengthening multiple intelligences, learners will be more able to apply a concept or technique they learn in one field to one in another field. This ability of applying knowledge across various fields is often where genius comes from. Leonardo Da Vinci, considered to be one of the greatest geniuses in the history of mankind, was a master in multiple fields, precisely because he focused so much energy on developing all his intelligences (Gelb, 2002:13).

South African learners often do not know how to transfer the concepts taught to them by their teachers to the real world. Learners learn how to memorise a formula, but not how to apply it to solve a problem in their everyday lives. Leon Eisenberg, Harvard Psychology Professor, once noted, “There is something very much wrong about what has been learned when the skills are not transferable.” (Root-Bernstein, 1999:17)

The second major flaw in the South African secondary education system is its overemphasis on end-of-year standardised exams. The learners are too focused on memorisation and simply passing their exams. Two major shortcomings result from such emphasis.

The first is that the standardised tests fail to measure all aspects of a given learner’s intelligences (Fraser & Streshly, 2000:19). The exams are heavily geared towards words and numbers. As has been discussed, words and numbers are critical to learning, communication and logical thinking, but they do not encompass all of a learner’s capabilities.

The second shortcoming of an overemphasis on tests is that the tests are often “obstructive to quality education, suppressing creativity and autonomy” (Fraser & Streshly, 2000:21). This happens because teachers are teaching to the test, while learners are solely focused on passing the test. The result is the suppression of other talents.

2.4 TALENT, CREATIVITY AND MOTIVATION

For people to truly reach their potential in life, they must work hard to exploit their talents, while doing something they truly love to do. This requires a unique combination of talent, creativity and motivation.

Fuller (2004:56) observes that “creativity, a willingness to take risks, task commitment, perseverance, initiative, a burning desire, a consuming interest, or an overwhelming passion often have a bigger role in determining a person’s success than the letters on their report card.” Renzulli’s (2000) extensive research has

revealed common traits amongst those demonstrating what he refers to as 'gifted behaviour'. These include an above-average general and/or specific ability (talent), a high level of task commitment (motivation), and high levels of creativity.

The following section will explore the term talent. After that, a brief summary of the research surrounding motivation and creativity, in relation to talent, will be provided.

2.4.1 Talent

This researcher claims that for one to realise one's full potential and to live a meaningful life, one must discover and develop one's talents. This begs the question, "What is talent?" For the purposes of this study, talent will refer to the ability to repeatedly accomplish something at a high level of competence; encompassing a person's abilities, gifts and aptitudes. For example, a talented long-distance runner will be able to repeatedly run a marathon at a time most of us could never dream of. A talented mathematician will be able to repeatedly solve numerous math problems with speed and accuracy that will make him seem like a genius.

Numerous researchers (Robinson, 2009; Rath, 2007; Renzulli, 2000) have established that people who focus on what they do best are much happier and more efficient than those who do not. People engaged in something in which they possess talent will generally be more motivated, confident, and effective.

The question then arises, "How does one discover and develop talent?" Is one born with it? Or does one develop it through learning and practice? This debate is commonly referred to as 'nurture versus nature'. Colvin (2008:133) notes that even today, most people still consider talent to be a natural, God-given gift. While this position may to varying degrees hold true in different fields, particularly certain athletics, there is surprisingly little empirical evidence to back it up.

- **Talent Discovery**

Before one is able to develop a talent, one first must discover that one possesses it (or possess the ability to develop it). In this regard, Rath (2007:29) observes, "Our

natural talents and passions – the things we truly love to do – last for a lifetime. But all too often, our talents go untapped.” For one to discover one’s own talents, one first must be given the opportunity to do so. One of the powerful moments that inspired the researcher’s research occurred after the Masinyusane Development Organisation’s decision to host a debating competition between schools in Port Elizabeth townships. On the day of the event, one learner stood out above all others, carrying his team to the finals and winning the ‘Best Speaker Award.’ Following the event, the boy approached the researcher, saying he never realised he “had it in him” and was going to consider a career in law. Over the next two years he worked tirelessly to improve his marks (which he did), ultimately gaining acceptance to the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University’s LLB undergraduate programme. Without that opportunity to discover his talents, this young man may not have been set on the path to a potentially rewarding and fulfilling career.

The critical word here is *opportunity*. A key role of schools must be to create these opportunities and encourage learners to take advantage of them. Opportunities may take the form of extracurricular programmes at school. Teams and clubs involved in sports, drama, art, music, public speaking, debating and chess all provide excellent opportunities for learners to discover the talents they possess. Unfortunately, it appears as if today’s learners are participating in fewer extracurricular activities than learners did a mere twenty years ago (Marock, 2008:14).

However, talent need not be developed in extracurricular programmes only; it can also be developed and nurtured during class through innovative and creative teaching (Frazier, 1959:90). Learners must be encouraged to think (versus memorise), work together (versus individually), and be given the room and space to do things their own way. Learners must be encouraged and given the freedom to create, think independently, and try new things. As was discussed in previous sections, revising the education curriculum to be more accommodating to creativity, critical thinking and the other intelligences will go a long way in helping to foster talent development.

- **Talent Development**

One of the most common beliefs about talent is that one is born with it; that whatever talents one possesses, are gifts from God. Colvin (2008:118) notes that this belief has held true for thousands of years, citing Homer's emphasis on the God-given nature of his character's talents in *The Odyssey* and *The Illiad*. The trouble with this belief is that there is essentially no empirical evidence to substantiate it (Coyle, 2009:89; Colvin, 2008:133; Renzulli, 2000:100). Science has yet to find a talent gene to explain certain why individuals exhibit extraordinary abilities. Instead, all research seems to indicate that one must develop one's talent over many years before achieving greatness or mastery. This is not to say that certain individuals do not possess some genetic makeup that allows them to excel in certain areas of life; only that science has yet to prove this.

In his seminal work on the topic, Ericsson (2007:1) notes that the difference in talent levels of most people can be attributed to the level of "deliberate practice" they have undertaken. By deliberate practice, he is referring to an extremely focused effort to push one's limits, make mistakes, and taking the time to correct these. In his words (2007:3), "it entails considerable, specific, and sustained efforts to do something you can't do well – or even at all." It is demanding work that requires expending a tremendous amount of concentration and energy. By Ericsson's account, it takes one 10,000 hours of deliberate practice to become a master in a chosen field (Ericsson, 2007:4). This holds true for everyone, including those commonly considered "child prodigies," such as Mozart (composer) or Bobby Fischer (chess grandmaster).

Over the years, other researchers have come to a similar conclusion. Coyle (2009:449) has explained the science behind talent. Every thought, action or feeling one experiences is actually an electric signal traveling through a chain of neurons, essentially a circuit of nerve fibers. Each of these fibers are surrounded by an insulating material, known as myelin. The more myelin wrapped around a circuit of nerve fibers, the greater the strength, speed and accuracy of the signal. Coyle (2009:449) further explains that, "the more we fire a particular circuit, the more

myelin optimizes that circuit, and the stronger, faster, and more fluent our movements and thoughts become.”

Colvin’s (2008:413) research confirms the above. Top performances in diverse disciplines, ranging from athletic achievement to scientific breakthroughs, improved dramatically in the twentieth century. Given that genetic changes in people tend to occur over thousands of years, genetics cannot be accountable for this improved performance. Instead, improvements should be attributed to better methods of deliberate practice. Colvin further states that while not all researchers are willing to dismiss genetics entirely (genetic research is still in its infancy), many now argue that innate or God-given abilities are total fiction (Colvin, 2008:126).

At the very least, research strongly indicates that a significant amount of what we consider talent can be taught and developed. Ericsson (Levitt & Dubner, 2011:177) summarises this by stating, “There is surprisingly little hard evidence that anyone could attain any kind of exceptional performance without spending a lot of time perfecting it.” With this in mind, educators should be viewing learners not in terms of what they already possess, but in terms of what they are capable of becoming (Feldhusen, 1993:1089).

2.4.2 Creativity

We are all born with vast creative capacities. In fact, the capacity to create is one of the traits that set mankind apart from all other animals. As humans, we are able to imagine, innovate and create a different future. A better future. Albert Einstein (Gelb, 2002:17) once claimed, “All the valuable things, material, spiritual, and moral which we receive from society can be traced back through countless generations to certain creative individuals.”

Phillips (1997:163) argues that we find our creativity, our passion and our voice by listening to our souls and living our dreams. In other words, we find who we are by looking deep within ourselves and pursuing that which moves us. This researcher is contending that too many, if not the large majority, of our learners are failing to find their creativity, passion and voice. The tragedy in this is that “too many [learners]

never connect with their true talents and therefore don't know what they're really capable of achieving. In that sense, they don't know who they really are" (Robinson, 2009:xi).

To maximise one's individual potential, one must develop all aspects of one's brain. This requires a focus on not only words and numbers (as mentioned above), but also on the arts. Root-Bernstein (1999:20) argues that "the imaginative tools used in the arts are critical to the humanities and the sciences, they deserve support not just for their own sake, but for the sake of education as a whole. Math, science, and technology have flourished in the past only when and where all the arts have flourished. They will flourish or fail together in the future."

Genius often comes from the overlapping of diverse areas of knowledge and talent. Every child is capable of achieving this: he or she simply needs the drive and the opportunity. Tharp (Dweck, 2008:1303) argues that creativity is not a magical act of inspiration, but rather the result of hard work and dedication. Great innovations are often the result of many small steps in which one incorporates various different intelligences and bits of knowledge into one grand idea.

It is the responsibility of schools to foster a creative environment. This can be accomplished by encouraging learners to explore their creativity and various intelligences, discover their talents, find their passions, and work towards capitalising on those talents.

2.4.3 Motivation

Once again, research (Coyle, 2009:89; Colvin, 2008:133; Renzulli, 2000:100) indicates that very few of us are born with innate talent. One must invest considerable amounts of time and energy to develop one's talents. However, in contrast to simply "putting in the time" by practising or repeating a certain activity, one must engage in a concentrated focus to really make marked improvements. Renzulli (2000:102) refers to this concentrated focus as "task commitment", while Ericsson calls it "deliberate practice". Regardless of terminology, both agree that such practice is very difficult and requires tremendous energy and dedication.

If one is expected to engage in such task commitment and deliberate practice, one needs to be highly motivated. It is for this reason that Levitt and Dubner (2005:149) suggest, “when it comes to choosing a life path, people should do what they love because if you don’t love what you’re doing, you are unlikely to work hard enough to get very good at it.” Coyle (2009:449) agrees, noting that, “wrapping myelin around a big circuit requires immense energy and time. If you don’t love it, you’ll never work hard enough to be great.” This brings us to the concept of motivation.

Motivation is here defined as the drive or will by which one accomplishes something. It may be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to one’s self-drive and is often associated with behaviours that we find satisfying and rewarding. Woolfolk (2010:377) defines it as, “the natural human tendency to seek out and conquer challenges as we pursue personal interests and exercise our capabilities.” Extrinsic motivation, in contrast, is when we do something for some reason other than the task itself (Woolfolk, 2010:377). Learners may be driven to achieve something that they believe will make their parents proud.

Regardless of the reason for motivation, if learners are to overcome the obstacles of township life, succeed in school, and develop a talent they are passionate about, they will need to be highly motivated. Coyle, who spent five years traveling the world to “talent hotspots”, observed that one common trait all of them shared was that, “the passion was always there, providing the emotional rocket fuel that kept them firing their circuits, honing skills, [and] getting better.”

The good news is that every child is eager to learn. From birth, a child has an incredible ability to absorb a tremendous volume of information (Brooks, 2010:646). Children want to learn. Unfortunately, in most learners this drive to learn declines each and every year they spend at school (Fried, 2001:2). Research (Barath, 2006: 18) confirms that this is indeed the case in South African townships, where motivation levels tend to be very low.

It was observed earlier that the current education system is designed to benefit a certain type of learner. The system fails to provide opportunities for learners with

musical, artistic and more creative talents. As a result, these learners lose motivation, as they feel the system is set up against them.

Furthermore, when the leadership and teachers of a school are not motivated to perform, the learners will begin to reflect this attitude. Far too many schools are disorganised, suffer from high teacher absenteeism, or are rife with under-qualified, de-motivated teachers (Macfarlane & Chaykowski, 2011:13).

One means of overcoming low levels of motivation is to assist learners in identifying the talents they have the passion and potential to develop. Colvin (2008:279) contends that becoming great at something we love is “among the deepest sources of fulfilment we will ever know“ and that one will be very motivated to do so given the opportunity. This has the potential to create a positive momentum of motivation and self-development that can extend into other spheres of one’s life, such as education.

In summary, it can be said that while motivation is needed to develop a talent, developing that talent can result in improved motivation. Thus, a self-reinforcing cycle develops. The following section will discuss two groups of people that play a big role in motivation and talent development.

2.5 ROLE MODELS AND MENTORS

Discovering and developing one’s talent often requires the inspiration, assistance or encouragement of others (Robinson, 2009:175). This could be someone who inspires us from afar, someone who pushes us to greater heights, someone who sees something in us, someone who brings out the best in us, or someone we admire and strive to be like. This person is usually referred to as a role model or mentor.

2.5.1 Role Models

A role model is someone who “models” behaviour, good or bad, demonstrating certain values, ways of thinking, and ways of acting (MGSLG, 2009:5). There does not need to be a relationship between learners and their role models for them to benefit from their role models. They will simply model, or be motivated by, the

actions of their role models. Role models are especially important for the developing youth, as they offer an image of successful people the youth may strive to become one day (Gibson, 2006:701).

Recent research (Gibson, 2006:702) has shown that social information conveyed through role models is related to the increased learning of specific skills, higher goal setting, and increased performance levels. Furthermore, studies (Stipek & Seal, 2001:149) have demonstrated repeatedly that learners who set goals not only perform better, but also enjoy the process more.

Perhaps most importantly, role models can inspire us to become something. As noted above, motivation is incredibly powerful. Consider the tiny Caribbean island of Curacao, which has a history of producing an almost inexplicable proportion (relative to its population) of world-class professional baseball players. Coyle (2009:1809) states that the reason for this is that every child grows up idolising the professional players that came before him. Coyle believes (2009:1820) that these professional athletes serve as “a million-watt antenna steadily transmitting a powerful stream of signals and images that add up to a thrilling whisper: ‘Hey, that could be you!’”

2.5.2 Mentors

In contrast to role models, mentors (or coaches) have close relationships with their mentees. In the South African educational context, mentoring has proven to be very helpful in assisting learners in acquiring life skills (Landsberg, 2005:97).

The four critical roles mentors play for their mentees are recognition, encouragement, facilitation, and stretching (Robinson, 2009:179). Through recognition, mentors help identify or discover talents in mentees that no one else, including possibly the mentees themselves, noticed. This often requires the experience of being involved in that field oneself, such as a musician noticing that a child has rhythm. In Robinson’s (2009:180) words, “Mentors recognize the spark of interest or delight and can help an individual drill down to the specific components of the discipline that match the individual’s capacity and passion.” Encouragement is self-explanatory. Mentors may encourage, motivate and even inspire their mentees.

They often show such belief and confidence in their mentees that the latter begin to believe in themselves. In fact, Coyle (2009) believes that, more than all the information and expertise, the most important task of mentors and coaches do is to teach their mentees to love to work on their talents. Facilitation refers to offering advice and suggestions or teaching new skills. Confidence comes with skills and experience and mentors can play a critical role in providing both of these to their mentees. Colvin (2008:1146) notes that very few of us are capable of unbiased self-assessment. Mentors play an important role in helping mentees identify weaknesses and developing practice methods to improve them. Finally, stretching refers to mentors “pushing us past what we see as our limits” (Robinson 2009:183). A good mentor will drive his or her mentees to overcome self-doubts and accomplish more than they could have on their own.

It is important to note that both role models and mentors can also play a negative role. In the townships, those with money, or at least those who flash their possession of money, are often criminals, gangsters and tsotsis. For learners that live in dire poverty and see no prospects for getting out of it, crime could seem to offer an attractive alternative.

In either case, role models and mentors play an important role in the development of the youth. While role models and mentors can be found throughout society, the most obvious candidates are learners’ parents.

2.6 PARENTING

It should go without saying that parents play a critical role in developing the talents of their children. While the extent to which parents influence their children’s future may be debated, researchers agree that parents are very influential (Heckman, 2008:5; Fuller, 2004:37; Lickona, 2004:60; Feldhusen 1993:1089). Parents play a number of simultaneous roles regarding education and talent development.

Parent’s first role is to provide all the basic necessities a child needs for healthy living. This includes food, shelter and safety. To succeed at school, it helps if learners are eating healthily, getting adequate sleep, and living in an abuse-free

environment. In addition, living in a home with “warm and involved” relationships with parents who are actively engaged in their children’s activities has been correlated with more motivated and morally responsible teens (Lickona, 2004:xxiv).

The second role is that parents serve as role models and mentors. As the above section highlighted, role models and mentors play an important role in the development of youth, especially concerning discovering and developing talents. The number one method of learning is through imitation; therefore, a parent’s actions are very influential (Fuller, 2004:32). Parents also play a critical role as mentors. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) studied 5,000 households in 14 countries, concluding that active parental involvement, even by simply reading to one’s child, makes an enormous difference in academic performance (OECD, 2011:1). Dweck (2008:3267) agrees, adding that it is critical that parents demonstrate and actively teach the growth mindset (as described in Section 2.4.3) to their children.

The third role relates to goal setting and motivation. It was noted earlier that learners who set goals tend to perform better in school. Feldhusen (1993:1089) and Fuller (2004:39) agree that parents play a critical role in assisting learners in formulating goals and strategies to achieve them. Furthermore, studies have shown that in general, learners are attuned to the expectations of their parents and strive to meet them. Achieving these goals is critical for building momentum and continuing to keep the learners motivated. Dweck has stated that all the world’s parenting advice can be summed up in two simple rules: Pay attention to what your children are fascinated by; and praise them for their efforts (Brooks, 2010:3000).

It is important to note that learners can - and many do - succeed without the affirmative roles of parents mentioned above. Researchers (Coyle, 2009:1527) have noted the extraordinary number of accomplished people who have lost a parent during their teenage years. However, those with active and engaged parents, who are educated themselves, have an advantage over learners without such parental support.

It warrants mentioning that some researchers feel that the role of parents in determining children's future is overrated. Levitt and Dubner (2005:1945) cite numerous studies that claim that peers have a much greater influence than parents on learners' behaviour. They state that research indicates that while 'who' the parents are (i.e. whether they are educated or employed) matters, 'what' the parents do matters much less (i.e. reading to their child every day or turning off the television after dinner).

The reality of township life, due a variety of reasons, is that many parents of learners are not engaged in the aforementioned roles. The three main reasons for this are South Africa's history of apartheid (and the poor education offered to many current adults); the scourge of HIV/AIDS and the ensuing parental deaths; and the high prevalence of extreme poverty.

2.7 EXPOSURE TO CAREERS AND CAREER GUIDANCE

2.7.1 Exposure to Careers

Learners that are exposed to a variety of careers from an early age will use those experiences to shape their own goals and aspirations. If learners are exposed to various professions, be it through their parents, role models or mentors, they will have a stronger base from which to determine which profession they wish to pursue.

Career development has multiple stages. Super (Maree & Ebersohn, 2002:157) suggests the first two stages are growth and exploration. It is here that a learner learns about different career paths and future opportunities. These early stages are critical, as it is here that learners must begin to develop the attitudes and skills that will allow them to pursue their chosen options.

As noted earlier, it is critical that one chooses a field for which one has passion and talent. When this is the case, learners are much more likely to be motivated, to persevere, to overcome obstacles, and to continue to work hard to develop their talents.

2.7.2 Career Guidance

At high school level, career guidance consists of assisting learners in making choices regarding subjects, potential tertiary options, and future careers. After completing the ninth grade, learners have to make subject choices that will drastically affect their future options. For example, learners must choose between pure mathematics and math literacy. By choosing math literacy, learners are essentially foregoing the options of studying engineering, architecture, accounting or science at university. This researcher's experience is that a large number of learners make these decisions without understanding the consequences. They often choose math literacy for the sole reason that they perceive it to be the easier subject.

In Grades 10 through to Grade 12, proper career guidance can help keep learners motivated to work hard on their studies. With the goal of pursuing specific careers, they will work hard to acquire the necessary skills. Without career guidance, many learners are left wondering what their future options are and become more susceptible to adopting a negative attitude.

2.7.3 Life Orientation

All South African secondary school learners are required to take Life Orientation as a subject. The course is designed to develop a wide variety of intrapersonal, interpersonal, thinking and survival skills (Landsberg, 2005:110). Life Orientation is largely project oriented, compelling learners to research various topics they are likely to face in the real world, such as HIV/AIDS or teenage pregnancy.

The Department of Education (2002:4) states that the main objective of the course is to prepare learners to succeed (in a meaningful way) in a rapidly changing world. This requires the development of the aforementioned skills. Intrapersonal skills consist of understanding oneself, self-reflection, and controlling emotions, while interpersonal skills are social skills such as communication, conflict resolution, and friendship. Thinking skills include critical, creative and problem solving thinking, while survival skills include reading, writing and computer skills.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter began by highlighting the links between education, development and talent. The literature suggests that discovering and developing one's talent is both a *means* to improved education and an *end* of education itself. Understanding this is particularly important in South Africa, given the wide-spread poverty in the population, the abysmal academic performance of today's learners, and the learners' lack of career plans and ambitions.

Unfortunately, talent discovery and development is no easy task. It requires an environment that is conducive to creativity and inspires one to work hard. However, motivation alone is not enough. Role models, mentors and supportive parents go a long way in assisting one to develop one's talents to their fullest potential.

The following chapter will present the research design and methodology the researcher employed while investigating the above issues.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Employing an appropriate research design is necessary to help ensure the capturing of reliable data and the development of valid conclusions. A research design refers to the strategy and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer a research question (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:33). This includes the procedures to be followed, the type of data to be collected, the characteristics of the sample, and the methodology employed for analysing the data. Choosing an appropriate design is critical to ensuring that the research is carried out in the most effective way possible (Rugg & Petre, 2007:60).

Before going into greater detail regarding the research design, it will first be helpful to restate the problem statement and the research questions and objectives. The reasons for choosing the type of research design and methodology is explained in detail below.

3.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Learners in township schools are generally performing well below their academic capabilities, dropping out of school prematurely, and failing to discover and develop the talents that they are passionate about. This poor performance, which is all too prevalent, has created a culture in many schools in which learners are unmotivated and do not exert the effort needed to succeed. As a result, only 5% of today's Black youth are expected to graduate with a university degree (Economist, 2011:1), while more than 60% are expected to drop out before completing high school (Saunders, 2011:42).

Equally tragic, an untold number of these youth will continue through life having missed the opportunity to discover and develop the talents they were passionate about while young. As discussed above, for both physiological and real-world opportunity reasons, missing that window in one's youth to discover and develop a

talent makes it all the more unlikely to happen later in life. The end result is all too often people who never realise their full potential. This research is therefore concerned with discovering why the phenomenon exists that learners fail to discover and develop their talents. Against this background, the following research questions were formulated.

3.2.1 Primary Research Question

What factors are limiting township learners from discovering and developing their talents?

3.2.2 Secondary Research Questions

- *What opportunities do the learners have to discover and develop talents?*
- *What level of exposure do the learners have to different career opportunities?*
- *How can learners be assisted in discovering and developing their individual talents?*
- *How can learners be motivated towards setting and achieving realistic career options?*

3.3 OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The following are the primary and secondary research objectives that were developed from the research questions above:

3.3.1 Primary Research Objective

- *Identify the factors that are limiting learners from discovering and developing their talents.*

3.3.2 Secondary Research Objectives

To identify:

- *Opportunities that learners have to discover and develop talents.*
- *The level of exposure learners have to different career opportunities.*

- *Ways to assist learners in discovering and developing their individual talents.*
- *Ways to motivate learners to set and achieve realistic career options.*

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

One of the greatest challenges for a researcher is choosing a research design that finds the optimal balance between precision and reality (Rugg & Petre, 2007:67). If research is overly precise, it may prove to be unrealistic. This researcher believes that the optimal balance lies in using a case study within a grounded theory research design. On this foundation, the researcher employed quantitative and qualitative methods of data gathering and analysis. The following section will examine grounded theory research and the case study in more detail.

3.4.1 Grounded Theory

This research consists of synthesising data, ranging from learners' backgrounds, family situations, attitudes, perceptions and opportunities into a theory that will facilitate the process of developing an educational environment that will assist township learners in discovering and developing their talents. The complexity of the topic lends itself well to a grounded theory approach.

Grounded theory essentially means developing a theory from the data that is obtained. Rather than beginning with a theory and then proving it, data collection, analysis and theory development occur simultaneously. Strauss and Corbin (Wisker, 2001:189) echo this, stating, "Data collection analysis and theory stand in reciprocal relationships with each other and what is relevant is allowed to emerge." In addition, grounded theory allows one to "relate abstract concepts to propose a theory as an explanation of the phenomena" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:322). The term "grounded" references the fact that the theory is backed up by the data obtained. This strategy is enticing, given the sometimes abstract nature of talent and personal development.

Moreover, the researcher was well aware of the fact that he did not possess the same life experiences or perspectives as the research respondents. Given this fact, the grounded theory approach was particularly attractive, since it allowed the researcher to begin with some insights, while maintaining a willingness to develop and change views and understanding of the research as new evidence and information emerged (Wisker, 2001:188).

3.4.2 Case Study

The research is based on a case study of a non-profit organisation's experiences of learners at School A, which is located in the township of New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. Thomas (2003:33) notes that "a case study typically consists of a description of an entity and the entity's actions." In this context, the 'entity' refers to the learners at School A. While this definition is appropriate, Bassey (1999:22) warns that case studies, particularly in the field of education, have been defined in many different ways. Therefore, it is helpful to note some of the common themes amongst these definitions, two of which are especially applicable here. The first is that the phenomenon is investigated within its actual context. In this case, the researcher investigated the concept of talent discovery and development within the context of a specific school. The second is that research stemming from a case study almost always leads to generalisations within a wider context. While a researcher must approach making generalisations with caution (Bassey, 1999:33), they are nonetheless helpful in creating a practical study. This researcher conducted an in-depth study of the topic through the lens of a non-profit organisation's experience at School A in the assumption that the situation of learners at that school may represent the *general* situation of the majority of township learners in Nelson Mandela Bay.

The case study method was considered especially appropriate for this study, given that case studies are particularly effective when a researcher is seeking to conduct an in-depth analysis of a situation. The case study method facilitated the need of this researcher to collect a wide and deep range of qualitative data (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:395).

Furthermore, case studies are useful in serving as inspiration for wide-scale research projects. One of the goals of this research was to provide a foundation for further research regarding providing opportunities for township learners to discover, build, and develop their talents.

3.5 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The researcher conducted research in collaboration with the Masinyusane Development Organisation. The organisation places great emphasis on the academic and personal development of South African youth in the townships of Port Elizabeth. To this end, the organisation had been involved in a comprehensive partnership with School A in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. Over a three year period, it had acquired a wealth of data, knowledge and experience with respect to the learners at the relevant school. This research sought to analyse, synthesise and make sense of that data.

3.5.1 Literature Review

Any study should begin with a thorough literature review of the topic under investigation. It is critical to have a general understanding of the available body of knowledge related to the topic in order to properly contextualise the issue and to have a sense of where the research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge. Anderson (1997:48) summarises the purpose of a literature review as becoming familiar with the conversation in the subject area of interest, ascertaining the nature of previous research, and keeping abreast of the most recent developments and research in the subject area. The purpose of a literature review is therefore to define and limit the research problem, place the study in a historical context, avoid unintentional replication, and select promising methods and measures, to relate findings to previous knowledge and suggest further research (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:120).

The researcher did not attempt to summarise all that had been written on the topic, but rather to engage in a dialogue with what had been written and discovered by others (Wisker, 2001:127). Therefore, a primary element of a successful literature

review, which was undertaken in this study, is to identify the key issues and arguments identified by other researchers.

3.5.2 Research Sample

Sampling involves taking a portion of a population and considering it to be representative. In this study, the sample size consisted of clusters of the 250 learners at School A, a secondary school located in the township of New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. The reason for choosing a specific school, versus numerous schools, was to allow the researcher a more in-depth and exhaustive inquisition into the learners. School A was also the school on which Masinyusane possessed the most comprehensive set of information. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:394) note that studying one school in depth, with only a secondary concern regarding sample size, is one of the most effective ways of gaining a true understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

In order for the findings to be generalisable, the sample needs to be representative (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:55). The *Learner Profiles* (see next section) constituted approximately 40% of the entire learner population of the selected school, which is well above what De Vos (1998:192) and Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:71) consider adequate for ensuring representation. Furthermore, the researcher leveraged data obtained through 75 essay-style open-ended questionnaires and a subset of 36 more detailed questionnaires.

- **Learner Profiles**

At the time that this study was undertaken, Masinyusane's field worker had visited approximately one hundred different homes over the previous three years (see Appendix A). He repeatedly revisited the same homes, particularly those in which assistance was needed. At least twenty families were visited on a weekly basis for the distribution of food parcels.

Prior to visiting their homes, the field worker spent between 30 minutes to an hour interviewing each learner at the school. Topics of discussion included the home situation, family dynamics, academic performance, and future goals and aspirations.

During a typical home visit, the parents and/or guardians were interviewed for approximately an hour. Discussions included aspects of the home situation, the behaviour of the learner, the academic performance of the learner, the talents the learner possessed, parental or mentor involvement, the learner's aspirations, and any other issues or problems the parents believed Masinyusane might be able to assist with. The data from these interviews were subsequently captured in raw notes, recorded audibly, and summarised into 101 *Learner Profiles* by the field worker.

3.5.3 Data Collection

The two most basic types of research approaches are the qualitative and quantitative approaches. A quantitative approach consists of gathering measurable facts to analyse a certain phenomenon. Quantitative data is excellent in determining 'what' is happening. It also tends to be easier to analyse due to the exactness of the data. In contrast, a qualitative approach entails obtaining data that is more descriptive and subjective in nature. The advantage of qualitative approaches is that they are generally better at capturing and describing real world phenomena. The disadvantage is that they encompass data that is often difficult to analyse objectively.

The researcher employed a mixed-method approach, leveraging the benefits of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Takona (2002:12) notes that research in education, almost by default, must employ both methods. However, due to the nature of the research problem, the emphasis was placed on obtaining reliable qualitative data. Given the generally poor academic performance of South African township learners, there is little dispute about what is happening. The bigger question is 'why', which once again is best answered through a qualitative approach.

The following section will explore these approaches – quantitative and qualitative – in more detail.

3.5.3.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research focuses on measurements presented in numbers (Thomas, 2003:1). Takona (2002:5) takes this a step further, noting not only the numerical nature of quantitative research, but observing that it “is designed to provide extensive or generalized information that objectively indicates what is happening across many people, cases and situations.” The reason why researchers can make these generalisations, and therefore the greatest advantage of using quantitative research, is that the data is obtained by means of standardisation, precision and reliability which ensures its replicability, should further research be conducted (De Vos, 1998:243). Unlike qualitative analysis, in which the researchers must make interpretations and inferences, quantitative data usually speaks for itself. Since the researcher intended to use a case-study approach that sought to illuminate a township-wide phenomenon through the lens of a non-profit organisation’s work with learners at School A, the objectivity provided by quantitative data was particularly alluring.

The researcher was in possession of a significant amount of quantitative data, most of which was obtained through the field worker’s *Learner Profiles* (see Section 3.5.2). Quantitative data, such as age, family employment, type of home, and family education levels assisted the researcher in understanding the context within which the learners lived. The relevant data was extracted from the profiles, notes and interviews before being organised into appropriate categories.

Despite the advantages noted above, the researcher contends that a major fault of the South African education system is its overreliance on measuring learners through purely quantitative methods. This is best illustrated by the all-important final Matriculation examinations; the traditional barometer of individual and school success. The intention was that this research would not succumb to the same temptation of relying too heavily on measurable data. For this reason, the bulk of the data obtained and analysed in this research was qualitative in nature.

3.5.3.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research entails using inductive thinking to organise data into categories and to establish patterns and relationships between them. In this context, the term 'inductive' means that the categories, patterns and relationships emerge from the data as opposed to being imposed on the data prior to its collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:501-502). Thomas (2003:1) agrees with Takona (2002:12) stating that qualitative methods differ from quantitative methods in that they seek to describe kinds of characteristics without being concerned about comparing or measuring results. This provides researchers with more flexibility and allows for the opportunity to obtain more detailed and richer information. This more comprehensive picture helps researchers understand *why* a given phenomenon is happening. Given the intimate nature of understanding the dynamics involved in an individual's personal development and life choices, a qualitative approach was deemed necessary for the purpose of this study.

3.5.5 Data Collection Instruments

The data collection process began with the researcher ensuring that all ethical and moral issues were considered and that appropriate consent was obtained from the relevant parties. This required a meeting with Masinyusane's Board of Directors. The researcher explained, in depth, the purpose of the study, the research questions and objectives, and how the research would be distributed.

Over the previous three years, Masinyusane's staff had obtained a wealth of data (described in detail below) on the learners at School A. After obtaining consent, the researcher read through various questionnaires, interviews, reports and profiles and aggregated all the available data that was related to talent discovery among and the development of learners at School A. This included the following:

- Two short answer questionnaires (n=36)
- One essay-style open-ended questionnaire (n=75)
- Detailed *Learner Profiles* (n=101)

- A programme manager's report to the Board of Directors in 2010 (n=1)
- Academic performance files of learners from 2009 through 2011 (n=350)

In addition to organising and analysing the data in Masinyusane's possession, the researcher embarked on interviewing Masinyusane staff and volunteers. The purpose of these interviews was to gain insight into Masinyusane staff and volunteers' experiences, perspectives and recommendations regarding the learners at School A. This included multiple interviews with a field worker, programme manager and ten volunteer *Youth Leaders*.

- **Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a form with a set of questions to be completed by the respondents participating in a research project (De Vos, 1998:152). Questionnaires are excellent tools for obtaining a large volume of data in a relatively short period of time. Furthermore, when open-ended, questionnaires are particularly helpful in obtaining both factual and perceived data on attitudes, beliefs and preferences.

Over the previous three years, Masinyusane's staff had obtained a wealth of data on the learners, partly through the two short answer and one essay-style questionnaires. In that process, the Masinyusane staff members explained the purpose and objectives of each of the questionnaires and remained in the classrooms to assist learners and answer questions. Learners were allowed to answer in either English or isiXhosa, and none of the questionnaires required learners to state their names.

The nature of the questionnaires varied between three major themes, namely learners' talents, passions and future aspirations; perceived obstacles to learner successes at home and in school; and, finally, learners' perceptions regarding school improvement and Masinyusane intervention.

The questionnaires used included question types providing for short answers, listings, and essay-type answers, which complemented one another. The questions in which learners were asked to list things were easy to code and were placed into

tables that enabled quick and easy quantitative data analysis. The essays, on the other hand, provided rich, vivid, and individualised insight into learners' feelings, beliefs and perspectives. These answers lent themselves to a qualitative data analysis. The short answers questions lay in the middle, offering a combination of code-able data and qualitative responses.

After compiling all the questionnaire data provided, the researcher was faced with the challenge of reducing it to a manageable and usable amount. This was achieved through coding, which refers to assigning numbers or symbols to chunks of data in order to organise it according to particular themes (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:214).

The greatest challenge encountered in respect of the data gained from responses to questionnaire questions was that it had not been systematically obtained as part of a research study. While Masinyusane did collect information related to talent discovery and development, the initial collection often had alternative intentions. Questionnaires would include questions about talent and personal development, but also about preferences regarding infrastructure development, the feeding scheme menu, and afternoon classes.

Furthermore, a small number of the questions were leading in nature and it became clear that many of the answers given in response to these questions reflected poor question design. This researcher made every effort to account for and remain aware of these shortcomings while interpreting the data.

Another challenge was that of language. Most of the questionnaires and all of the interviews with parents were conducted in isiXhosa. Masinyusane always offered the learners the option of answering questionnaires in either English or isiXhosa. The responses of many of the learners who chose to answer in English, which is a second language to all of them, might not have been as descriptive or detailed as they would have been had the learners responded in isiXhosa. All translations were done by the field worker.

- **Individual Interviews**

Interviews are effective in obtaining qualitative data, as they allow for “elaboration of detail, further explanations, and clarification of responses” (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:452). While considering interview approaches, the researcher employed both converging-question and response-guided approaches (Thomas, 2003:63-65). A converging question approach entails beginning with open-ended questions with somewhat generic answers, leading to more direct and pointed questions designed to generate specific data. The general questioning strategy adopted was chosen to gain insight into the respondents’ understanding of talent discovery and development amongst the learners at School A, while more specific questions focused on what they saw as barriers to or opportunities for talent discovery and development. One of the main focus points of the questions was to determine how much time they spent working on their talents and what opportunities they were afforded to do so.

The response-guided approach began with an interviewer asking a few predetermined questions. Further questions were then ‘guided’, depending on the respondents’ answers. This method was particularly effective in determining the beliefs and attitudes of respondents as they led (albeit somewhat indirectly) the conversation surrounding a certain issue.

Thomas (2003:64) notes the importance of obtaining both quantitative and qualitative data while conducting an interview. This researcher gathered quantitative data regarding the opportunities available to learners to develop their talents and the amount of time they spent on doing so. Equally important, the researcher gathered qualitative data regarding the non-profit organisation staff’s perceptions of the learners’ talents and level of motivation, as well as opportunities available for them to discover and develop their talents.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations posed by interviews. In addition to taking time, the truthfulness of the respondents is often called into question (Thomas, 2003:64). This especially holds true for parents, who may feel inclined to exaggerate their own children’s talents, effort, and potential. While the field worker generally found the parents or guardians very open and honest, it is important to

remain aware of any possible bias. While interviewing the non-profit organisation's staff, the biggest concern was that they would seek to please the interviewer by offering the responses they thought or assumed the interviewer was looking for.

Another limitation of interviews is the bias of the interviewers. This is particularly dangerous in the response-guided approach. The risk is that the roles can easily be reversed, with the interviewers taking the respondents down a pre-determined path.

Language also posed a challenge during the interviews. While a field worker who was fluent in isiXhosa conducted the interviews in that language (and then translated them into English), there was occasional confusion. In isiXhosa the terms 'talent' and 'role models' are not always understood. For example, the closest isiXhosa equivalent of the word 'talent' is the word 'isipho', which translates roughly as 'gift'. The problem with the term gift, as described above, is that infers a natural, God-given ability. Ironically, this misconception of the word 'talent' is a difficulty in both English and isiXhosa.

In addition to the interviews previously conducted by the field worker, the researcher conducted multiple interviews with Masinyusane staff and volunteers, including a field worker, a programme manager, and ten Masinyusane *Youth Leaders*.

The field worker's perspective was particularly informative, due to his personal circumstances and background. Growing up in the same environment as the learners, he had been tremendously successful in life, appearing on many popular South African television shows. In addition, his biological sister is the lead singer of *Freshly Ground*, a well-known South African music group. His own life experiences coupled with the invaluable knowledge gained from three years of interviewing learners and home visits, made him uniquely placed to speak about township learners' experiences, talents and personal development.

The programme manager's perspectives were interesting as she brought a European, specifically German, perspective to the research. Having worked as a volunteer at township high schools for two years, most recently as a programme manager at Masinyusane, she spoke with authority, insight and experience. Her

work involved helping Grades 8 and 9 learners to develop their English competency and literacy skills.

- **Focus Group Interviews**

Focus group interviews differ from individual interviews only in that they entail various participants being interviewed together. The main benefit of group interviews is that some participants may feel more encouraged to talk openly and share their feelings once they hear others doing the same. By creating an environment in which participants are stimulated by other's comments, ideas and perceptions, researchers may obtain richer and more descriptive data (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:453). In this study, the researcher employed a focus-group interview with the *Youth Leaders* that had been volunteering for Masinyusane and working with the learners at School A over the previous year.

Masinyusane's *Youth Leaders*, who participated in focus-group interviews, consisted of post-Matric youths who were helping out at the school. All of them attended township schools and passed with good marks. Moreover, they were all aspiring towards studying at university – the majority having not yet enrolled, due to financial constraints. Some of them had worked hard to develop their own talents (one held a black belt in karate). They could speak directly about the experiences of the learners and provided valuable insight into the mindset, motivation and perspectives of the learners.

- **Observation**

The researcher engaged in non-participative observation throughout the research. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:390) note that this is the most natural way to observe a phenomenon as long as the researcher ensures that he is in no way manipulating or controlling the observed environment. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:270) echo these sentiments, noting the power of observation to accurately record “what occurs in real life as opposed to contrived or artificial settings.”

The biggest criticism against observation is the possible lack of reliability of the data, due to the biases of the observer. In this study, the researcher took pains to observe actions against a checklist of predetermined objectives, versus making inferences regarding the intentions, attitudes, or beliefs of the respondents.

3.5.6 Trustworthiness of Data

Ensuring that the research data is reliable and that the research and the research findings are valid is of the utmost importance. The researcher needed to have confidence that his interpretation and analysis and the recommendations he made, were based on a sound foundation of credible and accurate data. It was essential to ensure a high level of trustworthiness with regard to the data and findings of the research.

The term reliability refers to the consistency of answers provided by a particular instrument, such as a questionnaire (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993:139). McMillan and Schumacher (1997:239) define it as the consistency of an instrument's measurement in producing similar results. In this study, reliability was ensured by distributing the questionnaires to many learners over different periods of time.

It was also critical that the researcher ensured that valid inferences and conclusions were made. In this context, validity may be defined as the "appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences researchers make based on the data they collect" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993:139). Put differently, one can ask whether the data collected provided support or served as evidence to the inferences the researcher made based upon it, and whether or not the data was interpreted correctly.

In this research, the researcher sought to ensure validity primarily through the means of triangulation. Data was collected from numerous questionnaires from learners, profiles created by a field worker, interviews with parents, observations by the interviewer, and interviews with the staff of the relevant non-profit organisation. The data from various questionnaires was first translated and then coded and organised. Much of the data from the hundred-plus *Learner Profiles* was condensed into tables

on a spreadsheet (see Appendix B). This was done by reading through all the profiles, identifying key data points, and confirming any missing data with the field worker. Data from the questionnaires and *Learner Profiles* was then compared to data acquired from other sources. The data from learner, parent and field worker interviews was rich in description and allowed the researcher to identify common patterns and themes, from which he could make inferences. On top of all of this data, the researcher reported on his own observations obtained over three years of working with learners at township schools.

De Vos (1998: 331) summarises the above, considering whether or not research results may be considered trustworthy. He suggests that there are four basic components of trustworthiness. The first is *truth value*, that is, whether the researcher has established with confidence that the findings of the research are true. The second is *applicability*, which refers to the ability to apply and generalise the findings to a larger group. The third component, *consistency*, is concerned with whether or not the findings would be replicated if another study were undertaken. The final component is *neutrality*, which refers to the degree to which the findings are unbiased and solely a function of the respondents.

3.5.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis consists of analysing the data, seeking to establish patterns, trends and common themes, and forming a holistic picture of what is happening. The researcher was challenged to find a system that would best facilitate the process of scrutinising, understanding and making sense of a vast collection of data. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:502) the four main objectives of data analysis are discovering and identify patterns, categorising the data, assessing its trustworthiness, and developing a synthesis of themes and concepts.

The process depended on the type of data being analysed, as the quantitative data was inherently easier to work with, given its measurable nature. Analysing the qualitative data was much more challenging. Qualitative data does not fit as neatly into quantifiable measurements and was therefore organised into categories, patterns and relationships. These categories, patterns and relationships included the

background, talents, attitudes and opportunities of the learners. As McMillan and Schumacher (1997:505) note, this strategy requires a high level of synthesis and creative “intellectual craftsmanship” on the part of researchers. Rather than being imposed on the data during the collection process, the categories, patterns and themes emerged from the data itself. One of the most effective ways of discovering these categories, patterns and themes is through triangulation.

- **Triangulation**

Triangulation refers to using more than one researcher, research method or data collection instrument to pursue and confirm information (Wisker, 2001:157). This research leveraged two types of triangulation, namely data and methodological triangulation. Data triangulation refers to gathering information through a variety of sampling strategies, such as questionnaires, interviews and written reports. Methodological triangulation entails using two or more methods – in this case quantitative and qualitative – of data collection (De Vos, 1998:360).

The use of multiple methods helped to ensure the validity and reliability of the data, thus strengthening the overall research and its findings (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993:400). Triangulation was particularly useful during this research, as the researcher was attempting to synthesise multiple sources of data. The researcher was in possession of three different surveys and questionnaires, individual interviews with learners, parents and workers from the relevant non-profit organisation and focus-group interviews with non-profit staff. In addition to all of this data, the researcher incorporated his own observations and experiences at both the non-profit organisation and the school.

Triangulation allowed the researcher to cross-check the data from differing themes to confirm an overall pattern or trend. The fact that the data was confirmed from multiple sources, strengthened its reliability and validity, allowing the researcher to make conclusions and recommendations with greater confidence.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In any research involving human respondents, the researcher must ensure that all practices and research procedures are ethical. This involves not only an awareness of one's own values, but also of the sponsoring institutions (Langebach, Vaughn & Aagaard, 1994:286). All research was conducted under the umbrella of the Masinyusane Development Organisation. Respondents were 18 years of age or older and participated on a voluntary basis.

First and foremost, ethics involves ensuring the safety of and avoidance of harm to the research respondents. It was very important to ensure that the research respondents understood that participation in the research was voluntary and that they could withdraw at anytime. Additionally, they were also advised that if there were any questions that they felt uncomfortable answering, they were free to skip them. This was made very clear to the non-profit staff and volunteers before the interviews started. In fact, a number of the *Youth Leaders* chose to remain silent during the focus group interviews.

Another important aspect of ethics is privacy and confidentiality. This was particularly important, given the personal nature of the information in Masinyusane's possession. The researcher ensured strict confidentiality throughout the study by omitting all names from the report and ensuring that documents were kept in a safe, secure place.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter described in detail the research problem, the research objectives and the research design chosen to help achieve those objectives. The research procedures for acquiring and then analysing the data were then described. The researcher leveraged a wealth of data that had been accumulated over the previous three years by Masinyusane and then employed quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis to analyse the research problem. Using the triangulation method, the researcher identified patterns, trends and themes among the data. The following

chapter presents the data findings, interpretation and themes developed from the analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings, interpretation and analysis of the data acquired by the researcher. The data from the learners and parents was collected by Masinyusane staff and complemented by data the researcher obtained by means of interviews with Masinyusane's field worker, programme manager, and ten *Youth Leaders*. The data collection instruments were individual semi-structured interviews, surveys and questionnaires, school performance reports and observation.

The literature in Chapter Two suggests that discovering and developing one's talent leads to a fulfilling life and success in the world, offering a potential path out of poverty. The first step towards achieving this is to discover a talent about which one is passionate. This could guide one towards a future career in which one will work hard and find meaning and fulfilment. After discovering this talent, one then needs to invest tremendous time, energy, and effort to develop it. This requires a deep internal drive, described above as motivation. Finally, this entire process can be facilitated by others, whether they be parents, role models, mentors or the school itself.

With this in mind, the researcher categorised the data into three major themes. Within each of these themes, categories were developed to provide further clarity. The first theme, 'Talent', provided an initial overview of the learners, parents and Masinyusane staff members' perceptions of the learners' talents. The intention was to lay a foundation for what learners identified (or failed to identify) as their talents, and their motivation levels to develop these talents. With this in mind, the next two sections will present data on the 'why' of the current levels of talent perception.

The second theme focuses on the 'Township Environment.' Within the township environment, the categories of obstacles in the home; parenting; extracurriculars; role models and mentors; and exposure to careers, were explored in detail.

Emphasis was placed on identifying barriers to and opportunities for talent discovery and development.

Finally, the third theme focuses on the 'School Environment.' Categories within this theme are the physical environment; the curriculum; obstacles at school; talent development; and positive perceptions of the school. Once again, emphasis was placed on barriers to and opportunities for talent discovery and development.

Unless otherwise indicated, all the questions to and responses from learners came from the three questionnaires described in Chapter Three. The questions to and responses from parents were taken from the recorded interviews the field worker had held with parents. Finally, the questions to and responses from Masinyusane staff were taken from recorded interviews with the staff. All responses were recorded verbatim, retaining spelling or grammatical errors, to ensure an accurate representation of data.

- Coding

The following coding methodology was used for all quotations in Chapter Four:

Learners: (L to represent learner / Number of Questionnaire / Letter of Learner)

Example: (L/3/AA) corresponds to Learner AA from the third questionnaire.

Parents: (P to represent parent / Number of Parent Interview)

Example: (P/8) corresponds to the Parent from the eighth interview

Learner Profiles: (LP to represent *Learner Profile* / Number of *Learner Profile*)

Example: (LP/82) corresponds to the 82nd *Learner Profile*

Youth Leaders: (YL to represent *Youth Leader* / Number of *Youth Leader*)

Example: (YL/5) corresponds to *Youth Leader* number 5

Field Worker: (FW)

Programme Manager: (PM)

Board Member: (BM)

4.2 THEME 1: TALENT

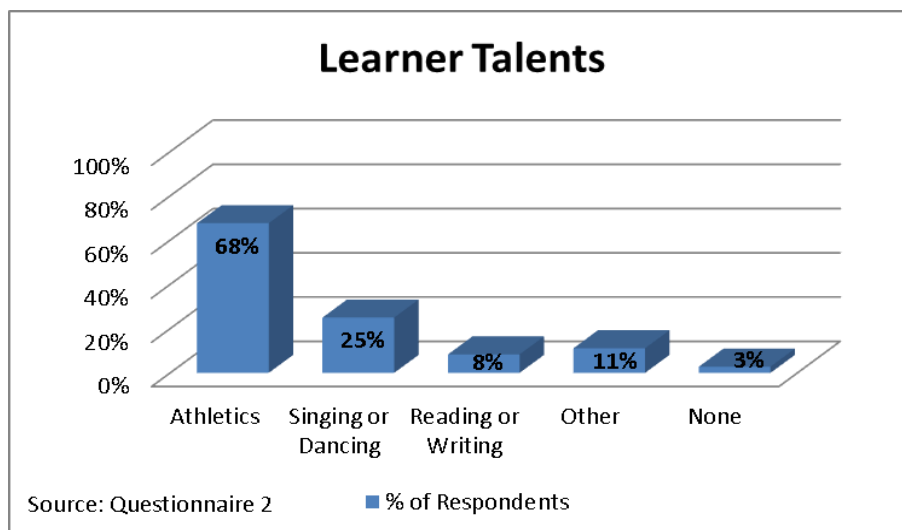
This section will explore the different perceptions of talent and motivation amongst learners, parents and Masinyusane staff. The first subsection highlights different perceptions among learners, parents and Masinyusane staff regarding the learners' talents. Following this, the data related to learner motivation – a key ingredient of talent development – is analysed. This section will lay the foundation for undertaking a more thorough analysis of opportunities to discover and develop those talents; at home and in school.

4.2.1 Learner Talents

The following section presents the data on the perceptions of learner talent from the learners themselves, the parents and, finally Masinyusane staff.

Learners: What are some of your talents?

Figure 4.1



Note: Learners were allowed multiple responses, hence the total greater than 100%.

The following is a complete list of the learners' responses:

- *Cleaning my home*
- *Dancing*
- *Electricity*
- *Netball*
- *Singing*
- *Talking*
- *Cooking*
- *Designing*
- *Hard work*
- *Reading*
- *Soccer*
- *Writing*
- *Cricket*
- *Drawing*
- *Listening*
- *Running*
- *Swimming*

Interpretation

The large majority (68%) of the learners felt that their talents lay in 'Athletics'. This was as expected as Booysen (2007:3) also found that most South Africans associated talent with athletic prowess. The second most common response (25%) was 'Singing and Dancing.' Together, these results correspond with Colvin's (2008:344) study, in which most respondents identified talent with athletics and music. The answers were not surprising, given that the only three extracurricular activities traditionally offered at the school were rugby, soccer and choir practice. Another influence could have been the pop-culture as shown on TV, with shows such as *Idols South Africa*, *So You Think You Can Dance*, and *America's Got Talent* emphasising singing and dancing as talents.

It was interesting to note how few learners mentioned any other talent. A mere 8% stated a talent in 'Reading or Writing', while no other response occurred more than once. The learners failed to mention public speaking, debating, negotiating, business, entrepreneurship, creative thinking, comedy, or countless other talents. This was most likely the result of them failing to fully understand the term talent and reflexively answering with what is most often associated with the term. The data mirrors Rath's statement (2007:29), namely that too many youths' talents remain undiscovered.

Parents: What are some of your child's talents?

Many of the learners' parents hesitated or took time to think before responding to the field worker's question. If parents did not respond, he prompted them by inquiring about the hobbies or interests of their children. Most of the parents that did respond stated that their children's talents lay in dance or athletics. Most of the parents of boys responded that their children's talent was soccer or rugby, while the parents of girls mostly cited dance or netball. Interestingly, a few of the parents (P/1, P/3 and P/5) mentioned studying as a talent. Other common answers, which seemed to indicate a lack of understanding of the word 'talent', were watching TV or listening to music.

Interpretation

The parents' responses mirrored those of the learners in listing sport or dance as their children's talents. In fact, there was very little variety in the parents' responses. Not one parent mentioned any technical skill, or any art (outside of dance), communication or business-related talent. This corresponds to Brooks (2010:1829) research finding that parents in impoverished communities tend to be less involved in the talent development or extracurricular activities of their children.

Masinyusane Staff: What are some of the talents that the learners possess?

The thoughts of both the field worker and the programme manager immediately turned to the school's star soccer players. However, the field worker and programme manager repeatedly also mentioned the arts, including music, drawing, and drama, and technical studies, such as auto mechanics. In fact, both felt that the learners were unaware of many of the gifts they possessed. The programme manager stated:

I think learners are not aware of their talents or do not see the talent they have as being such. (PM)

The field worker felt that the learners possessed a lot of untapped musical talent. The programme manager agreed, noting how impressed she was with the singing

groups she had established at the school earlier that year. The field worker observed:

Vocally, I've heard some pop-star material, coming out of, especially the girls. Choirly as well. The school has traditionally had a strong choir team. (FW)

The field worker also spoke at length about the technical aptitude displayed by some of the learners:

Many of the learners are quite good with electricity. As in, they can handle it, make things happen with gadgets, open things up and stuff. If there were a [technical] subject at school can you imagine how brilliant these kids would be? If they had technical skills, many of which they possess already, it would give them impetus to open a text book, because it would be something that they love. (FW)

Moreover, the *Learner Profiles* confirmed the responses in the questionnaires and interviews above, in that they most often identified talent with sport, with the rare exception being the arts.

One of the daughters is a Banyana Banyana [female national soccer team] prospect and [learner name] is a highly talented soccer player as well. (LP/39)

He says he is a budding thespian, and would love to study drama, and for drama to be his chosen career. He said to me that I am looking at the next Sean Penn. (LP/2)

Interpretation

In addition to echoing the learners and parents by identifying sports and dance as talents, Masinyusane staff members listed a broader range of talents among the kids. Of particular note were technical skills, such as learners' ability to work with their hands and fix things. The Masinyusane staff members also felt strongly that there was great untapped artistic ability among the learners. They spoke with enthusiasm about finding ways to create opportunities for learners to build upon those gifts. The broader range of responses elicited was undoubtedly because the

organisation had prioritised talent, often emphasising the importance of assisting learners in discovering their talents.

4.2.2 Motivation of Learners

It takes a tremendous amount of hard work and dedication for one to develop a talent. This is especially true for learners living in the townships, as they have fewer people around them to push and encourage them to persevere and keep going. The motivation levels of these learners are therefore critical for their success in developing their talents, doing well academically, and succeeding in life.

Learners

While there were no specific questions about motivation in the learners' questionnaires, the researcher extrapolated many comments from the open-ended essay-style questionnaire.

Numerous learners openly admitted that their home situation was affecting their attitudes:

I'm demotivated by my parents. (L/3/AA)

Nobody inspires me at my home. (L/3/X)

I wish everybody would understand and feel the pressure that I am under and try by all means to help and motivate me. (L/3/BB)

... sometimes I wish my dad was alive so that things could be different. (L/3/CC)

The field worker's comments reflected many of the learners' comments. The following are a few excerpts from the *Learner Profiles*:

... one of the least motivated learners in Grade 12. (LP/11)

He hangs out with the rest of the unmotivated crew, some of whom are repeating Grade 12 this year. (LP/5)

He is the apple of her eye, being her only child, but she is not shy to point out the fact that he is a lazy scholar. (LP/1)

However, the *Learner Profiles* did identify at least some learners that were motivated:

In Grades 9 and 10 he was so lazy and unmotivated. But he has now done a complete about-turn. (LP/24)

Interpretation

The number of learners that appeared to be demotivated far outnumbered those that appeared to be motivated. It was abundantly clear that many of the learners felt that they were extremely disadvantaged and that their prospects for success or achievement, especially with regard to academics was poor. This is in line with Barath's finding (Barath, 2006:18) that many South African township learners are very demotivated. The findings also support Fried's (2001:2) contention that the drive to succeed academically is already very diminished by the time learners reach their high school years.

The lack of motivation may be attributed partly to the challenges of a life of poverty. The comments above validate Farah's (Farah, Noble & Hurt, 2006:280) findings that poverty-related stress negatively impacts on the motivation of learners. One can state with confidence that the overall intrinsic motivation of the participating learners was low, which highlights the need for greater extrinsic motivation, as described by Woolfolk (2010:377). The data presented in Sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.4 below regarding parents, role models and mentors allowed inferences to be made regarding the levels of extrinsic motivation that the participating learners were receiving.

Regardless of the type of motivation, the data clearly indicates that the learners did not possess the levels of motivation that Levitt and Dubner (2005:149) and Coyle (2009:449) state is needed for talent development.

Masinyusane Staff: How motivated are the learners both in terms of academic performance and also in terms of developing their own talents?

The *Youth Leaders* felt that the motivation levels of the learners, especially with respect to academics, were very low.

I don't think they're motivated at all. (YL/1)

It's very, very low, I'd say about 5% are motivated to do something with their lives. (YL/3)

The same *Youth Leader* shared the different strategies, such as math competitions, that he had tried to implement to get the learners involved and motivated to work hard. He described one such effort:

I've tried to build up the thing of competition. It didn't really work out though. I thought if they thought they'd get a prize they'd fight for it. But the minute I showed them a prize and competition, nobody really cared. So that tells you that the kids' motivation is very, very low. It's critically low. (YL/3)

A few other examples of the learners' lack of motivation were cited. Following the 2011 September trial exams, which only 12% of the Grade Twelve learners passed, the field worker noted a sense of hopelessness amongst the learners. In one of the three Grade Twelve classrooms, someone had written on the blackboard, "We try so hard but we fail anyway. Why try?"

On another occasion, a few of the *Youth Leaders* were present in a class in which a group of students from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University attempted to motivate Grade Nine learners to work hard in school. The attitude of one of the more vocal learners was that they had nothing – no food at home, no clothes to wear, no books at school – so they were destined to fail, regardless of effort. He commented that education in the city was "powerful," while they had nothing. The class nodded along with everything he said. Afterwards, the NMMU students expressed shock at how demotivated and "beaten down" the kids seemed.

One of the reasons the *Youth Leaders* felt why the learners were lacking motivation was that school was not fun for the learners. One *Youth Leader* (YL/1) simply

stated, *“Education to them is not fun at all.”* It was simply something they had to do. Focusing on their studies was not seen as all that important. They should be given more encouragement and opportunities to develop a love of something would result in greater effort. Another *Youth Leader (YL/3)* stated:

If I know that I’m talented, that I’m good at art. And if I know I need classes to get into University to study it, to get to my goals. If I have a loving of doing it, a needing to do it, a wanting to do it, then definitely I’ll do whatever it takes to get to that goal. The minute I develop a love for something, I’ll go for it. I’ll dedicate myself to it. If I love it. It doesn’t matter how much time or effort I have to put into it.(YL/3)

Another concern was that even if learners were motivated to focus on their studies by teachers and Masinyusane staff, they received no such encouragement at home. *Youth Leaders* again pointed to the lack of educated adults in the townships. One of them (YL/4) said:

The motivation ends at school. Outside, they don’t get much motivation. No one encourages us to read a book or to do something like that.

The researcher then asked the *Youth Leaders* to what they attributed their own motivation to succeed, seeing that they themselves had attended township high schools, but still managed to pass and acquire marks high enough to enroll at the local University. Some of their responses were as follows:

I decided that everything is in my hands. If I want something, I will go get it. You have to push yourself harder in order to go get it. You can’t rely on some people, they’ll only bring you down. (YL/1)

We were all pushed, somehow. (YL/4)

We all had someone to push us. Someone to enlighten our dreams so that we can see that we could do it. That’s why we did it. So I believe us showing them that there is brightness in their future will help them. (YL/9)

It's always about telling yourself you're going to do it. If I'm not motivated to do so and if I don't tell myself that I'm going to do it. My environment is maybe 50% [of the equation], the other 50% is me. (YL/3)

Interpretation

The *Youth Leaders* were clearly frustrated by the lack of motivation they observed among the learners. They spoke of the learners as if they possessed no motivation whatsoever to succeed at school or to develop any talents. When asked about their own motivation levels, it was interesting to note that half of them replied that someone else had been pushing and motivating them. The issue of motivation is closely linked with that of parenting, role models and mentors, which will be discussed in Sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.4 below.

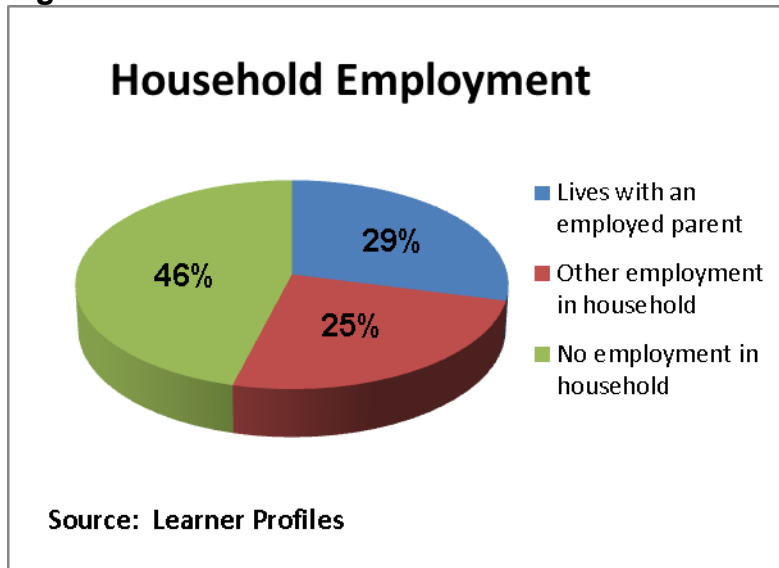
While the field worker and the programme manager seemed to agree that learners' overall motivation levels were dangerously low, they pointed out that a handful of learners were extremely motivated. While a few of these learners were motivated to do well in their studies, most were focused on sport or dance.

4.3 THEME 2: TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENT

This section will explore the different perceptions of the township environment among learners, parents and Masinyusane staff. The first section will present findings regarding perceived obstacles to performing well academically and developing talents. The second section will present the findings on parents' role in terms of talent development. This will be followed by data regarding role models and mentors in the township. The fourth section will present data on the extracurricular activities of learners. Finally, the fifth section will present data on the career plans and preferences of learners.

4.3.1 Obstacles in Home Environment

Figure 4.2



Most of the obstacles to learner development in the home environment could be attributed to poverty. As Figure 4.2 illustrates, only 29% of participating learners lived with an employed parent. Even in that case, almost none of those parents were professionally employed. The field worker considered income-generating activities, such as hawking vegetables, part-time domestic work and part-time car washing, to constitute employment. A further 25% of learners lived in households in which someone other than a parent had some form of employment: this was usually an uncle or a cousin, and the learner rarely benefited from such a situation. Furthermore, even if that someone was contributing money and groceries to the household, it often was not enough. In one *Learner Profile*, an older brother was working to support almost 20 people, all living in the same RDP house. So while 46% lived in households in which there was no employment, almost all of the learners lived in situations that would be considered abject poverty.

Learners: What are the obstacles at home or in your social life that can prevent you from being successful in your studies this year?

The learners listed a variety of obstacles at home and in their environment that posed huge obstacles to them succeeding at school. A Masinyusane Board member noted:

... reading the learners responses regarding the way they experience life at home was very depressing. (BM)

She went on to state that only five learners (7%) had responded with confidence that no obstacles were preventing them from succeeding. In reference to them, the Board member stated,

They have the ability to make things happen and receive encouragement from home, have good friends who study with them and enjoy good relationships with teachers. (BM)

The remainder of the learners listed a litany of obstacles preventing them from succeeding. Among her findings, some of the most prevalent and noteworthy were, “poverty, hunger, and going to school on an empty stomach”; “parents drinking alcohol and constantly fighting”; “physical and emotional abuse”; “alcoholism and drug use amongst learners”; and “crime”.

Poverty and a concern about finances were common amongst learner responses. Many noted that they often went to bed or to school hungry. Comments included,

... she can't even get groceries. (L/3/UU)

I come to school without eating anything like food but I'm going [to try] to listen to the teacher with an empty stomach. For sure I can't concentrate to the teacher because I'm starved. (L/3/TTT)

One of the recurring themes was that the learners were required to do many chores at home, which was detrimental to their studies. Two learners stated:

I don't have ixesha elanelayo lokufunda (enough time to study) because I must come from school and cook and then to the shop. (L/3/D)

I wish my parents could understand that I'm in a different grade now and I need so much more time [to study]. (L/3/I)

Interpretation

The learners were living in a very impoverished home environment and saw this as a major obstacle to their own growth and development. Less than one-third of the learners lived in households in which a parent was working. This certainly had an impact on the motivation data that was presented in Section 4.2.2. The learners suffered from many of the challenges Landsberg (2005:28) identified in his research on growing up in an impoverished environment.

Masinyusane Staff: What are the major obstacles from home and the environment preventing the learners from discovering and realising their talents?

Masinyusane's field worker believed that the "mindset" of the learners was one of the greatest hurdles. He spoke of the challenge of the cycle of poverty, in which one grows up in an impoverished situation and begins to feel that one's future is destined to be the same. In his own words:

When you talk about the cycle of poverty, it grips one and keeps one where one is. So much so that one is almost determined to stay where they are. And cannot see themselves anywhere other than where they are. It is a huge, huge obstacle for a learner when they know, for example, that nobody is working at home, nobody even has Grade 12, therefore a learner will go into Grade 8, believing, knowing that if/when he finishes Grade 12 he will [not have anything to do]. (FW)

The *Youth Leaders*, who all lived in the surrounding townships, also attributed many of the challenges the learners faced to the township environment. One spoke shared why it was difficult to appreciate the importance of education and be motivated to work hard and excel:

People are not educated in the location. So we live with people that aren't educated. (YL/4)

Another spoke metaphorically about how the township had failed to provide opportunities to nurture talents in the youth. According to him:

It's about the foundation. It's always about a seed. If you don't water a seed, it won't grow. So it's right from the foundation, right from the primary level. Or right from the way we are brought up. If you are brought up and you are given an abundance of opportunity, maybe after school, if you try all of those things you'll probably find something you like or something you're good at. (YL/3)

Interpretation

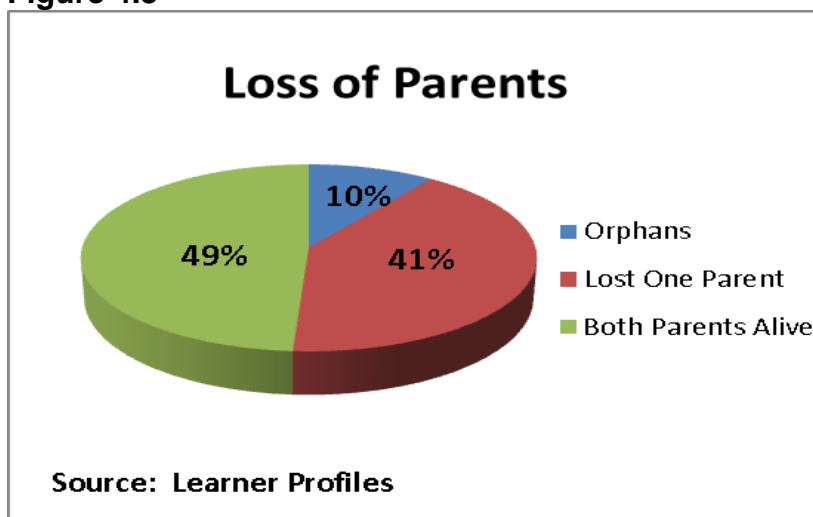
The Masinyusane staff was highly aware of the dire situation of the learners and spoke emphatically about the need to break the cycle of poverty. Their words echoed those of Brooks (2010:3000), namely that all the negative factors of an impoverished community merge together to create a sum greater than their parts. Their environment had obviously made it incredibly difficult for the participating learners to discover and develop talents.

4.3.2 Parenting

Family dynamics were often experienced as difficult by the learners at School A. A mere 10% of the learners lived with both parents. A number of issues posed significant challenges for the learners, including the loss of parents, parental abuse, lack of employment (see Figure 4.2 above), and a general lack of education among the parents.

- **Loss of Parents**

Figure 4.3



Many learners at School A had had to deal with tremendous trauma as a result of the loss of parents. The majority of these deaths had occurred within the previous ten years. While the cause of death was rarely known (the field worker did not inquire), one can reasonably assume that the majority could be attributed to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

It goes without say that the loss of their parent(s) had had a tremendously negative impact on the learners' lives. One example from a *Learner Profile* illustrates how destabilising losing a parent can be:

... his father hanged himself in 2005... after this incident he started playing truant at school. He soon started smoking, starting with cigarettes and then dagga... This was soon followed by stealing. (LP/37)

Interpretation

The death of a parent is a traumatic event for any child and has the ability to derail his or her entire life. Many learners at School A had suffered through the enormous incidence of death, which had clearly impacted on their world-view. The orphans, who constituted 10% of the learners, were often left to fend for themselves.

- **Parental Abuse**

Numerous learners commented on the abuse that they were subjected to at home, be it physical, or verbal, or neglect. Alcoholism, which is rife in the townships, was common in the homes of the learners. The *Learner Profiles* stated that at least one learner, an orphan, had been brutally raped by a family member she was forced to live with following her parents' death. The following are some comments from the learners:

At school I always think the things that my father was doing sometimes I don't concentrate at school I always think about izinto ezazisenzeka (things that are happening). (L/3/N)

My parents are drinking alcohol or they don't give me the support I need in my school work or everything about school okanye ukulala ungatyanga ikwenza ungabi namdla wokufunda (or to sleep without eating to have the strength to study). (L/3/QQ)

Ekhaya ngutata wam uyenza ukuba mandingaphumeleli ngoba uyasihlukumeza ekhaya uyabuse umama (At home my father makes it so that I don't succeed because he's always punishing us and abusing my mother)...he has a gun and that makes me scared when he's drinking....I want him to be in jail. (L/3/WWW)

The field worker had similarly found abuse to be common in the learners' homes. The following are some comments extracted from the *Learner Profiles*:

Both her father and stepmother are alcoholics, and when they are drunk, use this opportunity to hurl abuses at her, and call her all sorts of names, so loudly that even the neighbours can hear. She says the neighbours often come out and try to calm the situation, chastising the parents for their drunken behavior. (LP/17)

Her mother passed away in 2004 after domestic abuse by her boyfriend. She spent a week in hospital and then passed away. (LP/49)

Alcoholism is rife in this household. (LP/39)

His mother is abusive and lazy. She also calls him names. He gets no support from her whatsoever, financially or otherwise. (LP/26)

Her biological mother is still alive, and lives out in Wells Estate with her boyfriend. She is an alcoholic. She burnt the shack they were all living in, because she was drunk, and now not one of her children stays with her. Whenever she gets money, she spends it with her boyfriend, and drinking is all they have in mind. (LP/17)

Interpretation

Many of the learners suffered from abuse at home. This abuse varied in nature and degree, but generally consisted of physical abuse, verbal and psychological abuse, and overall neglect. It appeared as if much of the abuse stemmed from alcohol abuse. This data is consistent with Brooks (2010:1796) finding that impoverished

families, often as a result of poverty-related stress, are much more likely to engage in self-destructive behaviour.

- **Parental Involvement**

In general, the parents of learners at School A were not heavily involved in the learners' education. One learner made a comment similar to many, stating bluntly that he received little support at home:

... no support from parents... no eagerness to know my performance... even though I have strived by myself all of these years, sometimes I wish my parents would care more about what I do in school and be more involved. (L/3/SS)

Masinyusane Staff: How involved do you think the parents are in helping their kids find what they love to do, develop those skills, etc.?

The field worker's experience was also that the majority of the parents were not involved in their children's development, either academically or from a talent perspective. When asked why, he responded as follows:

Primarily because of the cycle of poverty. You really just want to get your next meal and it takes precedence above any sort of development. So much so that the parents can have their own expectations [in contrast to the expectations of the child] of what they want their child to be. There's no real involvement.

The programme manager echoed his comments, stating that the single greatest factor, in her opinion, preventing the learners from succeeding in school or developing their talents was:

The lack of interest from parents or guardians. (PM)

It must be noted that there were exceptions. A handful of parents and guardians were very involved in their children's development. The field worker provides the following example:

There are some parents who are extremely involved. Down to checking tests and homework. I have a learner in Grade 8, an orphan, and her aunt took her in at the beginning of the year. Her aunt makes her read the newspaper every morning, out loud. She's ridiculously far behind...[but her aunt is working with her]. There are some homes where the parents are really, really, really involved. (FW)

The researcher then asked him to estimate the percentage of households in which he believed that to be the case. His response was:

I've been doing this for three years now and I'd say, on average about ten percent. Ten percent who actually know what's going on and are participative in their child's education. (FW)

Interpretation

Neither the learners nor Masinyusane's staff felt that the parents, on the whole, were involved in the learners' education and development. This corresponds to Majola's findings (2008:65) that parents of township learners are not very involved in the education of their children. Part of this may be attributed to what Brooks (2010:1829) describes as a lack of time to be more involved, due to the burden of simply providing for their family's basic needs, such as food. Another contributing factor was certainly the lack of education among parents, which will be discussed next.

Feldhusen (1993:1089) and Fuller (2004:39) have noted the importance of parental goals and expectations for learners' academic performance. In this study, parents were clearly not assisting the learners to set academic goals, nor were they communicating their academic expectations (if they possessed any) of the learners.

- **Lack of Education**

Masinyusane Staff: What % of parents do you think have graduated Grade 12? Have received a university degree?

The field worker's experience was that very few learners lived with parents who had passed Grade 12. He estimated:

A very small percentage. Probably around 10%. (FW)

He was unaware of even one immediate family member who had attended university, though there were a few cousins. While this seemed discouraging, it was inspiring to hear a few parents speak proudly of their child being the first to graduate high school. One mother spoke confidently of her son, stating:

... no one yet, but [he] will be the first. (P/8)

Interpretation

The parents of the learners were generally not well educated, no doubt as a result of Apartheid and a life of poverty. A small minority appeared to have received their Matric certificate. This data corresponds to Majola's finding (2008:67) that the parents of township learners have very low levels of education. This certainly contributed to their lack of involvement in the learners' studies, as they were unfamiliar with not only the academic material, but the school system itself.

4.3.3 Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities, including sports, art or drama, and participation in church organisations could serve as critical opportunities for learners to discover and develop their talents. The following section will present the data on the extracurricular activities in which the participating learners were involved.

Parents: What clubs or teams is your child a part of?

When asked about opportunities for the learners to develop talents, such as sport clubs or teams, of which the learners were members, the parents mentioned either a soccer club (PE Callies), participation in church, or just playing with friends.

As one mother (P/2) put it, there simply were no opportunities in the townships anymore. In her opinion, twenty years ago, there had many more community clubs, organisations and teams. In her own words,

Mna, ndikhule apha eBhayi sinemibutho, umbutho webhala, sisiya ebholeni every weekend, apha aparkini. Ngoku kuhlalwa njee, andiyazi le yalapha. (For me, I grew up here in Port Elizabeth with many clubs, such as soccer clubs, we went to the field every weekend here at the park. Now, it [the park] just sits there [without any clubs using it], I don't know what's happening here.)

Interpretation

According to the parents, the learners were not involved in many extracurricular activities, clubs or teams. The most common affirmative responses related to a sports team or church group.

Marock's (2008:14) research confirms the complaints of the mother above that African youth today have fewer opportunities to be involved in clubs, extracurricular activities and organisations; hence the reduced level of involvement.

Masinyusane Staff: Outside of school, what talents do the learners work on improving?

The most common answer to this question was 'There are none.' One of the *Youth Leaders* commented that:

No one encourages us to practice or work on things. (YL/4)

The field worker's inclination was to say no as well, commenting:

It's difficult to say, because the kids don't really have hobbies or involve themselves in extracurricular activities. (FW)

However, both he and the programme manager emphasised that there were definitely exceptions. Those were learners who were involved in drama, music and

soccer clubs (all of which Masinyusane had launched at the school in the previous year). The staff noted that a handful of learners at the school took part in every extracurricular programme offered, eager to have the chance to learn something new or develop a talent.

For example, one Grade Eight boy practiced with the school's new soccer team after school, then jogged three kilometers to a field in a neighbouring park to play with a club team, before jogging the three kilometers back home late in the evening. The boy lived with his unemployed mother, who suffered from extreme alcoholism. By the field worker's account, he rarely was provided with food "or any other type of support" at home. His love for soccer, and dream of using it as a path out of poverty, serves as a powerful example of how important knowledge and the opportunity to develop one's talents can be for these learners.

Interpretation

The majority of the learners were not deliberately practising, let alone casually practising, any skill or talent. When they were engaged in an activity, this took the form of a leisure activity, such as kicking a ball around on the field with friends.

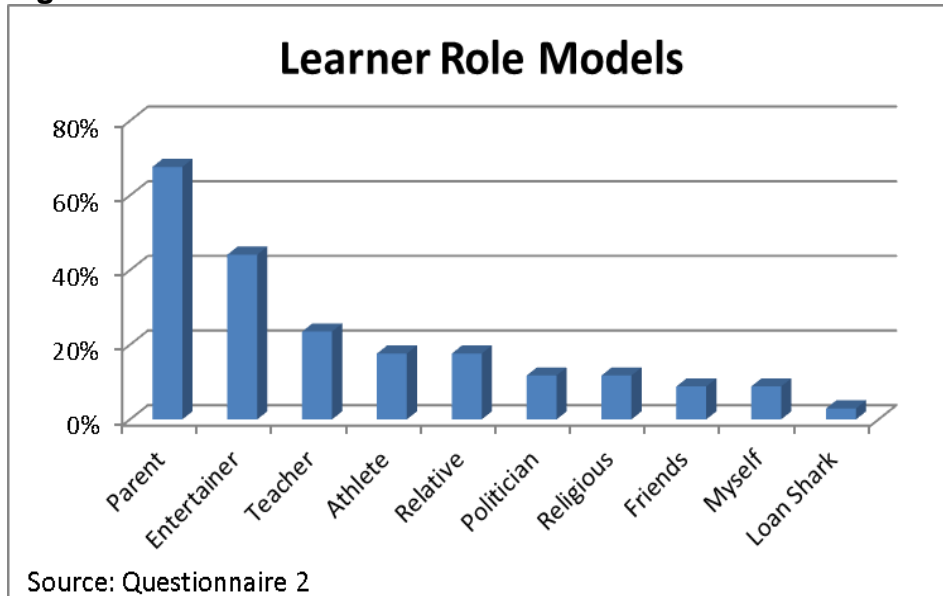
The one exception to this rule appeared to be soccer clubs. Many parents noted that their children, always the males, were part of a soccer club that occasionally played games. However, even in these situations, the learners did not appear to be putting in the hours needed to excel in the sport.

On the positive side, a handful of learners were actively engaged in developing specific talents. A dance team regularly met after school. Other examples were learners who were involved in their church choir and seemed to put in a decent amount of effort practising and improving.

4.3.4 Role Models and Mentors

Learners: *Who are some of your role models? Why is that person your role model?*

Figure 4.4



Note: Learners were awarded up to three responses, hence the total greater than 100%

The majority (68%) of learners listed one of their parents as a role model. Most of the reasons for listing a parent were centered around love, support and family:

I never go hungry when my mother is there. (L/2/Q)

... he gives me everything that I want (L/2/R).

... [He/She] gave birth to me (L/2/A, L/2/G, L/2/H)

After parents, the second most popular role models were 'Entertainers' (41%). Of these, most were in the music industry. After entertainers 'Other' (24%) scored highest with the most popular choice being 'myself' and 'Teachers' (24%) for "teaching us many things (2/F)."

In the essay-style questionnaire many learners commented on the negative forms of peer pressure that they were subject to.

My friends give me pressure all the time. They tell me to quit school. (L/3/M)

Another learner echoed this sentiment, stating he was always pressured by friends to skip school and:

... steal from Spar or rob people and use the money that we get from what we have done to buy drugs and get high. (L/3/EE)

The issue of orphaned learners was particularly concerning regarding finding strong role models. One of these learners said:

I live alone, I have no one to guide me as parents. (L/3/YY)

Interpretation

It is interesting to note that the overwhelming majority of learners saw their parents as role models. The reasons given were usually in terms of gratitude for support, as opposed to aspiring to achieve what their parents had. The learners also expressed a keen awareness of the negative influences in their lives, which many identified as friends.

It seems many of the learners possessed a poor understanding of the term role model. This again can be attributed to the fact that there simply were not many people in their communities that had achieved success in life.

Parents: Who are the role model or positive influences in their lives? Is anyone mentoring your child or helping them to develop their talents?

Most of the parents answered that no one was mentoring their children or serving as role models. One or two parents mentioned characters from a TV soap opera, but for the large part parents did not mention anyone specific. One mother (L/4/11) mentioned that her son looked up to the field worker. Another commented that while she did not know, she was sure it was someone very intelligent at school, possibly referring to a teacher. In general, the parents' answers were similar to those of the

field worker and *Youth Leaders*, in stating that there really were not many (at least identifiable) role models in the learners' lives. Some responses were as follows:

Akukho mtu endimazayo (there is no one that I know of). (P/8)

Umm...Andiyazi. Mhlawumbi....hayi, andiyazi (Umm...I don't know. Maybe...no, I don't know). (P/3)

Interpretation

The parents were mostly unaware of the existence of role models who their children were looking up to or aspiring to be like. Other than the occasional comment regarding a television character, which even then seemed to be more of a comparison than a role model, the parents were totally in the dark.

Masinyusane Staff: Who are some of the people the learners look up to or model themselves after?

The field worker noted that he was occasionally dumbfounded by the answers he received when he asked the learners whom they looked up to. In his words:

I've had some of the most bizarre role models. All of them are American celebrities. Pop-culture. Down to soapies. It's never really 'real' people.(FW)

The field worker was then asked if the learners looked up to their parents. His response was:

No, far from it. I have yet to meet a learner who says, 'I look up to my parents'. (FW)

This contradicts the fact that the majority (68%) of the learners surveyed above listed a parent as one of their role models.

In similar vein, the *Youth Leaders* did not think that there were enough positive influences in society. As one *Youth Leader* responded:

Who do they look up to? There are no role models. I was talking to [name withheld] today, telling her that the problem is most of the things we see around us we think is cool. We see people sell drugs and get drunk all the time and all of us start to think it's cool. The minute we think it's cool, and the kids think it's cool, they start to adopt that behavior. (YL/3)

Another Youth Leader noted:

Influence plays a big role. When you're around people that think less of themselves, you actually become like that. And if you grow up with people that have a very high self-esteem and believe in themselves, you will also be like that. (YL/1)

It was noted above that the learners' motivation levels appeared to be lacking. Some of the Masinyusane staff attributed this to the lack of role models serving as inspiration for the learners to work hard. Without goals and someone to look up to, they became complacent with where they were in life. As a result, the culture of poverty that the field worker noted above had taken hold. As one Youth Leader explained:

Most of these kids have become comfortable with where they are. The minute you become comfortable with what you have, you do not drive for more. You don't want to have more. You don't need to have more, because you think what you have is okay. And what you see around you [matters]. Majority of the community you see, majority of the people around you are not "up there" if I may put it that way. So you become comfortable with it, too, because of the company that you're keeping. (YL/3)

Interpretation

Masinyusane's staff was very concerned about the lack of role models to guide and inspire the learners. It is interesting to note that while the learners overwhelmingly mentioned their parents, the field worker was under the impression that none of the learners looked up to their parents. One of the reasons for this, as mentioned above, may be the understanding of the term role model. Some of the learners appeared to have listed their parents more in terms of gratitude, as opposed to in terms of striving to be like them.

4.3.5 Exposure to Careers

Learners: If you could have any job, what would that be?

Table 4.1

Profession	Count of Learner	% Total
Business person	9	26%
Social worker	6	18%
Professional athlete	4	12%
Unsure	4	12%
Pilot	2	6%
Actor	1	3%
Doctor	1	3%
Help the Poor	1	3%
Pet Groomer	1	3%
Police	1	3%
President	1	3%
Radio DJ	1	3%
Teacher	1	3%
Tourism	1	3%

The most popular career choice amongst the learners was that of a business person (26%). Of the learners that chose a business-related career, an accounting career was the most popular choice (44%). Other answers included, “business woman”; “CEO of a company”; and “bank teller.” Following business-related fields, social workers were the next most popular career (18%).

Interpretation

The learners expressed interest in a wide variety of careers. The most common, with 26% of the response, was a business career. On the surface, this seems to contradict the finding of Cosser and Sehlola (2009:xii), namely that Black learners have less developed career plans, or Stead (2005:7) that the learners in townships have little understanding of various careers due to lack of career guidance.

However, as described below, while the participating learners appeared to be aware of a variety of careers, their understanding of these careers was very limited.

Parents: What would your child like to do with their lives? What career do they want to pursue? What field of study are they interested in?

In general, the field worker found that almost none of the parents had any idea, nor did they seem to have put much thought into the issue. Most hoped that their children would be able to find a job somewhere, but answers with regard to further studies or a professional career were scarce. One mother commented that she did care, but did not know, because:

... uyincwadi evaliweyo (she's a closed book). (P/1)

Another parent (P/2) stated that her child would study engineering, without realising that by him taking (and failing) Math Literacy, that option was essentially off the table. Even more telling was the fact that the learner expressed no interest whatsoever in engineering during his personal interview with the field worker.

Interpretation

It is clear that the parents had little idea of what their children intended to pursue post-matric, whether it was tertiary studies or employment related. One reason for this may be the fact that the parents had not attended university, nor worked in professional jobs, themselves. This is in contrast to the finding of Collet (2010:100), namely that the parents of impoverished learners in South Africa are highly involved in discussing and determining their children's future careers.

Masinyusane Staff: Are the kids exposed to different professions at home? How many parents do you come across that are working in professional jobs?

According to the field worker:

"Very few. Very, very, very few. Uncles, yes. But parents, no. I've never come across one at [School A]." (FW)

He added that this was hardly surprising, because if parents held a professional job, they most likely would not be sending their children to School A!

The learners themselves seemed to have little understanding of various career options. While they listed many (see Table 4.1), when pressed to explain why they want to pursue a specific career, many struggled to elaborate. When asked about the learners' awareness of career options, the field worker continued that they had no idea. He elaborated:

I've had learners say 'I want to be a social worker'. And I'll say, 'Why do you want to be a social worker?' and they'll say, 'because I like to socialize.' And with a straight face. So you'll hear things like that. It's got to do with the school... A Grade 12 learner does not know what he wants to become. Has no clue. He might say he wants to become a doctor. You'll ask, do you know what requirements you need to become a doctor? And he'll say, no. Do you know which institutions offer medicine? He'll say no. (FW)

Interpretation

The learners had not been exposed to different careers through their parents. Most of the parents were unemployed and were able to provide very little career-related advice. The result was that while the learners were aware of a variety of career options, they possessed very little understanding about them.

4.4 THEME 3: THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

This section will present the data on the school environment. It will first present data on the physical environment of the school. This will be followed by data on the curriculum of the school, and then the obstacles present at the school. Finally, positive perceptions of the school as an environment conducive to learning and talent development will be presented.

4.4.1 Physical Environment

School A was one of the most disadvantaged schools in the entire Port Elizabeth. Prior to Masinyusane's arrival in 2009, the school had no running water or working

electricity. While it had running water at the time of writing this thesis, only six of the nineteen classrooms had electricity. Furthermore, the majority of the classrooms had missing or broken windows, doors and ceilings. The wind whipped straight through the classrooms, and most of them were covered in dust, dirt and debris. This was compounded by the fact that due to a lack of electricity in many classes, the learners were forced to learn in the dark (sunlight was minimal, due to building design). The fence surrounding the school had collapsed in places and the school had been heavily vandalised. Overall, the physical appearance of the school could be described as nothing short of dilapidated. It was certainly not conducive to learning.

Learners: What renovations are most important to you at the school?

Given the poor physical state of the school and Masinyusane’s stated intentions of fundraising for the purpose of renovating the infrastructure, the learners were asked to name the renovations they would most like to see. The following were the results:

Table 4.2

Choice	Top Choice (3 points)	Second Choice (2 points)	Third Choice (1 point)	Total Points
Electricity	22	4	1	75
Classroom	6	12	10	52
Other	2	8	10	32
Computers	4	3	1	19
Fence Security	1	4	2	13
Blank	0	4	11	19

Note: ‘Other’ consisted of toilet renovations, new water taps or picking up garbage.

The overwhelming majority of the learners wished to have electricity installed the classrooms. This corresponded with the researcher’s observations above that the classrooms were dark and difficult to learn in. Next to electricity, learners wished to see the classrooms renovated, including painting, fixing windows, and new doors and ceilings.

Interpretation

The learners wanted to study in classrooms that were in a better state of repair. The classrooms were dark and uninspiring and the learners overwhelmingly wished this to change – even more so than receiving new and better equipment, such as computers.

4.4.2 Curriculum at the School

School A offered only twelve classes for learners in Grades 10 to 12. This was a low number, even compared to other township schools. For example, the closest neighboring high school offered a total of 16 classes - 33% more than School A. The school offered no art, music or drama classes. Furthermore, there were no computer or science laboratories, or any technical classes whatsoever. One of the *Youth Leaders* commented on this, noting the lack of classes tapping into the learners' creative capacities:

... they're not given the room for creativity. Its' something they must be given. (YL/3)

Interpretation

The school offered a very narrow range of classes, with only the most traditional courses being offered. This confirms the findings of Root-Bernstein (1999:12) and Robinson (2009:13), namely that the schools are too focused on using words and numbers only. The lack of art, technical and information technology classes available to the learners was a huge disadvantage. The result was that the learners were simply not being exposed to a variety of fields they might be interested in pursuing.

Furthermore, there was very little room for creative development in the classes offered to the learners in Grades 10 to 12. The data suggests that the learners' creative development, which Gelb (2002:13) and Renzulli (2000:100) deem as a critical characteristic of productive citizens, was being suppressed.

Learners: Are there any subjects that you wish [School A] offered?

The responses to this question were difficult to analyse. While 88% of the learners stated 'Yes,' there were additional classes they wished that the school offered, only half of the respondents actually listed what they wished those classes were. Of those that responded, the most popular choice was Computer classes, followed by Afrikaans, Tourism, Music, and then Engineering. Only four of the learners (12%) stated that they were content with the courses offered by the school.

Interpretation

The learners indicated that they desired more choice in the classes they could take, but seemingly they did not know what they wanted. This most likely stemmed from ignorance with regard to the classes that might be available to them.

4.4.3 Obstacles at School

Learners: What are the obstacles at school that can prevent you from being successful in your studies this year?

The learners provided a long list of obstacles at school preventing their success during that year. The overriding theme was that the learners felt that many of the teachers were falling short of their responsibilities. In that regard, a Masinyusane Board member noted:

There are few who feel that the school is trying everything possible to ensure that learners succeed at the end of the year. (BM)

Some of the findings she found most prevalent and noteworthy were “*unsympathetic and insensitive teachers to slow learners*”, “*fear of harassment by teachers*”, and “*poor learner-teacher relationships.*”

Learners: What are some things you'd like to see happen or change at the school?

Given the open-ended question, learner responses were quite varied. The most prevalent answer centered around complaints about teachers (37%). Eight of the learners (23%) commented that they wanted to see improved teacher attitudes.

There are some teachers who just stay in the staff room or offices and don't really do nothing. (L/1/A)

A few other learners (L/1/N, L/1/C, L/1/I and L/1/M) also commented that they would like to see changes in teachers' attitudes.

Perhaps more concerning was the issue of physical abuse. Five learners (14%) stated that they wished that teachers would stop beating learners. Comments included:

I want our teachers to stop beating the learners. (L/1/Z)

Teachers must stop punishing us with canes. (L/1/HH)

Other issues included improvements to the School Feeding Scheme, which was launched in 2011; assistance to learners in the form of school uniforms; and motivating learners. One learner summed up two of these issues by saying:

I would like you guys [Masinyusane] to help learners with no uniform and also I would like you to motivate them about the importance of school. (L/1/FF)

Interpretation

School A suffered from many of the shortcomings identified by Macfarlane and Chaykowski (2011:13) and Motshekga (2011:1), such as poor teaching, a lack of leadership, and violence. The learners' comments validated the findings of Chisholm (2005:214), namely that many of the teachers in the townships simply do not teach as often as required.

The alleged high incidence of teachers bunking class reflected a lack of leadership that Motshekga (2011:1) suggests is prevalent in the township schools. It is clear that neither the principal, the SGB, nor the teachers themselves were holding certain teachers accountable for failing to attend their classes.

Corporal punishment was present at the school and the learners were unhappy about it. The learners harboured many negative feelings towards specific teachers. This confirms Maseko's finding (2002:3) that corporal punishment remains prevalent in township schools.

Masinyusane Staff: What are some of the things you'd like to see change at the school?

The Masinyusane team felt very frustrated by the failure of some teachers to teach. They believed that this was not only depriving the learners from learning, but was creating a culture of anarchy, which undermined all efforts to intervene with the learners. Speaking in tandem, the field worker and programme manager stated,

It should be criminal for there to be even a single free period. It's a scandal in a school with ten too many teachers. The free period thing is a huge huge thing. The problem is for the young learners coming into school, they are impressionable, wide-eyed, willing and eager to learn. They get bogged down by the system. In the back of their minds, this is a school in which they're used to having free periods. Now someone comes to make us stay longer, now they say hold on, this is a place we're used to doing nothing. If the ethic was doing work, it would be much easier for Masinyusane to do their work. (FW/PM)

There was also the feeling that the school was not doing enough to expose the learners to different careers, educational opportunities, or even historical sites in Port Elizabeth. The programme manager then commented that more outings should be arranged to expose the learners to different aspects of the city. The field worker agreed with her comments, noting that this was one of the big differences between township and city schools.

When you go to a better school, it opens your world. In every single sense. It challenges you on every single level. For example, a child in Grade 8 now at [School A], doesn't know where the airport is. Might not know there is an airport in Port Elizabeth, which is a disgrace. Whereas, a child in Grade 2 at a different school knows pretty much all of PE. Has been exposed to all of PE. (FW)

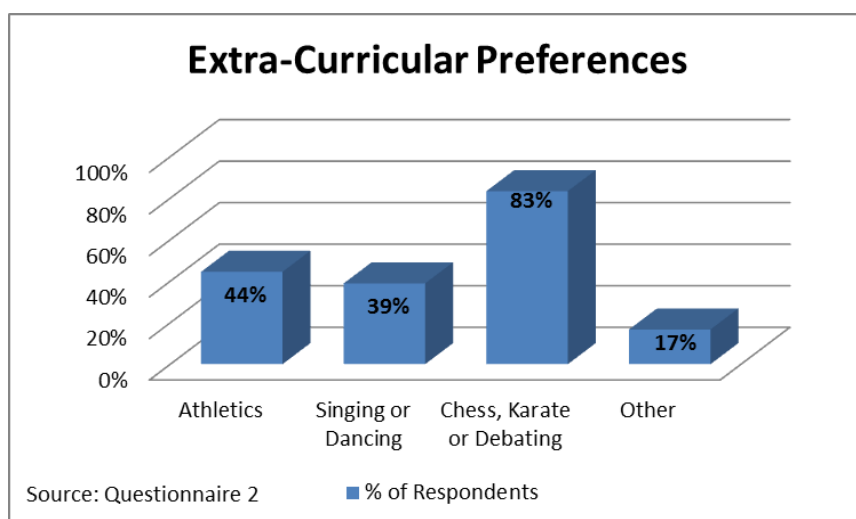
Interpretation

Similar to that of the learners above, and again confirming the findings of Chisholm (2005:214), the Masinyusane staff's biggest complaint was that teachers were not teaching during their allocated periods. It was clear that this had created a culture of anarchy and laziness at the school. Not only were the learners missing out on valuable teaching time, but they were also being taught bad habits that were preventing their successful participation in other programmes designed to help them.

4.4.4 Talent Development

Learners: What kind of extracurricular programmes do you want at the school? (Example: Debating, Chess, Karate, Other ...)

Figure 4.5



Note: Learners were allowed three responses

Given that the question was leading (by providing the examples of karate, chess, and debating), the researcher placed the responses of 'karate, chess, or debating' into a separate category. The fact that 83% of learners responded with one of those

choices amongst their top three illustrates the powerful influence a leading question can have on respondents.

Of those who responded in favour of 'Athletics', the most popular choice was soccer (63%). This was followed by netball (31%). Of those who responded in favour of 'Singing or Dancing', a strong majority stated a preference for a school choir (71%). Among those who responded in favour of 'Chess, Karate or Debating', debating was the most popular (56%), followed by karate (43%) and then chess (33%).

Interpretation

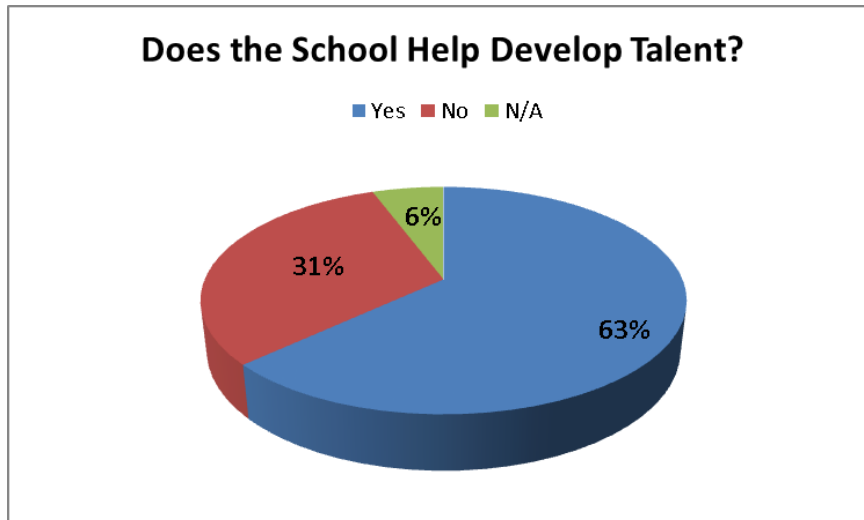
Similar to what the learners identified as talents, the learners overwhelmingly voted to have sport, art, music or dance classes introduced at the school. This was informative, since the learners again showed a preference, outside of being asked to consider talent, for these activities.

At the same time, one would have expected the learners to express an interest in participating in a much wider range of activities. Given that business-related careers were most popular in Section 4.3.5 above, one would have expected the learners to express some interest in being involved in business, investing or entrepreneurial activities. The researcher interpreted this as the learners being unaware that any such programmes might be available to them.

Learners: Does your school help you to develop [your] talents?

Researcher's note: This question followed, "What are some of your talents?" on the questionnaire.

Figure 4.6



Interestingly, of the 62% that said 'Yes,' the school was helping them to develop their talents, 43% stated that the reasons were "we do have practice", "we have poles for netball", or "every Wednesday is sports day". Three went so far as to say, "we practice every day." These answers were surprising, given that over the previous two years the various teams had on an annual basis formally practiced on no more than ten occasions (as per observation, field worker and volunteer responses).

Interpretation

Many learners were under the impression that the school was assisting them in developing their talents. This was in contrast to the comments and observations by Masinyusane staff. This confirmed the fact that the majority of the learners were totally unaware of what was necessary and required to develop one's talents. It was clear from all of the data that the school did not provide many opportunities for the learners to develop their talents, therefore the results above indicated a complete disconnect between what the learners perceived and what was necessary. The learners' opinion was also in complete opposition to the findings of Ericsson (2007:1), Coyle (2009:692), and Levitt and Dubner (2011:177), namely that one must work incredibly hard and be assisted by others to develop a talent.

Masinyusane Staff: How is the school helping the learners to develop their talents?

The overwhelming response to this question was that the school was not helping the learners to develop their talents, which led to the researcher rewording the question as follows:

Masinyusane Staff: Okay, where is the school falling short regarding helping the learners to discover and develop their talents?

- **Academic-related responses**

The single greatest complaint among Masinyusane staff, and this was nearly unanimous, was that teachers were skipping classes. Taking pains to respond politely, the programme manager commented that:

[The learners] may have a talent but need stimulation and material to nurture that academic talent. (PM)

The *Youth Leaders* felt that the quality of teaching was lacking amongst some of the learners they worked with. One observed:

At this school, kids are not taught how to think. It's all about what you need to know now. How to memorise something. And they don't remember things. (YL/1)

The *Youth Leaders* were also very concerned with the mindset of the Grades 8 and 9 learners. The general perception was, that rather than thinking and critically analysing problems, the learners were expecting to be spoon-fed information in their sessions with them.

- **Talent-related Responses**

The Masinyusane staff felt that another factor that was preventing talent development was the lack of proper coaches at the school. If a coach was available,

which in itself was rare, he or she tended to be a teacher without any relevant expertise. The field worker elaborated:

In terms of developing their talent. The coach of a team will be a teacher. A teacher has no real knowledge or passion of the game. Instead of getting a quality coach, or someone who's involved in the sport, they get a teacher. So the technical aspect of any particular game, he will not really know. They get a teacher, who's a teacher, and not a coach. And that hampers growth. A coach will identify technical aspect about how to identify particular things in a kids' development. Things only a coach will know. A lot of technical things. (FW)

Masinyusane Staff: What are some of the things you'd like to see the school or Masinyusane do to help the kids in discovering, realising, or developing their talents?

The most common response was that the culture of the school had to change, the first priority being to have the teachers spend more time teaching in class. The field worker summarised his thoughts:

Whenever you go to a different school, they flood you with different information and different skills. Your mind is constantly hungry. As opposed to going to a school where there's free periods and your mind just shuts down. [And in this situation] school is simply a phase that you go through. You have to do it. It's going through the motions. (FW)

Additional responses were either additional classes or more extracurricular activities after school:

Computers and different software programs so the kids could progress their interests themselves. (PM)

We are trying to roll out more extracurriculars. (YL/3)

The art thing. As well as the drama, chess, soccer. (YL/1)

At the school, I would love to have more technical subjects. Technical drawing. Engineering. It would really really go a long way for learners that aren't into the current subjects. (FW)

Interpretation

To begin, Masinyusane staff felt that too many of the teachers were failing to use their time effectively. In addition to skipping class, the feeling was that many of the teachers were failing to create a stimulating and effective classroom environment in which the learners were challenged, taught to think critically, and had their curiosity peaked. Brooks (2010:1460) has demonstrated how important this is for a learner's future success, both academically and in terms of career development.

Another shortcoming of the school was failure to provide coaches and mentors with the needed expertise to help develop talents in the learners. The field worker's response about the need for coaches with technical training was in line with the findings of Robinson (2009:179) and Colvin (2008:1146). A coach or mentor with expertise is critical to provide the advice and suggestions one needs to improve at something. It was clear that the learners were not provided this resource at the school.

4.4.5 Positive Perceptions of the School

Learners: What do you like most about [School A]?

Interestingly, when asked what they liked most about the school, two thirds (66%) of the learners stated something positive about the teachers. Some of their responses were:

... it's the encouragement from the teachers, they urge us to [work on] our studies. (L/1/EE)

The teachers are great and they support us in everything we do or want to achieve in life. (L/1/CC)

I like the teachers because they are committed in their work, they motivate us to read our books and to be disciplined. They communicate with us very well as a family. (L/1/GG)

Additional answers included the feeding scheme, Masinyusane's support, and the improved academic results over the previous few years. Five learners (14%)

mentioned the school feeding scheme as one of the things they liked most about the school. One learner said,

I like [School A] because it is a supportive school, because we don't pay school fees, and [because] they feed us. We thank Masinyusane for doing a great job. (L/1/A)

Interpretation

The learners had many positive things to say about the teachers. This was particularly interesting, given the complaints about the teachers in response to the previous question. An explanation, other than the children having ambivalent attitudes towards their teachers, could be that there were teachers of varying quality (at least in terms of the learners' perceptions) at the school. It is also possible that the learners were providing the type of responses that they believed Masinyusane was seeking. Either way, it was clear that some of the teachers went of their way to work hard and help the learners, while others were not as enthusiastic.

Masinyusane Staff: What are some of the things you like most about the school?

The Masinyusane staff was also quick to point out the commitment and efforts displayed by some of the teachers. In one *Learner Profile*, there was a detailed account of a learner dropping out of school, only to have a teacher visit his home and convince him to return. In another case, two orphaned boys were regularly supported by one of the teachers, by means of food and clothes. As the field worker stated:

There are some very good things that the teachers do. I have never seen a school where the teachers go to the learner's home when they spot a problem. I've seen that with more than five teachers who do that. They truly, truly care for the learners in that sense. They go out of their way to take kids to the clinics, to the police station, to their homes to talk to their parents. (FW)

Interpretation

The Masinyusane staff clearly felt that there was a number of teachers that went above and beyond the call of duty. This was certainly a very strong positive, as it seemed to inspire the volunteers that there was a core group of caring teachers around which positive programmes could be built.

4.5 CONCLUSION

It is clear from the data presented in this chapter that there were many factors preventing learners from discovering and realising their talents at School A. The learners had very limited understanding of where their talents lay and as such did not dedicate any time or energy towards developing them. The situation was exacerbated by challenging home and school environments, both ravaged by poverty. Chapter Five will discuss the implications of the data presented above and make recommendations for improving the situation.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the implications of the data findings presented in Chapter Four and make recommendations on how the situation may be improved. The reader is once again reminded that the research took place through the lens of Masinyusane, a non-profit organisation. Therefore, while recommendations were made regarding the school, the majority were directed towards Masinyusane. The researcher believed that the recommendations made to Masinyusane would be far more likely to be adopted and acted upon than those made to the school and therefore more valuable to the research project.

5.2 THEME 1: TALENT

5.2.1 Learner Talents

Implications

The results imply that the learners had a very limited view of the talents they possessed and how to develop these. Rath (2007), Robinson (2009) and Renzulli (2000) have all authored books that show emphatically that people are happiest and most effective when they are focusing on a talent they have a passion for. The fact that the learners held such limited views of their talents has decidedly negative implications.

Firstly, the learners were likely to be underestimating their own potential and therefore be demotivated. Maree and Ebersohn (2002:55) state that discovering one's talents is critical for self-confidence and motivation. Once one finds something one is passionate about, one is more likely to put in the effort to develop a talent of which one can not only be proud, but also use to further oneself in the world. On the other hand, demotivated learners are much less likely to succeed academically or

put in the effort to develop a talent. Motivation levels and the implications thereof will be discussed in greater detail in Section 5.2.2.

Secondly, if learners are not discovering their talents and passion in life, they are more likely to pursue a career that will not lead to satisfaction. This in turn will likely manifest itself in poor academic performance and struggles in any future tertiary programme.

Finally, developing a talent may be the best way to break out of the cycle of poverty that was trapping so many of the participating learners. It takes great effort and focus to overcome the many obstacles thrown at township learners and the drive to pursue and develop a talent that one loves, could provide a goal to strive towards. This talent may then open doors to a meaningful and successful life. As Brooks (2010:2951) observes, "School asks students to be good at a range of subjects, but life asks people to find one passion that they will follow forever."

Recommendations

It is critical that School A and Masinyusane create opportunities for learners to discover and develop their talents. These opportunities must entail working with parents, adjusting the curriculum, organising more extracurricular programmes and workshops, and hiring expert mentors and coaches. The sections that follow will provide recommendations for fostering opportunities for talent discovery and development.

5.2.2 Motivation of Learners

Implications

The low levels of motivation amongst the learners is of grave concern. For one, it suggests that the learners will not perform well academically. Unmotivated learners cannot be expected to put in the hours of studying required to succeed at school. Unless motivation levels are improved, School A will continue to witness poor academic performance and high drop-out rates.

In addition to academics, a lack of motivation will result in undeveloped talents. Once one discovers a talent that one is passionate about, one needs to put in considerable effort to develop it (Coyle, 2009:449; Ericsson, 2007:3). To become an expert, or at least proficient enough to leverage one's talent into a career, requires years of deliberate practice and intense focus. This requires high levels of motivation. This is especially true for township learners, given all the poverty-related obstacles they must overcome.

Recommendations

One critical step in improving motivation levels is to help the learners identify a talent they are passionate about. If one is passionate about something, and believes in one's ability to develop it, one is far more likely to be motivated and work hard. Identifying a talent that could lead to future success and a meaningful life will drastically raise motivation levels at the school.

In addition to assisting learners in identifying talents, which will be discussed in various sections below, the school and Masinyusane should do more to explain their future educational and career options to the learners. For example, Masinyusane could hold university preparation workshops to inform learners of the financial options, academic requirements and processes regarding university admission. With a goal in mind, and an understanding of how to achieve it, learners would be more motivated to perform both academically and to develop a talent that may help them gain admission to university. This workshop should be modeled after a programme such as the College Summit, which successfully assists thousands of low-income learners into university every year. At any given College Summit weekend, a learner will have written a 500-word personal essay, completed a university or college application, compiled a short list of colleges and universities, as well as received information about financial aid and scholarships.

Another important step in improving motivation levels is to explain the importance of adopting the right mindset. Masinyusane could arrange workshops to teach learners the life skills and attitudes that lead to success, as described by industry leaders

(Dweck, 2008; Covey, 2005). Learners are far more likely to work hard, develop a desire to learn, and succeed if they adopt the proper mindset (Dweck, 2008:178).

Motivational speeches could also be arranged to challenge and inspire the learners. The school could pay for professional speakers with experience in the field. On the other, the school could arrange for prior graduates, preferably ones currently studying at university, to address the learners. These graduates could not only serve as inspiration for current learners, but impart the knowledge of what they did to get where they were.

5.3 THEME 2: TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENT

5.3.1 Obstacles in Home Environment

Implications

The cycle of poverty was a huge concern and was directly correlated to the motivation levels and mindsets described in Section 5.2.2 above. Perceptions of the world are wildly important in determining one's success in life. The widespread poverty experience by (and surrounding) the learners had shaped their view of the world in a dangerous way. The fact that only 29% of the participating learners lived with an employed parent (again, employment here consisted of part-time and informal work) suggests that the majority of the learners lived in extreme poverty. Brooks (2010:1021) reminds us that all children develop a narrative of their life and tend to follow this closely. This narrative is influenced tremendously by one's environment. The learners were at a high risk of developing the narrative that the Field Worker (Section 4.3.1) described in which one "cannot see themselves anywhere other than where they are." This is a death knoll to the level of commitment and motivation one needs to develop a talent.

Peer pressure is enormously influential in young people's lives. Social networks matter greatly and the participating learners were clearly being influenced in negative ways by their peers. Brook's research (2010:3226) has shown that one tends to conform to the group with whom one spends the most time. As some participating

learners were surrounded by peers encouraging them to take drugs, engage in crime, and drop out of school, there was a strong possibility that that was what would happen.

Moreover, the high occurrence of death the learners had suffered implies that many were extremely vulnerable to the potential pitfalls of facing multiple “risk factors,” as described by Garbarino *et al.* (1992:3). The chance of underdevelopment in the learners who have lost a parent increases drastically. This worsened the high levels of stress that Farah (Farah, Noble & Hurt, 2006:280) warns that impoverished families already suffer. The result, as Farah describes, is the underdevelopment of cognitive abilities, such as language, memory and pattern awareness. This stress would also contribute to the widespread alcoholism and abuse the data suggests the learners suffered from.

Recommendations

The world has been searching for solutions to breaking cycles of poverty for decades. This research seeks to contribute to the debate by suggesting that assisting learners in identifying and then developing their talent will give them the opportunity for success in life (thus breaking the cycle). Rather than making a myriad of suggestions to combat the challenges, which range from HIV/AIDS to unemployment, in the impoverished township, the researcher suggests that the school and Masinyusane focus on creating opportunities for the learners to be involved in positive and productive activities that will serve as a contrast to all the negativity surrounding them.

A few smaller social steps could alleviate some of the worst aspects of the poverty the learners are suffering from. For one, the school could seek outside funds to expand its Feeding Scheme. Numerous learners commented on hunger being an obstacle to their success, and the school must address this issue. At the same time, Masinyusane could expand its social assistance, such as providing larger and more frequent food parcels to impoverished families.

Another recommendation is that Masinyusane could expand its entrepreneurship and home visit programmes. Providing opportunities for the parents to earn incomes, however meagre, may go a long way in raising morale at home. More frequent home visits would also provide greater opportunities for Masinyusane staff to assist with other social issues, such as accessing grants.

5.3.2 Parenting

Implications

The parents of the learners at School A were not heavily involved in the learners' lives, with regard to academics, career guidance and talent development. This has numerous negative implications.

To begin, the lack of parental involvement suggests that the parents were not assisting the learners to develop their talents. They were failing to heed Dweck's suggestion (Brooks, 2010:3000) that the two most important things a parent can do are to pay attention to what their child's passion is and to encourage them to develop it.

The low levels of parental involvement also suggest that the parents were not filling the role of role models or mentors. This is disconcerting, given the importance Feldhusen (1993:1089) and Fuller (2004:39) attach to parental goals and expectations in the performance of learners. It also implies that the learners were not receiving the recognition, encouragement, facilitation and stretching that Robinson (2009:179) states mentors can provide to learners.

Even if parents are not mentoring their children, parents can play an important role in motivating learners (Lickona, 2004:xxiv). Unfortunately, this did not appear to be the case in this study, as evidenced by both the learners' statements in Section 4.3.2 above and the low overall levels of motivation among the learners.

Finally, the lack of education of the parents suggests that they were not imparting many of the "invisible advantages" that Brooks (2010:1854) suggests learners from

upper and middle class families benefit from. These include the habits, knowledge and cognitive traits that will ensure success in the academic and economic worlds. This corresponds to Fuller's (2004:32) claims that the number one method of learning is through imitation. The learners were unable to imitate the academic skills and behaviors of their parents, since the majority of the parents did not possess these.

Recommendations

The school needs to create opportunities for greater parental involvement. This should begin with regularly scheduled and informative meetings with the parents. Masinyusane staff, in particular the field worker, could facilitate improving attendance at these meetings by visiting homes and encouraging parents to attend.

Given the parents' lack of education and familiarity with the education system Masinyusane could expand its efforts to educate, inform and update the parents about what is going on at the school. They could incorporate different aspects of this into their home-visit programmes.

5.3.3 Extracurricular Activities

Implications

The lack of extracurricular activities for learners contributed significantly to the poor talent awareness amongst the learners. Extracurricular activities, ranging from sport to debating societies, could play a critical role in introducing learners to different talents. However, the learners were not receiving these opportunities.

Moreover, in the few extracurriculars that did exist, the coaches were inadequate. Teachers without the necessary experience and relevant knowledge, and in some cases the motivation, were filling this role. This had resulted in irregular practice schedules and almost non-existent matches and meant that the learners were not receiving the inspiration, feedback, practice guidance and expertise that a proper coach would be able to provide them. The implication is that their development

would either be limited or slower than it otherwise could have been, had quality coaches been available. The result is that learners would become demotivated by lack of progress and choose to quit.

Recommendations

The school and Masinyusane could work together to expand extracurricular opportunities at the school. They could do this by introducing programmes themselves or by bringing in outside partners.

Regarding introducing programmes, the school and Masinyusane should consider partnering with local organisations that could support various initiatives. Government organisations, such as the Department of Sport and Recreation, have funding and resources to commit to worthy initiatives. The school should seek access to this funding by providing the Department with an opportunity to invest in a quality programme.

In addition to government, there are a variety of non-profit organisations, ranging from sports to arts, with which Masinyusane could establish partnerships. On the sporting front, these could include Grassroots Soccer, Imbewu, and the Umzingisi Foundation. In the field of arts, the Zama Foundation is pioneering new ways of bringing art and music to learners in the townships. Finally, organisations such as Toastmasters and the Junior City Council offer quality programmes that would expose the learners to even more opportunities to develop specific talents, such as public speaking.

The school should also address the issue of teachers serving as coaches. This was clearly hindering the development of sport and extracurricular activities and the model needs to be re-evaluated. Bringing in outside expertise, who could serve in partnership with the teachers, if necessary, would bring new life, energy and, most importantly, knowledge to the fledging existing programmes. Masinyusane could spearhead this initiative by again networking with other organisations.

5.3.4 Role Models and Mentors

Implications

The research showed a desperate lack of role models and mentors for the learners in the township. This was hurting the learners on multiple fronts. For one, no role models were inspiring and motivating them to strive and achieve in school and life. This can be directly correlated to the low motivation levels described in Section 5.1.2 above. Coyle (2009:2266) and Robinson (2009:180) suggest that one of the most important roles the role models and mentors is to push, inspire and motivate someone. The learners were not receiving this.

Another critical role played by role models and mentors is identifying talent in others (Robinson, 2009:179). They possess the domain knowledge (Colvin, 2008:1600) needed to see something in learners that no one else may be looking for. This once again contributes to the low levels of talent discovery discussed in Section 5.1.1 above.

For those learners seeking to develop a talent, there were not enough mentors available to help them. Mentors play a critical role in offering advice, suggestions and teaching new skills (Robinson, 2009:175). Without this support, the learners simply would not be able to achieve the levels of skill and talent they were capable of. This implies that they may be missing opportunities to pursue a career they would find meaningful, realise success in and finally break out of the cycle of poverty that was trapping so many of them.

Recommendations

The school and Masinyusane should investigate successful mentoring programmes, such as the Harvard Mentoring Project and the Big Brothers Big Sisters Organisation. These have both won awards for their success in pairing mentors with the youth, particularly in impoverished communities (Leverre, 2011:1). In addition to local business and community groups, the school and Masinyusane could

investigate the possibility of using students from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University as mentors.

Masinyusane should also create opportunities for its university students, especially those that have graduated from School A, to come to the school and speak to the learners. In addition to giving advice, the mere presence of these students could serve to inspire School A's learners, as the students have come from the same background.

5.3.5 Exposure to Careers

Implications

The learners' complete lack of career guidance and planning would inevitably result in incorrect decisions being made regarding their futures. This is very concerning, given the importance of choosing a career that one has an interest and passion for. If the learners that qualify for university studies are pursuing careers for the wrong reasons, they are more likely to struggle and become demotivated once enrolled at university. This will result in poor academic performance and the continuation of high drop-out rates.

Moreover, the lack of career guidance had clearly contributed to the poor motivation levels of the learners, as they did not see a path forward for themselves. It is critical that learners possess academic and career goals that they can strive to achieve (Stipek & Seal, 2001:149). In addition to these goals, they must understand the path to achieve them. Without these goals and an understanding of how to achieve them, the learners will be less motivated, more likely to succumb to distractions, and less likely to break out of the cycle of poverty.

Recommendations

Masinyusane needs to play a significant role here, given the lack of professional workers in the learners' families and communities. One suggestion would be to organise guest speakers to discuss, motivate and answer questions about various

careers. These could be held in conjunction with the Life Orientation projects concerning career development.

Masinyusane could leverage media that has already been created, such as the PACE software. PACE has a free career assessment tool in which learners answer 100 questions and receive career guidance based on their responses. They are then provided with a list of universities and colleges that offer programmes relevant to the recommended careers.

Another suggestion would be to work with local companies to create programmes to increase knowledge of careers and potentially work experience for learners. Masinyusane could work with the school to visit local businesses, such as Ford or VW, and have the companies give the learners a brief tour and speak about career options. In an ideal world, businesses would be willing to offer learnerships, even if unpaid, for the learners over school holidays.

Finally, both Masinyusane and the school need to ensure that the learners have a greater awareness of learnership, college and university options. As discussed in section 5.2.2 above, a model along the lines of College Summit should be consulted and implemented, if possible. At the very least, the school could invite local colleges and universities, such as the PE College, to give presentations to the learners about various post-matric options.

5.4 THEME 3: SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

5.4.1 Physical Environment

Implications

The dilapidated physical environment of the school was demotivating to the learners. Without a conducive environment to learning, gains would be limited in other interventions. Esau's (2007:87) research has shown the detrimental effects vandalism has on school culture and academic performance in township areas.

Recommendations

The SGB and management of the school should place a greater emphasis on improving the infrastructure of the school. Masinyusane could assist in this regard by identifying potential funders and obtaining quotes for renovations. The learners had clearly identified installing electricity as a top priority and the school should commit itself to bringing this about. Following this, the learners had requested renovated classrooms. The researcher suggests that this be done in part by professionals and in part by learners and community stakeholders (such as parents and guardians). By taking part in renovating the school, such as the painting of classrooms, the learners would be more likely to protect, take care of and maintain any renovations made.

5.4.2 Curriculum at the School

Implications

The school was not offering enough subjects for the learners to develop their creative capacities. The learners were therefore not being afforded the opportunity to develop one of the traits (creativity) that Renzulli (2000:100) identifies as “a hallmark of society’s most productive people.” By failing to give the arts and humanities due justice, the school was failing to provide what Root-Bernstein (1999:20) describes as a holistic education.

Equally concerning was that the lack of exposure to different subjects, and thus methods of thinking, resulting in a lack of opportunity to discover and develop many of Gardner’s (2008:4) multiple intelligences. This directly correlated to the lack of talent discovery and corresponding implications discussed in section 5.1.1 above.

Furthermore, with its limited curriculum, School A was only catering to certain intelligences, interests and talents. This resulted in lower motivation levels, poor academic performance and higher drop-out rates amongst students that were not being catered for academically.

Recommendations

School A should begin by holding a meeting with its SGB and management staff to discuss the curriculum. Among other things, they should discuss whether they are satisfied with the current curriculum and the scope (and capacity) there is to offer additional subjects. The school should investigate all options for opening a computer laboratory, as this was not only being demanded by the learners, but is an essential part of education in the modern world.

Masinyusane could assist by offering (or organising) extra classes after school that are not currently in the curriculum. These could range from the arts and humanities to engineering and technically oriented classes. While these afternoon classes would not be academically rigorous, they would help to expose learners to more subjects and help identify more passions and talents. They would also provide opportunities for these learners that stated that their interests were not being catered for by the school, which should in turn raise motivational levels and attendance.

5.4.3 Obstacles at School

Implications

A group of teachers were clearly failing the learners; by both neglecting their teaching responsibilities and by physically abusing the learners. The most obvious implication is that the learners would not learn the material from the curriculum. They would therefore be unprepared to perform well academically. Another implication is that the teachers' attitudes were showing the learners that their education was not important. The learners themselves would then begin to adopt this attitude, resulting in lower morale and learner motivation. This would contribute towards creating a culture of anarchy at the school, which would also undermine all other initiatives.

With regard to corporal punishment, this too was causing anarchy at the school. Not only was it illegal, but it created resentment and unrest amongst the learners, which could worsen the situation (Hawkins, 2009:39). The fact that the teachers were

resorting to corporal punishment suggests that the school needs to take steps to improve discipline.

Recommendations

It goes without say that the management of the school needs to address the issue of teachers failing to fulfill their teaching responsibilities. This could come from multiple fronts, such as the SGB, the principal, the teachers' union, and from the teachers themselves. It is critical that the SGB and the principal take the lead here and ensure that teachers are in class and doing their job. Failure to do so should be reported to the Department of Education and the relevant teachers' unions.

Masinyusane does not possess the authority to force teachers to teach, or to punish them for not doing so; therefore, its approach should be different. One suggestion may be to create a system of rewards and incentives to reward teachers who attend classes, perform their duties, and are rated highly according to some predetermined scale. This may not only encourage underperformers to start doing their job, but also inspire those working hard to continue to do so.

Regarding discipline, the school should enforce a more rigorous Code of Conduct. This may give teachers confidence that there is an alternative to corporal punishment (Hawkins, 2009:167). The school could also arrange for workshops to be held to discuss alternative disciplinary strategies.

5.4.4 Talent Development

Implications

The school was not providing the participating learners with as many extracurricular opportunities as they would like. This should not be the case and implies that the learners were being withheld opportunities to develop the talents in which they were interested. The fact that the majority of the learners believed that the school was helping them to develop their talents once again implies that they possessed a limited understanding of talent discovery and development.

Recommendations

Masinyusane needs to assist the school in creating opportunities for learners to develop their talents in the realms of academics, extracurriculars, role models and mentors, and parenting. These were discussed in detail in Sections 5.2 to Section 5.4 above.

In addition to this, Masinyusane should organise workshops designed to educate the learners about the process of talent development. With a clearer understanding of the hard work, focus, determination and assistance once needs to become an expert in any talent, the learners would be more likely to take the necessary steps. Furthermore, these workshops should seek to identify examples of successful individuals from similar backgrounds and explain the hard work and dedication those individuals exerted to achieve success. It is critical to dispel the myth that God-given talent is the only reason one achieves success in any given talent.

5.4.5 Positive Perceptions of the School

Implications

The learners did reflect many positive perceptions of the school, which provided a critical foundation from which to build. All hope is not lost. This held particularly true regarding a core group of teachers to whom the learners felt particularly grateful.

Recommendations

Both the school and Masinyusane must build upon the strengths of the school and attempt to create a tipping point of success in which excellence and achievement become expectations at the school. School culture matters a great deal, and a culture of expectation and success will go a long way in improving motivation levels and mindsets amongst the learners. This would in turn facilitate all the other recommendations for talent discovery and development noted before.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research conducted was a case-study of the involvement of a non-profit organisation at one school. This one school represents only a minute portion of the overall high school learner population in Port Elizabeth.

In addition, the school is located in a predominantly Xhosa community, which does not necessarily possess the same dynamics as Coloured or White communities. The inclusion of schools with learners from different race groups would have added value to the study.

Along those same lines, School A was situated in an impoverished township in which there were few opportunities for learners to discover and develop talents. The study would have benefited from the inclusion of wealthier city schools, especially with regards to comparing programmes and opportunities afforded to learners at those schools.

Furthermore, the researcher's learner data was constrained to that which had already been obtained by Masinyusane's staff, of which the researcher is a member. While this was rich in detail and allowed for many valuable insights and findings, the study would have benefited from the researcher conducting additional questionnaires and interviews with the learners themselves. The same holds true for the teachers, with whom the researcher had initially hoped to include in the study. In both instances, the proper ethics clearance was only provided to the researcher after timing made conducting such additional research impractical. These delays, which occurred within the University's Ethics Department, were unfortunately beyond the control of the researcher.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following topics could be researched further:

- The effectiveness of various talent discovery and development initiatives.

- The perceptions of teachers regarding talent discovery and development amongst the learners.
- A comparative study of talent discovery and development opportunities afforded to learners from township schools, as opposed to wealthier schools.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The researcher conducted a comprehensive study investigating the various factors limiting learners from discovering and developing their talents. This includes not only identifying factors, but making recommendations to improve the situation. The overall findings suggest that learners have very limited understandings of their own talents and are not being afforded the opportunity to discover and develop talents that could lead them to success in life.

The researcher feels that all the stated objectives were achieved. Given the importance of the topic, the researcher feels strongly that drastic steps must be taken to provide more opportunities for talent discovery and development to learners in the townships. To this end, the researcher will work with Masinyusane's Board of Directors to ensure that the recommendations that were made above are investigated and possibly implemented.

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APPENDIX A1

Name: [REDACTED]
Age: 16
Address: [REDACTED]
Grade: [REDACTED]

I was asked to speak to [REDACTED] by [REDACTED], because he apparently had issues with his mother, who does not provide for him. He came flat out and told me the story. He said his mother has never provided for him. She gets a monthly grant for him and his other siblings (he has five other siblings, all his mother's kids), so he says she buys a bag of mielie meal, and a few other things, and **spends the rest on alcohol.**

The clothes he wears he gets from neighbors. His mother is abusive and lazy. She also calls him names. He gets no support from her whatsoever, financially or otherwise. She is married to his stepdad, and I gathered from talking to him that his stepdad is quiet, and that the woman dominates the household. He is employed as a security guard. Social workers have been involved, and it is a social worker that I know personally. He used to have a holiday job at the clinic, cleaning up after people. **His passion is football. This is his chosen career in life,** and he plays for a football club in Gelvandale. I was looking forward greatly to hearing this woman's version of events.

When I went to his home, I met a woman who was, and always has been, dirty. There is no other word to use to describe her. She does not look after herself, and neither does she look after the household. She is always horizontal whenever I see them. They live in a shack at the back of a house. I have seen them (both parents) boozing with the landlords.

My synopsis of the whole situation is that she is not a bad mother in terms of being abusive. She may be a negligent mother, but the boy is also not blameless in the equation. He has asked me to ask her for something, having not asked her in the first place, making her look uncaring and reckless. What she needs is constant monitoring and reminding. She sadly will not get this from her husband. He is truly almost a non-factor in the household. **Academically the boy does not even look at his books.** Not even at a glance. [REDACTED] is extremely helpful with him, and gives him daily lifts to his football practices.

The family has since moved from their hovel in Ferguson, and **now lives in a shack** in Jabavu Street. They moved out of their former place of residence because the landlords were constantly running out of electricity, leaving them in the dark for weeks on end. So they left without any warning when they heard of the place in Jabavu street. It is slightly bigger than the previous one, but still no place for a family to live in. It is also not as dark and ominous as the previous place.

Update: The only thing [REDACTED] wants to become is a soccer player. That is his vision in life. He still has a troubled home situation, and he periodically comes to my home when he has a crisis at his home.

APPENDIX A2

Name: [REDACTED]
Address: [REDACTED]
Age: 20
Grade: [REDACTED]

I became aware of her situation when two teachers separately told me there was a hungry child in Grade [REDACTED], and after I had seen [REDACTED] preparing food for a few learners, food which she had bought herself for them. She is in the Masinyusane remedial English class during the extra lessons. A very polite learner she is, but the fact that she does not eat will hamper her cause. She was at [REDACTED] last year, and this is her first year at high school level. She says that the teaching is better at [REDACTED], and has no complaints about it. She has promised me the following in her subjects:

English	-	50%
Xhosa	-	90%
Maths	-	30%
Science	-	50%
L.O.	-	60%
Techno	-	60%
Arts & Cult	-	40%

Not surprisingly she is undecided about her future. As we continued chatting, she became more and more revealing about her home situation. She lives with her father, stepmother, older sister (22) and her sister's two children. Her stepmother is a domestic worker, and works some days of the week. Her father does odd jobs whenever he can. She has an aunt staying in Mhlaba Street, and she could not stop talking about this aunt. This aunt is not working, and has kids of her own, but this is the aunt that [REDACTED] turns to when she needs help.

Her biological mother is still alive, and lives out in Wells Estate with her boyfriend. She is an alcoholic. **She burnt the shack they were all living in, because she was drunk**, and now not one of her children stays with her. Whenever she gets money, she spends it with her boyfriend, and drinking is all they have in mind. Evidently this boyfriend has children of his own, and he looks after them, yet she seemingly cannot do the same with her own children. All of her mother's children have been removed from her, for neglect.

[REDACTED] has another sister who is attending school at Newell, and this sister stays with the aunt in Mhlaba street. I was alerted to her plight by [REDACTED]. Her father, she says, refused to attend the meeting at school. Both her father and stepmother are alcoholics, and when they are drunk, use this opportunity to hurl abuses at her, and call her all sorts of names, so loudly that even the neighbours can hear. She says the neighbours often come out and try to calm the situation, chastising the parents for their drunken behavior. She has only one pair of shoes, and these are her school shoes. She also has only one shirt, which she washes every day. Her skirt she bought from [REDACTED] in Grade 12, and she still owes her R100 for it, something which has caused friction between the two of them. She also does not have any form of deodorant, and her classmates call her names behind her back. Something she found out through her friend. With regard to her older sister, she says her sister has ill feelings towards her for some reason, and often spites her.

Update: [REDACTED] has dropped out of school.

APPENDIX A3

Name: [REDACTED]
Age: 20
Address: [REDACTED]
Grade: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is one of the most pleasant guys at school, and is a class rep. He started his high school campaign at [REDACTED]. He failed English in June, and he acknowledges that he has a problem with spelling and grammar. I have promised to get him some reading books to help, and he has promised me the following results:

L.O.	-	Level 5
Business	-	Level 5
IsiXhosa	-	Level 6
English	-	Level 4
Maths Lit	-	Level 5

He was very unsure about his academic future, and when I pressed him he said he wanted to study something handy at Iqhayiya. He settled on Motor Mechanics. When I asked him if he has any experience with it, he had none. He then told me he likes to hang out with a certain gentleman from his neighbourhood who is a spraypainter.

When I visited his home, I happened to stumble across the wrong home. He made no mention of his mother being alive when we were chatting. His mother is alive and well. He does not live at his home, but a few houses away, where he lives with an older brother. He ([REDACTED]) has his own **shack where he lives**, on the house premises. When I stumbled upon this house, I understood just why he had deflected me to another house, and made no mention of his mother.

I was surprised to find two other [REDACTED] students living there, one in Grade [REDACTED], the other in Grade [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] and [REDACTED]). They live in a hole. Yet living in this hole I found them to be a happy bunch. The house is tiny, and there are clearly a lot of people inside the house.

With regards to [REDACTED] they could not understand why he is not passing, because, in their eyes, he studies a lot. One of them mentioned that he may be failing because he has no study buddy, so I asked them to please make it a rule that all the boys attend the afternoon study sessions. His father passed away a few years ago. They knew of the parents meeting which would be on Sunday 14 August, and two people said they would be attending this meeting. His older cousin was at the meeting.

Update: There are over twenty people living in the household. The family has since changed their tune regarding [REDACTED]. They have tried to convince him to study more, but he simply does not want to do so. **Alcoholism is rife in this household, and the talent of the learners (one of the daughters is a Banyana Banyana prospect, and [REDACTED] is a highly talented soccer player as well) are not really prioritized, and instead, in the words of their mother “I want them both to become electricians, so that they can make a few pennies and earn a bit of income for the family.”**

APPENDIX B

Snapshot of Excel Sheet Created From 101 *Learner Profiles*

Learner	Age	Lives with					Deceased		Housing			Employment			
		Mother	Father	Mother & Father	Grandparents	Other	Mother	Father	RDP	Informal	Other	Parent Employed	Other Employed	No Employment	Grant
1	20	X			X	X		X	X			X		X	
2	18		X		X					X			X	X	
3	18	X						X	X		X				
4	18		X				X			X	X				
5	N/A		X				X		X		X			X	
6	20	X						X	X				X	X	
7	18	X						X	X		X				
8	18		X				X		X				X	X	
9	17				X		X	X		X			X	X	
10	20					X	X	X		X		X			
11	18	X						X	X				X		
12	20				X			X		X			X	X	
13	18					X			X				X		
14	20				X		X	X		X			X	X	
15	20					X	X	X		X			X	X	
16	20	X						X	X		X			X	
17	18	X						X		X			X		
18	19	X						X		X			X	X	
19	18	X			X			X	X			X		X	
20	18			X						X			X		
21	19					X				X			X		
22	19			X						X	X			X	
23	21	X						X		X			X	X	
24	19	X								X			X	X	
25	17	X								X	X				
26	19			X						X			X		
27	23	X						X	X				X		
28	17	X						X		X	X				
29	21			X						X		X			
30	19					X		X	X				X		
31	19					X	X	X		X			X		
32	20	X								X	X				

APPENDIX C1
Questionnaire 1

1. Yintoni enye yesiziphiwo zakho? / What are some of your talents

2. Ingaba isikolo siyakunceda ekukhulisani iziphiwo zakho? Ngoba? / Does school help you develop those talents? If yes, how?

3. Zintoni ezinye izinto eninohanda ukuba izenze uphuma kwesikolo? / What are some programmes, teams, clubs, after-school activities you wish [REDACTED] offered?

4. Ingaba zikhona ezinye zezifundo ofuna zenziwe sisikolo? / Are there any subjects that you wish [REDACTED] offered?

5. Ukuba unokufumana umsebenzi omfunayo, uyakuba ngowuphi? / If you could have any job you wanted, what would that be?

6. Ukuba unokufumana iR1 million ngonyaka usenza into oyithandayo, ungenza ntoni? / If you could earn R1 million per year doing anything you wanted, what would you do?

7. Ngubani i-role models zakho, xela zibembini okanye zibentathu. Nika izizathu zokuba uchonge ababantu. / Who are some of your role models? Why are they your role models?

APPENDIX C2
Questionnaire 2

1. What classes do you want during our afterschool sessions? (Example: Mathematics, Accounting, History, etc...)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

2. What extra-curricular programmes do you want at the school? (Example: Debating, Chess, Karate, etc...)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

3. What renovations are most important to you at the school?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

4. What else do you want to see change at the school?

5. What do you like most about XXXXXXXXXX?

APPENDIX C3

Questionnaire 3 (Essay Style)

- 1. What are some things in your life that will prevent you from achieving your goals this year?**
- 2. What are some of the things that you need to do to achieve your goals this year?**
- 3. What are some things in your life that will prevent you from succeeding in school this year?**
- 4. What are some of the things you need to do to succeed in school this year?**