

**FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATORS' KNOWLEDGE
AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE
NATIONAL READING STRATEGY**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Doctor of Technology: Language
Practice in the Faculty of Arts and Design at
the Durban University of Technology

Prabitha Singh

D. Tech: Language Practice

November 2011

Promoter: Prof. P. Singh

PhD (Education)

**FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATORS' KNOWLEDGE
AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE NATIONAL READING STRATEGY**

by

Prabitha Singh

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Doctor of
Technology: Language Practice in the Faculty of Arts and Design at the Durban University of
Technology

DECLARATION

I, Prabitha Singh, do declare that this dissertation is a representation of my own work in both
conception and execution.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Submission approved for examination

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Prof. P. Singh
PhD (Education)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the following people and institutions, which contributed to the completion of the study:

- My supervisor, Prof P Singh for her knowledge, expertise and support.
- The principals of the schools where the study was conducted for their willingness to allow the study to be undertaken at their schools.
- The educators and learners who participated.
- The ward manager Mr Mark Moonsamy for his support and assistance.
- The superintendent General of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, for permission to conduct the study.
- Dr Sadhna Manik for her help and support.
- Deepak Singh for the analysis of my data.
- Krishnee Munsamy for all the typing assistance.
- Rajen Dorasamy for his assistance and encouragement to complete this study timeously.
- To my husband Suren Singh, my sons Sudir and Kabir, my daughters-in-law Prabashni and Trishana for their love, support and encouragement
- My parents Mr and Mrs Dandaraj for their patience and understanding during my study.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my grandson Aaryan Singh who was the greatest inspiration in pursuit of knowledge and inquiry.

ABSTRACT

In response to the alarmingly low literacy rates in South Africa and to improve reading instruction in schools, the National Department of Education introduced the National Reading Strategy (NRS) in primary schools in 2008. The NRS was developed for educators from grades R to 9 to facilitate reading literacy but foundation phase educators are faced with many challenges in implementing the NRS which include among others: teaching or facilitating reading in English in their multicultural, multilingual classrooms where the majority of their learners do not speak English as a first language; catering for different levels of understanding and proficiency in the language of instruction and reading within time-table and resource constraints; and adapting to changing curricula and requirements without receiving training to do so. In the absence of training, educators are left to interpret the NRS on their own. Recognising that the above factors impact on performance in the classroom this study investigated foundation phase educators' knowledge and attitudes towards implementation of the NRS.

Grounded within a social constructivist paradigm and underpinned by Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development, this study used a mixed methods approach to gather both qualitative and quantitative data from foundation phase educators and learners in the Phoenix-North region in northern KwaZulu-Natal. Questionnaires were administered to foundation phase educators to gather data to determine their knowledge and attitude towards implementing the National Reading Strategy. Focus group discussions were conducted with learners to establish the effect of educators' implementation of the NRS on their "actual level" of development in terms of reading.

Analysis of data revealed that despite a relatively positive attitude towards teaching reading, educators' level of confidence to implement the NRS was low as many of them were teaching reading in their second language. In the absence of training workshops and professional development, there was conflict between educators' existing knowledge and the requirements of the NRS. This study also found that educators' knowledge and attitudes towards implementation of the NRS had a direct impact on learners' reading progress as they are dependent on the educator for guidance and assistance within their zone of proximal development. Based on the findings, this study developed a training framework towards

improving foundation phase educators' knowledge and attitudes in order to facilitate reading and implementation of the NRS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iiii
DEDICATION	ivv
ABSTRACT	v
 CHAPTER ONE: RATIONALE AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	 1
1.1 Literacy In South African Schools	1
1.2 The National Reading Strategy	2
1.3 Multilingualism	3
1.4 Knowledge and Attitudes	4
1.5 Demarcation of the Problem	4
1.6 Aim and Purpose of the Study	6
1.7 Definition of Operational Terms	7
1.7.1 Foundation phase	7
1.7.2 Educator	7
1.7.3 Reading	7
1.7.4 Attitude	7
1.7.5 Knowledge	8
1.8 Summary of Chapters	8
1.9 Acronyms used in the Study	9
 CHAPTER 2:LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	 11
2.1 Theoretical Framework	11
2.1.1 The Zone of Proximal Development	12
2.2 Reading Literacy Development	13
2.2.1 The role of international comparative studies of reading literacy	14
2.3 South African Learners' Performance on the Pirls 2006 International Benchmarks	17
2.4 Reading within a South African Framework	20
2.4.1 Outcomes based education	20
2.4.2 Revised National Curriculum	21
2.4.3 Foundations for Learning Campaign	22
2.4.4 Assessment Framework for the Foundation Phase	23
2.4.5 The National Reading Strategy	24
2.5 South African Learners' Reading Literacy Achievement	25

2.5.1	The second Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ II)	26
2.5.2	Grade 3 and Grade 6 systemic evaluations	26
2.5.3	Small-scale empirical studies in South Africa	27
2.6	Foundation Phase Educators' Attitude and Knowledge of Teaching Reading	29
2.6.1	Educator attitudes	30
2.6.2	Educator Knowledge	30
2.6.2.1	<i>Levels of knowledge in the three knowledge domains</i>	31
2.6.2.2	<i>Teacher competency</i>	31
2.7	The Status Quo for Teaching Reading in South African Primary Schools	33
2.7.1	Teaching and learning in English in multilingual classrooms	34
2.7.2	Reading teaching goals	37
2.7.3	Reading teacher qualities	37
2.7.4	Specific instructional strategies advocated	40
2.8	Summary	43
CHAPTER 3:RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY		44
3.1	Research Paradigm	44
3.1.1	Mixed methods research	45
3.1.2	Qualitative Research	46
3.1.3	Quantitative Research	46
3.1.4	Target Population	47
3.1.5	Sampling	48
3.1.6	Sample size	48
3.2	Data Collection Methods	49
3.2.1	Primary and secondary data	49
3.2.2	Questionnaire	49
3.2.3	Construction of the Questionnaire	50
3.2.4	Open- Ended Questions	50
3.2.5	Closed questions	51
3.2.6	Pilot testing of the questionnaire	51
3.2.7	Administration of questionnaires	52
3.3	Focus Group Discussion	52
3.4	Realibility and Validity	53
3.5	Ethics	55
3.6	Data Analysis	55
3.7	Statistical Analysis	56

3.7.1	Descriptive Statistics	56
3.7.2	Chi-Square	57
3.7.3	Cross Tabulations	57
3.7.4	Factor Analysis	57
3.7.5	Cronbach's Alpha	58
3.8	Summary	58
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA		59
4.1	Presentation of Findings	59
4.1.1	Biographical details of foundation phase educators	59
4.1.2	Biographical details of foundation phase learners	62
4.2	Emerging Themes	62
4.2.1	Theme one: Background to the National Reading Strategy	62
4.2.2	English as a medium of instruction	64
4.2.3	Professional development	67
4.2.4	Knowledge and attitudes of Foundation Phase educators	69
4.2.4.1	<i>Educator attitudes and the NRS</i>	70
4.2.4.1.	<i>Educator knowledge and NRS</i>	75
4.2.5.	Foundation phase educators' views on NRS	82
4.3	Summary	83
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		84
5.1	Achievement Of Research Objectives	85
5.1.1	What knowledge is necessary for the implementation of the NRS?	85
5.1.2	What attitudes are necessary for the implementation of the NRS?	85
5.1.3	What knowledge do qualified educators in the designated area possess to implement the NRS?	86
5.1.4	What attitudes do qualified educators in the designated area possess to implement the NRS?	87
5.2	Training Framework to improve Educators' Knowledge and Attitudes	88
5.2.1	How to improve educators' knowledge	89
5.2.2	How to improve educators' attitude	90
5.3	Recommendations for Further Study	91
5.4	Limitations of the Study	92
5.5	A Final Word	93
REFERENCES		95

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - Letter Requesting Permission to Conduct Study	128
APPENDIX B - Permission and approval to Conduct Research from Kwazulu-Natal Department of Education	129
APPENDIX C - Permission and approval to Conduct Research from Ward Manager	130
APPENDIX D - Letter to Principals	131
APPENDIX E - Questionnaire	132
APPENDIX F - Focus Group Discussion	138

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Gender of respondents	60
Figure 4.2: Age distribution of respondents	61
Figure 4.3: NRS and educator attitudes	70
Figure 4.4: Educators awareness of NRS	74
Figure 4.5: Educators' reasons for NRS being a burden in terms of time	75
Figure 4.6: Educators' responses on the importance of particular reading skills	77
Figure 4.7: Educators' use of phonics	78
Figure 4.8: Educators' use of word recognition	80
Figure 4.9: Educators' reasons for prioritising reading in the school curriculum	82
Figure 5.1: Training framework to improve educators' knowledge and attitudes	88

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Percentage of South African Learners reaching the PIRLS 2006 International Benchmarks	18
Table 3.1: Case processing summary	54
Table 3.2: Reliability statistics	54
Table 4.1: Educators' use of Syllabification	79

CHAPTER ONE

RATIONALE AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

*What a child can do in co-operation today, he can do alone tomorrow
(Vygotsky, 1962)*

The end of apartheid and the emergence of a democratic era in 1994 brought many changes to South Africa including its education system. Since then South African schools became culturally integrated. The question arose as to whether educators had the appropriate knowledge to teach in the South African context where schools became multilingual (Baker, 1996). Foundation phase (FP) educators in particular are increasingly faced with more demands at all levels (Fleisch, 2008; Howie, Venter, Van Staden, Long, and Scherman, 2007; Moloi and Strauss, 2005; Pretorius and Mampuru, 2007). They are expected to have sophisticated knowledge of subject matter and a wide repertoire of teaching strategies (Viljoen and Molefe, 2001:42) to help young learners in South Africa who are struggling to acquire the reading skills needed for future academic and occupational progress, moreover they need to be familiar with learning theory.

1.1 LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

In 2001 and 2004, the Department of Education conducted two National systemic evaluations to establish literacy and numeracy levels in primary schools in South Africa. The surveys showed shockingly low levels of reading ability across the country (DoE, 2008a). Although research has been carried out to assist FP educators in improving their ability to teach reading, in 2002 the Alliance for Excellence in Education (AEE) (Biancorosa and Snow, 2004:8) reported that about six million middle school learners read below grade level. Learners lack the strategies to help them comprehend what they read (Wise, 2009). In 2006, South Africa participated in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study which is an international study of grade 4 learners' ability and attitudes (Martin, Mullis and Kennedy, 2007). Out of the 38 countries that participated, South African Learners achieved the worst results in spite of the fact that grade 5 learners were competing against grade 4 learners from other countries (Howie *et al.*, 2007). In the UNESCO- Unicef- Department of Education literacy and numeracy study in 1999 South African learners again performed poorly

(Prinsloo, 2006). The Annual National Assessment (ANA) was another initiative undertaken by the Department of Education to improve literacy and numeracy levels and to provide a benchmark for all schools in the basic sector (DoE, 2011). Grades 3 and 6 learners throughout South Africa wrote this assessment. The results were as follows: in grade 3, the national average performance in literacy was 35% and in numeracy the performance level was 28% and the mathematics level was 30 % (DoE, 2005). In response, the National Reading Strategy (NRS) was implemented by the Department of Education (DoE) in primary schools in South Africa in 2007.

1.2 THE NATIONAL READING STRATEGY (NRS)

The aim of the NRS was to promote a nation of lifelong readers and lifelong learners (DoE, 2008b). Lifelong reading and lifelong learning is the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout the life of an individual, which occurs through experiences encountered in the course of a lifetime (Smith and Ferrier, 2002). They add that these experiences could be in the form of formal training, mentorship, higher education, etc. The main goal of the NRS is to improve the reading level of all learners in the country including those who experience barriers to learning and those learners who are at special schools and youth care centres (DoE, 2008a). The purpose of the NRS is to:

- put reading firmly on the school agenda
- clarify and simplify curriculum expectations
- promote reading across the curriculum
- affirm and advance the use of all languages
- encourage reading for enjoyment, and
- ensure that not only teachers, learners and parents, but also the broader community understand their role in improving and promoting reading (DoE, 2008a).

The implementation of the NRS was an initiative to assist educators to address the issue of poor literacy in schools but educators are not implementing it as it should be. Training for the implementation NRS comprised of weeklong workshops with the (FP) educators attending in 2007, followed by the intermediate Phase (IP) attending in 2008. Training for the senior phase (SP) was scheduled for late 2009, but did not take place. The workshops informed

educators about the NRS and implementation thereof and included discussions on topics such as, time allocation for reading on a daily basis, and possible challenges to implementation of the NRS. No follow-up workshops were held, as a result, educators in the primary phase were left to interpret the NRS in terms of their own knowledge, skills and training. This created a problem especially at the FP level because as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (1996:6) reports, FP educators are viewed to be key role players in the acquisition of “lifelong” learning for foundation phase learners.

As learners spend many hours each day with their educators, their experience under the guidance of educators has an impact on learners’ social, emotional, cognitive and literacy development. The educator thus plays a crucial role in their development. Vygotsky’s “zone of proximal development” (1978:86-87) refers to the distance or gap between the “actual development level” and the “potential development” of the learner and suggests that learners’ potential can be enhanced by adult guidance and collaboration with more capable peers (Singh, 2004). This means that what learners can do with assistance today, they can perform independently and competently tomorrow (Moll, 1993; Moll and Greenberg, 1993; Singh, 2004).

As educators play such a vital role in developing learners’ potential, they need to be properly trained so that they can guide learners adequately and appropriately. Moats (1994b) suggests that many teachers are not adequately prepared for the task of teaching reading to young learners because they understand very little about spoken and written language structure (Moats, 1994a). The National Commission on Excellence in Teacher Preparation in Reading (2003) includes key findings providing compelling evidence that an investment in quality reading teacher preparation contributes to effective teaching and learning of reading in foundation phase classrooms. The fact that our classrooms are multilingual in their make up, poses a problem for educators.

1.3 MULTILINGUALISM

Abel (2001) highlighted the difficulty that reading teachers have within the multicultural setting of South African schools because all languages do not have the same phonetic and phonemic make up. In multilingual educational situations the teacher has to make decisions

“not only about how to teach literacy but also about which languages children should learn in” (Bloch, 1999:41).

The findings of Howie (2003) gave rise to a number of reflections on the relationship between language and achievement in relation to the language policy implemented by the South African Government. He explained that the difficulty of not being able to communicate fluently in a common language leads to increased frustration for the teacher, disorientation on the part of the learner, and a slow rate of learning. McKinney (2005) points out that despite the Language-in-Education Policy which set out to promote all official languages as languages of learning and teaching, there is very little evidence to suggest that this is in fact the case in schools. Pillay (2008) states that knowledge and attitudes of educators that are displayed and practiced on day to day basis are very important and that a good and honest work ethic has to be established as low reading levels in the FP point to a grave lack of accountability within the education system.

1.4 KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES

The role of the FP educator in developing reading skills is of paramount importance (Snowling, 2003). To reduce the incidence of reading failure, teachers should increase their understanding of how the English language is constructed and how speech sounds relate to print (Nolen and Torgeson, 1997). Teachers with professional understanding of instruction and the authority to act on that expertise are central to creating classroom interventions that accelerate the development of all children (Allington, 2002). Effective teachers of reading need to understand the relationship between speech and print because these basic language processes are often deficient in cases of reading failure. There is evidence suggesting that many teachers are not adequately prepared for the task of teaching reading to young children because teachers themselves understand too little about spoken and written language structure (Moats, 1994b). Educators must acknowledge and understand the role of explicit reading instruction (Mather, 2001) especially within their multilingual classrooms.

1.5 DEMARCATION OF THE PROBLEM

A survey conducted by the DoE in 2008 found that multilingualism and educator competency was reported by educators as being a major obstacle in implementing the NRS. The survey

found that many teachers have an understanding of teaching literacy, reading and writing whilst others do not know how to teach reading and still others know only one method of teaching reading which does not cater for the learning needs of all learners. The DoE (2008b) further states that many FP educators have not been explicitly trained to teach reading and that most teachers teaching beyond the FP are not trained to teach basic reading and do not know how to help struggling readers. The survey also unveiled the employment of under-qualified and non-qualified educators as common practice especially in the FP and in rural schools which only adds to the problem.

Informal discussions conducted by the researcher with FP educators in the northern KwaZulu-Natal who attended training workshops on Foundations for Learning in 2007 and early 2008, revealed that several educators were struggling to prepare FP learners to read using the NRS. It became apparent therefore that the training workshops did not address all the problems that educators were experiencing and that they required further training to teach reading in a multilingual learning environment. The discussion also revealed educators' attitudes toward the teaching of reading.

Many of the educators regarded the NRS as simply adding to their teaching loads while others said that the diverse backgrounds of their learners negated any effort on their part. It became apparent to the researcher that many educators in the designated area do not possess the requisite knowledge or skills to implement the NRS and that their negative sentiments or attitudes only served to exacerbate the problem. Educators need to have the right attitudes toward: their role as educators; their learners; execution of their tasks; and assisting their learners to develop their potential because if they do not have a positive attitude, training will not make much of a difference.

According to Mather, Bos and Babur (2001), educators must acknowledge and understand the role of explicit reading knowledge and positive attitude towards teaching reading. Northcutt (2004) believe that the attitude of classroom teachers towards content area literacy can be one of the most important factors in reading achievement and reading practice. All teachers bring to the classroom some level of beliefs that influence their critical decision making (Squires and Bliss, 2004). After reviewing many studies, Freedman and Carver (2007) suggest that it is now widely accepted that teachers' personally held beliefs and values help to guide their teaching practices and attitudes. Santa (2006) believes that teachers who demonstrate an

explicit understanding of literacy can impart that insight to their students and by so doing may directly affect their academic success. Her research indicates that, whether educators are comfortable or not, they and their attitudes directly correlate with student literacy in the classroom.

Hall (2005) elaborates that despite the types and amounts of knowledge that teachers may hold, it is their beliefs that are more likely to dictate their actions in the classroom. Regardless of their pre-service exposure and preparation, and in-service training, teachers' beliefs inform their professional attitudes and conduct in their classrooms. To the best of the researcher's knowledge no research has been conducted on attitudes and knowledge of qualified FP educators towards implementation of the NRS. This study therefore addresses this gap and hopes to make recommendations to the DoE regarding the above.

1.6 AIM AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research was to investigate foundation phase educators' knowledge and attitudes towards implementing the National Reading Strategy at the foundation phase and to develop a framework for the training of FP educators in the above regard.

This study focused on selected primary schools subsidised by the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Department of Education in the Northern KZN area.

In order to meet the above aim, the following objectives were addressed in this study:

- to determine what knowledge is necessary for implementation of the NRS;
- to determine what attitudes are necessary for implementation of the NRS;
- to find out what knowledge qualified educators in the designated area currently possess to implement the NRS; and
- to find out what attitudes qualified educators in the designated area possess to implement the NRS.

It is hoped that this study will provide recommendations to the DoE based on the influence of educators' attitudes and knowledge on the implementation of the NRS at FP.

1.7 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

Terms used in this study are defined according to their operational use in order to provide clear understanding of what they mean in this study. Detailed definitions follow in the body of the dissertation.

1.7.1 Foundation phase

According to The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (1996), the term foundation phase refers to the lowest level of the General Education and Training Band (GET). This term is used in the study to refer to grades 1, 2 and 3 previously known as junior primary.

1.7.2 Educator

The National Education Policy Act of 1996 defines the term educator as any person who teaches, educates and trains other persons or assists in rendering education services provided by or in an education department.

1.7.3 Reading

Reading is not a natural process. In contrast to oral language development, reading does not emerge naturally from the interactions with parents and other adults even in print rich environments, for most children reading require systematic and explicit instruction National Academy of Education 1984 in Beaton, Postlewaite, Ross, Spearritt and Wolf, 1999). It is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation (Beaton *et al.*, 1999). Reading is making meaning from print. They add that it requires that we: identify the words in print, a process called word recognition; construct an understanding from them, a process called comprehension; co-ordinate identifying words and making meaning so that reading is automatic and accurate, an achievement called fluency.

1.7.4 Attitude

An attitude is a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's degree of like or dislike for something (Elaine, 2005). Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of person, place, thing or event (Carlson, 2010). Effects such as mood and emotion sometimes form part of motivation and attitude (Le Cordeur, 2010; Hugo, Le Roux, Muller and Nel, 2005).

1.7.5 Knowledge

Knowledge is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (2006) as expertise and skills acquired by a person through experience or education: the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject that is known in a particular field, or in total, facts and information or awareness.

Knowledge is a term that has been actively and continually defined. Early tendencies were to define knowledge based on dualism and abstractions (Moats, 1994b). From mere dualisms emerge a more sophisticated dynamic of emergent of knowledge, as built upon experience, observation and reasoning (Dewey, 1993). He adds that those defining knowledge gradually made concessions to the practical world, while still maintaining a higher ideal knowledge (Dewey, 1993).

1.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

The content of the various chapters in this study are as follows:

Chapter one outlines the introduction, rationale, purpose, scope of the study and the specific research questions that it sought to address.

Chapter two presents a review of South African and international literature. The focus is on exploring the constructs for and the context of the study as well as providing a conceptual framework relevant to the study. An analysis and discussion of the NRS is elaborated on with reference to contemporary educational realities and its relationships to literacy and reading, the implementation of the NRS in terms of foundation phase educator knowledge and attitudes.

Chapter three provides a description of the research methodological undertakings that address the research questions posed for the study. This chapter deals with how the study was undertaken, how educators and learners were selected for the administration of the questionnaire and focus group discussion respectively. The reasons for the choice of research methodology and the selection of participants are also explained in this chapter.

Chapter four interprets the qualitative and quantitative data gathered from foundation phase educators and learners in Ward 142 in the Phoenix North Region, arriving at general trends and tendencies in answering the research questions, and uses statistical analysis to detect any uneven distribution, skews or bias. Chapter five indicates the conclusions and recommendations pertinent to this study.

1.9 ACRONYMS USED IN THE STUDY

NRS	National Reading Strategy
DoE	Department of Education
FP	Foundation phase
IP	Intermediate phase
SP	Senior phase
ZPD	Zone of proximal development
MLA	Monitoring Learning Achievement
SACMEQ	South African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
OTL	Opportunity to Learn
LO	Learning outcomes
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SGB	School governing body
PIRLS	Progress in Reading Literacy Study
OBE	Outcomes based education
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
SES	Socio-economic status
AEE	Alliance for Excellent Education

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The previous chapter introduced this study and presented the research aim and objectives. Chapter Two presents an analytical review of literature pertinent to this study and explores the constructs for the context of this study further. Background and discussion of the theoretical framework is presented before discussing reading literacy development in South Africa and internationally, and the assessment thereof; international benchmarks; reading within the South African framework; the National Reading Strategy; and educators' knowledge and attitudes. The chapter culminates with a discussion of reading in South African primary schools.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section discusses selected theorists who have informed the development of a conceptual framework for this study. Constructivism is a learning theory built on the specific assumption that individuals with their experiences, frames of reference, knowledge and cognitive structure understand information differently (Erikson, 1968). Constructivists believe that learners need to construct their own knowledge and that learners' understanding of concepts depend primarily on their mental construction of those concepts (Brown, 2000:11).

A constructivist perspective goes beyond the innate and the cognitive psychological perspective in its emphasis on the privacy of each individual's construction of reality (Howe, 1996). Piaget and Vygotsky are both commonly described as constructivists who differ in the extent to which each emphasizes social context. They have different perspectives on how learning takes place.

Piaget (1972:45) stressed the importance of individual cognitive development as a relatively solitary act. For Piaget (1972:50) biological time tables and stages of development were only to trigger development at the right time. On the other hand, Vygotsky (1978:23) described as a social constructivist by some researchers, maintained that social interaction was foundational in cognitive development and he rejected the notion of predetermined stages. Vygotsky's (1978:87) theory deals with how children develop cognitively. He says that passing through the various stages of cognitive development is more complex than growing

up and responding to stimuli from the environment as these stages are not necessarily where learning takes place. According to Vygotsky (1978:95), the zone of proximal development (ZPD) represents intellectual functions that have not yet matured but which are in the process of maturation. Piaget identifies that the actual development level as indicative of the mental development that has been accomplished, while the ZPD refers to mental development that is possible.

Vygotsky (1978:86) explains that ZPD is the distance between actual development levels as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development which is determined through problem solving under the guidance of an adult or in collaboration with more capable peers. This implies that the child's mental development can only be determined by understanding the two levels, which are: the actual developmental level and the ZPD.

2.1.1 The zone of proximal development

The first level of the ZPD represents the child's mental functions that have been established as a result of biological cycles. These levels or stages have also been identified by Piaget (1972:110), therefore when determining the child's intellectual ability by using texts; we are almost always dealing with the actual developmental level. These texts presume that only those activities that children can do on their own with the assistance of others and without demonstrations or clues or guiding questions, are indicative of their mental abilities (Brown, 2003). This means that the child's actual developmental level indicates functions that are already mature which are the products of development (Kuzolin, 1998:50).

The second level of the ZPD is the potential level of development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Kuzolin, 1998). Vygotsky (1978:94) claimed that ZPD is achieved when: clues are offered to the child, the learner is assisted with questions; the learner is shown how the problem can be solved; and subsequently the learner solves it. He adds that the solution is then initiated and the child completes it or solves the problem in collaboration with other children. He explains that how the child arrives at a solution is regarded as indicative of the child's mental capacity, this means that the child's ZPD shows that the intellectual functions are maturing. He states further that the potential development level becomes the next actual developmental level, which presupposes the specific values and process by which children grow into the

intellectual life of those around them. According to Vygotsky (1978:90), learning is a cognitive function that occurs in a social context. It does not occur naturally as it occurs in association with other people. The notion of the ZPD helps to propound a new formula which states that good learning is in advance of the child's natural cognitive development and occurs in a social context (Brown, 2003).

Vygotsky (1978:95) stresses society as the determiner of development although the resulting stages are the same. Piaget (1972:233) believed that intelligence matures from the inside and directs itself outwards while Vygotsky (1978:97) believes that intelligence begins in the social environment and directs itself inward. Vygotsky (1978) refers to this directing inward as internalization. He adds that people observe something taking place in their external environment, they then reconstruct the experience for themselves and so internalize it, they have thus learned it and can benefit developmentally by it.

Krueger (1998) concurs that learning is something that starts outside people, in the society around them, and is then transferred inwardly and that what happens inside a person first happens between people. Intelligence therefore, does not begin in a person but rather in the relations between a person and the outside world (Vygotsky, 1978:95). He adds that the social relationship between the teacher and the learner informs the development of the child and creates new mental formulations and develops higher processes of mental life. This assumption therefore places the child's intellectual development squarely in the hands of the adults in the child's life. The child's mind will not develop on its own but can only develop depending on the level of interaction between the child and the adult in his/her life (Brown, 2002:35).

Learning therefore, is not just a thing one does before a test or an examination. It is essential for cognitive development and for the child's development as a whole person (Piaget, 1964). The responsible adult moves the child beyond this stage into the ZPD where learning takes place. This learning then awakens a variety of internal development processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting and co-operating with people in his environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Once this process is internalized, they become part of the child's independent development. Inter-personal relations therefore play an important part in any teaching situation. Teaching, according to Vygotsky (1987), is nothing other than the social transaction of meaning. The Vygotskian theory relates to this study because: he emphasizes

the role of educator as facilitator in relation to the learner's ZPD; and he stresses the importance of social interaction in the process of learning in which educators can assist learners by mediating the literacy and reading learning process through the activities in which they engage.

The following section therefore discusses the status of literacy worldwide and in the African continent in particular. The role of international comparative studies in the monitoring and evaluation of learners' academic development is also infused in this discussion.

2.2 READING LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Literacy is recognized as being crucial for economic, social and political participation and development especially in the knowledge driven societies of today (Zimmerman, 2010). A United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO, 2005) report on its Education for All (EFA) initiative claims that literacy is a right denied to nearly a fifth of the world's adult population. The majority of those without literacy skills are from Sub-Saharan Africa, South, East and West Asia and the Pacific. In relative terms, with only about 60% literacy rates, Sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia and the Arab states are the regions with the lowest literacy rates. Albeit that these regions would appear to need to make the most gains in diminishing illiteracy, direct testing of literacy does suggest that the global challenge is much greater than the conventional numbers based on indirect assessments would indicate, and that the challenge affects both developing and developed countries (UNESCO, 2005). Certainly, South African learners' participation in the Progress International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006 assessments (Howie *et al.*, 2007) has reinforced the extent of the challenge in addressing literacy development for South Africa.

As emphasized in chapter 1, while there are the challenges of illiteracy in the developing context of Africa, many reading studies cited in the international research literature involve educational contexts in developed countries. In the latter, resource availability, access to reading texts in learners' vernacular, the quality of instructional methods and literacy levels are not problematic. Localized research, taking into account contextual influences and the associated challenges is therefore needed. This comes at a time where few individual studies and large-scale national assessments suggest that learners in Africa battle to accomplish adequate levels of literacy (Pretorius and Mampuru, 2007).

In South Africa, out of a population of over 47 million people, it is estimated that between 7.4 and 8.5 million adults are functionally illiterate, and that between 2.9 and 4.2 million people have never attended school (Allington and Johnstone, 2000). Moreover, one million children in South Africa live in homes where no adult can read (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2007). Pretorius and Mampuru (2007) estimate that about 86% of South African adults have achieved basic literacy, but indicate that this does not mean that they have achieved advanced levels of literate understanding. They add that this lack of literate understanding is compounded by a society where reading for enjoyment is scarce and where reading materials are not readily available.

The need to monitor and evaluate the global drive towards the eradication of illiteracy (UNESCO, 2005) implies that both national and international assessments of literacy have key functions.

2.2.1 The role of assessments in international comparative studies of reading literacy

Interest in assessment specifically increased following the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand (UNESCO, 2009). Here, student achievement was proposed as a major point of reference in judging the quality of education. Whilst national examinations have long been prevalent in African education systems, national assessments are a relatively new occurrence (Kellaghan and Greaney, 2005). South Africa, together with other African countries, has participated in a number of these assessments, such as the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) and the Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) project. However, only a handful of African countries, including South Africa have participated in the array of international comparative studies that have come to the fore in recent decades (Kellaghan and Greaney, 2005). Organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are involved in monitoring literacy development, but only the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAEEA) is discussed here as this research is based on South Africa's participation in an (IAEEA) study. The IAEEA, which conducts the PIRLS, initiates comparative studies focused on educational policies and practices around the world. The IAEEA is headed by a permanent secretariat in Amsterdam and supported by a Data Processing Centre in Hamburg, Germany and it has a

membership of about 70 countries. The IAEEA studies use the world as an 'educational laboratory' in which the strengths and weaknesses of educational practices can be assessed (Mullis, 2002:2).

Many countries have national policies governing variables such as curriculum and teaching strategies, and without much differentiation in the approaches used within a country, it is difficult to estimate the effectiveness of various policies and practices in relation to educational outcomes. Across-country comparison therefore allows examination of the impact of different educational approaches on achievement and additional insight into a country's own educational system (Mullis, 2002). These studies have a variety of purposes which include a comparison of the levels of achievement between countries; an identification of the major determinants of national achievement within a country; an examination of similarities and differences across countries; and an identification of the factors that affect differences between countries. Specific functions of such studies include benchmarking, monitoring, enlightenment, understanding and cross-national research (Howie and Plomp, 2006). The benefit of insight into one's own educational system is of particular relevance for this research, an argument furthered in the discussion of the secondary analysis of the PIRLS data (Martin, Mullis and Kennedy, 2007).

The background information collected as part of large-scale assessments such as the PIRLS is significant to help understand the factors that influence learners' educational experiences and describe the learners being assessed. The collection of background information is also used to inform policy by collecting descriptions of the contexts of learning, sometimes described as an Opportunity-To-Learn (OTL). This incorporates the context officially specified in the curriculum, whether and how it is taught, learners' propensity to learn, as well as home and school reports that can contribute to learning (Mullis, 2002). Background data can therefore provide a picture of what is being done and how that coincides with what is thought to work best (Mullis, 2004). In fact, in large-scale assessments, priority is given to identifying instructional practices that relate to high achievement. However, there may be problems with identifying these instructional practices as strategies deemed to be effective might be reported as being used, but in actuality may not be implemented in ways envisioned to enhance learning. Also, what is considered effective may evolve and change over time, and therefore it may be difficult to report timely data about best practise. Nevertheless, it is seen as important for large-scale studies such as the PIRLS to collect information and instructional

practices to help ascertain the extent to which current research recommendations are being implemented and to capture what teachers are actually doing (Mullis, 2002). As in the case of this study, such reporting can also provide a springboard to further research.

Kellaghan and Greaney (2005) highlight some problems identified with international studies: firstly, it may be difficult to design an assessment procedure that will adequately measure the outcomes of a variety of curricula despite common elements across the world. There are also considerable differences in expected standards of achievement and in what is taught between developing and industrialized countries. Secondly, the issue of translation of instruments into one or more languages is a concern as the achievement differences that become apparent may be attributed to language-related differences in the difficulty of the assessments tasks, thus making question equivalence difficult to achieve.

A third challenge relates to the cross-country equivalence of the populations and the sample of learners being assessed. For instance, where retention rates differ or where countries differ in their inclusion of children with special education needs or learning problems in the study. A fourth difficulty occurs when the primary focus in reporting the results of the study is on the ranking of countries in terms of the average scores of their learners. Rankings alone say nothing about the factors that may underlie differences between the countries in their performance. Finally, the relationships between inputs, processes and outcomes need to be examined in the context of individual countries as one cannot assume that practices associated with high achievement in one country will reveal a similar relationship in another (Kellaghan and Greaney, 2005).

In their review of the benefits and limitations of international educational achievement studies, Beaton *et al.*, (1999:34) of the International Academy of Education, concluded that there are many benefits to such studies *on condition that* [Beaton *et al.*'s emphasis] the studies have been well conceptualized and conducted. The validity and reliability of the PIRLS 2006 assessment conceptualization and its implementation, translation and determination of learner populations (Howie *et al.*, 2007) will be discussed in the following section. Beaton *et al.* (1999) further explain that the type of studies conducted by organizations such as the IEA focus on the variables that might improve achievement in the current system of education. Thus, these types of studies are worthwhile but they do require effort on the part of the participating countries in co-ordinating them, much expertise on the

part of the researchers and great care in the interpretation by researchers and policymakers. Resulting recommendations for policy changes in a country need to consider not only the results of the international analyses but also the educational and cultural context in which the country operates (Beaton *et al.*, 1999). This mirrors the argument by Kellaghan and Greaney (2005) about the importance of context in interpretation. For the present study, an account of the educational and cultural context of the results of the PIRLS study is explored in-depth. This is done *via* secondary analysis of the PIRLS data and PIRLS data informed case studies, because it is the researcher's contention that more investigation is needed into the contextual influences given South Africa learners' poor performance in the study.

2.3 SOUTH AFRICAN LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE ON THE PIRLS 2006 INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARKS

As mentioned in Chapter One, South African learners' performance on the IEA's PIRLS (Martin, Mullis and Kennedy, 2007) reading literacy assessments were also scrutinized by means of a process of benchmarking. Benchmarking provides qualitative indications of learners' performance on a scale in relation to the questions asked in an assessment. The PIRLS international mean was set at 500 points with the range of performance of learners being aligned to four set benchmarks. These benchmarks included Advanced International Benchmark set at 625 points, and a High International Benchmark set at 400. These benchmarks are cumulative in that learners who were able to reach the higher ones also demonstrated the knowledge and skills for the lower ones (Howie *et al.*, 2007).

Table 2.1 (below) shows the benchmarks, outlining the international achievement median for each and indicating South African Grade 4 and grade 5 learners' median achievement. Only 13% of South African Grade 4 learners reached the Low International Benchmark, which is a stark contrast to 94% of Grade 4 learners managing to do so internationally. Apart from South African learners' poor results in the international benchmarks, it also has to be noted that 87% of Grade 4 learners and 78% of Grade 5 learners did not reach any of the benchmarks. More than half of the English and Afrikaans speaking learners and over 80% of African language speakers did not reach the Low International Benchmark, meaning that they lacked basic reading skills and strategies to cope with academic tasks. Of the minimal percentages of South African learners reaching the High and Advanced International

Benchmarks, no African language learners were represented in this cohort (Howie *et al.*, 2007).

PIRLS 2006 International Benchmarks	Benchmarks descriptions	International Median	South African Median (SE)	
			Grade 4 Grade 5	
Low (400–474)	Basic reading skills and strategies (recognize, locate and produce explicitly stated information in texts and answer some questions seeking straightforward inferences)	94	13 (0.5)	22 (0.2)
Intermediate (475-549)	Learners with some reading proficiency who can understand the plot at a literal level and can make some inferences and connections across texts.	76	7 (1.1)	13 (0.8)
High (550-624)	Linked to competent readers who have the ability to retrieve significant details embedded across the text and can provide text-based support for inferences.	41	3 (2.0)	6 (1.6)
Advanced (625+)	Able to respond fully to the PIRLS assessment by means of their integration of information across relatively challenging texts and the provision of fully text-based support in their answers.	7	1 (1.5)	2 (1.1)

Table 2.1: Percentage of South African Learners reaching the PIRLS 2006 International Benchmarks (Zimmerman, 2010)

The phenomenon of the so-called ‘fourth-grade slump’ must be acknowledged in these findings with regards to South African Grade 4 learners. In discussing the North American reading research landscape, Moss (2005) reports that much has been made of a so-called ‘fourth-grade slump’ which has been observed in Grade 3 learners from low-income families. These learners had been reading at the required grade level but experienced a sudden drop in reading scores in Grade 4. A number of explanations have been offered regarding this phenomenon, namely: school tasks change significantly from Grade 3 to Grade 4; assessment instruments shift from an emphasis on decoding to the reading of expository texts between these grades; and previously unimportant reading difficulties may arise for the first time in Grade 4 when children encounter informational materials (Moss, 2005).

It seems improbable that many South African learners would experience a similar fourth-grade slump as they may not in any event be reading at the required grade level when they enter Grade 4, especially in light of the DoE’s Grade 3 systemic evaluation findings (DoE, 2003a). Nonetheless, the reasons that Moss (2005) outlines for a fourth-grade slump are still likely to be complicit in South African learners’ difficulties in reading comprehension as, regardless of their levels of reading development, they will still face similar changes in the composition of their teaching and learning tasks which may be overwhelming for those who already have poorly developed reading skills. The results on the Annual National Assessment for 2011 are an indication that the education sector needs to focus even more on its core functions of quality teaching and learning (DoE, 2011).

In her address regarding the Annual National Assessments, Mrs Angie Motsheka (South African Government Information, 2011) stated that in grade 3, the national average performance in literacy was 35% while the average in numeracy was 28%. She further stated in terms of different levels of performance, 47% of grade 3 learners achieved above 35% in literacy and 34% of those assessed achieved above 35% in numeracy. In the case of grade 6, 30% of learners achieved above 35% in languages and 31% of learners achieved above 35% in mathematics. The Minister said results showed that there had been an under emphasis on the development of the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy at foundation phase

levels and where attention needs to be focused; this lends to the reason why this study focuses on foundation phase.

It is recognized that there is a vast corpus of research in reading literacy internationally (Allington and Johnstone, 2002; Snow, Tabors and Harris, 2007). Locally concerns are raised by Pretorius and Machet (2004) regarding the paucity of research in South Africa, while O'Sullivan (2003) argues that the literature on teaching reading to young learners in developing countries is limited. Perry (2008), in a similar vein states that although literacy development in early schooling in Africa has received increased attention from scholars, it is still under-represented in the scholarly literature. Moreover, Pretorius and Mampuru (2007) observe that there has been a wide variety of research into reading and writing in English speaking countries, which has mushroomed in the past six decades or so but again, there has been comparatively little research on literacy development in the African continent.

2.4 READING WITHIN A SOUTH AFRICAN FRAMEWORK

The previous sections discussed literature relevant to reading and literacy assessment. In this section, the implementation of reading in South Africa is explored. Christie (2008:24) explains that South Africa invests in education to enhance the development of the country in general and the development of the individual. Christie (2008:24) predicts that South Africa faces great challenges to provide quality teaching for all citizens, no matter what their socioeconomic status is, and to prepare them for their lives beyond school. The South African government attempted to provide good quality teaching for all children in South Africa through an outcomes-based approach to education. Outcomes-based education relies on performance assessment to make sure that all children achieve the desired teaching outcomes (Barchers, 1998:399; Conley, 2007:42; Soudien, 2007:182-189). The Revised National Curriculum for Grade R-9 is outcomes-based (DoE, 2002:6).

2.4.1 Outcomes based education

According to Pillay (2008), outcomes-based education had been used in parts of the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. These countries are affiliate members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). They are advanced industrial countries that have very broad tax bases, very favourable teacher-learning

ratios, and a high degree of professional education of teachers. Reading ability is highly correlated with direct measures of quality of education (e.g. teacher/learner ratio, teacher education) and academic achievement. And in South Africa only 10% of schools can claim to enjoy such conditions (Crawford, Moore and Cameron, 1992). Experts from the other countries were invited to take part in designing a new outcomes-based education policy; this exercise was to deliver an image so radical that in the 1998 election nobody could blame the government for failing to deliver a creative idea in education (Macdonald, 2000).

Altogether there were eight learning areas with a total of 66 learning outcomes, language, literacy and communication had seven learning outcomes. They were as follows: to make and negotiate meaning and understanding, show critical awareness of language usage, respond to aesthetics, affective, cultural and social values in texts; access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations; use language for learning; and use appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes and situations (Govender, 2000). Reading was included in the learning area of language, literacy and communication. The following section considers reading within the curriculum.

2.4.2 Revised National Curriculum

Christie (2008) outlines the development of the South African education curriculum post-apartheid. In 1994, the government ordered curriculum developers to remove racist language and policy from the apartheid curriculum. In 1997, the National Department of Education launched the outcomes-based Curriculum 2005. This curriculum received critique, the main complaints were that Curriculum 2005 used incomprehensible terminology, did not connect with actual classroom conditions, did not specify theory or pedagogy, and did not supply real guidance (Christie, 2008:199-200). In 2000, Curriculum 2005 was reviewed, which resulted in the Revised National Curriculum Statement 2002.

The Revised National Curriculum (DoE, 2002a:8) has six learning outcomes for both the home language and first additional language in Grades 1 and 2 (Christie, 2008). According to the Read Educational Trust Annual Report (2010; Meier, 2011) explains that reading can be done in both the home language and first additional language. In agreement with Garcia (2009:393) this study endorses this view and does not focus on the difference between the

home and the first additional language classroom instruction, but rather on reading practice which is similar in the home and first additional language.

The Read Educational Trust Annual Report (2010) states that reading is a methodology that is particularly suited to meeting the assessment standards of language LO 1 listening, LO 2 speaking, LO 3 Reading and Viewing and LO 5 Thinking and Reasoning. However, they omit LO 6 Language Structure and Use. This means that they ignore that reading advocates the use of syntactic cues in interpreting and understanding text and that reading lessons are often followed with Word Study (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996:22-24; Hornsby, 1997). Although reading is not described in the National Curriculum (2002), it certainly forms part of the balanced language programme of the South African Foundation for Learning Campaign (2008) which is linked to the National Curriculum (2008b:10; Meier, 2011).

The South African government supports schools in implementing reading by providing them with several documents that contain information on reading as part of balanced language programme. These documents are: Government Gazette number 30880 (DoE, 2008a); Foundation for Learning Campaign 2008-2011 (DoE, 2008a); Foundation for Learning Assessment Framework (DoE, 2005); Intermediate Phase and Foundation for Learning Assessment Framework (DoE, 2005); and the National Reading Strategy Document (Curriculum GET Minute 0012/2008) (DoE, 2008b). The above mentioned documents are the most recent on reading policy that were distributed to all schools in South Africa in 2008. Using different documents to clarify different aspects of reading could be confusing to South African educators. In the next section, the documents relevant to the foundation phase (as this study was conducted with a focus on Grades 1, 2 and 3) are discussed.

2.4.3 Foundations for Learning Campaign

The National Department of Education started the Foundation for Learning Campaign in May 2008. It was officially launched by the Western Cape Education Department on 1 November 2008 (DoE, 2008a:1). The campaign provides guidelines on how to improve the literacy and numeracy levels of the children. The goal is a minimum pass rate of 50% per grade by 2011 (DoE, 2008:1). Government Gazette No. 30880 (DoE, 2008a:4) provides a background of the campaign as it is a national response to national, regional and international studies which has shown over a number of years that South African children are not able to read, write and

count at expected levels, and are unable to execute tasks that demonstrate key skills associated with literacy and numeracy.

According to the Government Gazette No. 30880 (DoE, 2008:10), the weekly contact teaching time for Foundation Phase in Grade R- Grade 2 is twenty-two hours and thirty minutes. The teachers have to plan nine activities namely, shared reading or shared writing, word and Sentence Level Work, Group Guided and Independent reading/writing, handwriting, writing, listening and speaking, first additional language and reading for enjoyment (DoE, 2008b:9-11). As part of the teachers' daily planning, thirty minutes are reserved for reading. After four years, the Foundation for Learning Campaign (DoE, 2008a) will be concluded with a national evaluation.

2.4.4 Assessment framework for the foundation phase

Whereas the Foundation for Learning Campaign (DoE, 2008a) was launched to improve the literacy and numeracy levels of children, the Foundations for Learning Campaign Assessment Framework (DoE, 2008d) provides support to teachers monitoring children's progress in literacy and numeracy. The Learning Campaign Assessment Framework (DoE, 2008d:19) informs teachers that assessing children is an on-going process; it states that "on a daily basis you must observe the learners" and "assessing for reading is continuous and not a once-off assessment". It also emphasizes that reading assessment must assess the comprehension skills of the learners: "it is important, too, that learners' understanding of what they are reading is assessed and not just their ability to recognize words" and "you want to assess what learners understand and what they can just memorize, so integrate your activities as much as possible e.g. learners may spell all their words correctly during a test on Friday, but are they able to use those same words correctly spelt when writing / recording their personal news or a story?" (DoE, 2008d:19). Even though the running records test is an excellent tool to assess children's comprehension and to create reading groups (READ, 2008a), the Assessment Framework for the Foundation Phase (DoE, 2008d) does not mention running records.

From the Assessment Framework for the Foundation Phase (DoE, 2008d: 19-45) it may be deduced that each school year has four terms, and since there are four assessment tasks in literacy for each term, there are sixteen assessment tasks per child for the year). Each assessment is divided into five sections, namely: oral; phonics; reading; handwriting; and

writing. The rating scales for the assessment are: not achieved; partially achieved; satisfactory achieved and outstandingly achieved. However, a weakness is that the Assessment Framework (DoE, 2008d) does not elaborate on a tool for reading that monitor the reading development and assists teachers in teaching specific reading strategies outlined in the National Reading Strategy.

2.4.5 The National Reading Strategy

The National Reading Strategy (DoE, 2008b) which includes shared, independent and group reading is a response to two systemic evaluations held by the Department of Education. The findings revealed shocking low levels of reading ability across the country. Large numbers of children simply do not read (DoE, 2008b:4). It is difficult to find all the reasons that explain why the illiteracy rates are so high in South Africa. In his outline of South African education, Bell (2010) says that the major problem is the almost complete lack of pre-primary schools and nursery teacher training facilities along with overcrowded primary school classes, staffed by over-stretched and often under-qualified teachers. His views are endorsed by the National Reading Strategy (DoE, 2008b:8-10) which also mention under-qualified teachers, poor instructional materials and uneducated parents. In addition the language at home and at school do not match, which contributes to the high illiteracy rates (DoE, 2008b).

The problems are numerous, but the National Reading Strategy (DoE, 2008b) also offers possible solutions that may help to reduce the illiteracy rates. It explains that monitoring children's performances will give the teacher information on whether and how their teaching methodologies help to improve the reading skills of children. In addition, it recommends multiple pedagogies that teachers should use different methods to teach reading comprehension and reading enjoyment (DoE, 2008b:15-18). It states that the Department of Education will train and support teachers to become good reading teachers, help principals in their leadership task to manage the reading programme in the school, and provide schools with good reading materials to create reading and library corners (DoE, 2008b:18). Furthermore, the Department of Education advocates working together with universities, reading organizations, teachers, principals, district officials, parent communities, non-profit organizations, the higher education community, the business community, and the broader community (DoE, 2008b:13-18).

The National Reading Strategy (NRS) (DoE, 2008b:5) emphasizes that improving reading is part of nation building. The desired outcome is that “all children must be able to read basic text by the end of Grade 3” (DoE, 2008b:11), seven reading activities are highlighted for teachers: reading aloud, shared reading, guided and group Reading, independent reading, word and sentence level work, vocabulary, and comprehension. However, as discussed above the Foundation for Learning Campaign (2008a) highlights nine teaching activities, which could be confusing to teachers.

Although neither the NRS (DoE, 2008b) nor the Foundation for Learning Campaign (DoE, 2008a) mention any theoretical base to support their decisions, the activities they recommend support reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, independent writing, and letter and word study (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996: 22-24; Hornsby, 1997). Despite this positive development, both the NRS (DoE, 2008b) and the Foundation for Learning Campaign (DoE, 2008a) fail to offer teachers a clear explanation of reading and its theoretical underpinnings. Consequently, it is likely that South African teachers could become confused about what reading constitutes which could result in individualistic teaching practices and uneven reforms (Fischer, 2008:136; Lin, Schwartz and Hatano, 2005:443).

2.5 SOUTH AFRICAN LEARNERS’ READING LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT

Matier and Hart (2007) note that there is a growing corpus of research which suggest deep problems in the South African education system, linked to learners’ low levels of literacy achievement. They further posit that the root of these problems lies in the ineffective teaching of reading in schools and learners’ consequent inability to learn from reading across the curriculum independently. Research findings which connect with Matier and Hart’s (2007) observations are explored in this section. Learners’ performance in the PIRLS 2006 international benchmark tests is discussed in the next section. Aside from the PIRLS 2006 findings, other studies of reading literacy, which also illustrate the difficulties learners’ experience, are, discussed. These studies include the second Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ II), the DoE’s systemic evaluations at Grades 3 and 6 and selected small-scale empirical studies in individual classes and schools.

2.5.1 The second Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ II)

According to Zimmerman (2010), Grade 6 learners from 14 African countries including South Africa completed purpose-designed tests in reading for SACMEQ 11 which is a regional assessment. It was the first time that South Africa participated in this assessment. An analysis in South Africa focused on establishing learners' levels of achievement in reading and examining whether different levels of achievement existed according to gender, socio-economic status and school location. The analysis was also aimed at determining the percentage of learners who demonstrated mastery of essential test items aligned to curricular content. Although there was a fluctuation according to provincial location, overall average learner performance for reading was 492 points, which was below the fixed international mean score of 500 (Moloi and Strauss, 2005). Moreover, providing an apt illustration of the literacy continuum in South African classrooms, an in-depth analysis demonstrated large discrepancies in learners' levels of literacy development.

About 19% of the learners assessed had achieved basic reading skill competence, another 19% were functioning on an *emergent* reading level and, sadly 12% had only *pre-reading* skills. The other learners, accumulative 50% had reading competency levels above *basic* reading skills. This 50% included 16% of learners who could read independently, 9% who had *interpretive and inferential* reading skills, 7% with *critical reading* skills, 11% with *analytical reading skills*, and 7% with the highest level of reading competency in the assessment: *insightful reading*. As Moloi and Strauss (2005) indicate, the distribution of reading competency levels was heavily skewed towards the lower competencies. They further argued that the broad range of reading competencies amongst these learners has implications for the training of teachers to deal with individual learner reading needs and competence levels.

2.5.2 Grade 3 and Grade 6 systemic evaluations

In a national study, the DoE (2003a) undertook a systemic evaluation of the status of FP education which incorporated assessments of Grade 3 learners in literacy, numeracy and life skills. A learner mean of 54% was obtained for the literacy assessment administered, which included the components of *reading and writing and listening comprehension*, with national

means of 39% and 68% being achieved respectively (DoE, 2003a). Thus, although the overall mean performance of 54% for literacy is seemingly acceptable, the mean score of 39% for *reading and writing* is lower. The high mean for *listening comprehension* possibly points to a very strong teaching emphasis on oral comprehension rather than to written comprehension activities.

A further analysis by the DoE (2003b) also revealed that learners were more successful in selecting answers from multiple choice comprehension questions than in answering free response type questions. The mean score for free response type questions was just under 35% and the mean score for the multiple choice questions was just over 50%. Moreover, learners' writing was worse than their reading, with a national mean for reading being in the region of 55% and that of writing being 30% (DoE, 2003c). The level of difficulty in this local systemic assessment is of concern as there are seemingly large differences in performance in reading between these Grade 3 learners and the Grade 4 learners who completed the PIRLS 2006 assessments. One could conclude that the results should be somewhat similar in these two assessments if they had comparable testing content given the expected progression in reading literacy abilities from one grade to the next. Furthermore, possible reasons for the systemic evaluation outcomes are not explored in the report, nor are actual teaching practices for reading literacy. Presumably these difficulties with literacy filter into Intermediate Phase classrooms. Evidence of the continuance of these problems was evident in learners who also fared poorly in the Grade 6 systemic evaluation which followed three years after the Grade 3 evaluation. A national mean of 38% was obtained for English as the Language of Teaching and Learning (DoE, 2005). Similarly, in the USA, national longitudinal data show that three quarters of learners who exit Grade 3 as struggling readers continue to read poorly in high school (International Reading Association (IRA), 2006).

2.5.3 Small-scale empirical studies in South Africa

A number of small and localized studies on primary school reading have been published in South Africa in recent years (Matjila and Pretorius, 2004; Pretorius and Machet, 2004; Lessing and Mahabeer, 2007; Manyike, 2008; Scheepers, 2008). These local studies focused mostly on concerns for literacy development in English as a Second Language (ESL) learner population. Moreover, research emphasis was placed on teacher perceptions, learner attributes and/or small-scale interventions to address learner-reading difficulties. There are

two studies at Grade 7 levels, one which tracked the effect of a reading programme on Grade 7 learners' vocabulary development in a high poverty township school on the outskirts of Pretoria (Scheepers, 2008), whilst the other compared the first and second language reading performance of 162 Grade 7 learners in English and Xitsonga. The findings were that these learners' reading skills were poor in both their home language, Xitsonga, and in English as their second language (Manyike, 2008).

Lessing and Mahabeer's (2007) study investigated the barriers that hinder isiZulu-speaking ESL learners in the Foundation Phase from acquiring reading and writing skills. A random cluster sample of teachers (N=104) from 16 English medium schools in and around Durban completed questionnaires about which barriers hindered their learners' progress. With a 1% level of significance, the teachers perceived parental involvement, poor socioeconomic backgrounds, proficiency in English language structure, fear of responding to tasks and knowledge of phonetic skills as contributory factors to these learners' inability to read and write in English ($p=0.01$). At a 5% level of significance, teachers perceived that their proficiency in isiZulu was important for the teaching of English language structure ($p=0.05$) (Lessing and Mahabeer, 2007). Pretorius and Machet (2004) conducted research into the effects of an out-of-school literacy enrichment programme on the literacy skills of an intervention group of Grade 1 and Grade 4 learners in five rural primary schools in rural KwaZulu-Natal. Fifteen learners were included in the intervention group per grade at each school. As part of a broader project, five randomly selected non-participant peers were given a battery of tests that tapped into their emergent literacy skills and knowledge in Zulu.

The Grade 1 learners who attended the programme showed gains in most of the literacy measures with the most consistent gains shown for those activities involving reading. The assessment of five participating Grade 4 learners per school was focused on isiZulu literacy and numeracy, isiZulu comprehension, English word recognition and English oral fluency and comprehension. A levelling-off effect was apparent, as the gains were not as numerous and differences between intervention and non-intervention groups not as marked as those of the Grade 1 group (Pretorius and Machet, 2004).

The literacy practices and perceptions of the Grade 1 teachers were also investigated (Pretorius and Machet, 2004). Teachers were interviewed and given a questionnaire regarding perceptions of reading, their literacy habits at home as well as at school. Of the small number

of 20 teachers who completed a questionnaire, 60% classified themselves as an average reader in contrast to the 10% who saw themselves as a fast, highly skilled reader, which is a characteristic one might expect of most teachers. About 57% of the respondents indicated having received a thorough training in reading theories and methods, yet only 34% recognized that their learners were not really performing up to standard. Thus, there was a mismatch between the teachers' perceptions of the reading abilities of their learners and their actual reading levels as revealed by the formal assessments. The lack of external assessment and national standards were hypothesized as perpetuating the idea that their learners' reading levels were adequate (Pretorius and Machet, 2004). In spite of a number of South African studies outlining the problems of schooling and the factors that affect literacy accomplishment in the last decade, it is only in the last two years that the government has started to take tangible steps towards rectifying the situation (DoE, 2008a; 2008b; 2008c).

2.6 FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATORS' ATTITUDE AND KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING READING

2.6.1 Educator attitudes

According to Squires and Bliss (2006) decades of research on the connection between teachers, theoretical attitudes and their practices yield a common theme: all teachers bring to the classroom some level of beliefs and attitude that influence their critical decision making. After reviewing many studies, Friedman and Carver (2007:656) suggest that it is now widely accepted that teachers' personally held attitudes and beliefs help to guide their practices. Hall (2005:404) also indicates that the decisions that teachers of reading make is largely influenced by their attitudes and knowledge. Hall (2005) elaborates that despite the types and amounts of knowledge that teachers may hold; it is their beliefs that are likely to dictate their actions in the classroom. Regardless of their pre-service exposure and preparation, and in service training, teachers' beliefs inform their professional attitudes and conduct in the classrooms.

According to Northcutt (2004:372), the attitude of classroom teachers toward content area literacy can be one of the most important factors in reading achievement and reading practice of foundation phase educators. Santa (2006) a literacy specialist, suggests that the classroom teacher is directly related to improving foundation phase literacy. Clearly, Santa (2006)

believes that teachers who demonstrate an explicit understanding of literacy can impart that insight to his or her learners and, thereby affect their academic success. Research also indicates that whether educators are comfortable or not, willing or not, they and their attitudes directly correlate with learners literacy in the classroom (Dreyers, 2003).

2.6.2 Educator knowledge

Recent intervention studies that reduce or ameliorate reading failure however emphasize the importance of multi-component interventions that require teacher expertise across several domains, including phonology, phoneme-grapheme correspondence, morphology, semantic organization, syntax, discourse and pragmatics (Joshi, 2005; Lovett *et al.*, 2005). The content knowledge required for effective instruction and intervention (Moats, 2009; Snow *et al.*, 2005) includes knowledge of English orthography and the various ways that it represents spoken language. Results have indicated that while teachers limited knowledge levels positively, teachers demonstrated some ability to calibrate in the domains of phoneme awareness and phonics. There has since been a corresponding increase in interest in the research of teacher knowledge ability and proficiency across the curriculum but has most especially put a premium on teachers' abilities to foster literacy in the classroom (Allington, 2006). According to Pearson (1996), there is very little empirical data on disciplinary knowledge teachers possess in their domain of reading and remains largely unanswered. What do teachers need to know to be effective practitioners in teaching reading? How deep and explicit must the knowledge base be to provide effective instruction?

2.6.2.1 Levels of knowledge in the three knowledge domains

According to a survey conducted by Cunningham, Perry, Stanovich and Stanovich, (2004) to examine levels of teacher knowledge in the domains of children's literature, phonological awareness and phonics, and relations between teachers' perceptions of their knowledge and their actual knowledge in each of the domains, results indicated that in a critical component of early literacy instruction entails exposure to a wide variety and genre in which foundation phase teachers did not demonstrate high recognition levels. They emphasize that efforts must be improved to instruct teachers to shift their own attention to the sound stream of language and away from the more salient orthographical level when teaching children to read, and explicit phonic knowledge of foundation phase teachers responsible for teaching beginning

reading was aware how the consonant speech sounds are represented in the English language system. They state further that current research chose to make adequate progress in decoding common words found in the elementary curriculum, received training surrounding the complexity of consonant and vowel sounds. Teachers of reading must be knowledgeable about the vowel pattern, not only because it is the most commonly spoken vowel in English (Hanna and Hanna, 1996) but also because of the challenge it presents for children in learning to read and spell.

As teachers are an important part of a school's resources (Pretorius and Machet, 2004), the following section first considers teachers' competency in teaching reading literacy. Thereafter, the status quo of reading literacy teaching in South African schools is discussed with issues around teaching pedagogy for English language learners being specifically considered. Teacher qualities, teaching goals and reading instruction practices recognized as being relevant in the development of learners' reading literacy are then delineated.

2.6.2.2 Teacher competency

A DoE report (2009a) on trends in education macro indicators revealed that the percentage of qualified teachers in South Africa increased by 30% between 1994 and 2008. These gains occurred largely amongst Black or non-White teachers implying that equity in the distribution of qualifications had increased. However, the DoE (2009a) admitted that these figures only reflect formal certification courses and does not reflect any measure of teachers' classroom competency or subject knowledge, which was conceded as an issue that remains a serious concern. The DoE (2008b) lists teacher competency as a specific challenge for implementing the NRS.

Teachers in South Africa may have an under-developed understanding of teaching literacy, especially reading and writing, they may not know how to teach reading or may know only one method meaning they cannot adapt to the instructional needs of individual learners (DoE, 2008b). As a result of misunderstandings of the role of the teacher in teaching for Curriculum 2005 (C2005) and the subsequent Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), many teachers mistakenly thought that they did not have to actively teach reading but merely had to facilitate the process as children would teach themselves to read (DoE, 2008b). Teachers were also expected to develop their own teaching materials and reading programmes as part

of curriculum implementation aspects which it is now recognized they did not have the experience to undertake (DoE, 2008b). As hinted at in the DoE's (2009b) macro indicator report, teacher preparation for the teaching of reading literacy is not unproblematic either.

A 2008 survey of the FP literacy programme for the Bachelor of Education degree for Early Childhood Development and/or FP teacher preparation at eight South African higher education institutions revealed wide variation in the programme goals espoused and the design of the programmes at the different institutions (Zimmerman, Howie and Long (2009). While the content of the programmes were mostly well considered with goals in line with the national curriculum and international trends, there were some challenges. This included: time limitations; resource inadequacies; and less than optimal student practicals in schools which impeded optimal initial teacher preparation for teaching reading (Zimmerman, Howie and Long, 2009a). Linked to this survey, a case study of a specific institution's initial preparation of Intermediate Phase language teachers revealed a lack of specific focus on preparation for the teaching of reading, a scenario which Zimmerman, Howie and Long (2009b) state is likely to be present for the majority of Intermediate Phase Language teacher programmes in the country.

Notwithstanding the influence of educational policy and school context, Bloch (1999) contends that how teachers understand the process of becoming literate has consequences for what they identify as appropriate teaching strategies in the classroom. Intermediate Phase teachers may not be automatically aware of the connections between basic reading skills and reading comprehension. They may notice that learners in the Intermediate and upper grades read poorly but they may not understand that proficiency in basic reading skills must be taught before learners can progress. Furthermore, without instruction and practice, teachers are unlikely to develop strategies that can promote thoughtful reading by their learners (Moats, 1999a).

As Stoller and Grabe (2001) assert, the requirements for the development of reading fluency necessitate that teachers as well as curriculum developers determine the instructional goals for the various contexts. Moats (1999b) reinforces this by stating that classroom teaching for reading instruction needs to be considered as the critical factor in preventing reading problems and must be the central focus for change. As such, teachers' acquisition of the teaching skills necessary to bring about the development of literate language competency is

critical, particularly in South Africa where, many assumptions have been largely unquestioned about how to teach reading and writing, which languages to use and what counts as high quality practice in classrooms (Bloch, 1999).

2.7 THE STATUS QUO FOR TEACHING READING IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Depending on the medium of instruction at each school, reading skills in South African Schools are developed during the FP of schooling using mother tongue basal readers (Pretorius, 2002). Much emphasis is placed on the teaching of decoding skills but this is often done in a superficial, haphazard and decontextualized fashion (Pretorius and Currin, 2010). Children may read lists of syllables or words aloud from the chalkboard, since teachers assume that when learners can decode they will be able to comprehend, little attention is given to reading comprehension, therefore the transition from decoding syllables or words on a chalkboard to meaningful reading activities using extended texts does not easily happen (Pretorius and Currin, 2010).

In the Intermediate Phase (IP), learners' reading as a language and information-processing skill is then largely presumed to be developed as they can decode text. The texts used also change predominantly first language narrative formats to English expository texts with topics and issues that learners are unlikely to be familiar with (Leu and Kinzer, 2003). The focus on the decoding of texts in the primary language essentially means that non –English learners have most likely not yet mastered reading comprehension skills in their vernacular. As a result, these learners lack the necessary skills to transfer to literate reading in English. The system through which these learners then progress does not place enough emphasis on promoting reading skills and is strongly characterized by rote learning principles, verbatim recall and oral modes of information dissemination (Pretorius, 2002). The focus on decoding of texts in the FP also likely means that even first language learners' comprehension skills may not be adequate as they enter further primary school education (Zimmerman, 2010).

The only empirical research found which begins to broach South African teachers' overall literacy teaching practices is the SACMEQ II study (Moloi and Strauss, 2005). In this study, investigation was also extended to South African Grade 3 teachers' biographic characteristics (age, gender), training, time allocation for teaching, preparation and marking, and viewpoints

on learner activities, teaching goals, approaches and assessment procedures. Teachers were particularly asked about their opinions of the most important learner activities for teaching and reading, their decisions about the most important goals for teaching reading, and to give ratings of their most frequent used reading activities for instruction and assessment reading. Percentages of teachers according to response to categories provided were given.

Approximately 45% of teachers rated reading for comprehension as the most important activity for teaching reading, 22% rated learning new vocabulary and 13% rated sounding words. About 29% thought the most important goal was to develop a lasting interest for reading in learners, 32% considered the development of life skills to be most important, 11% indicated making reading enjoyable and 15% suggested improving reading comprehension. Teachers were also asked to rate their most frequently used teaching activities for reading. The majority of the teachers reported asking questions to deepen understanding (91%), asking questions to test comprehension (88%), giving positive feedback (84%), reading aloud to the class (72%) and introducing the passage before reading (67%). Using materials made by the teacher was the least often used strategy for teaching reading, with only 37% of teachers reporting using it.

In relation to the assessment of reading, 36% of teachers reported giving weekly reading tests, whereas a further 41% reported only giving reading tests two or three times per month (Moloi and Strauss, 2005). The survey data offered only superficial signs of teachers' opinions and do not give any indications of which strategies teachers use or how they use and adapt them to diverse learner populations in the classroom, nor do they provide any indications of the quality of these strategies or the school contexts that support them (Zimmerman, 2010).

2.7.1 Teaching and learning in English in multilingual classrooms

In multilingual educational contexts, Bloch (1999) reveals that the teacher has to make decisions not only about how to teach literacy, but also about which languages children should learn in. She further explains that many teachers are not confident that they can teach children who do not speak the same language as they do, and this leaves them feeling ill-equipped. There is much controversy about whether reading problems are caused by low

level proficiency in a second language or by a learner's difficulty in transferring reading strategy skills from their mother tongue to second language texts (Macaro, 2003).

Matjila and Pretorius (2004) argue that since the education system is tasked with promoting bilingualism, then due to literacy's undeniable linkage to academic achievement in bilingual education settings, it is also tasked with promoting biliteracy. There is an assumption that if one is proficient in a language then one will automatically be able to read in that language. However, although there is a link between proficiency in a language and reading capability in that language, the relationship between the two is asymmetrical. Proficiency in a language does not guarantee reading fluency in it (Matjila and Pretorius, 2004). To illustrate this, Pretorius (2002) maintained that in South Africa reading problems tend to be masked by language proficiency issues.

It is assumed that poor academic performance is caused by poor mother tongue proficiency. An associated assumption is that when learners have difficulty using reading as a tool for learning, their comprehension problems are a product of limited language proficiency, this then leads to the idea that language proficiency and reading ability are alike, however, this is not the case (Pretorius, 2002). Improving the language proficiency of learners does not automatically improve their reading comprehension. Attention to reading improves reading skill and as a result language proficiency also improves (Lessing and Mahabeer, 2007). Therefore, although reading ability alone cannot guarantee academic success, it is highly likely that a lack of reading ability can function as a key barrier to academic achievement (Pretorius, 2002).

Although English is the main language of instruction in South African schools, poor literacy results cannot be solely attributed to second language instructions as learners are battling to read in the African Languages as well as English (Pretorius and Machet, 2004; Howie *et al.*, 2007). As Alexander (2006: 2) comments, language medium policy and practice in and of themselves are a necessary but not sufficient explanation of poor academic performance. There are many other factors that are part of the casualty. Of these, socio-economic status, teaching method and parental involvement are probably the most important.

Research which focused on the second language medium of instruction situation in some South African context classrooms found that teachers did not have the methodological and presentational skills or language associated with effective second language instruction. These

teachers were thus considered incapable of consciously promoting functional language skills for content (Uys, Van der Walt, Botha and Van den Berg, 2006). Second language learners may experience reading comprehension in another language as an overwhelming task and teachers may not be aware of the difficulties that these learners confront as they attempt to gather meaning from text in another language (Stoller and Grabe, 2001). As Dyers (2003) notes, teachers are struggling to respond adequately to the increased linguistic diversity amongst learners in their classrooms. These teachers' formal training experiences may have afforded limited consideration of the practicalities of promoting this learner's literacy development (Zimmerman *et al.*, 2009a; 2009b).

Theron and Nel (2005) conducted research into the needs and perceptions of South African Grade 4 teachers who taught ESL learners. The sample only included teachers at schools where English had been the medium of instruction from Grade one. 86% of the teachers reportedly experimented in the classroom by trying out new methods, tools and techniques; they used alternative teaching practices such as stories, words and concepts that related to the learners' immediate environment, drilling of words with flash cards, role play, drama and dialogue. The development of vocabulary was recognized as a priority task.

Adaption of the level of teaching by using additional time for remediation, adaption of levels of assessment or adaption of worksheets was reported. The compilation of language enrichment programmes for these learners were also indicated, as was teachers' use of code-switching to assist these learners and the use of peer translators. These outcomes provide some interesting insights into teacher adaption according to learners' ESL status. However, the findings offer only a surface level description of a small sample of teachers' practices in engaging ESL learners in English medium schools.

Clearly the scarcity of research on South African teachers' reading instruction practices is evident. The literature review now turns to recognized goals and practices for developing learner reading literacy in primary schools in the international literature and begins by discussing the goals for teaching reading. Attention is then turned to the qualities of excellent reading teachers followed at length by the explication of teaching practices considered effective for literacy development.

2.7.2 Reading teaching goals

In the intermediate and senior phases of schooling there is a need for learners to become increasingly fluent readers. As they do so, it is expected that reading independence will be exhibited and many of the behaviours listed below will become automatic. For newly fluent readers it is proposed that they will be able to read in such a manner that they will: rarely interrupt the flow of their reading to decode words; consistently integrate and use cueing systems (phonics, meaning, and structure) to confirm the meaning of the text; use all the information in the text to confirm the message; retell; summarize; infer meaning; self-monitor and self-correct while reading; use inference; deduction; and prior experiences to predict and make meaning from text; read flexibly and strategically from a variety of texts; ask questions as an extension for further reading; make inferences; predictions and generalizations; confirm and extend knowledge, use word identification strategies very effectively; and discuss points of view and contrast texts themes and types (Blair, Rupley and Nichols, 2007).

2.7.3 Reading teacher qualities

Teacher abilities may have a greater impact on learner achievement than actual instructional programmes (Topping and Ferguson, 2005). Indeed, competent teaching can alleviate the severity and consequences of reading failure, especially for high risk population from second language backgrounds and those with reading disabilities (Moats, 2009). As Taylor (2008) stresses, teachers need to focus not only on the content of reading instructions but equally on the pedagogy as well. The qualities that excellent reading teachers have are that they: understand reading and writing and believe that all children can learn to read and write; continually assess children's individual progress and link reading instruction to children's prior experiences; know a variety of ways to teach reading, when to use each method, and how to combine methods into an effective instructional programme; offer a variety of materials and texts for children to read; use flexible grouping strategies to fit instruction to individual children; and are good reading coaches in that they provide help strategically (Blair, Rupley and Nichols, 2007).

In a study comparing effective teachers of reading, Poulson (2001) found that it was common for such teachers to teach a range of literacy skills and knowledge at the word, sentence and text level *via* shared text. There were distinctive beginnings and endings to lessons, and

learners were often required to present a review at the end of an activity. The teachers followed a brisk pace and used time-limits for sub-tasks within lessons. They re-focused their learners' attention to the task regularly and used modeling and demonstration to teach both the purposes and processes of literacy. The teachers used a wide range of questions and were inclined to ask learners open-ended questions about decisions and strategies (Topping and Ferguson, 2005).

In summarizing the research on effective elementary teachers of reading, Taylor, Peterson, and Rodriguez (2002) also noted a number of teacher characteristics that were similar, notably that they maintained an academic focus, kept more learners on task and provided direct instruction. Such direct instruction involved making learning goals clear, asking learners questions to monitor their understanding of content or skills covered, and provided feedback to learners on their academic progress. These teachers also used modelling and explanation to teach learners strategies for decoding words and understanding texts, and emphasised higher-order thinking skills more than lower order skills.

Teachers favoured small group instruction over whole group instruction and they elicited high levels of learner engagement. They also coach rather than instruct in interacting with learners, and engaged in higher level thinking of reading. Telling indicated a strong teacher-directed stance and lessened opportunities to assist learners to take responsibility for their own skills and strategies. Balance was also achieved in reading programmes by teaching skills, fostering much reading and writing and developing self-regulation in learners' use of strategies (Taylor *et al.*, 2002).

Interestingly, Reynolds (1998) noted that certain teaching factors may apply only in certain contexts. He indicates that effective practices in low socio-economic status (SES) contexts involve the following teacher behaviours: generating warm and positive effect; getting a response before moving on to new materials, presenting small segments of material with practice before moving on and showing how bits fit together; emphasizing knowledge and application before abstraction, therefore putting the concrete first; having strong structures and well-planned transitions; using individually differentiated materials; and using experiences of learners. In contrast, effective teaching behaviours in middle-income SES contexts include: extended reasoning; posing questions that require associations and generalizations; giving difficult materials, providing projects for independent judgment,

discovery, problem-solving and use of original information; very rich verbalizing and encouraging learners to take responsibility of their own learning (Reynolds,1998).

Related to this SES-based outlook on differentiated instruction, Moats (2009) argues that teachers who are able to identify their learners' abilities and needs and can then adapt their instruction to meet them are more likely to experience success with a range of learner abilities. Moreover, the provision of differentiated instruction is dependent on teachers' insight into what causes variation in learners' reading achievement (Moats, 2009).

In a study on the expertise of literacy teachers from preschool to Grade 5, (Bloch, Oakar and Hurt, 2002) found that highly effective Grade 4 teachers distinguish themselves by their abilities to simultaneously instruct learners who are either learning to read, or reading to learn, trying to use higher-order thinking skills to gain more information from content-area texts and using higher level comprehension abilities. These teachers can also move literacy activities up or down the cognitive scale as learner needs dictate (Block *et al.*, 2002).

In the only comprehensive study of Grade 4 teachers of reading, Allington and Johnstone (2002) studied the characteristics of exemplary teachers of reading at Grade 4 in the USA. Classroom observation of and interviews with 30 Grade 4 teachers who were identified as exemplary through a nomination process was conducted. The observation focused on the structure of classroom activity (time allocation, grouping, movement) and the essence of the language environment (who talks, the nature and content of talk) (Allington and Johnstone, 2002). In terms of their personal characteristics, these teachers both confirmed and extended the features of exemplary teachers already noted in the literature review for the study. In terms of their personal characteristics, these teachers were: warm, caring, supportive, encouraging, friendly, and enthusiastic about their work, confident, accurate in self-judgements with a sense of agency and with a genuine like of people. Related to their beliefs, attitudes and expectations, these teachers expected diversity, assumed potential, recognized that learning is social, requires ownership, relevance and choice, and that error and modelling is important (Allington and Johnstone, 2002).

One of the classroom level factors which consistently and most strongly affects reading test scores is Opportunity-To-Learn (OTL) whether it is measured as the amount of the curriculum covered or the percentage of test items taught (Allington and Johnstone, 2002). It

can be linked to length of school day, year and hours of reading experience that is taught. It is also linked to the quality of the teachers' classroom management, time on task, and the use of homework which expands available learning time (Bloch, 1999). In ensuring OTL, effective teachers emphasize academic instruction with learning as the main classroom goal. Instructional time is spent on curriculum based learning activities in a task-orientated, business-like manner within a relaxed and supportive environment (Bloch, 1999). The classroom itself is well-organised and there are minimal disruptions or learner misbehaviour. The learners are active rather than passive participants in their own learning, with teachers asking many questions and involving learners in class discussion (Reynolds, 1998).

2.7.4 Specific instructional strategies advocated

Reynolds (1998) noted that successful teaching of reading equips learners to draw on phonic knowledge, word recognition, grammatical knowledge and contextual information when reading to make meaning. He adds that frequent opportunities are given for children to listen, read and discuss texts and to think about the language and content used. He states further that good library use is also stimulated and required alongside the provision of time for productive individual reading both at school and at home. Dimensions of effective instruction supported by research include instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) 2000; Taylor, 2008).

Rasinski and Padak (2004) observed that after years of debate about which approaches to reading instruction were more effective, that is, whole language or phonics, skills-based or literature-based instruction, comprehension-orientated or work-based, the field has generally concluded that they are all important and need to be taught. Although they further indicate that this balance makes sense, particularly the inclusion of the aforementioned dimensions of effective instruction, (Rasinski and Padak, 2004, 92) argue that a balanced approach has to be “more than the simple conglomeration of disparate approaches to literacy instruction – in a truly balanced system, one element influences other parts of the curriculum, and that interrelationship of parts needs to be considered”. The significance of their position is acknowledged, albeit that each of the dimensions of effective instruction is considered separately, as in the rest of this sub-section.

2.7.4.1 Phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency

Most learners, especially those in the first grades of schooling, benefit from systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics knowledge (McGuiness, 2004). Effective systematic phonics instruction approaches include letter-by-letter decoding and decoding by onset and rhyme (Good and Kaminski, 2003). Oral reading is used to develop decoding fluency during which learners receive teacher guidance and support which has a positive impact on their overall reading (Taylor, 2008).

2.7.4.2 Comprehension

Reading comprehension is recognized as a multidimensional process that is an essential component of the learning process (NICHHD, 2000; Lesaux, Lipka and Siegel, 2006). Lesaux *et al.* (2006) observe that this process of comprehension can be determined by a number of different factors at various levels, including the reader, the actual text, and activities associated with the reading process itself. There are two types of reading comprehension divisions for English language learners specifically. There are those learners who are poor comprehenders and readers due to difficulties with lower-level processing skills, and there are poor comprehenders who experience difficulties at the higher-level text level despite good word recognition skills (Pinnell, 2000). The latter may battle with higher-order processing such as inference making, working memory and story structure knowledge (Lesaux, Lipka and Siegel, 2006).

The U.S. National Reading Panel's (NRP) Teaching Children to Read (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHHD], 2000) analysis of 203 studies on instruction of text comprehension strategies led to the identification of 16 different kinds of effective procedures. Of the 16 different types of instruction, eight were determined to have a firm scientific basis for concluding that they actually improve learner comprehension. Gill (2008) confirms that teaching even one comprehension strategy can improve learners' comprehension, for example: activating prior knowledge; generating questions while reading; visualizing text; inferring; predicting; retelling; deciding what is important; evaluating; synthesizing; summarizing and graphic and semantic organizers. Gill (2008) also states that those learners who can understand plot, character, setting, point of view and theme of texts are able to better understand what they read. Another factor is vocabulary development.

Comprehension does improve when teachers help learners to understand important vocabulary and concepts they will encounter in their reading, or demonstrate strategies that they can use to work out unknown words as they read (Gill, 2008).

2.7.4.3 Vocabulary

Although weak readers do need robust instruction in decoding, teachers also need to realize that disadvantaged children specifically may have one half of the oral language vocabulary typical of children from more privileged backgrounds. This means that vocabulary development is the cornerstone of a good teacher (Moats, 2009).

Given other studies on vocabulary growth in childhood, McKeown (2010) suggests as a set target vocabulary growth 1,000 words a year through elementary school. According to McKeown (2010):

Vocabulary growth in the intermediate grades is mostly a result of interaction with texts rather than from oral interactions. All children in the intermediate grades experience vocabulary growth in the intermediate grades mostly as a result of interactions with texts rather than from oral interactions, such rates vary and for some children it is not fast enough to help them to deal with the text materials which they should be reading and learning. Poor readers also have difficulties interacting with text, meaning that they have fewer opportunities to learn new words too. There is very little vocabulary instruction in schools and most often such instruction is organized around a dictionary as a source of word meanings this can be ineffective if learners cannot make sense of the information offered by the dictionary. Otherwise, most vocabulary is learned incidentally from context during reading. Intensive instruction is needed to provide learners with the opportunity of vocabulary growth adequate to keep pace with academic demands and learners in Grades 4 and 5 should be building vocabulary by developing: knowledge of individual word meanings and ability to use these words in multiple contexts; the ability to apply a word's meaning to make sense of text in which the word is used; the ability to extend meanings metaphorically; the ability to work out meanings of inflected and derived forms of words, e.g. *run* to *running*; the ability to use context to acquire information about word meaning; an awareness of common prefixes and suffixes; a recognition that words share word parts that can have similar meanings across words; an ability to find words in a dictionary and interpret the

information given, and an awareness of how words are used to convey meaning, including figurative language.

Taylor (2008) advocates that beneficial vocabulary instruction techniques involve direct teaching of specific words, pre-reading instruction in words, learning to use strategies to determine word meanings and learning words in rich contexts and incidentally through wide reading and that the words studied also need to be of use to the learner in many contexts. McKeown, Beck and Blake (2009) also indicate that teaching vocabulary can enhance comprehension, particularly if the kind of instruction provided can help learners to build meaningful associations into their knowledge base and more than a brief definition is provided.

2.8 SUMMARY

This literature review aimed at highlighting the factors that influence reading and literacy teaching practices at foundation phase. A number of studies were discussed which highlighted the difficulties that learners are experiencing in the development of reading, literacy and also the research available on the teaching of reading literacy in South Africa. The importance of international assessments in monitoring learners' reading development was also presented, alongside the benefits and limitations of such studies. Knowledge and attitudes of educators, as well as factors necessary for effective schooling and the teaching of reading literacy were discussed. The following chapter presents on the research methodology for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research is one of many different ways of knowing or understanding, it is a process of systematic enquiry that is designed to collect, analyse, interpret, and use data to understand, describe, predict or control an educational phenomenon or to empower individuals in such contexts (Martins, 1996). Pillay (2008:46) adds that research has, to varying degrees, influenced many of our ideas and thoughts about education and the practices and processes we use to achieve our goals and objectives in education. For example, some research involves educators who are constantly trying to discover and understand different and new pedagogical styles in order to embrace the quality of teaching and learning, thus enabling them to make professional decisions that have immediate and long term effects on learners, educators, parents and ultimately on our community at large (Brayman, 2007).

In this chapter, the research design and methodological approach that address the research questions in the study are outlined. First, the research paradigm for the study is discussed. The research design is then explained; subsequently the methodological aspects of the research are discussed. This is followed by validity and reliability concerns and ethical considerations.

3.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The choice of research methods cannot be divorced from researchers' theoretical concerns or conceptions of knowledge building (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2005). Creswell (2003) maintains that although philosophical ideas are largely hidden in research, they still influence the actual practice of research and thus need to be identified. These conceptions of knowledge building or paradigms can be treated as a belief system that researchers share which in turn influences the kinds of knowledge sought and interpretation of collected evidence (Morgan, 2007).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), methodology refers to a design which the researcher devises for data collection and the analysis procedures to investigate the research problem. They add that the research methodology in a research study is determined by both

the nature of data collected and the problem under investigation. This data can be either verbal or numerical. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) explain that when verbal data is collated, the methodology tends to be qualitative and when it is numerical data, then the methodology leans towards a quantitative approach. Northcutt (2004) call for reconciliation between qualitative and quantitative paradigmatic views to utilize the strengths of both to the benefit of the research undertaking as a whole. This study utilizes both a qualitative as well as a quantitative methodology as it collected both verbal and numerical data. Once a study combines both qualitative and quantitative techniques to any degree, the study is no longer considered a mono method design (Leech, 2009 and Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007), it is considered a mixed methods design.

3.1.1 Mixed methods research

Mixed methods research is an approach to theoretical and practical knowledge that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions and standpoints (Johnson, Onwuegbuzi and Turner, 2007). The emergence of mixed methods research offers an alternative research paradigm which combines, integrates or mixes qualitative and quantitative methods (Morgan, 2007).

The benefits of mixing qualitative and quantitative research designs are generally for enhanced triangulation, a more robust development of theory and the potential to more comprehensively understand the research situation (Anaf and Shepard, 2007). In support of this, Johnson *et al.* (2007) suggest that there are five broad purposes for mixing qualitative and quantitative research. The first purpose is that of triangulation which involves the use of different methods for studying the same phenomenon. A second purpose is that of complementarity which involves seeking elaboration through enhancement, illustration, and clarification of the results of one method with the results of the other. A third purpose is the use of one method for the development of, or to inform the other method. The fourth purpose is initiation or discovering paradoxes and contradictions that lead to reframing the research questions. A final purpose is that of expansion which involves seeking to expand the breadth and the range of inquiry by using different methods of inquiry components. For this research a mixed method design was particularly suitable as there were multiple facets of the research questions that needed exploring (Anaf and Shepard, 2007).

3.1.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research relies on the collection of non numerical data such as words and pictures (Johnson and Christensen, 2000:312). According to Martin (1996), qualitative methods used in research are designed to provide an in-depth description of a specific programme, practice or setting. In this study the researcher attempted to provide an in-depth description of teachers' understanding and attitude towards implementation of the NRS. This study studied teachers in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, and interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:3; Henning, 2004). According to Pillay (2005), the multiple perspectives, different theoretical positions, diverse methods of collecting, interpreting and analysing data blend together to reveal a deep and rich form of research.

3.1.3 Quantitative research

A quantitative approach to research has the following general characteristics: numerical data with tables and graphs are used to explain the trends in a discussion of the findings; the questionnaire is generally the main instrument used for data collection; structured interviews and observations may be employed, and data are analysed statistically (Brannen, 2004). This form of research leads to the application of rigorous forms of measurement such as mathematical, statistical, and computer techniques, to analyse and classify data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2010). In this type of research, the relationship between the researcher and the respondent is distant and the research strategy is structured, there is also confirmation in the relationship between theory and research. Thus quantitative research is structured, logical, measured and wide (Brannen, 2004).

Like qualitative methodology, this approach also has advantages and disadvantages. Most important about this methodology is that it is time-saving. Many respondents can be reached within a short period of time, and there is reduced researcher influence on the behaviour of the respondents (Fleisch, 2008).

Unlike qualitative data, the quantitative data may not be enough since the researcher has no time to make follow-ups. This may occur because an instrument such as the questionnaire

was mainly used. This instrument in many cases does not contain names of participants. This makes it difficult to find them if you need to follow up. Another disadvantage is that most people are unable to interpret numerical data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

3.1.4 Target population

The target population was defined by the following considerations: teachers had to be located in primary schools in the Phoenix-Verulam circuit and they had to have more than a year of teaching experience in the foundation phase. The population was therefore considered as follows:

- Type of school : Primary School
- Geographical location : Phoenix-Verulam circuit
- Population : Foundation phase educators and learners
- Age of learners : 6-8 years
- Age of educators : 20-60 years
- Gender : Male and female
- Years of teaching experience : More than one year.

A distinction is made between a population and a survey population. A population or universe is the aggregate of all the elements while the survey population is the aggregate of elements from which the sample is selected (Angel, 2009). A sample is a subset of the population; however, not all the elements of the population would form the sample (Sekaran, 2006). The major reason for sampling is feasibility (Huysamen, 1993:50). The use of samples may also result in more accurate information than might have been obtained if one had studied in the entire population (Chamaz, 2006). With a sample, time, money and effort can be concentrated on the smaller group to produce better results (Schnetler, 1993:53).

3.1.5 Sampling

Purposive sampling involves the settings, events and activities to be included for data collection. Purposive sampling means that participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them the holders of the data needed for the study (Chamaz, 2006). Random sampling was employed in the selection of a sample for this study. In random sampling a sample of a population is drawn in such a way that each member has an equal chance of being selected (Sekaran, 2006).

3.1.6 Sample size

To determine the sample size, Babbie's (2001:211) sampling table was used where everyone in the population was numbered; thereafter a table of random numbers was used to select a sample from the population. Members whose numbers were chosen made up a sample. According to Babbie (2001), a sampling ratio of 1:10 may be used. The sampling ratio is defined as a proportion of elements in a population that are selected to form a sample and the corresponding formula to calculate sampling ratio is sampling ratio: sample size divided by population size (Babbie, 2001: 213).

For selection of learners for the focus group discussions, the researcher again used a sampling ratio 1:10 as suggested by Babbie (2001, 213). On average, most of the schools had three grade 1, 2, and 3 classes with 40 learners each. Using the ratio of 1:10, the researcher therefore selected 10 learners per grade from each of the five schools making up a total sample of 150 FP learners. The task of selecting participants for the focus group discussions was left entirely to the FP educators, since they knew their learners. Educators were asked to choose learners with a mix of abilities that is to select two high achieving learners, who on average scored above 80% in assessments, two weak learners, who on an average scored below 40% in assessments, and two average learners, who on average scored between 40% and 70% in English. The researcher requested a good mix of learners in order to extract rich, honest and meaningful responses from them. Learners had to be willing to participate in the focus group discussions. The selected sample of FP educators comprised of four educators from each of five primary schools making up a total of 20 FP educators.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

3.2.1 Primary and secondary data

Two research instruments were used to gather data for this study which constituted spoken and written data (Mason, 2006) in the form of questionnaires and focus group discussions. Secondary data is primarily collected through desk-based research. As Creswell (2003) states, secondary data which is an obtrusive data collection method, depends on the location of related and provable, previously published academic studies and theories. He adds that the researcher should critically evaluate the data in order to ensure that it is valid and reliable. He explains that the researcher should only use secondary data which exists in academic research and articles which are verifiable and well referenced.

In this study primary data was collected from questionnaires that were administered to FP educators and from focus group discussions with learners in selected schools. Secondary sources identified and collected information from primary sources (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) and were frequently found in journals, literature reviews, internet sites and books. The questionnaire as a research instrument is important tool used by the researcher shall now be discussed in detail.

3.2.2 Questionnaire

Data is any kind of information researchers can identify and accumulate to facilitate answers to their questions. According Denzin and Lincoln (2000), questionnaires consist of questions dealing with some topic or related group of topics given to a selected group of individuals for the purpose of gathering data on a problem under consideration. A well designed questionnaire can boost the reliability and validity of the data (Schumacher, McMillan 2006). According to Creswell (2007) the length of individual questions, the number of response options as well as the format and wording of questions are determined by the following aspects: the choice of the subject to be researched; the aim of the research; the size of the research sample; the method of data collection; and the analysis of the data.

Against the above background then, the researcher constructed the questionnaire. It was thus necessary to pay careful attention to: question format; question order; types of questions; formulation of question; and the validity and reliability of questions.

3.2.3 Construction of the questionnaire

Mason (2006) explains that a researcher must ensure that adequate time is budgeted in the construction and preliminary testing of the questionnaire. An important aim in the construction of the questionnaire for this investigation was to present the questions as simply and straight forwardly as possible to avoid ambiguity, vagueness, bias, prejudice and technical language in the questions (Hlongwana, 2008).

The questionnaire was subdivided into the following sections:

- Section A dealt with the biographical information of the participants, namely age, number of years of teaching in the foundation phase, gender of the teacher, etc.
- Section B consisted of questions relating to teachers' understanding of the NRS, and their skills and attitudes in terms of implementation of the NRS. A mix of open-ended and closed questions was used in this section.

3.2.4 Open-ended questions

Cooper and Shindler (2008) define an open-ended question as a survey question in which no answer categories are provided and participants are given spaces to fill their answers. This type of question has several advantages according to Cooper and Shindler (2008). First, the researcher can get new ideas and information which is not included in the alternatives. Second, the researcher can use these questions for complex issues. Third, the participant can answer in detail and can clarify and qualify their responses. This helps the researcher to get all the necessary information and it will be easier to understand the data. Fourth, these types of questions can be used where there are too many categories of answers to list, such as question 2.1 on the educator questionnaire, which was about the importance of body language, pronunciation, tone of voice, using expression and being animated in implementing the NRS. Fifth, the respondents can express their feelings fully and are not constrained by options given. This implies that the respondents will be allowed to say what they really think, rather than be channelled to answer in a certain way. For this reason, the focus group discussions were made up of open-ended questions. Lastly, it enables the respondent to respond in a way in which the data becomes rich.

Johnson and Christensen (2000:131) state however that open-ended questionnaires are not without disadvantages. Firstly, the researcher may collect irrelevant information, secondly, the researcher needs certain skills to interpret and make the data reliable. Lastly, these types of questionnaire require much more time by the participant to construct an appropriate response hence one week was allocated for completion of the questionnaires in this study.

3.2.5 Closed questions

Johnson and Christensen (2000:131) define closed questions as requiring respondents to choose from a limited number of responses predetermined by the researcher. According to Northcut and McCoy (2004), this type of question forces the respondents to select one of the responses categories provided. He calls this a forced-choice or fixed-response. This type of question is usually employed to get statistics. Northcut and McCoy (2004) also state that answers to this type of questions are standard. This implies that it is easier to compare the data, answers are easy to answer and to code and this saves time and money. Lastly, minimum numbers of irrelevant answer are received, as alternative answers are provided. This type of questionnaire has the disadvantage that respondents may find it easy to guess answers in cases where they do not know the answers (Purcell-Gates 2004). The respondent may feel frustrated if not enough options are given. A further problem of this type of questionnaire is that the questions may be misinterpreted resulting in the respondent giving wrong information. Credibility and authenticity is important in questionnaire construction, this can be assured by pilot testing the questionnaire.

3.2.6 Pilot testing of the questionnaire

Jonson and Turner (2003) state that the most important point to be taken into account in questionnaire design is that it takes time and effort and that the questionnaire may be re-drafted a number of times before being finalized. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) concur that the pilot study enhances credibility of the research instruments in that it assists the researcher to take into account potential sources of error that may undermine the quality of research and distort the findings and conclusion. The researcher therefore conducted a pilot study for the testing of reliability and validity of the research tools in collecting data to

answer the critical questions. The pilot study was conducted by administering questionnaires to four FP educators in the school the researcher is currently at.

The findings of the pilot study unveiled a few short falls in the questionnaire. Respondents indicated that some of the questions were not easy to understand. As such their responses indicated different interpretations to questions that the researcher thought would be straight forward and simple to understand. The researcher attended to the errors such as ambiguity and vagueness in the structured questions, and language usage needed to be simplified before they were administered to the participants in the main study.

3.2.7 Administration of questionnaires

If properly administered, the questionnaire is the best available instrument for obtaining information from widespread sources or large groups simultaneously (Kennedy, 2007). The researcher administered the questionnaires to the educators at the selected schools and collected them on completion. Specific days, times and proper procedures to administer the questionnaire were negotiated with the principals of schools that participated in the research so that normal instructional time of educators and learners were not disrupted. The personal administration of the questionnaires facilitated the process and the response rate.

3.3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Focus groups are positioned in a continued setting, bringing together a specifically chosen population to discuss a particular theme or topic where the interaction with the group leads to data and outcomes (Cohen, Mansion and Morrison, 2000). They add that a focus group implies a degree of participation among participants in this data collection strategy. According to Singh (2004), focus group discussions (FGDs) have particular merit linking the generation of research data with collective consciousness rising and it holds the potential of linking both to the generation strategies of protection.

Provided that groups have been well chosen in terms of composition and number, FGD's can be a powerful research tool which provides spontaneous information in a short period of time and at a relatively low cost (Babbie and Mouton, 2010). Implementation of the FGD is an

imperative process as each discussion builds on the previous one, with a slightly elaborated or better focused set of questions for discussions (Babbie and Mouton, 2010). The purpose of choosing to conduct FGDs with foundation phase learners in this study was to gauge their level of development in terms of reading. As Singh (2004) said, the best way after all to learn about student problems, is to ask students themselves.

Communication and interaction during the FGDs was encouraged by seating learners in a circle so that learners could be visible to each other. As Lederman (1990:117) said, focus group discussions are based on the therapeutic assumption that people who share a common problem will be more willing to talk amid the security of others with the same problem.

The FGDs were held in neutral settings, such as being in their classrooms which encouraged participants to freely express their views. The researcher who was also the facilitator of the FGDs ensured no disturbances, sufficient questions, adequate lighting and a casual atmosphere. The researcher had formulated a series of open ended questions to stimulate discussion among participants.

The researcher facilitated and recorded the discussions. Participants were encouraged to answer the questions candidly and to freely express their views. Each FGD was audio recorded. Permission to record was obtained from the participants.

The researcher initiated the discussions by introducing herself and stating the purpose of the study and the FGD. Ice-breakers were used to encourage a casual atmosphere. They were then given an explanation of the kind of information needed and how the information would be used in future reading programmes. Participants were assured that they would not be identified in any way. They were therefore not asked to introduce themselves or to state their names.

3.4 REALIBILITY AND VALIDITY

The two most important aspects of precision are reliability and validity. Reliability refers to consistency or stability of the score we get from tests and assessment procedures. Reliability is computed by taking several measurements on the same subjects therefore, in this study foundation phase learners and educators were asked the same questions to ensure reliability of the findings. In this study Cronbach's Alpha was used as a measure of reliability.

Mathematically, reliability is defined as the proportion of the variability in the responses to the survey that is the result of differences in the respondents (Dellinger and Leech, 2007). That is, answers to a reliable survey will not differ because respondents have different opinions, not because the survey is confusing nor has multiple interpretations. The computation of Cronbach's Alpha is based on the number of items on the survey (k) and the ratio of the average inter-item co variance to the average item variance (Williamse and Isabel, 2009). Under the assumption that the item variances are equal, this ratio simplifies to the average inter-item correlation, and the result is known as a standardised item alpha (or Spearman – Brown stepped unreliability coefficient (Williamse and Isabel, 2009). This implies that the instrument the researcher selects must produce accurate data.

The reliability scores for ordinal data of the research are shown in the table below.

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	16	100.0
	Excluded	0	.0
	Total	16	100.0

Table 3.1: Case processing summary

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.687	5

Table 3.2: Reliability statistics

A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered as 'acceptable', however, values between 0.6 and 0.7 are also considered acceptable for exploratory studies (Garson, 2011:9; Malhotra, 2004:268; Simon, 2004). The results indicate that the reliabilities fall close to the acceptable norms. This indicates that the questionnaire achieved what it was set out to measure for the ordinal data.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2000:106) validity refers to the judgment of the appropriateness of interpretations and actions we make based on scores we get from a test. Construct validity was ensured by explaining key concepts to the teachers and learners prior to the questionnaire and focus group discussions respectively. In this study, arising from the belief that knowledge is a social interaction it was not assumed that a stable and unchanging

reality was being studied and therefore the researcher did not expect to find the same results repeatedly as individuals behave differently and express different opinions as the text changes. Therefore rather than speaking of validity, generalizability, and reliability of the research findings, constructionist researchers talk about credibility, transferability respectively (Lincoln and Cuba, 1985; Durheim and Wassenaar, 1999).

To achieve dependability, the context and conditions under which the research was carried out, are clearly outlined. Throughout the study attempts have been made to provide rich and detailed descriptions of the participants and the context of the research. Therefore, the study could serve as a guide for other researchers to conduct similar studies, thereby contributing to its transferability.

3.5 ETHICS

Since questionnaires needed to be administered to foundation phase educators, permission (*Appendix B*) was sought from the Senior Circuit Manager of the area in which this research was conducted, he was based in the Pinetown District in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education. A copy of the questionnaire was sent with the letter requesting approval. Permission was sought from the principals of the randomly selected primary schools to administer the questionnaires to the foundation phase educators and to conduct focus group discussions with foundation phase learners of the school. The principals were also given a copy of the Senior Circuit Manager's letter indicating approval to undertake the research.

Ethical clearance for the questionnaire and the focus group discussion schedule were granted by the Durban University of Technology. Permission was sought from the participants to record the focus group discussions and participants were reassured of anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were notified that pseudonyms would be used in any write-up or reporting of findings of this study.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The process of data analysis commenced immediately the questionnaires were returned by the respondents. The questionnaires were counted and sorted so that the categorization of the data could be facilitated. Voluminous data was organized into manageable, coherent patterns and categories so that valid interpretations and findings or conclusions could be generated

(Chamaz, 2006). The first step in the analysis involved counting the questionnaires (n=20) and reading through all the responses to the questions and also listening to the FGDs of foundation phase learners. The recordings were transcribed verbatim. This was the beginning of organizing the data into relevant categories or themes. This was followed by a pattern analysis and synthesizing of the data gathered from both the instruments. The analysis process for each of the research instruments follows.

3.7 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data was analysed using statistical software called PASW 18.0 and Stat Graphics Centurion 15.1. This statistical programme is used to analyse data collected from surveys, tests and, observations. It can perform a variety of data analyses and presentation functions, including statistical analysis and graphical presentation of data (Stevens and Larry, 2004). They add that PASW statistics help the user understand how to interpret the output for research questions. In this study the graphs were generated to represent the statistical analysis of the data generated from the questionnaires. The questionnaires comprised of items that need to generated data on FP educators knowledge and attitudes in implementing the NRS, which was the main focus of this study. Among its features for statistical analysis (Lind *et al.*, 2004) is descriptive statistics.

3.7.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics describes the organising and summarising of quantitative data. Univariate and bi-variate analysis is the most appropriate for descriptive statistics. Uni-variate analysis is concerned with measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion (Lind, Douglas, Marchal, William, Mason and Robert, 2004). The most appropriate measure of central tendency for interval data is the mean and the most appropriate measure of dispersion for interval data is the standard deviation (Stevens and Larry, 2004). Bi-variate analysis concerns the measurement of the two variables at a time. Descriptive statistics is useful as it summarises results for an analysis. Descriptive data analysis aims to describe the data and investigates the distribution of each variable by determining whether the scores on different variables are related to each other (Lind, Douglas, Marchal, William, Mason and Robert, 2004). For the purpose of this study descriptive statistics aided in the formation of the common themes that emanated from the data collected.

3.7.2 Chi-Square

A Chi Square is any statistical hypothesis test in which the test statistic has a Chi square distribution when the null hypothesis is true, or any in which the probability distribution of the test statistic (assuming the null hypothesis is true) can be made to approximate a Chi square distribution as closely as desired by making the sample size large enough (Kerr *et al.*, 2004). Specifically, a Chi-square test for independence evaluates statistically significant differences between proportions for two or more groups in a data set (Kerr *et al.*, 2004). Chi-square was used in this analysis to determine whether there were relationships between the knowledge variables and other variables of interest.

3.7.3 Cross tabulations

Data resulting from observations made on two related categorical variables (bi-variate) can be summarised using a table, known as a two way frequency table or contingency table (Williamse and Isabel, 2009). The word contingency is used to determine whether there is an association between variables. In this study, cross-tabulations were used to determine the spread of the knowledge variables in relation to other variables of interest.

3.7.4 Factor analysis

According to Field (2009), factor analysis attempts to identify underlying variables or factors that explain the pattern of correlations within a set of observed variables. Factor analysis is often used in data reduction to identify a small number of factors that explain most of the variance that is observed in a much larger number of manifest variables (Field, 2009). Factor analysis can also be used to generate hypotheses regarding casual mechanisms or to screen variables for subsequent analysis (for example, to identify co-linearity prior to performing a linear regression analysis). Factor analysis was used to determine the knowledge variables measured what they set out to measure.

3.7.5 Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's alpha measures how well a set of items (or variables) measures a single uni-dimensional latent construct. When data have a multidimensional structure, Cronbach's Alpha will usually be low. Technically speaking, Cronbach's Alpha is not a statistical test – it is a coefficient of reliability (or consistency) (Stevens and Larry, 2004). Cronbach's Alpha can be written as a function of the number of test items. Below, for conceptual purposes, the formula is represented for the standardised Cronbach's alpha as:

$$\alpha = \frac{k(\text{cov/var})}{1 + (k - 1) (\text{cov/var})}$$

3.8 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on a justification for the use of the research methodology employed in this study and the related considerations in the design of the study. The selection of participants was also explained. Two data collection instruments were used namely, questionnaires and focus group discussions. These instruments were used to gather qualitative and quantitative data. In this study a mixed methods approach to data collection, analysis and interpretation strengthened the quality of the research. The next chapter presents the findings of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

In the previous chapter the general approach of the study and the methods employed to generate data were discussed. This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the data. The data is categorized into themes, namely: background to the NRS; English as the medium of instruction; professional development; educator knowledge and NRS; educator attitudes and NRS; and foundation phase educator's views on requirements of the NRS.

4.1 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Twenty questionnaires were distributed to foundation phase educators, sixteen unspoilt questionnaires were returned, a return rate of 80%. Four educators indicated that they needed more time to complete the questionnaires, which the researcher agreed to, but after a week when the researcher returned to collect, they were still not done. At that point the researcher realised that she would have to ask the educators to fill out the questionnaire while she waited, which they did, thus ensuring a 100% return rate.

The focus group discussions with foundation phase learners were successful because there was maximum participation to generate as much data as possible. A total of 150 learners, that is, three groups of 10 learners in each of the five schools were conducted. All data were entered onto an Excel spread sheet and scores and percentages of specific grouping were calculated. The findings were elicited from a combination of data generated from the focus groups comprising foundation phase learners and questionnaires from foundation phase educators.

4.1.1 Biographical details of foundation phase educators

The sample comprised of nineteen female and one male educator. The majority of the respondents (93.8%) were female as can be seen in Figure 4.1 (on page 60). It is evident that women dominate the foundation phase. This comes as no surprise as teaching is often regarded as an extension of women's primary role care function, namely that of being a care giver. Reay and Dennison (1990) have established that primary schools' preference for female educators may be explained by *inter alia* the following: a female educator represents a

motherly figure and is more acceptable as a *loco parentis* to younger children in primary schools; and female educators have more patience with, and show more empathy for young learners and learners with special needs. Statistics have shown that more females than males in the profession may view teaching as an occupation that affords them time in the afternoons to attend to their household chores, attend to their own children, and assist them with their homework (Perumal, 2006). He adds that many female teachers are not sole breadwinners and therefore may see teaching as a second or additional family.

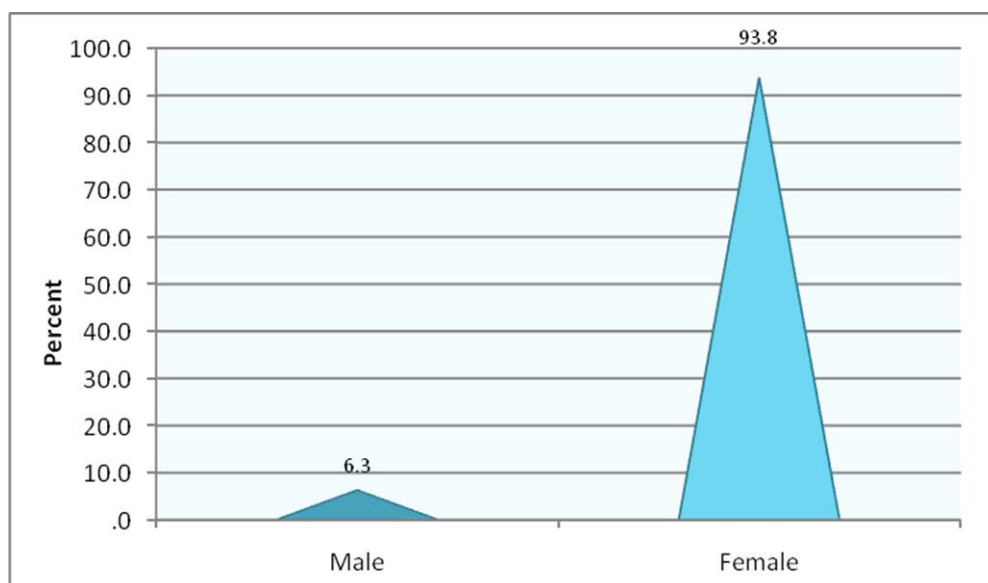


Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents

In respect of racial profile, eighteen educators were Indian and two were African. The Indian educators classified themselves as English first language speakers (EFL) and the two African educators classified themselves as English second language speakers (ESL) in terms of their home language, which is isiZulu. This was in contrast to their predominantly English second language learners indicating that the learners spoke different home languages. Bloch (1999:41) states that in multilingual educational situations the teacher has to make decisions not only about how to teach reading literacy but also about which languages children should learn in. She further explains that teachers are not confident that they can provide the kind of education they have themselves experienced, that is to teach children who do not speak the same language as they do leave them feeling ill-equipped.

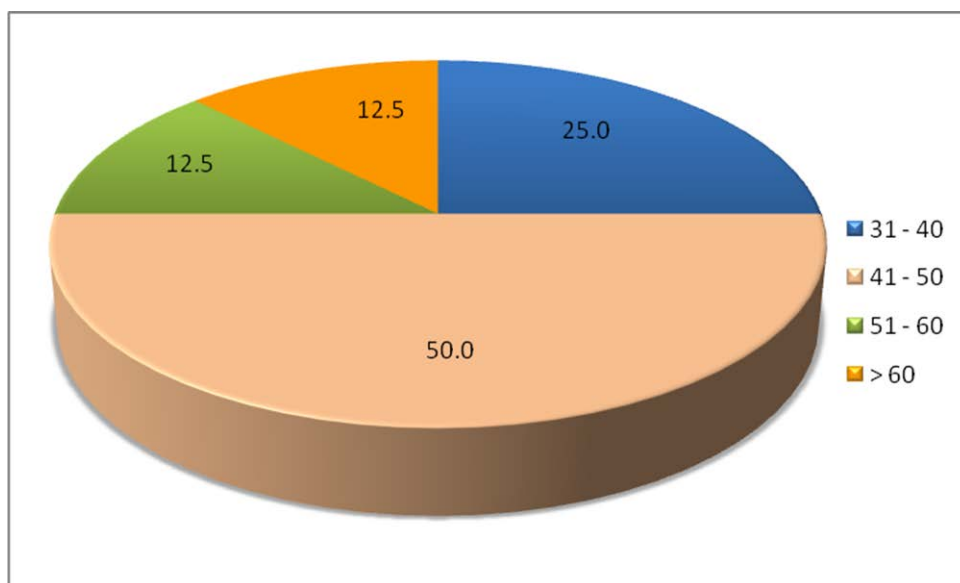


Figure 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Half of the respondents (50%) were between the ages of 41 and 50 years. The remaining 50% were split evenly between those older than 50 years and those younger than 40 years. Clearly, these were an older cohort of respondents. This could mean that many of these teachers could have inferior teaching education programmes and/or did not receive prolonged training for teaching the RNCS (DoE, 2002a). If on-going replenishment of the teaching force is to take place, one would expect that FP learners would be taught by teachers in their twenties, thirties, forties and fifties and not by unqualified FP educators (Howie *et al.*, 2007).

The above figure also indicates that half the respondents would have received their teacher training pre-1994, in other words, under the apartheid dispensation. This means that they were not trained to teach in multicultural and multilingual classrooms. With regards to their academic and professional qualifications: three educators had Bachelor of Arts degrees with Higher Education Diploma, two had Bachelor of Education Degrees, one had a Diploma in the Junior primary phase, one had a Diploma in the senior primary phase, three had Higher Education Diplomas in pre-primary education, one had M+3, and one had an M+4 qualification.

The majority of the educators had more than ten years teaching experience. None of the educators in the sample had any intention of leaving the education sector in the near future yet their qualifications mainly consisted of diplomas and not degrees. There were a few exceptions, two educators held Bachelor of Education Honours degrees, and another held a Bachelor of Arts degree, these were not qualified foundation phase educators, but had

teaching certification. In recognition of the qualifications of educators, the DoE (2008b) lists teacher competency and qualifications as a specific challenge to implementing the NRS because there are unqualified educators teaching in the foundation phase. Educators are hired by the school* governing body (SGB) which often do not function maximally, and these educators are not necessarily qualified or experienced educators let alone being qualified FP educators (Mbanjwa, 2009), this lack of qualification and experience impacts on the successful implementation of the NRS (DoE, 2008c).

4.1.2 Biographical details of foundation phase learners

The learner sample comprised of 150 male and female learners who were predominantly African. 85% of the participants were isiZulu first language speakers, and 15 % were English First Language speakers. Although the majority of the learner population in the designated area was African, the medium of instruction (MOI) was English. In one school though, 100% of the learners who participated in the focus group discussions were Indian. Majority of South Africa's learners are second language speakers of English, but the medium of instruction is English. This diversity poses a problem for most learners and educators in the FP.

4.2 EMERGING THEMES

An in-depth exploration of responses from the questionnaires and learner focus group discussions yielded common themes, namely: background to the NRS; English as medium of instruction; professional development; factors that affect teaching of reading; knowledge; attitudes of FP educators; and FP educators' views on requirements of NRS.

4.2.1 Theme one: Background to the National Reading Strategy

Nineteen educators (90 %) responded that they were aware of the NRS and agreed that a copy had been made available to all educators at their school. The educators indicated that they were first made aware of the NRS at staff meetings at their schools *via* a departmental circular. At least 60% had personal copies of the NRS and 30% indicated that they were first made aware of the document by the principal, while the other 30% obtained information regarding the NRS from colleagues. This indicates that the majority of educators were in receipt of the document but it does not automatically imply that educators understood or implemented this document according to its intentions. Fullan (2001) also found that the mere presence of a document is no guarantee of its implementation because educators find that the

policy is not very clear as to what it means in practice. Educators called for “*intensive discussions*” and “*meaning making workshops*” on the NRS because as one educator said “*workshops were not conducted to introduce NRS in schools and educators find it difficult to understand it*”. Govender (2000) agrees that knowledge and understanding of the NRS is essential to increase educator competency.

Educators reported that during the introduction of new educational policies to schools in post-apartheid South Africa generally, many curriculum changes in education received greater priority in comparison to reading, such as “*the phasing in and reviewing of the curriculum*”, “*the training of educators in outcomes-based education approaches*”, and “*other policies relating to school governance*”. It was strange to the educators that more emphasis was placed on curriculum policy implementation than on the reading strategy, since implementation of the latter is crucial to teaching and learning at school. This effectively meant that educators were of the view that the NRS did not receive the necessary attention during the period of educational change when it was required.

Educators revealed that apart from the five day orientation workshop on the National Curriculum Statement offered to educators by the Department of Education in 2008, there were no further workshops on implementing the NRS. The curriculum orientation training did not include the changes to the National Curriculum Statement or how to implement the NRS. Respondents said that owing to logistical problems, they do not have opportunities to engage regularly with other educators in the district, debate issues, or come to an understanding of implementing the NRS in different contexts and thereby grow professionally. Their need for such engagement and guidance was summed up by one educator who said that “*teacher competency, in- service training for educators who have not attended colleges and universities, continuous support programmes for new educators joining the profession, methodology, use of specific manuals and resources are required*”. According to Cantrell, Burns and Callaway (2009), the reality is that the research on reading strategies is extensive and validated, the results are inarguable: explicit instruction of literacy strategies in content area classrooms is the most effective means of improving reading literacy across the curriculum. The problem is that, though the curriculum requires proficiency in English within our multilingual classroom, this poses challenges for the learners and the educators.

4.2.2 Theme two: English as a medium of instruction

The educators' perception of the medium of instruction (MoI) is indicated by their view that African learners have to be taught in their mother tongue given that the NRS promotes multilingualism and respect for other languages. A respondent succinctly stated: *"African learners already find difficulty in understanding/reading English – other languages will definitely assist the learner in some way"*. A cumulative response of 93.8% of the educators agreed that there is a need to affirm and advance the use of all languages.

One educator said that it is necessary to *"bring traditional languages to the fore. Black learners need to be able to relate content to their own language and culture in order to assimilate it properly"*.

The importance of teaching and learning in their mother tongue was evident in the comment of learners who participated in the focus group discussions: *"isiZulu also helps me to communicate with all the Zulu children too. If you don't know isiZulu you can't tell them in English, they won't understand"* and *"if you don't know isiZulu you won't survive in the world"*. It is evident that these children value their language and regard isiZulu as their language of communication, while other learners favoured instruction in English.

One African learner stated *"we all must read only English and isiZulu books because English books make us clever"*. In her study Vesely (2000) found that Black South African learners have an ambivalent attitude towards their own languages; they value their languages highly as ethnolinguistic symbols which serve as vehicles for transmission of indigenous cultures and traditions but view English as a language of power and as contributing to their personal upward mobility. This is contrary to the view of 80% of FP educators in the study. They felt that they need expert help on how to teach second language learners to read. They indicated the difficulties they experience with second language learners and asked how they could assist *"second language learners with learning English and learning to read"*. In their research, Pluddemann, Braam, October and Wababa (2004) found that teachers have not been formally trained to teach bilingually whether in English/Afrikaans or English/IsiZulu.

Researchers involved in the Pluddemann *et al.* (2004) study are of the view that the quality of learning and teaching in several of the schools is compromised on account of educators relative lack of training in the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) or in the home language of learners among other factors. In other words, educators in many cases are not

effective despite their formal (subject) qualifications. Wolf (2000) adds that there has not been any successful or comprehensive national development or modernization of mother tongue education. This begs the question, if educators cannot speak learners' mother tongue fluently in the medium of instruction, how is the educator supposed to effectively guide the learner in terms of his or her ZPD.

Having discussed indigenous languages as MoI, it is necessary to consider the views of the participants who argue for English as MoI. When referring to the implementation of the NRS and FP educators' dilemma, Heugh (2002) observed that in an era of globalization there are larger structural forces at play, which influence international and domestic economic development policies. These forces generally do not contribute to multilingualism. In response to the question on how to affirm and advance the use of all languages, an educator responded, *"English must be stressed because including any other language has only so far confused educators and learners alike"*. Educators from all four schools supported English as the MoI. There was emphasis on the teaching of English and a strong sense that mother tongue use is relegated to the community but that English is for access to the outside world (Sookrajh and Joshua, 2009). They add that the success of mother tongue education depends on many variables, including the availability of human and financial resources, and people's attitudes which in turn are dependent on the reward attached to mother-tongue education, and the political will to make mother-tongue education marketing succeed.

Broader, Extra and Maartens (2002) astutely sum up the language issue in post-apartheid South Africa by emphasising the very real mismatch between the multilingual policy of official documentation and the actual language practice in government, education and business. Only if the leadership is seen to take pride in all South Africa's languages; only if schools value every child's mother tongue as a unique asset, and offer multilingual options; and only if people are rewarded for their knowledge of a variety of languages in terms of their jobs and status, can language practice in South Africa reflect language policy. According to Lessing and Mahabeer (2007) recognition of the importance of learners' home language has not been easily translated into the school curriculum. This is reflected in the social and political factors that influence and complicate decisions in schools, as do community/parental attitudes towards language and literacy, whether and how literacy is used in the particular home languages, resources and educator availability in different languages (Macro, 2003). It would seem from participants' comments that parents make choices on issues of the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) that are contrary to the intentions of

the NRS. For example, educators said that parents want their children to learn in English but they also want to promote their mother tongue (Braam, 2004.)

Post-1994, Afrikaans was excluded as a compulsory second language and isiZulu was included in the school curriculum. Research into community perceptions of school language policy formulation by Braam (2004) shows that there is a strong drive towards English in order to move away from the perceived low socio- economic status, and the reported ethnic prejudices and stereotypes associated with the prevailing variety of Afrikaans, as stated by a learner that *“everyone must learn English”*.

The following extracts are interesting in that they clearly indicate the importance of affirming and advancing the use of all languages when various educators stated that *“all languages need to be introduced to help other learners e.g.: Black learners”*, *“we live in a multicultural society. Hence we must promote tolerance / love for all languages”*, *“in KZN, English and isiZulu are of paramount importance, learners must be encouraged to become literate in both languages, this would prepare them for the future: jobs, interviews, effective communication etc.”* and *“Black learners need to be able to relate content to their own language and culture to assimilate it properly”*.

The above views indicate that there is a need to teach learners in isiZulu as well English. Using home languages as a scaffold would most likely draw in ESL learners in the classroom, while at the same time exposing the learners to isiZulu in a natural and meaningful way. According to (Vygotsky, 1962) in scaffolding instruction a more knowledgeable other provides scaffolds or support to facilitate the learners’ development. Respect for other languages is important. It must be noted that although English is used as the main language of teaching instruction in South African schools, poor literacy results cannot be attributed to second language instruction as teachers and learners are struggling with literacy in the African languages as well as English (Pretorius and Matchet, 2004). This indicates that there are other important factors that hinder the academic achievement, one of which is teachers’ acquisition of the teaching skills that are necessary to bring about the development of competent reading literacy and this lends itself to the critical acquisition of professional development (Alexander, 2006) which will be discussed later in this chapter.

While some educators acknowledge the importance of mother tongue instruction in the curriculum, others stated that their principals had no intention of introducing it citing reasons such as implications for staffing, and parental support for English. In her statement on the

release of the annual national assessment results, Angie Motshegka, the Minister of Basic Education in South Africa indicated that from 2012, all learners in grades 1, 2 and 3 will be required to study four subjects, that is: Home Language, First Additional Language, Numeracy and Life Skills (South African Government Information, 2011). Each learner will be taught in his or her home language and thereafter will be taught alongside home language where it is practical instruction for those learners who choose English as the Language of Learning and Teaching in latter grades. This places major emphasis on professional development of FP educators.

4.2.3 Theme three: Professional development

The importance of teacher development cannot be overstated given the reality that most of our teachers were trained under the apartheid system which did not encourage professional autonomy and the involvement of teachers in policy matters (SACE, 2001). Research insights inform practice and common sense converges around the understanding that skilled educators have a significant impact on student learning (Moats, 2009). Effective continuing professional development helps educators to continue enhancing their knowledge and skills throughout their career (Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien and Rivkin, 2005). The professional development of educators involves training of skills, which is in line with updating skills and receiving advice on best practice (Martinez-Beck and Zaslow, 2005). This continual updating discourse of lifelong learning is linked to a commitment to raise standards as well as to collaborate with other educators in reaching target and shared expertise (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

The era is passing when it was assumed that a person equipped with a teaching certificate was prepared for lifelong service as an educator (Strickland and Kamil, 2004). The recent curriculum transformation in South Africa coupled with calls for improving quality has asserted that educators need to update and improve their skills through continuing professional development. 75% of the educators agreed that FP educators should be workshopped on how to implement the NRS. Moloi (2005) agrees that in an ever-changing environment new learning capabilities will enable educators to respond creatively to both internal and external changes. *“Workshops are necessary in all aspects such as coping with second language learners, large classes and weaker learners”* said an educator who has been teaching in the FP for thirty years. Another educator added *‘teacher competency, in service training for educators who have not attended college or university, continuous support*

programmes for new educators joining the profession, methodology and use of specific manuals". These quotes are clearly indicative of lack of knowledge in some educators who are assigned to teach reading in the FP.

In this discussion the term 'professional development' is used as a general term to include educator development, staff development and in-service education and training (Tomlinson, 1997: 27). He adds that professional development is the process by which educators acquire the knowledge and skills for good professional practice throughout different stages of their career. Educators as professionals need to keep abreast of new developments in the curriculum, extend their expertise and acquire new competencies, but 40% of educators stated that they felt that they were not competent enough. The Department of Education (2008) purports that in-service education and training (INSET) should be conceived as an on-going process of professional development. INSET is thus seen as a process whereby educator's continuously renew and update their skills, knowledge and attitude during their career, but unfortunately this has not been the practice.

Majority of the educators have indicated their interest in attending the Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS), which is synthetic, and analytic phonics programme where young children learn to spell, read and write by using pictures and keywords (Mead 2006). This programme is offered by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE). It is described as being at the 'word' level teaching of literacy. 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that more training workshops should be provided to assist them in implementing the NRS. This clearly indicates that FP educators are admitting that they need to be more knowledgeable in terms of teaching reading, because THRASS emphasises the importance of teacher knowledge of phonology, onset rhymes and alliteration and unstressed vowels (Pretorius, 2003). As mentioned in chapter 2, professional development as purported by the Department of Education is one of the underpinning philosophies of the NRS. ELRC (2003) adds that professional development provides support and opportunities for development and assures continued growth of educators but again, this was not done.

Educators are part of a dynamic profession and must constantly be aware of new developments in matters relating to education (Poster and Poster, 1993). Bardenhortst, Calitz, Van Schalkwyk, Van Wyk, and Kruger (1985) concur that educators should be kept informed of the latest trends in their learning area in particular and in education in general. No member of the teaching profession can enter teaching and remain in it for decades without updating

their professional skills (Bell, 1988). Educators similarly expressed their views that, *“we should be work shopped before the document was even implemented, so foundation phase educators would be prepared, well off and more confident when teaching reading, especially with so many challenges like language barriers and large classes”*.

The need is increasing for teachers who can provide learners in low-performing schools with the same educational opportunities as those provided to learners of higher performing schools (National Partnership in At-Risk Schools, 2005). Quality teaching requires deep knowledge of content and extensive knowledge of how foundation phase learners learn the content, it also requires pedagogical content knowledge, which is knowledge about how to teach the content (Spencer, 2008). Quality teaching involves knowledge of how students learn to read, knowledge of how to assess reading proficiency and growth, and how to use assessment information to apply the appropriate strategies from a repertoire of practices that are demonstrably effective for teaching learners to read (Dickson and Brady, 2005). To sustain quality teaching in reading, on-going professional learning is essential. Findings in this study revealed that educators had a very superficial knowledge of the requirements of the NRS; they need to fully equip themselves with the requirements of the NRS.

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development emphasises the role of the instructor in the development of the child where the instructor and the learner collaborate with each other (Mol, 1993:3). In order to do this, teachers require deep knowledge of subject content. To sustain quality teaching in reading, on-going professional learning is essential.

80% of the educators complained about the short crash courses that were conducted by the DoE instead of proper workshops. Respondents were also not in favour of any training that *“takes place after a hard day's work”* or *“when we are tired”*. Respondents were unhappy that training urgently needed by all foundation phase educators was being reserved *“for a chosen few”* to *“represent”* all foundation phase educators, because training or knowledge gained was seldom cascaded to all FP educators.

4.2.4 Theme four: Knowledge and attitudes of foundation phase educators

Respondents said that they work very hard and are dedicated to the calling to teach but since they did not receive any training on implementing the NRS, they would continue to teach reading according to traditional methods. They agreed that the foundations for learning workshops which some attended did not meet their expectations in terms of implementing the

NRS as some of the trainers were also inexperienced but there were also other factors that affected the teaching of reading.

4.2.5.1 Educator attitudes and the NRS

Section B of the questionnaire was structured to obtain information on educators' attitudes towards teaching reading and implementation of the NRS. The questions were structured in a yes/no format. Analysis of responses on attitudes of educators was analysed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistics. Although respondents (81.3%) felt qualified and 87.5% enjoyed teaching reading, 43.8% were not happy with their level of competence and a little less than a third (31.2%) would like to take a training course in teaching reading. Three-quarters of the respondents (75%) were confident in their ability to teach reading. Figure 4.4 (on page 74) is a representation of these responses. The data revealed that teachers held strong unfavourable attitudes regarding their level of competence in teaching reading and their likeliness to take training courses in teaching reading.

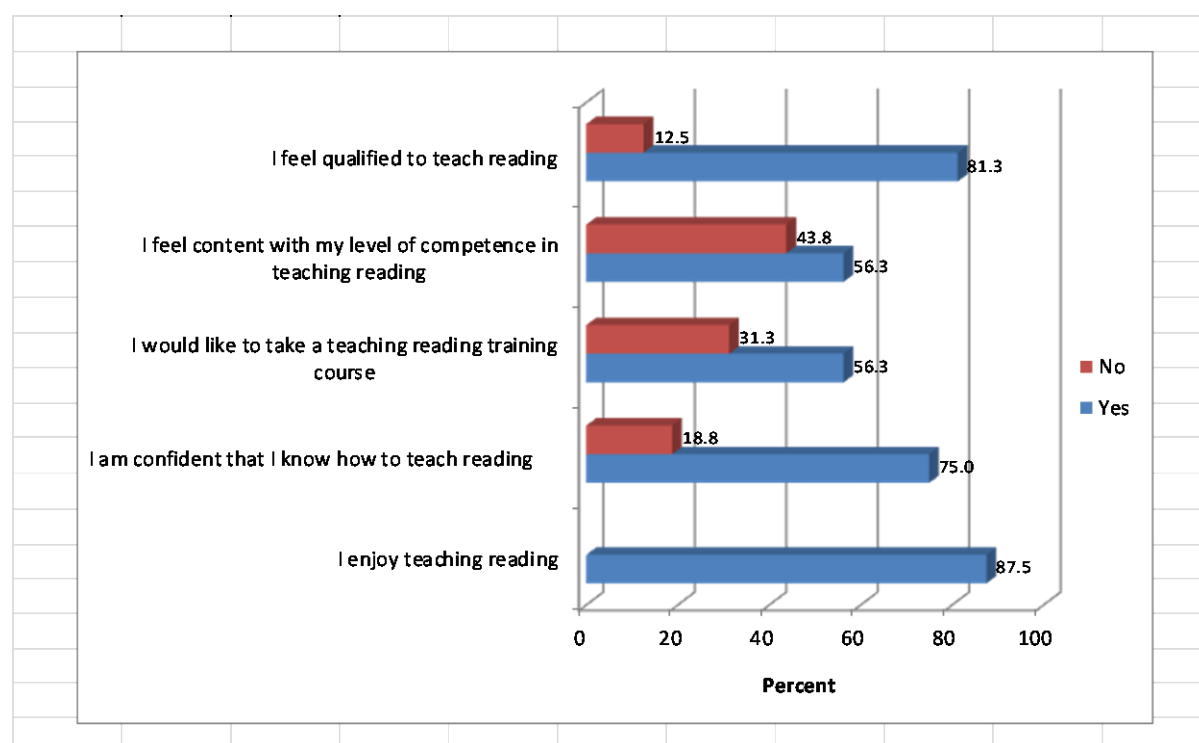


Figure 4.3: NRS and Educator Attitudes

The responses of FP educators about the NRS highlight their level of preparedness to actually teach reading in the FP. In terms of their knowledge of early literacy, these educators were on the whole seemingly confident that they were adequately prepared to teach reading. It does appear though that they were concerned about their overall preparedness to deal with the practicalities of teaching and learning reading.

According to Strickland (2005), confidence about NRS and its implementation should be reflected in educators' lesson plans and lesson delivery, organisation of learners for learning, displays of learning support materials in their classrooms and the management of assessment records. The success of the implementation of NRS may be determined by the amount of confidence educators have in themselves. Pudi (2006) states that the initiators of curriculum development should not ignore local needs as new materials are important but are ineffective by themselves if they have to be competent enough. The lack of confidence in educators about their practice could have a negative effect on the implementation of the NRS, which in turn leads to negative attitudes among educators. Teaching and learning could suffer by not accomplishing the aim of education, which is the development of skilful and responsible citizens (Probyn, 2006).

Prior to implementing the NRS, FP educators should be empowered with expertise and practical skills required in curriculum development and implementation such as, the ability to select content and contextualise it within the broader aims (Blair, Ruply and Nichols, 2007). In so doing, teachers will not feel inadequate to handle reading problems in their classrooms (Park and Osborne, 2006). (Spencer, 2008) explains that content area classroom teachers have expressed that they are uncomfortable planning instruction to foster reading development and (Hall 2005) found that content area teachers would like to teach reading but do not know how.

Cantrell, Burns and Callaway (2009) indicate that pressures to teach reading skills as efficiently as possible may impede teachers' willingness to abandon traditional pedagogical methods. They further suggest that these pressures often lead reading teachers to perceive that helping learners to read more effectively is not their responsibility. Paris and Bloch (2007) report that a major challenge for teachers of under achieving learners was simply finding the time to deliberately teach literacy competency. As Chehayl (2008) said, lack of competence, confidence in knowledge and preparation is a common reason content teachers point to for not incorporating reading strategies and literacy skills training in their instructional

approaches. Cantrell (2009) suggests that content reading teachers deem that helping learners read more effectively is not their responsibility. According to Park and Osborne (2006), classroom teachers feel that reading instruction infringes on content area teaching. Hall (2005) adds that content area teachers might believe that they are not qualified to teach reading to their learners. Knowledge of reading and of the requirements and implementation of the NRS therefore could empower teachers to contribute to the successful teaching of reading during their language lesson and in the content area lesson.

Data from the participants clearly pointed to common factors that made it very difficult for them to conduct reading lessons in their classrooms. Problems cited were large class sizes, lack of parental or community involvement, and lack of resources that affected the implementation of teaching reading.

Large class sizes

There were divergent and convergent views identified during the process of data analysis from the responses of the FP educators. Educators had common perceptions of the challenges they faced with the implementation of the NRS, when they stated that their first challenge is overcrowded classrooms. They held the view that the FP is a very critical stage of learning and it was impossible to address learners' individual needs within these restrictive parameters of large classes and limited access to support professionals and support resources to deal with mixed ability learner grouping. Learners did not speak English as a first language and learners also had different level of proficiency in the language of reading, which required individual attention but was not possible.

"There is too much noise when we read, my mam cannot hear us read," said a learner which indicates the difficult situations that FP educators have to endure. This makes teaching conditions in such classes difficult with the teacher having to address the varied specific language problems and reading difficulties of large groups in the class.

Lack of resources

Learners indicated that *"we have to share"* and *"we are always fighting for the books"*. 60% of educators said that there was a shortage of reading books and that overcrowding of learners made grouping and class control very difficult for a class of more than 50 learners. Allington and Cunningham (2007) pointed out that enormous amounts of easy and interesting reading materials are an absolute necessity to developing effective reading strategies, and, a

strong, balanced literacy curriculum requires childrens' access to a large supply of books (*see also* Fleisch, 2008). They called for more parental and community involvement for the successful teaching of reading

Parental involvement

Westberg (2004) emphasized the importance of parental and community involvement through teacher-parent interaction in childrens' reading acquisition, as they play an important role in their childrens' ZPD, learning after all, begins at home and what the children can do with guidance today, they will be able to do on their own tomorrow (Vygotsky, 1978). Parents and older or more acceptable siblings therefore play an important role in teaching children to read. They said that parents play an important role in teaching children to read. Fleisch (2008) concurs that most international studies of achievement can be linked to the family background of school children, and says that parents are encouraged to listen to their children read.

Schools do not have enough reading books, so educators are sceptical about lending the limited books that they have to parents who themselves don't know how to read. As a result some parents have never been exposed to reading in English, let alone teaching their children to read. Respondents were of the opinion that reading is the responsibility of the community including parents and not solely that of the teacher in the confines of a classroom as reflected by various educators who stated their views: *"all stakeholders in education as stipulated in the NRS should be involved and committed"*, *"it should commence at home where parents encourage books to be read to their children guided or independently"*, *"learners are exposed to reading namely only at school; once parents and members in the community understand the importance of reading, they will be able to help their children and make it possible for learners to have access to books at home"*, and *"the mission to promote a vibrant reading culture is conceived as being not the responsibility of teachers alone, but all members of the community, all have a role to play in promoting a reading habit"*. Educators also complained about having little time for reading.

Availability of time

The availability of time was revealed as a key factor inhibiting their implementation of the NRS. 93.8% of educators agreed that time management in the implementation of the various reading strategies is of fundamental importance as indicated in Figure 4.5 (on page 75). In

response to the question: do you think that the implementation of the NRS puts a burden on the school curriculum, respondents said that “*time is a problem*”, “*little learners are not able to read on their own*”, “*teachers are unable to complete their work for the day*”, and that “*NRS is very important and time and effort must be spent on implementing it*”.

According to Zimmerman (2010), teachers at four schools complained that time allocation was not enough for NRS implementation. Cantrell’s (2009) findings indicate the pressures to teach subject area content as efficiently as possible may impede teachers’ willingness to abandon traditional pedagogical methods as their current workloads cannot accommodate the time consuming requirements of the NRS. The structured lesson planning and preparation of a reading lesson requires huge amounts of time considering the various learning needs of learners in a diverse classroom. Pressures to complete the syllabus and scheduled assessments, especially in grade 3 is rushed, because FP have to ensure that learners are equipped to be promoted to the next phase (grade 4).

According to the former Minister of Education in South Africa, Naledi Pandor (DoE, 2002a) a learner cannot exit the FP without knowing decoding skills. As an educator stated, “*we have to drill phonics everyday*” otherwise “*the learner won’t pass*”. Ness (2007) indicates that when teachers feel instructional time is best spent delivering content, literacy integration takes a back seat.

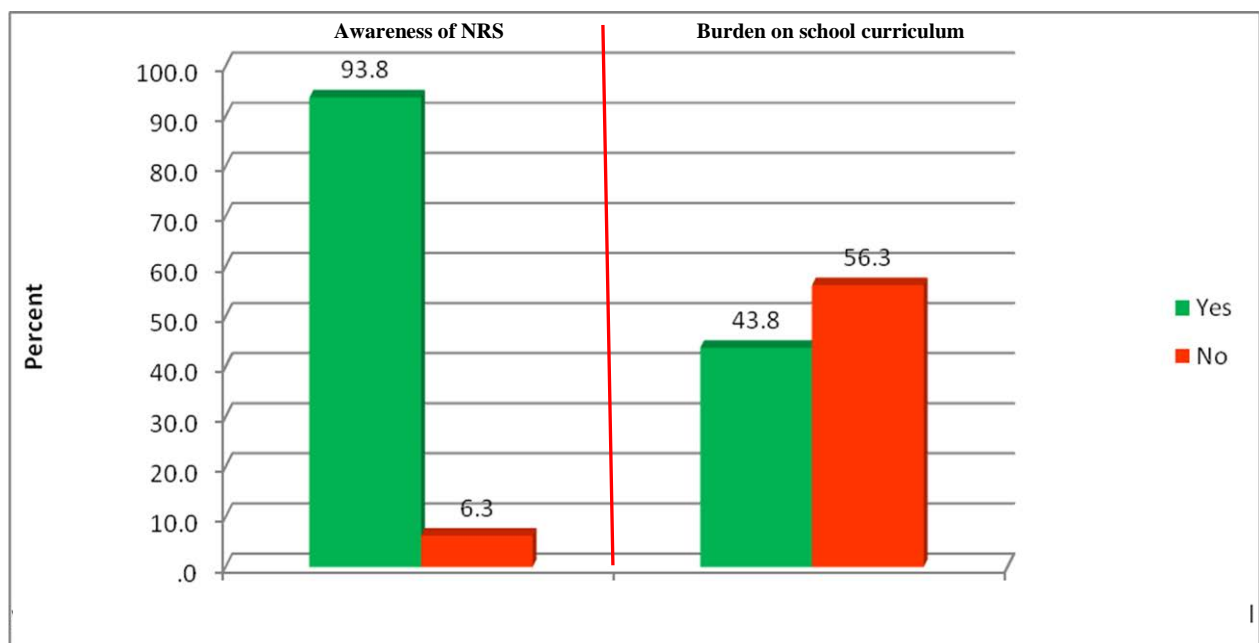


Figure 4.4 Awareness of NRS and burden on school curriculum

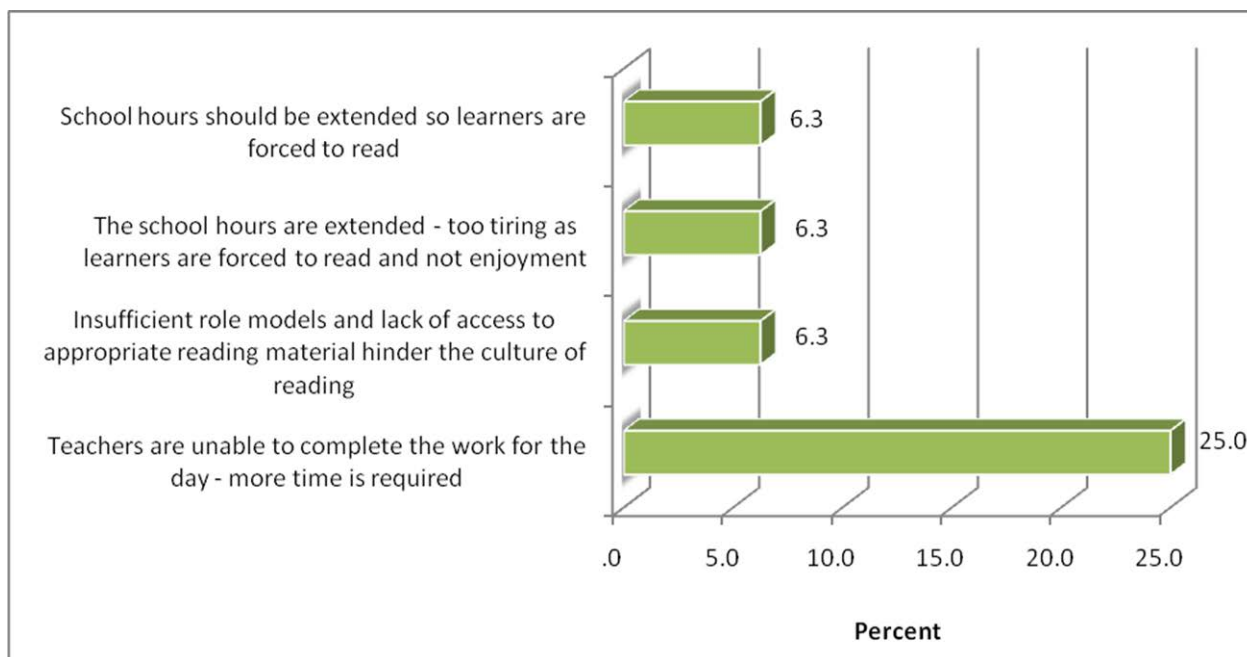


Figure 4.5: Educators' reasons for NRS being a burden in terms of time

4.2.5.2 Educator knowledge and NRS

Findings revealed that there was a variation in educators' knowledge regarding the various components of teaching reading. 93.8 % of respondents indicated that they were familiar with the NRS. The respondents were of the view that proper implementation of the NRS was lacking due to insufficient knowledge, which led to negative attitudes towards implementing the NRS. Figure 4.5 (on page 75) indicates the responses that educators' provided on the extent of importance of the following specific reading skills: body language, pronunciation, tone of voice, using expression and being animated. According to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 2002a) and the National Reading Strategy (2008), the most important task of the FP educator is to ensure that all learners learn to read. Skilled teachers are therefore essential to the successful teaching of reading.

Teaching happens in a special relationship between teachers and learners. The teacher has to be trusted to provide the learner with competence and skill of reading and the love for reading. Reading is a competence that teachers have to actively teach since learners simply do not pick up reading skills. They therefore have to be knowledgeable in terms of having a plan for teaching the learners how to read. Teachers need to know what is expected of learners. They need to know precisely how to help learners to achieve satisfactory reading levels and where necessary, they need to refer learners for professional support as Vygotsky

(1978) stated, teaching is viewed as an assisted performance. Thus, as an educator assists the learner to improve in both the use of psychological and material tools, in order for the learner to keep improving his or her performance. He adds that the instructional design of the material to be learned must be structured to encourage collaboration and interaction (Vygotsky, 1978).

According to Bouwer (2004), and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000), those who struggle with emergent literacy have been described as young readers who have not learned to orchestrate their knowledge of language, of the world, of print and how it works. Such children need support in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, text comprehension and vocabulary. Prinsloo (2006) summarises the key assumptions on which the theory of reading readiness and reading development are based as: a period of preparation is necessary before formal reading instruction can start; that it develops pre reading skills; reading is separate and must occupy a content area of its own in the schooling curriculum; the learning of reading should take place by way of learning of discrete skill within a skill hierarchy and these should be taught by direct systematic and value free process delivered by skilled and knowledgeable professionals (*see also* Adams, 1995; Chall, 1967 ; Crawford, 1996; Fleisch, 1995; Herner, 2002).

Typically, teacher knowledge develops from declarative knowledge (knowing what the strategy is and is meant to do, to procedural knowledge (knowing how the strategy works), to conditional knowledge (knowing when and why to use the strategy) (Jones, 2001). The Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga has stressed the importance of teachers being central to the success of the new NCS the DoE is adopting (DoE, 2011). The strengthening of teacher development programmes guided by the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development will be crucial (DoE, 2011) to attract young people to the teaching profession through the Funza Lushaka Bursary programme. Here the focus is firmly on more targeted, subject specific teacher education and development, which is aimed at improving teacher content knowledge (DoE, 2011).

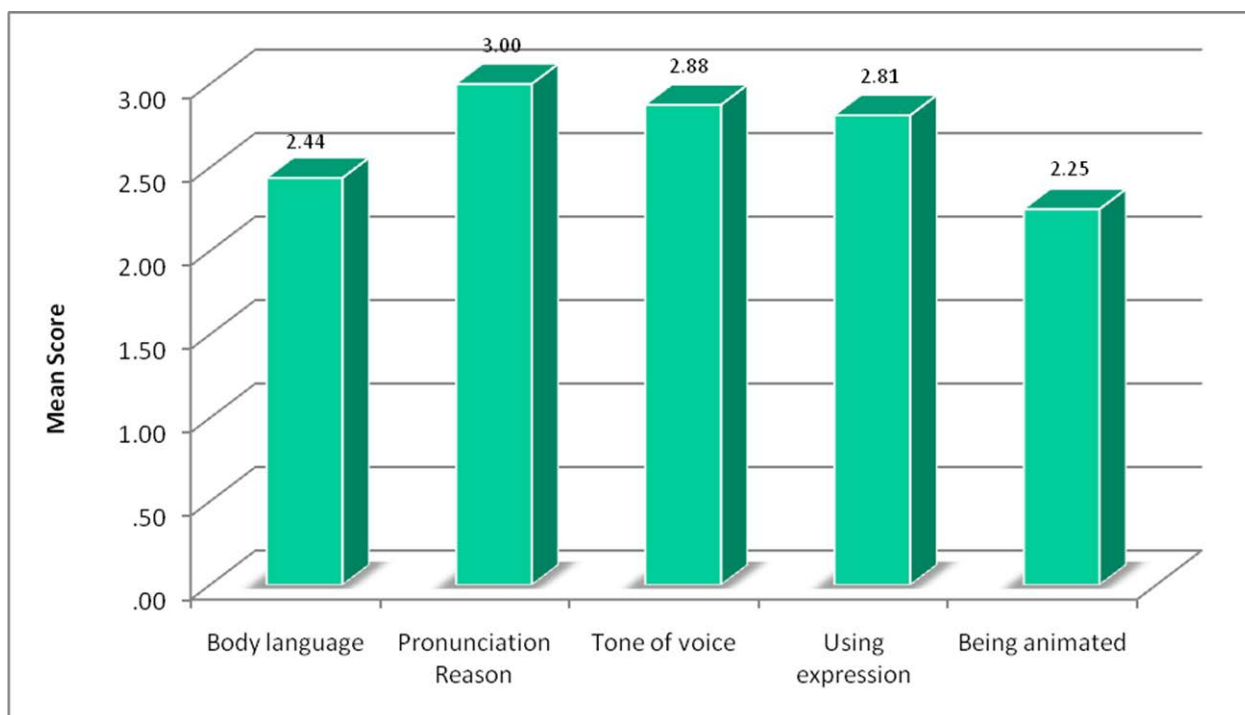


Figure 4.6: Educators' Responses on the Importance of particular Reading skills

In order to read meaningfully, children need to bring together their knowledge about decoding, their language in which they are reading, their general knowledge around them, and their recognition of sight, sounds and vocabulary words. It is therefore important to investigate educators' knowledge of teaching reading (DoE, 2007).

The mean scores on the importance of particular reading skills leant towards being 'always important'. Respondents consider pronunciation, tone of voice, and using expression as being more important than body language and being animated. Spencer (2008) asserted that research has shown that when teacher-directed strategy instruction is used, learners make significant gains in their reading skills stopped reading here.

Educators' explanation regarding these essential components to learning and teaching of reading were that *"all are important in developing interest and understanding in reading; body language creates an interest in the text; proper pronunciation is needed; tone of voice must suit the text; expression adds meaning to reading and body language is only needed when necessary"*. The following were also views of other educators: *"body language would assist in understanding / comprehending text"*, *"tone of voice assist in grasping change of roles"*, *"fluency which is central to understanding text; too much of body language might take away the jist"*, and *"using expression adds fun and more clarity to the whole story and*

being animated sometimes trigger understanding of how learners are encouraged. The following was a response of educators' perceptions of the knowledge and skills in implementing phonics, syllabification and word recognition: "phonological awareness and phonics have been viewed as being critical to reading acquisition". These two distinct knowledge domains are especially important for those learners that need greater assistance in developing beginner-reading skills due to constitutional problems or lack of experience with language and literacy (Santa, 2006). Phonological awareness is a precursor to phonics and is an oral language activity. It is a method of reading instruction that begins with individual letters and sounds. Many children acquire phonological awareness from language activities and reading. The following were explanations given by the educators on how to implement phonics in the teaching of reading, "initial single sounds (phonemes) are taught in conjunction with handwriting, reinforced with charts / pictures music (flute) movements, worksheets etc., constant repetition and this is the basis of where reading and learning occurs if its well acquired because this is where we form the written word", "incidental phonics during discussion, specific phonic according to graded readers, implementation of THRASS, through sing along method. Work cards, work sheets, wall charts, phonic freeze and CD's can be used".

Phonics

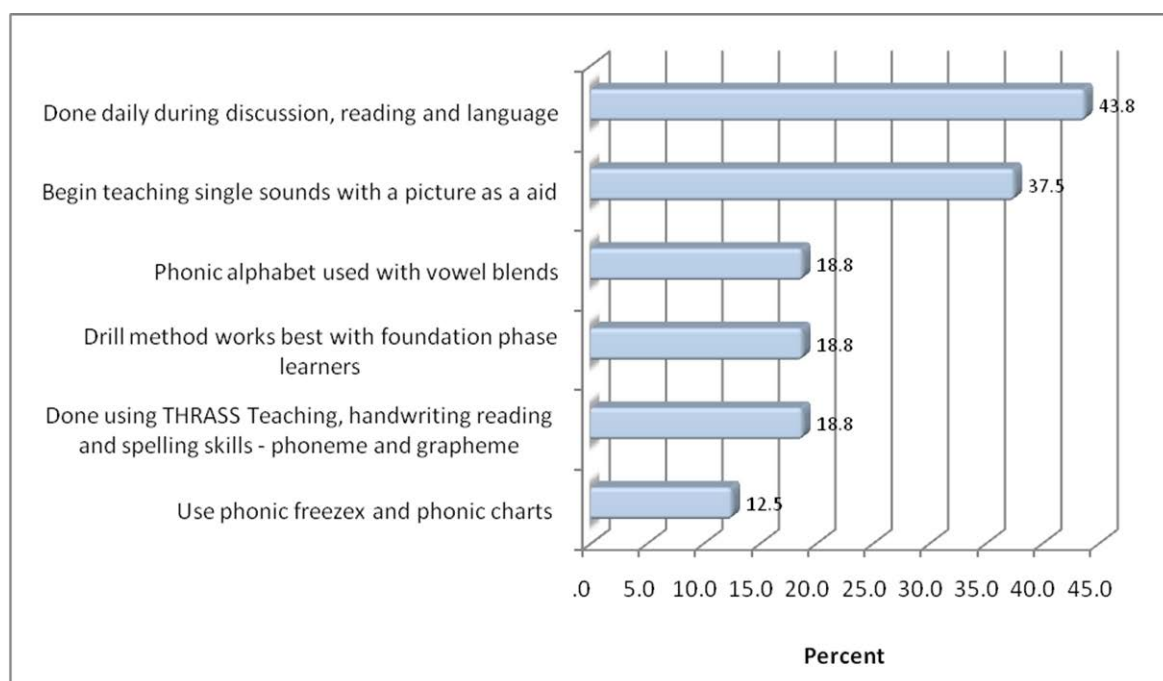


Figure 4.7: Educators' approaches to teaching of Phonics

43.8% of educators indicated that teaching of phonics was done on a daily bases using discussion, reading and language and 43.8% said that they teach single sounds using a picture as an aid. Learners who are not English first language speakers may have difficulty distinguishing and pronouncing phonemes that are not present in their primary language (Antunez, 2002). Research shows that systematic training in phonemic awareness and phonics can improve literacy outcomes for students learning to read in English (Lesaux and Siegal, 2003). In her study, Moats (1994b) observed that few teachers possess high levels of knowledge in these domains although research has indicated that these domains are most critical in reading acquisition. She has demonstrated that teachers' increased understanding of phonology and spelling patterns positively influence their instructional practices and effectiveness. 75% indicated that this was achieved using flashcards, flip files and worksheets. 37.5% also indicated that phonological awareness instruction, moreover involves more than the manipulation of sub word units.

Accurate identification and discrimination of confusable phenomenon and word is important for reading and spelling (Scarborough and Brady, 2002). Phonology also plays a role in vocabulary acquisition hence, by knowing this, a teacher will ensure that students pronounce words accurately, and may break them into syllables and morphemes. If children's attention is directed to subtle differences in word forms such as 'consist' and 'assist', 'specific' and 'pacific', and 'flight' and 'fright' (Stahl and Nagy, 2006), they are less likely to confuse word forms and word meanings. The teacher's articulation and enunciation of phonemes, syllables and words provides a model for learners to internalize what is learned.

Syllabification

Using THRASS method, learners are taught graphs, diagraphs and triagraphs	1	6.3
Important for pronunciation-develops confidence in child-words said aloud.	1	6.3
Done in word recognition and spelling	1	6.3
Done during reading lesson	2	12.5
Breaking up of words - syllabification - decoding using knowledge of sounds learnt	10	62.5

Table 4.1: Educators' Use of Syllabification

The use of syllabification is important. 62.5% of respondents indicated that this was achieved by breaking up of words. Table 4.1 (on page 79) indicates other techniques applied in teaching syllabification. A few studies have targeted the ability to break words into syllable units which enhances the accuracy, fluency and comprehension of the texts (Blair, Rupley and Nicols, 2007). They also indicated that explicit teaching and constantly articulating and reviewing strategies in varied situations do increase the students' ability to syllabify thus increasing fluency. They further stated that the ability to detect segment and manipulate syllables is important for reading ability.

Word Recognition

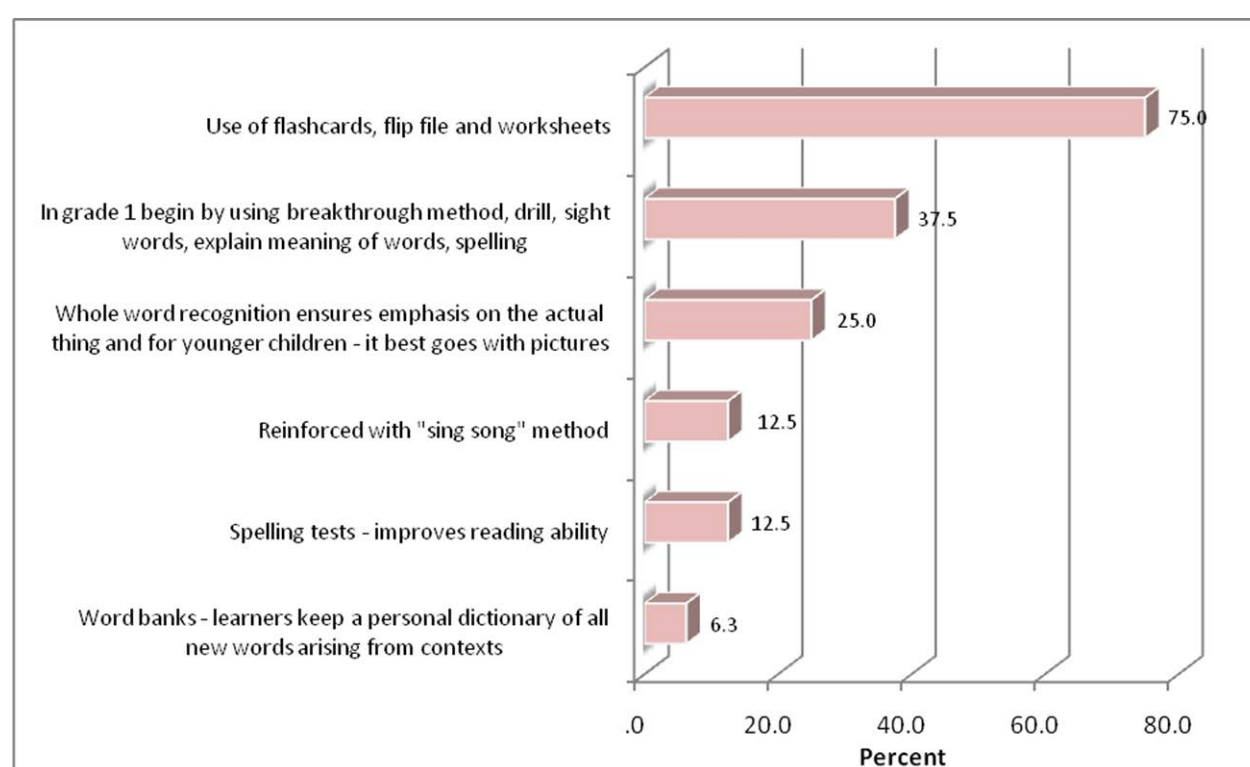


Figure 4.8: Educators' use of Word Recognition

Educators used the traditional approach to build up the learners' word recognition skills which was through the use of flash cards, contextual clues and by guiding them through various reading phases in order to help them develop sufficient word recognition abilities (Stahl, 1998 and EHRI, 1995). These were the responses of an educator regarding the implementation of word recognition, *"always used learners taught in groups and drill as a whole class flash word drill done everyday, words from readers, word banks, all new words*

arising from contexts”, “learners keep a personal dictionary make flash words, taken from reader, teach learner, explain meaning, use in context, flash daily till identify easily”.

75 % indicated that word recognition was achieved using flashcards, flip files and worksheets. 37.5 % also indicated that the breakthrough method was used at Grade 1 level. The following views were expressed during the focus group discussion with learners regarding word recognition, *“some children know the word and some children don’t know the words so the children that know the words help those that do not know”* and *“when we don’t know the word our mam tells us the word or if she is busy we ask the ones that know”*.

The above findings on word recognition, syllabification, and phonic awareness have implications for reading progress and the culture of teaching and learning. Policies requiring informed reading instruction are founded on considerable evidence that teacher knowledge and attitudes will alleviate or reduce the severity and consequences of reading failure (Baker, 1996). This is especially true in high risk populations including second language learners, children of poverty, and children with dyslexia who are dependant on good instruction to overcome their disadvantages (Velutino, Tunmer, Jaccard and Chen, 2007). The content knowledge required for effective instruction and intervention includes knowledge of English orthography and the various ways that represent spoken language (Snow, Griffin, and Burns, 2005).

Levin (2006) argues that teaching reading is a job for an expert contrary to the popular theory that learning to read is natural and easy; learning to read is a complex linguistic achievement. He adds that for many children it requires effort and mental skill development moreover, teaching reading requires considerable knowledge and skill acquired over several years through focused study and supervised practice. He states further that no one can acquire such skills by attending a few courses or attending a few short in-service workshops. Descriptive statistics for each of the items discussed above in terms of teaching reading was not in keeping with the requirements of the NRS. It was clear that the commonality among educators was that they all used traditional methods to teach reading which clearly indicates that these educators were not familiar with the requirements of the NRS.

In their study Moats (2009) and Snow, Griffin and Burns (2005) found that content knowledge required for effective instruction implementation will alleviate or reduce the severity and consequences of reading failure. This lends itself to educators’ views on the requirements of the NRS.

4.2.5 Theme five: Foundation phase educators' views on NRS

Figure 4.8 (on page 80) presents the constructive suggestions of educators reiterating some of the important requirements of the NRS.

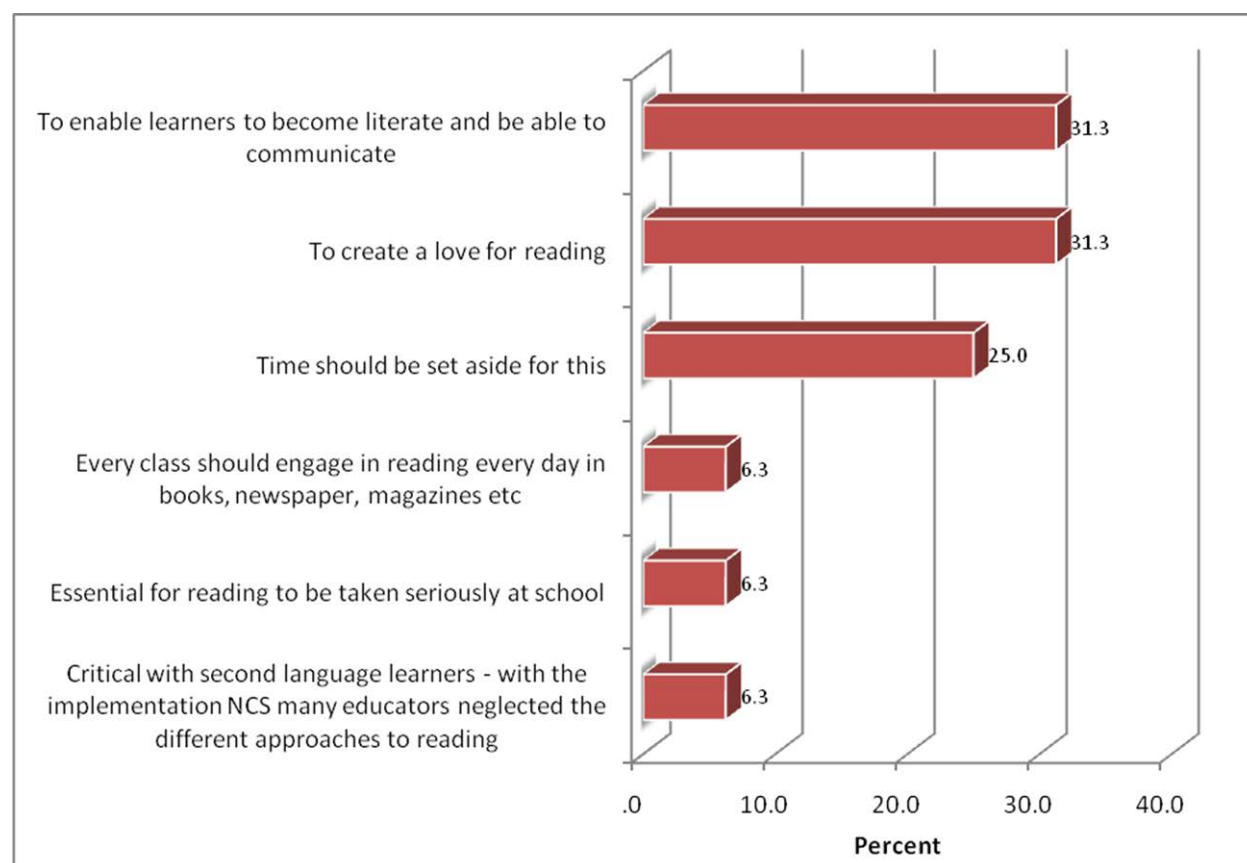


Figure 4.9: Educators' Reasons for Prioritising Reading in the School Curriculum

All participants were of the view that reading should be placed firmly on the school agenda. According to Moss (2005), there is a need for content reading instruction to occur well before the fourth grade so that students are better prepared for textbook reading. As one educator said *“reading impacts on all learning areas therefore reading must be encouraged across the school curriculum”*. Senior (2005) stated that reading is very important since it improves literacy. One of the requirements of the NRS is to make learners gain enjoyment and pleasure from the text. The following was a positive view of a respondent regarding encouraging reading for enjoyment, *“learners who love reading invariably do better than learners who don’t like reading”* and *“children must be encouraged to read for enjoyment”* and *“it is through the pleasure reading texts that the child’s knowledge is expanded.”*

The NRS is intended to gradually make learners take responsibility for their own learning as they begin to internalise their goals and the purposes for reading. The NRS is to facilitate literacy in English and create a balance between traditional and more innovative and recent pedagogic and reading approaches (Senior, 2005). Respondents felt that these learners (including ESL Learners), who did not have the benefit of a reading-rich environment at home would benefit more from the NRS which began with more structured traditional methods.

DoE (2006) stated that, in order to read meaningfully, children need to bring together their knowledge about decoding, their language in which they are reading, their general knowledge around them, and their recognition of sight, sounds and vocabulary words. It is therefore important to investigate educators' knowledge of teaching reading.

4.3 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the data was presented within five themes. It was evident that what really matters, is not student compositional characteristics such as learning difficulties, educational disadvantages, disruptive student behaviour, school infrastructure but the imperativeness of quality teaching and learning provision. This must be supported by teaching standards and strategies and on-going professional development which is focused on evidence based practice that are demonstrably effective in maximising students learning outcomes and achievement progress. Since the most valuable education resource available to any school is its teachers, there is a need for a refocus on prevailing effective educational policy and research agenda that focuses on quality teaching and learning (Probyn, 2006). From the data generated it also became clear that all participants regarded teaching reading in the FP as an important tool that showcases learners' vocabularies. However, there were some challenges that faced the teaching of reading in real classroom situations. Conclusions and recommendations for this research are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers are the main pillars of a sound and progressive society. Truth be told, they are the ones who pass on knowledge, skills and values to children. They prepare the young for further education and further roles in society

(Angie Motshekga in South African Government Information, 2011)

Teachers are central to the success of the new approach to teacher training that is being adopted which focusses firmly on more targeted, subject- specific teacher education and development that will improve content knowledge (South African Government Information, 2011). As teachers play such a vital role in the learner's zone of proximal development, it is necessary for them to have the necessary knowledge and a positive attitude to facilitate learning. Our learners come from diverse language and cultural backgrounds which pose challenges in the classroom. Teachers therefore need to know how to teach in these multilingual and multicultural classrooms. A positive attitude could go a long way to promote effective teaching and learning.

The apartheid education system in South Africa was characterised by extreme inequality, astonishing inefficiency, a lack of legitimacy in the eyes of both communities and industry, and highly authoritarian and ideologically loaded syllabuses (Allias, 2007). The democratic government post-1994 acknowledged the need for overhauling the fragmented and unequal apartheid education system by ensuring that education played a role in reducing social inequalities. As such schools were open to all races, schools were reclassified or re-zoned to facilitate funding and government subsidy and policies were revisited.

New policies such as the Language in Education Policy (LIEP) and the National Reading Policy were initiated to meet the transformational educational needs of the country. The NRS was one of the initiatives that emerged after the dismantling of apartheid. For the first time in South Africa, there was a legitimate system that aimed at improving the quality of teaching reading through proper research and agreed to legal parameters (Smith and Ngoma-Maema, 2003:362). Vidovich (2001:15) suggests that when we look at any policy, we need to ask ourselves: what struggles are occurring to influence policy? What struggles are occurring in the production of the text? Keeping this in mind, the researcher showed how the current form

of the NRS was a necessary compromise to various factors that hindered the success of the backdrop of an emerging education system.

5.1 ACHIEVEMENT OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

5.1.1 What knowledge is necessary for the implementation of the NRS?

Educators must acknowledge and understand the role of explicit reading. Educators must be aware of language elements and how it is represented in writing. Reading content knowledge can assist to accurately present linguistic concepts and enable them to assess the learners' level of reading by direct observation of his or her performance. Teachers need to be able to reflect on their reading content knowledge and their own reading ability to gain an understanding of reading strategies before they can apply it to their classroom practices. Knowledge of phonology, phoneme-grapheme correspondence, morphology, semantic organisation, syntax, discourse and pragmatics is essential knowledge to implement the NRS.

Teachers need to know facts and practices to teach learners with diverse needs. Teachers need to know as much as possible about content and how to get it across to learners. Specifically teachers must understand the basic psychological processes in reading, how children develop reading skill, how good readers differ from poor readers, how the English language is structured in written and spoken form, and the validated principles of academically diverse learners, to select validated instructional method and materials, and use assessments to tailor instruction are all central to effective teaching which is the goal of the NRS.

5.1.2 What attitudes are necessary for the implementation of the NRS?

Teachers' attitudes are important because they affect learner performance and achievement. Teachers' attitudes play a significant role in shaping the classroom environment which has an impact on students' performance which in turn influences student behaviour. Teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading and implementing the NRS are depicted in their attributes. Teachers' attributes are pivotal in the implementation of the NRS which not only include how much they know but also how effective they are in communicative skills and knowledge.

Teachers may be very skilful yet lack the ability to impart knowledge in a meaningful way that is they fail to perform their role functions effectively (Jones, 2001). Reading teachers should therefore have the following attributes: broad interest; intellectual preparedness; ability to work with learners of all ability levels; ability to control temper and emotions; flexibility; stable and approachable and knowledge of their learners (Park and Osborn, 2006). The type of attitudes a content area teacher subscribes to about literacy instruction in the classroom forecasts the probability that he or she implements content area reading strategies into course design and instructional practices (Hall, 2005).

5.1.3 What knowledge do qualified educators in the designated area possess to implement the NRS?

Foundation phase educators find it a challenge to learn new information that conflicts with their existing knowledge. Many educators still struggle with important concepts needed to explicitly teach code-focused instructions including: the difference between phonics and phonological awareness; the number of phonemes or sound in words; and phonic concepts such as consonant blends, consonant, digraphs, and diphthongs. Teachers existing knowledge about using whole language to teach early reading was inconsistent with the requirements presented to them from the NRS. Thus, not only was the NRS presenting something new to teachers but it also presented something that conflicted with their existing knowledge about early reading instruction.

To explore the possible effect of years of experience it was evident that the least experienced teachers had significantly more positive perceptions of their knowledge on how to teach reading than the most experienced. With the advent of recent changes in pedagogy and practice, it may be the case that teachers who have entered the profession more recently have benefitted from increased exposure to research on reading acquisition through either their pre-service training, teacher training workshops or other forms of professional development. The results of this study indicate that the knowledge base of many FP educators is not aligned with the large body of research demonstrating the key role that component processes such as phoneme awareness and alphabetic principle play in learning to read. The appropriate response to these findings would be to improve the level of knowledge of foundation phase educators in these critical domains. Attention towards improving teacher preparation and

teacher development in the area of reading education should continue (Nolan, McCutchen and Berninger, 1990). Significant differences in teachers' ability to calibrate their knowledge across different domains of reading were also observed in this study.

In the domain of phonological awareness and phonics, it was noted that teachers were moderately calibrated. It is therefore necessary that more work has to be done professionally in the domain of phonological awareness and phonics. Receptivity to new ideas and methods depends on good calibration of one's knowledge and experience. Reading experts agree that if teachers are poorly calibrated and significantly overestimate their knowledge of important reading related information, they will not seek to acquire or be open to new constructs presented in the context of professional development. Nolan, McCutchen and Berninger (1990) have rightly maintained that teachers cannot teach what they do not know.

5.1.4 What attitudes do qualified educators in the designated area possess to implement the NRS?

Results from the study indicate that many educators hold positive attitudes regarding their level of competence in teaching reading. 87.5% enjoyed teaching reading and 81.3% felt qualified to teach reading. Although attitudes are somewhat more positive towards teaching reading, this is an encouraging result suggesting a swing towards a more balanced approach to reading instruction which is a requirement of the NRS. This has suffered in recent years from a strong movement away from a skills- based approach. Adams (1995) clearly demonstrated in her synthesis of research on beginning reading, the importance of teaching children explicit instruction in English orthography. Additionally, her research demonstrated that different types of literacy experiences are required for the development of sound reading ability, including explicit phonics instruction, exposure to rich vocabulary, and practice in reading varied and interesting texts. Despite a relatively positive attitude towards teaching reading teachers level of confidence to implement the NRS was low because 48.3% indicated that they would like to attend training workshops on how to implement the NRS.

5.2 TRAINING FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE EDUCATORS' KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES

Borne out of the findings, this study proposes a framework (Figure 5.1 below) for the training of educators to improve knowledge and attitudes to facilitate implementation of the NRS.

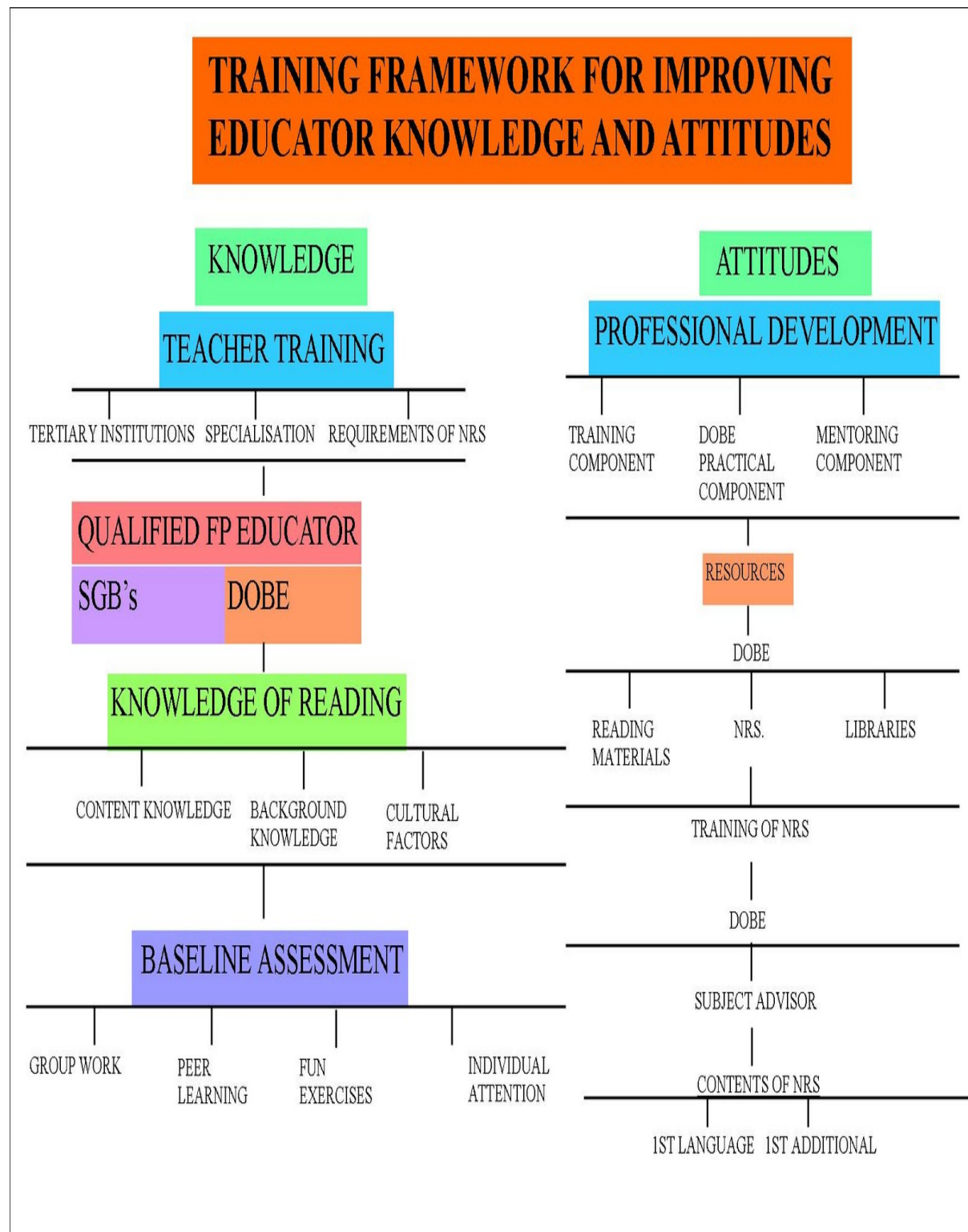


Figure 5.1: Training framework to improve educators' knowledge and attitudes

The framework in Figure 5.1 represents the complex activity of improving educator knowledge and attitudes in implementing the NRS. This framework is divided into various components which are clustered into two domains namely educator knowledge and educator attitude. These components seek to enhance FP educator's knowledge and attitudes toward implementation of the NRS.

5.2.1 How to improve educators' knowledge

Teacher training

The Department of education at tertiary institutions must structure their training and development material so that FP educators can specialise in teaching reading. The literacy modules at university level must include strategies and activities that facilitate teaching reading and at the same time educators must be exposed to the requirements of the NRS. Educators must also be taught how to structure and deliver reading lesson plans. Educators must be instructed on content knowledge in reading and be trained to teach in diverse reading lessons within multicultural and multilingual classrooms.

Qualified FP educators

The DoBE and the school governing bodies must ensure that qualified FP educators are employed in the FP as these educators play a vital role in their learners' zone of proximal development. Literacy has to be established at the FP, qualified educators must therefore be employed to ensure that learners receive quality instruction. Educators must also be required to write a competency test in terms of teaching reading.

Knowledge of reading

FP educators must have knowledge of: phonemic awareness; phonics instruction; fluency practice; vocabulary instruction; and comprehension instruction. This knowledge of teaching reading must be made compulsory. Content knowledge of reading and reading instruction are essential for success in the classroom. Educators must also have knowledge of FP learners'

background in terms of reading that is what knowledge the learner already possesses, level of proficiency in the medium of instruction, cultural and other factors that affect learners' reading. This will assist the educator to determine the level of knowledge of the learner so that appropriate assistance may be provided to facilitate literacy and reading. Educators need to do a baseline assessment to obtain this. By obtaining learners knowledge of reading, they can be introduced to group work, peer learning, fun exercises and individual attention as required.

5.2.2 How to improve educators' attitude

Professional development

Professional development may be divided into three components, namely: training; practical; and mentoring.

The training component must consist of training and development materials, and workshops must be offered on a regular scheduled basis, this means that educators must be informed well in advance so that they can make the necessary arrangements to attend. In the semi-rural context workshops can be conducted on a Saturday and in the urban context on school holidays and public holidays. Transport arrangements must be facilitated in areas where educators have to travel to a distant venue. Workshops must provide educators with practical activities on teaching reading.

For the practical component, educators should be trained to implement strategies in the classroom and then complete portfolio assessments. The implementation of reading strategies must be directed at skills acquisition to develop educators' practical competence at applying the skills learnt. Educators must be able to plan and prepare lessons within a specific theme. Hands-on practical training will enable the simulation of real classrooms so that educators are taught how to deal with problems.

Throughout the process of engagement the educators must be supported by a mentoring component that is aimed at developing their reflective competence. The portfolios with lesson plans and teaching materials must be assessed by a qualified district facilitator. Assessments must be linked to the South African Council for Educators Continuous

Professional Teaching Development (SACE CPTD) Management system. This support and mentoring must be on-going.

Provision of Resources

Essential resources such as appropriate reading material must be provided. The DoBE must ensure that libraries are fully operational and equipped with qualified librarians in every school. Every classroom must have a reading corner with exciting story books in the languages spoken in the region.

Promote good understanding of NRS in multilingual and multicultural classrooms

According to one of the principles of the NRS, learners have the right to learn to read in their mother tongue, especially at FP. Learners must be taught in their home language in the early grades where it is practically possible as stated by the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga (South African Government Information, 2011). Research has shown that later transition from home language to the language of teaching and learning where they differ negatively affects learning outcomes. It is important to recognize that there are a number of different languages spoken by various learners in the schools and it is economically not feasible to have a language class for each of the eleven official languages. Educators too come from different language backgrounds. Successful implementation of the NRS requires understanding of the power relationships, the traditions, the roles and responsibilities of the individuals in the school system. Educators must be well versed with the contents of the NRS.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

While this study found that FP educators' knowledge and attitudes are contributory factors in developing essential reading skills in FP learners, it also acknowledges that educator knowledge and attitudes are not the only requirements for the success in implementing the NRS. Many more questions remain to be answered in order to fully address the successful implementation of the NRS. Recommendations for future research include:

- Examination of the impact of content area strategy instruction within all learning areas not just reading and literacy.
- Address the attitudes and beliefs that educators have towards content area reading instruction. Educators need to vocalise their attitudes and beliefs so that the various stakeholders can strategize this issue.
- Evaluate the best method for improving unfavourable beliefs held by educators in terms of teaching reading. Its beliefs or attitudes could serve to address unfavourable beliefs held by educators in terms of teaching reading and create positivity in educator beliefs. Research into best practice in reading instruction within multilingual contexts in South Africa and abroad could go along way in educating our teachers about how they can manage reading instruction.
- Develop a profile of the different types of teachers likely to implement specific reading strategies. This will enable the DoBE to improve educator content knowledge in terms of teaching reading.
- Examine how learners perceive their educational experiences in classrooms where content area reading strategies are implemented.

As the constructivist classroom is shaped by educator and learner participation, research into highly skilled and knowledgeable FP educators is essential. This is required by the new curriculum. Responsibility for the literacy crises is a catastrophe in the FP as well as in our education system. We need the initiative to generate workable solutions that must be taken by the DoE, for example by pilot testing the training of the framework that the researcher has developed. Elmore (2001) warns that teacher development should rather be driven by the needs of the schools and of the broader system for improved learners' learning and achievement. This improvement is not possible through teachers alone. It requires quality interventions by outside experts who can identify teacher problems and assist them in receiving continuous professional development and workshop them on teaching in multicultural classrooms.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study investigated knowledge and attitudes of FP educators in implementing the NRS but acknowledged that subject specialisation of FP educators also plays a major role in the

classroom. A focused investigation into the effect of the educators' specialisation in teaching reading to FP learners would have yielded richer data but was outside the scope of the study. Initially the research sample for this study was to include all schools with FP in the Northern KwaZulu Natal, which is in the Phoenix-Verulam Circuit. The researcher had to reduce the sample size since administration of questionnaires was anticipated to be problematic because schools were located at a distance from each other.

Focus group discussion had to be scheduled by special arrangement with the principals and educators to avoid disruption to classes. As the researcher is also employed as an educator, she could not visit the schools during teaching time. Arrangements were thus made to conduct focus group discussions during breaks or at the end of the school day.

This study could also have been expanded to include an in-depth study of learners' home language; demographic background; family history; education level of parents and siblings; exposure to reading material and socio-economic background to determine their impact on educator knowledge and attitude towards implementing the NRS. Unfortunately inclusion of the above was not possible within the ambit of this study.

5.5 A FINAL WORD

As stated at the beginning of this study, there are multifarious reasons for learners' low reading literacy outcomes, some of which this study did not directly investigate. The study findings did however accentuate and confirm that the prevailing schooling conditions and teaching practices in the South African education system will continue to make it difficult to ensure that all learners have equitable opportunities to develop the levels of reading literacy in the FP. As far as learners' achievement is concerned, the vital task of the FP educator is to mediate between the learners' present level of functioning and the learners' potential level of functioning. The conditions that are created and opportunities that are provided by the educator should assist the learner through his or her zone of proximal development. Levin (2008) sum up the tasks that lie ahead for all role players as the heart of improvement lies in changing teaching and learning practices in thousands of classrooms, this requires focused and sustained effort by all the parts of the education system and its partners. As emphasised by the Minister of Basic Education in SA (2010), teachers are central to the success of our

learners, they play a vital role in learners' zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978;1981), their attitude and knowledge toward implementation of the NRS are therefore crucial to learner success in reading. It is hoped that teacher development programmes will be strengthened and that more targeted teacher education regarding reading will improve performance in our classrooms.

REFERENCES

- Abel, L. 2001. Challenges to reading teachers in multilingual settings in South Africa. [Online]. Available: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/summary?doi=10.1.1.203.2300> (accessed: 10 October 2010).
- Adams, M.A. 1995. *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Alexander, N. 1999. English unassailable but unattainable: The dilemma of language policy in South African Education, *PRAESA Occasional Paper*. [Online]. Available: <http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/praesaa/all%20andy%20pdf%20feb07mar11/OccPap3.pdf> (accessed: 15 February 2011).
- Allias, S. 2007. The Rise and fall of the NQF; A critical analysis of the South African Qualifications Framework. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa.
- Alexander, N. 2001. We are fiddling while the country's schools are burning. *Mail and Guardian*, 2-8 February, p.28-29.
- Alexander, N. 2006. The experience of mother-tongue based education in post-colonial Africa, with special reference to South Africa. Input memo prepared for the Language Colloquium, 31 July 2006, Cullinan Hotel, Cape Town. National Department of Education, Government Gazette no. 129,
- Allington, L. 2002. Research on reading/learning disability interventions. In Farstrup, A.E. and Samuels, S.J. (Eds). *What Research has to Say about Instruction*, pp. 261-290. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Allington, I. 2005. How much evidence is enough evidence? *The Journal of Reading Recovery*, 4 (2): 8-11.

Allington, R. 2006. Reading specialist, reading teacher, reading coaches: A question of credentials. *Reading Today*, 4 (23): 16-17.

Allington, R.L. and Johnstone, P.H. 2002. *What do we know effective fourth grade teachers and their classrooms?* Albany, NY: The National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement.

Alger, C. 2007. Engaging student teachers' hearts and minds in the struggle to address literacy in content area classrooms. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 50 (8): 620-630.

Anaf, S. and Sheppard, L.A. 2007. Mixing research methods in health professional degrees: Thoughts for undergraduate students and supervisors. *The Qualitative Report*, 12, 184-192. [Online]. Available: <http://www.nova.edu/sss/QR/QR12-2/anaf.pdf> (accessed: 10 October 2010).

Angel, G. G. 2009. *PMP Certification: A beginner's guide*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Antunez, B. 2002. Implementing reading first with English language learners. *Directions in Language and Education*, 15: 1-12. [Online]. Available: <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/rcd/BE024311/15.pdf> (accessed: 20 May 2010).

Babbie, E.R and Mouton, J.2001.The practice of social research. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Babbie, E.R. 2010. The practice of social research.12th ed. Balmont: Wadsworth Cengage.

Badenhorst, D.C., Calitz, L.P., Van Schalkwyk, O.J., Van Wyk, J.G. and Kruger, A.G. 1985. *School management: The task and role of the teacher*. Pretoria: Kagiso.

Baker, C. 1996. *Foundations of bilingual education*. 2nd ed. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Barchers, S. I. 1998. *Teaching Reading: From process to practice*. New York: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Baumann, J.F. and Bason, J.J. 2004. Survey research. In Duke, N.K. and Mallette, M.H. (Eds). *Literacy Research Methodologies*, pp. 287-307. New York: The Guilford Press.

Beaton, A.E, Postletwaite, T.N., Ross, K.N., Spearitt, D. and Wolf, RM. 1999. *The Benefits and Limitations of International Educational Achievement Studies*. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning/International Academic of Education.

Beck, I.L. and Blake, R. G. K. 2009. Rethinking reading comprehension instruction: A comparison of instruction for strategies and content approaches. *Reading Research Quarterly*. 44 (3): 218-253.

Bell, L. 1988. *Teachers in Schools*. London: Routledge.

Berg, B.L. 1998. *Qualitative research methods in the social sciences*. 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Biancarosa, G. and Snow, C. 2004. *Reading next - a vision for action and research in middle school and high school literacy: A report of Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Blair, T.R., Rupley, W.H. and Nichols, W.D. 2007. The effective teacher of reading: Considering the "what" and "how" of instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 60 (5): 432-438.

Bloch, C. 1999. Literacy in the early years: Teaching and learning in multilingual early childhood classrooms. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 7 (1): 39-51.

Bloom, B.S., Engelhart, M.B., Furst, E.J. and Krathwohl, D.R. 1956. *Taxonomy of education objectives: The classification of educational goals*. New York: Longmans Green.

Booth, T and Ainscow, M. 1998. *From them to us - an international study of inclusion in education*. London: Routledge.

- Bos, C.M.N., Friedman, N., Narr R. and Babur, N. 1999. Interactive, collaborative professional development / early literacy instruction: supporting the balancing act. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 14 (4): 227-238.
- Bouwer, C. 2004. *Reading and writing. Keys to educational psychology*. Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Braam,D. 2004. Community perceptions of changes in a schools language policy. PRAESA. Occasional Paper, 21, Cape Town.
- Brannen B.C. and Prys Jones, S. 1998. *Encyclopedia of bilingualism and bilingual education*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Brennen, J. 1992. *Mixing methods: Qualitative and quantitative research*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Brennen, J. 2004. *Working qualitatively and quantitatively*. In Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J.F. and Silverman, D. (Eds). *Qualitative Research Practice*, pp. 312-326. London: Sage Publications.
- Bryman, A. 2004. *Social research methods*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. 2007. Barriers to integrating quantitative and qualitative research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 11: 1-18.
- Broeder, P., Extra, G. and Maartens, J. 2002. *Multilingualism in South Africa with a focus on Kwazulu -Natal and Metropolitan area*. Cape Town: PRAESA.
- Brown, H. D. 2000. *Principles of language learning and teaching*. 4th ed. White Plains, New York: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Brown, K. 2005. Reading campaign a must. *Daily News*, 25 April, p. 3.

Caine, R.N. and Caine, G.1998. Building a bridge between the neurosciences and education: Cautions and possibilities, *NAASP Bulletin*, 82 (598): 1-8.

Cantrell, S., Burns, L. and Callaway, P. 2009. Middle- and high- school content area teachers' perceptions about literacy teaching and learning. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 48 (1): 76-94.

Carl, A. E. 1995. *Empowerment through curriculum development: Theory into practice*. Cape Town: Juta and Co. Ltd.

Carlson, N. 2010. *Psychology: The science of behavior*. New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Chall, J.S. 1967. *Learning to read. The great debates: An enquiry into the science, art and ideology of old and new methods of teaching children to read*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Chamaz, K. 2006. *Constructing grounded theory. A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Chehayl, L. 2008. Books in Action! *Middle School Journal*, 40 (1): 26-32. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No.EJ809640.

Chisholm, L. 2007. Diffusion of the National Qualifications Framework and outcomes-based education in Southern and Eastern Africa. *Comparative Education*, (43): 295-309.

Cob, P. 1994. Where is the mind? Constructivist and sociocultural perspectives of mathematical development. *Education Researcher*, 22 (7): 13-20.

Cob, P. 1995. Early Literacy: Emerging perspectives. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 10 (1): 71-86.

Cohen, L. and Morrison, K. 2000. *Research methods in education*. 5th ed. London: Routledge Falmer.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. 2010. *Research methods in education*. 6th ed. New York.

Coleman, P.C. E., Hobson, C., McPartland, J., Mood, A., Weinfeld, F. and York, R. 1966. *Equity of education opportunity*. Washington, DC: National Centre for Educational Statistics.

Coltheart, M. and Prior, M. 2007. *Learning to read in Australia*. Paper presented at Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, Canberra. Occasional paper 1, Policy paper No.6.

Commeyras, M. and Inyenga, H.N. 2007. An integrated review of teaching reading in Kenyan primary schools. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 42 (2): 258-281.

Conley, M. 2007. *Teaching and learning in South African schools*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Cooper, D. and Shindler, P. 2008. *Business research methods*. 10th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill/ Irwin.

Crawford, A. 1996. Fear and loathing in the classroom. *Education*, 1 (2): 27-29.

Creswell, J.W. 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing amongst five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J.W. 2003. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J.W. 2007. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cummins, J. 1981. *Bilingualism and minority language children*. Ontario: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Cummins, J. 2001. Empowering minority students: A framework for intervention. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71 (4): 649-675.

- Cummins, J. 2003. *World yearbook of education: Language education*. London: Kogan Page.
- Cunningham, P. 2005. Struggling Readers: "If they don't read, much, how they ever gonna get good?" *Reading Teacher*, 59 (1): 88-90.
- Darling, S. 2005. *Doing qualitative research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Darling, S. and Westburg, L. 2004. Parent involvement in children's acquisition of reading. *The Reading Teacher*, 57: 774-776.
- Dellinger, N.L. 2007. Toward a unified validation framework in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1 (4): 309-332.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y. S. 1988. *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. London: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. 2000. Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds). *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed., pp. 1-29. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Department of Education (DoE). 1997. *Language in Education Policy*. Government Gazette no. 68. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Department of Education (DoE). 1998. *Curriculum 2005 Support Material: Towards a theoretical framework: C2005 Pilot Project*. Government Gazette no. 9. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Department of Education (DoE). 2001. *Education White Paper 6. Special needs education: Building an inclusive education and training system*. Government Gazette no. 69. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2002a. *Revised National Curriculum Statement: Grade R to 9 (Schools)*. Government Gazette, no. 23406 (443). Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2002b. *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools). Languages. English- First Additional Language*. Government Gazette no. 145 Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE) 2002c. *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 Schools*. Government Gazette no. 146. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2003a. *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 Schools. Languages. English-Home Language*. Government Gazette no. 71. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2003b. *Integrated quality management system. Collective Agreement No, 8*. Government Gazette no. 5. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE) 2003c. *Systemic Evaluation Foundation Phase Mainstream National Report*. Government Gazette no. 72. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2005. *Systemic Evaluation Report: Intermediate Phase Grade 6*. Government Gazette no. 73. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2006. *Teaching reading in the early grade. A teacher's handbook*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2008a. *Foundations for Learning Campaign: 2008-2011*. Government Gazette no. 74. Vol. 513, No. 30880. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2008b. *National Reading Strategy*. Government Gazette no. 75. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2008c. *Teaching reading in the early grades. A teacher's handbook*. Government Gazette no. 76. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2008d. *Foundations for Learning Campaign. Assessment Framework. Intermediate phase*. Government Gazette no. 77. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2009a. *Report of the Task Team Review the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement*. Government Gazette no. 78. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2009b. *Trends in education macro indicators. Summary Report, South Africa 2009*. Government Gazette no. 79. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education (DoE). 2010. *Guidelines for inclusive teaching and learning*. Government Gazette no. 80. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Dillon-Peterson, B. 1981. *Staff Development/Organization Development Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*. Alexandria: Virginia.

Dole, J.A. 2004. The changing role of the reading specialist in school reform. *The Reading Teacher*, (57): 462-471.

Donald, D., Lazarus, S. and Lolwana, P., 2002. *Educational psychology in social context*. 2nd ed. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Donald, J.K. and Charles, K.K. 2003. *Effective literacy instruction. Implementing best practice*. 5th ed. Columbus Ohio: Pearson Education.

Du Plessis, S. 2006. Introducing language across the curriculum into the English multilingual setting. *SAALT Journal for language Teaching*, (27): 269-277.

Dyers, C. 2003. Intervention and language attitudes: The effects of one development programme on the language attitudes of primary school educators. *Journal for Language Teaching*, 37 (1): 60-73.

Du Plessis, S. and Naude, E. 2003. The needs of teachers in preschool centers with regards to multilingual learners. *South African Journal of Education*, (23): 122-129.

Ehri, L. 1995. Phases of development in learning to read words by sight. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 18: 116-125.

Ehri, L., Nunes, S.R., Willows, D., Schuster, B., Yaghoub- Zadeh, Z. and Shanahan, T. 2001. Phonemic awareness instructions helps children to read: Evidence from the National Reading Panels meta-analysis. *Reading Research Quarterly*, (3): 250-257.

Ehri, L. and Snowling, M. 2004. Development variation in word recognition. *Handbook of Language and Literacy: Development and Disorders*. New York: Guilford Press.

Elaine, D. 2005. *Applying communication theory for professional life*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Ellington, L.L. 2008. *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research. An introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Elliott, J. 1991. *Action research for educational change*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Engelbrecht, P. 2001. *Changing roles of education support professionals*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Erikson, E. 1968. *Identity: Youth and crises*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

Field, A. 2009. *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Fleisch, B. 2008. *Primary education in crises: Why South African children underachieve in reading and mathematics*. Cape Town: Juta and Co.

Fountas, I.C. and Pinnell, G.S. 1996. *Guided Reading: Good first teaching for all children*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

- Freedman, L. and Carver, C. 2007. Pre-Service teacher understandings of adolescent literacy development: Naive wonder to dawning realization to intellectual rigor. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 50 (8): 654-665.
- Fullan, M. 1985. Change process and strategies at local level. *Elementary School Journal*, 85 (3): 391-421.
- Fullan, M. 2001. *The new meaning of educational change*. 3rd ed. New York: Teacher's College Press.
- Fullan, M. and Promfert, A. 1977. Research on curriculum and instruction implementation. *Reviews of Educational Research*, 47 (1): 335-395.
- Garcia, G. 2000. Bilingual children's reading. In Kamil, M., Mosenthal, P., Pearson, D. and Barr, R. (Eds). *Handbook of Reading Research*, Vol. 3, pp. 813-834. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Garson, G.D. 2011. Scales and standard measures. [Online]. Available : <http://www.faculty.chassncsu.edu/garson/PA765/standard.htm> (accessed: 22 October 2011).
- Gill, S.R. 2008. The comprehension matrix: a tool for designing comprehension instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 62 (2): 106-113.
- Good, R. H. and Kaminski, R. A. 1996. Assessment for instructional decisions: Towards a proactive/prevention model of decision –making for early literacy skills, *School of Psychology Review*, 25: 215-227.
- Govender, P. 2006. Indian experts to help SA's worst schools. *Sunday Times*, 22 January, p.1.
- Gracier, O. and Baker, C.1990. Vygotsky in a whole language perspective. In Moll, L.C. (Ed). *Vygotsky and Education. Instructional Implications and Applications of Sociocultural Psychology*, pp. 233-250. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Green, L., Forrester, J., Mvambi, N., Janse Van Vuuren, E. and Du Toit, S. 1999. *Classroom support for inclusion*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Greenfield, P.M. 1999. A theory of the teacher in the learning activities of everyday life. In Rogoff, B. and Lave, J. (Eds). *Everyday Cognition: It's Development in Social Context*, pp. 117-138. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Gregory, K.D. and Martin, M.O. 2001. *Technical standards for IEA studies: An annotated bibliography*. Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Group, R.R.S. 2002. *Reading for understanding: Toward an R and D program in reading comprehension*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

Hall, I. 2005. Teaching and content area reading: Attitudes, beliefs and change. *Teacher Education*, 21 (4): 403-414.

Hanna, P. and Hanna, J.S. 1996. Phoneme grapheme correspondence as cues to spelling improvement: Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Hariparsad, S.D. 2005. In search of deep change: A study of the implementation of the assessment policy in South African schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Pretori, South Africa.

Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W. and Smit, B. 2004. *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Hesse-Biber, S. and Leavy, P. 2005. *The practice of qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.

Heugh, K. 2002. Recovering multilingualism: Recent Language-policy developments. In Mesthrie, R. (Ed). *Language in South Africa*, pp. 449-75. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Heugh, K. 2006. Optimizing learning and education in Africa – the language factor: A stock-taking research on mother-tongue and bilingual education in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) 2006 Biennial Meeting, 27-31 March, Libreville, Gabon.

Hornsby, R. 1997. Critical thinking. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 14: 277–278.

Howe, A. C. 1996. Development of science concepts within a Vygotskian framework. *Science Education*, 80: 35–51.

Howie, S. J. 2002. English language proficiency and contextual factors influencing mathematics achievement of secondary school pupils in South Africa. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of Education, Enschede, University of Toronto, Canada.

Howie, S. J. and Plomp, T. 2006. Lessons from cross-national research on context and achievement: Hunting and fishing in the TIMSS landscape. In Howie, S.J. and Plomp, T. (Eds). *Contexts of Learning Mathematics and Science*, pp. 3-15. London: Routledge.

Howie, S. J., Van Staden, S., Draper, K. and Zimmerman, L. 2010. *An evaluation of the implementation of the FET curriculum: Gauteng* (unpublished). University of Pretoria: Centre for Evaluation and Assessment.

Howie, S.J., Venter, E., Zimmerman, L and Archer, A. 2009. *Gauteng Report on Grade 5 reading achievement in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2006* (unpublished). University of Pretoria: Centre for Evaluation and Assessment.

Howie, S. J., Venter E., Van Staden, S., Zimmerman, L., Long, C., Scherman, V. and Archer, E. 2007. *PIRLS 2006 summary report: South African children's reading achievement*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Hugo, A.J., Le Roux, S.G., Muller, H. and Nel, N. 2005. Phonological awareness and the minimising of reading problems: A South African perspective. *Journal for language Teaching*, 39 (2): 210-225.

Huysamen, G. T.1993. *Methodology for social and behavioural sciences*. Johannesburg: International Thomson Publishing.

International Energy Association. 2009. *International database analyzer, version 20.00. Computer software*. Hamburg, Germany: IEA Data Procession and Research Center.

International Reading Association (IRA). 2006. Standards for middle and high school literacy coaches. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. [Online]. Available: www.reading.org/resources/issues/reports/coaching.html (accessed: 22 October 2010).

International Reading Association (IRA). 2007. Teaching reading well. A synthesis of the International Reading Association's research on teacher preparation for reading instruction. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. [Online]. Available : www.reading.org (accessed: 22 October 2010).

Jansen, J.D. 1998. Curriculum reform in South Africa: A critical analysis of outcomes-based education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 28 (3): 321-331.

Jarvis G. 1983. *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jeul, C. 1998. Learning to read and write: A longitudinal study of 54 children from first through fourth grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80 (4): 437-447.

Johnson, B. and Christen L. 2000. *Education research: Qualitative and quantitative research approach*. Boston, London: Allyn and Bacon.

Johnson, B., Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and. Turner, L.A. 2007. Towards a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1 (2): 112-133.

Johnson, B. and Turner, L.A. 2003. *Data Collection strategies in mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Johnson, R.B. and Onwuegbuzie, A.J. 2004. Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33 (7): 14-26.

Joncas, M. 2007a. PIRLS 2006 sample design. In Martin, M.O., Mullis, I.V.S. and Kennedy, A.M. (Eds). *PIRLS 2006 Technical Report*, pp. 35-47. Lynch School of Education, Boston College: TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Center.

Joncas, M. 2007b. PIRLS 2006 sampling weights and participation rates. In Martin, M.O., Mullis, I.V.S. and Kennedy, A.M. (Eds). *PIRLS 2006 Technical Report*, pp. 105-130. Lynch School of Education, Boston College: TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Center.

Jones, D.C. 2001. *Multilingual literacies in the primary classroom: Making the connections*. PEN 130. Sydney: Primary English Teaching Association.

Joshi, R.M. 2005. Response to intervention based on the Componential Model of reading. In Gilger, J. and Richardson, S. (Eds). *Research Based Education and Intervention: What we Need to Know*, pp. 45-65. Baltimore, MD: International Dyslexia Association.

Kellaghan, T. and Greaney, V. 2005. Monitoring performance: Assessments and examinations. In A.M. Verspoor, A.M. (Ed). *The Challenge of Learning: Improving the Quality of Basic Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, pp. 271-292. Paris: Association for the Development of Education in Africa.

Kennedy, A. M. 2007. Developing the PIRLS 2006 background questionnaires. In Martin, M.O., Mullis, I.V.S. and Kennedy, A. M. (Eds). *PIRLS 2006 Technical Report*, pp. 23-34. Lynch School of Education: Boston College.

Kerr, A.W., Hall, H.K. and Kozuh, S.A. 2004. *Doing statistics with SPSS*. London: Sage Publications.

Kinnucan-Welsch, K. 1999. Strategic teaching and strategic learning in first grade classrooms. *Reading Horizons*, (40): 3-21.

Kouziilin, A. 1998. *Psychological tools: A sociocultural approach to education*. Cambridge: Pergamon Press.

Krepps, L. 2009. Do teacher attitudes impact literacy strategy implementation in content area classrooms? *Journal of Instructional Pedagogics* [Online]. Available: www.aabri.com/manuscripts/10519.pdf (accessed: 10 October 2010).

Krueger, R.A. 1998. *The focus group kit*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

Lapp, F.D., Flood, J. and Cabello, A. 2001. An Integrated approach to the teaching and assessment of language arts. In Rollins Hurley, S. and Vilamil Tinajero, J. (Eds). *Literacy Assessment of Second Language Learners*, pp. 1-26. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Lerner, J. 2003. *Learning disabilities: Theories, diagnosis and teaching strategies*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Le Cordeur, M. 2010. From 0 to 100% - How Raithby Primary turned their literacy performance around. *Journal of Education*, 49: 35-64.

Leech, A.J. 2009. A typology of mixed methods research designs. *Quality and Quantity*, 43 (2): 265-275.

Lesaux, N. K., Lipka, O. and Siegel, L. S. 2006. Investigating cognitive and linguistic abilities that influence the reading comprehension skills of children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. *Reading and Writing*, (19): 99-131.

Lessing, A.C. and de Witt, M.W. 2005. An investigation into the early literacy skills of Grade R second language L2 learners in South Africa. *Africa Education Review*, 2 (2): 242-257.

Lessing, A.C. and Mahabeer, S.D. 2007. Barriers to acquiring English reading and writing skills by Zulu-speaking Foundation-phase learners. *Journal for Language Teaching*, 41 (2): 139-151.

Leu, D.J. and Kinzer, C.K. 2003. *Effective literacy instruction. Implementing best practice*. 5th ed. Columbus, Ohio: Pearson Education.

Levin, B. 2006. Schools in challenging circumstances: A reflection on what we know and what we need to know. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 17 (4): 399-407.

Levin, B. 2008. Learning about system renewal. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 36: 289-303.

Levin, B. 2010. The challenge of large-scale literacy improvement. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 21 (4): 1-18.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Lind, D.A., Marchal, W.G. and Mason, R.D. 2004. *Statistical techniques in business and economics*. 11th ed. New York: McGraw Hill.

Lin, X., Schwartz, D.L. and Hatano, G. 2005. Toward teachers adaptive metacognition. *Educational Psychologist*, 40 (4): 245-256.

Loewenstein, G. 2007. Affect regulation and affective forecasting. In Gross J.J. (Ed). *Handbook of Regulation*, pp. 180-203. New York: Guilford.

Lombard, K. 2008. Critical thinking: Are the ideals of OBE failing us or are we failing the ideals of OBE? *South African Journal of Education*, (28): 561-579.

Long, M.C. and Zimmerman, L. 2009. Reading beyond the lines: Developing South African foundation phase learner's higher order reading literacy skills. Proceedings of the Teacher Education Research and Development Programme (TEP) Concluding Conference, 4-5 September, Birchwood Conference Centre, Boksburg, Gauteng.

Lovelt, M.W. 2004. The importance of multicomponent intervention for children and adolescent who are struggling readers in South Africa. In Richardson, K. and Gilger, I. (Eds). *Research-Based Education Intervention: What we need to Know*, pp. 67-102. Baltimore, M.D. International Dyslexia Association.

- Lyon, G.R.1996. Teachers' Perceptions of their undergraduate and graduate preparation. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 12: 164-169.
- Mbanjwa, B. 2009. KZN sends teachers to be educated. *Daily News*, 5 August, p. 24.
- Malhotra, N.R. 2004. *Marketing research: An applied orientation*. 4th ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Manyike, T.V.L. 2008. A comparative assessment of the L1 and L2 reading performance of Grade 7 learners in English and Xitsonga. *Per Linguam*, 24 (2): 62-74.
- Maree, K.P.J. 2007a. Surveys and the use of questionnaires. In Maree, K. (Ed). *First Steps in Research*, pp. 155-170. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Marsh, J. and Millard, E. 2000. *Literacy and popular culture: Using children's culture in a classroom*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Martin, M.O., Mullis, I.V.S. and Kennedy, A.M. (Eds). 2007. *PIRLS 2006 Technical Report*. Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College.
- Mason, J. 2006. Mixing methods in a qualitatively driven way. *Qualitative Research*, 6 (9): 9-25.
- Mather, N. 2001. Perceptions and knowledge of pre-service and inservice teachers about early literacy instruction. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, (34): 472-482.
- Matier M.J. and Hart, M. 2007. Access to reading: Scaffolded reading strategies in the South African context: *Journal of Language and Teaching*, 41 (1): 15-31.
- Matjila, E.J. 2004. Bilingual and biliterate? An exploratory study of grade 8 reading skills in Setswana and English. *Per Linguam*, 201: 1-21.

McCutchen, D., Harry, D.R., Cunningham, A.E., Cox, S., Sidman, S. and Covill, A.E. 2002. Reading teachers' knowledge of children's literature and English phonology. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 52: 207-228.

McDonnell, L. 1995. Opportunity to learn as a research concept and a policy instrument. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 17 (3): 305-322.

McDonough, J. and McDonough, S. 1997. *Research methods for English language teachers*. New York: Hodder Headline Group.

McKenna, M.D. and Kear, D.J. 1990. Measuring attitude toward reading - a new tool for teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, 43 (9): 626-639.

McKenzie, B. and Turbill, J. 1999. Professional development, classroom practice and student outcomes: Exploring the connections in early literacy development. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education, 29 November-2 December. [Online]. Available: www.swin.edu.au/aare/99pap/mck99328.htm (accessed: 20 April 2009).

McKeown, M.G., Beck, I.L. and Blake, R.G.K. 2009. Rethinking reading comprehension instruction: A comparison of instruction for strategies and content approaches. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 44 (43): 218-253.

McKeon, M.G. 2010. Vocabulary development for students in grades four and five. [Online]. Available: [http://www.reading.org/libraries/Book Supplement/bk767Supp-McKeon.sflb.ashx](http://www.reading.org/libraries/Book%20Supplement/bk767Supp-McKeon.sflb.ashx). (accessed: 20 October 2010).

McKinny, C. 2005. Language, identity and (subverting) Assimilation in a South African desegregated suburban school. Paper presented at SACHES Conference, September 2005, Dar-es-Salaam.

Mead, M. 2009. *Zimbabwe government gives go-ahead for British couple to extend innovative SING-A-LONG programme*. [Online]. Available: www.thrass.co.uk/nm.htm (accessed: 30 April 2009).

Meerkotter, D. 2003. *Markets, language in education and socio-economic stratification. Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa*. Dar-Es-Salaam: E and D Limited.

Meier, C. 2011. The Foundations for learning campaign: Helping hand or hurdle? *South African Journal of Education*, 31 (4): 549-573.

Miles, P.A., Hubbs, K.G., Henh, W.A. and Mallette, M.H. 2005. A whole class support model for early literacy: The Anna Plan. *The Reading Teacher*, (58): 318-327.

Moats, L.C. 1994a. The missing foundation in teacher education: Knowledge of language. *Topics of Language Disorders*, 16 (2): 73-86.

Moats, L.C. 1994b. The missing foundation in teacher education: Knowledge of the structure of spoken and written language. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 44: 81-102.

Moats, LC. 1999a. Teaching reading is rocket science. What expert teachers of reading should know and be able to do. [Online]. Available: <http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/downloads/teachers/rocketsci.pdf> (accessed: 24 September 2009).

Moats, L.C. 1999b. The missing foundation in teaching education. *American Federation of Teachers*, 9: 43-51.

Moats, L.C. 2009. Knowledge foundations for teaching reading and spelling. *Reading and Writing*, (22): 379-399.

Mohammed, H. 2004. Challenges in curriculum transformation in South Africa: A proceedings volume from the Fifth Annual Educational Speaking Conference, 15-18 May, Birchwood Hotel, Boksburg, South Africa.

Moloi, M. and Strauss, J. 2005. South African working report. The SACMEQ11 project in South Africa: A study of the conditions of schooling and the quality of education. South Africa: Ministry of Education.

Moll, L.C. 1993. Introduction. In Moll, L.C. (Ed). *Vygotsky and Education. Instructional Implication and Application of statistical Psychology*, pp. 1-30 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moll, L.C.1992. Literacy and research in community and classrooms: A sociocultural approach. In Beach, R., Green, J.L., Kamil, M.L. and Shannon, T. (Eds). *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Literacy Research*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Moore, J.H.M. 2007. Access to literacy: Scaffolding reading strategies in the South African context. *Journal for Language Teaching*, 41 (1): 15-30.

Morgan, D.L. 2007. Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained. Methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1 (1): 48-76.

Moss, B. 2005. Making a case and a place for effective content area literacy instruction in the elementary grades. *The Reading Teacher*, 59 (1): 46-65.

Moss, G. 2004. Provision of trustworthiness in critical narrative research: Bridging intersubjectivity and fidelity, *The Qualitative Report*, 9 (2): 359-374. [Online]. Available: <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR9-2/moss.pdf> (accessed: 9 November 2010).

Moss ,G. 2005. Making a case and a place for effective content area literacy instruction in the elementary grades. *The Reading Teacher*, 59 (1): 46-55.

Motshekga, A. 2009. Statement at the National Assembly by the Minister of Basic Education on curriculum review process, 5 November 2009. [Online]. Available: <http://education.gov.za/dynamic.aspx?pageid=306&id=9148> (accessed: 14 October 2011).

Motshekga, A. 2010. Statement by the Minister of Basic Education on the progress of the review of the National Curriculum Statement, 6 July 2010. [Online]. Available: <http://education.gov.za/dynamic.aspx?pageid=306&id=9148> (accessed: 14 October 2011).

Motskekga, A. 2011. Statement by the Minister of Basic Education on the release of the Annual National Assessments Results for 2011, 28 June 2011. [Online]. Available <http://education.gov.za/dynamic.aspx?pageid=306&id=9148> (accessed: 14 October 2011)

Mullis, I.V.S. 2000. *Research in education: A conceptual introduction*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman Inc.

Mullis, I.V.S. 2002. *Background questions in TIMSS and PIRLS: An overview. Paper commissioned by the National Assessment Governing Board*. Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Centre, Department of Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation, Lynch School of Education, Boston College.

Mullis, I.V.F., Martin, M.O. and Foy, P. 2007. *PIRLS 2006 International Report: IEA's study of reading literacy achievement in primary schools*. Chesnut Hill, MA: TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Center, Lynch School of Education, Boston College.

Mullis, I.V. F., Martin, M.O. and Sainsbury, M. 2006. *PIRLS 2006 Assessment Framework and specifications*. Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Center, Lynch School of Education, Boston College.

Myburgh, O. and Van Rensburg W. 2004. Learners experience of teaching and learning in a second or third language. *Education*, 124 (3): 573-584.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). 1996. Position statement. Responding to linguistic and cultural diversity. Recommendations for effective childhood education. *Young Children*, 51: 9-12.

Naicker, S. 1999. Inclusive education in South Africa. In Engelbrecht, P., Green L., Naicker, S. and Engelbrecht, L. (Eds). *Inclusive Education in South Africa*, pp. 45-64. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Ness, M. 2007. Reading comprehension strategies in secondary content area classrooms. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89 (33): 229-231.

- Nieuwenhuis, J. 2007a. Analysing qualitative data. In Maree, K. (Ed). *First Steps in Research*, pp. 99-122. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. 2007b. Introducing qualitative research. In Maree, K. (Ed). *First Steps in Research*, pp. 47-68. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Nieuwenhuis. 2007c. *Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques*. In Maree, K. (Ed). *First Steps in Research*, pp. 70-97. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Nolen, P.A., McCruthchen, D. and Berninger, V. 1990. Ensuring tomorrow's literacy: A shared responsibility. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 41: 63-72.
- Northcutt, D. 2004. *Interactive qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks. CA: Sage Publications.
- Nourie, L.B. and Lenski, D.S. 1998. The (in) effectiveness of content area literacy instruction for secondary pre-service teachers. *Clearing House*, 71 (6): 372-380.
- Obanya, P. 2004. Learning in, with and from the first language. *PRAESA Occasional Paper*, 19. [Online]. Available: <http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/praesa/.../Paper19.pdf> (accessed: 9 November 2010).
- Ohi, S. 2007. Investigating the role of teachers in the Research-Policy-Praxis Nexus: Construction of reading in the early years. Unpublished Doctor of Education dissertation, Monash University, Victoria, Australia.
- O'Sullivan, M. 2003. The development of effective strategies to teach reading among unqualified primary teachers in developing country context. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 11 (2): 129-140.
- Onwuegbuzie, A.J. 2002. Why can't we all get along? Towards a framework for unifying research paradigms. *Education*, 122 (3): 518-530.

Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and Collins, M.T. 2007. A typology of mixed methods sampling designs in social science research. *The Qualitative report*, 12: 281-386. [Online]. Available: <http://www.nova.edu/ssw/QR/QR12-2/onwuegbuzie2pdf> (accessed: 21 April 2010).

Oxford English Dictionary. 2006. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Park, T.D. and Osborne, E. 2006. Agriscience teachers' attitudes towards implementation of content area reading strategies. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 47 (4): 39-51.

Perry, K.H. 2008. Primary school literacy in Southern Africa: African perspectives. *Comparative Education*, 44 (1): 57-73.

Piaget, J. 1964. Development and learning. In Gauvain, M. and Cole, M. (Eds). *Readings on the Development of Children*, pp. 19-28. NY: W.H. Freeman and Company.

Piaget, J. 1972. Intellectual evolution from childhood to adolescent: *Human Development*, 15(1): 1-12.

Pillay, A.A. 2008. Intermediate phase educators' perceptions and knowledge of co-operative learning. Unpublished MEd dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

Pinnell, G. S. 1990. Reading recovery: Learning how to make a difference. *The Reading Teacher*, (43): 282-295.

Pluddemann, P., Braam, D., October, M. and Wababa, Z. 2004. Dual-medium and parallel-medium schooling in the Western Cape: From default to design. *PRAESA Occasional Papers*: 17. [Online]. Available: http://www.praesa.org.za/images/stories/Occasional_Paper_1/OccPap17.pdf (accessed: 10 October 2010).

Poster, C. and Poster, D. 1993. *Teacher appraisal: Training and implementation*. London: Routledge.

Postlewaite, T.N. 1992. *Effective schools in reading: Implications for educational planners. An exploratory study*. The Hague: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Poulson, L., Avramidis, E., Fox, R., Medwell, J. and Wray, D. 2001. The theoretical beliefs of effective teachers of literacy in primary schools: An exploratory study of orientations to reading and writing. [Online]. Available: <http://www.education.exeter.ac.uk/projects.php?id=172> (accessed: 25 October 2011).

Pretorius, E.J. 2000. Reading and the Unisa student: Is academic performance related to reading ability? *Progression*, 22 (2): 35-48.

Pretorius, E.J. 2002. Reading ability and academic performance in South Africa: Are we fiddling while Rome is burning? *Language Matters*, (33): 169-196.

Pretorius, E.J. 2004a. Literacy and disadvantage: Learners' achievements in the early primary school years. *Africa Education Review*, 1 (1): 128-146.

Pretorius, E.J. 2004b. The socio-educational context of literacy accomplished in disadvantaged schools: Lessons for reading in the primary school years. *Journal of Language Teaching*, 38 (1): 45-62.

Pretorius E. 2005a. Procedural knowledge of ESL readers in decoding expository text. Unpublished Doctor of Education dissertation, Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Pretorius, E.J. 2005b. Reading in a disadvantaged high school: Issues of accomplishment, assessment and accountability. *South African Journal of Education*, 25 (3): 139-147.

Pretorius, E.J. 2010. Do the rich get richer and poor poorer? The effects of an intervention programme on reading in the home and school language in a high poverty multilingual context. *International Journal of Educational Development*, (30): 67-76.

Pretorius, E.J. and Machet, M.P. 2004. Literacy and disadvantage: Learner's achievements in the early primary school years. *Africa Education Review*, (1): 128-146.

Pretorius, E.J. and Mampuru, D.M. 2007. Playing football without a ball: Reading and academic performance in a high- poverty school. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 30: 38-58.

Prinsloo, M. 2006. Connections between child and adult literacy regarding learning, skills levels and practices. Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006. Literacy for life. [Online]. Available: <http://www.unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001461/146101e.pdf> (accessed: 10 October 2010).

Probyn, M. 2006. Learning science through the medium of English: What do grade 8 learners say? *Southern African Linguistic and Applied Studies*, 23 (4): 369-392.

Pudi, T. 2006. From OBE to C2005 to RNCS - are we still on track? *Africa Education Review*, 3 (3): 100-112.

Purcell-Gates, V. 2004. Ethnographic research. In Duke, N. K. and Mallette, M.H. (Eds). *Literacy Research Methodologies*, pp. 92-113. New York: Guilford Press.

Rasinski, T. and Padak, N. 2004. Beyond consensus, beyond balance: Toward a comprehensive literacy curriculum. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 20 (1): 91-102.

Read Educational Trust Annual Report. 2010. [Online]. Available: http://www.read.co.za/uploads/media/READ_Annual-Report_2010.pdf (accessed: 6 November 2011).

Reyneke, M. 2002. Assessment in South African schools. *Assessment in Education*, 9 (2): 255-268.

Reynolds, D. 1998. Schooling for literacy: A review of research on teacher effectiveness and school effectiveness and its implications for contemporary educational policies. *Educational Review*, 50 (2): 147-162.

- Russell, T. and Munby, H. 1992. *Teachers and teaching: From classroom to reflection*. London: Falmer Press.
- Santa, C.M. 2006. A vision for adolescent literacy: Ours or theirs? *Journal of Adolescence and Adult Literacy*, 49 (6): 466-476.
- Scarborough, H.S. and Brady, S.A. 2002. Toward a common terminology for talking about speech and reading: A glossary of the 'phon' word and some related terms. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 34: 299-334.
- Scheepers, R.A. 2008. Reading is fundamental: The effect of a reading programme on vocabulary development in a high poverty township school. *Per Linguam*, 24 (1): 30-44.
- Schmidt, W.H. 1996. *Characterising pedagogical flow. An investigation of mathematics and science teaching in six countries*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Schmidt, W.H. 1999. *Many visions, many aims. A cross national investigation of curricular intentions in school mathematics*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Schon, D. 1991. *The reflective turn: Case studies in reflective practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Senior, C. 2005. *Getting the buggers to read*. New York: Routledge.
- Sekaran, U. 2006. *Research methods for business: A skill-building approach*. 4th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Shanahan, T. and Neuman, S. 1997. Conversations. Literacy research that makes a difference. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 32 (2): 202-211.
- Shiel, G. 2009. International comparisons of reading literacy: what can they tell us? *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39 (3): 345-360.

Shulman, L. 1986. Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15 (2): 4-14.

Shulman, L. and Sykes, G. 1986. *A National Board for teaching? In search of a bold standard*. Paper commissioned for the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, Teacher Assessment Project. CA, USA: Stanford University School of Education.

Simon, S. 2004. What's a good value for Cronbach's Alpha. [Online] Available: <http://www.childrensmrcy.org/stats/weblog2004/CronbachApha.asp>. (accessed: 25 October 2011).

Singh, P. 2004. Towards improving equity in assessment for tertiary science students in South Africa: incorporating an oral component. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

Smith, E. 2008. Pitfalls and promises: The use of secondary data analysis in educational research. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 56 (3): 323-339.

Smith, W.J. and Ngoma-Maema, W.J. 2003. Education for all in South Africa: Developing a national system for quality assurance. *Comparative Education*, 39 (3): 345-365.

Snow, C.E. and Burns, M.S. 1999. What speech language pathologists need to know about early reading. *Topics in Language Disorders*, (20): 48-58.

Snow, C. E., Burns, M.S. and Griffin, P. 1998. *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Snow, C.E., Griffin, P. and Burns, M.S. 2005. *Knowledge to support the teaching of reading: Preparing teachers for a changing world*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Snow, C.E., Tabors, P.O. and Harris, S.R. 2007. *Is literacy enough? Pathways to academic success for adolescents*. Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Snowling, M.J. 2003. Family risk of dyslexia is continuous: Individual differences in the precursors of reading skill. *Child Development*, (74): 358-374.

Sookrajh, R. and Joshua, J. 2009. Language matters in rural schools in South Africa: Are educators making the implementation of the Language in Education Policy (1997) work? *Language Learning Journal*, 37 (3): 323-338.

Soudien, C. 2007. The 'A' factor: Coming to terms with the question of legacy in South African Education. *International Journal of Education Development*, 27 (2):183-193.

South African Government Information. 2011. Statement on the release of the Annual National Assessments results for 2011 by Mrs Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education, Union Buildings. [Online]. Available:
<http://www.info.gov.za/speech/DynamicAction?pageid=461&sid=19525&tid=36106>
(accessed: 22 October 2011).

Squires, D. and Bliss, T. 2004. Teacher visions: Navigating beliefs about literacy learning: Teachers can use "visioning" as a tool to clarify how their beliefs play out as instructional practices. *The Reading Teacher*. [Online]. Available:
<http://www.questia.com/googleScholar.qst?docId=5005902717> (accessed: 25 October 2011).

Stahl, S.A. 1991. *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.

Stahl, S.A. and Nagy, W.G. 2006. *Teaching word meanings*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Stephens, L.J. 2004. *Advanced statistics demystified*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Stern, H.H. 1983. *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. London: Oxford University Press.

Steyn, A.G.W., Smit, C.F., Du Toit, S.H.C. and Strasheim, C. 1994. *Modern statistics in practice*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Suthehall, T.L. 1993. Secondary analysis in qualitative research: Issues and implications. In Morse, J.M. (Ed). *Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods*, pp. 263-279. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Suthehall, T.L. 2001. Locating and conducting discourse analytic research. In Wetherell, M., Taylor, S. and Yates, S.J. (Eds). *Discourse for Data: A Guide for Analysis*, pp. 5-48. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Tarp, R.G. and Galimore, R.1988. *Rousing minds to life: Teaching and learning and schooling in social contexts*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, B.M. 2008. *What does excellent reading instruction look like in elementary classrooms?* Minnesota: Minnesota Center for Reading Research.

Taylor, B.M., Pearson, P.D. and Rodriguez, M.C. 2002. Looking inside classrooms: Reflecting on the “how” as well as the “what” in effective reading instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 56 (3): 270-279.

Taylor, N. F., Fleisch, B, and Schindler, J. 2008. Changes in education since 1994. Background paper for the Fifteen Year Review of Government Business. Commissioned by the Policy Unity, Office of the Presidency. [Online]. Available: <http://0-www.jet.org.za.innopac.up.ac.za/publications/research/Taylor%20Fleisch%20Shindler%20Changes%20in%20Education%2015%20year%20review.pdf> (accessed: 19 October 2010).

Taylor, S. 2001. Locating and conducting discourse analytic research. In Wetherell, M., Taylor, S. and Yates, S.J. (Eds). *Discourse as Data: A Guide for Analysis*, pp. 29-38. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Theron, L. C. and Nell, M. 2005. The needs and perceptions of South African Grade 4 educators. Teaching English second-language (ESL) learners. *Africa Education Review*, 2 (2): 21-241.

- Torgeson, J. 1997. The prevention and remediation of reading disabilities: Evaluating what we know from research. *Academic Language Theory*, 34 (1): 11-47.
- Tollefson, J.W. 1991. *Planning language, planning inequality*. New York: Longman.
- Topping, K. and Ferguson, N. 2005. Effective literacy teaching behaviours. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 28 (2): 125-143.
- Uys, M., Van der Walt, J.L., Botha, S.U. and Van den Berg, R. 2006. An integrated course for English medium of instruction teacher trainees in South Africa. *Journal for Language Teaching*, 40 (20): 68-87.
- Van Den Akker, J. 2003. Curriculum perspectives: An introduction. In Van den Akker, J., Kuiper, W. and Hameyer, U. (Eds). *Curriculum Landscapes and Trends*, pp. 1-10. Dordrecht, NL: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Velutino, F. R., Tunmer, W.E., Jaccard, J. J. and Chen, R. 2007. Components of reading ability: Multivariate evidence for a convergent skills model of reading development. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, (11): 3-33.
- Vesely, R. 2000. Multilingual Environments for Survival: The impact of English on Xhosa-speaking students in Cape Town. PRAESA Occasional Papers 5. [Online]. Available: <http://www.praesa.org.za/publications/occasional-papers> (accessed: 6 November 2010).
- Vidovich, L. 2001. That chameleon 'quality': The multiple and contradictory discourse of 'quality' policy in Australian higher education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 22 (2): 249-261.
- Viljoen, C.F. and Molefe, R.M.L. 2001. Language related problems of limited proficiency learners in grade 1. *South African Journal of Education*, (21): 21-127.
- Vithal, R. 2003. *In search of a pedagogy of conflict and dialogue for mathematics education*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Vygotsky, L.S. 1978. *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Howard University Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. 1981. The genesis of higher mental functions. In Wertsch, J. (Ed). *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology*, pp. 144-188. Armonk, NY: Sharpe.

Vygotsky, L.S. 1986. *Thought and language*. Revised and edited by A. Kozulin. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. 1987. Thinking and speech. In Rieber, R.W. and Carton, A.S. (Eds). Minick, N. (Translator). *LS Vygotsky, Collected Works*, Vol 1, pp. 39-285. New York: Plenum Press.

Weatherell, M. 1987. *Discourse and socio psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour*. London: Sage Publications Company.

Wesley, A.H. 2002. The importance of phonemic awareness in learning to read. *International Reading Association*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/sedl-letter/v14n03/3.html> (accessed: 10 May 2010).

Willemse, I. 2009. *Statistics methods and calculations skills*. 3rd ed. Cape Town: Juta and Co.

Wilson, N. and Smetana, L. 2009. Investigating content area teachers' understanding of a content literacy framework: A yearlong professional development initiative. *Journal of Adolescence and Literacy*, 52 (8): 708-718.

Wise, B. 2009. Adolescent literacy: The cornerstone to student success. *Journal of Adolescence and Literacy*, 52 (5): 369-375.

Yates, S.J. 2001. Sociolinguistics and corpus analysis. In Wetherell, M., Taylor, S. and Yates, S.J. (Eds). *Discourse as Data: A Guide for Analysis*, pp. 93-146. London: Sage Publications.

Yates, S.J. 2004. *Doing social science research*. Thousand Oaks, USA: Sage Publications.

Yin, R.K. 2003. Case study research: Design and methods. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Zimmerman, L. 2006. Parents' constructions of the role of the helping professional in learning support. Unpublished master's dissertation, Department of Education, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Zimmerman, L. 2010 . Bi-lingual and bile state? An exploratory study of grade 8 reading skills in Setswana and English. *Per Linguam*, (20): 1-21.

Zimmerman, L, Howie, S.J. and Long, C. 2009a. *Examining the status quo: A cross-sectional survey of initial teacher education for foundation phase reading literacy teaching at South African universities*. University of Pretoria: Centre for Evaluation and Assessment.

Zimmerman, L., Howie, S.J. and Long, C. 2009b. *Examining the status quo: Pre-service teacher education for primary school teachers of reading literacy at a South African University*. University of Pretoria: Centre for Evaluation and Assessment.

APPENDIX A – LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY

PARKGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 24122, PARKGATE
VERULAM, 4340
TEL/FAX: (032) 537 6090

FOR ATT.
DR PP KGANYE
FAX 031-7026382

Mr. E.M Kganye
The District Director
Pinetown District

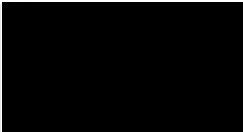
04 June 2009

Dear Sir



Enclosed is a letter seeking permission to conduct my P.hd research.
Details of this study is clearly stated in the enclosed letter.

I look forward to a reply at your earliest.

Thank You



**APPENDIX B – PERMISSION AND APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
FROM KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

		
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION		
<hr/>		
Address: 41 Voortekker street Ikheili: ASHLEY Adres: 3610	Private Bag: X9001 Isikhwama Seposi: PINETOWN Privaatsak: 3600	Telephone: 031 7162700 Ucingo: Telefoon: Fax: (031) 702-6382
Enquiries: DBT BAQWA Imibuzo: Navrae:	Reference: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH Inkomba: Verwyssing:	Date: 17/06/2009 Usuku: Datum:
<hr/>		
Acting Head – Media , Languages & Communication MLS Campus Durban University of Technology		
ATT: Prof. Penny Singh		
Re: Permission to conduct Research		
Permission is hereby granted for Mrs Prabitha Singh to conduct research at the selected schools in the Phoenix / Verulam Area.		
We wish her everything of the best in her studies.		
		

APPENDIX C - PERMISSION AND APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM WARD MANAGER



2 June 2009

Mr M. Moonsamy
The Ward Manager
Phoenix Education Centre
Spine Road, Phoenix
DURBAN

Dear Sir

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Mrs Prabitha Singh is registered for her DTech: Language Practice (Doctorate) at the Durban University of Technology and I am her promoter. She is researching the influence of qualified educators' skills and attitudes on the teaching of reading in the foundation phase at selected schools in the northern KZN area.

Please grant her permission to conduct her research through interviews and questionnaires with foundation phase educators at selected schools in the Phoenix/Verulam area. Please be assured that none of the findings of this research will be made public, and the educators will remain anonymous throughout the research process and in the reporting of her findings.



APPENDIX D – LETTER TO PRINCIPAL

1st November 2010

The Principal

Thank you for your assistance by participating in the first stage of my research.

I would be grateful if you would kindly allow me to conduct a Focus group discussion in your school with Foundation phase learners. (10 learners from each of the following grades 1, 2 and 3).

It is imperative that these discussions be conducted on Monday 8th November 2010 or Tuesday 9th November 2010 at your convenience.

Please fill in details below and fax slip as soon as possible.

Thank you for your co-operation.

P. Singh

Parkgate Primary School
Tel / Fax 032 537 6090
Cell: 083 550 0325

-----Fax Slip-----

Name of School _____

Please tick convenient date and indicate suitable time.

Day	Date		Time
Monday	8 th November 2010		
Tuesday	9 th November 2010		

APPENDIX E – QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire to ascertain Foundation Phase educators' knowledge and attitudes towards implementation of the National Reading Strategy.

Biographical Details please cross (x) where necessary.

1. First Name _____ (OPTIONAL) Surname _____ (OPTIONAL)
2. Your Age: ☐ 20-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ 61 over
3. Your Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female
4. What learning areas do you teach at Foundation Phase Level?

5. How many years of experience do you have in teaching at Foundation Phase Level?

6. Your Qualification: _____
☐ Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Degree ☐ Higher Degree
7. I studied English up to this level:
☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ College ☐ University
8. Is reading important in your discipline? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, describe the ways in which you emphasize the importance of reading in your classroom?
☐ I teach reading everyday
☐ I encourage independent reading.
☐ Test learners formally on reading
☐ Other (please explain) _____

9. Are you familiar with the South African National Reading Strategy?
☐ Yes ☐ No
10. Do you think the Implementation of the National Reading Strategy puts a burden on the school curriculum? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If answered 'yes', please explain your answer _____

11. Do you think that the foundation phase educators should be workshopped on how to implement the National Reading Strategy? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered 'yes', please state in which areas/ fields workshops are necessary _____

12. How would you classify the level of difficulty of implementing the National Reading Strategy.

☐ Very easy ☐ Quite easy ☐ Quite difficult ☐ Very difficult
☐ Makes no difference

13. What are your views on the allocation of time to teach reading in your class?

☐ More time must be allocated to teach reading
☐ Time allocated for reading is sufficient
☐ Time should not be wasted on teaching reading
☐ Other (Please Explain) _____

14. The educators in your school:

☐ feel that the NRS is waste of time
☐ do not care about implementing NRS
☐ are very enthusiastic about implementing the NRS
☐ feel that the department is just wasting their time with the NRS
☐ other (please explain): _____

15. Please answer the following question using a five point scale where: 1= Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3= Uncertain 4=Disagree 5= Strongly Disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cultural differences among educators and learners play an important part in the implementation of the National Reading Strategy:					
More training workshops should be provided to equip educators in implementing the NRS with Ease:					
The lack of resources inhibits the proper implementation of the NRS.					
The rigid jargon/terminology of the NRS stifles the performance of the educator:					
Educators were not consulted when the NRS was devised:					

SECTION B

1. NRS and educator attitudes

Please place a cross [X] in the relevant box.

	Yes	No
1.1 I enjoy teaching reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 I am confident that I know how to teach reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 I would like to take a training course on how to teach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.4 I feel content with my level of competence in teaching reading ☐ ☐

1.5 I feel qualified to teach reading ☐ ☐

2. NRS and educator skills

2.1 When teaching reading to what extent, do you think the following is important?

	Always	Sometimes	Not at All	Please explain your answer
Body language				
Pronunciation				
Tone of voice				
Using expression				
Being animated				

2 Phonics, syllabification and word recognition are important aspects taught at foundation phase level.

Please explain how you implement each of the above in your teaching

Phonics:

Syllabification:

Word recognition:

3. Please explain some of the strategies you use to create an environment that is conducive to the teaching of reading.

4. The following are important requirements of the NRS. Please state your views on each of the requirements.

4.1 To put reading firmly on the school agenda

4.2 To promote reading across the curriculum

4.3 To affirm and advance the use of all languages

4.4 To encourage reading for enjoyment.

4.5 To ensure that not only teachers, learners and parents, but also the broader community understands their role in improving and promoting reading

5. If a learner cannot recognize / pronounce a word, do you:

☐ react immediately

☐ reassure the learner

☐ get frustrated

☐ try to assist

☐ just ignore the learner

☐ other: (please explain) _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

APPENDIX F – FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

INSTRUMENT B

Learner Focus Group – Discussion

1. Do you enjoy reading? Please explain!
2. What type of books do you read during your reading lesson?
3. Do you look forward to reading in class? Please explain your answer!
4. Do you think some of your reading books should be in IsiZulu?
5. Does your teacher read to you in class?
6. Do you find reading a book difficult?
7. Do you like the way your teacher teaches you reading? Please explain!
8. Do all of you read the same book during the reading lesson?
9. Does your classroom have a library corner?
10. Are you allowed to read a book when your work is complete?
11. Does your teacher assist you in pronouncing the difficult words?
12. Do you help your friends with reading?
13. What type of book (eg.adventure) would you like to have as part of your library corner? Name some.