

**READING FOR UNDERSTANDING: AN INVESTIGATION INTO
TEACHERS' READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES IN GRADE
THREE ISIXHOSA HOME LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS IN THE
WESTERN CAPE**

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ABSTRACT

Reading is one of the components of literacy that plays a crucial role in accessing knowledge. It develops the children's mind and stimulates their understanding of the reading content and enables them to function and communicate effectively in society. Research conducted in the field of literacy suggests that there is a literacy crisis (especially in reading), around the world. Recent research indicates that South African Foundation Phase learners perform poorly in reading comprehension. Considering poor literacy results observed in South Africa, it is important to explore reading as a socio-cultural and cognitive practice and to identify the factors that contribute towards adequate acquisition of reading comprehension skills in the Foundation Phase. Thus the focus of this study is on reading comprehension in isiXhosa Home Language which is used as the main language of learning and teaching from Grade R - 3. I have used a qualitative approach as an underpinning research methodological framework for this study. Data was collected by means of interviews and classroom observations from two selected Grade three classrooms in one primary school in the Western Cape. The findings of this study illustrate the significance of learners' prior knowledge and the use of adequate resources to enhance learners' reading comprehension. The study concludes that reading comprehension is a cognitive process that demands innovative teaching approaches that will facilitate meaningful learning across the curriculum.

Key words: Reading, Vocabulary, Fluency, Comprehension, Literacy, Home Language, Guided Reading, Grade 3, Foundation Phase, IsiXhosa

DECLARATION

I, Ayanda Andisiwe Siyothula, declare that “*Reading for understanding: An investigation into teachers’ reading comprehension strategies in Grade three isiXhosa Home Language classrooms in the Western Cape*” is my own work that has not been submitted for examination to obtain a qualification in any university. All cited or quoted sources in the study have been acknowledged by means of references.

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Ayanda A. Siyothula



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I love you all!!

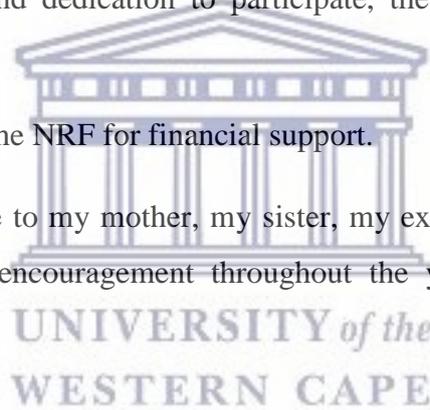


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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
ANA	Annual National Assessment
BLA	Balanced Language Approach
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CTLI	Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
eBFLP	eBooks and Family Literacy Programme
EFA	Education for All
FP	Foundation Phase
HDE	Higher Degree in Education
IP	Intermediate Phase
ISPFTED	Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa
LITNUM	Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEEDU	National Education and Evaluation Development Unit

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLS	New Literacy Studies
NRS	National Reading Strategy
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PA	Phonic Approach
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
PRAESA	Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACMEQ	The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SE	Systemic Evaluation
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
UCT	University of Cape Town
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organisation
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
WLA	Whole Language Approach
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development



CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

After the apartheid government was abolished in 1994, the government had to implement various policies to improve literacy levels in all South African schools. South Africa in its democracy needed a curriculum review that would promote literacy performance of learners (Department of Basic Education - DBE, 2012). The Outcomes Based Education (OBE) was introduced in 1997 and it was replaced by Curriculum 2005 (C2005) (Jansen, 2003; Moodley, 2013). Subsequently, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) for Grades R-9 and the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Grades 10-12 were introduced due to challenges that were experienced with C2005.

The NCS aimed at providing children with knowledge and skills that are significant and relevant to their lives. It was later amended into the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2012 which is a more focussed curriculum aimed to improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills (DBE, 2012). The CAPS document, like the previous curricula, promotes the teaching of languages, mathematics (numeracy) and life skills in the Foundation Phase. Literacy includes reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The CAPS document stipulates what should be taught and it gives the timeframe to be spent in teaching a particular content and skills. For example, it proposes ten hours for language teaching in Grade R, while Grades 1-3 are allocated a minimum of seven hours and a maximum of eight hours for languages per week (DBE, 2011). Concerning language teaching, CAPS requires teachers to teach listening and speaking, reading and phonics, handwriting and writing in Grade 3 for seven hours per week. In the specified hours, reading and phonics are allocated four hours.

While reading is prioritised as an important aspect of literacy, reading comprehension remains an international problem. Hence many countries in the world are concerned about low reading comprehension levels of children (Snow 2004). In Tanzania, for example, many learners complete their primary school without acquiring reading skills in Kiswahili which is their home language and Tanzania's official language (Ligembe, 2014).

Many of them are one grade below in terms of their reading performance. This report was revealed by UWEZO, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) which conducted research in Tanzania in 2010 (Ligembe, 2014). South Africa is also amongst countries faced with learners poor reading comprehension levels (Pretorious and Lephala 2011).

The Progress for International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), an international study, was conducted in 2011 to assess learners' reading comprehension and South Africa participated in this study. According to the PIRLS report that assessed reading for literacy experience and to acquire information, South African learners were at the bottom of the participating countries (Howie, Venter, van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Du Toit, Scherman & Archer 2008). Due to the learners' low performance in the PIRLS, forty per cent (40%) of teaching time has been set aside by the Department of Basic Education for literacy in many South African schools. Additionally, the PIRLS report suggests that teachers need to teach children reading strategies which could help them comprehend a variety of reading texts (Howie et al., 2008).

South Africa participated in another cycle of reading assessment for Grade 4 learners. The assessment was conducted in the 11 South African official languages (Howie, Combrinck, Tshele, Roux, Palane & Mokoena 2018). The assessment focused on comprehension strategies such as acquiring and understanding information, making straightforward inferences, interpreting content and information and evaluating textual elements, content and language. South Africa came at the bottom of the fifty countries that participated in the study (Howie et al., 2018).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) regards literacy as a human right (Carr-Hill & Pessoa, 2008). Since its establishment, some countries seem to have improved literacy levels, including developing countries such as East Asia and the Arab States. However, another report compiled by the UNESCO shows that low literacy levels are an international problem. For example, Bangladesh still falls behind other countries in literacy levels (Carr-Hill & Pessoa, 2008). In an assessment of basic learning skills such as reading, writing and oral for 11 year old children in Bangladesh, the results showed learners' poor literacy levels (Carr-Hill & Pessoa, 2008). Learners who had the highest performance obtained the minimum requirement of the assessment. According to the UNESCO report, Bangladesh learners could write and understand straight forward questions only (Carr-Hill & Pessoa, 2008).

Likewise, South African schools are challenged with a reading crisis (Pretorius and Lephala, 2011). Learners' poor literacy levels are reported in the National Annual Assessments (ANAs) in literacy and numeracy commissioned by the Department of Basic Education in Grades 3 and 6 (DBE, 2011).

The Systemic Evaluation (SE) was introduced as an intervention strategy for improving literacy and numeracy in schools. It was conducted in 2001, 2004 and 2007 with Grade 3 learners who were assessed in 2001 and 2007. The two assessment cycles in Grade 3 allowed provinces, districts, parents and teachers to make a comparison of numeracy and literacy performance (DBE, 2011). In 2007 literacy improved by 6% while numeracy improved by 5% which were still below the acceptable achievement level (DoE, 2008).

In 2008 the South African government announced the Foundations for Learning Campaign which was intended to improve literacy and numeracy in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases. Learning materials such as the DBE workbooks were distributed to schools to support teachers and learners in literacy teaching and learning. Through this intervention, teachers were guided on how to distribute time evenly throughout the day to support the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. The campaign emphasized that learners in primary schools should read for at least thirty minutes daily (Meier, 2011).

The DBE introduced the Annual National Assessment (ANA) in 2011. The trial runs of ANA were conducted in 2008 and 2009 with the aim of introducing improved ways of assessment to teachers. The first official ANA took place in 2011, followed by others until 2014. ANA was intended to improve learning and teaching by focussing on literacy and numeracy (DBE, 2012). It also aimed to enable districts, principals and teachers to identify schools that needed support and other areas of concern. Additionally, it involved the School Governing Body (SGB) and emphasised parental involvement in improving learning and teaching (DBE, 2012).

Despite these interventions in literacy teaching in the Foundation Phase, the ANA and the SE results indicate that many South African Grade 3 learners have poor reading comprehension in their own home languages. This presents a challenge as Grade 3 learners still have low proficiency levels in their home languages after three years of schooling.

The National Educational Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) report also confirms that South African learners have poor reading comprehension skills in their home languages. Some South African children are taught in languages other than their home languages from Grade one. Such learners performed poorly in the ANAs compared to those whose home languages were used for learning and teaching (Prinsloo, 2008). For example, learners who were assessed in English and Afrikaans home languages and wrote the test in those languages did well compared to those who were not home language speakers of these languages. Surprisingly, African learners who were assessed in English and Afrikaans, even though it was not their home language did better than those who were assessed in African home languages (Prinsloo, 2008). It was different for African learners who were assessed in Tshivenda who did well in Tshivenda. This shows that there are other factors which lead to learners' poor academic performance other than the languages used in assessment (Prinsloo, 2008).

According to O'Carroll & Hickman (2012) poverty affects early literacy and language development of children. This implies that most children who grow up in poverty are likely to have poor cognitive development than children who are raised in rich families (O'Carroll & Hickman, 2012).

The Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga, stated that only 14% of South Africans read books, while only 5% of parents read to their children (News 24, 2016). Many learners from disadvantaged backgrounds get the opportunity of being read to or holding a book only at school. As literacy development begins at home, this implies that these children have limited exposure to formal reading as they only start to be exposed to literacy when they begin schooling (Van Steensel, 2006). On the contrary, children from homes with rich literacy environment show better literacy performance in decoding and spelling as early as in Grade 2 (Van Steensel, 2006). Play is another means of enhancing literacy (Prinsloo, 2004). When children play together, they express values and practices of the school. They also show societal behaviours and religion, for each other (Prinsloo, 2004).

Reading is a difficult task and it requires individuals to use their cognitive processes and language knowledge. Children need to acquire five basic components of reading in order to be able to comprehend. These are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Phonemes are small elements in a spoken language. They form phonemes which build up words. Phonemic awareness is regarded as a skill that enables one to focus and use phonemes in spoken words (National Reading Panel, 2000). The knowledge and use of phonemic awareness enhances reading with comprehension. Reading fluency is an important skill to determine how well or how children read (Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005). Lack of this literacy skill leads to poor decoding of texts and poor reading comprehension while fluent readers read without any challenges (Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005).

Vocabulary is knowledge of words whether they are verbal or written. It has a great influence on comprehension even though not all vocabulary instruction increases reading comprehension (Nagy, 1988). This means that learning new words helps one to acquire new meanings that are useful for comprehension. Children can acquire vocabulary either incidentally when listening to conversations or they can learn intentionally (Nagy, 1988). Vocabulary has a positive influence in reading comprehension. Teachers need to teach learners vocabulary in context (Mckeown & Beck, 2004). It would be impossible to teach word for word, but teachers could try to teach mostly basic and new words in the text (Mckeown & Beck, 2004). Words taught should be grade appropriate, especially new words.

In this study, the focus is on investigating how teachers approach the teaching of reading comprehension and to understand how their pedagogical approaches impact on learners' reading comprehension in isiXhosa. The study was conducted in one primary school located in a black township in the Western Cape.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RATIONALE

As mentioned above, there is literacy crisis in many South African schools (DBE, 2012; NEEDU, 2013). South African children experience reading and comprehension problems. Reading is a challenge for many learners, especially in the first three years of schooling. Learners struggle to comprehend and make meaning from the texts they read.

Learner's reading problems were revealed on the PIRLS where learners who wrote assessments in the African languages performed poorly (Howie, et al. 2008).

Learners who were tested in African languages showed poor basic reading skills. South African learners could not even obtain the lowest international benchmark which was measured by learner's ability to discover unambiguous information from the text and write it on their own. Only one percent (1%) of Grade 4 learners of isiZulu and Setswana reached the low international benchmark (Howie, et al., 2008).

The lack of reading material in African languages seems to have an impact on learners' reading performance. When there are scarce reading resources at home learners begin school with poor vocabulary (Pretorius & Matjila, 2004). Children with a positive reading and learning environment learn to read early and easily. They can read signs and symbols that they see and associate with particular things such as restaurants and advertisements. But this is not the case for the majority of South African learners, especially those who grow up in poor and rural environments.

According to Pretorius & Lephala (2012), the PIRLS (2006) results indicate that South African learners have problems in making meaning of the texts they read. This could suggest that teachers do not give comprehension the attention it deserves. If the principal aim of reading is to build or construct meaning while reading, then learners must be taught how to read with comprehension (Pretorius & Lephala, 2012). Children need to be taught reading comprehension because it is a skill that they will need in all the subjects they learn throughout their schooling (Mullis, Martin, Foy & Drucker, 2012).

As mentioned above, in the national Systemic Evaluation for Grade 3 in 2001 and 2007 learners performed poorly. In this assessment learners were required to read and write independently (DoE, 2008). Even though there was an improvement in reading and viewing on the Systemic Evaluation of 2007 compared with the 2001 results, learners still showed low literacy levels, especially in thinking and reasoning (DoE, 2008).

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has been administering the Annual National Assessment (ANA) since 2011 with the aim of continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning. Although the latest ANA report for the Foundation Phase (2014) showed some improvement when compared with the 2011 report where Grade 3 learners obtained a 47% pass rate on literacy at the national level, learners still have poor literacy performance (DBE, 2015).

Even though CAPS stipulates how much time should be spent on reading, teachers do not seem to spend stipulated the time on tasks or focus on activities that are encouraged by CAPS. This indicates that learners are not given enough opportunities to read and write (DBE, 2011).

It also appears that teacher's pedagogical strategies do not support learner's reading which result in learners' poor reading and comprehension levels. Teacher practices and methodology influence learners' comprehension shown by learners (DoE, 2008). For example, many teachers do not know how to implement the reading strategies such as before-reading, during reading and after reading and this impacts on learners' reading comprehension skills (DoE, 2008). Learners are also exposed to few methods of reading because some teachers are either comfortable with one method of reading or they know only know one method of reading. A single method of teaching reading cannot be suitable for all learners (DoE, 2008). Moreover, many teachers are not motivated to read (NEEDU, 2013). So, teacher's perceptions of reading and their own practices on reading are also a barrier to learners' low literacy levels (DoE, 2008).

The teachers' pedagogical knowledge is a major challenge in the implementation of the National Reading Strategy (NRS) (DoE, 2008). Some teachers do not know how to develop and encourage high order comprehension and problem-solving process through reading, speaking and writing tasks (DoE, 2008). They lack an understanding of how these activities promote reading comprehension in learners (DoE, 2008). Most challenges originate from teachers' poor subject knowledge in language and mathematics (NEEDU, 2013). Therefore teachers need support and monitoring in order to be able to master the teaching reading comprehension skills.

Research shows that teachers only take learners through recall during reading and they do not practise the most important parts of reading such as independent reading and levels of textual analysis. In addition, learners are often exposed to collective decoding and rarely to reading for individual understanding (NEEDU, 2013). Poor training of Foundation Phase teachers has an impact on poor reading comprehension challenges for learners (DoE, 2008). Howie et al. (2008), claim that the qualifications of teachers do not fully prepare them to teach reading literacy. Therefore, teachers need support in order to be able to master the teaching reading comprehension skills.

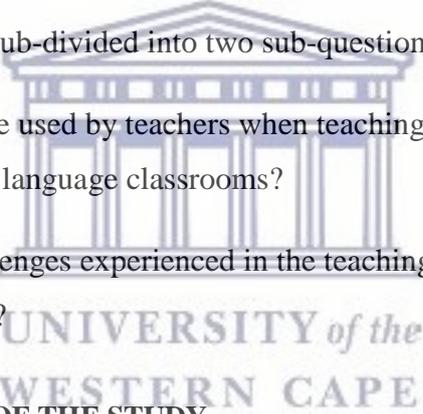
While there is a lot reported about low literacy performance in South African schools, there is very limited research on African languages. Recent studies on isiXhosa focus on different aspects of literacy pedagogical strategies (e.g. storytelling) and literacy intervention programmes (Ngece, 2014; Nondalana, 2016; Makaluza, 2018; Nomlomo, Stofile & Sivasubramaniam, 2018). I have been inspired by the literacy challenges mentioned above and the dearth of research in reading comprehension in isiXhosa to pursue this study.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study addresses the following main research question:

What are the Grade 3 teachers' experiences of teaching reading comprehension in isiXhosa as part of literacy development?

The main research question is sub-divided into two sub-questions as follows:

- 
- 1.3.1 What strategies are used by teachers when teaching reading comprehension in Grade 3 isiXhosa home language classrooms?
- 1.3.2 What are the challenges experienced in the teaching and learning of isiXhosa reading comprehension?

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general aim of this study is to investigate the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in Grade 3 isiXhosa Home Language. It is underpinned by the following objectives:

1. To observe and analyse teacher's pedagogical strategies for teaching reading comprehension in isiXhosa Home Language in Grade 3 classrooms.
2. To investigate the challenges of teaching reading comprehension encountered by teachers and the interventions introduced to address the challenges.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research approach guides this study because it seeks to understand a given research problem that exists in the identified community. My study focuses on the values, opinions and behaviour of teachers in Grade 3 classrooms contexts where isiXhosa is used as the medium of instruction.

Therefore, the qualitative approach has helped me get a deeper understanding of teacher's behaviours and practices in the teaching of reading comprehension to Grade 3 learners. I have used classroom observations and interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of literacy practices in the two selected Grade 3 classrooms.

I have used qualitative research approach and a case study design. A case study is the use of data collection methods such as interviews, observations or questionnaires which provides an in-depth understanding of the phenomena (Rowley, 2002; Eisenhardt, 1989). This study has used classroom observations and interviews to collect data. A detailed description of the data collection process is provided in Chapter 3.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There are undoubtedly various challenges which influence Grade 3 learners' poor reading comprehension skills in isiXhosa as discussed above. The study intends to investigate teachers' practices in teaching reading comprehension in Grade 3. Research on reading comprehension in isiXhosa is limited.

This study will make a great contribution on the importance of comprehension as part of literacy development in isiXhosa. It will benefit parents, teachers and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) officials by highlighting literacy classroom practices and factors that influence reading comprehension practices in isiXhosa Home Language literacy. In this way, it will inform the language and literacy curriculum policy on relevant approaches to teaching reading comprehension in the Foundation Phase isiXhosa Home Language Literacy.

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This study has five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This is an introductory chapter that provides the background and the context of the study. It discusses the research problem, research questions, aims and objectives of the study. A brief synopsis of research methodology has been provided in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter the focus is on literature review and theoretical framework. It discusses relevant literature that relates to the study aims and it also unpacks the Constructivism Theory that underpins this study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter describes the research participants and their profiles. It provides a detailed description of the data collection process and ethical considerations in the study.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter presents the data collected by means of classroom observations and interviews. It also gives details on how the collected data was analysed. It also presents the preliminary findings of the study.

Chapter 5: Summary of findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

In this chapter, research findings are summarised. The chapter also provides a conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review discussed in this chapter draws on the concepts of literacy, reading and reading practices as the key concepts that underpin reading comprehension.

This chapter consists of three sections, namely the literature review, conceptual framework as well as theoretical framework relevant to my study. These three sections provide an in-depth insight of how children construct meaning from reading that is central to literacy development. Firstly, I review literacy conceptions from international and national perspectives. Then I provide an overview of literacy intervention programmes in South Africa. Finally, I discuss the reading components and approaches in relation to the theoretical framework that underpins the study.

2.2 GLOBAL ISSUES ON LITERACY

In 2013 there were about 757 million adults and children aged 15 and above who could not read and write. The majority of those illiterate people were women. Children from homes headed by illiterate persons are likely to be more than four times out of school compared to those headed by someone with secondary or higher education (The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016, 2018). This shows that socio-economic factors and parents' educational levels influence children's education.

In order to deal with international problems, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were established for developing countries to end poverty, improve health, education and other human needs for a period of 15 years from 2000 to 2015 (Sachs, 2012). Later on, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were developed. In 2012, the high-level global sustainability panel issued recommendations that the world adopts Sustainable Development Goals (Sachs, 2012). In 2016, SDG were implemented (Hak, Janoušková & Moldan, 2016). These goals aim to serve all the United Nation (UN) member states, poor and rich countries. All countries, rich and poor are expected to contribute towards the wellbeing of generations to come (Sachs, 2012).

There are seventeen SDGs that were developed, but my study aligns with goal number four which aims at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all (The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016, 2018). The study focuses on how teachers' literacy practices enhance learners' reading comprehension i.e. the extent to which they foster reading for and with meaning.

The focus of goal number four is also on the acquisition of foundational and high order skills. It aims at creating greater and more accessible opportunities to technical and vocational education and training and higher education. It seeks to train children and adults through knowledge, skills and values that are needed by people to function well and be able to contribute to society throughout their lives (The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016, 2018). In addition, in developed regions, about 38 countries have 75 percent or more young people who have at least minimum proficiently in reading or mathematics whereas quality education should stress the acquisition of fundamental skills such as literacy, numeracy and high-order skills (The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016, 2018).

Below I discuss how literacy is conceptualised and understood in different contexts.

2.3 CONCEPTUALIZING LITERACY

Literacy refers to the development of knowledge, skills and strategies which individuals build throughout their lives (Schleicher & Tamassia, 2000). It does not involve reading and writing only but it also includes listening and speaking. In addition, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) describes literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and use printed and written material associated with changeable contexts (UNESCO, 2008). UNESCO regards literacy as a human right (Carr-Hill & Pessoa, 2008).

Literacy is everyday life to people and it relates to culture. When parents prepare for work in their homes, they use literacy practices. For example, people draw pictures to communicate messages of how people in the particular community live. This means that literacy does not have boundaries, but it is found in every context.

Children learn a language when they speak with other people even though they might still be making mistakes. Sometimes, they develop their own language, which involves reading and writing in meaningful ways (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003).

This shows that the environment in which children grow plays a fundamental role in the way children acquire literacy (Bloch, 2006). Language aspects such as talking, listening, speaking, reading and writing, translating and interpreting in multilingual settings are interrelated and are learned together as literacy activities (Bloch, 2006). A rich environment to which children are exposed, plays a significant role in their language learning (Bloch, 2006). This indicates that environment in which children grow plays a fundamental role in the way they acquire literacy (Bloch, 2006).

Literacy is viewed as a social practice. It is more than reading and writing and it involves the interpretations that people make in their communities in trying to understand the different messages. For example, people from different communities, depending on their culture, would interpret the same message differently (Gee, 1996). Therefore, people cannot be taught only about decoding reading and writing but they have to be taught that literacy also consists of social relations and the implications of social values (Gee, 1996). Literacy is intertwined with identity because all the activities that people do represent who they are. These activities are associated with culture based on what people do (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). For example, children act differently in varying contexts (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). This supports the view that literacy practices are part of societal structures (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). This implies that the community in which people grow up has an influence on literacy.

UNESCO recommends that there should be adequate supply of reading material in children's home languages for both learning and entertainment. The emphasis on children's mother tongue in literacy teaching and learning is a key factor in knowledge construction (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016). Below I focus on how young children acquire literacy, i.e. emergent literacy.

2.4 EMERGENT LITERACY

Children are born into an environment with people who possess their culture. They listen to people in their environment and learn to speak and write before they are taught at school. They acquire literacy identity as they associate with people and the language they get exposed to. The characteristics such as how you talk, your dressing style and how you behave indicate your social identity (Thomas & Wareing, 1999). People change their identity and adapt different roles in different situations (Thomas & Wareing, 1999). This implies that learners are exposed to various literacies both at home and at school. Therefore, children come to school with many literacies which should not be ignored because prior knowledge is important for learning.

Literacy is a very complex aspect of language. It is a sociolinguistic matter because people learn it by communicating with others in their environment and by interacting with them. It is also a psychological concept because cognitive processes are involved in literacy events. When children are born, they become exposed to literacy from an early age and that kind of literacy is referred to as emergent literacy.

Emergent literacy is described as a developmental scale that begins at the birth of a child (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). This suggests that literacy does not begin only when the child starts schooling. Literacy related behaviours which occur in the pre-school stage are an important part of literacy. In other words, reading, writing and oral language develop concurrently from children's early age when interacting with others in the social context (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Emergent literacy also refers to children's pretence to read and write. The components of emergent literacy such as reading, writing and oral language develop simultaneously and independently when children are exposed to literate social settings (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Children who start school without or with little response to emergent literacy are faced with many disadvantages such as learning how books are structured when they start school. Such children usually take longer to learn to read and write (Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005).

Children need to acquire different components of emergent literacy as they form the basis of the skills that they need in order to be literate (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). These skills include decoding, encoding or comprehension skills (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Reading and thinking skills in children could best be developed between five to ten years of age which forms part of the Foundation Phase i.e. Grades R to 3 (Prinsloo, 2008). The home is an important environment where children acquire literacy before they go to school. In other words, school literacy is built on home literacy that children bring to school. This means that children from illiterate homes do not grow up into a print rich environment. Such children are not always assisted with literacy activities at home.

Furthermore, children recognise labels such as Adidas or Nike, read signs or logos of restaurants such as McDonalds to show that they have acquired literacy. This suggests that children participate in literacy events at all times. These events and processes are referred to as outside-in-processes of literacy (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998) that include knowledge of graphemes that refer to letter-name knowledge. For learners to be good readers, they need to have phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is about the manipulation of phonemes of individual phonemes and detection of rhyme (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Phoneme-grapheme refers to letter-sound knowledge (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Yeats (2010) discusses the various stages of reading comprehension development. He speaks of the emergent stage, which begins from birth to Grade one. This is a stage where children gain control over language. Learners at this stage read pictures and they use a finger to point at the text (Yeats, 2010). The next stage is the decoding stage when children start Grade one. Learners at this stage focus on printed symbols. They work out the meaning of the text through decoding (Yeats, 2010). They become aware of the sound or symbol relationship (Yeats, 2010). This stage is followed by the confirmation and fluency stage. Learners at this stage are said to develop fluency in reading and they recognize patterns in words (Yeats, 2010). This happens in Grade one and continues to develop throughout the Foundation Phase and subsequent phases and grades.

Knowledge of words equips children with conceptual skills of reading and writing which interact with both formal and informal learning opportunities (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Whitehurst & Lonigan (1998) concurs with Yeats (2010) that the ability to convert print into language is a necessary skill for reading comprehension.

In many developed countries such as Austria, parents have positive attitudes towards reading. They have a supportive home environment such as the availability of books at home and they engage with children in literacy activities and other positive factors (Ehgartner, Gangl, Garbe, Lafontaine, Mallovs, Shiel & Valtin, 2016). Children listen to stories and have to retell them at some point. They also play games which improve literacy skills. Such games improve children's cognitive thinking and they build up their vocabulary. This shows that literacy cannot be kept within the walls of the school only as many people treat it in that manner. In the school context, teachers' interaction with children is a social practice which affects the children's literacy development (Street, 2003).

The storybook in the early years of children does not only broaden knowledge but it helps children's attention span. It builds the foundation for the development of academic language proficiency (Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005). Storytelling stimulates children's imagination and develops oral language input. It helps them unconsciously build a discourse of the sequence of a story and how to tell a story (Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005). When children are told stories, they are also expected to use knowledge of the world and their experiences and the use of linguistic structures to tell stories (Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005). Children learn to hold a book, to page it and observe that we read from left to right or sometimes pointing at individual words from people in their environment. Block (2006) supports the view that storytelling and reading expose children to rich and complex context of language. It develops their knowledge structure in language and increases their vocabulary.

A rich home environment and an early start to children's reading is crucial for children's emergent reading literacy. Austrian parents reported that children exposed to reading in their homes tended to like parents reading for them (Mullis, Martin, Foy & Drucker, 2012). They are exposed to early literacy activities with their parents and enjoy home resources for learning (Mullis, Martin, Foy & Drucker, 2012). During the acquisition of reading literacy skills, time devoted to literacy related activities is very important (Mullis, Martin, Foy & Drucker, 2012).

On the contrary, many children from poor homes in South Africa do not have access to early childhood programmes. This means that children from disadvantaged homes start school with disadvantages to learning. For example, over a million children between 3-5 years do not have access to group learning programmes (Hall, Sambu, Berry, Giese, Almeleh, & Rosa, 2016). Therefore, they acquire language later than those of literate homes.

Children from literate homes who are exposed to written language such as books, signs, captions, printed containers, logos and handwriting tend to do better in reading than their counterparts (Goodman & Goodman, 1979). Their exposure to written language enables them to participate in reading and writing even before their parents see that they are reading or writing. Children learn a language because they want to communicate and to understand others (Goodman & Goodman, 1979). Literacy mediators are needed in our communities. These mediators could be people or objects who deliver literacy skills either formally or informally. It could be parents, peers, the community or the teacher (Bayham, 1995). Children should have a positive classroom environment with a display of posters and other resources. Classrooms need to be print-rich in order to promote learning and teaching (Wolfersberger, Reutzler, Sudweeks, Fawson, 2004; McCormack & Pasquarelli, 2009).

Emergent literacy as a concept is important for this study because teachers at school build language and learning on what children have learned in their environment. It is, therefore, very important for teachers to understand children's prior knowledge and build onto it because new knowledge is based on something that is known and socially constructed (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). In the case of my study, stories read at school should be more about what learners experience at home in order to build up their background knowledge. It is also important to note that children make meaning based on their experiences and identity in order to create new meaning (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). Emergent literacy can be understood in relation to the two literacy models discussed by Street (1984).

2.5 LITERACY MODELS

Literacy is understood in relation to two schools of thought, namely the autonomous and ideological literacy models (Street, 1984). The autonomous literacy model believes that people learn in certain contexts while the ideological literacy model believes that literacy occurs without boundaries. Below I discuss the two literacy models.

2.5.1 AUTONOMOUS LITERACY MODEL

Autonomous literacy model does not consider that people learn from the environment around them (Street, 1984). This model regards literacy as the acquisition of literacy skills (Street, 2003). It is of the view that people need to be taught skills before they could participate in literacy.

It does not consider the context, beliefs and the culture in which people function (Street, 2003). Street (2003) believes that literacy has an influence in social and cognitive practices.

Street (2003) further explains that the autonomous model literacy improves the economic conditions and cognitive skills of illiterate people. It makes them better citizens compared to their previous life. It is a model of literacy that reinforces Western viewpoints of cultural groups (Street, 2003).

Additionally, Bartlette (2008) views the autonomous model as a model based on ideas and beliefs about the nature of literacy. He believes that autonomous literacy as a skill is learned as people move through universal stages of cognitive and physical development (Bartlette, 2008). People who believe in the autonomous model of literacy view it as a narrow literacy practice and they ignore the multiple practices of literacy (Bartlette, 2008). A different literacy model is known as the ideological literacy model which is discussed below.

2.5.2 IDEOLOGICAL LITERACY MODEL

The perception that literacy consists of skills that people learn at school has changed over the years. The modern view is that literacy is a social practice consisting of activities that people do in their everyday life, e.g. at home, community, work and school (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). The New Literacy Studies (NLS) model was introduced to support the ideological model which entails literacy events and practices. NLS is shaped by people as they practise their cultural events in different spaces such as home or school (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). It opposes the belief that literacy is learned through rules at school. It promotes literacy practices by people in different social contexts. It believes that the literacy of people is based on people's socio-cultural views that allow them to build knowledge based on what they know (Street, 2005). In other words, the ideological literacy model is a literacy practice that is rooted in cultural and ideological assumptions of people (Street, 2003). This model does not support the transmission of content of what is taught, but it provides learners steadily with knowledge so that they understand that learning is a process.

NLS broadens our understanding of how learners relate to their identities. It further explains that the texts drawn or written by children are mostly based on and highly reflect their identities (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005).

Therefore, children make and receive texts which are surrounded by things that happen in their daily lives such as cooking, watching television or shopping (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). NLS brings knowledge and awareness that children participate in literacy activities at all times. It further raises the importance of observing children's interactions at home and in school (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005).

According to the ideological model learners are exposed to different learning situations (Street, 2003). They learn language in the context in which they grow (Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005). When learning to read, children bring their existing knowledge and build from it. In addition, they combine their existing knowledge and oral knowledge to create written language (Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005). This suggests that poor language skills and poor communicative skills could have a negative impact on children's reading (Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005).

Teachers should be aware that learners come to school with knowledge. It is important to understand the context where literacy is being learnt because the teacher builds on learner's prior knowledge (Street, 1995). This understanding gives the teacher valuable information that learners bring to school. Learners come to school with diverse linguistic abilities and they come in contact with the teacher through language. In line with ideological model, teaching and learning does not only focus on a specific skill, but it follows a holistic approach to literacy teaching in the classroom.

The ideological model proposes that learners should be exposed to different kinds of environments so that they can be able to construct their own meanings, based on a particular scenario. The ideological model challenges the traditional approach to teaching where teaching is centred on the teacher with the belief that the teacher knows everything (Street, 2003). It serves to understand the interaction and response in the classroom and supports the teacher to design activity tasks that are context-based. It is concerned with the way literacy is used in social contexts (Street, 2003).

Street (1995) further views literacy as learning without boundaries. It is a process whereby children learn both at home and at school.

For example, the toys that parents buy for their children have an educational value e.g. for understanding the colours or counting.

Many people tend to value and respect school literacy more than home literacy while all different literacies are important because learning occurs in all the contexts (Street, 1995). School literacy is acknowledged than home literacy which is either taken for granted or ignored (Street, 1995). School literacy is acknowledged than home literacy which is either taken for granted or ignored (Street, 1995).

People acquire different literacies from their backgrounds, which subsequently help them to build their school literacy from their prior knowledge. Literacy as a socio-cultural practice differs due to different cultural backgrounds. In each community, social construction of literacy determines people's understanding of literacy and literacy practices (Prosper, 2012). Children's literacy does not only begin when they start school but when they interact with parents and peers at home (van Steensel, 2006). In the following section I focus on reading as one of the key components of literacy.

2.6 UNDERSTANDING READING LITERACY

The definition of reading literacy has changed over the years. In the past reading literacy was understood as focussing only on reading and writing (Mullis, Kennedy, Martin & Sainsbury, 2006). Nowadays reading literacy is understood as the ability to use written language forms appropriately in the society in which one lives in (Mullis, Kennedy, Martin & Sainsbury, 2006). Reading literacy is the ability to decode texts, interpret word meanings, bring knowledge of grammatical structures and be able to construct meaning (Schleicher & Tamassia, 2000). In addition, it is the understanding and interpretation of various texts such as narratives, descriptions, expositions and documents. It also refers to structures such as forms, graphs, advertisement or tables by relating them to the context in which they are used (Schleicher & Tamassia, 2000).

Reading literacy involves the understanding of the contexts in which the texts are used and created, as well as the interpretation of these texts (Schleicher & Tamassia, 2000). It further means the ability to read a wide range of texts inside the classroom and outside the classroom. Schleicher & Tamassia (2000) refer to three literacy dimensions. Firstly, they perceive literacy as the process in which the reader is required to do various reading tasks such as retrieving and interpreting information. Secondly, it is viewed as the content contained by the text and the structure of the text given to the reader.

Lastly, it is the purpose of the text. This means that the writer creates the text with certain intentions to be acknowledged by the reader (Schleicher & Tamassia, 2000).

Reading is the understanding and reflection on texts (Schleicher & Tamassia, 2000). Reading has two most important functions, namely word recognition and comprehension. A reader's ability to recognize how written symbols correspond with spoken language is referred to as word recognition (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003).

Another component of reading is comprehension. Comprehension is the process of making meaning about words, sentences and paragraphs (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003).

It includes vocabulary learning, thinking and reasoning about the text and the knowledge outside the text (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil 2003). Reading is a complex interaction of language because it requires sensory perception, memory and motivation (Pikulski & Chard, 2005).

The crucial aspect of reading is when readers are able to make use of their background knowledge, use vocabulary expected at their level, grammatical knowledge, text structures, other reading strategies and experience with various texts (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003). Readers need to be able to read words with fluency and apply reading comprehension strategies such as making connections between prior knowledge and new knowledge (Duke & Block, 2012). The ability to read is seen as a skill that opens up new opportunities in the world for both children and adults (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003).

However, reading is a challenge for many children who have poor reading comprehension levels. In South Africa learner's poor literacy and numeracy in Grades three and six levels are reported in the international and national assessments results commissioned by the Department of Education during the past decade (DBE, 2011). The challenge faced by researchers and linguists in trying to improve literacy levels is to deal with how responsible adults like parents, teacher trainers and teachers change their ideas and practices about literacy (Bloch, 2006). Teachers and parents might have poor understanding of why they should teach in a particular manner. Lack of understanding about why people should teach in a particular way is another challenge because people will be unable to engage with the practical level of teaching reading. Teachers need to know how to teach reading comprehension (Bloch, 2006).

In the beginning stages of reading, children learn how to use the alphabetical system which involves knowledge of letters, decoding letters into sounds and linking the sounds into single words (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). People read texts to understand their meaning and to put that understanding into use (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003). Rich prior knowledge could facilitate comprehension. In other words, prior knowledge helps children to comprehend better (Alvermann, Smith & Readence, 1985). Differences in cultural knowledge could have an effect on understanding and appreciation of written texts. This means that texts for children should be culturally appropriate so that there would not be any gap between children's prior knowledge and the texts (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003). Gee (1996) believes that literacy promotes higher order cognitive abilities. As a psychological aspect, literacy helps people to be more analytical, and it improves their logical thoughts (Gee, 1996).

Another model of reading is psycholinguistic. This model emphasizes reading for meaning. Psycholinguistic is a science of cognitive psychology and linguistics (Cooper & Petrosky, 1976). The cognitive psychology explores the human mind while science of linguistics deals with the human language (Cooper & Petrosky, 1976). Therefore, psycholinguistics combines cognitive psychology and language to enhance understanding, reasoning, analysing, thinking or reading in human beings (Cooper & Petrosky, 1976). The discussion below is based on reading approaches.

2.7 READING APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

There are different approaches to reading. The Phonic Approach (PA) is one of the important approaches in reading. This approach focuses on the acquisition of linguistic features of words to form new words (Brooks & Brooks, 2005). Its emphasis is on teaching sounds and spelling. It teaches learners to re-arrange words and it enhances reading with meaning or comprehension (Brooks & Brooks, 2005).

However, Ngece (2014) believes that PA limits learner's thinking ability because it focuses on a certain aspect of language. It further limits the enthusiasm for learning and affects the development of love for reading. This occurs as words are not learned in context (Ngece, 2014). As a result learners show poor reading abilities and struggle to critically evaluate texts (Brooks & Brooks, 2005).

The Cognitive Vocabulary Approach is one of the strategies that foster reading comprehension. This approach focuses on three comprehension strategies which involve identifying unfamiliar words, understanding and relating word meanings (Harmon, Martin & Wood, 2010). Through this approach children are taught how to examine word meanings to enhance their reading comprehension. This practice deepens their understanding of associating word meanings with particular contexts (Harmon, Martin & Wood, 2010).

Bloch (2005) discourages the use of separate skills approach to literacy teaching. She encourages that teachers employ an integrated approach to literacy. This approach combines skills such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, translating, interpreting and stories and print (Bloch, 2005). Teachers and older children could tell and read the stories to each other in their home language to improve learners' reading skills (Bloch, 2005).

Concerning reading strategies, the CAPS document states that in order to teach for effective reading and writing, time should be set aside daily for various reading requirements such as shared reading, group guided reading, ability group, paired reading and independent reading (DBE, 2011). Shared reading refers to a strategy whereby the teacher conducts reading with the whole class. It is usually done by making use of Big Books, posters or overhead transparency (DBE, 2011). CAPS suggests an exposure to vocabulary development, comprehension, decoding skills and text structures during shared reading (DBE, 2011).

Guided reading is a small-group instruction designed to provide differentiated teaching with the aim of reaching learner's different reading abilities (DBE, 2011; Pinnell, & Fountas, 2010). It supports students in developing reading fluency. According to Pinnell & Fountas (2010), guided lessons aim at teaching reading comprehension through various techniques. They focus on reading components such as comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, word solving and other skills (Pinnell & Fountas, 2010). Teachers could do this task by selecting texts that are appropriate to learners' reading abilities. In doing so, learners could develop into effective readers (Pinnell & Fountas, 2010).

Ability group reading lessons enhance engagement and motivation for reading as learners are grouped according to their abilities (DBE, 2011). Therefore, the teacher must guide and support learners by providing various texts which encourage individual and group progress. The teacher should take children through different reading stages such as before reading, during reading and after reading questions to help them comprehend the text better (Duke & Pearson, 2008).

Fielding & Pearson (1994) state that children should be given more time to read texts. An exposure to various reading texts builds up reading skills and strategies that are important for proficient reading and comprehension because learners are given enough time to be guided in reading (Fielding & Pearson, 1994). Another advantage of exposing learners to various texts is to build their prior knowledge so that they can comprehend better when reading other texts (Fielding & Pearson, 1994).

In order to provide learners with effective reading strategies, we need to use relevant teaching approaches. Brooks & Brooks (2005) suggest the use of the Whole Language Approach (WLA). In teaching reading, the WLA focuses on teaching all language skills in context. This approach can be used in the Foundation Phase because it is in this phase where literacy is nurtured and developed. Xue and Meissels (2004) suggest that the use of WLA improves teacher practices in reading. Print-rich classrooms are also recommended as a positive learning environment where learners are exposed to various reading materials that enhance cognitive development (Xue & Meissels, 2004).

2.8 READING WITH COMPREHENSION

Reading comprehension is the ability understand the reading text and to make meaning out of it. It is a process of constructing meaning from the text that we read (Pretorious & Lephalala, 2011). The text could be a one-line advert or a longer text. According to Snow (2002) reading comprehension is the process of concurrently extracting and building meaning through interaction with written language. It consists of three elements: the reader who is doing comprehension, the text that is to be comprehended and the activity or purpose for reading (Snow, 2002). Reading comprehension is the engagement of a person with the text at a deep level, beyond the recognition of words (Konza, 2011). It requires children to have adequate understanding of vocabulary and necessary background knowledge of the text. It also involves grammatical structure and arrangements of words, phrases and clauses, sentence structure and text structure (Konza, 2011). In order to comprehend well, children need sufficient and appropriate vocabulary of the text.

Durkin (1978) sees comprehension as a way of reading in which children acquire reading ability. It is a broad framework that includes word identification, word meanings, phonic and structural analyses (Durkin, 1978).

Reading comprehension could be a challenging task for learners. It needs to be taught by encouraging learners to participate in deep thinking and to focus on the coherence of texts (Pinnell & Fountas, 2010). Irrespective of the language one speaks, comprehension has four main components namely decoding, comprehension response, metalinguistic and metacognitive knowledge (Pretorius & Lephala, 2011). It involves the application of metacognition. Metacognition refers to the reflection on language, thinking and the ability to act on them when required (Baker & Brown, 1984; Pretorius & Lephala, 2011). The reader uses it to monitor comprehension, to mend poor or failed comprehension (Pretorius & Lephala, 2011).

Boulwre-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill & Joshi (2007) suggest the use of metacognition strategies such as before reading, during reading and after reading strategies to help children to think about their thinking so that they can understand and remember the text that has been read.

Good readers take themselves through before reading strategies by activating their prior knowledge through predictions and viewing pictures (Paris and Jacobs, 1984 & Pressley, 2002). Both novice and expert readers use existing knowledge and various cues in the text and in situational context to build and make meaning from the text (Dole, Duffy, Roehler & Pearson, 1991). During reading, skilled readers question themselves, focus on note taking, underline the most important information and focus on it. This implies that readers can monitor themselves when reading.

Lastly, after reading the text good readers add new knowledge to what they already know, evaluate and summarise information from the text (Pressley, 2002 & Rubin, 1989). Unfortunately, with poor readers, teachers need to help and guide them throughout (Pressley, 2002).

2.9 THE BASIC COMPONENTS OF READING COMPREHENSION

There are five basic components of reading comprehension. These are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). Phonemes are small elements in a spoken language. They build up and ultimately form words. Phonemic awareness is regarded as a skill that focuses on the use of phonemes in spoken words (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Konza (2011) believes that children need phonological awareness because it helps them to be effective in their reading comprehension. Phajane & Mokhele (2013) concur that phonemic awareness teaches children how to break down words into phonemes and that improves their decoding skills. Children need to be taught phonological and phonemic awareness through various language activities such as rhymes, alliteration and sounds for the purpose of language development.

Phonics teaches learners about the relationship between the letters of a written language and individual sounds of the spoken language (Phajane & Mokhele, 2013). Knowing the relationship between the words and the sounds helps learners to recognize words accurately and decode new ones. It also helps learners to know words in isolation and the words that appear in the text (Phajane & Mokhele, 2013).

Fluency refers to the level where all the component skills of learning to read work together seamlessly to make meaning of the text (Konza, 2011). In other words, fluency is reading with ease, speed and accuracy and keeping the balance of the natural rhythm of spoken language (Pretorius & Lephala, 2011). Fluency links word recognition and comprehension in most children (Phajane & Mokhele, 2013). It is an important skill that determines how well or how poor children read (Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005). Konza (2011) also supports the view of Hudson, Lane & Pullen (2005) that in reading comprehension, fluency is an important component of reading comprehension.

It is through fluency that children move from 'learning to read' into 'reading to learn'. This means that through fluency children could first be taught the ability to read and then be exposed to reading with the purpose to comprehend. Fluency includes appropriate phrasing and intonation that reflects comprehension (Konza, 2011). This implies that the lack of fluency may lead to poor comprehension (Konza, 2011). Pikulski & Chard (2005) view fluency as the reading component that helps with decoding words and construction of meaning in the text. Poor readers often struggle to divide their attention between reading and comprehension. Their attention is either drained by decoding words and little or no attention is given to comprehension (Pikulski & Chard, 2005).

Through practice, the speed level processes are improved and reading becomes a higher-level comprehension process.

Through fluency, children could comprehend without being stuck at words (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003). Fluency can be taught through word recognition skills so that learners can learn and develop speed and ease recognition. Texts could vary by having low and high frequency words that would encourage fluency and make texts to be more interesting and meaningful to the reader (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003).

The other component of reading comprehension is vocabulary. Vocabulary is knowledge and understanding of words, whether they are verbal or written. It has a great influence in comprehension even though not all vocabulary instruction increases reading comprehension (Nagy, 1988). This means that learning new words helps learners acquire new meanings that are useful for comprehension.

Children can acquire vocabulary either incidentally when listening to conversations or they can learn it intentionally (Nagy, 1988). Mckeown & Beck (2004) suggest that teachers need to teach learners vocabulary words in context.

They are of the view that it would be difficult to teach word for word, but teachers could try to teach mostly basic and new words in the text (Mckeown & Beck, 2004). These words could include grade related words, especially new words. Harmon, Martin & Wood (2010) concur that comprehension and vocabulary have a strong relationship because knowing more words improves comprehension in a similar way that reading and understanding texts builds vocabulary knowledge.

According to Konza (2011), the key component of reading for meaning is vocabulary. This means that, when children know the meaning of words, they are enabled to read and make sense within the sentence (Konza, 2011). Phajane and Mokhele (2013) concurs with Harmon, Martin & Wood (2010) that a broad understanding of vocabulary could make children understand the content read.

However, even though vocabulary is a component of reading it is not a sufficient condition for reading comprehension (Harmon, Martin & Wood, 2010). The meaning of the whole text is not only about understanding words within the text because much of what we read, especially when reading to learn, also deals with new, previously unknown information which we must be able to interact with and acquire new knowledge in the process (Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011). In reading to learn, learners should be able to interact with a text in a way that enables them to modify prior knowledge as they become aware of new knowledge.

Finally, children need an environment-rich-vocabulary as they develop concepts and vocabulary through reading. These discussions about texts could include drawing interpretations of texts, relating text to other texts, experiences and reading goal (Duke & Pearson, 2009). Children need to know the meanings of individual words and the words that form sentences so that they could understand a text as a whole (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003). Exposure to rich vocabulary promotes reading comprehension.

2.10 COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Duke and Pearson (2009) introduced individual comprehension strategies. Prediction is exercised to activate learner's prior knowledge before reading. It is a stage where learners make predictions to think about the story. Learners need to think aloud in order to improve comprehension. Prediction allows children to share what they think about the characters of the text (Duke & Pearson, 2009). Learners can be encouraged to share their thoughts through prediction.

Another strategy is teacher-think-aloud, where a teacher models visualising characters in the story so that children can know what is expected of them (Duke and Pearson, 2009). Comprehension can improve if children are exposed to student-think-alouds. This strategy exposes children to the text without immediately jumping into conclusion (Duke and Pearson, 2009). Duke and Pearson (2009) further state that students need to be taught to know text structures such as narrative, information texts and others. The advantage will be teaching them to organise their understanding of the text.

Another effective strategy is Story Structure. The teacher models and guides learners into understanding the structure of the story to enhance their comprehension (Duke and Pearson, 2009). Learners have to be exposed into structural features of informational texts through Informational Text Structure (Duke and Pearson, 2009).

This means that learners may use their knowledge on informational text structure to recall important points about the text they have read.

Summarising is another effective individual comprehension strategy that needs to be applied during reading comprehension, although many students struggle with it. When learners write summaries they show their understanding of the text they have read. This strategy improves children's ability to comprehend and recall the content of the text (Duke and Pearson, 2009).

Duke and Pearson also identified Question and Answer as part of comprehension. This strategy allows teachers to ask questions based on the text or social context of the text to ensure that children understood the text. It also helps the teacher to see how well or how poor the students understood the text (Duke & Pearson, 2009).

Finally, the Visual Representation of the text is also another strategy. Visuals such as pictures in the texts help students to remember the texts, comprehend better and be able to retell the texts without relying only on written part of the text.

When children see pictures, they are enabled to imagine and build up their understanding of the text (Duke & Pearson, 2009). All the comprehension strategies play a huge role in knowledge construction through reading. Given the literacy challenges worldwide, it is important to understand how children acquire reading comprehension, as well as the various approaches and strategies that support reading.

2.11 LITERACY CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Literacy is an international problem as countries around the world have poor literacy levels. Poor literacy levels are reported in different assessments reports such as the Progress in International Literacy Study (PIRLS) and national assessments such as the Annual National Assessment and Systemic Assessment. UNESCO emphasizes the importance of learners who read in their home language for either their studies or for entertainment. It also encourages the importance of training teachers properly in order to produce competent teachers (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016).

This study has drawn on examples from Austria, Tanzania, Ethiopia and South Africa to show that reading comprehension is an international problem. I chose these countries based on their use of home language or first language for various reading assessments on literacy. For example, Austria participated in the PIRLS in 2006 and in 2011 to observe the literacy performance of their Grade four learners, especially in reading comprehension. The aim was to observe learners' reading proficiency over the years. Most of the children who took part in PIRLS wrote their test that included reading comprehension in their first language (Ehgartner, Gangl, Garbe, Lafontaine, Mallows, Shiel & Valtin, 2016). Children who did poorly could read simple texts or make straightforward inferences. They could not deal with longer and more complex texts.

Teachers were empowered through training. Parental involvement and the supply of resources were prioritized (Ehgartner, Gangl, Garbe, Lafontaine, Mallows, Shiel & Valtin, 2016). Strict regulations for Austrian libraries were implemented so that literacy levels could improve (Ehgartner et al., 2016).

As stated earlier, in Tanzania many learners complete their primary school without acquiring reading skills in Kiswahili, their home language and Tanzania's official language (Ligembe, 2014). Many of them are one grade below in terms of their reading performance. This report was revealed by UWEZO, a non-governmental organisation that conducted research in Tanzania in 2010 (Ligembe, 2014).

In Ethiopia parents and their children participated in a literacy programme known as the eBooks and Family Literacy Programme (eBFLP). By participating in this programme parents realised the importance of early literacy and cognitive development of their children (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016). Facilitators were trained on how to develop literacy programmes. Family literacy approaches were introduced through Information and Communication Technology (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016). Even though parents were granted an opportunity to improve children's language literacy skills, they had to reach a minimum threshold level in literacy so that they could enrol. Another challenge was the baseline level which was not enough for parents to participate with their children in reading activities (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016). The librarian facilitators did not have enough time to acquire important Information Communication Technology skills (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016). Despite the challenges that the programme had, there was a significant increase in awareness of print by children. Parents showed interest in learning resources and activities offered by libraries. Librarians who participated in the programme showed confidence in implementing and promoting reading activities (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016).

In order to assess the literacy level in South Africa, South Africa participated in an international literacy study, the PIRLS for the first time in 2006. Through this study, the countries would be able to see and monitor their literacy levels and areas that needed improvement (Howie et al., 2008). Learners' skills were measured by giving different questions on reading comprehension such as retrieving explicit information from the text, making straight forward inferences, interpreting and integrating information, and evaluating and examining content (Howie et al., 2008).

The study showed that South African learners could answer straightforward questions but had challenges on other skills such as interpreting and integrating information. Hence, the PIRLS report suggests that teachers need to teach children reading strategies to help children comprehend texts (Howie et al., 2008).

In light of the above, South Africa is not different from other countries of the world that experience poor literacy levels. Many learners obtain poor literacy levels in their home languages in the Foundation Phase. Many research studies on reading comprehension in the past two decades show that Foundation Phase children have a worse reading comprehension levels compared to their counterparts in other parts of the world (Howie, Combrinck, Tshele, Roux, McLeod Palane & Mokoena, 2018; Howie, Van Staden, Tshele, Dowse & Zimmerman, 2012 & Howie et al., 2008). This has been evident in the results of the various reading assessments conducted nationally and internationally such as the Annual National Assessment (ANA), Systemic Evaluation (SE) and PIRLS. The assessment results indicate that South African learners have poor reading comprehension skills although they are assessed in their home languages. For example, the PIRLS study conducted in 2016 was aimed at assessing reading levels of Grade 4 learners and to look at contextual factors that affect them. The study also compared Grade 4 reading literacy against international and national level for all 11 languages (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016). Unfortunately, South African learners performed very poorly even though they were assessed in their home languages.

The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) conducted a study by assessing teachers' subject knowledge. It administered language and mathematics tests in Grade 6 teachers (Spaull, 2011). Teachers performed well in questions requiring simple retrieval of information and they performed very poorly obtaining 55.2% on the application of higher cognitive functions such as inference, interpretation and evaluation (Spaull, 2011).

The teachers' poor performance raised concerns about how they teach reading, speaking and writing tasks in order to promote higher order comprehension and problem solving processes of learners in their classroom (Spaull, 2011). Poor pedagogical understanding of teachers has poor deliverance of literacy to learners (Spaull, 2011; Shulman, 1987; Kazemi, Franke & Lampert, 2009). Teachers should have good content knowledge of what will be taught and educational materials (Shulman, 1987).

Additionally, the support of School Management Team in the workplace influences teachers to work effectively with their learners (Singh & Billingsley, 1998; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014). Singh & Billingsley (1998) further state that teachers in a positive environment are free to ask questions, offer assistance to each other and make opportunities to give and receive feedback. Teacher support is necessary to enhance learners' reading literacy.

Another literacy challenge in South Africa is the lack of reading resources in African languages. The lack of reading culture and unavailability of books at home has a great impact on learners' reading levels. Teachers need to expose learners to more reading activities (Pretorius & Matjila, 2004). Additionally, teachers should be equipped with reading knowledge and necessary skills for teaching reading (Pretorius & Matjila, 2004).

As literacy levels have been a concern for a while, intervention programmes have been implemented to improve literacy rates.

2.12 LITERACY INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 2008, the South African government announced the Foundations for Learning Campaign, which was intended to improve literacy and numeracy in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases. Learning materials such as DBE workbooks were distributed to schools to assist teachers and learners.

Through this intervention, teachers were guided on how to distribute teaching time evenly for literacy and numeracy throughout the day. It further emphasized that learners in primary schools should read for at least thirty minutes daily (Meier, 2011).

Due to underachievement in South Africa in reading and mathematics in South African primary schools, the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces developed their own intervention strategies to improve primary educational levels. In 2002, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) launched the Literacy and Numeracy (LITNUM) Strategy. The WCED conducted research on reading and numeracy on a representative sample of Grade 3 learners in all schools. Only 36% achieved at an accepted grade level, while the rest performed two or three years behind grade expectation (WCED LITNUM Strategy, 2006-2016).

The LITNUM encourages constructivism as a learning theory so that learners should use various conceptual tools to deal with diverse learning backgrounds and contexts.

In this way, literacy is taught through the whole language approach in both reading and writing. The LITNUM intervention strategy prioritises teacher development and support. It also aims at improving the whole school or community and family literacy by involving role models, volunteer readers, volunteer teachers, assistant teachers, community development workers, NGOs, libraries and schools to support literacy teaching and learning (WCED LITNUM Strategy, 2006-2016).

The Systemic Evaluation (SE) was introduced as an intervention strategy for improving literacy and numeracy in Western Cape schools. It was conducted in 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2016. Grade 3 learners who were assessed both in 2001 and 2007. The two cycles in Grade 3 allowed provinces, districts, parents and teachers to be able to make a comparison of numeracy and literacy performance (Department of Basic Education, 2011). In 2007, literacy improved with 6% while numeracy improved with 5%. Even though results showed some improvements, recent assessment results indicate that learners still have low literacy levels (DoE, 2008).

In 2010, the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy was developed with the aim of improving mathematics and language in Gauteng schools (Fleisch & Schöer, 2014). Its intention was to develop comprehensive skills to develop both reading and writing. It focussed mostly on the development of vocabulary, sentence structure and a great exposure to both oral and written texts. It also aimed at encouraging Foundation Phase teachers to focus on reading. It reduced the administrative work for teachers by providing them with prepared lesson plans so that quality time could be spent on learning and teaching (Fleisch & Schöer, 2014).

The Department of Education implemented the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in 2015 with the aim of improving low reading literacies (DBE, 2014). The EGRA programme focuses on the Foundation Phase. The major purpose of this intervention is to evaluate Foundation Phase reading skills, identify reading problems early and then scaffold reading through literacy instructional practice (DBE, 2015).

Given the learner's poor literacy achievements in national and international assessments in South Africa, the DBE has to monitor its literacy intervention strategies. It is for this reason that this study investigates how isiXhosa reading comprehension is taught in Grade 3 classrooms. Below I discuss the theoretical framework that informs my study.

2.13 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is informed by Vygotsky's theory (Vygotsky, 1979). Vygotsky was a social scientist and he was interested in the development of the human mind and the interaction of people and their consciousness in the environment (Mahn, 1999). Vygotsky believed that individual cognition and social situation could not be separated because knowledgeable people in the society are needed by children so that they can learn from them (Jaramillo, 1996).

The fundamental explanation of Sociocultural Theory is that people's activities are based on cultural contexts and are mediated by language and other systems around them (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). It claims that children learn from each other and from their sociocultural environment (Vygotsky, 1979). It emphasizes that social interaction plays an important role in the cognitive development of a child. In order for children to learn better, they need a social context and a peer or person who is more knowledgeable than they are (Vygotsky, 1979). The environment in which they live influences how they think and interpret the world (Jaramillo, 1996). In other words, the Sociocultural Theory adopts both the sociological and psychological perspectives of teaching and learning.

A mediator is required to help the child to move from what s/he already knows into the level that s/he has not yet reached (Vygotsky, 1979). At school, teachers need to help children from their actual developmental level into the stage of matured development, known as the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1979). Teachers must use appropriate methods so that students can feel eager to learn through concepts and structures in their meaning (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Teachers should be aware that children come to school with some prior knowledge (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002). Any learning that they obtain at school is always added to what has been previously learned on their first day in life and they construct new understanding from their prior knowledge (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002).

Vygotsky (1979) believed that cultural knowledge of an individual is useful for early and later forms of individual development (Vygotsky, 1979). Both culture and society are important in one's learning and development. This means that children start to learn and develop long before they start school. For example, when children play with others, they view themselves as adults doing cultural activities. They become more imaginary and imitate adult roles and values (Vygotsky, 1979). This implies that teachers must use both cognitive and social constructivism approaches when they teach.

Pahl & Rowsell (2005) supports the view that children come to school with knowledge and school literacy should be built on home literacy so that learners can build on what they already know in order to acquire new knowledge. This means that literacy is socially constructed because children grow up in an environment with certain practices that they must learn in their homes. They learn the language and literacy practices done at home and also make meaning from them (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). Children bring their identity and social practices and apply them in classroom lessons (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005).

Researchers make a distinction between Cognitive Constructivism by Piaget and Social Constructivism by Vygotsky (Powell & Kalina, 2009). In Cognitive Constructivism, learners use their minds and personal processes to construct meaning while in Social Constructivism children construct ideas by interacting with the teacher and other learners (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Constructivism is regarded as the best method of teaching by many theorists which suggests that teachers should know the level of children's knowledge and build new knowledge on it (Powell & Kalina, 2009).

Hein (1999) defines social constructivism as a process in which a learner constructs meaning individually and collectively as s/he learns socially. It refers to meaning making through knowledge and learning. It requires teachers to create opportunities for learners to interact with sensory data and construct their own world (Hein, 1999). Powell & Kalina (2009) regard it as the best way for teaching and learning because learners are given an opportunity to create their own meaning of the learning content.

The Social Constructivism theory emphasizes that children come to school with some knowledge and that most learners think about learning. In other words, knowledge construction is influenced by one's personal and social experiences (Hein, 1999).

Goodman & Goodman (1979) agree with Hein (1999) that language is a personal and social invention in which children learn by interacting with other people. Hein (1999) believes that learning is a constructive and a continuous process that learners construct for themselves (Hein, 1999). Hein (1999) suggests principles of learning that should be kept in mind when we think about the role of educators in learning. He believes that learning is a constructive and a continuous process that allows learners to construct knowledge for themselves (Hein, 1999). The vital aspect of constructing meaning is when we create a learning environment which allows children to use their minds and their hands. People learn language by speaking to themselves about how things are and by speaking to others about the world.

This means that learning is a social activity, which involves interaction with peers, family, teachers and others (Hein, 1999). Therefore, teachers need to understand the level of children's prior knowledge and use it to build new knowledge (Powell & Kalina, 2009).

According to Hein (1999) learning is contextual because we learn facts and theories that relate to our lives. Acquiring background knowledge is very crucial for learning. Learning without previous knowledge is difficult and sometimes impossible. In order for learning to occur one needs to be motivated so that one can find other ways of understanding the world. Learning is never fully completed in a few minutes but it needs a frequent practice (Hein, 1999). Children learn by watching peers and adults and then imitate their behaviours.

Cognitive constructivism is knowledge constructed by an individual through personal experiences (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Concerning cognitive development, Piaget believed that children go through developmental stages in their ability to learn and construct knowledge. They create a balance of how things are through assimilation and accommodation (Piaget, 1980). Assimilation is the process of bringing new information into their schemas while accommodation occurs when children have to change knowledge in their schema to accommodate new knowledge (Piaget, 1980). Teachers need to acknowledge that children go through different stages of learning and they need to teach accordingly (Piaget, 1980). The next developmental stage at which children move is equilibrium. Equilibrium is a stage in which children become uncomfortable with the new knowledge and start adjusting what they already know (Piaget, 1980).

Vygotsky's and Piaget's theories are relevant to my study because they enable us to understand how children learn. Both types of constructivism are very useful because they enable an individual to draw on prior knowledge to create other meanings (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Specifically, they support the various stages of reading to learn and comprehension development. They are appropriate in understanding the various forms and models of literacy and how reading comprehension is mediated by using various strategies and approaches, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

In the following chapter I focus on research methodology to illustrate how data was collected.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology refers to how the research was conducted and its rationale. Gilbert (2008) describes methodology as a study of research methods. Methodology is the broader system of principles, theories and values which underpin a particular research approach. Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit (2004) describe methodology as the practical activity of how we implement research activities.

In this chapter, I discuss the research methodology framework, research paradigm and research design that were used in this study. Methods for collecting data were classroom observations and interviews to investigate how Grade 3 teachers facilitated reading comprehension in isiXhosa Home Language Literacy lessons. Sampling is discussed based on the population that was identified for this research study. Lastly, ethical considerations, validity and reliability are discussed.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

There are different paradigms that are used when conducting research. The purpose of paradigms in research is to give an outline for researchers on what is within or outside their boundaries (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Choosing a suitable paradigm for research depends on the type of the topic or the interest of the researcher (Patton, 1990). Paradigms are systems of interrelated practice which help the researchers to inquire about the nature of their research along three dimensions which are ontology, epistemology and methodology (Terre Blanche & Durrheim & Painter, 2006).

Epistemology focuses on the relationship between the researcher and what can be known in the world (Guba & Lincoln, 1994 & Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006) while ontology outlines the relationship on what can be studied and be known by researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 1994 & Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Methodology is an inquiry paradigm that outlines how the researcher could study practically what can be revealed to people (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, Mouton, 1996 & Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). It is more about discovering what can be discovered in the world for people. This means that different choices of paradigms such as qualitative and quantitative paradigms are appropriate for different situations and purposes of research (Patton, 1990).

A qualitative study can choose to follow various frameworks such as interpretive and positivist to understand human behaviour when conducting research. There is a significant difference between the frameworks which cannot be ignored in research studies (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). For example, if the researcher wants to discover what is to be known by people which consists of unchanging external reality then s/he can employ the positivist approach in an objective epistemology (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The positivist approach is mostly scientific. It focuses on the objective of social issues as it believes that reality is based on facts. This approach claims that science is built on knowledge that can be verifiable than theoretical statements (Mouton, 1996 and Hennink, Hutler & Bailey, 2011).

The researcher employs an interpretive approach to get details of people's subjective experiences of how they see the world (Hennink, Hutler & Bailey, 2011). The interpretive approach tends to understand that people's lived experiences and their perspectives about the world have a big influence in research. It attaches meaning to people's experiences (Hennink, Hutler & Bailey, 2011). It believes that reality is socially constructed by people through the experiences based on culture, economy, social and historical influences and how they see the world (Hennink, Hutler & Bailey, 2011).

The Interpretive approach is aware that people's experiences are subjective, which means that there could be multiple meanings attached to reality instead of one truth as suggested by positivism (Hennink, Hutler & Bailey, 2011). This framework understands that observation of human beings could have errors (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2004). The interpretive researcher uses a variety of data and different sources and analysis methods in striving for validity (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2004). The interpretivist believes that science aims to hold constantly to the goal of getting it right about reality or multiple realities (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2004).

This study adopted interpretive framework and used different methodologies, namely interviews and classroom observations in order to interpret teaching methods employed by teachers in the classrooms. The aim was to understand teachers' experiences of teaching isiXhosa literacy to Grade 3 learners. It also aimed at understanding the sociocultural environment of the learners and the factors that influenced their reading comprehension. The next section focuses on the research approach that was followed in this study.

3.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research refers to description and interpretation of events through words and the analysis used by the researcher to understand a given concept (Mouton & Marais, 1996; Merriam, 2002). In qualitative research meaning is created by people and the observations of their interactions with the world (Merriam, 2002). On the other hand, quantitative research uses numbers to analyse things and a single meaning is attached to the concept researched (Mouton & Marais, 1996). The findings of qualitative research are revealed in words while quantitative research uses numbers even though meaning is then interpreted in words (Baker, 1999; Polkinghorne 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The most fundamental point in qualitative research is that it does not assume that there is only one correct version of reality or knowledge (Braun & Clarke; 2013). Instead it believes in the use of various versions of reality which are closely linked to the context in which they take place (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It gives a clear and detailed account of actions and representation of actions to provide a better understanding of the world and how it could be used to bring about social change (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). It aims to find depth of the phenomena from different views whereby participants give their views and demonstrate their actions (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004).

People in qualitative research are called participants because they participate in the study and share their experiences (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011).

Researchers conduct qualitative field research in order to get the insider's view of reality being studied (Auriacombe & Mouton, 2007). A qualitative approach allows for a comprehensive use and collection of various empirical materials such as case-study, interviews, personal experiences, observations and visual texts which describe individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Qualitative researchers learn how people interact and interpret the social world (Merriam, 2002). This study used qualitative research in order to investigate the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in Grade three isiXhosa Home Language Literacy lessons.

This qualitative paradigm was used in order to gain insights into Grade 3 teacher's pedagogy, their beliefs and behaviour in teaching reading comprehension. Below, I discuss the research design.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design links collected data with the research conclusion to be drawn (Rowley, 2002). Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2006) describe a case study as a framework between research questions and the implementation of research. It explains how the research will be conducted in order to ensure that research questions are answered (Terre Blanche & Durrheim Painter, 2006). Singleton, Straits & Straits (1993) concur with Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) that the bridge between research questions and the implementation of the practical strategy of obtaining knowledge or relevant answers to research questions is known as a research design.

A research design has four most important principles that the researcher has to focus on namely, the purpose of the research, the paradigm informing the research, the situation to execute the research and the research techniques employed to collect and analyse data (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The research design aims to fulfil a research purpose and to ensure that each research conducted has the necessary available resources to complete it (Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006).

Qualitative research approach has different qualitative designs such as basic interpretive, phenomenology, grounded theory, case study, ethnography, narrative analysis, critical and post-modern structural approach chosen to write about (Merriam, 2002). A case study uses different data collection methods such as interviews, observations or questionnaires (Eisenhardt, 1989). Yin (1984) agrees that a case study is a way of doing social research that focuses on meaningful characteristics of real life events holistically.

A researcher's responsibility is to prepare what questions to ask in the study, which data is relevant, what data to collect and how to analyse that data (Yin, 1984).

I used the case study qualitative research design. I chose it because this approach focuses on the exploration of the phenomena within the context, using various data sources (Baxter and Jack, 2008). The aim was to ensure that reading comprehension was explored through various lenses in order to gain a better understanding of how it is conceptualised and practised.

I used a case study to understand the challenges of teaching reading comprehension that could impede Grade 3 learners' literacy development and to determine the factors that contributed towards learner's acquisition of reading comprehension skills in the Grade 3 classrooms.

3.5 RESEARCH SITE

The data for this study was collected at Siyavuya Primary School (fictitious name). Siyavuya Primary School is situated in predominantly Black township called Asanda village. The Asanda village was developed around 1958 in a disadvantaged area between Somerset West and Gordon's Bay.

Siyavuya Primary School is the third primary school in the township and it was established in 2012. It was established due to overcrowding of learners in a neighbouring school. The school consists of predominantly black learners, few coloureds and foreign language speakers from neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe.

During the data collection period, the school had a total enrolment of 1452 learners, 41 educators, two administrative clerks and three general staff members. The school is multicultural and multilingual with isiXhosa, Sesotho, Afrikaans speakers. The teachers are mainly isiXhosa Home Language speakers who share the same cultural and language background with many learners. There were 43 learners in each class, with one qualified teacher.

The school's teaching staff is organised in a hierarchy consisting of educators at the bottom, then the Head of Department (HODs), two Deputy Principals who report to the school Principal. Of the 41 educators, eight are part of the School Management Team (SMT) which consists of the school Principal, two Deputy Principals and the Heads of Departments (HODs) of all the grades. The SMT members were responsible for learning and teaching activities, administrative and extra-curricular activities.

Siyavuya Primary School has no formal structure and operates in mobile containers that were donated by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and are used as classes. In the school premises there are 35 classes, one donated library, one staff room and one administration building. The school starts from Grade 1 up to Grade 7. Each grade has at least five classes (A-E).

There is one library in a nearby township which serves three neighbouring townships including Asanda village. Even though the community has one library for a very large population, very few parents make use of the library facilities for reading purposes. Most parents who go to the library are there to read local newspaper articles in search of employment.

The majority of inhabitants have low levels of education, mainly primary school education. Given this, the majority of parents cannot afford to buy books or read for their children. Therefore, many children get exposure to read at school only. This ties in with Hugo's (2010) observation that learning to read for many learners only happens at the formal school where it is in the hands of the teacher.

The criteria for choosing Siyavuya Primary School were based on its Language of Teaching and Learning (LoLT) which is isiXhosa in the Foundation Phase (from Grade R-3). This was an important factor for my study as children acquire the home language before they start schooling. This language is used as a foundation in the teaching and learning of reading and writing. Secondly, the school participated in various literacy assessments such as the ANAs, SE and EGRA. It also participated in the pilot programme for improving literacy in Grade 1, a project that was initiated by the Western Cape Education Department. The following section presents the sample that was chosen for this study.

3.6 SAMPLE

A sample is a selection of people with characteristics of the whole population who represent the studied population (Polkinghorne, 2005; Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993). Sampling is deciding about which people, settings, events and social processes would be used in the research (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 1999). Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) and Polkinghorne (2005) agree that the most fundamental aspect is to select participants who will represent the population in the research study.

Ideally, a researcher selects a sample that represents the target population (Singleton, Straits & Straits, 1993). This means that the selected people are taken from a population and they are considered to be the representative of the population because they share the environment, same contexts and language. Its aim is to gather findings that could be applied into the population (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006).

This study made use of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling may be defined as a selection of participants who serve a specific characteristics related to the study's main objective (Collingridge & Grant, 2008); Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011).

Cohen, Manion, Morrison & Morrison (2011) and Patton (1990) hold the view that in purposive sampling the researcher hand-picks the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of the possession of a certain characteristic being pursued. Therefore, researchers choose a sample that is suitable for their specific research needs.

Purposive sampling enables researchers to make comparisons between participants, to focus on unique cases and to get data from different sources (Cohen, Manion, Morrison & Morrison, 2011). Purposive sampling is a flexible sampling method for research (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). The most significant principle of purposeful sample is the selection of people or documents which provide the researcher with their experience (Polkinghorne, 2005). There are no strict rules for sample size of participants; instead the sample size depends on what is researched, the purpose and credibility of the research (Patton, 1990).

In light of the above, the participants in this research study were selected purposely. Two Grade 3 teachers were highly considered because they had in-depth knowledge of teaching reading comprehension in isiXhosa Home Language, thus they were expected to provide profound insights on this issue. The two teachers had 5-10 years teaching experience in the Foundation Phase and were able to provide rich information on the teaching of literacy.

I decided to use two classes and two class teachers so that I could gather in-depth information and observe teaching approaches used by two different teachers to enhance reading comprehension in isiXhosa. The other participants were Grade 3 learners from two different classes, the Grade 3 Head of Department and the school principal. I interviewed the two Grade 3 teachers, the HOD and the school principal.

The table below illustrates the participant's personal profiles.

TABLE 1: TEACHERS PROFILE

Teacher	Gender	Age Range	Designation	Teaching experience	Highest qualification
Jama	Female	30-35	Teacher	5 years	Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
Goba	Female	45-55	Teacher	20 years	Higher Diploma in Education (HDE)
Sigu	Female	45-50	HOD	20 years	Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE)
Vamba	Male	40-45	Principal	21 years	B.ED (Honours) Degree in Management

3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

In order to achieve the objectives of my study, I used primary data. Data from teachers, Head of Department and the principal was collected through non-participant observations and interviews in order to address my research questions. Data for this study was collected to understand the factors that contribute towards learners' acquisition of reading comprehension skills in Grade 3. These data collection methods were also used to look at the challenges of teaching reading comprehension that may impede Grade 3 learner's literacy development. The study was interested in the strategies used by teachers when teaching reading comprehension in Grade 3 isiXhosa home language classrooms.

Prior to data collection methods, I sought permission from the participants and children's parents to use a tape recorder and to take notes during observations. Observations were used to collect data on practices employed by teachers to teach reading comprehension. I also used interviews to complement classroom observation data. Interviews are discussed below.

3.7.1 INTERVIEWS

A two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer, asking questions from an interviewee for a specific purpose, is called an interview (Cohen, Manion, Morrison & Morrison, 2011). It is more than just a conversation but an opportunity whereby the interviewee is given an opportunity to share lived experiences or knowledge with the interviewer. The main focus is listening to the interviewees who share their perceptions about the world (Hennink, Hutler & Bailey, 2011). The purpose could be to gather information about the research and its focus could be on the content specified by the research objectives (Cohen, Manion, Morrison & Morrison, 2011). Interviews can help both the interviewee and the interviewer to express how they see the world and situations related to the research (Cohen, Manion, Morrison & Morrison, 2011). Polkinghorne (2005) believes that interviews are used to obtain direct experience from the participant. Interviews are regarded as suitable instruments to gather more detailed information from the participants (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008).

There are three significant types of interviews in qualitative research namely structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews (Gill, Stewart & Chadwick, 2008). Structured interviews are conducted verbally and the interviewer usually has a list of pre-set questions to ask. Sometimes there is little or no follow up questions (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). On the other hand, unstructured interviews are conducted with little or no organisation. The interviewer asks a question and follow-up questions based on the initial response. Unstructured interviews are not easily managed and they are time-consuming (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008).

In this study, I used semi-structured interviews because of their flexibility as they make room for elaboration of information (Gill et al., 2008). They also allow the researcher to use pre-set open ended questions. I was able to gather information on how teachers viewed reading comprehension and listened to their classroom experiences. The use of semi-structured interviews helped me with answering open-ended questions that I had prepared for my study. Open-ended questions grant the researcher with an opportunity to understand the world from the perspective of the participant (Patton, 1990).

In this study questions were directed on the strategies used by teachers when teaching reading comprehension in Grade 3 isiXhosa home language classrooms. The questions also covered their understanding of literacy and how the school supported literacy practices and events. It may be difficult and almost impossible to capture all data during the interview.

Therefore, the researcher must record information so that s/he can gather the information accurately (Patton, 1990). In order to capture accurate interview data, I made use of a tape recorder. Permission was sought from teachers to record their responses.

3.7.2 CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

The interpretation of behaviours in a particular social setting by the observer is referred to as the observation (Hennink, Hutler & Bailey 2011; Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole 2013). Observation entails watching people's behaviours, listening to questions and their answers, actions of their activities and how they interpret interactional and organisational processes (Patton, 1990; & Hennink, Hutler & Bailey, 2011). It allows the researcher an opportunity to attain a detailed description of events (Hennink, Hutler & Bailey, 2011). The observer must plan what to observe, who and why they do observations (Hennink et al., 2011).

Polkinghorne (2005) refers to observation as a technique to collect data through direct contact of the researcher with the research participants. The researcher becomes physically present in the researched area and studies the behaviour of the participants. The presence of the researcher helps him/her to describe the phenomenon and affords the researcher with an in-depth understanding of the site (Polkinghorne, 2005).

This study focussed on non-participant observation. Non-participant observation is simply watching actions and behaviours of people to be studied without participating in any of their activities (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole 2013). Data is collected in the form of seen, spoken or written language and transformed into written texts through transcription (Polkinghorne 2005). This means that the ideas and thoughts of participants are then transformed into written texts.

Observation is a fundamental technique of qualitative research used to gather data through direct contact with an object or participant (Polkinghorne, 2005). It can be structured and unstructured. Bentley, Boot, Gittelsohn & Stallings (1994) define an unstructured observation as a schedule that is organised in a detailed way while a structured observation is a list with a fixed number of points to be applied in a number of situations. This study focused on structured observation. I watched all the actions of the teachers when teaching Grade 3 isiXhosa reading comprehension.

During the lesson presentations, I observed if teachers activated learners' prior knowledge through pictures and the type of questions they used during the teaching and learning process. The reading strategies stipulated by CAPS were observed to determine if teachers used them to facilitate reading comprehension i.e. before reading, during reading and after reading strategies. I also observed whether the teachers focused on vocabulary that guides reading throughout the text, explained new words and gave comments on learner's reading. I also observed whether they asked and ask challenging questions to enhance comprehension.

Observations of the various methods of reading employed by the educator such as shared reading, group guided reading, ability group, paired reading as well as individual reading were also observed.

3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Research findings need to be valid, reliable and conclusive (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Validity may be defined as an element that measures what was intended to be measured. It measures how truthful the results are. It reveals whether what has been measured is accurate or not (Golafshani, 2003). The most critical point in validity is the use of dependable research techniques, research methods and a methodological paradigm in searching for valid knowledge (Mouton, 1996).

Collected data has to be checked for reliability. Golafshani (2003) explains that when the results of a study are reproduced, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. Collingridge and Grant (2008) and Terre Blanche Durrheim and Painter (2006) are also of the view that reliable qualitative methods constantly produce meaningful descriptions of the phenomena.

The use of various participants helps to deepen the understanding of a researched experience (Polkinghorne, 2005). Researchers use multiple data collection methods in order to have an in-depth understanding of the problem researched and also to verify truth in what has been collected. This is known as triangulation (Baker, 1999).

In this study reliability was checked through verification of transcripts with the teachers. After transcribing data, I showed participants what I had gathered and asked for their comments on the data. Validity was observed by using different methods of data collection, i.e. triangulation of interview and observation data.

The purpose of triangulation was to ensure an in-depth understanding of teachers' practices in teaching reading comprehension in Grade3 isiXhosa home language literacy.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are morals and legal obligations that allow participants to voluntarily participate or withdraw from research at any time when they want to do so. Ethics include respect for persons, confidentiality, justice, reporting results to participants and not harming participants especially in a study involving children (Farrell, 2005). Ethics should be observed in all types of research (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001). Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden (2001) suggest that harm on participants can be prevented through the application and acknowledging ethical principles.

Qualitative researchers need to consider three most important ethical principles. The first principle is autonomy which requires researchers to address voluntary and informed consent of participants. Participants should be informed that they can withdraw from the research at any stage of the research. They have rights to remain anonymous on any publication (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

The researcher should ensure that there is no harm on participants. This means that the researcher must consider any potential risks that may occur on persons involved in the study (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The last principle is ensuring that the study will be beneficial not only to the participants but also to the society at large (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

Before commencing with my study, ethical clearance was obtained from the Western Cape Education Department as shown in Appendix A. A permission letter was written to the school principal which asked a meeting to explain the process thoroughly to the teachers and parents. The procedures for this study were approved by School Governing Body as I informed them about my study. Parents were informed about the study and they were given consent forms in an official language they understood very well to grant permission on behalf of their children. Furthermore, participants were informed that they would be treated with respect, dignity and that there would be no harm during the research process.

I ensured the participants that the information they gave would be used for research purposes only and it would not be passed on to any other researcher.

The names of participants and the school have been kept anonymous throughout the research process. I have used fictitious names to protect their identity.

Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research whenever they wanted to do so. Consent and permission letters, as well as ethical issues are attached as Appendices A-B. The appendices include the permission letter from the Western Cape Education Department, the information letters and the consent forms from the Schools Governing Body, the school principal, the Grade 3 HOD and the Grade 3 class teachers.

In the following chapter, I present and analyse the data that was collected by means of interviews and classroom observations.



CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present and analyse the data I collected to address the main research question of this study. As explained in Chapter 3, the data was collected by means of two different qualitative research methods, namely interviews and classroom observations. Interviews were conducted with two Grade 3 teachers, the Grade 3 Head of Department (HOD) and the school principal. Reading lessons were observed. I observed how teaching and learning took place in order to get insights into the strategies used by Grade 3 teachers to teach reading comprehension in isiXhosa Home Language.

I present data following a thematic narrative approach in order to describe how teachers and learners participated in literacy development activities that focussed on reading comprehension. As a point of departure, I present the data that was collected from classroom observations.

4.2 DATA FROM CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

In total I observed fourteen (14) Grade 3 lessons in two Grade 3 classrooms that focussed on reading comprehension. In other words, I observed seven lessons in each class, and the topics were similar.

I chose lessons that closely addressed the study research questions and objectives, while making reference to other lessons to highlight key issues relevant to my study. I adhered to the teachers' timetables to manage observations in the two classrooms (See Appendix K). During observations I used a tape recorder and I wrote notes to record the data, with the permission of the teachers.

In order to differentiate between the two Grade 3 classes used in the study, I refer to 3A and 3B throughout the study. I also refer to Miss Jama and Miss Goba to differentiate between the two teachers and to protect their identity. Miss Jama taught 3A and Miss Goba taught 3B.

The Grade 3 classroom walls were covered with isiXhosa and Mathematics charts and there were also English and Life Skills charts. There were class rules on the walls. McCormack & Pasquarelli (2009) suggest that posters in classroom walls help the teacher to reinforce learning if the class takes time to read print on the wall.

As mentioned earlier, the two teachers used the same texts but different approaches to teach reading in their classrooms. In my presentation, I have divided the lesson in three stages, namely: (i) pre- or before reading, (ii) during reading and (iii) post reading stage. The aim is to illustrate how reading comprehension was approached in each class.

LESSON 1 - 3A: READING COMPREHENSION

Grade 3A had 34 learners. Lesson 1 focussed on vocabulary and the teaching of the isiXhosa trigraph 'xhw' but I was more interested in the reading comprehension.

In the first stage (pre- or before reading) the teacher and learners discussed meanings of new words before reading the text. The teacher started as follows:

Interaction:

Miss Jama: *Yintoni isixhiliphothi?*

What is a hefty person?

Learner 1: *Ngumntu oxhwilayo Miss.*

It is someone who snatches Miss.

Learner 2: *Ngumntu ombi Miss.*

It is an ugly person Miss.

Miss Jama: *Izixhiphothi ngamadoda amakhulu, anezoso. Nike nithi umntu*

u-fit moss...

Hefty men are big men with muscles. Sometimes you refer to them

as fit.

The teacher continued to ask questions, but the questions were not necessarily on the "xhw" sound.

Miss Jama: *Yintoni igqirha?*

What is a healer?

Learner 3: *Ngumntu onamayeza namathambo for unyanga abantu.*

It is someone who uses medicine and bones to heal people.

Miss Jama had prepared a list of new words which learners will find in the story. Miss Jama and her learners discussed the meanings of words as an activity and she pasted meanings of the words next to the words as shown below.

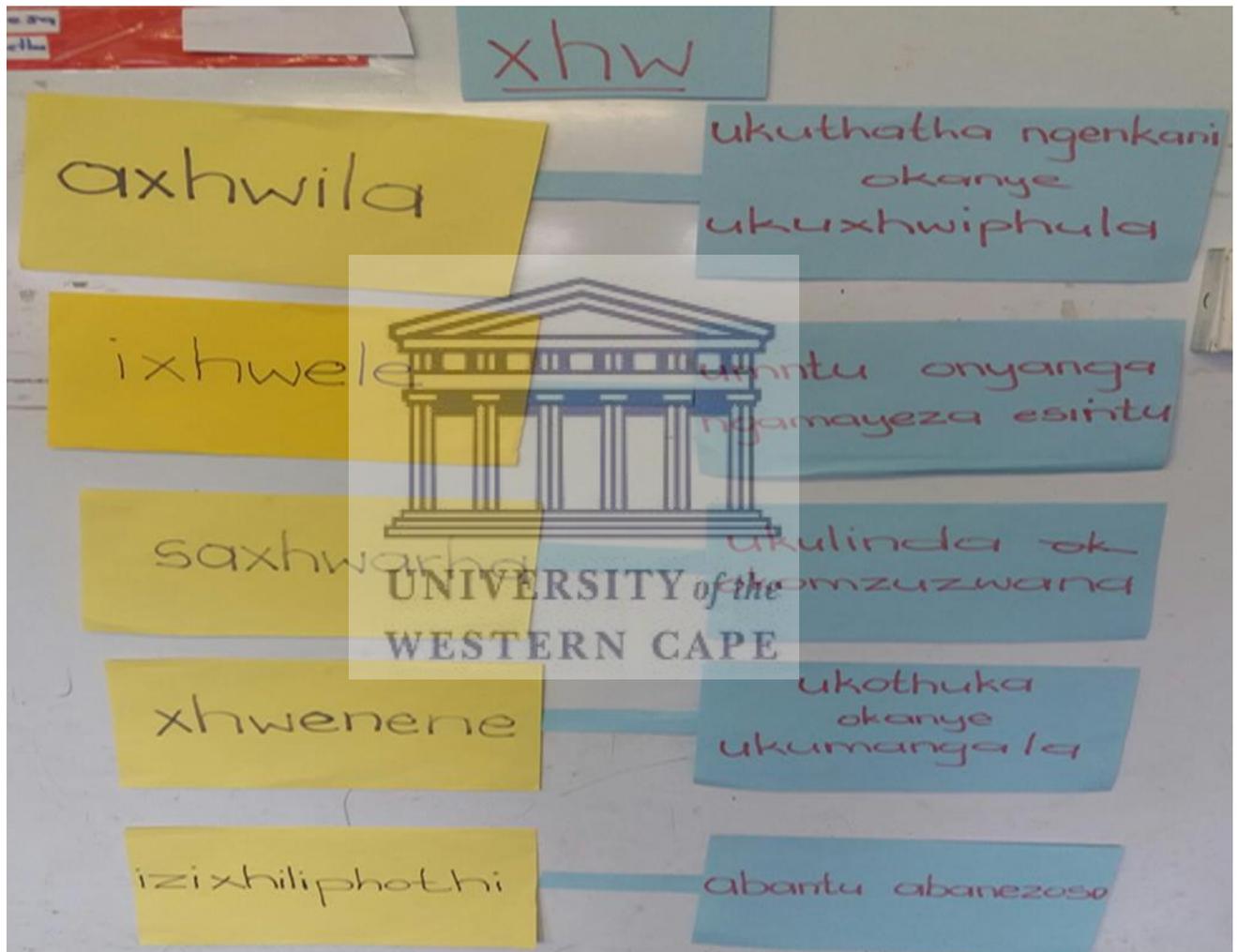
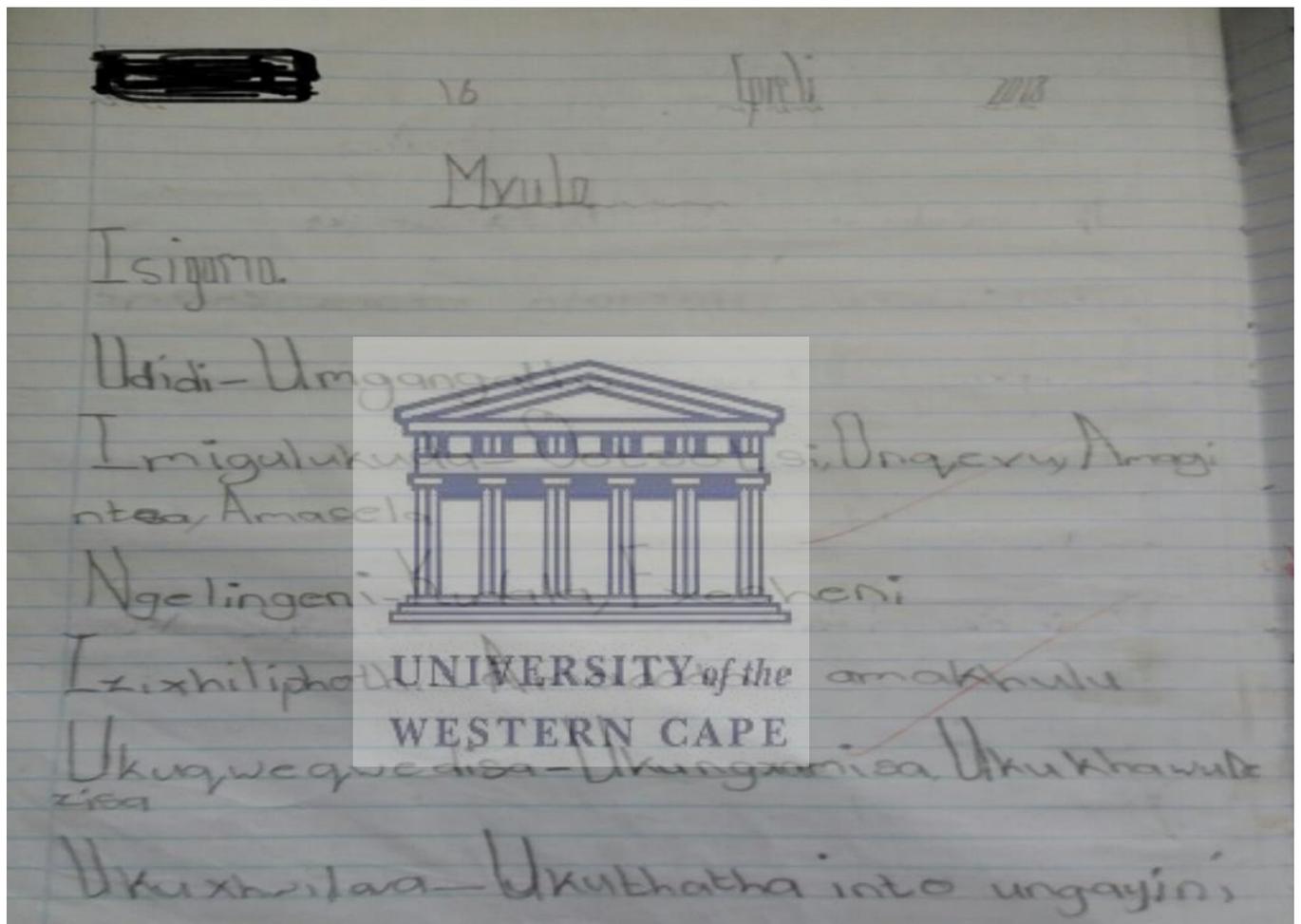


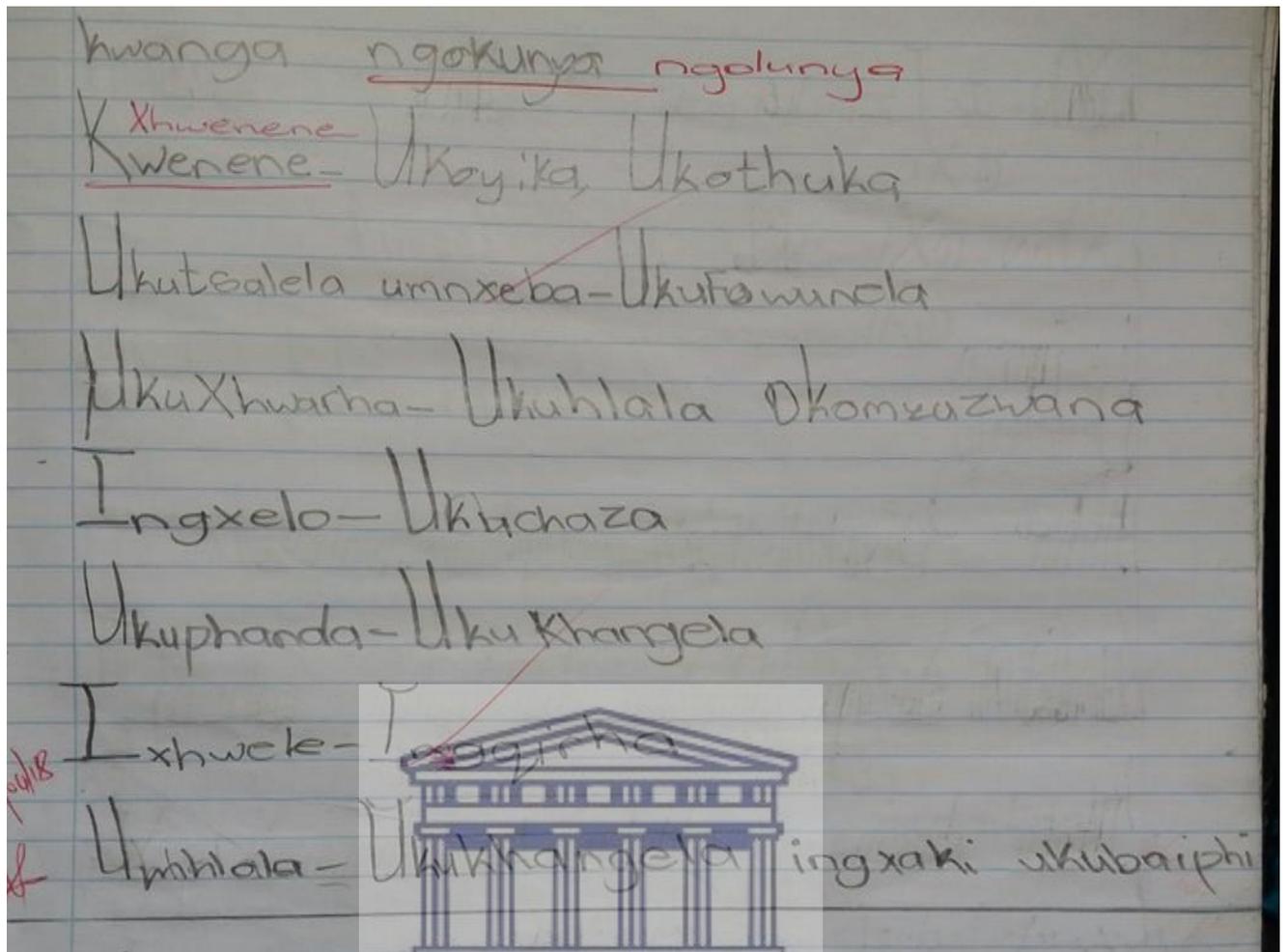
Figure 1: New words used in the text

Learners seemed to understand most of the words but struggled with the meaning of “*izixhiliphothi*”. Miss Jama explained the meaning of the words to learners. After a set of words had been discussed, the teacher gave learners another list of words from the text to develop their vocabulary.

The learners discussed the meanings and the teacher helped them where they struggled. In this activity, the teacher applied a question and answer method. Learners were given a written task on new words which are shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Task with new words





Firstly, Miss Jama taught the learners new words to enhance their understanding of the text and then exposed them to new words and their meanings. The lesson proceeded as follows:

	Teacher activity	Learner activity
Line 1	<p><i>Ngubani owake waxhwilelwa into yakhe apha esikolweni okanye ekhaya?</i></p> <p>Who had their belonging forcefully taken?</p>	<p>L(Chorus): <i>Ndim Miss.</i></p> <p><i>It's me Miss.</i></p> <p><i>Nam Miss.</i></p> <p><i>And me, Miss.</i></p>

<p>Line 2</p>	<p><i>Okay, yimani masicaciselwe ngaba bantu ndizobakhomba ningathethi nonke. Waxhwiphulelwa ntoni wena?</i></p> <p>Okay, I will point people who will tell us. Don't speak at the same time. What was grabbed from you?</p>	<p>L1: <i>UZuko wandixhwiphulela isonka Miss.</i></p> <p>Zuko snatched my bread.</p> <p>L2: <i>USiyabonga Miss uyathanda uxhwiphula noba yintoni ka usity.</i></p> <p>Siyabonga takes anything from you when you eat.</p> <p>L3: <i>Omnye umntwana wakwaGrade 7 wandixhwilela amanqina Miss.</i></p> <p>A Grade 7 learner took my chicken feet, Mis.</p>
<p>Line 3</p>	<p><i>Waziva njani xa umntu ekuxhwiphulela into yakho?</i></p> <p>How did you feel when someone forcefully took something from you?</p>	<p>L1: <i>Ndandinomsindo.</i></p> <p>I was furious.</p> <p>L2: <i>Xolo Miss, ndalila wasibuyisa sekesilumile isonka sam.</i></p> <p>Sorry Miss, I cried and he gave my bread back although he already had a bite.</p>

In summary, Miss Jama asked them how they felt when their belongings were grabbed from them. Learners answered sharing how annoyed and angry they felt and how it felt when someone forcefully takes something that belongs to you without your permission.

The teacher helped learners to reflect on their experiences and to construct meaning from the concept “ukuxhwila” (to grab). The learners constructed meaning individually and as a group when they shared their answers and experiences and also listened to others’ experiences.

Theorists refer to this kind of interaction as social constructivism i.e. the making of meaning through dialogic thinking. This kind of teaching encourages teachers to provide opportunities for learners to interact and construct their own world (Hein, 1999).

Miss Jama related the lesson to life skills that they should not take others people’s belongings, instead they should ask when they needed something. The lesson introduction was based on learners’ social background, e.g. asking about grabbing. It appeared that learners were familiar with the situation of grabbing because they had been exposed to it at school. They could also describe their feelings. Learners were enthusiastic and active in the lesson because the introduction was based on things they could relate to.

In the second stage of the lesson, (i.e. during reading) Miss Jama handed out copies of reading texts. Learners were instructed to settle down and get ready to read with the teacher. During reading, she controlled their reading fluency and pacing. The teacher and the learners read together. Learners were told to observe punctuation marks and listen to the story while reading. As they read, the teacher modelled fluency by reading words clearly so that learners could hear the pronunciation of the words. I observed that some learners were struggling with reading. For example, some of them had a tendency of reading softly when they were not sure of how to pronounce a word. They were afraid to make mistakes. The teacher asked questions while they were reading, as indicated below:

	<u>Teacher activity</u>	<u>Learner activity</u>
Line 4	<i>Lalisenzeka phi elibali?</i> Where did the story take place?	L1: <i>EXhorha Miss.</i> In Xhorha Miss.
Line 5	<i>Good, xa babegqajukelwa livili, zenza ntoni izigebenga?</i> When they had a tyre puncture, what did the	L1: <i>Amapolisa abanceda Miss.</i> The police helped them.

	criminals do?	
Line 6	<i>Anceda bani amapolisa?</i> Who did the police help?	<i>L1: Anceda i-family.</i> They helped the family.
Line 7	<i>Ewe, amapolisa ayinceda i-family. But, umbuzo wam uthi, yenza ntoni imigulukudu xa begqajukelwe livili?</i> Yes the police helped the family. But my question is, what did the criminals do when the family had a tyre puncture?	<i>L1: Zaxhwiphula imoto Miss.</i> They forcefully took the car Miss.

Questioning during reading is a good strategy of comprehension because it helps the teacher to see if learners are listening and whether learners understand the text (Goodman & Goodman, 1979). The teacher started off with a literal question and asked where the story took place. Literal questions give an opportunity to all learners to participate. Learners answered correctly. However, they seemed to have a problem in answering a question which needed their explanation.

While the teacher engaged the learners through questioning, her questions did not challenge the learners' critical thinking. She could have asked various questions suggested by CAPS in order to challenge learners to use high levels of thinking and reasoning. Such questions require learners to compare or contrast and evaluate information based on the lesson. Teachers could also ask learners to express their opinions based on their experiences.

Other questions include inferential questions that need learners to draw conclusions and find answers without being directly told by the teacher. For example, learners could be asked what could have happened if the family did not receive help from the strangers passing by the bridge or what a learner would have done if he/she was part of the travelling family. In this way, learners would be able to apply their knowledge in real life situations.

Straight forward questions do not promote good reading skills because learners simply search for information in the text. Learners need to be asked analytical and evaluation questions which require them to apply different reading processes to make meaning of the text (Howie

et al., 2008). This approach enables them to apply their social and cultural understanding to discover the hidden meaning of texts (Ngece, 2014). Therefore, teachers should expose learners into discovering hidden meaning in the text so that their comprehension could be stimulated (Ngece, 2014).

In the following section, I present the activities of the post- reading stage.

	<u>Teacher activity</u>	<u>Learner activity</u>
Line 8	<p>Singasinika esiphi isihloko elibali?</p> <p>Which title can we give to this story?</p>	<p>L1: I-Family.</p> <p>Family.</p>
Line 9	<p>I-family itheni?</p> <p>What about the family?</p>	<p>L (ALL) : Bathule.</p> <p>Quiet.</p>
Line 10	<p>Ewe, kuthethiwe ngefamili kweli bali. Kwakusenzekani kule famili? Okanye mandithi sifunde ngantoni kweli bali?</p> <p>Yes, there was a family in this story. What was happening in this family? What did we learn about in this story?</p>	<p>L1: Sifunde ngezikoli, Miss.</p> <p>We learned about.</p> <p>Thugs, Miss.</p> <p>L2: Sifunde ngefamili ibi-visitor Miss.</p> <p>We learned about a visiting family.</p>
Line 11	<p>Ewe, sifunde ngefamili edibene noonqevu. Singathini isihloko sethu?</p> <p>Yes, we learned about a family which was attacked by thugs. What could be our title?</p>	<p>L1: Ifamily ibi-visitor irojwe imoto yayo.</p> <p>The visiting family was robbed of their car.</p>

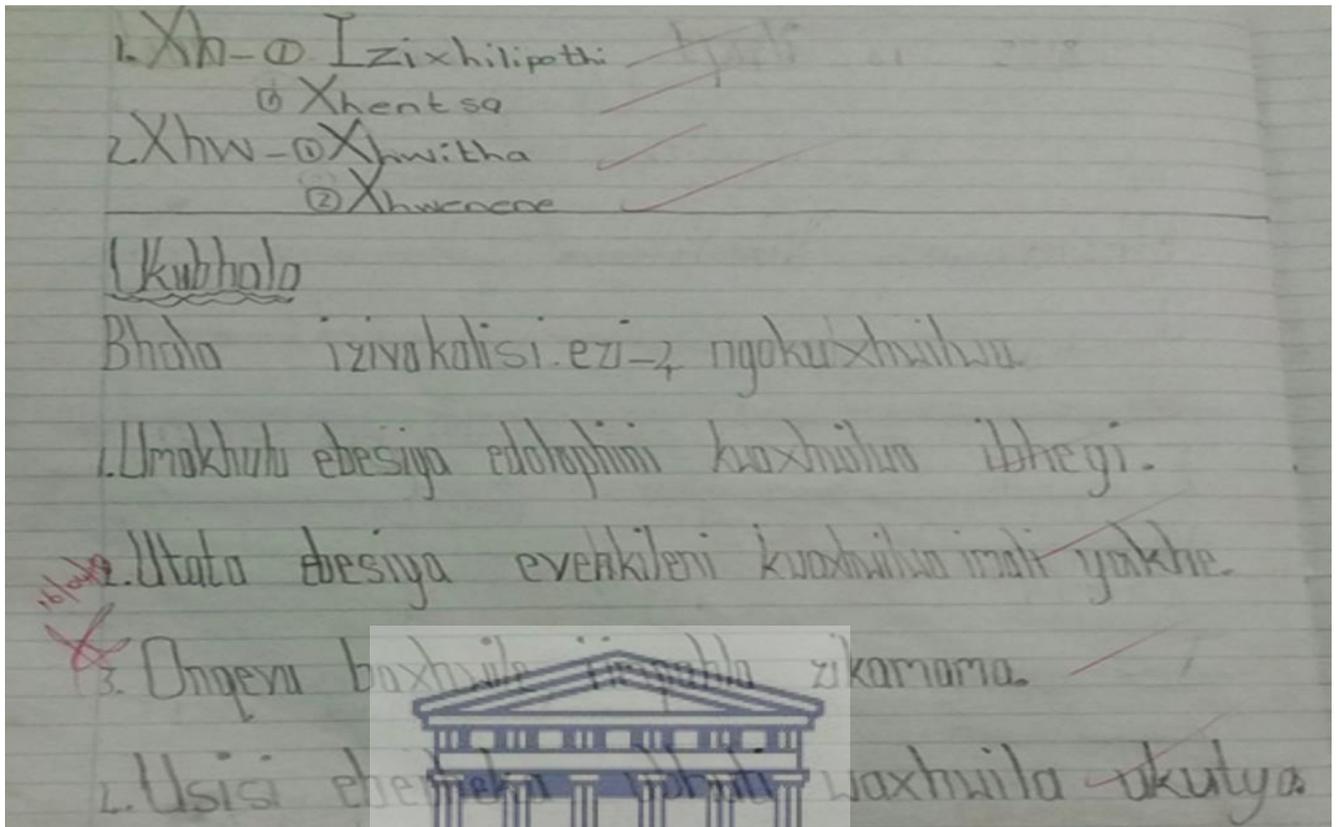
Line 12	<p><i>Okay, si-right eso sihloko. Ukuxhwilwa kwemoto ye-family ibindwendwela ngoonqevu.</i></p> <p>Okay, that title is correct. Car robbery of a visiting family by criminals.</p>	<p>L (ALL): <i>Ewe Miss.</i></p> <p>Yes Miss.</p>
Line 13	<p><i>Ngubani omnye ocinge isihloko?</i></p> <p>Who else has thought of a title?</p>	<p>L1: <i>Imoto kamalume ixhwiphulwe zizikoli.</i></p> <p>The uncle's car was forcefully taken by thugs.</p>
Line 14	<p><i>Ewe, very good, imoto kamalume ixhwiphulwe zizikoli.</i></p> <p>Yes, very good, uncle's car was forcefully taken by thugs.</p>	<p>L(ALL): Bathule</p> <p>Quiet</p>

Giving a title to a text requires summarising everything about the story and looking for significant parts of what the story was about. For example, the teacher reminded the learners that their titles should be about the family or what happened to it. The teacher guided learners into choosing suitable titles by applying Feuerstein's Mediated Learning Experience that suggests that an adult directs learning from incidental learning by children or by a less knowledgeable person into intentional learning by an adult (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995).

To wrap up the lesson, the teacher gave learners an activity to write. The activity started with the digraph "xh" which was taught in the previous lesson. She included a trigraph "xhw" which they learned in the new lesson.

The last question required learners to write their own sentences using the verb "xhwila". The teacher built up learners' knowledge from a less challenging activity into a challenging task. This activity had varying levels and was divided into three parts focussing on a digraph and trigraph, namely "xh" and "xhw" and writing sentences about "xhwila" as shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Activity written after reading comprehension (3A)



LESSON 1 - 3B: READING COMPREHENSION

The two teachers (Miss Jama and Miss Goba) used the same texts to teach reading comprehension but I noticed that the lessons were presented differently in the two classrooms. In 3B classroom, there was a positive learning environment with print-rich walls of literacy and numeracy content. Learners had smiles and there was laughter in the classroom. Most of the learners worked with the teacher to maintain order in the classroom.

In lesson 1, Miss Goba greeted the learners and told them that they were going to read a story that happened in the rural areas a while ago. She told them that each group would have an opportunity to read but she would decide which group would start reading. While one group read, others had to listen how they pronounced words.

In the first stage (pre-reading stage), Miss Goba gave the learners new words from the text to break up into syllables. She revised the words that they wrote in the previous activity (See Figure 4). Almost all learners could recall the words written previously because they had written them in their classwork books.

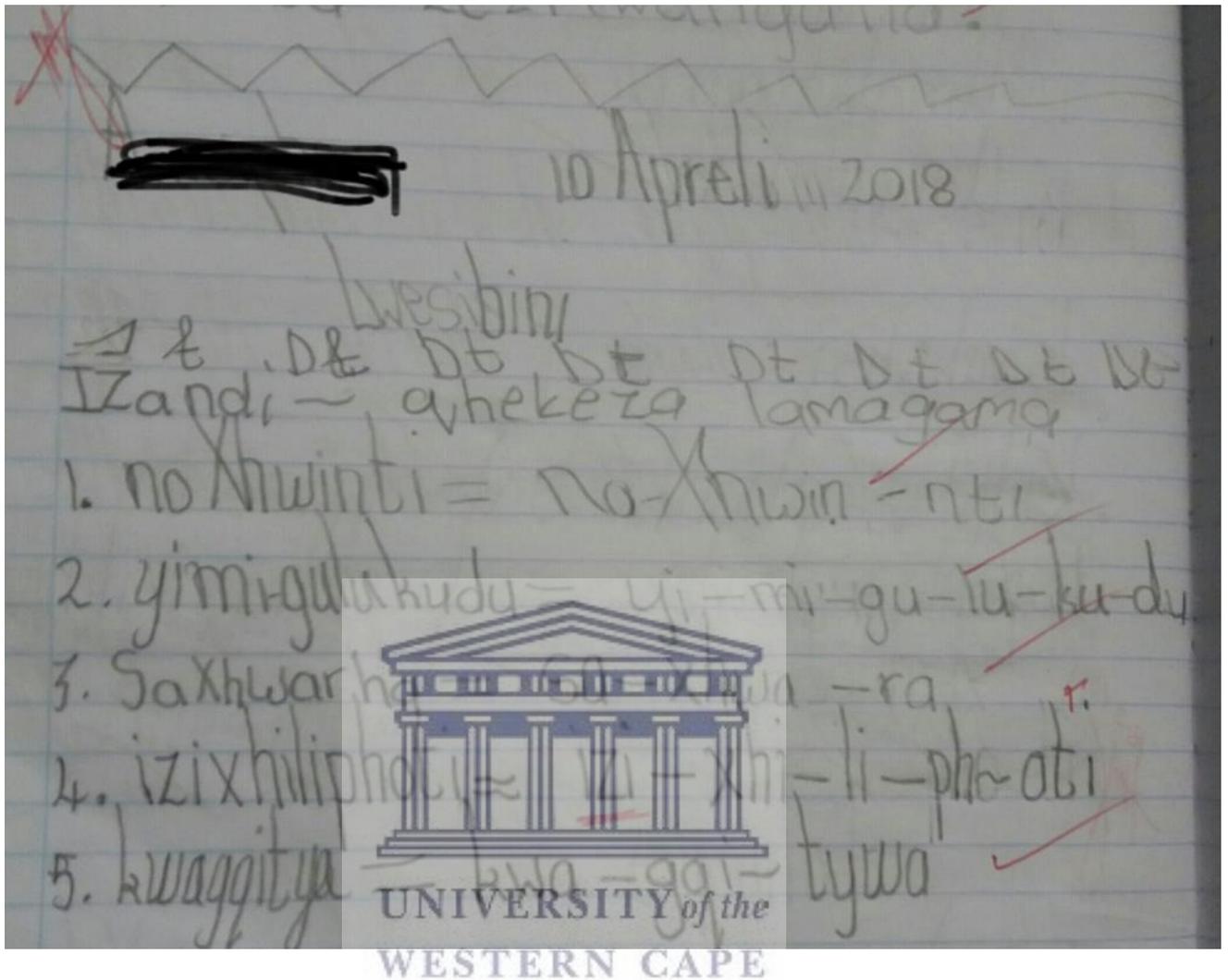


Figure 4: New words broken into syllables (3B)

Miss Goba wrote the words on the board and learners discussed the meanings of these words. She handed out a text to learners to see the new words discussed in the text. Below I illustrate how the teacher interacted with the learners:

Miss Goba: *Yintoni ukuxhwila?*

What is to snatch?

Learner 1: *Kukuthatha into yomntu ubaleke nayo.*

It is to take something from a person and run with it.

Miss Goba: *Ewe, ukuxhwila kukuthatha into yomntu kuye ngenkani.*

It is to forcefully take something from someone.

Sithi yintoni ukuxhwila?

What is to snatch?

Learners (Bonke): ***Kukuthatha into yomntu kuye ngenkani.***

Learners (All): It is to forcefully take something from someone

Miss Goba gave learners the correct meaning of “*ukuxhwila*”. She ensured that all the learners could pronounce the word properly to get its meaning.

In the first stage of the lesson, Miss Goba introduced learners to syllables which form an important part of phonological awareness. However, it would have been useful if she could have activated learner’s prior knowledge before she started with her lesson. It is good to first find out about learners’ prior knowledge and their personal experiences on the text to be read through prediction or previewing the title to stimulate learner’s thinking. Learners come to school with knowledge that should be acknowledged (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005; Alvermann, Smith & Readence, 1985). For example, “*ukuxhwila*” is something that they could relate to because it happens in their social lives or they hear about snatching on the television and radio news.

Another challenge was with the text (Appendix G) which had no title. While asking questions stimulated learners’ reading comprehension, it could have been easier for learners to predict the content of the story if there were pictures and other learning and teaching materials such as flash cards. This would also make the lesson more interesting.

During the reading stage, Miss Goba told the learners that she would first read the story alone and learners were asked to listen attentively. She read with fluency and guided learners to read with appropriate speed, punctuation, intonation and expression especially in words with the “*xhw*” sound (e.g. *izixhiliphothi, xhwenene*).

Miss Goba gave each group an opportunity to read. There were three reading groups and each group had more than ten learners. She stood next to the reading groups and listened to their reading. She had to correct all the groups several times before they could read the sentences correctly. The first and second groups made a few mistakes but the last group seemed to have reading difficulties.

They could not pronounce words and some words were inaudible, especially words with the new sound “xhw”. The teacher spent more time on this group to support them in their reading. This demonstrated the teacher’s understanding that learners read at different levels, therefore they should be guided and supported according to their reading levels and needs.

In the post-reading stage, whole class discussion occurred. Miss Goba asked learners literal questions (e.g. line 6 in the table below). Literal questions are usually easy questions in reading comprehension and all learners in different groups could answer them. Some learners, however, showed poor comprehension skills when they could not answer who came to help the family when their car was taken by thugs (e.g. in line 7). Learners were also asked an inferential question, e.g. what they would have done if they were in the car (line 8). In addition, knowledge was constructed when learners listened to each other’s views about what to do when you are in trouble. This interaction can be associated with social construction as learners tried to make meaning of the reading text. Hein (1999) defines social construction as a process in which learners construct knowledge on their own and in a group during learning.

The following lesson extract shows what Miss Goba did during the post-reading stage:

	Teacher activity	Learner activity
Line 1	<p><i>Sesiphi isandi esisetyenziswe kakhulu apha?</i></p> <p>Which sound is mostly used here?</p>	<p>L1: <i>Ngu“xhw” Miss.</i></p> <p>It is “xhw” Miss.</p>
Line 2	<p><u><i>Ngawaphi amagama anesi sandi kule-text?</i></u></p> <p>Which words have this sound in the text?</p>	<p>L(Chorus): <u><i>Axhwila, saxhwarha, ixhwele, masixhwithe</i></u></p>
Line 3	<p><i>Ngabantu abanjani izixhiliphothi?</i></p> <p>How do hefty people look?</p>	<p>L1: <i>Ngabantu abatyebilyo Miss.</i></p> <p>It is a fat people, Miss.</p> <p>L2: <i>Miss, ngumntu ombi, owoyikekayo.</i></p> <p>Miss, it is someone ugly and scary.</p>

Line 4	<i>Izixhiliphothi ngabantu abanezoso</i> Hefty people are men with muscles	L (ALL): <i>Ewe Miss.</i> Yes Miss.
Line 5	<i>Yintoni lena yayisendleleni kulaa bhlorho?</i> What was on the way on that bridge?	L1: <i>Yayiyiplastiki.</i> It was a plastic.
Line 6	<i>Zenza ntoni kule family izixhiliphothi?</i> What did the thugs do to this family?	L1: <i>Bathatha imoto yabo babaleka nayo.</i> They took their car and ran away with It
Line 7	<i>Ngubani oweza kubo wabanceda ngexesha imoto igqajukelwe livili?</i> Who came and helped them when they had a tyre puncture?	L1: <i>Ngamapolisa.</i> It is the police. L2: <i>Abantu babedlula ebhlorhweni.</i> People who passed by the bridge.
Line 8	<i>Ukuba wawusemotweni wena, wawungathini?</i> If you were in the car, what would you have done?	L1: <i>Ndandizakukhwaza noba ngubani ovayo azokusinceda.</i> I would scream for help. L2: <i>Zandizokhala Miss.</i> I would cry Miss. L3: <i>Ndandingacinga uba bazakusenzani ndikhwaze uncedo.</i>

		I would be worried about what they would do to us and shout for help.
Line 9	<p><i>Ewe, ucele uncedo xa usengxakini kubantu abadlulayo.</i></p> <p>Yes, you ask for help from people passing by when you are in trouble.</p>	<p>L (ALL): <i>Ewe Miss.</i></p> <p>Yes Miss.</p>

In summary, Grade 3B learners identified the letter sounds introduced in the story. Miss Goba discussed the meanings of new words such as “*axhwila*”, and “*izixhiliphothi*”. Learners knew “*ukuxhwila*” but seemed to struggle with the meaning of “*izixhiliphothi*”. I noticed that many learners in Grade 3B needed to be guided when reading. It would have been better if flash cards were pasted on the board instead of writing the words on the board.

Grade 3B learners were given a written activity after the lesson. Miss Goba differentiated the activity according to different reading levels of the learners. The reading text focussed on three letter consonant clusters (trigraphs) but the teacher adjusted the activity to accommodate learners who were at different reading levels.

The third group appeared to be learners who had reading difficulties, so Miss Goba simplified the activity so that they could also learn. Group 3 had to build words using one letter sound “*x*” (See figure 5A). However, groups two and three started from digraphs (two letter-sounds) “*xh*” which were learned in the previous lesson. They also had to write words using trigraphs (three letter-sound) “*xhw*” on which the lesson was based (See figure 5A and B). However, in 3A there was only one lesson prepared to accommodate learners in all levels (See figure 3).

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ 11 Epreli 2018

Iwesit hatlu

h-b h-b h-b h-b h-b h-b

Izandi

$\boxed{x} + \boxed{h} + \boxed{w}$

= xhw

yakha amagama ngezizandi:

Qela 1 no 2

1. xh = xhela, xhorha

2. xhw = ~~xhuzi~~, xhuzila

Ukubhala

Bhala umkhosi ezine

ngoku xhwila

Ixhwele inkuku. hys

Xhuzila usana lakamshone, kwakhuzila ka

intombi yase goli



Figure 5A: Activity written by Group 1 learner after reading comprehension (3B)

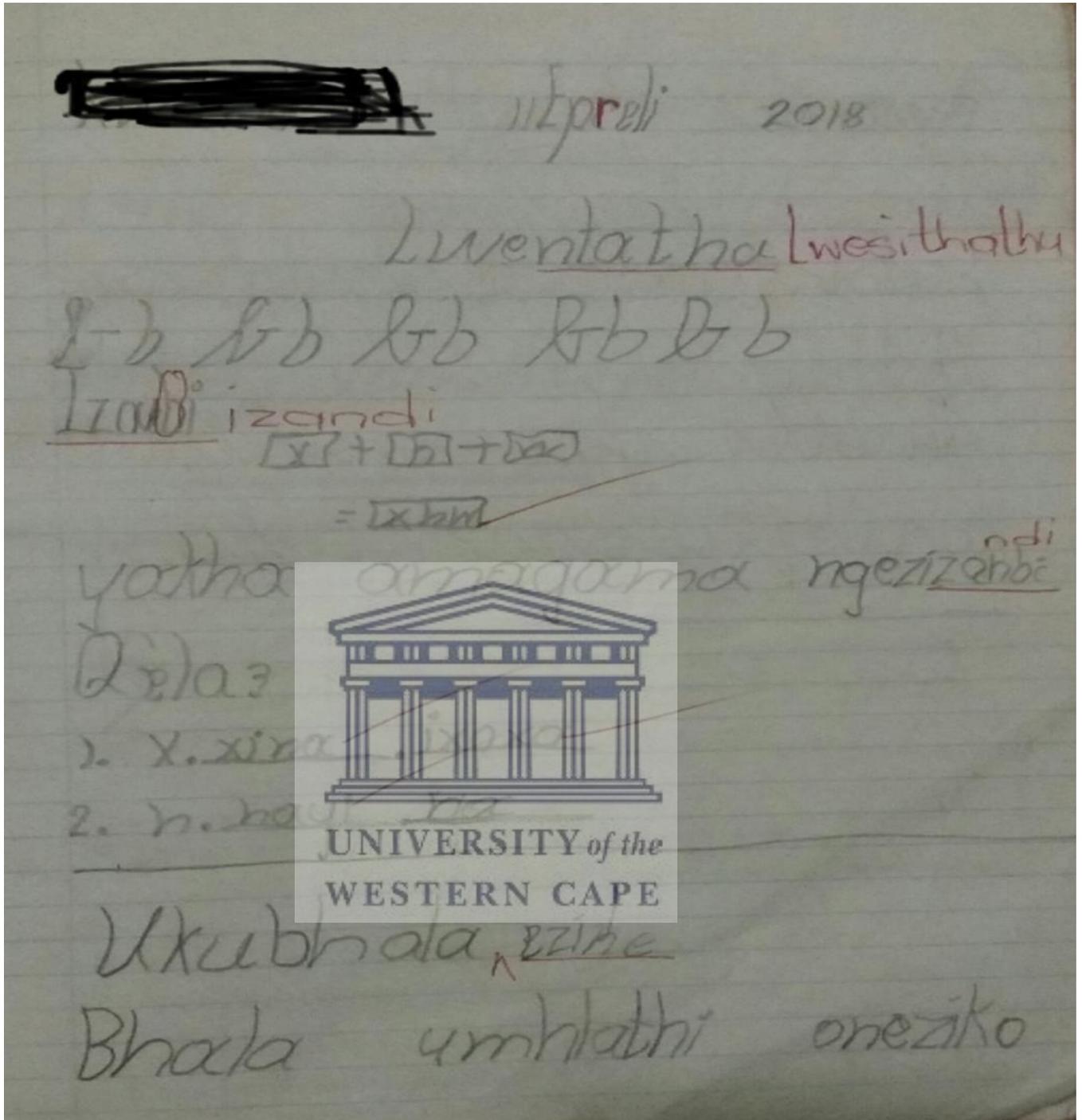


Figure 5B: An activity written by Group 3 learner after reading comprehension (3B)

The following text was used in both classes (3A and 3B) for reading comprehension.

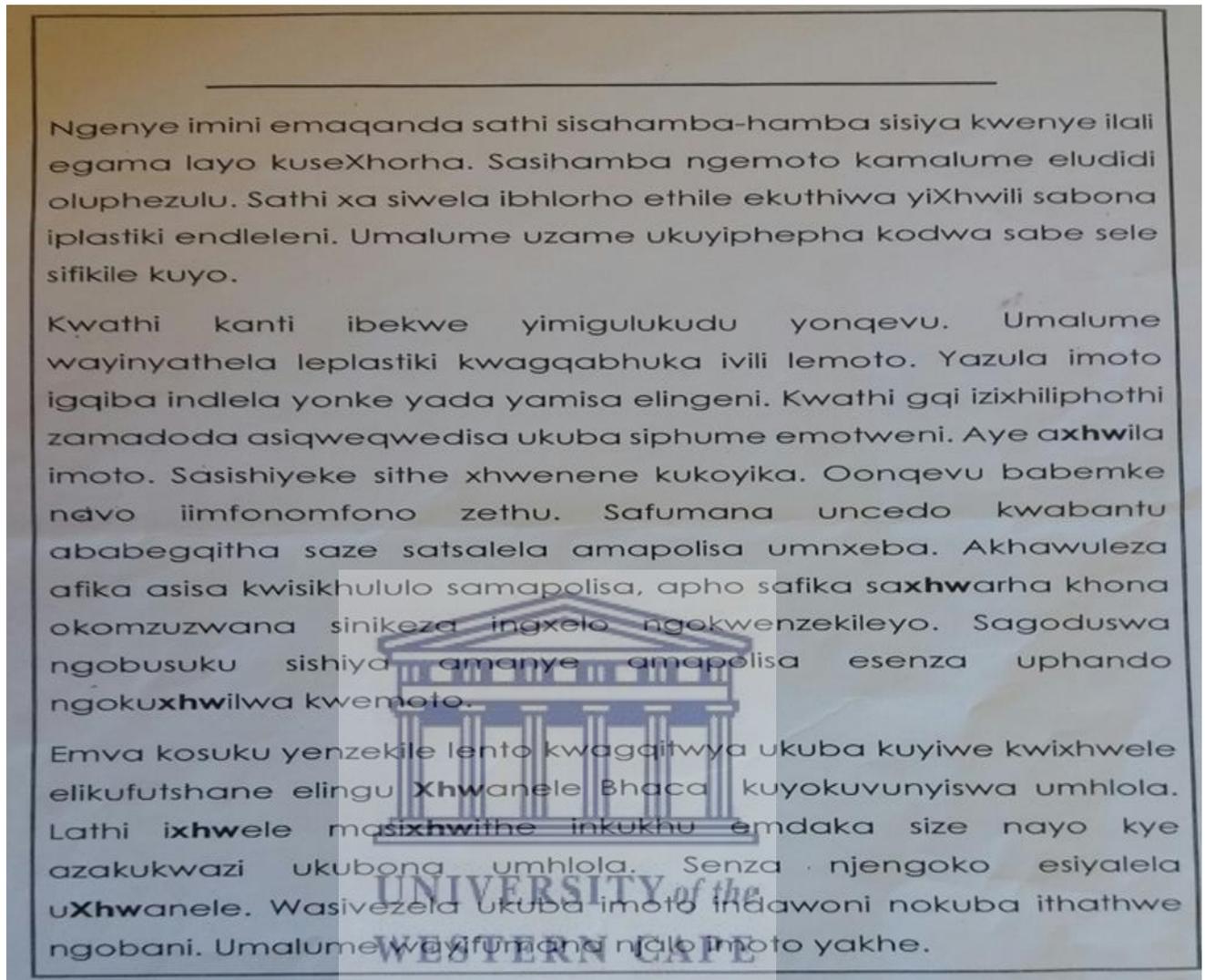


Figure 6: Text used for reading comprehension in 3A & 3B

In the following section I present other lessons that were observed in the two classrooms, as indicated earlier. Both lessons focussed on reading comprehension. I observed reading lessons but I focussed on how teachers enhanced learners' reading comprehension. In the first two lessons presented above, the focus was on the digraph "xh" and the trigraph "xhw".

LESSON 2 - 3A: READING COMPREHENSION

As a starting point, I present Grade 3A reading comprehension lesson. The two lessons presented in this section focussed on “ngqw”. They were based on the following text:

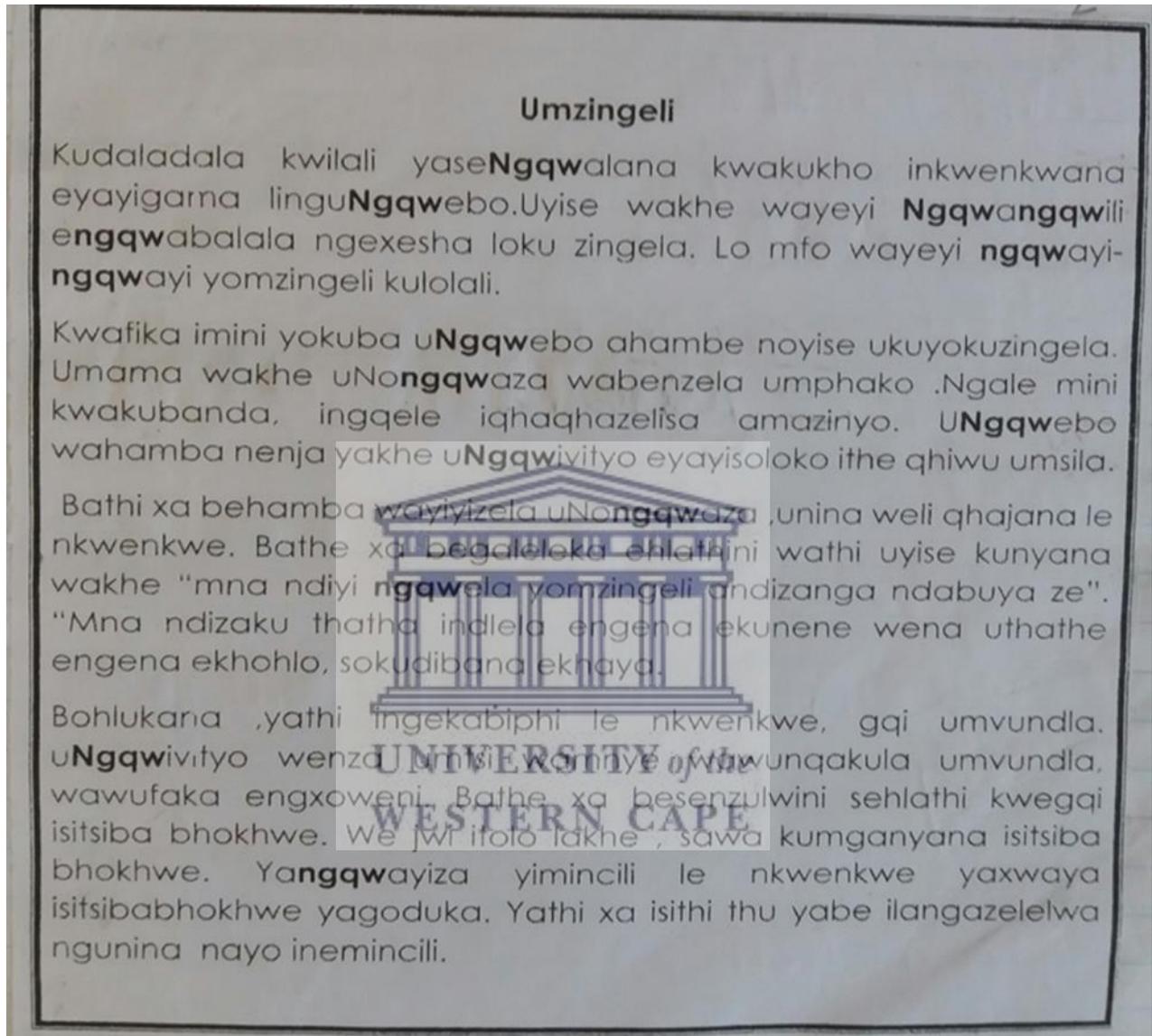


Figure 7: Text used for reading comprehension (3A & 3B)

The two teachers (Miss Jama and Miss Goba) introduced the lesson in the same way. Before reading, both teachers activated learners' prior knowledge by asking what they already knew about hunting. In both classes learners understood that a hunter was someone who goes out to hunt animals with dogs. The lesson below shows how the Miss Jama facilitated her reading comprehension lesson.

After introducing the lesson, Miss Jama asked the learners to mention animals that could be hunted, as part of the pre-reading stage. When learners could not fully explain what animals could be hunted, the teacher scaffolded and mediated their knowledge by explaining that hunters looked for wild animals. The lesson appeared to accommodate the learners' cultural and social background because they knew the animals. They participated in the lesson with great enthusiasm and enjoyment.

	<u>Teacher's activity</u>	<u>Learner's activity</u>
Line 1	<p><i>Kakade zeziphi izilwanyana ezizingelwayo?</i></p> <p>Which animals do people hunt?</p>	<p>L1: <i>Kuzingelwa imivundla Mis.s</i></p> <p>Rabbits are hunted, Miss.</p> <p>L2: <i>Abanye bazingela ihlosi.</i></p> <p>Others hunt tiger.</p> <p>L3: <i>Iintaka ziyazingelwa nazo Miss.</i></p> <p>Birds can also be hunt Miss.</p>

The interaction highlighted above is in line with Pahl & Rowsell's (2005) view that children come to school with knowledge, and that school literacy should be built on home literacy. This suggests that literacy is socially constructed because children are exposed to certain practices in their home environment (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005).

In order for children to learn better, they need a social context and a person who is more knowledgeable than they are to mediate knowledge between the text and the learner (Vygotsky, 1979). In the school context, a mediator could be a knowledgeable peer or teacher who is required to move children's knowledge from what they already know to new knowledge (Vygotsky, 1979). Both teachers in this stage of reading mediated learning by explaining that hunters search for wild animals.

The lesson appeared to accommodate learners' cultural and social background because they knew the animals and they participated in the lesson with great enthusiasm. They seemed excited and they enjoyed the lesson.

However, Miss Jama could have made an effort to get pictures of hunters to stimulate learners' imagination and support them to retell the story. Learners with reading difficulties learn better with pictures. In other words, poor readers remember the story when they see pictures.

In the second stage of the reading process (i.e. during reading) Miss Jama read the text alone and learners had to listen attentively. She read the text twice and instructed the learners to listen to the words with a letter sound “*ngqw*” which was introduced in the text. She modelled how reading should be done by pronouncing the words correctly and fluently.

After reading the text (post-reading), the teacher asked which words had “*ngqw*” (letter sound) and which they found difficult. Learners identified words such as “*ngqwabalala*, *ingqwangqwili* and *ingqwayingqwayi*”. The teacher pasted flashcards on the board and the class discussed meanings of the words as shown in Figure 8. The teacher asked the learners to give meaning of the new words.

One learner explained that “*ingqwangqwili*” referred to someone who is harsh. They further gave meanings of “*ingqwangqwili* and *ingqwayingqwayi*”. They agreed that “*ingqwangqwili*” was someone who excelled in something. She asked who in their homes excelled and what they excelled in doing. Learners shouted their family members and showed a good understanding of the word “*ingqwangqwili*” because one learner said no one cooked delicious meals like her mother. New vocabulary was discussed in order to enhance their understanding of the new words they encountered in the text.

Miss Jama worked with learners to create meaning by using the new words. She pasted the flash cards and instructed learners to read new words and their meanings from the board as illustrated in Figure 8 below.



Figure 8: Vocabulary used in the reading comprehension lesson (3A)

After the explanation of the vocabulary, Miss Jama asked more questions as shown below:

	Teacher activity	Learner activity
<u>Line 2</u>	<i>Ngubani owayeyingqwawili ngalaa mini?</i> Who was a great hunter in the story?	L1: <i>Yayingutata kaNgqwebo, Miss.</i> It was Ngqwebo's father, Miss.
<u>Line 3</u>	<i>Ee-ehh-h, utata kakaNgqwebo wayeyingqwela kwintsuku ezidlulileyo. Kodwa ngalaa mini</i>	L1: <i>NguNgqwebo Miss.</i> It was Ngqwebo Miss.

	<p><i>zazijikile izinto.</i></p> <p><i>Phendulani, yayi ngubani owayeyingqwela ngalaa mini?</i></p> <p>Ee-ehh-h, Ngqwebo’s father had excelled in the previous days. But that day, things had changed. Who was the best hunter that day?</p>	
<u>Line 4</u>	<p><i>Ewe, uNgqwebo wayeyiyingqwangqwili ngalaa mini. Wayeze neenyamazana ezimbini mos uNgqwebo. Yayizintoni?</i></p> <p>Yes, Ngqwebo excelled that day. He brought home two wild animals. What were they?</p>	<p>L1: <i>Wabamba isitsibabhokhwe Miss.</i></p> <p>He caught a springbok Miss.</p> <p>L2: <i>Wabambisa intaka, Miss.</i></p> <p>He caught a bird, Miss.</p> <p>L (Most): Besebeza, “Hayi”</p> <p>Whispering, “No”</p>
<u>Line 5</u>	<p><i>Hayi, wayengabambisanga intaka. Ngubani okhumbulayo ukuba wayebambe isitsibabhokhwe nantoni?</i></p> <p>No, he did not catch a bird. Who remembers what else he caught besides the springbok?</p>	<p>L1: <i>Miss, ...nomvundla.</i></p> <p>Miss,... And the rabbit.</p>

In the above interaction, when the teacher asked who the great hunter was on that day (Line 2), one learner got the answer incorrect and said it was *Ngqwebo*’s father and others were quiet. She rephrased the question and learners got it correctly. The teacher asked more questions and made sure that learners repeated answers in order to reinforce learning. One of the learners said *Ngqwebo* brought home a bird. His peers corrected him by saying he brought a springbok and a rabbit. In this way, learners supported each other in their learning.

Inferring is an important strategy for reading comprehension because it encourages learners to think broadly and fill in gaps about something that is implicit in the story.

In this lesson, the teacher could have asked more challenging questions so that learners could infer from the text.

The teacher summarised the story to ensure that learners understood it. Learners were given jumbled sentences and they had to write them in the correct order of events as shown in Figures 8A and 8B below. The figures illustrate that some of the learners could write meaningful sentences (e.g. Figure 8A) while other learners struggled to construct meaningful sentences (e.g. 8B). The two samples were taken from Group 1 and Group 3 learners.

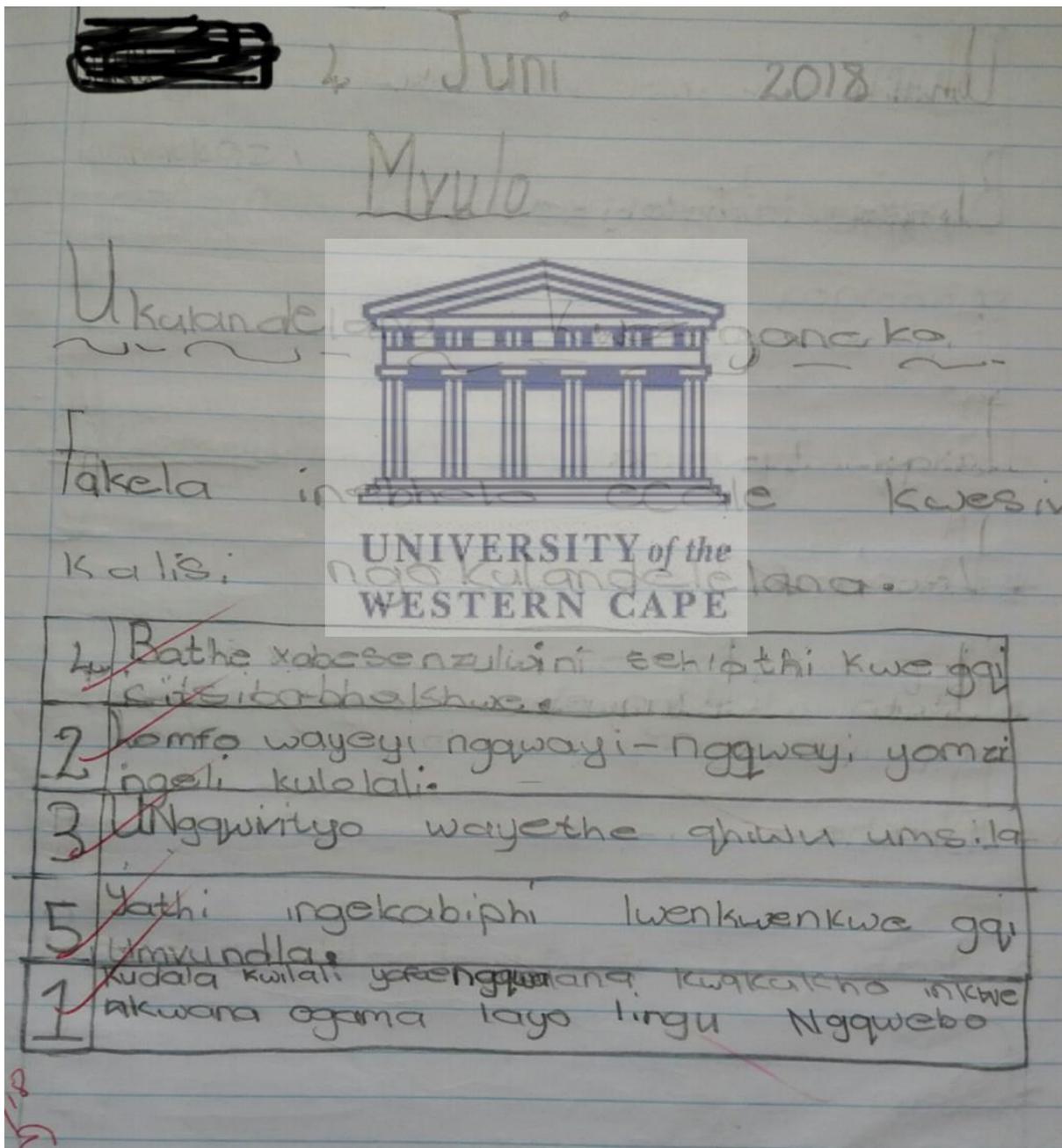


Figure 8A: Activity written after reading comprehension (Group 1 learner -3A)

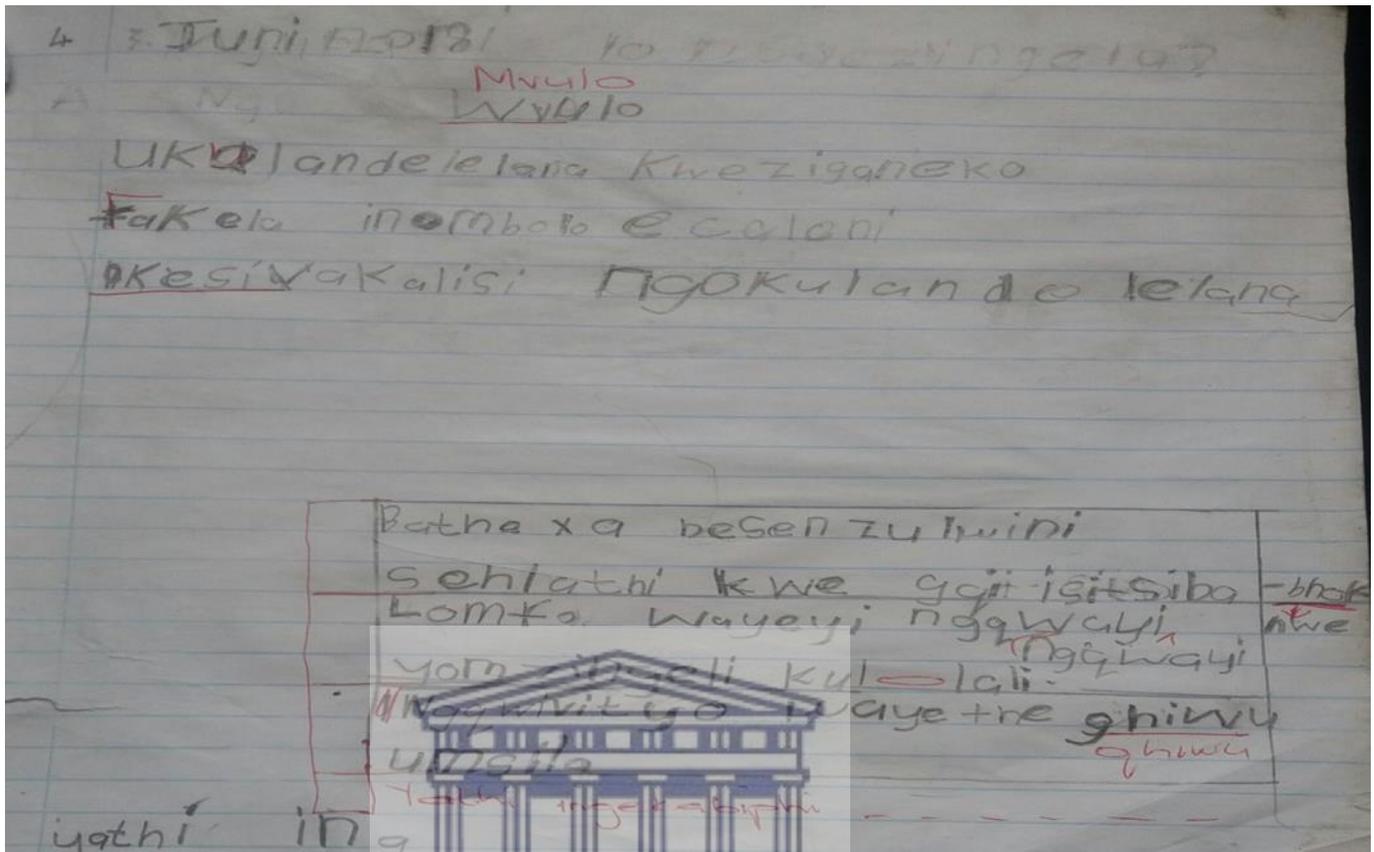


Figure 8B: Activity written after reading comprehension (Group 3 learner – 3B)

LESSON 2-3B: READING COMPREHENSION

Like in class 3A, this lesson was conducted in three stages of reading namely, before reading, during reading and post reading. Each stage shows how comprehension was enhanced.

As a starting point, Miss Goba instructed learners to remove all the books from their desks and told them that they were going to read a new story. Learners were given copies of the reading text. Miss Goba told learners that she was going to read a story entitled “Umzingeli” (Hunter).

Like Miss Jama, Miss Goba started the lesson by activating learners’ prior knowledge. She asked learners what a hunter was. Learners explained that it was someone who goes away to hunt animals.

During reading Miss Goba used varying pace and intonation to arouse learners' interest and she also modelled fluency, word pronunciation and observed punctuation marks. She read the text alone and stopped when she had finished it.

In concluding her lesson, she asked some questions as shown below:

	Teacher activity	Learner activity
Line 1	<i>Yintoni ingqwela?</i> What is a hero?	L1: <i>Ngumntu okwazi ukuyenza into kakuhle Miss.</i> It is someone who is good in doing something.
Line 2		L1: Miss, wabamba umvundla na la tata kayezingela? Miss, did the man catch a rabbit when he was hunting?
Line 3	Class, nanku umbuzo, ngubani ongawuphendula. Class here is the question, who can answer it?	L1: Ewe, wabamba umvundla. Yes, he caught a rabbit.
Line 4	<i>Hayi zangabambise mvundla. Ndiyakubona uphakamisile, ndicela uphendule.</i> No he did not catch a rabbit, I see your hand up, please answer.	L1: Ngumntwana wakhe Miss owabamba umvundla nesitsiba-bhokhwe. It is his son who caught a rabbit and a springbok.
Line 5	Ewe nguNgqwebo yedwa owabambisayo. Inoba wazibamba njani izilwanyana uNgqwebo? Yes, only Ngqwebo caught something. How did Ngqwebo	L1: <i>Inoba wazihlaba, Miss.</i> Maybe he stabbed them, Miss.

	catch the animals?	
Line 7	Huh...wazihlaba ngantoni? Huh?... Stabbed them, with what?	L1: Ngemesi Miss. With a knife Miss.
Line 8	Hayi, imesi uyisebenzisa xa uxhela izilwanyana. Wayephethe ntoni okanye wazibamba njani izilwanyana? No, you use a knife when you slaughter animals. What were they carrying or how did he catch the animals?	L (ALL): <i>(Bekhwaza) I-gun, watsibela umvundla wawubamba... and pangas.</i> (Shouting) Guns, he jumped and caught the rabbit,...and pangas.
Line 9	Hayi, khumbulani, uNqwebo watsiba wabamba umvundla, wadubula isitsibabhokhwe ngetolo. Ayikho njalo? No, remember that Nqwebo jumped and caught the rabbit and shot the springbok with an arrow. Isn't it?	L (ALL): <i>Ewe Miss.</i> Yes Miss.

Miss Goba read the text once more and this time she told learners to listen to sounds that were mostly used in the story. Group 3 was asked to identify single consonants. The teacher asked one learner from this group to come and write one letter sound built from “ngqw”.

The learner did not have a clear understanding between “n” and “m” even though they recited the letters of alphabets almost every morning. However, both the first and second groups could identify the correct letter sounds and gave examples of words built from them.

Learners chose words with the “ngqw” sound e.g. “ingqwayingqwayi, engqwabalala, ingwangqwili”, and the teacher wrote them on the board.

In short, the lesson on *Umzingeli* (Hunter) brought great excitement to learners because it was something that they had experienced in their homes. The lesson focussed on vocabulary which is one of the components of reading but comprehension of the text could have been deepened.

Learners were also given a listening activity. The following examples of questions were asked:

1. *Ngubani igama lale nkwenkwe kubaliswa ngayo kwelibali?*
What was the boy’s name whom the story is about?
2. *Yayinjani imozulu ngale mini babesiya kuzingela?*
How was the weather on the day they went hunting?
3. *Khetha igama kwisicatshulwa elibonakalisa ukuba le nkwenkwe yayinwabile?*
Choose a word in the comprehension that shows that this boy was happy.
4. *Wabalungiselela ntoni umama wakhe xa bezakuya kuzingela?*
What did his mother prepare for them when they were going to hunt?
5. *Dwelisa izilwanyana zibentathu ezikhankanyiweyo ebalini.*
List three animals mentioned in the story.

Below are samples of learners’ responses to the questions:

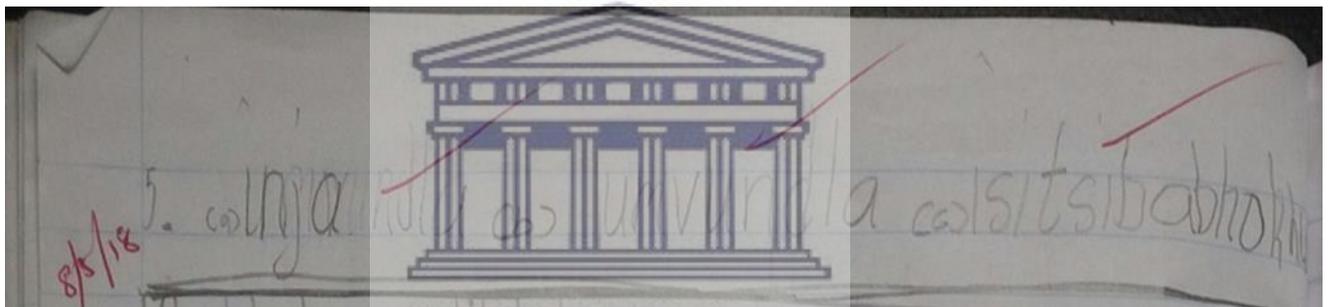
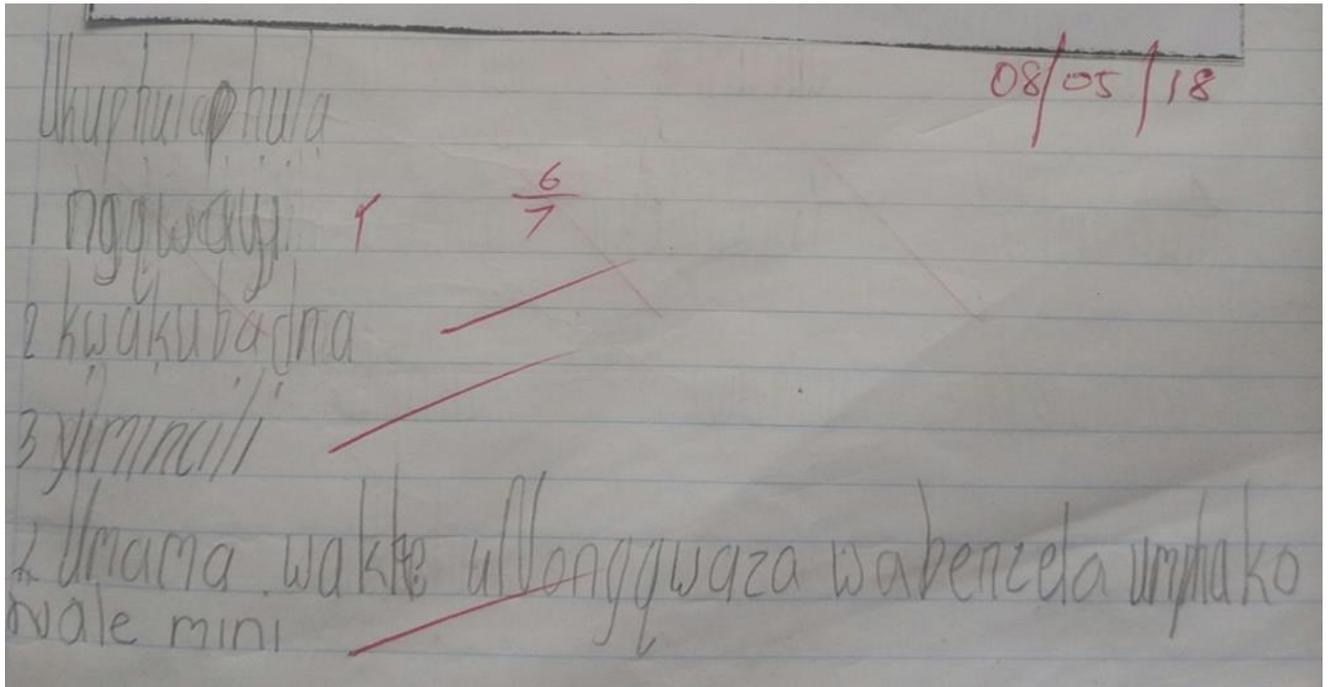


Figure 9A: Activity written after reading comprehension (Group 1 learner – 3B)

The learners' work above shows good understanding of the text as she got most of the answers correctly. However, the learner wrote “kwakubadna” instead of “kwakubanda” (it was cold) but the teacher marked her correctly. The learner either made a mistake or does not know how to write the word correctly. Incorrect spelling of words could impact on learners' vocabulary development if the learners are not corrected and guided by the teacher.

The following text is an example of what was written by one of the Group 3 learners:

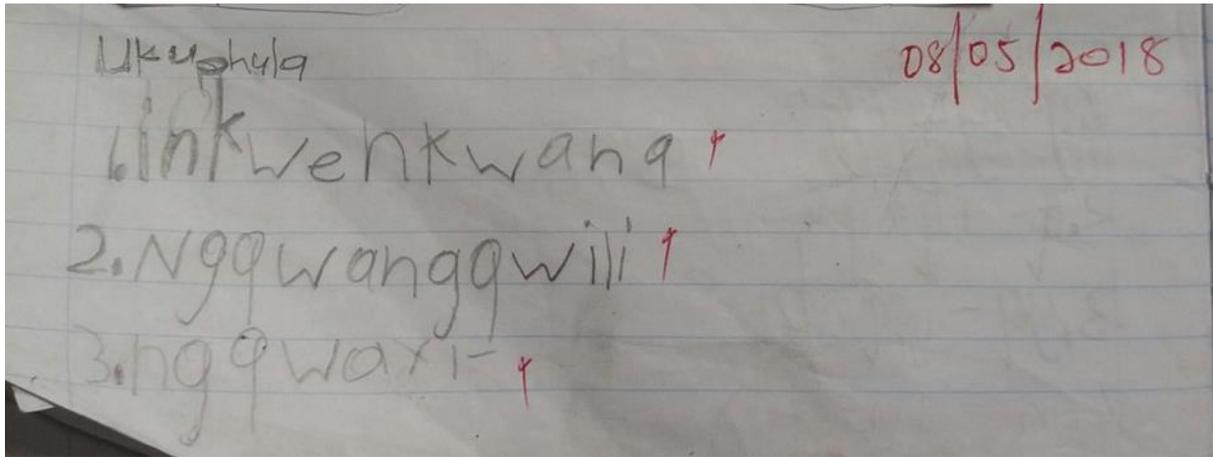


Figure 9B: Activity written after reading comprehension (Group 3 learner – 3B)

4.2.1 SUMMARY OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATION DATA

The observation data was based on teaching reading comprehension in two Grade 3 classes. As mentioned in Chapter 3, I observed two Grade 3 classrooms, 3A and 3B. In both classes the teachers focussed on reading. They seemed to be aware of the CAPS reading requirements for the Foundation Phase such as shared reading, group guided reading, paired/independent reading and phonics, including Phonemic Awareness (DBE, 2011). However, they did not focus on all the reading requirements, mentioned above. Both teachers introduced learners to shared reading and group guided reading only and did not facilitate independent and phonemic awareness.

In each class, learners sat in groups with different reading abilities. Both teachers activated learners' prior knowledge by asking questions. In the lesson presented above, learners relied on reading texts as there were no pictures in the stories that were read. During reading the teachers focussed on vocabulary development. Teachers seemed aware of the different reading stages (pre- or before, during and post reading) although they approached these stages differently and asked less challenging questions.

For example, Miss Goba demonstrated knowledge of phonological awareness in lesson 2 (3B) by asking learners to break new words into syllables. Written activities were given to learners at the end of the reading lesson in both classes.

Some learners struggled to write meaningful sentences although others could write short paragraphs that demonstrated good comprehension of their reading. As mentioned in Chapter 3, interviews were conducted with two Grade 3 teachers, the Grade 3 HOD and the school principal in order to validate classroom observation data. In the following section I present data collected by means of interviews.

4.3 DATA FROM INTERVIEWS

The teachers were asked questions on how they approached reading with comprehension in their classrooms. The HOD and the school principal were asked similar questions focussing on literacy levels in the school, and how they supported teachers to improve literacy performance levels in the Foundation Phase. As a starting point, I present data collected from two Grade 3 teachers (Miss Jama and Miss Goba).

4.3.1 INTERVIEWS WITH GRADE 3 TEACHERS

During data collection period Miss Jama who taught Grade 3A had been teaching for four years. She was a qualified Senior Phase educator. She did a Diploma in Fashion Design at Walter Sisulu University (WSU) and she furthered her studies with a Post Graduate Certificate in Education at the University of South Africa. She was registered for an Advanced Certificate in Teaching Foundation Phase at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

Miss Goba, on the other hand, had been a teacher for about twenty years and had been teaching in the Foundation Phase even though she was a qualified Senior Phase educator. She held a teaching Diploma from Cicerha College of Education in the Eastern Cape. She furthered her studies with a Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) certificate from the University of the Western Cape.

Concerning the teaching of reading comprehension, both teachers claimed that they used various strategies. Miss Jama stated that shared strategies such as before reading, during reading and after reading strategy promote learners' reading comprehension. Below is what Miss Jama (J1) said:

(J1)...Zininzi kakhulu izistrategies endizisebenzisayo mna. Okokuqala xa ndizoqalisa ufundisa ndiqale ndithi benze uqikelelo ngokujonga isihloko

sebali bajonge nemifanekiso esebalini, baqikelele ukuba inoba lingantoni. Kanti ndiyakwazi noqala ndibafundise amagama amatsha webali ngokusebenzisa oonotsheluzo. Phakathi ebalini, ndifunda ibali ndodwa, bafunde bodwa ndimamele okanye sifunde sonke de siligqibe.

...There are various strategies that I use. I start off with previewing the title before reading and predict through pictures what the story would be about. I introduce new vocabulary in the text by using flashcards. I read the story, and learners' read alone and I listen to them or read together until we finish the story.

She went on to explain how she proceeded with reading to cover all the reading stages.

(J2)...Okwesibini ke, imibuzo neempendulo yona ivela kuzo zonke izigaba zebali *because* kwaphana kwi-*before reading*, ngoku sifunda okanye emva kokufunda ndiqhuba imibuzo nje. ...Okwesithathu, ba-*summari-za* iziganeko ngokulandelelana kwazo.

...Secondly, questions and answers come throughout the reading stages because even before reading, during reading and after reading stage I continue with questions....Thirdly we summarise the story according to the sequence of events.

In the interviews, the two teachers claimed that they activated learners' prior knowledge by using pictures and by reading the title of the story, but during my lesson observations there were no pictures in the reading comprehension texts that were used. The teachers' responses show that teachers were aware of how to conduct a reading comprehension lesson but they did not always practise it.

In addition, the two Grade 3 teachers highlighted similar challenges in teaching reading comprehension. Both teachers stated that the lack of teaching and learning resources was a challenge. They further reported that it was a challenge to find isiXhosa resources such as books, magazines or recipes which could be used to teach learners using various texts. Miss Jama expressed herself as follows:

(J3)...iincwadi esinazo apha azikho *enough shame*. For example, sinee-readers zakwa *Shooter & Shuter, Oxford graded readers and Kagiso readers*

for uGrade3 but aziboneli abantwana. *I mean ziyashota kwi-class nganye.*
So loo nto yenza abantwana bethu bangasoloko bezifumana incwadi xa befuna ufunda. Sine-*library* enye apha kwezi lokshini zintathu ehoye izikolo eziyi-nine.

...the books we have are not enough. For example, we have readers from Shooter & Shuter, Oxford graded readers and Kagiso readers but they are not enough for learners in each class. I mean they fall short in each class. So learners do not always get books to read. We have one library in these three nearby townships and it serves nine schools.

According to Miss Goba (G), the available teaching resources at Siyavuya Primary School do not have all the letter sounds recommended by CAPS to be taught in Grade 3. She had this to say:

(G1)...Incwadi esinazo zivele zingahambelani nezandi ekufanele sizititshe ngokwakuCAPS.

...the books that we have do not always correlate with the sounds required by CAPS.

The above responses indicate that learners may have difficulties in reading because they do not have enough reading material to read for pleasure and for learning. This may lead to poor reading abilities as learners have limited access to books. This suggests that teachers need to create their own stories because the available resources are inappropriate. As discussed earlier, insufficient exposure to teaching and learning resources such as textbooks in the classroom or school library has a big impact on the learners' reading (Pretorius and Machet, 2004).

Concerning their qualifications and teaching experience, the teachers had varying experience in Foundation Phase teaching. Miss Jama said:

(J4)...Mna ke zange ndenze i-degree kwi-teaching. Ndenza i-Diploma kwiFashion Design eWalter Sisulu University then ndenza unyaka omnye we-teaching certificate ukongeza kwiDiploma ukuze ndibe ne-teaching qualification eUniversity of South Africa. So ke ezinye izinto about i-

Foundation Phase or *utitsha i-language* ndizifunda ngoku ndititsha, kwii-
seminars nee-*workshops* eCTLI.

... I did not do a degree in teaching. I did a Diploma in Fashion Design at Walter Sisulu University. Then I did a one year teaching certificate to add to my Diploma at the University of South Africa. So I learned about Foundation Phase teaching and language teaching on the job, in seminars and at CTLI workshops.

On the other hand, Miss Goba felt that even though she obtained a Diploma it was a long time ago and teaching methodologies have changed. She studied under the apartheid government which offered a different training curriculum for students along racial lines. With the implementation of the new democratic policies, things have changed and sometimes it is difficult to adapt to new teaching methodologies.

The teachers attended professional development courses. For example, Miss Jama attended a literacy workshop at least once per year. She mentioned that she needed assistance to manage reading comprehension and class activities. More assistance was needed in reading and writing activities. She also indicated that the availability of teaching and learning resources and workshops would be useful to support her in teaching reading comprehension. Miss Jama was aware that she needed more knowledge on strategies to teach reading comprehension even though she had attended courses at the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute (CTLI). This limitation is likely to affect her teaching practice as teachers' limited subject knowledge could be a contributory factor to poor reading comprehension levels because teachers are the most important resources on which the school depends to achieve its literacy levels (Pretorious and Machet, 2004).

Likewise, Miss Goba attended CTLI workshops at least once a year. She also attended cluster seminars at least once a month. She indicated that she gained knowledge from the workshops offered at the CTLI. She wished that each school would be allocated a school-based teacher for Learners with Special Educational Needs because there were many learners who seriously needed attention to improve in literacy. She stated that teachers needed to be monitored and supported on teaching reading comprehension in their classes because sometimes they did what they thought was right. Reading comprehension could be improved if the school could have enough relevant teaching and learning resources.

The two teachers stated that they used the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) to observe learners when reading and to monitor their reading pace on the number of words they read per minute. They believed that EGRA was a good intervention strategy because it starts with the observation of learners in Grade 3 who experience difficulties in reading and writing. Miss Goba used different strategies such as additional class activities to assist struggling learners in literacy and numeracy. Regarding factors contributing towards learners' acquisition of reading comprehension skills, Miss Jama mentioned that she exposed her learners to shared reading, reading aloud, group guided reading, but she expressed a concern about learners who were very lazy to read.

(J5): ...Yhoo!! Abantwana esinabo bayonqena ukufunda, futhi sowubaxelela ukuba bafunde uvele ubone uba abanamdla nje tu...

... Yhoo!! Our learners lack interest and motivation to read even when you are instructing them to read, they seem to have no interest...

The above observation was echoed by Miss Goba who stated that many learners come to Grade 3 with poor reading competence, and needed constant support to improve their reading. She had this to say:

(G2)...abanye babantwana bethu bafika kwaGrade 3 bewaqhawula amagama xa befunda. Uve kwa-sentence ayifundwa kuvakale umyalezo wayo. And then when you model reading for them, ubeve bayazama baphinde xa bafunda bodwa bavele boyisakale.

...some learners start Grade3 breaking up words when they read. You find that they do not read with meaning. When you model reading for them, they try to read correctly but when they are on their own, they struggle to read.

Another factor that influences learner's acquisition of reading comprehension skills is the learners' lack of knowledge of basic letter sounds and reading with understanding. Both teachers shared the same view. Miss Goba said:

(G3)...Abantwana bethu ba-lack (isha) i-basic skills zezandi, alphabets, ukwenza izivakalisi nokufunda ngokuqonda.

...Our learners lack basic skills of letter sounds, letters of the alphabet, and sentence construction and reading with comprehension.

Both Grade 3 teachers voiced similar anxieties that there was not sufficient time to teach reading thoroughly. Struggling readers were not always given time to read individually and with the teacher. Pretorious & Klapwijk (2016) hold the view that if time is not spent on developing reading in and out of classrooms, learners will have difficulties in improving their reading ability which leads to better reading comprehension skills. In other words, the time of exposure to reading is an important factor in enhancing reading comprehension.

Below I present interview data from the Grade 3 HOD. Her interview was based on the school's literacy level, the challenges experienced by the learners in reading and how they supported teaching literacy in the Foundation Phase.

4.3.2 INTERVIEW WITH THE GRADE 3 HOD

When I collected data at Siyavuya Primary School in 2018, Miss Sigu had been an educator for twenty years. She had taught for ten years in the Senior Phase and had been teaching in the Foundation Phase for at least ten years. She was trained for the Intermediate Phase. She had been an HOD for four years. Miss Sigu holds a Senior Teachers Diploma from the Western Cape Education College, an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in Mathematics from the University of Cape Town (UCT). She was also doing an Advanced Certificate in Teaching Foundation Phase at UCT.

Miss Sigu mentioned that there was a challenge with regard to the availability of suitable resources for teaching and learning in the Foundation Phase. As an HOD, Miss Sigu encouraged teachers to write their own stories that would include letter sounds suggested by CAPS.

(S1)...Thina sisiGrade 3, sizenzela ezethu izitori kuba ezi sizifumana ezincwadini *sometimes* azihambelani nentlalo abantwana *aba-relate* kuyo. *Then* siye sizame uqinisekisa uba izitori ezi zethu zihambelana nentlalo yesimo sabantwana. *Kwi-story* ngasinye siye siveze izandi ezithile *like* oonombini, oonontathu, noonone *for* Grade 3 *as* esitsho uCAPS. Umzekelo kumabali esesiwenzile okwangoku siquke izandi ezingoo-“*ndyw, xhw, nkc kunye no-ngqw*”.

...As Grade 3 teachers, we create our own stories because those we find in the books sometimes do not relate to the learners' social environment.

Then we always try to ensure that our stories relate to the contextual background of the learners. In each story we introduce two, three or four letter-sounds for Grade 3 as required by CAPS. For example, in the stories that we have created so far we focussed on letter sounds such as “*ndyw, xhw, nkc and ngqw*”.

In the above except, Miss Sigu showed her understanding of the importance of teaching stories that are based on learners’ sociocultural backgrounds so that they could build knowledge on what they are familiar with in their environment. Prior knowledge helps to build new knowledge.

She explained that the teaching approaches used by teachers contribute to learners’ acquisition of reading comprehension skills. She mentioned that as experienced teachers, they used to focus more on language structures and conventions instead of the Balanced Language Approach. She stressed that learners might struggle with letter sounds and alphabets because of how they were taught in Grade 1. She further stated that teachers did not expose learners adequately to reading because they rushed to complete various assessments such as School Based Assessment and Early Grade Reading Assessment.

Another challenge mentioned by Miss Sigu was the lack of knowledge on literacy teaching methodologies, especially in the lower grades. She said:

... Abanye abantwana bachanwa kufundiswa ii-*alphabets* nge-*English* xa bekuGrade R. *But then* xa befika kuGrade 1 funeka bafunde ii-*alphabets* ngesiXhosa. Yingxaki enkulu leyo. Uvele ubone ukuba kumnyama tsu kubo. Umzekelo, /e/ nge-*English could be* yi-vowel ku- *egg* kanti /i/ ngesiXhosa sisikhamiso esisetyenziswa kakhulu xa ukhomba. Kuzo zombini ezi-*languages* sibizwa ngokufanayo esi sikhamiso (i).

...Some learners were taught alphabets in English in Grade R but learners are taught alphabets in isiXhosa in Grade 1. This is a big challenge. You can see that learners do not understand at all. For example, /e/ in English is a vowel as in /egg/ whereas in isiXhosa it is a vowel used to form locatives. In both languages they are pronounced in the same way.

As HOD, she identified teachers’ needs through class visits. In this way, she monitored and supported teachers.

Miss Sigu measured her success through the systemic assessment which had improved since she became the HOD. She held individual and group meetings to praise teachers, listen to their challenges and teaching strategies.

As stated earlier, I also interviewed the principal to gain an insight of how the SMT supported literacy teaching and learning at Siyavuya Primary School. Below I discuss the interview with the principal.

4.3.3 INTERVIEW WITH THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

I interviewed the school principal (Mr Vamba) in order to understand his experiences about low literacy results at his school, the challenges faced by teachers and the factors which contributed to low literacy levels.

Mr Vamba had been a teacher for sixteen years in other schools and had been a school principal at Siyavuya Primary School for five years. He held an Honours Degree in Education Management from the University of Stellenbosch and was doing Masters in the same institution at the time of data collection.

Mr Vamba thought that the literacy status at Siyavuya Primary School was low but Systemic Assessment results had improved since 2014 even though there was still a room for improvement. He stated that as their Foundation Phase learners were taught in their Home Language, they should at least be able to obtain above 50% in the School Based Assessments and Systemic Assessment but this has not been the case. He had this to say:

(V1)...Sinootitshala aba (we have teachers who are) *-qualified* but *unqualified*. With this, I mean, with fifteen teachers for Foundation Phase, only two teachers are qualified to teach in that Phase. The rest of the teachers are Intermediate and Senior teachers.

Mr Vamba's response is consistent with the NEEDU Report (2013) which states that teachers are expected to play a central role in teaching literacy skills but some of them are not adequately qualified to teach literacy and are not skilled readers themselves. They have poor content knowledge, poor subject knowledge and poor detailed curriculum knowledge.

He also mentioned the lack of parental involvement as a challenge that contributed to low literacy levels at the school. Many parents had low education levels and did not understand the value of literacy. He said:

(V2): ...Enye ingxaki, *this school is situated in a disadvantaged community with many illiterate people ... so I think ababancedisi ncam abantwana kwimisebenzi yesikolo. I think sometimes they do not understand the value of buying educational resources for their children.*

...Another problem, this school is situated in a disadvantaged community with many illiterate people so they do not help their children with school work...I think sometimes they do not understand the value of buying educational resources for their children.

Mr Vamba further mentioned that teachers lacked motivation and passion to teach as some of them dragged their feet to go to the classrooms. Others came late to school or would be absent. Concerning the teaching of literacy, he believed that teachers had to improve their teaching methodologies and should be aware of new literacy approaches. He was also of the view that the school's Systemic Evaluation results could improve if intervention programmes such as additional support activities were provided to struggling learners and there was differentiation of activities in classes. He also stated that the holiday programmes that were planned by teachers could be implemented during formal school hours.

The principal explained that their school had its own institutional strategy which focused on improving literacy by monitoring curriculum implementation by the HODs. He considered himself successful in his position because he had managed to work with teachers and improve the systemic evaluation results since he started at the school. He also listened to teacher proposals and ideas to improve literacy. In supporting teachers, he tried to supply resources needed by teachers and encouraged HODs to work cooperatively with the teachers they supervised.

4.4 SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

The teachers mentioned that they used different strategies to teach literacy. Storytelling was one of the strategies they used.

Teachers reported that they taught reading comprehension lessons by following the three stages of reading, namely before, during and after reading to facilitate learner's comprehension.

All the participants who were interviewed mentioned that the learners' literacy levels were low and learners struggled with reading comprehension.

The School Management Team (SMT) members (HOD and Principal) mentioned some of the FP teachers were unqualified to teach in this phase. Some of them lacked motivation and passion in teaching. The lack of parental involvement and insufficient teaching and learning resources were also a challenge in the teaching of reading literacy in the Foundation Phase. However, the school's literacy levels have improved since 2014 even though they had not yet reached 50%. They achieved the results by doing holiday programmes for Grade 3 learners where they grouped Grade 3 learners according to their literacy abilities.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Various qualitative studies collect data using audio or video data through tape recordings of interviews, focus groups or talk in consultation and then usually transcribe into written form for a meaningful description (Bailey, 2008). Transcriptions of data is very detailed in qualitative research because it focuses on capturing features of talk such as emphasis, speed, tone of voice, timing and pauses of the participant and these are important elements for interpreting data (Bailey, 2008).

In this study, I adopted this approach by first transcribing the collected data into written form. Codes in data analysis are used as devices to identify, mark and remind the researcher about certain themes in a text (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). I chose ethnographic coding which refers to grouping certain notes together (Emmerson, Fretze & Shaw, 1995).

I used themes to categorise transcribed data accordingly. Thematic analysis is further seen as a method that reports on experiences, meanings and reality which participants attach on things within the society (Braun & Clarke 2006). Many qualitative researchers regard Thematic Analysis as a type of analysis used to identify, classify, present and report patterns in themes within the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Alhojailan, 2012).

It is viewed as a useful and flexible research tool that could provide detailed and complex data (Braun & Clarke; 2006).

I chose Thematic Analysis because I wanted to see similar and different patterns on the information gathered from participants. Ryan & Bernard (2003) suggest techniques such as repetitions, categories, linguistic connections, time orientated relationship and missing data as things to look for when observing themes in the texts. In this study, I did not use all the techniques but I chose repetitions, similarities, differences to sort data accordingly.

Themes were informed by research questions that are stated in the first chapter of thesis. The themes and sub-themes discussed below emerged from the data that is presented above. The main themes are:

1. Pedagogical practices
2. Barriers to Reading Literacy
3. Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Reading Comprehension

4.6 PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

Teachers used different reading strategies for reading comprehension. They followed before, during and after reading strategies that are suggested by CAPS.

4.6.1 Reading Strategies

In the interviews teachers mentioned that they used metacognition strategies such as before reading, during reading and after reading strategies to enhance reading comprehension in their classes. Metacognition strategies help learners to acquire knowledge and comprehend what they read (Boulwere,-Gooden, Carrer, Thornhill & Joshi, 2007). The pre-reading strategy helps the teacher to understand learners' prior knowledge and the teachers use their experiences to brainstorm and predict the reading content. During this stage children should predict the title and what the story is about through visuals (Duke & Pearson, 2009). The CAPS document recommends that learners be taken through visual cues by using pictures or photographs in the text before reading the text (DBE, 2011). Boulwere-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill & Joshi, (2007) claim that the use of metacognition strategies such as before reading, during reading and after reading help children to think about what they are reading, understand and remember the text read.

However, both teachers did not make use of visuals resources to enhance learners' reading because most of the texts that were used had no pictures (See Appendix G & I).

Ignoring learners' prior knowledge could lead to learners' poor comprehension of the text (Alvermann, Smith & Readence, 1985). Observation data showed a good interaction in the two Grade 3 classrooms through questions and answers. Nevertheless, the questions did not challenge learners' high order thinking skills. For example, in lesson 2 -3B it could have been useful if learners' predictions were followed up in order to guide their thinking. Although teachers seemed to be aware of metacognition strategies, they did not give an in-depth focus on each stage to support learners' reading comprehension. The teaching strategies used by the teachers were not in line with the ideological literacy model which believes that people's literacy is based on people's socio-cultural views and allows people to build knowledge based on what they know (Street, 2005).

It appeared that teachers were not sure of how to make incremental connections between the different reading stages for learners' cognitive development and access to knowledge through reading. In other words, there was no strong mediation of learners' reading comprehension for the learners to reach the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1979).

Different teaching strategies and assessment strategies are needed to accommodate all learners during the teaching-learning process. Both teachers reported that they differentiated tasks in order to accommodate learners who were at different literacy competence levels. However, the observation data indicates that it was only Miss Goba who attempted to differentiate assessment activities to accommodate all learners. For example, differentiated assessments are seen in Figure 5A by Group 1 learners, and the activity shown as Figure 5B shows Group 3 learners who experienced some reading and writing difficulties. In lesson two, Miss Goba further asked her last group to identify single consonants from letter sound "ngqw" while she asked her second and first groups to identify other consonants. This shows that she was aware of the different levels at which learners were in and varied the activities accordingly.

4.6.2 Phonemic awareness

In the beginning stages of reading, children read in an alphabetical system which involves knowledge of letters, decoding letters into sounds and linking the sounds into single words to form sentences (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Phonemic awareness teaches children how to break down words into phonemes and this improves their language development and decoding skills (Phajane & Mokhele, 2013).

While classroom observations show that teachers were aware of phonemic awareness as a reading strategy, they did not promote reading through phonemes, i.e. reading single sounds to form words. Miss Goba tried to use this strategy to a limited extent whereby she gave learners new words from the text and told them to break them into syllables. The example is illustrated by Figure 4, Lesson 1 – in 3B.

Even though vocabulary was taught in reading comprehension lessons, words were not taught in context. Teaching vocabulary from the text is a good approach as learners are introduced to new words.

Observation data showed that many learners in both classes had poor basic components of reading such as phonemic awareness, phonics fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Some of them broke words and had many pauses instead of reading with speed and fluency. Poor reading fluency results in loss of reading comprehension. If children are fluent in their reading, they can comprehend the text without being stuck at words (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003).

The lessons presented illustrated that it was difficult for learners to comprehend when they relied on written words only which were not accompanied by any visuals. Questions were kept on low order and did not deepen learners' critical thinking.

4.6.3 Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Reading Comprehension

Teachers need to have strong knowledge base in order to teach appropriately. Knowledge base includes content knowledge of what will be taught, educational materials and structures in teacher organisations, an understanding of processes involved in schooling, teaching and learning. Teachers also need guidance in order to be effective in their teaching (Shulman, 1987).

Teachers are expected to play a crucial role in teaching literacy skills. However, some show poor content knowledge, poor subject knowledge and poor detailed curriculum knowledge (NEEDU, 2012). Some teachers cannot understand what is expected of them (Bloch, 2006; & Shulman, 1987). Interviews showed that one of the teachers had poor subject and pedagogical literacy knowledge for the Foundation Phase.

For example, one teacher stated that she did fashion design during her tertiary training and a one year certificate in order to obtain teacher qualification. As a result, she experienced difficulties in teaching reading and writing in Grade 3.

Similarly, the principal's interview stated that the majority of teachers were unqualified to teach in the Foundation Phase because they were trained for the Senior Phase. This shows that there is poor instructional knowledge on how to teach literacy in the FP. This is likely to affect not only teachers' confidence, but also their literacy practice in the classroom.

Both the interview and observation data showed that the stories in the readers do not focus on letter sounds recommended by CAPS. As a result, the Grade 3 teachers created their own stories and tried to expose learners to a range of texts. They also introduced the letter-sounds appropriate for the grade. Children need to be exposed to extensive experience of reading and writing texts which could help them to become excellent independent readers (Duke & Pearson, 2008). However, the challenge was the fact that both teachers were not FP specialists.

4.7 CHALLENGES TO THE TEACHING READING AND LEARNING OF READING COMPREHENSION

The interview and classroom observation data show that there were challenges with regard to the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. The main challenges were the following:

1. Lack of isiXhosa reading material
2. Insufficient time allocated for reading
3. Limited Teacher Support

4.7.1 Lack of isiXhosa reading material

The two Grade 3 teachers reported that they did not have enough readers for teaching reading. Sometimes reading could not take place as the teachers had planned because there were insufficient or few reading books in isiXhosa. This was confirmed by classroom observation data whereby I noticed that there were three different sets of readers and the copies were not enough for all the learners. As a result, learners could not take the readers home to read for pleasure. Also, there is only one local library surrounded by at least three townships and it serves five primary schools and three high schools.

This shows that there is a general lack of reading material in the community due to low socio-economic status of the entire community.

Introducing children to educational resources and books from an early age improves language development. Some researchers note that books do not only broaden knowledge in children but they also develop academic language proficiency and increase children's attention span (Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005). While children from illiterate homes are exposed to spoken language, they have limited exposure to reading and writing (Goodman & Goodman, 1979). This impacts negatively on their reading proficiency when they start school.

Research shows that low socio-economic backgrounds often impact negatively on children's literacy (Bloch, 2006). The interview data showed that parents' low education levels had a negative effect too on learners' reading performance as they could not afford to buy educational or reading resources for their children. They could not assist their children in activities such as reading stories to develop their love for reading. Hence Pretorius and Machet (2004) claim that lack of reading resources has a major effect on the learner's reading.

Observation data showed that learners were at different reading proficiency levels. While oral, reading and written languages are influenced by the environment in which learners grow (Konza, 2011), adequate exposure to reading material is one of the major factors in supporting children's reading literacy. This implies that access to appropriate reading could have a positive impact on learners' reading abilities and comprehension.

It was interesting to observe that Grade 3 teachers had opted to create their own texts in isiXhosa due to lack of reading books in this language. This is good initiative towards developing materials in isiXhosa for early readers.

4.7.2 Insufficient time allocated for reading

Teachers indicated that there was insufficient reading time for Grade 3 learners. They expressed their anxiety that learners could have comprehension challenges because the reading time as suggested by CAPS was insufficient. Data gathered from the interviews stressed that teachers did not give learners enough time to read, instead they focussed on various assessments tasks such as School Based Assessment. This means that learners were not adequately exposed to extensive reading.

This is likely to lead to learners' reading difficulties and their acquisition of their home languages if time is not spent on developing reading in and out of classrooms (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016).

The interviewed teachers believed that children needed to be exposed to different reading methodologies. Both interviews and observations revealed that learners were at different stages of reading. Therefore, with the stipulated time, it was difficult to expose learners to reading effectively. However, teachers needed to acknowledge reading time and focus on reading to enhance comprehension or reading with meaning. Teachers need to be creative when teaching language and not restrict themselves on the prescribed documents of education departments (Rubin, 1989; Richards & Jones, 2015). Creativity increases motivation to learn and learners' self-esteem enriches their lives to make a contribution to the society (Richards & Jones, 2015). Rubin (1989) affirms that proficient teaching depends on the number of skills such as technical skills which include organising and preparing relevant activities for the lessons and differentiation of questions. Another skill to enhance reading is including and exposing learners to analysis of problems, detecting cause and effect and predicting throughout the texts. Unfortunately, the two teachers did not stimulate learners' problem-solving and prediction skills in their teaching of reading.

4.7.3. Limited Teacher Support

Teachers relied on workshops and seminars which they attended once or twice per year or monthly cluster meetings. This seemed to be insufficient for teachers to gain sufficient information on how to enhance FP learner's reading comprehension. So teachers need more and frequent training so that they can deepen their pedagogical content knowledge in reading.

The provision of support in the school influences teachers to work effectively with their learners (Singh & Billingsley, 1998; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014).

A positive environment consequently leads to teachers who ask questions, help others and are eager to give and receive feedback (Billingsley, 1998).

The analysed data showed that even though the SMT highlighted that teachers were supported at school, the support was not directed towards teaching reading comprehension. The school helped in the enrolment of six teachers to further their studies in FP teaching, but this kind of support was mostly on professional development and not on the different aspects

of teaching reading. Supporting teachers to improve poor pedagogical content knowledge could be through developing and coaching them in their subjects throughout their teaching careers (Kazemi, Franke & Lampert, 2009).

4.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have presented and analysed data collected by means of classroom observations and interviews with two Grade 3 teachers, the Grade 3 HOD and the School Principal regarding reading comprehension. I discussed data analysis through themes and sub-themes reporting on the strategies that teachers used to teach reading comprehension and the challenges they experienced.

The data showed a gap between what teachers are expected to do and what they do in their classroom practise.

In the next chapter, I discuss the findings of the study and provide recommendations.



CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the reading of reading comprehension in isiXhosa as part of literacy development in Grade 3. In this chapter I present the research findings that emanated from the analysed data. The chapter also provides conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following research findings align with the subsidiary research questions mentioned in Chapter 1 of this thesis. The research focusses on the strategies used by teachers in the teaching of isiXhosa reading comprehension in Grade 3 and the challenges experienced in the teaching and learning of isiXhosa reading comprehension. The first two findings (5.2.1-5.2.3) address the first research question: What are the strategies used by teachers in teaching isiXhosa reading comprehension to Grade 3 learners? The second research question is addressed by findings 5.2.4 – 5.2.7. Below I discuss the research findings.

5.2.1 Use of Question and Answer teaching strategy

The analysed data shows that teachers made use of teacher-centred or learner-centred approaches. In this study both teachers facilitated learner's reading comprehension by making use of the question and answer method. They stimulated learner's prior knowledge and also used questions to assess learner's understanding of what they read. However, some of the questions did not challenge learner's critical thinking. In other words, the teachers made use of low order questions that required easy answers from the learners. In some cases, the teachers played the biggest role in the lessons by reading alone and not giving enough reading opportunities to learners. In this way, the lessons became more teacher-centred.

Learner centred approaches enable learners to take control of their own learning and take responsibilities of directing what to is to be learned (Doyle, 2008).

In this approach the learners become active participants in their learning while the teacher acts as a facilitator (Weimer, 2002).

Doyle (2008) points out that creating learner-centred environment is very important for teachers because it enhances student's learning. The fundamental aim of a learner-centred approach is to equip learners with the necessary learning skills so that they can construct their own knowledge (Weimer, 2002). Both Weimer (2002) and Doyle (2008) view a learner-centred approach as a new way of teaching as opposed to the teacher-centred approach.

5.2.2 Use of a variety of reading strategies to foster learners' reading for comprehension

In this study, both teachers made attempts to develop learners' vocabulary. Learners were asked to explain the meaning of various words such as "*izixhiliphothi*". However, they were not given enough opportunity to use the new vocabulary in sentences. In this way, their knowledge on how they made meaning of the new vocabulary that emanated from the reading lessons could not be assessed.

Many language experts agree on five components of reading which are discussed in Chapter 2 (National Reading Panel, 2000 & DBE, 2011). In this study reading was mainly based on group guided reading, shared reading and phonics. Teachers complained that paired or independent reading required more time. Learners were also introduced to phonics through phonological awareness that is recommended by CAPS (DBE, 2011).

Through phonological awareness learners are able to recognise that the spoken language has a sequence of sounds. Learners should be able to recognise these sounds from words and sentences (DBE, 2011). One of the teachers introduced learners to phonological awareness by giving learners new words from the text to break up into syllables, (*e.g. yimigulukudu- yi-mi-gu-lu-ku-du*), as illustrated in Figure 4.

CAPS provides suggestions and a guidance on how to introduce phonics (DBE, 2011). Learners need to understand phonics because they are very important for both reading and writing. CAPS recommends that teaching spelling informally could be done in Grades 1, 2 and 3 but a formal spelling programme should also be implemented with spelling tests in order to expose learners to the sounds of the language (DBE, 2011). Learners should be exposed to word recognition especially during Shared Reading and Group Guided Reading lessons.

Reading comprehension was also enhanced through vocabulary development. Vocabulary is the knowledge and understanding of spoken or written words and it has a positive influence

in comprehension. However, not all vocabulary instruction increases reading comprehension (Nagy, 1988). Vocabulary should not be alone but new words should be taught in context to enable learners to use words for meaning-making.

5.2.3 Limited use of Reading Comprehension Strategies

The Grade 3 teachers did not use all comprehension strategies to activate learners' prior knowledge. Both teachers focussed on the question and answer strategy and used mostly literal questions which were straight forward and required one or two word answers. Learners did not get time to elaborate on their answers to display their reasoning and comprehension of the reading texts.

Pictures help children to remember the story and be able to tell it in their own way. De Jong and Bus (2002) believe that pictures and illustrations in story books improve comprehension. The use of appropriate resources which consider learners' socio-cultural environment is also very important for reading comprehension.

Learners should read with understanding or comprehension. The teacher needs to introduce learners to different levels of thinking, starting with low order questions and guide the learners into high order thinking to enhance comprehension (DBE, 2011).

CAPS provides a guide on which questions could be used to promote levels of thinking. For example, literal questions which consist of easier questions are meant to be answered by almost all learners. On the other hand, higher order skills include reorganisation of the story by comparing and contrasting, classifying and summarising events of the story. Higher order questions also include evaluation and appreciation questions. Learners need to be exposed to inferential questions. Through inferential questions, learners find the information that is not explicitly stated and state the consequences of actions of characters (DBE, 2011). In this study, teachers relied on low order questions to assess children's reading comprehension. These questions did not encourage learners' critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

5.2.4 Insufficient isiXhosa reading materials

One of the challenges identified in this study was the lack of isiXhosa reading materials. The study established that teachers did not have appropriate resources to teach reading due to limited teaching and learning resources at the school, especially isiXhosa materials. The available resources at the researched school did not address the requirement of CAPS.

The teachers had to create teaching and learning material, and they had no training on materials development. While the Department of Basic Education has issued DBE workbooks for Grades R-6 in languages and mathematics across the country (DBE, 2011), there were limited reading materials in isiXhosa. In this way, the school relied on the DBE workbooks which were not sufficient for learners. This implies that learners were not exposed to various texts in their home language.

Adequate exposure to reading material leads to an increase in learners' reading development and their construction of meaning (De Jong & Bus, 2002). This shows that learners can view books to gather information and construct their own stories if they have adequate access to books. Additionally, vocabulary development in children could increase by reading books under the guidance of a knowledgeable person like a teacher or parent (De Jong & Bus, 2002). Limited vocabulary is likely to lead to poor reading proficiency and comprehension.

5.2.5 Lack of training in Foundation Phase Teaching

Sometimes schools do not appoint teachers according to phase they have trained for due to a number of factors. This study revealed that the majority of teachers in the school where researched was conducted school were trained for the Intermediate Phase but they taught in the Foundation Phase.

Both teachers in the interviews expressed that their qualifications were not appropriate for the Foundation Phase. One of the teachers had a qualification in fashion designing and was not fully equipped with the Foundation Phase pedagogy. She showed lack of knowledge on the teaching of reading comprehension as part of literacy in the Foundation Phase.

Teachers are supposed to deliver the curriculum and facilitate learning, but low qualifications can have a negative impact on children's learning. The DBE has realised the crisis of teacher education and launched an Intergrated Strategic Planning Framework in 2011-2025 which aimed at improving the quality of teacher education (DBE, 2011). This initiative is promising, given the literacy crisis in many South African schools.

5.2.6 The negative impact of the socio-economic environment on reading

Learners involved in this study came from poor socio-economic background and did not have access to books in their homes. The community in which the school was located is poor, with

high unemployment rates. There was one library which served a number of neighbouring schools.

This means that most learners only found an opportunity to read in the classrooms at school only. Most parents in the community had low education levels and therefore, could not assist their children in their school work.

Whitehurst & Lonigan (1998) emphasize that as children start literacy in their homes, which is referred to emergent literacy, they should be exposed to literacy activities both at home and at school. In other words, reading, writing and oral language develop concurrently from children's early age when interacting with others in the social context (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Therefore, in order to improve literacy levels at schools, learners need to be exposed to literacy both at home and at school.

Guo, Sawyer, Justice & Kaderavek (2013) suggest that classrooms should be print-rich environments in order to help children from poor literacy environments. Wolfersberger, Reutzel, Sudweeks, Fawson (2004) concurs with Guo, Sawyer, Justice & Kaderavek (2013) that print rich classrooms play a fundamental role in developing children's literacy.

The analysed data showed that 3A and 3B walls were covered with charts, but the charts mostly had sounds and narratives that had already been taught.

The classrooms had no other types of genres such shopping list, notices, calendars in learners' home language. This shows that reading literacy in classrooms was limited.

5.2.7 Limited Teacher Support

The findings of the study show that support given to teachers by their management team in the researched school was not enough. The study also revealed that some HOD's had not specialised in the subjects or phase s/he managed. This shows that there was an imbalance between managing the phase and the pedagogical content knowledge of the SMT members that was needed to support teachers.

The analysed data showed that the training provided by the Department (i.e. the CTLI training) was not enough because teachers were sent to workshops once or twice per year. This period was insufficient, especially for teachers who had not done a four year training in teaching.

Liebermann (1995) states that most of the in-service or teacher development activities are abstract ideas that are unattached to classroom life, with little attention paid to an on-going support needed by teachers. In addition, DBE (2011), claims that teacher development should be classroom and curriculum-focused and should concentrate on improving learners' understanding of the school work. It also explains that the teacher must be placed at the heart of teacher development activities such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). It further claims that the curriculum should develop teacher knowledge and practice standards, focus on diagnostic self-assessments courses to develop teachers' curriculum competence (DBE, 2011). Teachers need to be guided and shown what to do in order to conduct teaching and learning in a progressive way (Reumann-Moore, Sanders & Christman, 2011). Therefore, the content of the teacher development courses should be designed to support teachers' subject content and pedagogical content knowledge.

In the light of the above findings , I would like to make the following recommendations.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers could be frequently sent to teacher training workshops in order to improve their pedagogical knowledge. The WCED and the schools' SMT should reconsider teacher training workshops because sending teachers to workshops once per year is not enough to acquire knowledge needed for classroom practice. Workshops help teachers to learn about relevant teaching approaches and make a shift from traditional teaching approaches and apply learner-centred approaches. Given the literacy crisis in South Africa, more attention should be given to the teaching of reading for and with meaning.
2. Regarding teacher qualification, the government and all higher institutions should apply strict requirements on teacher certificates issued to teachers and how they are placed in schools. Teachers should be employed and placed according to their specialisations, i.e. subjects and phase they trained for.
3. Teachers need to be guided and supported in the curriculum during teaching and learning by their supervisors. This could mean that the SMT members and Subject Heads should have realistic school structure where they meet together to plan what will be taught, how it will be taught, time tabling and provide the necessary support to teachers.

4. In order to deal with illiteracy in communities, parents could be encouraged to participate in literacy activities. The government could offer literacy programmes in communities so that they could understand the importance of exposing children to literacy activities at home.
5. Community leaders should ensure that there is a library in each township to serve its inhabitants rather than one library serving various areas.
6. African writers should be encouraged to write textbooks and other teaching resources in African languages.
7. Textbooks used at schools should be approved when they are aligned with CAPS recommendations.
8. Schools should buy enough and relevant resources so that each child could have access to books in order to improve literacy.
9. Resources should be evaluated in order to ensure that they are relevant to the context of learners.
10. The school should have a functioning library, teachers should monitor book reading and learners should get an access to books and read for pleasure in order to develop their love for reading books and increase their vocabulary.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The research was conducted with Grade 3 isiXhosa Home Language learners. The majority of learners and all the teachers spoke isiXhosa as their Home Language. Even though learners were taught in their home language from Grade 1-3, the study revealed that learners struggled to read for comprehension and this is likely to lead to low literacy levels.

Lack of resources at both the school and in the community perpetuates the cycle of academic disadvantage for poor children.

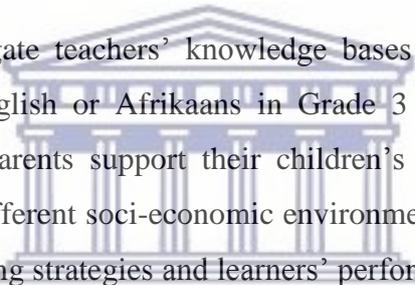
Poor learners are becoming poorer because they have no access to reading materials and other resources at school and within their environment and most parents do not play a major role in their children's education. This is a limitation that exacerbates learners' poor literacy performance, especially in disadvantaged schools.

The study also showed poor teacher pedagogical knowledge of reading comprehension. This has implication for learners reading comprehension. In other words, if teachers lack appropriate subject content and pedagogical content knowledge on reading, they are unlikely to successfully influence learners' reading for meaning. Therefore, reading for and with meaning requires urgent attention to improve learners' literacy performance in all the official languages used for learning and teaching in many Foundation Phase classrooms in South Africa. Teachers have to be trained and supported in order to teach effectively and improve learners' literacy performance through reading with comprehension.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study focussed on the teaching of reading comprehension in isiXhosa at Grade 3 level. The school where I conducted the research had insufficient resources and the school was situated in a disadvantaged area.

The next study could investigate teachers' knowledge bases and experiences of teaching reading comprehension in English or Afrikaans in Grade 3 in the Western Cape. Some schools have resources and parents support their children's literacy. It will be useful to conduct a similar study in a different soci-economic environment to determine whether there would be a difference in teaching strategies and learners' performance.



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APPENDICES



UNIVERSITY *of the*
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APPENDIX A



UNIVERSITY *of the*
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PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (WCED)



REFERENCE: 20180222-9693

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Ms Ayanda Siyothula
29705 Zulu Drive
Asanda Village
Strand
7140

Dear Ms Ayanda Siyothula

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: READING FOR UNDERSTANDING: AN INVESTIGATION INTO TEACHERS READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES IN GRADE 3 ISIXHOSA HOME LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 March 2018 till 15 June 2018**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

Directorate: Research

DATE: 26 February 2018

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTERS AND CONSENT FORMS



UNIVERSITY *of the*
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i) PERMISSION LETTER FOR THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

The Chairperson,

School Governing Body (SGB),

Primary School

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am a Masters Degree Student in the Department of Language Education at the University of the Western Cape. I hereby apply for approval to carry out my research in your school. The title of my research is: Reading for understanding: An investigation into teachers' reading comprehension strategies in Grade three isiXhosa Home Language classrooms in the Western Cape

My research involves observing teaching practices in a Grade 3 isiXhosa Home Language classroom. The class teacher will be interviewed. I will also interview Grade three HOD and the school Principal. Class activities will be audio and video-recorded with the teacher's permission. The aim of the research is to have a deeper understanding of teachers' pedagogical knowledge in teaching reading comprehension in isiXhosa.

All participants in the research will get consent forms. Participation is voluntary. This means that participants can withdraw from the research at any time they choose to do so. The names of all participants will be kept anonymous. The research process will not hinder teaching and learning.

I will adhere to ethical standards and respect learners, teachers and the school as a whole. Parents will sign on behalf of their children. The information about the school, teachers and learners will be kept confidential. The information provided will only be used for the purpose of the study. Lastly, I will give you a hard copy of the research findings before they are published.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

A. Siyothula (Miss)

Researcher: Ayanda Siyothula

@073 9810 752

ayandaandisiwe@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof. V. Nomlomo

@021 9592 649

vnomlomo@uwc.ac.za



ii) PERMISSION LETTER FOR THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND CONSENT FORM

The School Principal

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am a Masters Degree Student in the Department of Language Education at the University of the Western Cape. The title of my research topic is: Reading for understanding: An investigation into teachers' reading comprehension strategies in Grade three isiXhosa Home Language classrooms in the Western Cape.

The aim of the research is to have a deeper understanding of teachers' pedagogical knowledge in teaching reading comprehension in isiXhosa. My research will involve observing teacher and learner interactions in IsiXhosa home language reading literacy lessons.

I would like to conduct a research in your school. I would like to work with a Grade 3 class teacher and learners. Class activities will be audio and video-recorded with the teacher's permission. I will also interview the Grade three class teacher, the HOD and the school Principal.

Participation in the study will be voluntary. This means that my participants can withdraw from the research at any time they choose to do so. The names of all the participants will be kept anonymous. The research process will not hinder teaching and learning. I will adhere to ethical standards and respect learners, teachers and the school as a whole. The information about the school, teachers and learners will be kept confidential. The information provided will only be used for the purpose of the study. All participants will get consent forms. You will get a hard copy of the research findings before they are published.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

A. Siyothula (Miss)

Researcher: Ayanda Siyothula

@073 9810 752

ayandaandisiwe@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof. V. Nomlomo

@021 9592 649

vnomlomo@uwc.ac.za



iii) ILETA YEMVUME YABAZALI KUNYE NEMBALELWANO YEMVUME (PERMISSION LETTER TO PARENTS AND THE CONSENT FORM)

Mzali Obekekileyo

ISICELO SOKWENZA UPHANDO

_Ndenza izifundo zam kwimfundo enomsila (Masters Degree) kwiSebe leelwimi kwiDyunivesithi yase Ntshona Koloni. Ngoko ke ndicela ukwenza uphando ndisebenza nomntwana wakho kunye notitshala wakhe ukuphuhlisa indlela yokufunda nokufundisa. Isihloko sophando: Ukufunda ngengqiqo: *Ukuphonononga indlela ekufunda nekufundiswa ngayo ukufunda isicatshulwa kwisiXhosa kuLwimi lwasekhaya kwibanga lesithathu.*

Uphando lwam luquka ukubukela utitshala xa efundisa nabafundi xa befundiswa. Ezinye izifundo zeklasi ndiya kuzishicilela ndenze nevidiyo, ngemvume katitshala. Injongo yolu phando kukuqonda gabalala ngolwazi lweetitshala xa zifundisa isicatshulwa esifundwayo.

Wonke umntu othatha inxaxheba uza kunikwa iphepha-mvume. Abantwana bona bosayinelwa ngabazali babo. Ukuthatha inxaxheba kolu phando kuvulelekile, ngoko ke umntu angarhoxa nanini na xa efuna ukwenza njalo. Amagama wabantu abathathe inxaxheba akazukupahazwa ngenjongo zokubakhusela. Akuzukubakho kuhlukunyezwa kubathathi nxaxheba ngexesha lophando. Ndiya kubahlonipha abantwana, ootitshala kunye nesikolo ngokubanzi. Umzali uzakusayayinela umntwana wakhe evuma ukuba athathe inxaxheba koluphando. Zonke izinto endizifumene ngexesha lophando ziya kugcinwa bucala. Yonke into endithe ndayifumana kolu phando, ayizukudluliswela kolunye uphando. Okokugqibela, umntwana uyakufumana incwadi yophando phambi kokuba lupapashwe. Ndiyakuthembisa ukuba olu phando aluzukuphazamisana nokufunda kunye nokufundiswa.

Ningavuya ukudibana nawe ndikunike ingcaciso ethe vetshe malunga nophando, ukuba kukho into ongayiqondiyo.

Ozithobileyo

A. Siyothula (Miss)

Umphandi: Ayanda Siyothula

Umntu ondiphetheyo: Prof. V. Nomlomo

@073 9810 752

@021 9592 649

ayandaandisiwe@gmail.com

vnomlomo@uwc.ac.za



iv) IFOMU YOMZALI (CONSENT FORM FOR THE PARENT)

Uphando lucacisiwe kum. Umphandi undicacisele ukuba:

1. Akuzukubakho bungozi ngexesha lophando.
2. Ukuthabatha inxaxheba kuvulelekile, kwaye amagama wabathabathe inxaxheba awayi kupahaswa.
3. Nanini na umntu efuna ukurhoxa kuphando, uvumelekile enze njalo.
4. Ndiqinisekisiwe ukuba lonke ulwazi uluqokelelwe kuphando aluyi kudluliselwa kulonye uphando.
5. Phambi kokuba zipapashwe iziphumo zophando, ndiza kufumana ingxelo yalo.

Ndiyifundile ndayiqonda imiqathango yophando-nzulu.

Intsayino-gama:

Umhla.....



Inkcukacha zomzali : Iselula -

Ekhaya /emsebenzini –



v) PERMISSION LETTER TO PARENTS (TRANSLATED LETTER)

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

I am a Masters Degree Student in the Department of Language Education at the University of the Western Cape. The title of my research topic is: Reading for understanding: An investigation into teachers' reading comprehension strategies in Grade three isiXhosa Home Language classrooms in the Western Cape

The aim of the research is to have a deeper understanding of teachers' pedagogical knowledge in teaching reading comprehension in isiXhosa.

I would like to conduct a research in your child's classroom to observe IsiXhosa Home Language reading literacy lessons. In addition, class activities will be audio and video-recorded with your permission. I would also like to interview you.

Your child's participation in the study is voluntary. This means that he/she can withdraw from the research at any time you choose to do so. The names of all the children will be kept anonymous. The research process will not hinder teaching and learning. I will adhere to ethical standards and respect learners, teachers and the school as a whole. The information about the school, teachers and learners will be kept confidential. The information provided will only be used for the purpose of the study. All participants will get consent forms. You will get a hard copy of the research findings before they are published.

I would like to meet with you to give more explanation if there is anything that you don't understand.

Yours sincerely

A. Siyothula (Miss)

Researcher: Ayanda Siyothula

@073 9810 752

ayandaandisiwe@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof. V. Nomlomo

@021 9592 649

ynomlomo@uwc.ac.za



vi) INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARENT / LEGAL GUARDIAN

The study was explained to me clearly. The researcher explained to me that:

1. There will be no harm during the research process.
2. Participation is voluntary and that the names of participants will be kept anonymous.
3. Withdrawal of participation is permitted at any time I want to do so.
4. I have been assured that the information gathered during the research process will be used for the purpose of the study only.
5. The researcher will give me a hard copy of the research findings before they are published.

I have read and understand the conditions of the research.

Signature.....

Date.....



Your contact details: Cell -

Home / work –



vii) PERMISSION LETTER FOR THE CLASS TEACHER

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN MY RESEARCH

I am a Masters Degree Student in the Department of Language Education at the University of the Western Cape. The title of my research topic is: Reading for understanding: An investigation into teachers' reading comprehension strategies in Grade three isiXhosa Home Language classrooms in the Western Cape

The aim of the research is to have a deeper understanding of teachers' pedagogical knowledge in teaching reading comprehension in isiXhosa.

I would like to conduct a research in your classroom while you teach IsiXhosa Home Language reading literacy. In addition, class activities will be audio and video-recorded with your permission. I would also like to interview you.

Your participation in the study is voluntary. This means that you can withdraw from the research at any time you choose to do so. The names of all participants will be kept anonymous. The research process will not hinder teaching and learning. I will adhere to ethical standards and respect learners, teachers and the school as a whole. The information about the school, teachers and learners will be kept confidential. The information provided will only be used for the purpose of the study. All participants will get consent forms. You will get a hard copy of the research findings before they are published.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

A. Siyothula (Miss)

Researcher: Ayanda Siyothula

@073 9810 752

ayandaandisiwe@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof. V. Nomlomo

@021 9592 649

vnomlomo@uwc.ac.za



viii) INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR THE GRADE 3 CLASS TEACHER

The study was explained to me clearly. The researcher explained to me that:

1. There will be no harm during the research process.
2. Participation is voluntary and that the names of participants will be kept anonymous.
3. Withdrawal of participation is permitted at any time I want to do so.
4. I have been assured that the information gathered during the research process will be used for the purpose of the study only.
5. The researcher will give me a hard copy of the research findings before they are published.



I have read and understood the conditions of the research.

Signature:

Date:

Your contact details: Cell -

Home / work –



ix) PERMISSION LETTER FOR THE GRADE 3 HOD AND CONSENT LETTER

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN MY RESEARCH

I am a Masters Degree Student in the Department of Language Education at the University of the Western Cape. The title of my research topic is: Reading for understanding: An investigation into teachers' reading comprehension strategies in Grade three isiXhosa Home Language classrooms in the Western Cape

The aim of the research is to have a deeper understanding of teachers' pedagogical knowledge in teaching reading comprehension in isiXhosa.

I would like to conduct a research in your classroom while you teach IsiXhosa Home Language reading literacy. In addition, class activities will be audio and video-recorded with your permission. I would also like to interview you.

Your participation in the study is voluntary. This means that you can withdraw from the research at any time you choose to do so. The names of all participants will be kept anonymous. The research process will not hinder teaching and learning. I will adhere to ethical standards and respect learners, teachers and the school as a whole. The information about the school, teachers and learners will be kept confidential. The information provided will only be used for the purpose of the study. All participants will get consent forms. You will get a hard copy of the research findings before they are published.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

A. Siyothula (Miss)

Researcher: Ayanda Siyothula

@073 9810 752

ayandaandisiwe@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof. V. Nomlomo

@021 9592 649

vnomlomo@uwc.ac.za



x) INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR THE GRADE 3 HOD

The study was explained to me clearly. The researcher explained to me that:

1. There will be no harm during the research process.
2. Participation is voluntary and that the names of participants will be kept anonymous.
3. Withdrawal of participation is permitted at any time I want to do so.
4. I have been assured that the information gathered during the research process will be used for the purpose of the study only.
5. The researcher will give me a hard copy of the research findings before they are published.

I have read and understood the conditions of the research.



Signature:

Date:

Your contact details: Cell -

Home / work –

APPENDIX C

TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



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APPENDIX C: SAMPLE FOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR GRADE THREE TEACHER

A. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender:	F		M						
2. Age range:	21-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55	55-60	

3. Overall teaching experience:
4. Teaching experience in Grade three:
5. Highest Qualifications:
6. For which Phase are you trained to teach?

B. TEACHING STRATEGIES

7. Which types of reading do you practise in your class? Why?
8. Could you describe how you teach reading comprehension?
9. How would you rate reading comprehension skills for Grade three learners currently?
10. According to your experience, what are the factors that contribute towards learners' acquisition of reading comprehension skills in Grade three?
11. Besides reading for understanding, what are other challenges have you identified in reading comprehension?
12. What are the challenges of teaching reading comprehension that may impede Grade three reading literacy development?
13. Which intervention programmes do you apply in your class to deal with reading comprehension?
14. How often do you attend literacy workshops and seminars (per year)?
15. Does the school have any intervention programmes to deal with reading literacy challenges in Foundation Phase?
15. How would you like to be assisted in managing reading comprehension in the classroom? Why?
16. Have you ever achieved good performance in Annual National Assessments?
17. If Yes, how did you achieve them? If No why do you struggle to achieve them?

APPENDIXD

GRADE 3 HEAD OF DEPARTMENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



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APPENDIX D: SAMPLE FOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (HOD)

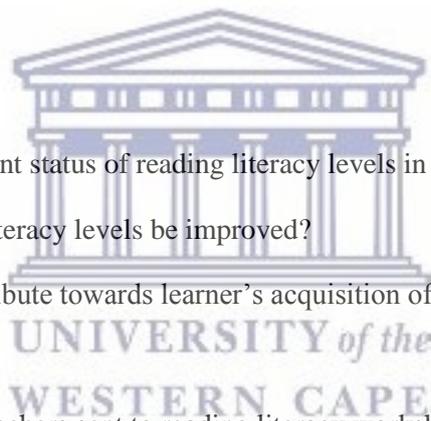
A. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender:	F		M					
2. Age range:	21-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55	55-60

- 3. Overall teaching experience:
- 4. HOD experience:
- 5. Highest Qualifications:
- 6. For which Phase are you trained to teach?

B. TEACHING STRATEGIES

- 7. What do you think of the current status of reading literacy levels in the Foundation Phase?
- 8. How can the current reading literacy levels be improved?
- 9. What are the factors that contribute towards learner’s acquisition of reading comprehension skills in Grade three?
- 10. How often are Grade three teachers sent to reading literacy workshops and seminars (per year)?
- 11. Do you have a phase strategy on how to improve reading literacy levels in the school?
- 12. What are the challenges of teaching reading comprehension that may impede Grade three reading literacy development?
- 13. Can you please tell me about your reading literacy intervention strategy?
- 14. What is your role in supporting teachers to improve reading literacy teaching and learning?
- 15. How do you measure your success of what you are doing in supporting teachers in reading literacy teaching?
- 16. What is different today from what you did when you started in this position with regards to reading literacy teaching and learning?



APPENDIX E

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



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APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

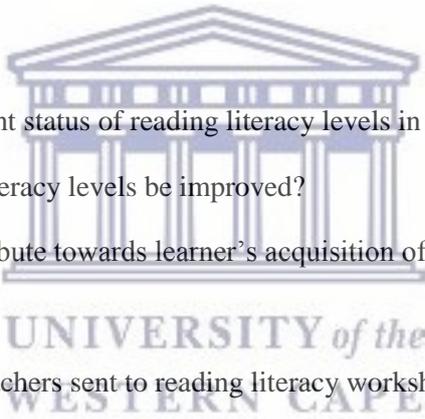
A. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender:

F	M
---	---
2. Age range:

21-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55	55-60
-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------
3. Overall teaching experience:
4. Principal experience:
5. Highest Qualifications:
6. For which Phase are you trained to teach?

B. TEACHING STRATEGIES

- 
7. What do you think of the current status of reading literacy levels in the Foundation Phase?
8. How can the current reading literacy levels be improved?
9. What are the factors that contribute towards learner's acquisition of reading comprehension skills in Grade three?
10. How often are Grade three teachers sent to reading literacy workshops and seminars (per year)?
11. Do you have a phase strategy on how to improve reading literacy levels in the school?
12. What are the challenges of teaching reading comprehension that may impede Grade three reading literacy development?
13. Can you please tell me about your reading literacy intervention strategy?
14. What is your role in supporting teachers to improve reading literacy teaching and learning?
15. How do you measure your success of what you are doing in supporting teachers in reading literacy teaching?
16. What is different today from what you did when you started in this position with regards to reading literacy teaching and learning?

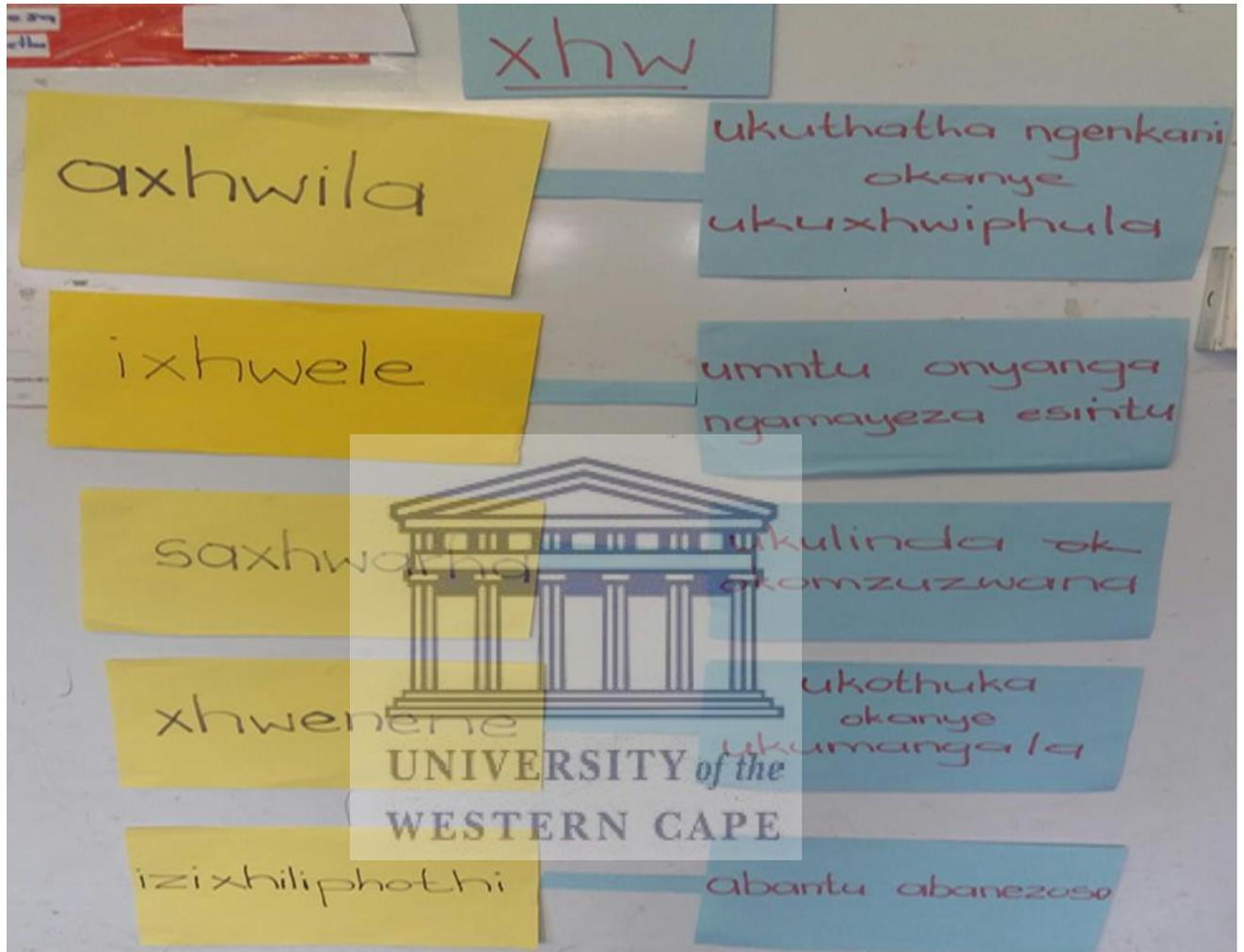
APPENDIX F

TEACHING RESOURCES USED BY TEACHERS



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APPENDIX F: (VOCABULARY USED IN LESSON 1 – 3A)



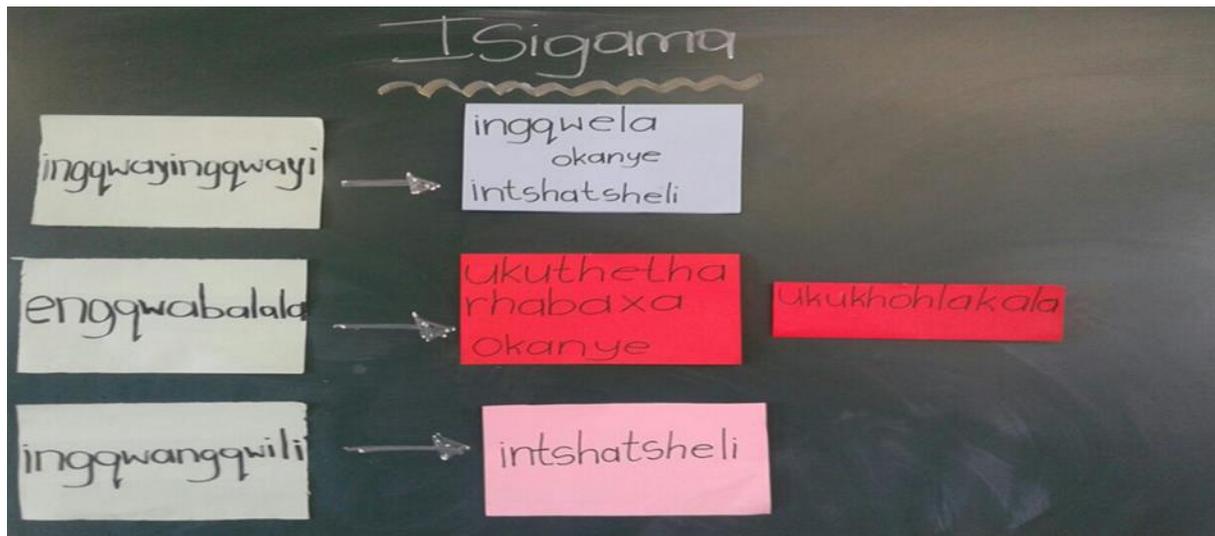
APPENDIX G: TEXT USED IN LESSON 1 (3A & 3B)

Ngenye imini emaqanda sathi sisahamba-hamba sisiya kwenye ilali egama layo kuseXhorha. Sasihamba ngemoto kamalume eludidi oluphezulu. Sathi xa siwela ibhlorho ethile ekuthiwa yiXhwili sabona iplastiki endleleni. Umalume uzame ukuyiphepha kodwa sabe sele sifikile kuyo.

Kwathi kanti ibekwe yimigulukudu yonqevu. Umalume wayinyathela leplastiki kwagqabhuka ivili lemoto. Yazula imoto igqiba indlela yonke yada yamisa elingeni. Kwathi gqi izixhiliphothi zamadoda asiqweqwedisa ukuba siphume emotweni. Aye axhwila imoto. Sasishiyeke sitha xhwenene kukoyika. Oonqevu babemke nayo iimfonomfono zethu. Safumana uncedo kwabantu ababegqitha saze satsalela amapolisa umnxeba. Akhawuleza afika asisa kwisikhululo samapolisa, apho safika saxhwarha khona okomzuzwana sinikeza ingxelo ngokwenzekileyo. Sagoduswa ngobusuku sishiya amanye amapolisa esenza uphando ngokuxhwilwa kwemoto.

Emva kosuku yenzekile lento kwagqitwya ukuba kuyiwe kwixhwele elikufutshane elingu Xhwanele Bhaca kuyokuvunyiswa umhlola. Lathi ixhwele masixhwi the inkukhu emdaka size nayo kye azakukwazi ukubona umhlola. Senza njengoko esiyalela uXhwanele. Wasivezela ukuba imoto indawoni nokuba ithathwe ngobani. Umalume wayifumana njalo imoto yakhe.

APPENDIX H: VOCABULARY USED IN READING COMPREHNSION LESSON (3A)



APPENDIX I: TEXT USED IN LESSON 2 – 3A & 3B

Umzingeli

Kudaladala kwilali yaseNgqwalana kwakukho inkwenkwana eyayigama linguNgqwebo. Uyise wakhe wayeyi **Ngqwangqwili** engqwabalala ngexesha loku zingela. Lo mfo wayeyi **ngqwayingqwayi** yomzingeli kulolali.

Kwafika imini yokuba uNgqwebo ahambe noyise ukuyokuzingela. Umama wakhe uN**ngqwaza** wahenzela umphako .Ngale mini kwakubanda, ingqele iqhazazelisa amazinyo. UN**Ngqwebo** wahamba nenja yakhe u**Ngqwivityo** eyayisotoko ithe qhiwu umsila.

Bathi xa behamba wayiyizela uN**ngqwaza** ,unina weli qhajana le nkwenkwe. Bathe xa begaleleka ehlathini wathi uyise kunyana wakhe "mna ndiyi **ngqwela** yomzingeli andizanga ndabuya ze". "Mna ndizaku thatha indlela engena ekunene wena uthathe engena ekhohlo, sokudibana ekhaya.

Bohlukana ,yathi ingekabiphi le nkwenkwe, gqi umvundla. u**Ngqwivityo** wenza umtsi wamnye wawunqakula umvundla, wawufaka engxoweni. Bathe xa besenzulwini sehlathi kwegqi isitsiba bhokhwe. We jwi itolo lakhe , sawa kumganyana isitsiba bhokhwe. Yangqwayiza yimincili le nkwenkwe yaxwaya isitsibabhokhwe yagoduka. Yathi xa isithi thu yabe ilangazelelwa ngunina nayo inemincili.

APPENDIX J

LEARNERS' WRITTEN ACTIVITIES

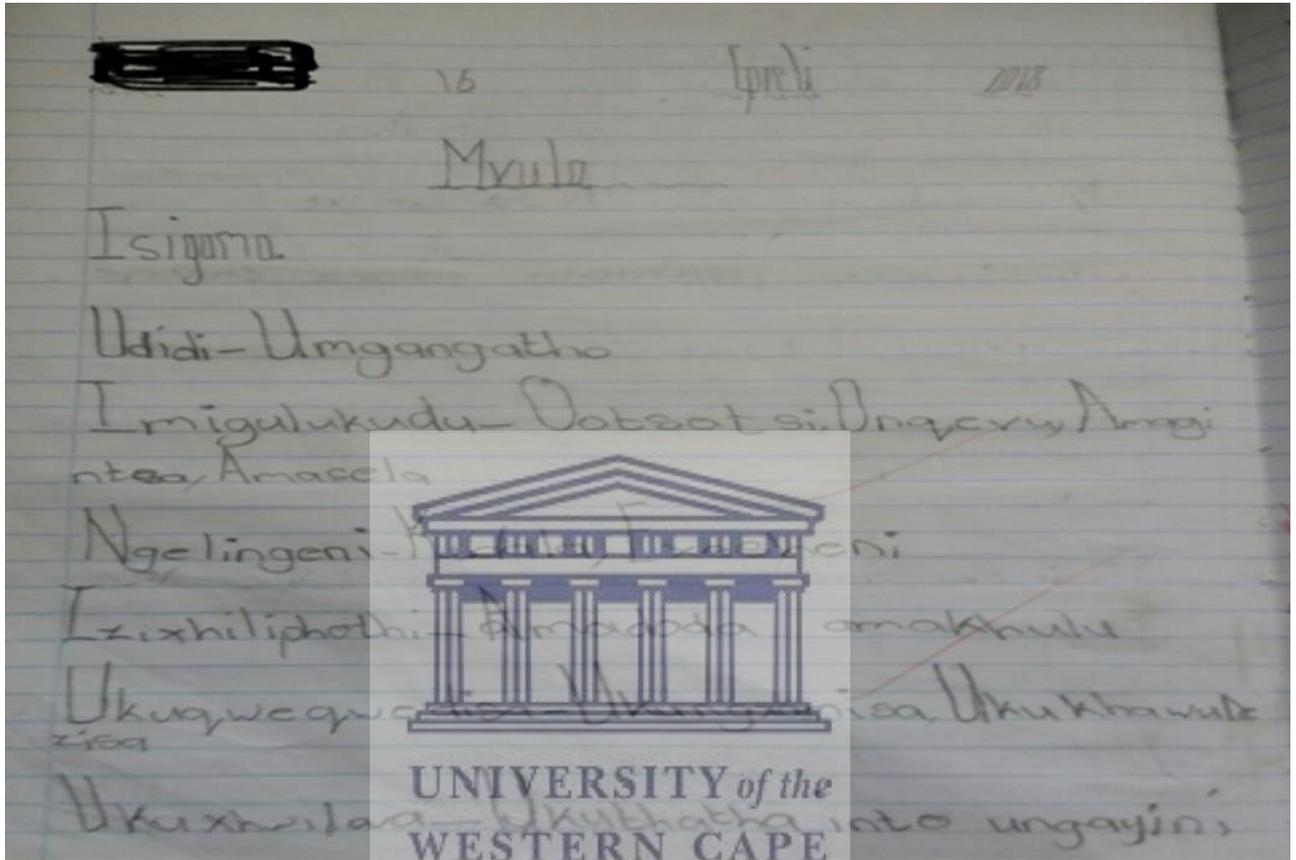


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APPENDIX: J CLASS ACTIVITIES FROM 3A &3B

LESSON 1 (3A): CLASS ACTIVITY WRITTEN BY LEARNERS BEFORE READING

COMPREHENSION (Learner 1)



kwanga ngokunya ngolunya
~~Xhwenene~~
Kwenene - Ukoyika, Ukothuka
 Ukutsalela umnxeba - Ukufawunela
 Ukuxhwama - Ukuhlala Okomxazwana
 Ingxelo - Ukuchaza
 Ukuphanda - UkuKhangela
~~Ixhwele~~ - ~~Iggirha~~
~~I~~ Umhlala - Ukukhangela ingxaki ukuba iphi

LESSON 1 (3A): CLASS ACTIVITY WRITTEN BY LEARNERS AFTER READING

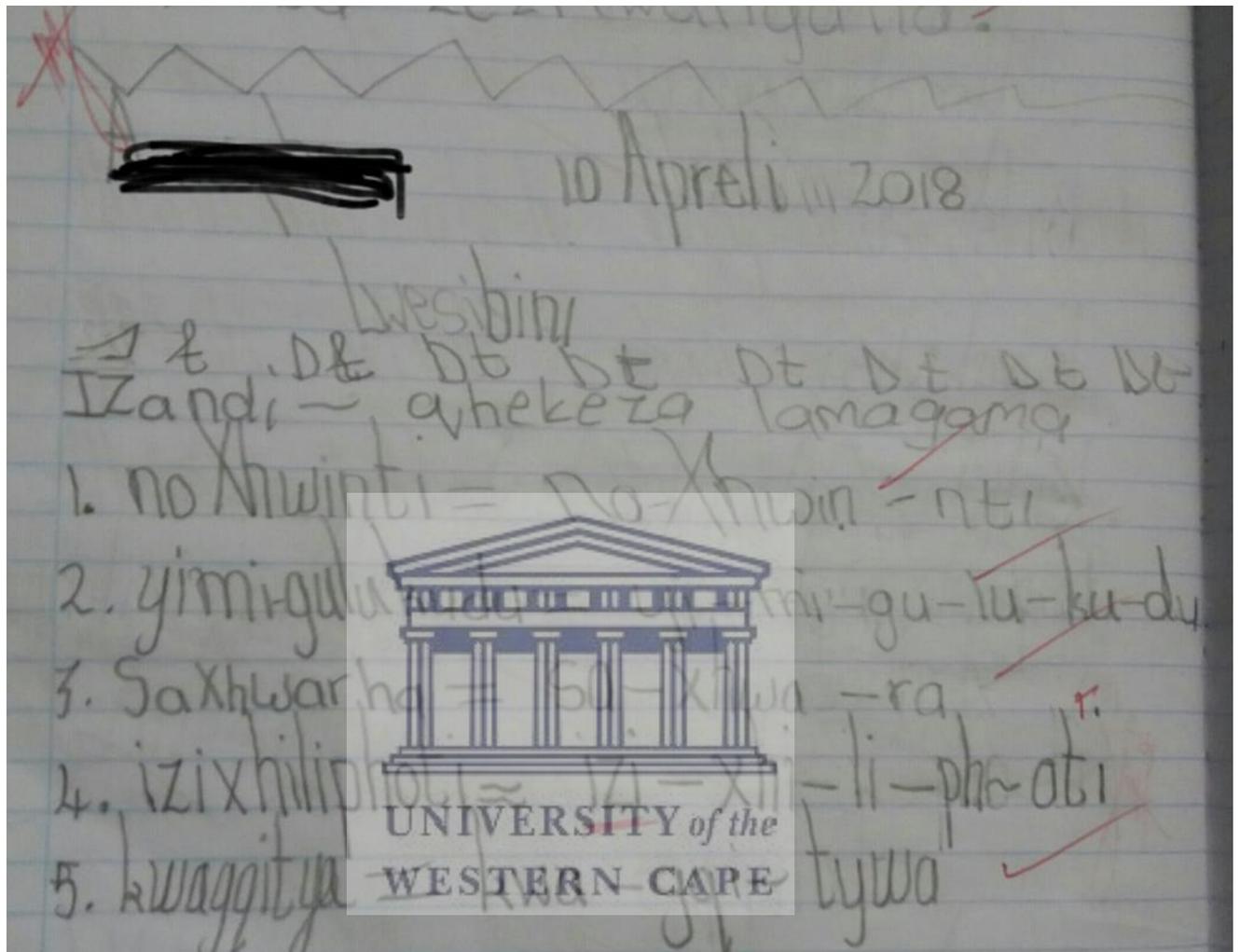
COMPREHENSION (Learner 2)

1. Xh - @ I zixhiliphi
 2. Xhw - @ Xh
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Ukubhala
 Bhala izivakalisi ezi-4 ngokuxhwilwa.
 1. Umakhulu ebesiya edolophini kuaxhwilwa ibhegi.
 2. Utata ebesiya evenkileni kuaxhwilwa imali yakhe.
 3. Ongevu baxhwile, iimpahla zikamama.
 4. Ulisi ebepheka ubhuti waxhwila ukutya.

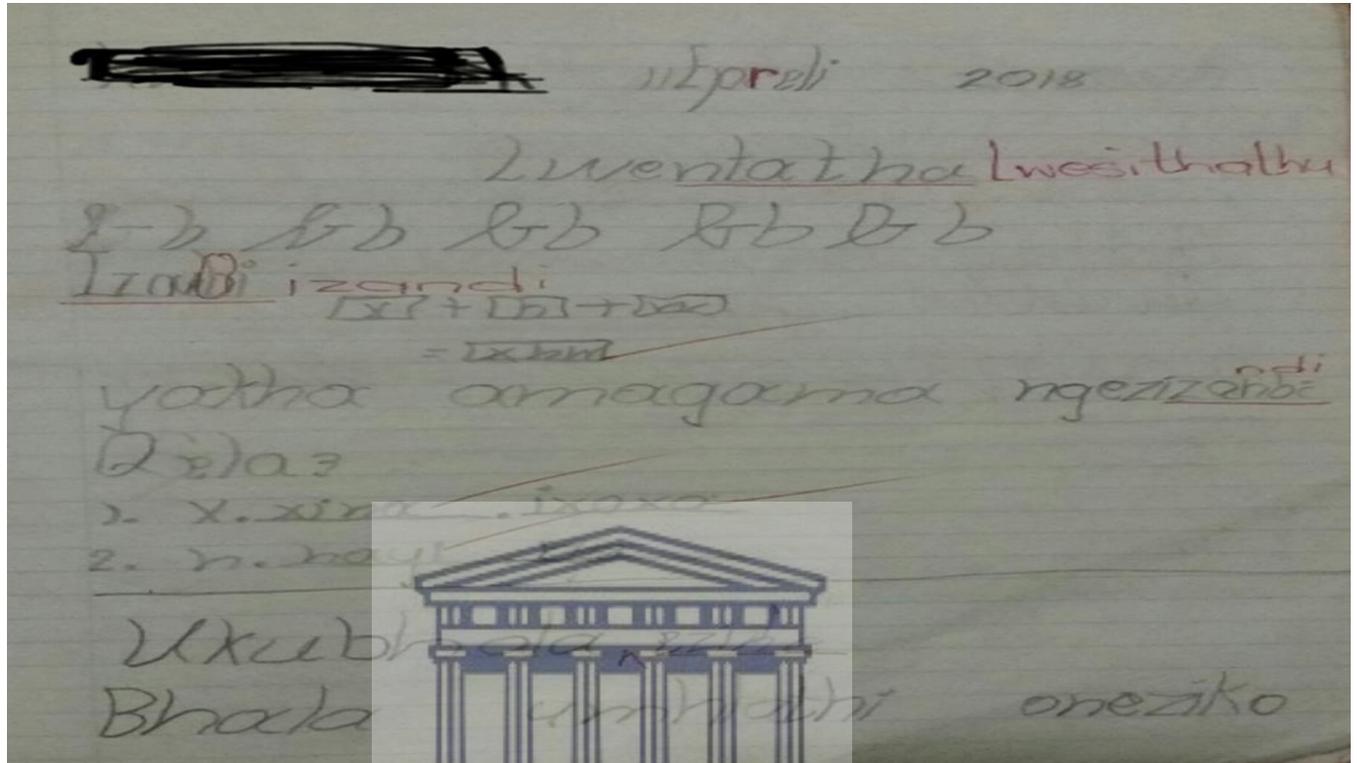
LESSON 1 (3B): CLASS ACTIVITY WRITTEN BY LEARNERS

In 3B the teacher first gave learners words that they should break into phonemes before reading comprehension.



LESSON 1 (3B): CLASS ACTIVITY WRITTEN BY LEARNERS (Learner 4)

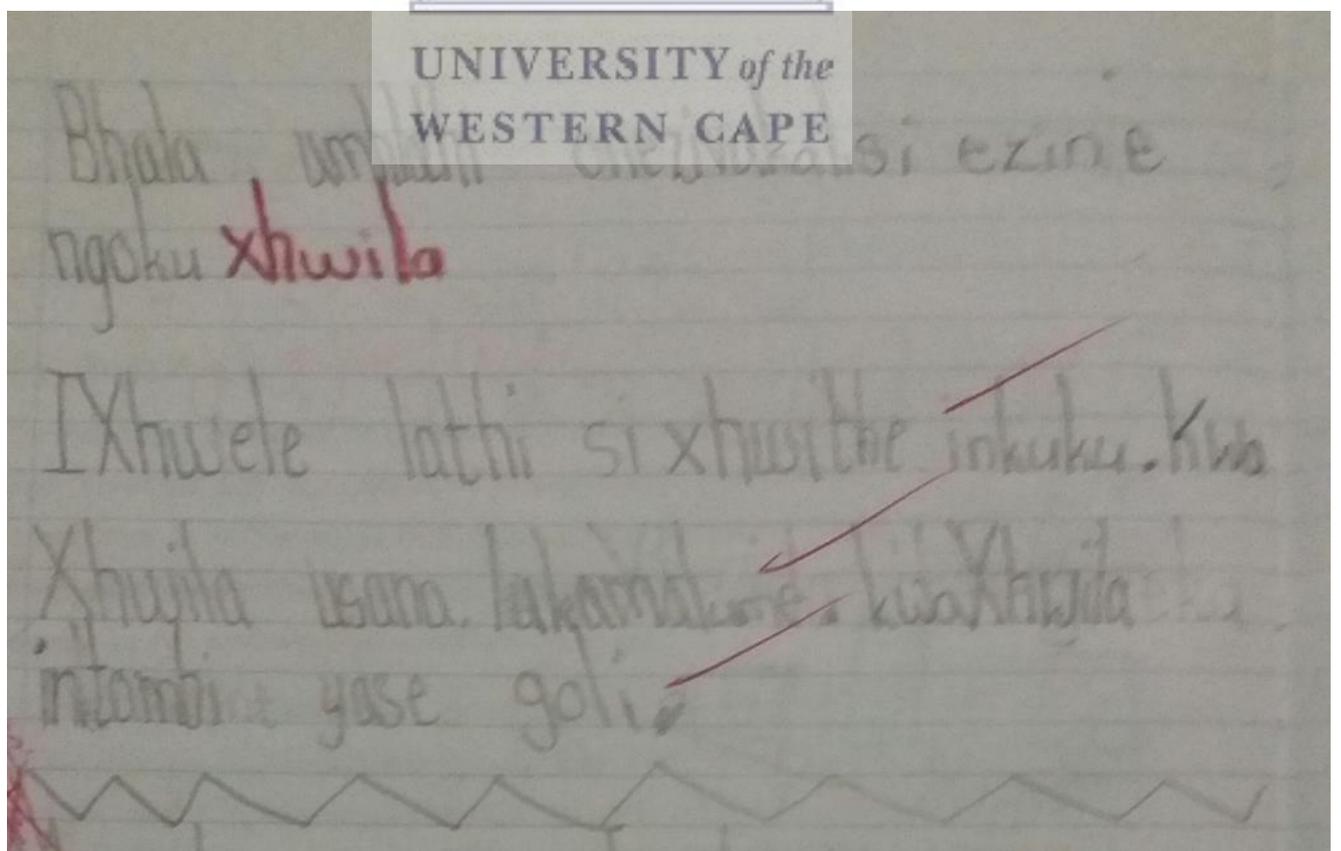
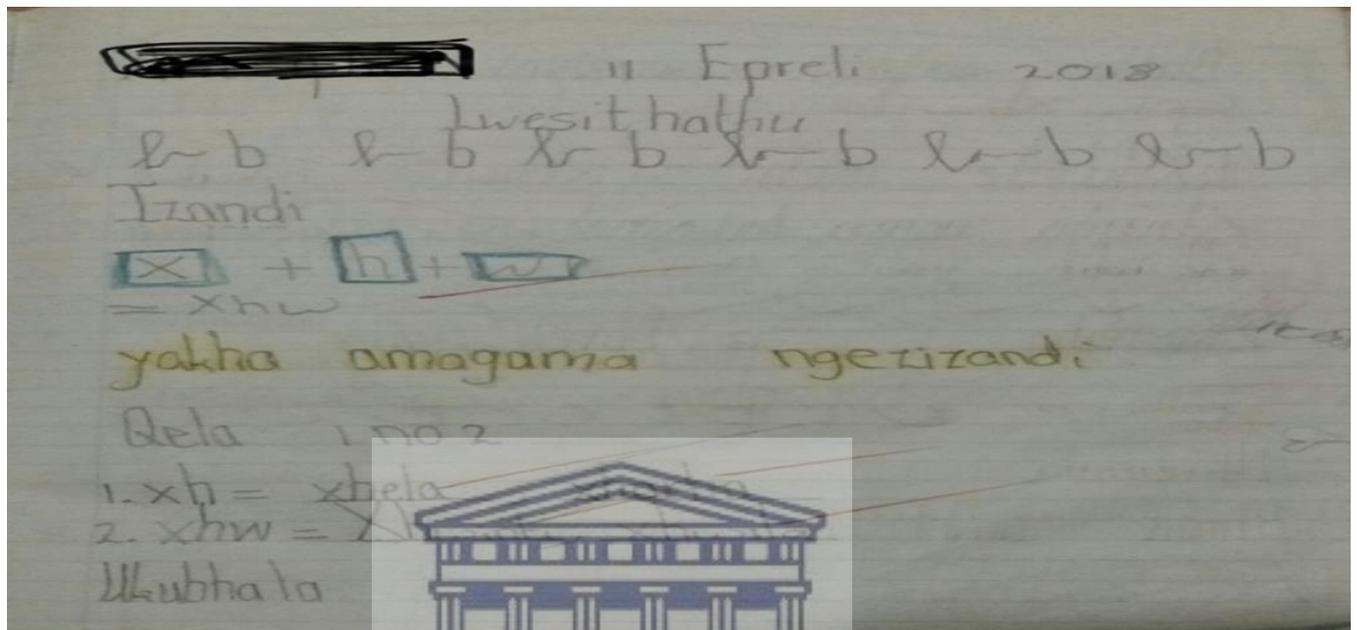
An activity written by a group 3 learner after reading comprehension.



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LESSON 1 (3B): CLASS ACTIVITY WRITTEN BY LEARNERS (Learner 4)

An activity written by a group 1 learner after reading comprehension.



LESSON 2 (3A): CLASS ACTIVITY BY LEARNERS AFTER READING

COMPREHENSION (Learner 6)

Written activity by a group 1 learner – 3A

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ 4 Juni 2018

Myulo

Ukubandelana kweziganeko

Takela inebhele scale kwesiv

Kalisi: ngokulandelelana



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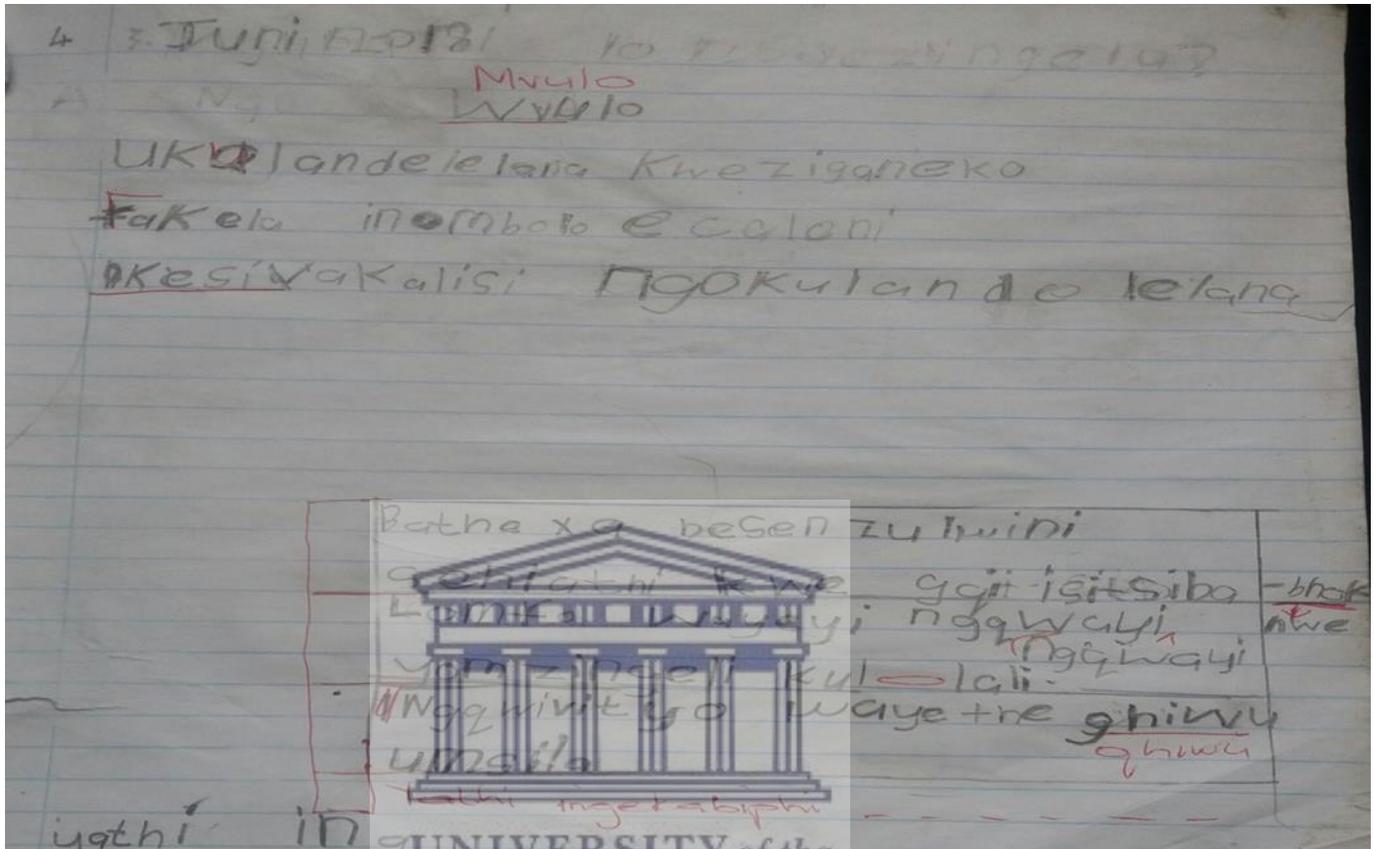
4	Bathe xobesomkhi ehipti kwe gqi sitsibanebshwe
2	lomfo wayeyi ngqwayi - ngqwayi yomzi ngeli kulolali
3	Ungqwityo wayethe qhulu umsila
5	yathi ingekabiphi lwenkwenkwe gqi imvundla
1	kudala kwilali yengqumana kwakachho inkwe akwana ogama layo lingu Ngqwebo

18

LESSON 2 (3A): CLASS ACTIVITY BY LEARNERS AFTER READING

COMPREHENSION (Learner 7)

Written activity by a group 3 learner – 3A

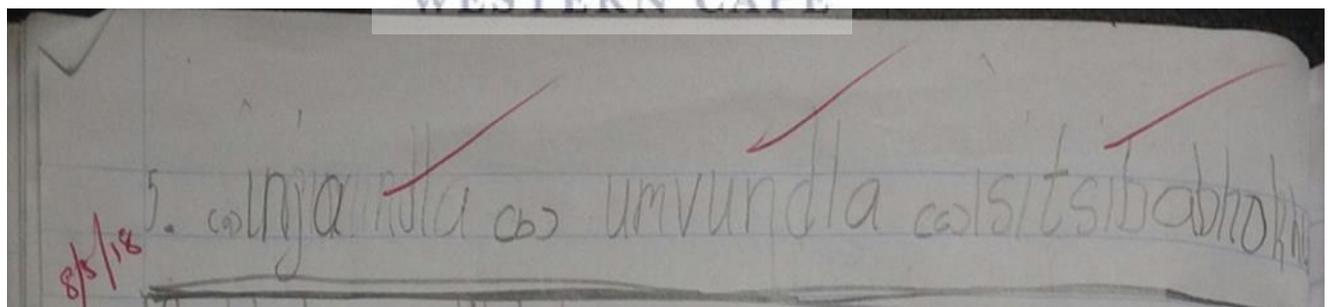
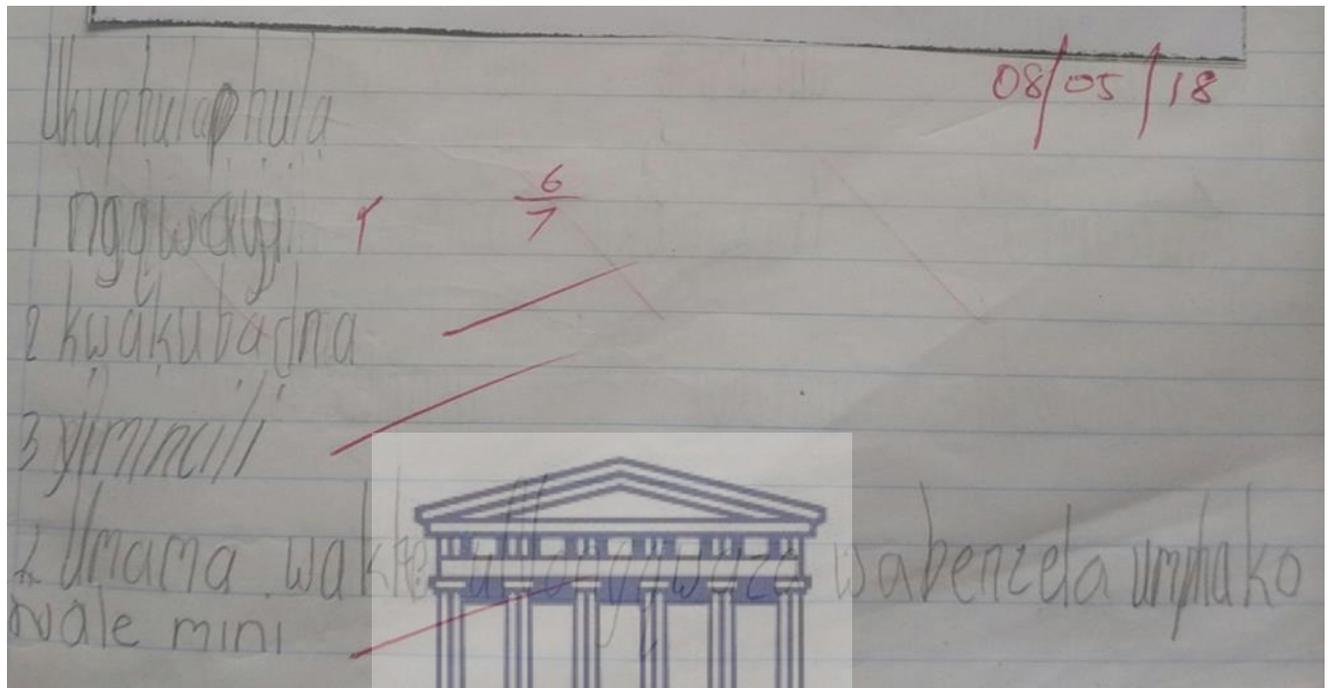


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LESSON 2 (3B): CLASS ACTIVITY BY LEARNERS AFTER READING

COMPREHENSION (Learner 8)

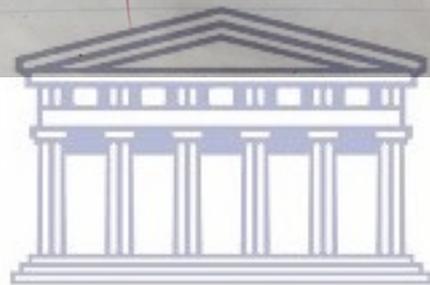
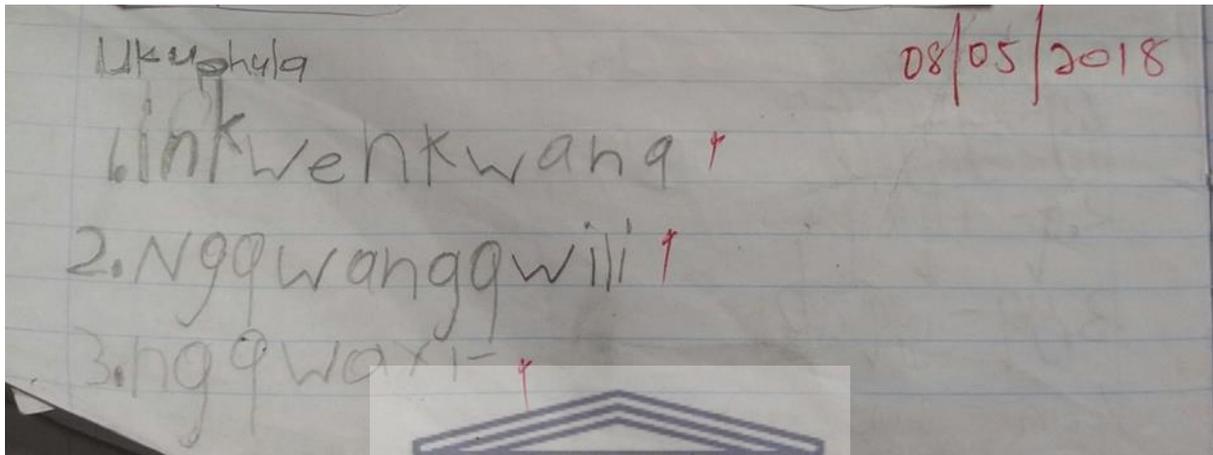
Group 1 written activity



LESSON 2 (3B): CLASS ACTIVITY BY LEARNERS AFTER READING

COMPREHENSION (Learner 9)

Group 3 written activity



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APPENDIX K

GRADE 3 TIMETABLE AT SIYAVUYA PRIMARY SCHOOL



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APPENDIX K: GRADE 3 TIMETABLE AT SIYAVUYA PRIMARY SCHOOL

GRADE 3 TIME-TABLE									
MVULO		LWESIBINI		LWESITHATHU		LWESINE		LWESIHLANU	
Time	Subject	Time	Subject	Time	Subject	Time	Subject	Time	Subject
8:15 - 9:39	Maths (1h24 min)	8:00 - 9:24	Maths (1h24 min)	8:00 - 9:24	Maths (1h24 min)	8:00 - 9:24	Maths (1h24 min)	8:15 - 9:39	Maths (1h24 min)
		9:24 - 9:40	IsiXhosa (16 min)	9:24 - 9:40	IsiXhosa (16 min)	9:24 - 9:40	IsiXhosa (16 min)		
9:40 - 10:00	FEED (20 min)	9:40 - 10:00	FEED (20 min)	9:40 - 10:00	FEED (20 min)	9:40 - 10:00	FEED (20 min)	9:40 - 10:00	FEED (20 min)
10:00 - 10:30	IsiXhosa (30 min)	10:00 - 10:30	IsiXhosa (30 min)	10:00 - 10:30	IsiXhosa (30 min)	10:00 - 10:30	IsiXhosa (30 min)	10:00 - 10:30	IsiXhosa (30 min)
10:30 - 11:00	Break (30 min)	10:30 - 11:00	Break (30 min)	10:30 - 11:00	Break (30 min)	10:30 - 11:00	Break (30 min)	10:30 - 11:00	Break (30 min)
11:00 - 11:50	IsiXhosa (50 min)	11:00 - 11:44	IsiXhosa (44 min)	11:00 - 11:44	IsiXhosa (44 min)	11:00 - 11:49	IsiXhosa (49 min)	11:00 - 11:30	IsiXhosa (30 min)
11:50 - 12:35	FAL (45 min)	11:44 - 12:44	FAL (1h00)	11:44 - 12:39	FAL (45 min)	11:49 - 12:34	FAL (45 min)	11:30 - 12:15	FAL (45 min)
12:35 - 13:00	L/S (25 min)	12:44 - 13:00	L/S (16 min)	12:39 - 13:00	L/S (21 min)	12:34 - 13:00	L/S (26 min)	12:15 - 13:00	L/S (45 min)
13:00 - 13:10	Break (10 min)	13:00 - 13:10	Break (10 min)	13:00 - 13:10	Break (10 min)	13:00 - 13:10	Break (10 min)	13:00	HOME
13:10 - 14:15	L/S (1h05)	13:10 - 14:15	L/S (1h05)	13:10 - 14:15	L/S (1h05)	13:10 - 14:15	L/S (1h05)		

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APPENDIX L:
GRADE 3 SYSTEMIC RESULTS OF
SIYAVUYA PRIMARY SCHOOL
2014-2017 (ISIXHOSA HOME
LANGUAGE)



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APPENDIX L: GRADE 3 SYSTEMIC RESULTS OF SIYAVUYA PRIMARY SCHOOL 2014-2017 (ISIXHOSA HOME LANGUAGE)

