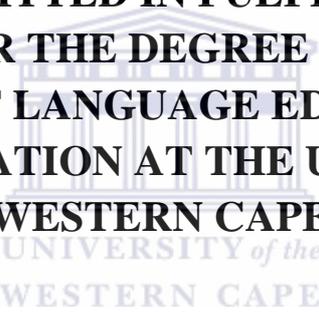


**INVESTIGATING ISIXHOSA LANGUAGE LITERACY
PRACTICES IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE: AN
ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

SOMEKA MONICA NGECE

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE
WESTERN CAPE**

The logo of the University of the Western Cape is visible as a watermark in the background. It features a stylized building with columns and the text "UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE" below it.

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR VUYOKAZI NOMLOMO

JUNE 2014

ABSTRACT

International and national studies show that there is a literacy crisis in many South African schools, particularly in the Foundation Phase (Grades R -Grade 3). For example, South African learners achieved poorly in the Progress in International Literacy Study (PIRLS), in comparison to their international counterparts (Howie, et al. 2006). The results of the Systemic Evaluation (SE) of 2003 confirmed poor literacy performance in many South African schools, particularly in disadvantaged rural and township schools. Similarly, the Annual National Assessment (ANA) report (2011) confirmed that many Grade 3 learners performed well below their expected potential. The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2006-2016 document confirmed that literacy levels of the learners in the Western Cape are below the expected level (WCED Lit Num Strategy, 2006-2016).

This study investigated language literacy practices of Grade 3 teachers and learners in the Foundation Phase where isiXhosa was used as a medium of instruction. It explored the extent to which the instructional practices enhanced or hindered literacy development in the Grade 3 classroom in one school located in a disadvantaged area in the Western Cape.

This study followed a qualitative ethnographic case study design. Qualitative data collection techniques, namely, classroom observations, interviews and document analysis were used to collect data for this study.

The findings of this study indicate that there are many pedagogical or instructional challenges that tend to impede learners' literacy development. The use of resources is also a concern with regard literacy instruction. The study concludes that literacy instruction or pedagogy determines literacy practices, regardless of the language used for learning and teaching.

Key words for this research: Literacy, Literacy Practices, Literacy Performance, Foundation Phase, Grade 3, isiXhosa, Instruction, Constructivism, Sociocultural Theory

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late father Bonakele Ngece, my mother Nokwakha and my children, Siziwe and Aviwe. Thank you for your support and patients. I love you.



DECLARATION

I, Someka Monica Ngece, declare that **INVESTIGATING ISIXHOSA LANGUAGE LITERACY PRACTICES IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY IN THE WESTERN CAPE** is my own work that has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all sources I have cited or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

.....

Someka M. Ngece



June 2014

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This study has been a learning journey for me. The period of time that I spent conducting this research taught me to be thankful everyday for the blessings that I continuously receive. Different people who enriched my life in different ways deserve to be mentioned.

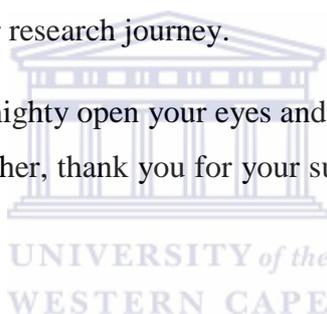
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To my son, Aviwe, may God Almighty open your eyes and see the greatness that lay ahead of you. To my daughter and my mother, thank you for your support despite the fact that you are many miles away.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	Schematic representation of a Curriculum cycle	43
Figure 2:	Learning to read: reading to learn Curriculum Cycle	45
Figure 3:	Scaffolding cycle	59



LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Grade 3 learners' profile	74
Table 2:	Interviewed teacher at the school	81
Table 3:	Grade 3 parent profile	82



LIST OF PICTURES

Picture 1:	Sentence construction	97
Picture 2:	Words written on the chalkboard	98
Picture 3:	Activity on verbs	105
Picture 4:	Verb explanation	105



LIST OF TEXTS

Text A:	Text used for shared reading	93
Text B:	Text on road safety	138
Text C:	Text for vocabulary development	139
Text D:	Exposure to multilingual texts	140
Text E:	Chart with blended sounds	141
Text F:	Chart with short texts	142
Text G:	Alphabet chart with sounds and pictures	142
Text H:	Chart with body parts that exposes additional language	143



LIST OF LEARNERS' ANALYSED WRITING TASKS

Task A:	Construct sentences using phonic knowledge	132-133
Task B:	Learners' recount texts	134-135
Task C:	Learners' information text	136-137



LIST OF ACRONYMS

EFA	Education for All
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
Doe	Department of Education
C2005	Curriculum 2005
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum statement
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
PIRLS	Progress in International Literacy Study
SA	South Africa
SE	Systemic Evaluation
ANA	Annual National Assessment
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
OPL	Older People's Literacy project
NLS	New Literacy Studies
PISA	The Programme for International Student assessment
DBE	Department of Basic Education
FP	Foundation Phase
PA	Phonic Approach
WLA	Whole Language Approach

CC	Curriculum Cycle
FET	Further Education and Training
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
SPTD	Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma
HOD	Head of Department
B.ED	Bachelor of Education
JPTD	Junior Primary Teacher's Diploma
CA	Curriculum Adviser
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
PRAESA	Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa
CA	Content Analysis
TA	Thematic analysis
ACER	Australian Council for educational Research
FA	Functional Approach
ISPFTED	The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa
IP	Intermediate Phase



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i-ii
Dedication	iii
Declaration	iv
Acknowledgements	v
List of figures	vi
List of tables	vii
List of pictures	viii
List of texts	ix
List of learners' writing tasks	x
List of acronyms	xi-xii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background and Contexts	2-4
1.3 Rationale for the study	5
1.4 Problem statement	5-7
1.5 Research aim and Objectives	7
1.6 Research questions	8
1.7 Research Methodology	9
1.8 Significance of the study	9
1.9 Organization of the study	9-10
1.10 Summary	10-11

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Views on literacy	12-18



2.3 LITERACY MODELS	18
2.3.1 Autonomous Literacy Model	18-19
2.3.2vIdeological Literacy Model	19-20
2.4 LITERACY PRACTICES	20-22
2.4.1 Home literacy	22-24
2.4.2 Literacy as social Practice	25
2.5 THE SOCIOCULTURAL VIEW OF LITERACY	26-31
2.6 EMERGENT LITERACY	31-34
2.7 TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES	34-36
2.7.1 Literacy Teaching Approaches	36
2.7.2 Phonics Approach	36-38
2.7.3 Whole Language Approach	38-40
2.7.4 Reading and writing as an integrated process	40-47
2.8 APPROACHES TO READING AND WRITING LITERACY	47-48
2.9 THE PEDAGOGICAL ROLE OF FEEDBACK	48-51
2.10 SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY	51-52
2.10.1 Social Constructivism	52-54
2.10.2 Mediation	54-57
2.10.3 Inner speech as a mediation tool	57-58
2.10.4 Scaffolding	58-60
2.10.5 Zone of Proximal Development	60-61
2.11 Summary	61
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	62
3.1 Introduction	62
3.2 Epistemology and Methodology	62-63
3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM	63-67
3.4 ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY	67-70

3.5 RESEARCH SITE	70-72
3.6 SAMPLING	72-75
3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS	75
3.7.1 Observation in Ethnographic Research	75-79
3.7.2 Interviews	79-80
3.7.2.1 Teacher Interviews	80-81
3.7.2.2 Parents' Interviews	81-82
3.7.2.3 Limitations associated with interviews	82
3.7.3 Document Analysis	83
2.7.3.1 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement	83-84
3.7.3.2 Classroom timetable	84
3.7.3.3 Learners' writing	84-85
3.7.3.4 Print and other reading material	85
3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	85
3.8.1 Validity	85-87
3.8.2 Reliability	87
3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	87-89
3.10 Summary	89
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION	90
4.1 Introduction	90
4.2 TEACHERS' PROFILES	90-91
4.3 DATA PRESENTATION	91
4.3.1 Data from Classroom Observations	91-92
4.3.2 Lessons observed	92
❖ Lesson A: Reading	92-99
❖ Lesson B: transactional writing	99-104
❖ Lesson C: Language Structure and Use	104-107
❖ Lesson D: Reading comprehension	107-112



4.3.2.1 Summary of classroom observation	112
4.4 DATA FROM INTERVIEWS	112
4.4.1 Teacher Interviews	113-115
4.4.2 Head of Department (HOD) Interviews	115-119
4.4.3 Principal Interviews	119-123
4.4.3.1 Summary of the teacher interviews	123-125
4.4.4 Parents' Interviews	125-127
4.5 DATA FROM DOCUMENTS	127-128
4.5.1 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)	128-129
4.5.2 Teacher's Lesson Plan	130-131
4.5.3 Learners' written work	131-137
4.5.4 Reading Books	137-139
4.5.5 Data from print material	139-143
4.6 Summary	143-144
CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS	145
5.1 Introduction	145
5.2 DATA ANALYSIS	145-146
5.3 LITERACY PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES	146-147
5.3.1 Classroom talk and learners' access to literacy	147-149
5.3.2 Questioning as pedagogical strategy	149-155
5.3.3 Vocabulary Development	155-158
5.3.4 Learners' writing tasks	158-164
5.3.5 The role of feedback	164-166
5.4 Availability and use of resources	167-168
5.5 TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT	168-170
5.6 Preliminary Findings	170
5.6.1 Limited literacy dialogue	170-171



5.6.2 Use of low order thinking questions	171-172
5.6.3 Limited writing opportunities	172-173
5.6.4 Underdeveloped learner's vocabulary	173-174
5.6.5 Ineffective use of literacy materials	174
5.6.6 Insufficient support to learners experiencing difficulties	175
5.6.7 Inadequate teacher support	175-177
5.7 Summary	177
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	178
6.1 Introduction	178
6.2 Summary of findings	178-181
6.3 CONCLUSION	182-183
6.4 Implications for strengthening literacy practices in the Foundation Phase	183-184
6.5 Recommendations	185
7 REFERENCES	186-206
8 APPENDICES	208
Appendix A Permission letter from Western Cape Education Department	208-210
Appendix B Consent letters	211-217
Appendix C Teacher interview questions	218-219
Appendix D Head of Department and the Principal interview questions	220-221
Appendix E Letter scheduling an appointment with parents	222-223
Appendix F Parents interview questions	224-225
Appendix G Text used for reading comprehension	226-230
Appendix H Teacher's lesson plan	231-235
Appendix I Text used to evaluate processes of comprehension: reorganize information	236-245
Appendix J Class timetable	246-247
Appendix K Teacher profile questionnaire	248-250



CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

Literacy is a global concern which is viewed as a pathway to achieving other goals in human life (Keefe & Copeland, 2011). According to the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (2006), literacy is a human right (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation – UNESCO, 2006) and a necessary skill that is needed in the changing world (UNESCO 2006). It provides different opportunities for growth and empowerment of individuals and communities. For example, literate people are able to make informed decisions and participate in community discussions. In the classroom, literacy skills enable the learner to engage with other learners and to construct meaning of the learning process. Well-developed literacy skills improve learner's self-esteem as the learner becomes confident in communicating with others in the classroom because he/she has gained the voice to speak in public (UNESCO, 2006, Barlett 2008) Cognitively, literacy enhances critical thinking because learners are equipped with strategies to question, evaluate and reflect on their learning. In other words, well developed literacy skills support learners as constructors of their own knowledge.

Literacy contributes to economic freedom as it enhances learners' chances of developing and building networks for socio-economic upliftment (Bartlett, 2008). This suggests that the literacy practices that learners engage in at school help them to negotiate their way in the economy. The negotiation of meaning is not about how fluent learners are in reading and writing, but on how they are able to use the literacy skills they have learned in other contexts. For any country to develop economically there is a need for literate citizens. Literate citizens are important for the development of skills the country needs to develop its economy and also to participate in society discussions.

There is evidence of low literacy skills among South African learners, particularly in the Foundation Phase (Howie, Venter, van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, du Toit, Scherman & Archer, 2006). Research shows that teachers and learners struggle with literacy in the African languages as well (Howie, et al. 2006). This study aims to investigate literacy practices in the Grade 3 classroom (Foundation Phase) where isiXhosa is used as the medium of instruction.

1.2 Background and Context

There have been educational policy changes in South Africa since 1994. These changes were meant to address the imbalances of the apartheid education system whose aim was “to isolate Africans and convince them of their permanent inferiority with whites constructed as superior” (Luthuli 2006 in Lafon, 2009). The introduction of Bantu Education resulted to the majority of the marginalized South Africans not to effectively access the benefits that education was supposed to provide. For example, under the Bantu education policy, access to education had different meanings for different groups. For blacks it meant the promotion of semi-skilled obedient working youth, who received just enough literacy skills to contribute to the economy of the country (Christie, 1985; Hyslop, 1999; Giliomee, 2009) and continue to be socially oppressed (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997). It also meant registering African learners at school in order to enforce discipline (Hyslop 1999 in Giliomee 2009) but for whites, on the other hand, it implied the continuation of exploitation for their benefit and enjoyment of privileges. Therefore, literacy development for the Africans was to allow them to only contribute to the economy of the country and not to engage in socio-economic discourses to better their lives.

During the apartheid education system black schools were characterized by large classes and under qualified teachers, and this led to inadequate teaching (Giliomee 2009). The education policy was not for academic achievements for black children, but to further marginalize and divide Africans ethnically and by so doing, controlling their access to quality education (Hyslop 1999). The majority of black communities were in “chaos” in the sense that they did not have the physical resources and expertise to meet the needs of the children. This state of affairs demanded a provocative transformative policy framework which would address the racially divided South African education system. In an attempt to provide a transformative education policy and to address inequalities of the past, the Ministry of Education in 1997 introduced a policy reform of the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) as its approach to democracy and inclusion (Jansen 1998; Taylor 2001).

In 1997 the national Department of Education (DoE) launched curriculum 2005 (Chisholm 2005) to cleanse the ‘degrading’ racially divided apartheid curriculum. In 2000 curriculum 2005 (C2005) was reviewed after consultation with teacher unions and public hearing (Chisholm

2005) and in 2002 the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) became the official policy. In both documents i.e. C2005 and the RNCS literacy development is regarded as an important skill to acquire from an early age, as it promotes learners' reading and writing skills.

The National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12 came into effect after the amendment of RNCS (Grade R-9) and NCS (Grade 10-12). The amendment of the two curricula policies led to the existence of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) which was introduced in 2011 for implementation in 2012 (Department of Education, 2011). CAPS is a comprehensive curriculum and assessment policy document with amended subject statements, learning programmes and subject guidelines for Grades R to 12, and it was developed to improve the implementation of National Curriculum Statement. With it, came two supporting documents, namely the National Policy outlining the programme and promotion requirements as well as the National Protocol for Assessment (Grades R-12).

CAPS provides positive guidelines that could enhance literacy practices. For example, to support reading comprehension the teacher is introduced to a range of different levels of questions to help expose learners to higher order thinking skills. To develop writing, CAPS suggests a process approach to be followed to involve learners in writing their texts. According to Christie (2005) the process approach allows learners to take the initiative to write texts of their choice with the teacher providing guidance to what the learners have written. Although the process approach promotes a community of writers, (MacArthur, 1993) it seems to be limiting on the grounds that it does not make use of the context under which literacy is being developed because learning is left on the hands of the children.

CAPS has taken away additional administration for teachers as they are not expected to prepare their own learning programmes as it used to be the case with the RNCS (2002) and the NCS (2005). However, it is prescriptive in that there is a set time by which objectives have to be achieved, leaving a struggling learner at a disadvantage. In this way, more difficulties could be experienced by learners in disadvantaged areas with insufficient resources as the pacing of activities would leave them out of the school experience. This implies that literacy experiences of learners from socio-economically challenged areas might not meet the expectations of their learning.

According to CAPS literacy development happens through incidental and spontaneous play where emergent literacy is promoted. Emergent literacy is an understanding that literacy is a gradual developmental process (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). This means that emergent literacy develops in a social context and it takes into consideration the development of reading, writing and oral language. Although these skills happen simultaneously, they develop independently. This suggests that emergent literacy is a gradual development of literacy that could happen in a non-formal environment.

Furthermore, emergent literacy is a developmental precursor for children's transition to conventional reading and writing (Whitehurst & Lonigan 1998; Justice and Kadervek, 2004; Saracho & Spodek, 2006). The foundational development of literacy becomes effective through the availability of different resources, a conducive social environment and planned tasks at school (Whitehurst & Lonigan 1998; Saracho & Spodek 2006). So learners in disadvantaged areas may experience difficulties in their literacy performance because they are not exposed to experiences and environment that support learning (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Learners need quality education which will shape them into active and competitive members of the society. If learners have poor literacy skills they are likely to encounter difficulties in their learning which could subsequently affect their learning and adult lives. According to Miller (2001) literate skills enable members of the society to have access to information and afford them the opportunity of playing a part in social institutions. Advanced literacy plays a role in shaping and reshaping one's world view because it facilitates engagement in critical dialogues and it produces human agencies that, through reflection, are able to evaluate the nature of relationship that structure their society (Gewirtz, 1998). Language literacy education therefore, is a necessary connection to the development of language capabilities of children as interpreters of academic discourse.

1.3 Rationale for the study

I worked at a primary school that is situated in a disadvantaged area for 7 years; teaching languages and other subjects from Grade 4 to Grade 6. The most troubling experience to me was the inflated reports of learner performance, especially in literacy. As learners progressed in terms of schooling, their performance reflected the different or fragmented skills of literacy that their teachers emphasized while teaching literacy. The focus on acquisition of different skills, according to Gee (1989) does not expose learning of literacy as a social practice.

Different educational reports show concerns on poor learner literacy performance in the Foundation Phase, especially Grade 3. The studies and reports seem to suggest various factors that contribute to poor performance in literacy, such as the employment of under or unqualified teachers, particularly in the Foundation Phase Progress in International Literacy Study –(PIRLS) 2006, National Reading Strategy 2008). The reports further allude to South Africa as having an under-developed understanding of teaching of literacy, especially reading and writing. Given the literacy crisis in South African schools, this study investigated how literacy is taught in the Grade 3 classroom in order to suggest possible ways of improving learners' literacy performance.

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1.4 Problem statement

Literacy practices in the Foundation Phase continue to be a matter of concern in South Africa (SA). Various international and national studies have been conducted to look at literacy performance in primary education. One of the international studies is the PIRLS in which the South African Grade 4 and Grade 5 learners' performance was the worst when it was compared to international learners (Howie et al. 2006). According to Howie et al.(2006) PIRLS focused on reading for literary experience, and reading to acquire and use information i.e. how literacy is used for comprehension purposes. To measure whether learners were able to exhibit those skills they had to answer questions that were looking at different literacy processes. For example, they looked at whether learners were able to read and comprehend. Some questions focused on retrieving explicitly stated information, making straightforward inferences, interpreting and integrating ideas and information and evaluating and examining content, language and textual

elements (Howie et al. 2006). The results of the PIRLS tests showed that SA learners were at the bottom of the 40 countries that participated in the study between 2005 and 2006. Internationally, the learners who wrote the test were in Grade 4, and in South Africa Grade 5 learners participated in the study. The test results revealed literacy problems in SA.

Another study that confirmed poor literacy performance in SA schools is the Systemic Evaluation (SE) of 2003. Systemic Evaluation is an intervention tool that is set to measure and benchmark learner performance in respect of educational transformational goals. According to the 2003 SE, the national scores for literacy were 68% in Listening Comprehension and 39% in Reading Comprehension and Writing aspects.

The Annual National Assessment (ANA) report (2011) confirmed that Grade 3 learners performed well below their expected potential. The purpose for conducting ANA was to make a decisive contribution towards better learning in schools. In the Foundation Phase the question paper was translated to meet the home language needs of the learners at the school. That means the literacy question paper was translated into 11 official languages.

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The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2006-2016 document confirmed the fact that literacy levels of the learners in the Western Cape is below expected level (WCED Lit Num Strategy, 2006-2016). Different factors that contributed to poor performance by learners included socio-economic conditions, lack of print in the home environment and exposure to learning support that stimulates learning. Implications for literacy development for learners coming from these challenging conditions could mean that chances of them succeeding at school are minimal.

The Western Cape Education department (WCED) commissioned an investigation into literacy and numeracy of the Grade 3 learners in the Eden and Central Karroo region in 2002 (WCED Literacy Report, undated). This study was concerned with language literacy performance. The results showed that 34% of most learners underperformed at a Grade 3 literacy level. This suggested that, learners in this district performed below the expected standard (WCED Literacy

Report,undated). As a result of this under-development in literacy, children continued to have limited conceptual development which resulted in poor literacy performance.

Given the findings of the above-mentioned studies, it seems that literacy continues to be a challenge in many South African schools, particularly in the Foundation Phase. Although the above-mentioned studies made suggestions about intervention measures that could be implemented to promote literacy, they, however, say little or nothing about literacy practices in the classroom i.e. teacher-learner engagement for literacy development. Furthermore, there is limited research that is done in African languages on how learners develop literacy in these languages. Much of the research focuses on literacy development in English which is learnt as an additional language by the majority of African language speaking learners. For example, in the PIRLS (Howie et al. 2006) and the WCED Lit-Num strategy 2006-2016 reports, it is mentioned that instructional time is not effectively used at schools whereas in the WCED Literacy Report study conducted in 2002 it is mentioned that literacy classes started late and that seem to compromise time to be spent to teach literacy programmes. The Systemic Evaluation(SE) report, on the other hand mentions teacher and learner practices as a positive contributory factor towards satisfactorily learner performance. The ANA (2011) report mentioned the provision of workbooks as an improvement in classroom practices. In view of the above, the key concern in this study is to investigate isiXhosa language literacy practices in Grade 3 as it is an exit grade in the Foundation Phase. By Grade 3 learners are expected to possess literacy practices that would enable them to critically engage with the world around them and for subsequent or further learning. In this study, I focused on literacy practices in order to understand how Grade 3 teachers and learners interacted to enhance literacy development in isiXhosa (Home Language).

1.5 Research aim and Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to investigate language literacy practices of the isiXhosa Grade 3 classroom in the Foundation Phase and the extent to which these practices promote or hinder literacy development. The study wanted to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To understand literacy practices with regard to writing and reading in a Grade 3 classroom in the Western Cape Province where isiXhosa is used as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT).
- 2) To identify available resources that could enhance literacy development in isiXhosa in a Grade 3 classroom.
- 3) To observe how the resources are utilized to support literacy development in isiXhosa.
- 4) To suggest ways in which teacher and learner isiXhosa language literacy practices can be strengthened in the Foundation Phase.
- 5) To investigate the role parents could play to support literacy development at home and how that literacy development could be translated in school literacy.

1.6. Research questions

The main question this study is investigating is: What are the Teacher and Learner isiXhosa literacy practices in Grade 3?

The following sub-questions intend to guide the development of the study:

- 1) How do teachers facilitate learners' access to isiXhosa Home Language literacy in the Grade 3 classroom?
- 2) What literacy resources are available and used to promote literacy in isiXhosa in Grade 3?
- 3) What support is available to teachers and learners to enhance their language literacy practices?
- 4) In what ways can teacher and learner literacy practices be strengthened in the Foundation Phase?
- 5) What mechanisms could parents provide to support literacy practices at home to in order to support literacy development at school?

1.7 Research Methodology

This study followed a qualitative approach which is supported by interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm is used to understand participants in their natural settings and how they construct and attach meanings in their practices. In understanding literacy practices of the Grade 3 classroom, an ethnographic case study was employed because I wanted to understand the participants' sociocultural experiences by making use of different data collection methods. These methods include interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. A sample of three teachers (including the Principal and Head of Department), six learners represented by three girls and three boys and five parents was used in order to understand their perspectives about literacy and how it could be improved. A detailed account of the research design, sampling and data collection techniques is provided in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

1.8 Significance of the study

This study is a contribution to literacy development in the Foundation Phase. It explores strategies that are used in developing literacy in an African language, isiXhosa, which is an under researched area in education research. The study results are valuable to teachers, particularly the Foundation Phase teachers, parents and curriculum advisors as it informs them of the current literacy practices in the Grade 3 classroom, and how such practices could be improved for better literacy development. Given the current literacy crisis in South African schools, this study a valuable contribution as it sheds light on the quality of literacy instruction that takes place in many classrooms.

1.9. Chapter Outline

This thesis consists of six chapters as summarised below:

Chapter 1

This chapter provides the introduction and background to the study. It discusses the problem statement, research aims and objectives that underpin the study. It provides the research

questions that guide the development of the study. It briefly highlights the research methodology and significance of the study.

Chapter 2

This chapter reviews literature with regard to literacy practices. It also focuses on theoretical framework on which the study is based.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 discusses the methodological and research paradigm that relate to the study. It discusses the research methods that were used to collect data for this study. It also deals with ethics.

Chapter 4

In this chapter I, present data that was collected from teachers, learners and parents. Data collected by means of observations, interviews and document analysis is discussed.

Chapter 5

In this chapter I analyze data collected by means of different methods. I also provide some preliminary findings that emerge from analyzed data.

Chapter 6

In this chapter I summarize the research findings and draw conclusions. I make recommendations on the basis of the research findings.

1.10SUMMARY

This chapter provided an introduction and background to the study in order to understand the historical and current literacy policies in South Africa. It highlights South African literacy problems that have been identified by national and international studies. It provides the aims and objectives of conducting this research, as well as questions that guide this inquiry. The chapter also highlighted the research paradigm and data collection techniques that were used in this

study. The next chapter will review literature on literacy and it will also deal with the theoretical framework on which the study is premised.



CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to discuss international and national literature that is relevant to my research questions stated in Chapter one. The literature reviewed in this study is informed by the concepts of literacy, literacy models and literacy practices, and how these concepts inform learners' construction of knowledge. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section concentrates on literacy conceptualization and the second section focuses on theoretical framework informed by the sociocultural theory (SCT) in order to gain an insight into ways whereby Grade 3 learners construct meaning for literacy development.

2.2 Views on literacy

Different conceptions of literacy exist based on different ways in which it is perceived. Some scholars view literacy on the basis of its function in the society (Prinsloo & Block 1999); while others define it in terms of its goals (UNESCO 2006). Others define it as a commodity (Woods & Henderson 2008). Literacy as a function in society is not seen as a transfer of skills by the teacher to the learners through drills, but as an interactive process between the adults and the child. The adults could be parents, family, community members or the teacher. It is also a dialogic process that encourages meaningful access to the written language (Prinsloo & Block 1999). Viewing literacy as social practice supports the role of language in society.

Defining literacy in terms of its goals in the society could mean what people achieve or can do as a result of being literate. The general aim of being literate is to allow people to function effectively in their societies. UNESCO's (2006) goal is to reduce illiteracy. However, there is a view that literacy does not address economic and social development needs, especially those of women (UNESCO 2006).

Due to continuous drop in literacy levels in countries like the United States, United Kingdom and Australia between the years 2001-2005, literacy came to be viewed as a commodity and has been used to open up channels for economic success. Less attention has been paid to underlying

reasons namely, poverty, social and cultural challenges that could lead to low literacy performance by learners. Being has been based on the ability to read or write, and meaningfully engage with the text in order to be prepared for vocational skills, and be able to support the economic success of the country. Hence, Woods & Henderson (2008) claim that literacy could be viewed as a commodity. In other words, literacy could be viewed as preparing people for the workplace.

The UNESCO Report (2006) views the function of literacy in society as allowing people to engage in activities which require them to use reading, writing and numeracy in order to function in a society. The Report also claims that the function of literacy in the society allows community members to use it to develop the community. The skills for doing so are learned at school (Woods & Henderson, 2008; UNESCO 2006).

After analysing a range of reports and policy documents between the years 1975-2005 relating to the status of literacy in Australia using different metaphors, Edward & Potts (2008) came to a realization that a clear definition of the term “literacy” is difficult to arrive at. But they realized that literacy could be constructed to mean “a level of spoken and written language which is appropriate for a range of contexts” (Edward & Potts, 2008). In other words, for learners to be literate, their literacy skills should not be limited to being able to read and write only, but literacy skills should include the ability to listen and apply critical thinking skills to solve problems in particular contexts. That is, literacy is not seen as ability to code words only, but is a tool for communication in a particular context (Prinsloo and Block 1999). Prinsloo and Block (1999) further argue that when learners are able to think critically, they can ask questions and when their questions are answered, the process of reading and writing begins. In other words, learners do not develop awareness of critical thinking by being exposed to print environments only, but through observing the value that print environment provides in developing literacy.

Purdie, Reid & Buckley (2011) support the view that there is no single definition of literacy because in defining literacy one needs to consider the context and the purpose it serves. According to these scholars, culture, beliefs, pedagogical strategies and contexts play an important role in influencing literacy learning; hence literacy is viewed differently by different people. So, literacy is a broad and multi-faceted phenomenon (Diorio 2002, Snow 2004;

Freebody 2007 cited by Condy, Chigona, Chetty & Thornhill, 2010) and its meaning varies according to context in which it is used (Sibiya and Van Rooyen 2005).

According to Machalowitz (1993) literacy does not afford a learner an ability to read or write only, but an ability to express himself/herself through analyzing and evaluating information. For example, when a learner views a picture or a toy, he/she is able to express his/her thoughts by naming the picture or a toy. When the learner has developed intellectual skills at school, he/she will be able to write and read the word he/she has assigned to the picture or a toy. This implies that literacy includes the teaching of reading and writing skills, as well as speaking skills. Literacy learning begins at home where the learner develops curiosity when he/she is confronted with print material (Snow 2004).

Snow (2004), Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony (2000) refer to literacy as a developmental continuum that is evidenced as the child interacts with print material that contains familiar words, using a familiar language and engages in a dialogue. In other words, children develop curiosity through observing at home, and that allows them the opportunity to interact with the adults in trying to learn more about certain things they observed. According to the developmental process, literacy understanding changes or develops as the learner develops and acquires it, not only when he/she starts schooling (Lonigan, Burgess & Anthony 2000).

Similarly, van Steensel (2006), Lonigan, Burgess & Anthony (2000) claim that children's literacy experiences do not begin with formal reading and writing, but begins with observations at home and when the child interacts with adults at home. According to van Steensel (2006), children become exposed to literacy functions at home through participating in literacy activities they observe their parents and older siblings participate in. Children growing up in affluent communities where print or visual communication is available experience literacy practices easily, compared to learners growing in impoverished communities (Dyson 2010). For instance, a four year old who grows up exposed to print environment is able to admire a book or visual text, scribble in a book or page because he/she has observed the practice from the adults. Likewise, a five year old would be able to engage with the book at a slightly developed level by holding a book properly, knowing how to turn the pages of the book correctly, without reading the book. He/she can relay a story based on pictures after noticing adults discussing or analyzing a visual text. It is believed that a seven year old child would be able to follow a correct writing

convention, correct spelling and can read a text with familiar words if he/she has been exposed to a print-rich environment (Dyson 2010). However, the pattern for literacy development for learners growing up in disadvantaged communities would happen at a slower pace because of lack of available print in the language they are familiar with (Lonigan, Burgess & Anthony 2000). They are likely to lack reading comprehension strategies because they do not grow up engaging with print, and may encounter challenges in reading (Lonigan et al. 2000). This suggests that as a child grows, so does literacy, depending on the level of exposure to literacy materials and activities. In the same way, Benson (2010) perceives literacy as not being static. It changes based on the context and purpose (van Steensel 2006); Lonigan, Burgess & Anthony (2000).

Auerbach cited in van Steensel (2006) claims that parents of children growing up in impoverished communities are perceived not to value literacy as they possess few reading material. They are believed to engage in few reading and writing activities, and do not support their children's literacy. It is also assumed that lack of exposure to literacy practices is one of the contributing factors in children's failure rate. However, Auerbach dismisses the view that children coming from impoverished families are deprived of literacy exposure at home. She mentions that these children engage in cultural literacy with their family members as literacy is a social and cultural practice (Elish-Pipe 1997), and use print for different purposes, namely, reading a bible or following instructions when working with a cooking recipe (van Steensel 2006).

According to Snow (2004) literacy development is further motivated by the kind of help and support a learner encounters as he/she progresses with age. Literacy development is reinforced at school through scaffolding activities where the learner is required to exhibit more developed and complex literacy skills through participating in challenging reading and writing activities (Snow 2004, Dyson 2010). To illustrate the developmental process of literacy, learners in higher grades exhibit different skills when they interact with print material. For example, they develop abilities to use talk, either through discussion or through the process of asking questions. The ability to ask questions, therefore, indicates an ability to reflect on what they have learned. So, literacy is socially constructed as learners interact with print material, and with the help of adults they use

speech or talk to reflect on what they have read or pretend to read from the material that is at their disposal.

Rassool (2002) claims that literacy is not universal but it depends on the manner in which it is used in different contexts. He further states that literacy serves at a particular time and in a particular context. Both Bartlett (2007) and Rassool (2002) oppose the traditional understanding of literacy which perceives literacy to mean only: (i) classifying people as being literate or not, (ii) viewing literacy as a strict set of rules, (iii) that literacy skills are the same between languages and serve the same purpose and (iv) that literacy skills are measureable.

Okech & Torres (2005) view literacy as referring to the meaningful acquisition of reading literacy skills and the use of the written language. Okech & Torres' (2005) view of literacy is based on the functionality of literacy for the development of reading, writing and critical thinking skills. This view of literacy seems to limit the other ways different people use literacy and emphasize the acquisition of reading and writing. Furthermore, Okech & Torres (2005) view literacy as an ageless educational concept and practice that applies to children, youth and adults, in and out of school. However, their focus seems to pay less attention to the ways in which literacy can instill a value of agency or transformation to people in order to change their social environment. In that way, literacy is more than a skill to be used for reading and writing, but it also performs function of uplifting their society. Okech & Torres' (2005) view of literacy also indicates that learners acquire literacy through spoken, visual, sound and through experience with literacy materials. They also regard it as a skill acquired through different mediums that learners are exposed to such as television, computers, newspapers and magazines and other human beings.

The view of literacy that exposes learners to different media enhances their chances of interaction between themselves and their teachers. The interaction, therefore, results in them not only understanding the formal school work, but also developing the literacy that would help them access other avenues in their lifetime. This suggests that when learners are actively interacting and participating in meaningful social learning environments, their literacy acquisition is likely to improve as in the case where they are exposed to different media in the classroom and at home.

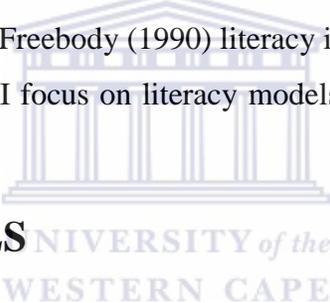
Howie, Venter, van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, du Toit, Scherman & Archer (2006) view literacy as a set of tools to achieve an outcome. These scholars were engaged in a study called the Progress International Literacy Study (PIRLS). PIRLS was a comparative literacy reading study and was premised on the principles of enabling participating countries to track and monitor their development with respect to literacy, over a period of time. To understand learners' literacy levels, PIRLS assessed reading for literary experience and reading to acquire and use information. To measure whether learners were able to exhibit the skills that required them to gain literacy experience and information, they had to answer questions that looked at different literacy processes. For example, they looked at whether learners were able to read and comprehend the text that was presented to them. Some questions focused on retrieving explicitly stated information, making straightforward inferences, interpreting and integrating ideas and information and evaluating and examining content, language and textual elements (Howie et al., 2006). In other words, their study looked at how literacy was used for comprehension purposes. So, the inferences that could be drawn from the PIRLS study is that teaching and exposing learners to different thinking processes early in their academic life teaches them to learn for meaning making and not just to acquire a skill to read words from left to right in the page. Secondly, it is important to scaffold learners into understanding the underpinning message the writer tries to relay. In that way, learners would be able to understand how to examine, evaluate and make emotional judgments about the text.

Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, Trong & Sainsbury (2009), in the third round of PIRLS (2011), defined literacy as the ability to understand and use written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. Young readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and in everyday life, and for enjoyment (Mullis, et al. 2009). This implies that being literate means that learners would be able to negotiate meaning and develop critical competence that would be required later in their school life. In addition, they would be able to use the knowledge they gained in literacy for specific purposes in their lives.

Sibiya & Van Rooyen (2005) perceive literacy as a vehicle which can improve the lives of people in poor socio-economic areas if it is developed appropriately. In other words, literacy could be seen as tool to be used to better the lives of the people, especially adults coming from

low socio-economic circumstances. Sibiya & Van Rooyen (2005) further state that literacy is more than the technical skills of reading and writing, but it is how it is used in society to achieve a certain goal. Sibiya & van Rooyen's perceptions of literacy seem to suggest a functional approach to literacy in that it aims at improving adults with regard to literacy. Functional literacy, therefore, aims to develop skills that would improve the lives of the adults so that they are able to participate in the development of their communities. These skills include, but are not limited to language literacy, numeracy and entrepreneurship. They enable people to participate in the society and to use any skill that intends to financially improve the lives of adult learners (Sibiya & Van Rooyen 2005).

From the above discussion, it can be deduced that views on literacy rest on three pillars, namely, learners' abilities to reflect on the text, their ability to improve their understanding and actively participate in the society (Okech and Torres 2005, Mullis et al (2009) and their ability to reflect on the text. According to Luke and Freebody (1990) literacy is an ability of the learner to analyse the text. In the following section, I focus on literacy models that correspond with the different conceptions of literacy.



2.3 LITERACY MODELS

2.3.1 Autonomous Literacy Model

Street (2003) draws a distinction between 'autonomous' and 'ideological' models of literacy. 'Autonomous' is defined as a model that is technical in nature and its focus is on the acquisition of literacy skills (Street 2003). In other words, the autonomous model focuses on the teaching of grammatical aspects of literacy and not on the deduction of grammatical features of literacy as people or learners engage in a literacy activity. According to Street (2003) the autonomous model focuses on individual aspects of literacy, separating it from the context, beliefs and culture under which people live (Block 2006). The autonomous model, therefore, views literacy experiences separately from people's social context (Evans 2005; Bartlette 2008). In a school situation, for example, the teaching of skills like phonics, or skills based learning falls into this category because it focuses on teaching literacy in stages and does not take the context into consideration. According to Block (2006) the autonomous model is believed to enhance cognitive skills of poor people and improving their chances of improving their social and

economic conditions, without looking at the causal factors of their situations. In other words, the autonomous model is viewed as representing the meaning of literacy for “others” in terms of limited mental operations (Evans 2005). It also examines the relationship between the oral and written language as well as between literacy and cognitive development.

2.3.2 Ideological Literacy Model

The ideological model, on the other hand, is defined as a literacy practice that is embedded in cultural and ideological assumptions and connects people to different points of time (Street 2003). Street (1995) claims that the ideological model of teaching literacy does not focus on transmitting content but it equips learners systematically so that learners understand that learning is a process. In other words, during the learning process, learners are exposed to different learning situations through trial and error (Street 1995).

Street (1995) further states that it is important to understand the context where literacy is being learnt. This understanding affords the teacher with valuable data that learners bring to school, that is, the learners’ diverse linguistic abilities, as well as the relationship learners have with their teacher. In other words, in the 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.

Therefore, 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 that particular scenario. The ideological model challenges teachers’ perceptions about knowledge generation and how it used in a specific context. It also challenges the traditional approach to teaching where the teacher is assumed to know everything, and therefore, should deposit information to the learners. It calls for a shift with regard to literacy practices in the classroom.

In the context of this study, the ideological model serves to understand the interaction and response in the classroom and support the teacher to design activity tasks that are context bound and attend to the needs of the diversity of learners and those of the community where the school is situated. In its conception, the ideological model is concerned with the way literacy is used in social context.

The ideological model is associated with multiplicity of literacy. Multiplicity of literacy, according to Walsh (2010), implies using visual literacy like diagrams, images, photographs, sound and pictures to enhance literacy development, especially for the young learners. The use of digital literacy is meant to broaden interaction of the learners with the text. However, using digital literacy does not imply replacing the imagination and cultural knowledge that is received from the books (Walsh 2010). Therefore, the multiplicity of literacy is a study of literacy learning that integrates oral language, social activities, including material setting and values and ways of thinking (Gee 1999). It involves the practices that are involved in literacy learning.

2.4 LITERACY PRACTICES

According to Scribner and Cole (1978) literacy as practice implies the use of literacy in real life situations. Literacy practices refer to the everyday uses and meanings of literacy in social practice (Street 2003; Papien 2005). In other words, literacy practices inform us of the different ways people use literacy in their lives. As a social practice, literacy is used by people to get things done in their societies (Pahl and Roswell 2005). Literacy practice entails cultural ways of using literacy that people draw upon in a literacy event (Street 1995). Furthermore, literacy practices are not abstract but they are inferred by events and other cultural activities. This implies that literacy practices occur in a socio-cultural context. In other words, people in the same social space may use literacy differently to achieve specific outcomes (Street 2003; Papien 2005; Hamilton 1998). For example, in a classroom context, literacy practices refer to activities such as reading, writing and other skills. Literacy practices also occur through non-formal schooling to ensure that people are literate in their social settings (Papien 2005). This means that the literacy practices that occur in the classroom build on learners' prior knowledge and enable them to function in the society.

There is an assumption that people working in less professional environments possess less reading and writing practices. So developing their professional literacy practices is intended to meet the needs of the institution they work for and the new challenges they could face. This could involve scaffolding people's literacy practices of reading and writing whereby the institution exerts control or power over the workers (Papien 2005). In the work place, for

example, people's literacy skills are aligned with the requirements of that particular industry in order to be effective (Dionísio & de Castro 2007).

According to Baynham (1995) literacy practice does not stop at what people do with literacy, but also looks at the outcome of what they make with literacy. Brandt & Clinton (2002) concur with Baynham (1995) that the cognitive effect of literacy practice is dependent on how an individual acts or uses literacy, and not on what literacy provides. This indicates that the context plays an important role in stimulating literacy practices. In other words, literacy as a practice provides a way of linking cognitive abilities with social performances in a particular context or applying reading and writing literacy skills to a specific context. For example, applying one's knowledge of how to write a piece of text in filling up an application form for work purposes illustrates that one has made use of what one knows about writing to achieve an outcome.

Literacy practice is more than grammar and structure but it includes the ways of thinking, acting and believing (Street, 2003; Evans, 2005). Although literacy practices seem to provide great gains for the construction of knowledge, Papen (2005) maintains that learners' understanding of literacy in their everyday lives needs to be taken into account. Papen (2005) applied the principles of the social view of literacy in 1997 when he conducted research in Durban using a project called the Older People's Literacy project (OPL) which ran for a period of three years. The curriculum that was developed and used in the project intended to investigate learners' existing reading and writing practices, but due to the needs of the community, it changed its focus to accommodate the practical needs of the community. This meant that the practical use of literacy by the community was taken into consideration and the social view of literacy was addressed, that of using literacy for social purpose. In other words, the OPL literacy programme was adapted to give way to the kind of literacy that aimed to develop the community. This shows that literacy is not fixed, but changes according to identifiable needs. In the education context, the literacy curriculum needs to take into consideration learner's prior knowledge and build on literacy practices acquired out of school.

Although the OPL project was intended for older people, it provides interesting information for this study that looks at literacy practices to address the diverse learner population in the Foundation Phase. Some learners come from homes where there is little regard for literacy (Gonzalez 2008). These children's literacy development is relatively behind from those who are

exposed to literacy materials of reading and writing at home. Papen (2005) maintains that learner's literacy discourses should be understood within a historical, cultural and social context of their lives. The school should create information rich settings in order to accommodate different literacy practices learners could benefit from to enhance their citizenry.

Street (2003) refers to the interaction that happens between the teacher and learners in literacy teaching. The interaction reflects power relations as the learners are often regarded as blank slates. This kind of interaction often ignores the social, cultural, historical and political context of the community in which the learners are raised or socialized. In the South African context, for example, literacy instruction should be designed to meet diverse socio-cultural needs of learners. This approach is supported by Banda (2010) who suggests that literacy could be facilitated through inquiry about learner practices in the community.

This study follows an ideological model since it views literacy as a social practice where meaning is socially constructed. It is guided by Street's (1995) view of literacy as a social practice. This means that the manner in which literacy practices occur in a particular social context are meant to meet the socio-cultural needs of that particular context (Papen, 2005). Therefore, literacy is a significant factor which influences retention, progression and achievement in any educational environment (Xue & Meisels 2004). However, the role of home literacy in children's learning cannot be ignored.

2.4.1 Home literacy

Roberts, Jurgens & Burchinal (2005) define the home as an environment that promotes the young child's experiences, attitudes and materials pertaining to literacy that a child encounters and interacts with at home before they attend formal schooling. Literacy is acquired at home with an intention to equip learners with knowledge that will be evaluated at a later stage. Gonzalez (2008) emphasizes the value or significance of families or parents on literacy development. This indicates that for young children's literacy to develop, they require strong literacy activities at home.

Home literacy involves the informal introduction of reading activities, namely, exposure to shared book reading, viewing of newspapers, drawing up of grocery lists and other print material that is available at home and used to develop oral language skills (Ásgeirsdóttir 2011). Reading

as a home literacy activity is often more dominant in Western cultures and in affluent homes than in disadvantaged communities. However, some print materials are found in disadvantaged communities such as municipal bills, magazines, local newspapers, bibles but their use at homes is not as effective as it is in affluent homes (Van steel 2006). In other words, children growing up in disadvantaged communities get little exposure to reading activities like being read to or the reading aloud practices by parents in Western and affluent homes.

In addition, home literacy is said to be informal for two reasons. Firstly it is not subjected to any formal assessment but it paves a way for the development of emergent literacy through exposing children to print materials. Secondly, it is practiced for enjoyment and entertainment by knowledgeable family members. Feiler (2005) concurs that learning at home plays a pivotal role in literacy acquisition. This indicates that when young children are read to at home, it is likely that their literacy improves at school because they have adequate exposure to literate environments (Purcell- Gates 2001). The home, therefore, is viewed as a hub where parents motivate their children by giving them feedback and instill opportunities for literacy development (Hattie & Timperlet 2007). Feiler (2005) further argues that the impact of parental involvement is a necessity across all social classes and all ethnic groups. Parental involvement is important because the interaction that happens at home between the child and the parent (or the knowledgeable other) helps to sharpen the child's cognitive abilities (Purcell- Gates (2001). This suggests that literacy practices at home are beneficial for every learner in developing school literacy.

A study conducted by van Steensel (2006) to understand literacy practices within families living in low socio-economic communities discovered that families use literacy for different purposes such as interpersonal communication. Van Steel's (2006) study showed that people used literacy to write letters to other members of their families, and used reading for school related activities. For example, they used reading to view children's school reports. Other families used other literacy texts like reading a Bible or cooking recipes for developing children's literacy at home. Van Steel's study indicates that learners from low socio-economic communities are exposed to literacy, but use it for different purposes. The study came with a different view of the lack of print material or lack of literacy activity in disadvantaged homes. It showed that learners growing up in disadvantaged communities are frequently exposed to school related literacy

activities at home. Hence, Van Steensel (2006) concluded that provision of an enabling literacy environment motivates learners' literacy practices at home.

Street (2003) makes a distinction between literacy events and literacy practices. Literacy events come from the idea of speech event as used in sociolinguistics (Street 2003; Banda 2003; Prinsloo 2004) and they seem to take on distinctive forms and functions. Street (1995) views a literacy event as any occasion in which literacy plays a role in a participant's interactions. For example, he draws on Scribner and Cole's (1978) observation of the Vai literacy where literacy event played a role in getting the communication across and between individuals. In this case, the recipient of a letter who was unschooled used oral language and asked the researcher to read and narrate the contents of the letter. Upon hearing the contents of the letter, the recipient together with the researcher and another person in the room, composed a response to the letter. The act of reading and narrating the contents of the letter and the composition of response represented a literacy event that involved reading and writing. In this instance, the literacy event played a role in enhancing communication between different individuals.

Rowse & Pahl (2005) reiterate the role played by literacy events in the classroom. They note that literacy events are observable chunks of literacy tasks or activities and they are evident in the classroom. For example, when learners engage in reading and writing activities they are participating in a literacy event. Pahl & Rowse (2005) further state that the act of reading a book is an event and the action itself implies participating in a practice of reading. According to Barton and Hamilton (2000) literacy events are observable actions. Literacy events play a role in literacy learning. They have social interactional rules which regulate the input of talk in relation to what is written, and they are governed by context. The exchanging of roles in the speech function facilitates the social impact of literacy (Martin & Rose 2007). For example, when people enter into a negotiation, four speech functions, namely, statements, questions, offers and commands take effect and they regulate the input of talk in that conversation. So, the speech functions serve to argue a certain point of view. In a classroom situation, for instance, learners are given opportunities to engage in debates or discussion to show knowledge and awareness of the speech functions.

2.4.2 Literacy as a Social Practice

The debates about meanings and practice of literacy have led to the birth of “New Literacy Studies” (NLS) which views literacy not only as a function, but also its nature and role in the society (Pahl and Roswell 2005, Street 1995). Compton-Lilly (2009) and Stephens (2000) view NLS as referring to the ways in which literacy practices are connected to people’s everyday lives. Therefore, the NLS views literacy as a social practice and it is not concerned with the acquisition of skills such as the teaching of grammar aspects of literacy at school (Street 2003), but how people use literacy in everyday life to fulfil social practices.

NLS emerged around the 1970’s when Street studied how Islamic villagers in Iran used reading and writing in their everyday lives (Street 1995), and the relationship those practices had with school literacy (Barton & Hamilton 1998). The purpose of conducting the study in Iran, according to Street, was to uplift the value of local literacy and to draw the attention to the meanings of literacy that the society attaches to it (Volk and Acosta 2001). The NLS is concerned with the multiplicity of literacies (Street 2003). That is, literacy is part and parcel of specific social, cultural, institutional and political practices. Thus Gee (1999) claims that literacy is not isolated, but it happens in a social context.

In order to understand literacy practices of the Iran community, Street lived in the community as a social anthropologist during the 1970s, carrying out ethnographic work. His interest was to investigate the ways in which locals used literacy (Street 1995). While in Iran, Street discovered that people used literacy in their everyday lives, and that literacy was part of their cultural practices. The tools he used to collect data were observations and he documented how the two literacies, commercial and the non-commercial literacies were operational in the area. Commercial literacy implied the kind of literacy that was used every day for commercial purposes when traders were communicating with their buyers. They also used commercial literacy to identify the kinds of fresh produce they were buying (Street 1995). The manner in which the two literacies, namely, the commercial literacy and non-commercial literacy were used differed in the sense that the commercial literacy was favoured in that particular situation and the other was not. This implies that literacy as a concept is not universal but is determined by the context in which it is used (Rassool 2002). Below, I discuss the sociocultural view of literacy.

2.5 THE SOCIOCULTURAL VIEW OF LITERACY

The sociocultural view of literacy believes that literacy is situated in social relations and is not a product of a set of skills (Papen 2005). This view focuses on what people want to use literacy for. In other words, the social view of literacy looks at the kinds of knowledge a certain society is interested in for the society to develop.

As mentioned earlier, Baynham (1995) views the idea of literacy as a social practice. This suggests that literacy is a concrete human activity because it cannot be separated from other cultural activities that people of the same culture practice. Literacy as a social practice enhances people's cognitive abilities and understanding that literacy is not only the ability to read and write, but it also enables people to decide the kinds of development literacy provides for them. It develops in people a sense of agency (Dionísio & de Castro 2007).

The traditional view of literacy which describes literacy as a set of skills that are transmitted by the teacher to the learners contradicts the sociocultural view of literacy which claims that literacy is socially and culturally bound. In other words, the traditional view interprets literacy learning as a process that happens in a systemic manner, which has to be preceded by certain systems before the introduction of literacy activities (Rose 2005). Rose (2005) further mentions that the traditional view of literacy limits the understanding of literacy learning by placing emphasis on an individual where he/she conquers and masters the skills step by step, thus neglecting or minimizing the contribution made by other individuals in the process of meaning construction. The sociocultural view of literacy, on the other hand, does not focus on an individual in relation to development, but it claims that literacy is socially negotiated in cultural practices (Bartlett 2007). This means that, the sociocultural view of literacy recognizes the role that the society plays in developing people's literacy skills. This is done by sharing beliefs, cultural values and practices and through communicating historical practices that are passed down from generation to generation. So in that way, social interaction enhances literacy development because through interaction learners are able to share ideas and experiences about a certain topic, discuss and respect each other's contribution in the learning environment.

In relation to the above, Rassool (2000) states that different 'literacies' exist in various social and cultural contexts. In a classroom situation, literacy could be understood in terms of the different

literacies that are used to develop different subject knowledge that is specific to particular subject content areas. Mathematics literacy, for example, serves to develop learners to be competent in using numeracy or mathematical concepts and understand the requirements of numeracy or mathematics subject areas (Rassool 2002). On the question of universal status of literacy, Bartlette (2007) mentions that a sociocultural approach to literacy does not accept the way that things are told, but it instils to people an element of questioning the practices since the meanings people attach to literacy are not the same and are motivated by cultural contexts. Moreover, a sociocultural approach to literacy takes into consideration the social role literacy plays in the construction of meaning and the development of higher order thinking skills.

In light of the above, the sociocultural principles that underpin the sociocultural view of literacy are influenced by Vygotsky's theory of learning which explains learning as a mediation process that takes place in the human mind (Lantolf 2000). In other words, for human mental functions to operate, psychological tools need to be used for the people to effectively interact, regulate and negotiate meaning with themselves and other individuals (Kozulin 1998, Lantolf 2000). The psychological tools Kuzolin (1998) talks about include but are not limited to signs, symbols, computers, books, language, diagrams, maps and all the tools that could be used in the classroom to mediate learning. These tools serve as a bridge between individual acts of mental development (Kuzolin 1998). This suggests that the employment of psychological tools, e.g. diagrams, maps and or language during teaching and learning stimulate learners' thinking and meaning construction.

Howie's et al. (2006) and Mullis' et al.(2009) studies mentioned in 2.2 above, view literacy as a means of opening up of literate environments where learners interact with written texts to make meaning as valuable members of the society. What is also suggested by Mullis et al. (2009) definition is that literacy is socially constructed. In the process of interaction with the text, the reader makes use of different strategies and cues to arrive at a meaningful outcome (Rassool 2002).

Howie et al. (2006), Mullis et al. (2009) and Okech and Torres (2005) view literacy as a socially constructed process where learners actively construct meaning. They go on to say that literacy is a practice that is not limited by age and it happens in and out of school environments. Furthermore, they claim that literacy serves to empower individuals to be able to reflect on the

text they have made use of in different contexts. This implies that learners are able to participate in the society as they acquire literacy. In a classroom situation, where formal learning takes place when learners engage in a group discussion about a particular topic, they have read, they begin to construct individual meanings about the topic where they make connections with the text by making reference to their own experiences and thereby developing other ideas about the topic. In the process, learners share ideas that enhance their learning. In other words, through group discussions in a literacy lesson, learners acquire skills to value and appreciate a printed word.

In the school environment, literacy is developed through social interaction with the teacher and learner. This entails the use of strategies the teacher employs in developing literacy in the classroom. At home the parents, the family and the community play a vital role in supporting children's literacy. Therefore, classroom practices and the media support literacy development and contribute to the development of literate communities (Mullis et al 2009).

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (2009) views literacy as an individual's capacity to understand, use, reflect on and engage with written texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society. PISA concurs with Okech and Torres (2005) as well as Mullis et al.'s (2009) view of literacy as mentioned one of the sections above.

Similarly, Chauvin (2003) claims that literacy affords learners with the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms. This definition of literacy implies that learners are actively involved in the process of developing new knowledge through accessing and analysing texts. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) expects learners to use visual cues to talk about the graphic text (DBE 2011). This implies that when learners view a text, they develop strategies of looking at the situation that is presented to them in a written form. In that way, learners are able to reflect on the information to make sense of the written word. Hence they are expected to view texts for information.

Similarly, the social view of literacy was observed by Scribner & Cole (1978) in Liberia. Scribner & Cole (1978) do not support the traditional view of literacy. They dismiss it on the basis of the findings of their study with the Vai community of Liberia which investigated literacy without schooling, specifically the effect of writing among the Vai society members. Instead

they believed that literacy should be defined as development or a practice. The purpose of Scribner & Cole's (1978) study was to investigate the role of schooling in a community that practised home schooling. In the Vai community boys were schooled by the males in the bush and young girls were schooled by their mothers. The culture of schooling as we currently experience it was not mostly practised. So, the purposes of being schooled were different from the Vai community. Being literate in the Vai community had a different meaning. Some started to learn to read and write for family protection. Others started to learn to read and write in order to establish personal relationships with the opposite sex. This implied that Scribner and Cole's (1978) study wanted to understand how unschooled community members solved their problems in the absence of knowing how to read and write. Thus, they wanted to know the kinds of practices that the Vai community used literacy for (Scribner and Cole 1981).

In investigating literacy as practice with the Vai community, Scribner & Cole's (1978) wanted to understand what aspects of the mind influence thinking in unschooled adults. They found out that through cultural literacy, the Vai society did not require a professional person to teach them but were able to use cultural literacy to continue their living. People who possess cultural literacy, according to Michalowitz (1999), understand the context in which they live but might or might not have the reading, writing and mathematical skills that are required for classroom context. Scribner and Cole (1978) concluded that literacy development enhances mental abilities when cognitively challenging literacy tasks are used (Barnes, Tager, Stariano & Yaffe 2004). Activities that are known to stimulate thinking include critical analyses of the texts. But when less inspiring learning atmosphere is employed, critical engagement with the text is likely not to promote cognitive development. In the classroom context, a less inspiring learning atmosphere is characterised by rote learning where learners are not provided with opportunities to think and develop as critical thinkers.

Scribner & Cole's (1978) study is relevant to this study as it focused on literacy practices and how social literacy practices might influence school literacy practices. Scribner and Cole (1978) maintain that there is a relationship between literacy and cognitive or mental development. They make reference to a college student who is assumed to have acquired literacy level that would enable him to write a coherent and logical essay because his mental abilities have been developed. Instead they are of the opinion that in order to understand the assumed relationship

between literacy and mental abilities, two perspectives need to be contrasted, namely, literacy as practice and literacy for development (Scribner & Cole 1978). Understanding the functions and uses of literacy could help in defining literacy and create an understanding of the relationship between literacy and cognition (Scribner & Cole 1978).

Scribner and Cole (1978) analysed Greenfield and Bruner's (1966) findings of the study they conducted in Senegal where schooled children were compared to unschooled children in an experimental cognitive task. Intellectual stimulating tasks allowed learners to engage in activities that increase their problem solving skills (Literacy for Learning Report 2004). The experimental intellectual activities that Greenfield and Bruner used to assess the performance of unschooled children compared to schooled children, required them to sort pictures and provide reasons that led them to use a particular strategy in sorting, than the other. With reference to Greenfield and Bruner, schooled children were able to use full sentences in providing their answers. Secondly, they were able to attach certain qualities to the items in order for them to be able to categorise and group them.

Nonetheless, the unschooled were able to sort the given objects but could not explicitly pronounce the logic behind their sorting. The ability of the schooled learners to provide reasons for their decisions suggested an existing relationship between literacy and mental abilities (Greenfield and Bruner 1966) based on the abilities of the schooled children to motivate on the claims they made about sorting the objects. The interpretation of the findings of the study conducted in Senegal, however, indicated the effects of literacy on general mental abilities but it did not explicitly suggest the supporting relationship between literacy and mental abilities (Scribner and Cole 1978). This could mean that Greenfield and Bruner (1966) drew conclusions on an existing relationship between literacy and intellectual abilities, based on the instructional support that literacy receives at school, than that which the unschooled learners receive at home.

Furthermore, the unschooled learners who participated in the 1966 study that was conducted by Greenfield and Bruner could have used literacy for social purposes since their context required them to be able to communicate their messages. However, the purpose of literacy required the schooled learners to make the meaning explicitly clear in writing, and in that process they had to construct meaningful sentences in order to validate the claims they made with regard to the attributes they attached when sorting the objects. Scribner and Cole (1978) are of the opinion that

exposure to literate environments at school in the form of books and other reading and writing resources has a positive effect on cognitive abilities of school-going children, based on Greenfield and Bruner's findings. The following section discusses the role emergent literacy plays in supporting reading and writing in young learners.

2.6 EMERGENT LITERACY

Emergent literacy is believed to be a gradual developmental process that happens early in the child's life (Lonigan et al., 2000, Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). It is believed to be the basis for which children's traditional abilities of reading and writing are built (Justice, Chow, Capellini, Flanigan and Colton 2003). In other words, emergent literacy involves children's exposure to reading and writing environments before attending formal literacy instruction at school.

Emergent literacy is said to consist of skills, knowledge and attitudes that are presumed to be developmental for conventional forms of reading and writing (Lonigan et al., 2000; Whitehurst & Lonigan 1998; Roberts, Jurgens & Burchinal 2005). Availability and exposure to literacy tools such as book reading at home have a positive effect on emergent literacy development (Roberts, Jurgens & Burchinal 2005; Purcell-Gates 2001). This suggests that emergent literacy comprises of important components for word decoding abilities that do not end at school. These components are oral language, phonological processing abilities, and print knowledge (Lonigan et al. 2000; Gove & Watterberg 2011). This indicates that reading and writing are mediated, scaffolded and acquired in a non-threatening, informal and natural manner through interacting with knowledgeable family members and literacy materials (Justice et al., 2003).

Emergent literacy assumes that reading, writing and oral language develop concurrently and independently when children are exposed to literate social environments in which literacy is a component at home and at school (Whitehurst & Lonigan 1998). In other words, the social interaction with adults promotes the development of emergent literacy that also provides opportunities for exploration of written language when learners are exposed to print material, especially at school (Teale 1987).

Literacy is an important skill and practice throughout the learner's school years. A good literacy foundation involves, among other things, exposure to print material at an early age. It is also viewed as a precursor for good academic life and learners who receive less practice in reading are likely to lack important skills that could help them to develop better reading comprehension skills (Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony 2000; Gove & Watterberg 2011). Lack of reading practice could affect young learners negatively as they cannot absorb printed information, follow written instructions or communicate well in writing (Gove & Watterberg 2011). Therefore, exposure to reading and writing practices earlier in life could eliminate or minimize literacy difficulties that might arise when children enter school (Gove & Watterberg 2011).

Block (2006) perceives emergent literacy as a strategy young children use to construct their own literacy in personally useful and meaningful ways and as part of developmental, personal, social and cultural learning processes. Block's definition of emergent literacy suggests that young learners acquire literacy by using it to construct meaningful ways of dealing with life demands in a social context. Block (2006) mentions two variables that help to develop emergent literacy in young learners, namely, pretending to read and bedtime reading. Pretending to read is a process that happens in and out of school when young learners are exposed to print material whereby they pretend to read under the guidance of a knowledgeable adult. Bedtime reading implies exposing children to literacy practices in a non-threatening manner, in the company of their family. This exposure and modelling of literacy in social setting stimulates the use of language and learning, at the same time (Block 2006). The knowledgeable adult could be the teacher, a parent or a sibling that is more advanced in reading than the learner.

Bedtime reading by parents and the time they spend with their children at home can improve young learners' literacy abilities (Evans, Shaw & Bell 2000). This practice happens at home to expose learners to the value of reading and it develops the learners' vocabulary and knowledge that would help them later in academic life. According to Robert, Jurgens & Burchinal (2005) a difference in terms of knowledge and literacy development was observed between children from low socio-economic and middle socio-economic backgrounds. Children from disadvantaged communities received less reading support from their parents than children from middle socio-economic backgrounds and, as a result, lagged behind their counterparts in terms of reading abilities.

Prinsloo & Block (1999) extend the view of emergent literacy to imply not only exposure to print material but also to include how print material provides access to enjoyment and love of books. Children develop skills and positive experiences that enable them to engage with print material by asking questions, and have those questions answered by adults. Michalowitz (1999) and Koon (2008) agree that the children view the book for information, while reading for enjoyment.

Many scholars believe that there is a relationship between play and the development of emergent writing (Prinsloo & Block 1999; Michalowitz 1999; Neuman & Rokos 1990; (RNCS) (DoE 2002 and Block 2006). According to Block (2006) play involves pretending that something represents an object and that precedes the understanding of written language. In other words, when children play, their imagination allows them to think about the rules of the game and the act of playing leads to development. Block (2006) goes on to make an example of using story telling where the knowledgeable other models writing, by writing down what the young learner is narrating. So, the relevance of pretend-read activities at home during early years develop curiosity among the young children and open more opportunities for them to be exposed to print material early in their lives.

Similarly, Flear & Raban (2007) recognise that young learners' literacy develops in everyday activities that are accompanied by talk, with lots of new vocabulary words. According to Flear & Raban (2007) "literacy is more than knowing letters and reading some words" but the development of knowledge generators and learners that are able to analyse the text and reflect on it. It is also about an understanding that making mistakes is a natural part of learning and that literacy learning is a process. This implies that young learners show their understanding of literacy by being aware of the different kinds of print or visual materials available at their homes, as well as by actively participating in talk with adults.

Purcell-Gates (2001) also emphasizes the role of talk or oral language in emergent literacy, and she is of the view that oral language is a precursor for written language. She believes that exposure to written language mediates oral language development which children use in pretend-to-read activities at school and at home. Purcell-Gates's notion of emergent literacy rests on the belief that emergent literacy should be concerned with the emerging conceptual and procedural knowledge of written language, including the reading and writing of that particular language. She further states that language needs to be retained as a key variant to emergent literacy

knowledge, but it is important to support its written form than oral. One of Purcell- Gates's recommendations when dealing with emergent literacy is that a focus on developing written form of language provides measures for intervention early in a learner's school life. So, according to Purcell- Gates (2001) exposure to written material early in children's life, irrespective of their sociocultural background, could help children to learn to read and develop their pretend- to-read ability when they are constantly read to at school or at home. Purcell- Gates, therefore, confirms that language is an important component to literacy and a focus on reading and written language development could provide improvements in instructional or intervention measures early in a child's academic life.

Purcell- Gates further mentions that language is embedded in culture, and culture is not constant but changes all the time. Therefore, Purcell-Gates recommends that during formal schooling, it is the teacher's explicit instructional practices that could introduce children to written text literacy activities. Such activities bring different qualities of written features of language to develop literacy abilities. In other words, the teacher has an influence on learners' literacy development, especially in the Foundation Phase because the (FP) teacher lays the literacy foundational skills that the learner will use to learn in other school subjects in subsequent grades. So, it is the teacher's responsibility to introduce young learners to the practices of reading and writing at school.

2.7 TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Different views attribute better learner performance to teacher effectiveness and classroom instructional practices. In this section, I discuss the importance of teacher instructional practices and their impact on learners' literacy achievement. Allen (2002) defines "practice" as repeating the same thing until one is skilful in it. It further states that a practice is to actively do something habitually. This view of practice indicates an act of having a routine.

Equally, Scribner and Cole (1981) describe practice as a sequence of activities that have a specific goal. They further mention that for a particular practice to be mastered, three components need to be involved to carry out the task, namely, knowledge, skills and technology. The two descriptions of practice given by Scribner and Cole (1981) and that of the Allen (2002) complement each other in the sense that they view practice as a motivation to achieve a social

goal or task. In the context of this study, instructional practice suggests the strategies that the teacher uses to mediate and negotiate meaning with the learners.

Neuman and Cunningham (2009) link teacher's instructional practices to the teacher's content knowledge about language and literacy development, especially in the lower grades. The knowledge that the teachers possess, help them to teach in a developmental and effective way (Neuman and Cunningham 2009). Instructional practice also indicates a teacher's knowledge about the learners' prior knowledge, culture and history in order to engage children's understanding in a meaningful way. In short, Neuman and Cunningham (2009) view teacher's instructional practices as implying an ability to monitor children's literacy development, an ability to provide effective feedback to the families about the progress of the child, construction of respectful relationships and the provision of support and empowerment to the families.

Similarly, Shanahan (1998) defines teacher instructional practices as the ability of the teacher to have an impact on learner achievements. This could be achieved when a teacher explicitly plans and executes each literacy skill, and not rely on the development of one skill to the detriment of the other (Shanahan 1998). Neuman and Cunningham (2009) and Shanahan (1998) refer to teacher instructional practices as the strategies the teacher uses in order to effectively engage children in learning and in literacy development.

Many researchers believe that the teachers' instructional practices have an influence on student learning and achievement (Nye, Konstantopoulos & Hedges 2004; Schacter & Thum 2004; Wyne & Youngs 2003 and Palardy & Rumberger 2008). Wenglinsky (2002) views teachers' instructional classroom practices to imply the development of higher order thinking skills. He goes on to say that the decisions teachers make, regarding their classroom practices could either enhance or constrain learning. Classroom instructional practices that are seen to have a direct and positive effect on learner performance are those that develop learners' higher order thinking in order to develop their conceptual understanding.

The process to develop higher order thinkers involves a multi-layered approach by the teacher. This approach involves exposing learners to activities that engage them in problem solving, where the teacher develops both the learners who perform above average grade level and scaffold low performing grade level learners. Another practice that enhances learners' conceptual

understanding is allowing learners to work collaboratively in solving problems and engaging learners in authentic assessment (Wenglinisky 2002). Collaborative work by learners also serves as a disciplinary measure in the classroom (Gibbons 2002). For example, group work could help to eliminate domination or bullying of other learners in the classroom and help to improve self-esteem of other learners. In the following section I focus on literacy teaching approaches.

2.7.1 Literacy Teaching Approaches

Concerns about literacy instruction led to a series of debates that date back to 1945 in New Zealand and England, during a period that was known as the ‘literacy crises’. The debate was on which literacy programme should be dominant over others and which approaches and strategies best expose children to literacy. The focus of these debates was to look for the best practice that could improve literacy standards (Soler & Openshaw 2007). The debates about literacy instruction in early years gave rise to specific political, economic and pedagogical implications towards literacy instruction.

Xue & Meisels (2004) claim that learners enter school with different literacy skills and abilities, depending on the extent of their exposure to print materials. This poses a challenge to the teacher as to which approach is best to use in order for learners to learn effectively. Learners’ literacy levels guide teachers on the best literacy approaches to employ to teach reading and writing in early years of schooling. These approaches are the phonic approach and the whole language or balanced approach (Wyse 2003; Xue & Meisels 2004; Brooks & Brooks 2005; Soler & Openshaw 2007, Sebastian 2003 and Wyse & Styles 2007). Below, I provide a description of the different approaches to literacy teaching.

2.7.2 Phonics Approach

In the Phonics Approach (PA) to literacy teaching, learners are taught how to break the code (Xue & Meisels 2004; Sebastian 2003) of the rules on how words are spelt and written. Brooks & Brooks (2005) view phonics instruction as an ordered way of acquiring the linguistic features of a word, and then rearranging them to form a word. In other words, learners are taught the spelling- sound relationship of the word. In this way, learners start by decoding the word,

rearrange it and later try to make its meaning. This implies that in PA instruction words are taught as isolated sounds.

In the same vein, Mesmer & Griffith (2005) refer to the term “phonics” as the way of encoding speech sounds into written symbols. They go on to say that phonics instruction involves an understanding of the relationship between the ways sounds are systematically used and how they are recognised. For example, if the lesson is focused on the ‘ch’ sound, as in the word “chola” (pick up), the teacher can leave the initial sound and make changes from the middle with the use of different vowels to the end of the word. The word can be rearranged to form another word. For example, from the initial sound “ch” the learner could be expected to construct the word “chitha” (spill). In that case, there are vowel changes to the word. The rationale behind using the initial sound is to support the young learner to recognise the word and also to distinguish between the different sounds that make the words. The instruction, therefore, relies on identifying and sounding the changes that are happening in the construction of the word. When learners are able to identify and make the changes in given letters, they develop phonemic awareness and begin to recognise the syllables (Brooks & Brooks 2005), and this assists in their comprehending the word and not the meaning.

The PA provides different assumptions for teaching literacy in the FP. Xue & Meisels (2004) mentions that use of PA focuses on accuracy in recognising the word and the skill of breaking down words. In other words, the learning process is controlled by the teacher since he/she has to focus on getting the product of the learning in a skilled and structured manner. Thus, the focus in PA is on accurately and successfully completing the word, without looking at the meaning that the word could generate. This suggests that the purpose of the PA approach is to teach learners to decode the text and to follow instructions as they are pronounced by the teacher. This suggests that PA limits learners’ creative thinking abilities as they do not read for comprehension or meaning.

Lastly, since the focus in PA instruction is on controlling how the learners learn to read, this instruction seems to limit opportunities of developing love for reading and it also limits learners in engaging with the text in an authentic and supporting manner. The learners are oriented to learn words in isolation. But if the teaching of phonics is made part of the shared reading

programme, learners can understand that words carry with them meaning if they are associated with a certain context.

The curriculum (CAPS) recognises the importance of the teaching of phonics in the early years but also proposes that phonics be taught in context where meaning construction forms the basis of the lesson (WCED Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2006-2016; Curriculum and Assessment Policy statement DBE 2011). In other words, the curriculum aims at the development of meaning where young learners need to be supported in comprehending the meaning of the text, and then engage with smaller units of the alphabet and blend them to construct words.

Xue & Meisels (2004) suggest that the PA is relevant to teach reading in early years, especially to children coming from low socio-economic backgrounds, since there is lack of exposure to print material in such disadvantaged surroundings. Learners in the Foundation Phase, irrespective of their family background, need to be taught reading in order to develop their cognitive reading abilities. Xue & Meisels (2004) criticise the use of the PA approach that it develops literacy skills that introduce learners to surface understanding as it focuses on word reading and correct spelling only. They do not mention how the PA enhances meaning construction. They further mention that enhancing literacy levels of learners using the PA is not effective beyond the first grade (Xue & Meisels 2004). This seems to suggest that PA does not enhance literacy learning in a way that learners are able to use their literacy skills in other subjects in subsequent grades. However, the CAPS supports the use of the PA, but stresses the fact that phonics should not be taught in isolation, but should be linked to shared reading programme. In other words, the teaching of phonics should be taught in context to support learning of languages and also to support learners to construct and spell words correctly. I will now focus on the Whole Language Approach to literacy learning.

2.7.3 Whole Language Approach

Teachers' understanding of how to teach reading in the Foundation Phase is important because it provides a good foundation for reading which is valuable in learners' academic lives. The Whole Language (WLA) approach is one of the strategies which could be used to teach reading. The (WLA) believes that learners acquire language skills in context (Brooks & Brooks 2005) through active participation in the construction of meaning (WCED Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

2006-2016). In other words, the WLA is framed within a constructivist approach where learners are active constructors of knowledge (Xue & Meisels 2004; WCED LitNum Strategy 2006-2016) and it is learner- centered as learners actively participate in learning by employing a wide variety of strategies to engage with the text. These strategies include, and are not limited to asking questions, and engaging in authentic reading and writing activities.

Xue & Meisels (2004) argue that literature based reading, which is what PA proposes, does not expose learners to active participation and engagement with the text in order to construct meaning because it works on word level where the focus is on blending syllables, but limits their participation in literacy learning. They further mention that the WLA enhances literacy learning in that it creates opportunities for learners to read for a purpose. There is an assumption that the WLA improves teacher practices with regard to reading (Xue & Meisels 2004). In this approach the teacher creates a learning environment that is print rich where learners are exposed to a variety of reading material.

Sebastian (2003) maintains that the focus of learning in a WLA classroom is on the comprehension of the text by the learners. According to him, the WLA proponents are not concerned about precisions and accuracy of sounding the words, but on how learners make connections with the text and subsequently comprehend it. Xue & Meisels (2004) concur that when decoding a text, the focus is on predicting and guessing. This implies that through the teacher's questions and cues, learners are able to guess or predict how the text develops. In that way, reading becomes a mediated activity. This implies that, learners are scaffolded in order to make connections by engaging with the text. When learners are able to make connections, they are cognitively stimulated for comprehension of what they read.

According to Xue & Meisels (2004) "learning to read should not be viewed as a process to be broken into component skills that are taught in sequence", but it a learning process where learners experience language literacy activities. The other pedagogical significances of using the WLA in teaching reading is that it exposes learners to the nature of reading and writing so that they can read for meaning. This approach motivates love for reading and reading for enjoyment.

Furthermore, the WLA enhances literacy development skills that PA does not promote, namely, more opportunities to expose learners to use the connection that exists between reading and

writing and help develop young readers into lifelong readers (Xue & Meisels 2004). However, there still exist concerns regarding the teaching of reading comprehension using PA or WLA. According to Brooks & Brooks (2005), regardless of either approach used to teach reading, learners leave school with less reading understanding and ability to critically evaluate texts. In the context of this study, both approaches seem to be relevant as they promote reading and writing simultaneously, but they also have some limitations. In the following section I explore reading and writing practices for making meaning.

2.7.4 Reading and writing as an integrated process

The reading and writing aspects of literacy have traditionally been thought of as different fields of study (Fitzgerald 2000; Skeans 2000; Parodi 2007 and Koons 2008). Parodi, quoting Tierney (1992) states that there is limited work that traces the collaboration that exists between reading and writing because these literacy skills are often taught independently. Fitzgerald (2000) mentions the contributory factors that influence the relationship between reading and writing, and these include the different values that are attached to reading and writing by the society. There is high publication of textbooks that support reading and less exposure to textbooks that support the teaching of writing (Skeans 2000). In this way, writing is regarded as a supplementary element to reading, and is then perceived as a secondary skill that needs to be learnt after acquiring competency in reading. Besides the separation in the teaching of reading and writing, political influence also plays a part in creating divisions between reading and writing. That is, when the political climate changes or when there is change in power, there are often changes in literacy curriculum. The ruling party usually promotes what it thinks is the important aspect of literacy in terms of reading and writing. Hence different groups of educators develop separate curricula, instructional materials, and assessments at a certain political period (Block 2006).

The changes in political climate, according Lombard & Grosser (2008), impact on practices in the classroom. In other words, teachers experience political changes differently, resulting in them feeling a little confused by what the curriculum spells out for them to implement, and what they should teach towards. South Africa comes from a divided education system. As stated in Chapter 1, different curriculum policies, namely, Curriculum 2005 (C2005), Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), National Curriculum Statements and Curriculum Assessment

Policy Statement (CAPS) were developed to help improve the general quality of education and bring the previously disadvantaged groups on par with the rest of the other groups in the country. With regard to literacy teaching and learning, the explicitly stated focus is on the teaching of reading, with writing acting as a product of reading.

Reading and writing are interconnected and should be treated and conceptualized as a process (Fitzgerald 2000; Parodi 2007; Martinez & Teale 1987 & Koons 2008 and Skeans 2000). Ulusoy & Dedeoglu (2011) further state that the integration of reading and writing aspects of literacy ensures and maintains a high level of literacy learning (Bromley 1989, Ulusoy & Dedeoglu 2011). For example, after Grade 3 learners are exposed to more content subjects that require them to read more content area materials and to use reading and writing in order to learn more effectively. So, the promotion of reading and writing as interconnected aspects of literacy serves to unlock the thinking processes of learners (Bowman 2000) and provides them with better opportunities to improve in other school subjects. Additionally, it is also believed that the connection between reading and writing could benefit learners if these practices are made explicit in the curriculum (Mayo 2000; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu 2011). It is the intention of this study to investigate the collaboration that exists between literacy reading and writing practices with learners as constructors of meaning. Teaching reading and writing explicitly and as an interdependent skill calls on the instructional practices of the teacher (Skeans 2000) when delivering the curriculum.

Bromley (1989) mentions three reasons why reading and writing should be taught as a process. Firstly, she mentions that reading and writing are not only interdependent, but they develop simultaneously as the child grows. This suggests that as literacy is believed to begin at home through socialization even before the child attends formal schooling, children become aware of the print in their environments and start to engage in literate activities. For example, they start to notice words in their immediate surroundings e.g. words written in the cereal box or words written in a favourable juice bottle, even though they do not engage with the words in the container to construct meaning. This implies that, even though children have not yet attended school, they can name the words of the things or objects that they are familiar with, because they are exposed to literate print, but they cannot read.

Secondly, Bromley (1989) mentions that reading and writing reinforce each other. This means that these skills are not meant to be used one as a product of the other, but they should be used and treated equally to support and enhance literacy. Thirdly, when learners read and write, they use language for communication. In this way, exposure to print environment even before children start schooling makes them aware of the print because of several encounters with words. The continuous exposure to print develops their prior experience with the print.

According to Gunther (2000) when learners are exposed to reading and writing, they are able to freely make inferences, predictions and associations. The ability to make inferences and predictions implies the connection that the learner makes with his/her prior knowledge (Gunther 2000; Bowman 2000 and Skeans 2000). Gunther's (2000) study has relevance to this study since it investigated the relationship between writing and reading for high school learners.

Gunther (2000) and Bowman (2000) claim that learners make a connection when they read and write, and are able to effectively analyze and draw conclusions about the text. In other words, learners are able to draw conclusions when they are active participants in meaning construction from the text (Bowman 2000). Active writing and reading allows the learners to construct meaning, understand and discover the underlying message of the text on their own or with the assistance of the teacher. This process, according to Bowman (2000), leads to the development of personal, social and political awareness. For Grade 3 learners, active participation in the development of meaning through reading and writing develops the skill of being an independent reader and critical writer. It also enables the learner to analyse the text and offer his/ her views, and not only internalize what the author has documented as the ultimate truth.

Reading and writing integration is said to provide advantages for the diverse learners in the classroom. For Gunther (2000) the reading and writing advantages are evident when learners are able to organize their thoughts, provide reasons in defence of their statements and communicate their thinking through writing. This indicates that in a Grade 3 classroom learners can be able to exhibit the advantages when the teacher provides the necessary support by asking different kinds of questions that allow learners to critically think and defend their reasons for supporting a particular idea. The ability to document their thoughts is important at this stage.

Besides organizing thinking and reflection, reading and writing encourage learners to engage with the text in order to meaningfully construct knowledge instead of memorizing information (Bowman 2000). Skeans (2000) reiterate the value of reading as it enables learners to constantly evaluate their comprehension by silently asking themselves questions to clarify possible misunderstandings. Therefore, classroom practices should scaffold specific comprehension strategies (Skeans 2000). This illustrates that the teacher should focus on developing specific knowledge that the learners could be able to use as a resource to develop their own pieces of writing, guided by a particular context. Mayo (2000) concurs with Skeans (2000) that learners could develop their own pieces of writing and they propose the use of genres to collaborate reading and writing skills. According to Mayo (2000) when learners are motivated to create their own text using the features of the already learned text, they may become more capable and independent readers and writers of complex texts (DBE 2011). Koons (2008), Gibbons (2002) and Rose (2005) believe that genres help learners to transfer the skills they learned across the curriculum by following a process called the Curriculum Cycle (CC). According to Gibbons (2002) the Curriculum Cycle (CC) is a four staged cycle which is represented by the following diagram:

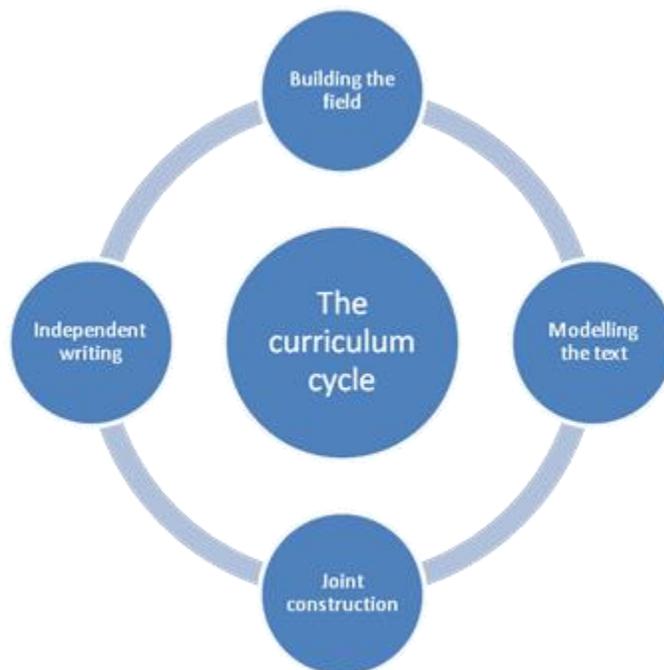


Figure 1: Schematic representation of a Curriculum Cycle

The CC approach focuses on developing language activities and it also integrates other literacy skills (e.g.) listening, speaking, reading and writing (Gibbons 2002). According to Gibbons (2002) CC is helpful in that it integrates language content across other school subjects. The four stages of the CC are discussed below.

The first stage of “building the field” focuses on collecting data that is relevant to a specific text type. The teacher plays a pivotal role in creating an environment for linguistic development where learners share ideas about the topic. At this stage, learners could be exposed to writing through communication or interaction in authentic situations.

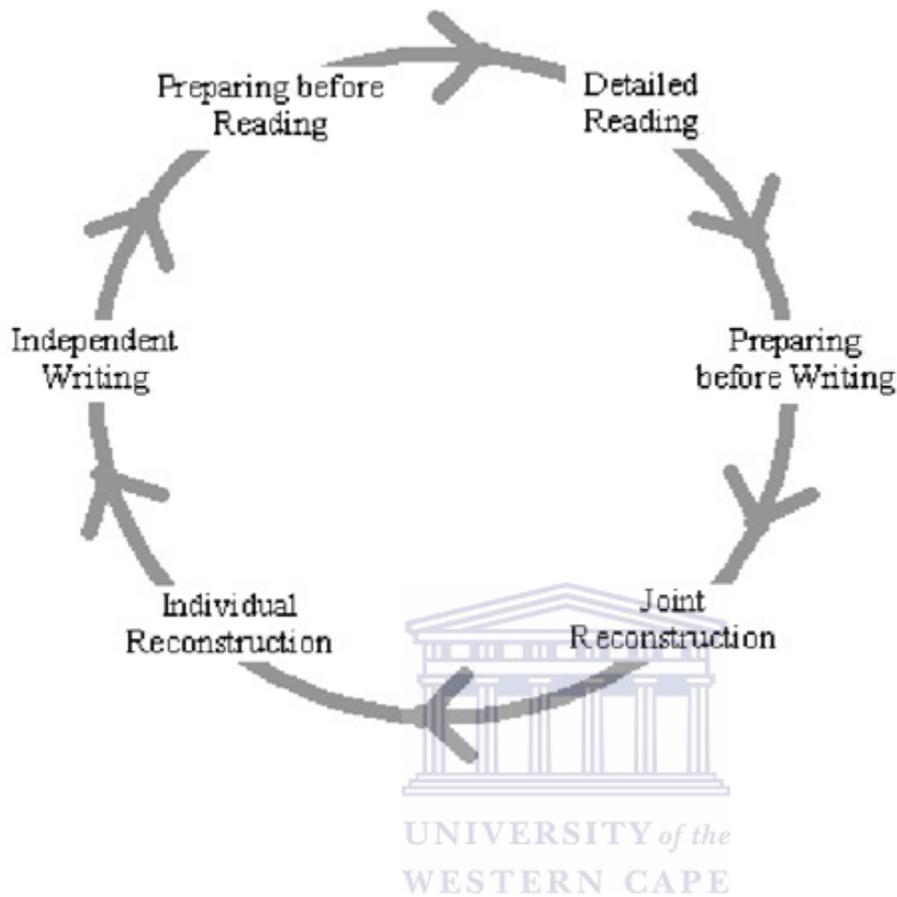
After learners had collected as much information about the text, the teacher introduces them to the purpose and the context of the text. At this point, the focus is on the structure of a particular text as well as the grammatical features an individual text possess. This is the stage of “modeling the text”. The teacher uses the structure of the text and model how it is written, using the language bank they collaboratively constructed during the first stage of the CC.

The third stage entails learners working in groups to support each other. The teacher’s guidance is important at this stage because learners have to jointly construct the text under the guidance of the teacher.

Lastly, learners write their own texts. This stage is called “independent writing”. Learners could work individually or the teacher could ask learners to work in pairs. At this point, learners have generated enough vocabulary and concepts about the topic or text that they going to write about.

The teacher could support the struggling learners by making use of writing frames, a strategy that is supported by the DBE (2011). The CC and the writing frames serve to guide the learners in their thinking about writing. This approach, according to Gibbons (2002) enhances literacy development. Rose (2005) shares a similar view with Gibbons (2002) that learners need to be supported in the classroom by creating an environment that is conducive for the development of reading and writing. Rose (2005) proposes a six staged curriculum cycle that is meant to support learners to deconstruct and construct a text by explicitly and systematically teaching them how to make meaning using the CC (Rose 2005). Figure 2 below provides a graphical representation of the six stages of the CC that is proposed by Rose (2005).

Figure 2: Learning to read: reading to learn curriculum cycle [Adapted from Rose (2005)]



The identifiable difference between the two CCs (Figures 1 and 2) is that Gibbons (2002) focuses on explicit teaching of writing. In Gibbons' diagram, the starting point is the use of a text which is used to explicitly teach writing. The text is used as a tool to mediate the writing activity. However, Rose's (2005) CC diagram teaches reading and writing in collaboration. The focus in the six stages is divided into two. The first three levels focus on developing reading, while the remaining levels focus on teaching writing.

The first stage is called preparation before reading. The teacher first reads the text, giving learners time to listen to the texts. This is followed by intense interaction with the text. The activities that are done at this stage take an oral approach to enable learners to make meaning of the text. Learners' phonological and phonemic awareness are developed.

The following stage is called "detailed reading". During this stage learners take responsibility in reading the text. To unpack or analyse the text, the teacher at certain intervals, could ask

questions that provide cues for the learners to develop an understanding or to make meaning of what they are reading.

The third level focuses on reading and it is called “preparation before writing”. At this stage, the teacher takes a leading role by creating activities that allow learners to understand the text, e.g. letting learners work on manipulating sentence strips to show their understanding of the text. Overall, the first three stages, namely, preparation before reading, detailed reading and preparation before writing focus on the general understanding of the text, to grammatical or language features found in the text and later, to phonological understanding where the teacher could let learners work on a spelling activity.

As mentioned earlier, Rose (2005)’s curriculum cycle is focused on two skills; reading and writing. From the fourth stage (joint reconstruction) of the six stages, the teacher takes a leading role again in guiding the learners to develop a writing text. Learners are supported to adapt the content and grammar of the text they learnt. At this stage, learners could develop the writing activity as groups or pairs.

This stage is followed by individual reconstruction of the text. The notes that the learners took during the reading stages of the cycle are used to guide them during the individual reconstruction of the text. Depending on the text type, the structure and grammar that the learners need to follow has to be in line with the text type they were taught. This phase is followed by learners working individually.

The last stage is called independent writing. At this stage, learners show how much they have understood the text. The writing activities that learners engage with at this stage lead to assessment. The aim of all the activities is to teach learners reading and writing in a collaborative manner. The teacher takes an authoritative role in guiding and sequencing activities so that the weakest learner could be sufficiently supported without disregarding the strongest achiever in the class. The support that the teacher is giving is meant to develop the diverse academic challenges of the learners in the same classroom. Thus, curriculum cycle exposes learners to explicit practices of reading and writing.

Skeans (2000) alerts teachers about the power of writing during reading because of the transactional relationship these skills possess. The transactional relationship that reading and

writing have play a role in scaffolding writing and the teaching of specific comprehension strategies (Skeans 2000). The teacher could model reading and writing by giving learners written feedback (Skeans 2000). In the next section, I focus on approaches that support reading and writing literacy.

2.8 APPROACHES TO READING AND WRITING LITERACY

Fitzgerald (2000) mentions three approaches that support the relationship between reading and writing. These approaches are rhetorical relations, procedural connection and shared knowledge.

The rhetorical approach holds the idea that reading and writing are communication activities and that readers and writers gain insights about how communication works. This means that the linguistic features that are used for reading make writing possible. For example, people document their thoughts in a journal or diary in order to reflect on them. The act of documenting one's thoughts indicates a reflection of what a person might have observed or read. When the thoughts are put into writing, they provide a picture of what was read, using the language that was used in reading. The rhetorical approach, therefore, denotes that when the learner is actively involved in the act of reading and writing, he/she engages in a meaning making process.

The procedural approach, on the other hand, views reading and writing as functional activities that can be combined to accomplish a certain outcome (Fitzgerald 2000). According to this view, the exploration of how reading and writing can be used together for academic achievement is emphasized. The procedural approach views learners as being capable to take notes and revise their work. As this study investigates literacy practices in a Grade 3 classroom, this approach is relevant as it observed how learners were required to read and write short pieces of texts as discussed in Chapter 4.

Thirdly, the shared knowledge approach is of the view that reading and writing are connected. Koons (2008) observed that combining reading and writing in instructional activities improves learner's critical thinking. Koons (2008) conducted a study on the relationship between reading ability and writing quality across different grades and phases. Learners had to write essays or engage in creative writing. His sample was from the Intermediate Phase (Grade four to Grade six), Senior Phase, (Grade eight), and Further Education and Training (FET) (Grades ten and

twelve) in Mississippi. The essay writings showed how the learners were able to make connections with the text, and how they constructed meaning. His findings reflected a need to employ a strong emphasis on combining reading and writing instructions to improve learner's performance. According to Koons's (2008) study findings, reading comprehension and writing quality improved in all the grades, but were much higher in upper grades than in lower grades. The study findings showed that learners' writing improved as they shared knowledge that they applied when they used reading and writing cyclically. However, the nature of the relationship between reading and writing was different across grades. The study recommended effective instructional design practices that are intended to enhance learners' ability to comprehend what they read in order to be able to be better writers. Koons's (2008) study concludes that if the writing curriculum could be integrated into reading materials that are used at schools, learners' writing quality could improve.

In light of the above, reading and writing can be referred to as social events because they happen in a social environment, for example, in the classroom or at home. When people read, they obtain information, and when they write they share information with the audience or readers. The writer becomes the dispenser of knowledge, whereas the reader becomes the receiver of knowledge. So, reading and writing could be integrated to enhance literacy learning, especially in the early grades.

It is also believed that writing is not a single and sequential process; it follows a process where through support, learners plan the writing task. It is through writing development that the teacher supports learners through feedback in order to learn and develop their skills as good writers. As learners negotiate meaning in writing or reading, the teacher's role is to scaffold or support this process by responding to the different performances learners show in order to develop their learning. The section below discusses the role the teacher plays to scaffold and intervene in a learner's written tasks by providing feedback.

2.9 THE PEDAGOGICAL ROLE OF FEEDBACK

According to Hattie & Timperley (2007) feedback is the information that is provided by the teacher or a parent or a more capable other, regarding performance. This means that praising the learner, is not the duty of the teacher only, but it also done by the parent at home since literacy is a social practice. It could be given in oral form or it could be written. Written feedback,

according to Skeans (2000), plays an important role in scaffolding reading and writing. In that way, it serves as a pedagogical strategy that develops literacy learning. In other words, learners do not only produce written pieces of work, but through reading the teacher's feedback, they could be able to exhibit to the teacher how they managed to comprehend the text by making personal connections to it.

Additionally, Bansilal, James & Naidoo (2010) state the manner in which learners could use feedback in improving their school performance. They comment on the results presented by the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) of 1995, 1999 and 2003 for the Grade eight learners which confirmed the poor performance of learners in mathematics. They mention that learners should be equipped to use the feedback to share their experiences about their learning.

According to Bansilal, James & Naidoo (2010) older learners are able to use the feedback effectively when they are able to reflect on their view of learning as they construct knowledge, but with younger learners it enables the teacher to identify strategies he/she could use to provide individual attention to struggling learners. In this way, feedback serves as an intervention strategy. Written feedback provides learners with the skill to monitor their writing and it enhances comprehension skills. For the teachers, it provides diagnostic clues in assessing whether learners comprehend the text by making personal connections (Skeans 2000).

Hyland & Hayland (2001) support Skeans (2000) on the value of written feedback and mentions that it provides the learner with individualized attention that is somehow impossible in normal classroom situation. Feedback serves to generally motivate learning (Shute 2008). In the FP, feedback could create a supportive learning environment as learners are still emergent readers and writers. So, the teachers' interpersonal skills help to ease the tension that learners tend to feel, especially less able writers (Hyland & Hayland 2001). Feedback, therefore, serves not only to reinforce language development, but also boosts learners' self-esteem.

Hattie & Timperley (2007) go on to say that feedback needs to provide information that develops the learner in a specific task in order to academically support learning so that the learner is able to use that knowledge not only for literacy development, but for other subjects and in subsequent years. This suggests that feedback mediates learning. The Sociocultural Theory

provides an insight into how learning is mediated and scaffolded in the classroom. The school is an institution of learning which serves as a social environment where learning is mediated through instructional activities. Gibbons (2002) citing Luke and Freebody, argue that for learners to be understood as successful in their learning, they need to tap into four roles that make learning explicit in a sociocultural context. In that way, they would learn to construct interpretations based on the mutual relationship these roles possess. These roles portray the learner as a code breaker, text participant, text user and text analyst. The reading roles and processes are discussed below.

When a reader is a code breaker, he/she possesses phonemic awareness (Gibbons 2002). This suggests that the reader is aware that there is a relationship between a sound or speech and a word, and how a sentence is developed (Gibbons 2002, DBE 2011). In other words, during the reading process the focus is on phonics. The knowledge gained through phonemic awareness later allows the reader to understand that words in a text begin from left to the right of the page. Luke and Freebody caution, though, that knowing how to sound the word or breaking the code is not sufficient to construct meaning and breaking the code does not lead to successful reading (Gibbons 2002).

The second reading role expects learners to have an ability to be text participants. As a text participant, the reader is able to interrogate the text. He/she is able to understand the context for which the text was written. That implies that the reader is able to understand the writer's intentions. At this point, the reader is able to connect with the text and use his/her prior knowledge to reflect on the message that is brought forward by the text. In this process, the reader is able to read for comprehension in that he/she is able to make inferences by using his/her experiences and connect ideas across the text. When the reader makes connections with the text, he/she becomes a text participant (Gibbons 2002).

When a reader is labelled as a text user, it is assumed that he/she is able to analyse the text. In the analysis of the text, the reader is able to understand the context and the purpose of the text. In that way, the reader is able to see that texts are different and they serve different purposes. Text analysis equips the user with an understanding of the linguistic and grammar features that each text possesses. The knowledge that the reader gains from a particular text can be used in other contexts. Such knowledge includes vocabulary development and cognitive abilities.

As a text analyst, the learner is able to use his/her appreciation skills and defend or support the ideas the author brings forward. At this stage, the reader has acquired reading comprehension skills and understands that texts are written for a particular purpose. By integrating and reflecting on the ideas within the text and his/her own experience, the text analyst is able to make a clear statement about the author's message and its appropriateness for the audience.

As much as these roles seem to support reading for meaning making, this study argues that some of the practices might not be easy to achieve in certain educational environments. Hence this study focuses on the Grade 3 teacher's instructional literacy practices in order to understand how the roles and processes mentioned above are facilitated for meaning making in isiXhosa literacy. Through the lens of the Sociocultural Theory, this study has investigated the role played by the teacher and her learners to make meaning of what they learned in the literacy lessons. The following section discusses the Sociocultural Theory and its relevance to this study.

2.10 SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

The Sociocultural Theory (SCT) is a learning theory that was developed by Vygotsky (Lantolf and Thorne 2006) which places learning in the development and construction of meaning by learners, with the support of the teacher or the knowledgeable person at home (Lantolf and Thorne 2006). Central to SCT is mediation of the mind (Turuk 2008). Mediation entails the use of auxiliaries or tools that help to empower humans in order to carry out the task they are given (Lantolf 2000). This means that for learning to effectively take place in a school environment, the teacher as the knowledgeable person needs to provide support to learners.

In support of development and support of higher order thinking, Kozulin (1998) mentions that the use of tools in the classroom invokes critical and problem solving skills. The support could come in the form of tools. Vygotsky differentiates between two forms of tools (Lantolf and Thorne 2006 and Lantolf 2000) namely, language and physical tools (e.g.) books, maps, diagrams and any other tools that can be physically utilised to support learning. According to Zuengler and Miller (2006), language is important because it is a resource for participation in the learning process. In other words, language is used to pronounce certain qualities about a specific context. When learners are able to understand language demands of a particular context, they

have gained control of their mental abilities where learning and development have taken place (Zuengler and Miller 2006).

Kuzolin (1998) further mentions that learning is sociocultural. The sociocultural perspective assumes that learning does not start and end at school. Children come from a sociocultural environment (home) where learning is fun and enjoyable, where information is passed down from generation to generation in a cultural way and, in most cases, it is not written down. In this way, information is shared between members of the family and among members of the same society. Learning at home is not assessed, but monitored. For example, the child at home is given a task to perform under the guidance of a parent who narrates the instructions and the procedure to be followed. The parent supports and monitors the child as he/she carries out the task. In that way, learning is sociocultural because the home as an institution can be taken to represent a society, and it is cultural because there is information sharing and interaction between the members of the family. The SCT projects a holistic view about learning (Turuk 2008). In other words, SCT takes into consideration the learners' prior knowledge. With the help of the teacher and other peers, the learner negotiates and constructs meaning.

2.10.1 Social Constructivism

The social constructivism approach is believed to be the interdependence of socio-cognitive theory of Piaget and the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (Palincsar 1998). It suggests that knowledge develops as one engages in dialogue with others (Palincsar 1998). In other words, learning is interactional and the learner participates actively in the learning process. For example, during instruction, the teacher communicates the content and expected knowledge verbally, and learners learn from each other during group discussions where they share information. Interaction is also witnessed when the teacher uses probing strategies in order to help the learner to negotiate meaning and understand the task at hand. In this instance, the teacher mediates learning using language as a tool to support the learner. In the education context, this means that the learner should be actively involved in constructing meaning through interaction with the teacher and with other learners.

Constructivism requires the teacher to have an idea of the level the learner is at, in order for them to construct knowledge. The social constructivism approach is then born from the relationship

between the individual and social processes in the co-construction of knowledge. Knowledge construction is, therefore, an interactive social event, where the child actively constructs his/her own understandings within a social and physical environment (Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden, Bell 2002; Bantwini 2009).

According to social constructivists, people learn best not by assimilating only what they are told, but rather by a knowledge construction process. In other words, individuals or groups of people participate in a knowledge construction process by making sense of their experiences. In order for individuals to learn how to construct knowledge, it is necessary that the process be modelled and supported in the community (Yilmaz 2008). This means that children require direct and immediate active experiences that will enable them to make meaning of the learning content since meaning making is at the core of constructivist approach (Yilmaz 2008).

According to the constructivist approach, knowledge is viewed as developmental, cultural and socially mediated (Yilmaz 2008). This implies that, for young learners to be able to make meaning of their world, they need stimulating intellectual interaction from the knowledgeable people (i.e.) the teacher or parent. The interaction is assumed to be developmental when it inspires young learners to participate in a knowledge construction process through asking questions and have their thinking abilities motivated. The curiosity that a particular problem presents could result in learners trying to solve problems around their lives (Yilmaz 2008).

Similarly, Bruning, Schraw, Norby and Ronning (1999) view constructivism as the contribution made by learners in creating meaning and learning through both individual and social activity. This implies that learners contribute to meaning development when they are able to use their experiences to make sense of the information presented to them. Information presentation could take different forms, for example, written form, oral presentation or it could be in visual form. When learners use their experiences, it is assumed they are able to make connections between what the society has taught them, and the new information that is presented. Bruning et al. (1999)'s notion of constructivism emphasises the role played by learners in actively constructing their own knowledge. They also pronounce the important role social interaction plays in knowledge construction.

Furthermore, the process of meaning making exposes the cultural and societal experiences that the reader is exposed to. This indicates that when people interact in their social gatherings, they unconsciously contribute to meaning making. The tool that is mostly used in discussions is the language. Hence Matthiessen and Halliday (1997) maintain that language is a resource to make meaning. Through the use of language, the society, in collaboration with the learner, develops knowledge through interpersonal experience. Interpersonal experiences seem to develop as a result of interaction in a number of relationships, for example, making requests, ordering, insisting, etc. Learners make a contribution to their learning when an interesting and motivating learning context is created through interesting activities that encourage and mediate learning.

The process of meaning construction has no specific set of time or is not controlled by time. According to Flower (1994) learners make meaning while they are daydreaming in class, recalling, reflecting or talking with a friend. According to Flower's assertions, meaning making is a solitary process, which becomes more effective when the social context is included. For example, when a learner silently reads a book, he is individually developing an interpretation of the text based on his interpersonal experiences that are determined by social context. The process of interaction of the learner with words in the book and the silent discussion that happens between the learner and the written text represent the society. This suggests that there is no set time to construct meaning.

Normal formal schooling could be said to be a site where thinking is regulated and transformed (Lantolf and Thorne 2006). Following Vygotsky's SCT principles, the learning process could be made explicit through mediation, inner speech, scaffolding and working in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) of each learner (Turuk 2008, Eun 2010). The following section discusses these SCT principles.

2.10.2 Mediation

Turuk (2008) views mediation as the part played by knowledgeable people to less experienced and knowledgeable others, and making use of other objects with the idea of enhancing learning. This implies that during the learning process, the teacher as the knowledgeable person provides an interactional instruction that is directed to developing the learner's learning experiences. For example, in the mediation of learning, the teacher brings a problem as a learning activity to be

solved by learners. In this way, learning is learner-centered; an approach that is firmly grounded in Constructivism.

When teachers employ a learner-centered approach in their classrooms, the classroom atmosphere should be reflective of this approach. For example, the sitting arrangement in the class should pronounce a collaborative experience where learners work together to solve a problems. Yilmaz (2008) suggests that knowledge cannot exist outside our minds and that knowledge is not fixed; and it is not discovered, but constructed by individuals based on their experiences. Yilmaz (2008) claims that constructivism as an approach, stresses that knowledge is not passively received but is actively constructed by individuals or groups making sense of their experiential worlds. In addition, knowledge is non-objective. It is internally constructed, developmental, socially and culturally mediated (Lowenthal & Muth 2008). The knowledge that is contained in the book, after being internally processed and analysed by the reader, is then produced as knowledge gained. This supports the view that knowledge is non-objective (Lowenthal & Muth 2008).

Equally, King (1994) elaborating on the value of constructivism, mentions that individuals in the process of constructing their knowledge may draw on inferences, add details and generate relationship between the new information and with what they already know. This implies that learners are able to draw on inferences when there are cues that direct their thinking about the material they were learning. This process, according to King (1994), is a manner of constructing meaning whereby individuals restructure the existing knowledge in order to understand the new one. Wittrock (1974) quoted in King (1994), further alludes to the fact people's understanding is enhanced when they are actively constructing knowledge instead of memorizing the information that is presented. Active participation by learners is associated with the learner-centred approach.

On the contrary, is the teacher - centered approach which views learners as passive recipients of the information that the teacher transmits (Postarell & Lindblom-Ylänne 2008). According to this approach, the teacher controls all what is happening in the class. As a result, the learning process is determined by the facts that the teacher assumes to be important for the learners to know, without taking into consideration of the culture and context of the learners. Furthermore, learners are not to be active in the construction of their learning because they focus on memorizing what the teacher has told them and do not use their imagination to produce new

knowledge (Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne 2008). Because learners are assumed to be passive recipients and therefore everything they have to learn has to come from the teacher. Their sitting arrangement in class is not mapped in such a way that they would be able to work as a team to engage in inquiry based learning (Brown 2004). The classroom atmosphere in which learners are seated (e.g. in rows) often suggests that the classroom is not conducive for the development of knowledge. This arrangement enables the learners to hear the teacher because the teaching process is directed to the whole class, at the same time. When learners are arranged in groups, the aim is to draw up an atmosphere that is conducive for learning where learners are able to discuss and use language to communicate and share ideas. This is the idea that constructivism promotes that learners should participate actively in the class to construct knowledge.

The Constructivism approach has enormous ideas and advantages for learning as learners are active in selecting and constructing their knowledge. Social interaction is important in knowledge development. According to Bruning et al. (1999) the main aim of teaching when looked through the constructivism lens, is not to transmit information but to provide an enabling environment to develop processes for organizing, judging, acquiring and construction of new information. The above processes present themselves in the classroom through careful selection of instructional material that learners can use to engage in deep understanding of the subject matter. The engagement in the classroom is social in nature since the learners work under the guidance of the teacher and collect content relevant information to make learning developmental. As a result of the interaction and response process between the teacher and learners, language is used effectively to encourage dialogue and reflection, either orally or in written form. By the time learners write their reflections about the lesson, they have acquired as much vocabulary during the time they participated in the data collection stage, hence scaffolding and mediation are viewed as important SCT principles to be applied in this study.

Gibbons (2002) is of the view that language is best learned in a supportive environment where it is learned through meaningful use in a variety of context. In other words, a supportive environment for language learning is through integration with other subjects across the curriculum, where learners do not only learn the structure of the genre but also the language features that are characteristic in that particular genre. Gibbons (2002) further mentions that

when language is integrated, it takes a functional approach because language is used as a medium for learning and is not taken as separate from the content of that particular genre.

Similarly, Bruning et al. (1999) propose that the curriculum should integrate different subjects in order for the learners to recognize that each discipline is not a stand-alone. In this case, the learners would be able to recycle the vocabulary, the grammar and the concepts they learned from the content subjects and may use it in a language lesson. (Bruning et al. 1999) suggest that when assessment activities are designed, they should take a form of projects in order to encourage the mutual relationship and development across the curriculum (Bruning et al 1999).

2.10.3 Inner Speech as a mediation tool

Learners are diverse in terms of age, race, social background, language and cognitive abilities and other skills that they bring to the school environment. Lantolf and Thorne (2006) associate the development of inner speech to the process of analysing a text. In other words, when a learner reads a book, the book on its own acts as a bridge to mediate learning. During instruction, the teacher as a facilitator uses a book, language and other materials to support and negotiate meaning with the learner. During reading, there is an interaction between the learner, the teacher and the book (Lantolf and Thorne 2006). However, when the learner begins to engage and self-regulate using the book, share his/her feelings, brings out his/her point of view and seriously enter into a conversation about the book in his/her mind, then according to SCT, the reader or the learner had invoked inner speech. In this way, inner speech can then be regarded as a process that supports thinking (Miyake, Emerson, Padilla and Ahn 2004).

Miyake et al. (2004) elaborate that inner speech could be labelled as playing a regulatory role in one's learning, especially among adults for two reasons. Firstly, the utterances adult people make operate as an aid to retrieve information. Secondly, adult people use inner speech to facilitate shifting performance. Since this study is focused at Grade 3 learners, inner speech could serve to support their thinking as the teacher thinking by making use of thinking aloud strategy. Donato (2000) traces inner speech to verbal attempts learners make when they try to solve a problem during instruction. In the process of meaning construction, it is assumed that learners tap into inner speech in order to gain control of their thoughts about a particular task.

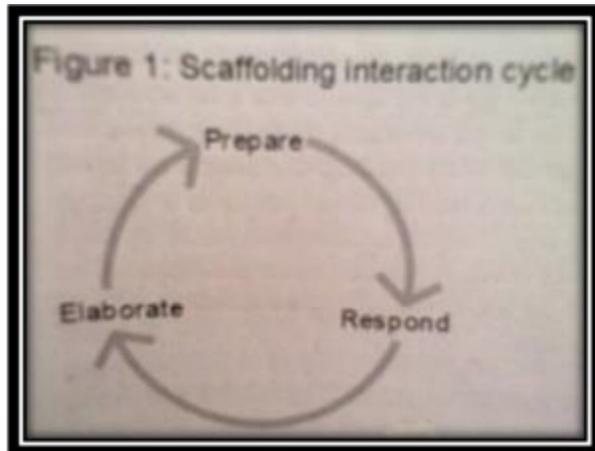
Similarly, Sawyer (2002) views inner speech as the mastery of meaning. He further states that in SCT, learning and development involves transformation in individual's understanding of the task at hand. When the learner begins to analyse a text making use of the social context at his/her disposal, then his /her understanding is transformed. This suggests that the learner's inner speech has taken effect. In short, when learners are able to mediate a new task without the support of others, that implies that the interactions that scaffolded the learning process are effective because the learner is able to have inner discussions with himself/herself about the best strategies to employ in solving a new task (Turuk 2008). SCT does not view learning as a solitary task (Turuk 2008) but as a process where human beings and other tools play a role in constructing knowledge. In the following section I discuss the concept of scaffolding as an aspect in knowledge construction.

2.10.4 Scaffolding

Allen (2002) defines scaffolding as a temporary structure that is made of metal poles and planks to provide support for working on the outside of a building. The purpose of a scaffold in the above definition is to provide support for construction workers. Educationally, scaffolding is an instructional strategy that is used for support whereby at a later stage the teacher shifts responsibility to the learner (Turuk (2008). Lantolf and Thorne (2006) describe scaffolding as a dialogically mediated process whereby learners co-construct knowledge with their peers and the teacher. In other words, through teacher's strategies, learners could be able to support each other through sharing information when they are working in a collaborative manner, e.g. in a group or in pairs as they work on a problem solving task. Through scaffolding, it is believed that learners are equipped to work as a collective and achieve a task using a collaborative effort which they could not have managed to accomplish if they were working individually.

In language learning, Martin and Rose (2007) believe that scaffolding is the construction of supportive environment for the learners in order to explore how language is learnt in a dialogical manner. They also agree with Turuk (2005) that when the teacher notices that learners are no longer experiencing difficulties with the language task, the teacher removes the scaffold. According to Martin and Rose (2007) scaffolding happens in a cyclical manner as shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Scaffolding cycle. Interacting with text: the role of dialogue in learning to read and write [Adapted from Martin and Rose (2007)].



The above diagram shows how a scaffolding cycle works in an interaction for learning. The teacher or knowledgeable parent first prepares the amount of language activity to be learned by making use of guiding questions, the learners then participates in the conversation through either asking questions and the knowledgeable person elaborates for the learner to get an idea so that he/she is able to make meaning and the learner responds to the interaction or dialogue that is happening between him/her and the knowledgeable person.

Figure 3 illustrates the interaction between the child and the experienced person. The interaction forms the basis of joint construction of the text which suggests that the participants are working towards constructing meaning, and not just reading through the words in the text. In the classroom context, for example, a scaffolding cycle could work when the teacher scaffolds an individual learner or works with learners in a group activity. In other words, the teacher or the experienced adult initiates the interaction by making use of simple questions that are used as a guide or to support the thinking of the learner.

The scaffolding cycle consists of three phases. Phase one is called a preparation phase where the knowledgeable person initiates the interaction either by reading a piece of text or by asking questions that guide the respondent towards thinking about the text. The second phase focuses on the provision of a response by the participants. In this phase the engagement with the text or topic begins where the respondent either answers questions or asks questions of his/her own to show his/her own understanding.

The last phase focuses on elaboration by the participants or the experienced individual. During the elaboration phase, the knowledgeable person provides additional information to support the learners' cognition and consolidates the process of interaction. The support provided during the scaffolding process is meant to escalate learners' thinking and engagement about the topic of discussion. The interaction cycle provides an enabling environment for the child to manage a challenging task with the support of the teachers or peers, so that he/she could be able to do the task independently.

The three phases of the scaffolding cycle enable the learners to make sense of what they read. For example, in a reading lesson the learners could be scaffolded by means of cues and questions to understand the text. Therefore, the purpose of a scaffolding cycle is to develop learners' thinking abilities in order to reach their ZPD.

Turuk (2008) further mentions that the knowledgeable person systematically removes the scaffold when learners take more responsibility of their learning. The scaffold, according to Turuk (2008), is removed when the teacher notices that the learner has benefited from the kind of support that was provided. In this way, the learners are expected to have reached a higher level of understanding whereby independently. This high level of development is discussed under the concept of Zone of Proximal Development.

2.10.5 Zone of Proximal Development

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is another principle on which the Sociocultural Theory is based. Turuk (2008) and Lantolf (2000) define the ZPD as the distance between a child's developmental level determined by a problem solving task, and the potential the child could attain through problem solving activity when the child is assisted by an adult. In other words, through the ZPD, the learners' mental abilities are supported in order to use them creatively and critically to solve problems they would not be able to solve if they were not supported by a knowledgeable person.

The ZPD could be defined as the potential ability of the learner (Turuk 2008). Lantolf (2000) mentions that ZPD is a metaphor that is used to indicate how schooling impacts on learners' mental abilities. It serves to indicate how learners construct meaning while they are learning (Lantolf 2000). The development in learning is determined by the severity of the task that

learners have to engage with. Lantolf (2000) is of the opinion that for the ZPD to be noticeable and effective in children's learning, the teacher should mediate the learning process. In other words, if the teacher provides the learners with a challenging activity, and the teacher actively uses cues to support learners to think about the ways or methods they could apply to solve the problem, then the development of learning could be linked to the development in ZPD.

Similarly, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) attach different attributes to ZPD; one of which is its assisted performance. Secondly, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) commend the contributions of SCT on making use of the ZPD concept not on what learners have achieved, but on the developmental process and the kinds of activities that the teacher uses to support an individual learner to reach higher levels of thinking. Therefore, the notion of ZPD is not limited in showing what learners have achieved but it also shows what they could achieve in the future.

Eun (2010) views the ZPD as the support from adults, namely, teachers, parents and knowledgeable siblings or peers that make learning and development possible. According to Eun (2010) learning is also made possible by sensitive and compassionate teachers who, through care, provide the necessary guidance to the learners in order to achieve a seemingly difficult task. For example, in the case of this study, the learners at a Grade 3 level are still at emergent stages both of reading and writing.

2.11 Summary

To summarize, this chapter has focused on the different views on literacy. It discussed the sociocultural view of literacy as the basis for this study as it examines literacy instruction and practices from the sociocultural perspective. It also provided an in-depth discussion of the Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and its principles. The SCT acknowledges learners' prior knowledge as an important factor in the learning process. SCT views language as a resource to mediate learning among other tools that are used to support the co-construction of meaning. Meaning making and the development of higher order thinking abilities in literacy is the focus of this study. Hence this study views collaboration as the central point of the teaching of reading and writing. SCT also stresses the role played by interaction and the use of tools to support the meaning making process. In the next chapter, I focus on research methodology which unpacks the various strategies that were used to collect data for this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss methodological framework and data collection procedures that were used in this study. It discusses the research design and approaches relevant to this study, namely the qualitative approach and ethnography. It also describes data collection techniques that were used to address the research questions stated in Chapter 1. These techniques include classroom observation, document analysis and interviews.

Firstly, I trace the link between knowledge construction (epistemology) and research methodology in relation to the two paradigms namely, the qualitative and quantitative paradigms. I then discuss the research design underpinning the study and the data collection techniques relevant to this study. Lastly, I discuss sampling procedures, ethical considerations as well as validity and reliability issues as they apply to the study in order to validate the triangulated data.

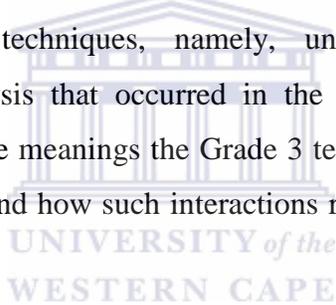
3.2 Epistemology and Methodology

This study investigated literacy practices of reading and writing in a Grade 3 isiXhosa classroom as indicated in the first chapter of this study. I wanted to explore how the teaching of reading and writing were mediated to support literacy development in a Grade 3 classroom. Thus, the sociocultural theory with its underpinning principles on the importance of social interaction to develop cognitive abilities of learners, especially those of reading and writing was explored in order to understand how the teacher and the learners construct knowledge for literacy development. As a result, the qualitative methodology was used in this study to understand the meanings the participants attached to literacy knowledge development in the Grade 3 classroom.

According to Bryman (1984) the term ‘methodology’ refers to the manner in which knowledge is constructed where certain ways of collecting data are employed. DeMarrais and Lapan (2004) concur with this view and mention that methodology in social science is not only about knowledge construction, but it is a process that involves the researchers’ assumptions about the nature of knowing and knowledge. This suggests that methodology is a way of studying phenomena using certain principles that promote a certain paradigm which has its own specific

and appropriate data collection methods. When the researcher follows knowledge principles of a certain paradigm, he/she is able to learn how to construct knowledge that is framed in a specific paradigm. Thus DeMarrais and Lapan (2004), as well as Babbie and Mouton (2001), allude to the fact that methodological research paradigms are more than just a process of collecting data in social research, as they also involve different methods and techniques of data collection.

Henning, van Rensburg & Smit (2004), on the other hand, state that methodology is a practical way of coming to know the world or the reality about the world, and how it is assessed. They further mention that people come to know by inquiring in certain ways so that they can try to understand the world better. For example, if the researcher makes use of the qualitative research paradigm, it is expected of him/her to make use of data collection methods that align with this particular paradigm. This suggests that methodological paradigms follow certain principles when working with data and they influence the manner in which the data is interpreted. So, my research employed qualitative techniques, namely, unstructured interviews, classroom observations and document analysis that occurred in the participants' natural settings. The emphasis was on understanding the meanings the Grade 3 teacher and learners attached to their everyday classroom interactions, and how such interactions reflected knowledge construction in literacy.



3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Qualitative and quantitative frameworks employ different techniques to collect data. The differences in methods and techniques of data collection imply the manner in which knowledge is constructed and interpreted by the participants in the qualitative and quantitative frameworks. Although this study followed a qualitative research approach, I also provide a brief description of the quantitative approach in order to illustrate the differences between the two paradigms.

Quantitative paradigm is believed to have its roots in the positivist tradition (Bryman 1984, Poggenpoel, Myburgh & van der Linde 2006; Babbie and Mouton 2001 & Caruth 2013). According to the positivist view, knowledge is gained through predicting, use of objective observational methods, measure and control of human behaviour (Babbie and Mouton 2001, Poggenpoel, Myburgh & van der Linde 2006). Babbie & Mouton explain that in quantitative paradigm the core area for knowledge construction is on experimental control, replicable

observations, generalisation and objectivity. This indicates that in quantitative research, the method of collecting data is characterised by proving hypotheses and conducting controlled surveys.

The qualitative approach, on the other hand, maintains that knowledge is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world (Merriam 2002). In other words, the research participants are not controlled by the researcher in the way they should interpret and understand their world in qualitative research. Furthermore, it is believed that the participants' interpretation of their experiences is not controlled by the researcher and the interpretation can change because of the context (Merriam 2002). Johnson & Waterfield (2004) concur with this idea that knowledge is socially constructed by individuals, and further state that knowledge should be interpreted rather than measured. The interpretation of gathered knowledge in qualitative research is said to be unique to a particular context and this could strengthen the reliability of the study because the information cannot be reproduced. This implies that if the data is to be collected in the same school, it may not be the same when collected for the second time because the kind of information is determined by context, at a particular time and context. Similarly, Caruth (2013) claims that, the focus of qualitative paradigm is not to generalize and duplicate information. Hence the findings may not be the same even if they have been generated from the same environment, because the context and experiences are not the same.

The process of knowledge construction in qualitative research is associated with the interpretive framework (Denzil and Lincoln 2005, Babbie and Mouton 2001). According to this framework, knowledge is constructed by making use of different processes of observation. The use of different observation processes provides the researcher with multiple perspectives of how the people in their natural environment act, view the world and their beliefs and how they interpret, make meaning and understand their world (Babbie and Mouton 2001).

Merriam (2009) supports Johnson & Waterfield's (2004) view that the qualitative research is located in people's culture, and that there is no single truth in knowledge interpretation. This indicates that knowledge is experienced naturally in the society, and different people may interpret the same experience differently. This could result in different versions of the same experience as interpretation is subjective. Likewise, Poggenpoel, Myburgh & van der Linde (2006) agree to the existence of multiple perceptions about knowledge in qualitative paradigm,

and state that meanings about social life are interpreted differently by people and therefore, cannot be measured. In other words, meaning in qualitative research is not quantified in terms of statistics and numbers, but it is interpreted by both the researcher and the research participants.

Studying and understanding the phenomena is seen as a crucial characteristic of qualitative research (Leedy and Ormrod 2005). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005) the qualitative researcher's ability to interpret and make sense of the phenomena does not complete the investigation, but it is a crucial factor in understanding the social world.

Studying people in their natural environment is another characteristic of qualitative research (Merriam 2009). This suggests that qualitative research studies people in their natural environment in order to understand the way they construct meaning and the kinds of meanings they make in a particular environment (Henning et al. 2004).

Henning, van Rensburg & Smit (2004) support the idea that the researcher co-constructs meaning with the participants in qualitative research. They are of the view that the interpretivist paradigm aims to understand and interpret the meanings the participants attach to their lives through participant's views. Denzil and Lincoln (2005) reiterate the fact that meaning is interpreted differently by different people participating in social activity, and further state that qualitative researchers are guided by principles that combine certain beliefs in their context. These beliefs, according to Denzil and Lincoln (2005), help to shape or teach about the nature of knowledge and the meanings the participants attach to their everyday activities. The beliefs also teach the researcher about the relationship that exists between the researcher and the knowledge he/she is pursuing, and how people come to know about the world. This indicates that the researcher is able to understand how the world is interpreted by the research participants that are involved in the study.

Henning et al. (2004) refer to the role of the researcher in interpretive paradigm as taking an "insider" perspective when working on social action. This implies that the researcher has to be physically present in the research site in order to understand how the participants view their environment. They further explain that qualitative and interpretive investigations are often conducted in natural settings where different techniques are used in order to gather substantive information about the participants (Henning et al. 2004). The use of different techniques when

collecting data affords the researcher different perspectives about the social world, and that adds credibility to the data because the researcher does not rely on a single source of data. The use of multiple sources of data also allows the researcher to have a better understanding of the context under which knowledge is constructed.

In addition, Babbie and Mouton (2001) refer to the “insider” perspective as a phenomenon of studying research subjects in close proximity through observational methods. These methods may include unstructured interviews where the researcher has an opportunity to quote the participants’ words when working with findings, participant observation and the analysis of documents.

As mentioned earlier, this study followed a qualitative approach which is supported by the interpretive paradigm in investigating literacy practices of Grade 3 isiXhosa learners. According to the interpretive paradigm, reality is interpreted and not static. It makes use of different sources of data collection methods in order to interpret and validate data. The interpretive paradigm, according to Henning et al. (2004) is framed on the basis that human lives are interpreted in order for them to be understood. In interpretive paradigm the researcher becomes the co-creator of the meanings that participants attach to their lives.

Researchers who follow the interpretive paradigm believe that knowledge is constructed by people interacting in their environment. In other words, the interaction by participants results in different viewpoints which imply different forms of knowledge. As mentioned earlier, this qualitative study investigated people in their social environment. In a quest to understand people in their social lives, the qualitative approach makes use of ethnography in order to capture and understand the behaviours and attitudes of a particular social group (Collingridge and Gantt (2008). Therefore, a relationship exists between interpretive frameworks and qualitative approach in that both are concerned about understanding human behaviour. Secondly, the qualitative and interpretive approaches make use of multiple sources in order to establish and understand the meanings that are constructed by participants. This study followed the interpretive because the data collected by means of interviews, observations and document analysis was analysed and interpreted in order to construct the meanings that the participants’ actions and responses revealed. White, Oelke and Friesen (2012) support the idea that the qualitative researcher investigates people in their real situations and further state that it describes

participants' experiences in an accurate manner. So, this study aligns with the qualitative approach in that I spent five months in the Grade 3 classroom, collecting data through observing, interviews and document analysis in order to understand literacy practices of Grade 3 learners in their natural environment. My interest in the Grade 3 classroom was to understand the pedagogical strategies the teacher used to teach reading and writing as a collaborative process, and the extent to which the strategies constrained or enhanced learners' literacy skills. In the next section, I provide a description of the research design which corresponds with the qualitative approach used in this study.

3.4 ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY DESIGN

There are different research designs that can be employed in social research such as a case study, field research and ethnographic research (LeCompte and Preissle 2003). Merriam (1998) views ethnography as a form of qualitative research that studies society and culture. In studying culture, ethnographers pay special emphasis on the patterns of behaviour that are projected by the members of the society under study.

Stacey and Eckert (1999) reiterate Merriam's (1998) view of ethnography as an approach developed in the social sciences for understanding how a culture or sub-culture of a certain group works by observing it from the inside (Higginbottom 2004, Collingridge and Gantt (2008). In other words, the researcher is interested in understanding the behaviours and attitudes of the group under investigation. For the researcher to understand the research participants' behavior, he/she needs to spend sufficient time with the group he/she is studying. Walters (2007) defines ethnography as a study that investigates people interacting in natural settings and which also looks for patterns of what people are doing (LeCompte 2003). LeCompte & Preissle (2003) concur with the above definition that ethnography deals with people interaction in their natural settings. Higginbottom (2004) defines ethnography in terms of the data which is unstructured, the sample size which may include one case, the analysis of data which is primarily narrative and data which is not quantified.

Merriam (1998) claims that an ethnographic study is a sociocultural interpretation of the data. In other words, an ethnographic study analyses the sociocultural aspects of the participants and their environment by employing multiple data collection techniques. Stacey and Eckert (1999) claim

that ethnography represents three aspects of inquiry, namely, intense investigation of people in their natural environment, a process of collecting data and a method of investigation. An ethnographic study enables the researcher to collect descriptions of human behavior (LeCompte & Preissle 2003). This suggests that the researcher has to study the group in question in detail in order to reconstruct the participants' experiences in the manner in which he/she viewed the group members.

As a process of collecting data, ethnography allows the researcher to use certain ways that are compatible with qualitative research such as observation which is conducted in natural settings and unstructured conversations. Avoiding manipulating data is central to ethnographic work. As a method, ethnography establishes a relationship between the data collection process through spending time in the setting, and the provision of descriptive accounts of participant's experiences that define the group's culture in their natural context. As mentioned earlier, I spent five months in the Grade 3 classroom, observing teacher and learner interactions, analyzing print materials which include learner workbooks. I also interviewed the Grade 3 teacher. In that way, I was equipped with information that depicted how literacy was practiced in the Grade 3 classroom I was studying.

This study made use of the ethnographic case study in order to discover the meanings and experiences of Grade 3 teacher and learners. Gerring (2004) views a case study as an intensive study of a single unit over a period of time for the purposes of understanding similar units. Conducting a case study involves a process of explicitly choosing a sample of population that will be studied extensively, and the remaining population in that unit will be implicitly studied. The implicit studying of the remaining population becomes explicit through the triangulation of data. Stake (2005) concurs with Gerring (2004) that a case study focuses on an individual case or an event within a certain context in order to do an in-depth study of the participants in their environment. Stake (2005) goes on to say that a case may be simple or complex but it is characterized by its boundedness or focus. With regard to this research study, I used one Grade 3 isiXhosa classroom to understand how literacy practices of reading and writing in isiXhosa were developed. In other words, the Grade 3 classroom I studied served as a case to understand how literacy was developed at this level, although I could not generalize on the findings due to the small sample that was used. The focus was on literacy practices of reading and writing in

Grade 3. This implies that there were specific patterns of activities that were expected to be pronounced when the researcher was conducting this case study.

Stacey and Eckert (1999) claim that ethnography represents three aspects of inquiry. Firstly, they view it as a product of intense investigation of people in their natural environment. Secondly, it is viewed as a process of collecting data and lastly, as a method of investigation. An ethnographic study enables the researcher to collect descriptions of human behavior (LeCompte & Preissle 2003). This implies that the researcher studies the group in question in much detail in order to answer the research question. The lapse of time the researcher spends studying the same group allows him/her to reconstruct the participants' experiences as observed in the research site. In other words, the reconstruction of the participant's practices assists the researcher to interpret and understand what the participants experienced as revealed in their behaviour and verbal responses.

According to Walters (2007) and Fairhurst & Good (1991) an ethnographic case study is a process where the researcher reserves judgment on the selection of data. In other words, the researcher does not pre-judge which data would be suitable for the study, but the data develops as the researcher interacts with the participants and develops ways to construct questions in order to explore the research site.

I used ethnographic methods of collecting data namely, observations, interviews and document analysis in order to understand the literacy practices in one Grade 3 isiXhosa classroom. The ethnographic techniques allowed me to conduct an in-depth research of a single case over a period of time. They provided me with a holistic perspective of the participants' behaviours in their natural environment. This research followed the aspects that LeCompte & Preissle (2003) mentioned when studying participants in their natural settings. In this study, I focused on one Grade 3 classroom in order to understand the strategies the teacher used to teach literacy. I also wanted to investigate the quality and kinds of resources that were used in the Grade 3 classroom. In this instance, interviews allowed me to get a better understanding of the teacher's perspectives about literacy practices and how her instructional methods shed light into the way she used resources to teach and develop literacy in a Grade 3 classroom, as presented in Appendix G.

Research designs have strengths and limitations. Different scholars above have discussed the strengths of case studies. Merriam (1998) mentions a few limitations of case studies. Firstly, she mentions that novice researchers are not capacitated with skills to conduct interviews and observations. They fiddle their way through the research process. Bias is cited as one of the limitations suffered by case study researchers. In other words, when the researcher becomes biased, he/she compromises the validity and reliability of his/her studies. Bias is also linked to the subjective nature of the research being performed. To avoid this limitation, I triangulated data by using multiple data collection strategies.

3.5 RESEARCH SITE

This study was conducted in a primary school situated in Kraaifontein, one of the disadvantaged black townships in the northern part of the Western Cape. There are different characteristics that are used to identify people as being disadvantaged. Dyson and Raffo (2007) mention lack of service delivery as one of the indicators of disadvantage. With regard to schooling, Gorard (2011) mentions the provision of school feeding as another indicator for disadvantage. Two policies serve to provide access to education for learners coming from poor communities, namely, a no-fee school policy as outlined in the South African Schools Act of 1996 and the School fee exemption as stipulated in the Amended National Norms and Standards for School Funding of 2006 (Hall and Giese 2008/2009). As a result of these two policies, schools are categorized into quintiles based on the economic affordability of parents, and the area where the school is situated. Schools in poor communities fall into quintiles one and two and the affluent schools fall into quintiles four to five. The ranking of schools according to quintiles determines the financial support the school receives from the education department. The school where data was collected is classified as quintile one because it is a no-fee school and it participates in a poverty alleviation programme by being supplied with nutrition for every learner. In other words, the school was classified as a quintile one as it is serving learners from impoverished or disadvantaged backgrounds. As a result, it receives funding annually, per learner from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) in order to help relieve the parents from paying school fees. Secondly, the school participated in the poverty alleviation programme that the WCED, in partnership with the Department of Social Development, provides to the school to cater for the children from impoverished communities.

Disadvantage is also defined as processes that happen inside and outside of school which often expose learners to drawback with regard to curriculum and inappropriate educational experiences (Considine and Zappala 2002; Pallas, Natriello and McDill 1989). Learners experience inappropriate educational experiences when they receive curriculum that does not intellectually challenge them to exhibit their comprehension of the learning tasks. Pallas, Natriello and McDill (1989) view learning as a developmental relationship between the school, family and the society. However, they acknowledge the fact that the evaluation of formal learning happens at school, even though societal and family experiences may have positive or negative influences over the outcomes of schooling as a result of disadvantage.

Poor performance by learners in their school work is another characteristic of disadvantage (Considine and Zappala 2002 & Pallas, Natriello and McDill (1989). In relation to the above, the WCED administered a diagnostic test between 2002 and 2005 and found that the majority of learners who performed poorly in those tests came from disadvantaged communities. Although the purpose of the testing was to identify intervention measures that could be employed to rectify literacy problems, poverty was identified as a contributing factor towards poor performance hence the WCED introduced the nutrition programme at the school. According to WCED Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2006-2016), low academic performance by learners residing in low income communities could be identified as a characteristic of being disadvantaged (Considine and Zappala 2002).

The delay in the provision of essential services to the school by the government also places the school in the disadvantaged category. The school started in 1997, but the school building was constructed in 2013. This means that the school operated for 16 years without a proper school building and it used mobile units. As time went by, the department systematically built brick classrooms which were used by the Foundation Phase while the Intermediate and Senior Phases continued to use the mobile classrooms until June 2013. During the data collection period, the construction of new classrooms was taking place so that the Intermediate and Senior Phase classes could move to the brick classrooms as well. As the building construction was going on, the noise level of the bulldozers and that of the construction personnel caused disturbance in the classrooms.

The school was chosen because it was convenient in terms of time and accessibility to the researcher and it served the purposes of the study. The teachers' and learners' literacy actions and events enriched my understanding of the use of certain strategies in such a disadvantaged context. In the context of this research, the school was a natural setting in which learning was negotiated and constructed. As the practice of teaching is constructed in the minds of teachers, learners, school management teams, and maintained or changed through their interactions with one another (Meier 2011), the school was regarded as a place where meaning was constructed and interpreted by the different stakeholders.

The learner enrolment at the school was 1 428 with 31 teachers. The total number of Grade 3 learners was 175, with five female teachers. There were 38 learners in the Grade 3 classroom who participated in the study. The youngest learner was eight years old and the oldest was 11 years. Their home language was isiXhosa, with a few learners who spoke different languages with their parents. For example, there was one learner who spoke Portuguese, three who spoke isiZulu and four who spoke SeSotho with their parents at home.

3.6 SAMPLING

According to Coyne (1997) sample selection plays an important role in a qualitative study. Aggarwal (2011) defines a sample as a subgroup of the individuals in the population. In other words, a sample in qualitative research is drawn by drafting criteria by which participants are to be chosen. In qualitative research, therefore, the idea is not to generalize the results but the chosen sample should meet pre-determined criteria. This implies that when the selected sample is not aligned with the established criteria, the data collected could influence the quality of the research. The implications of not aligning the sample with the criteria in qualitative studies is said to create difficulties during the interpretation of the findings (Coyne 1997). The process of selecting individuals according to certain criteria is called purposive sampling or criterion based selection (LeCompte & Preissle 2003; Merriam 2009).

Purposive sampling involves the selection of information rich cases that provide much insight into the research question (Coyne 1997; Tuckett 2004 & Denvers and Frankel 2000). In other words, the chosen sample provides the researcher with in-depth information about the issues that are central to the purpose of the research. Purposive sampling is criterion based (Tuckett 2004)

and it is guided by the selection of the research participants. This study, therefore, followed a purposive sampling procedure since the criteria were developed before entering the research site. Purposive sampling was deemed relevant as the study made use of a small sample.

LeCompte and Preissle (2003) and Hittingbottom (2004) mention that choosing a sample for an ethnographic study is a developmental process. In other words, during the data collection process, the researcher could investigate other areas that could provide additional information for the study. Before resuming with data collection, I established criteria for selection of participants. I chose to study one Grade 3 class for various reasons. Firstly, I chose to conduct my research in Grade 3 because it is an exit grade in the Foundation Phase (FP) and a gateway to the Intermediate Phase (IP) where the learners' literacy skills are crucial for learning other subjects. In other words, at Grade 3 level, the learners' language and literacy skills are expected to have systematically developed to enable the learners to use literacy skills for reading and writing across the curriculum. FP learners are taught in their home language, isiXhosa, and they shift to English Second Language in the IP. Strong home language literacy skills in the FP are, therefore, crucial in learning in the second language. Eisenclas, Schalley and Guillemin (2013) support the idea that strong literacy development in the home language forms a basis for better educational achievement. They further mention that insufficient support in the learners' home language could deprive them of better educational, social and cognitive advantages that are associated with learning a second language.

According to Eisenclas, Schalley and Guillemin (2013) better academic results in second language depend on highly developed skills in the home language because language and cognition in the second language build on the home language skills (Eisenclas, Schalley and Guillemin 2013). This means that strong home language development in the FP serves as a foundation for the second language, thereby providing the learner with skills to face reading and writing demands in the IP.

Secondly, I chose to work in one class in order to get an in-depth understanding of what the learners did during the literacy lessons by observing lessons and analyzing their activity or writing books. Lastly, I chose to conduct this research in a Grade 3 classroom where isiXhosa was the medium of instruction. Guided by the principles of purposive sampling and an ethnographic case study design, I decided to work with one Grade 3 class chosen from 5 Grade 3

classes in order to spend an elongated time in one class and to gain an in-depth understanding of literacy practices over a period of time, than to divide my time among the five classes. The sample chosen for this study comprised one Grade 3 teacher and learners as stated earlier. The class teacher's age ranged between 40-49 years and she held a Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma (SPTD). Her teaching experience ranged between six and ten years. During the classroom observations, I investigated the strategies the teacher employed in order to develop her learners' reading and writing skills. I also wanted to discover the kinds of writing activities the teacher used to enhance learners' literacy skills. In this regard, three girls and three boys of the age range of nine to twelve years were selected, and their books were analysed. They were selected on the basis of their academic performance. I wanted a sample that was representative of the gender of learners in the classroom. I asked the teacher to assist me select the learners: two learners with excellent or outstanding performance, two with average performance and two with low or weak performance. I was interested in understanding the ways in which the learners' writing differed as the teacher's record sheet reflected three categories of assessment, namely, outstanding, average and low performers. I asked the teacher to do the selection because during the five months that I spent at the school I noticed that the teacher kept a record of the learner's literacy development over time, and I was interested to learn how the learners had responded to the various literacy activities that were given by the teacher.

Below is a profile of the six Grade 3 learners whose workbooks were viewed:

Table 1: Grade 3 Learners' Profile

Learner	Gender	Home Languages	Other languages used at home with parents	Performance	Age
Lutho	M	isiXhosa	SeSotho	Outstanding	9
Onke	F	isiXhosa	isiXhosa	Outstanding	9
Mavis	F	isiXhosa	Portuguese	Average	9
Dan	M	isiXhosa	isiXhosa	Average	10
Shiela	M	isiXhosa	isiXhosa	Low	11
Themba	F	isiXhosa	isiXhosa	Low	10

The names given to the learners are fictitious in order to adhere to the ethical considerations of protecting the participants' identity.

A parent sample was also included in this research. The parent sample consisted of six parents who were the parents of the six learners whom I chose to conduct an in-depth study of their writing activities. The parents' sample was selected in order to get a better understanding of the relationship between school and home literacy and the parents' understanding of literacy. I chose the parents to investigate their role as parents in developing literacy at home. Considine and Zappala (2002) believe that parents have an influence on their children's school life. So, when parents understand their role and influence with regard to developing school literacy, it is likely that their children's literacy could improve, irrespective of the poor socio-economic conditions. In other words, if parents understand that they themselves are a resource in their learner's academic achievement, it is likely that they can work closely with teachers to support their children.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I collected data using data collection techniques that support a qualitative research approach. LeCompte (1984) identifies different categories of data collection that are normally used by ethnographers, namely, observations; interviews and document analysis. Below is a discussion of each data collection method that was used.

3.7.1 Observations in Ethnographic research

Observation, according to Whitehead (2005), is but not limited to the means of collecting information through the sense of sight, but it also involves all other human senses. In other words, while the researcher is looking at what people are doing, he/she might also be listening to what the informants are saying by making use of a recording device. In that way, the researcher is able to triangulate the activities with what he/she heard to that he/she observed. Participation, on the other hand, is the interaction between the researcher and the research subjects (LeCompte and Preissle 2003). Kaluwich (2005) suggests that the researcher immerses himself/herself in the culture of the research participants. In other words, the immersion of the researcher in the research site determines the amount of participation he/she is likely to play. Therefore, the role

the researcher chooses in order to collect his/her data adds value to the credibility of the study (LeCompte & Preissle 2003; Kaluwich 2005).

Bryman (1984) defines participant observation as an appropriate tool to examine social relations. Besides examining participants' social relations, Bryman (1984) mentions that when participant observation is used as a data collection tool, the researcher investigates patterns of interaction. Not only do observations capture participant's patterns of interaction, but they also capture their unconscious routine behaviours (Draper and Swift 2010). Berker (2002) supports the idea that participant observation captures people's everyday life and further states that it is useful when one seeks to investigate how people actually behave in their natural environment.

Researchers associated with ethnographic study can either be participant observers or non-participant observers (Preissle and Grant 2004). Participant observation is one of the techniques that could be used to collect data in ethnographic studies. According to Kawulich (2005), participant observation provides the researcher with information about the participants by studying their non-verbal expressions. In this way, the researcher is actively involved in the lives of the people he/she is studying.

In relation to the above, LeCompte & Preissle (2003) and Kaluwich (2005) identified four kinds of interaction the researcher could use to engage with in conducting research. These roles include a complete participant, a participant-as-observer, a complete observer and an observer as participant. These roles pose different advantages and disadvantages for the researcher.

The role of participant- as-observer occurs when the researcher is a member of a group that he/she is studying, but the focus is more on observing than participating. In other words, the researcher has access to the data and the participants have an advantage of determining which information the researcher could make use of (LeCompte & Preissle 2003). This is determined in the actions that happen after the data has been collected where the researcher seeks feedback on what has been observed for verification.

As a complete observer, the researcher keeps himself/herself completely hidden from the group. In this case, the researcher has limited interaction with the group being studied, and the group that is being studied is unaware of the research.

A complete participant observer is when the researcher is known to the group he/she is studying, but hides his/her participation (LeCompte & Preissle 2003 and Kaluwich 2005). Kaluwich (2005), LeCompte & Preissle (2003) and Preissle & Grant (2004) claim that when the researcher deceives the informants, the study results could be questioned as data collection could have been conducted in an unethical manner.

According to Kaluwich (2005) the observer-as-participant role happens when the informants under study are aware of the presence of the researcher. The researcher's objective is often to collect data and participate in the group to get clarity on a certain event that takes place in social setting.

In this study, I became an observer as a participant because I interacted with the participants, particularly the teacher, in an attempt to understand her classroom practice. The teacher and the learners were aware of my presence. It was important for me to take the role of participant-as-observer because I wanted to study the teacher and learner practices with regard to isiXhosa literacy development from the 'insider' perspective. When I first arrived at the school, specifically in the Grade 3 classroom, I was an 'outsider' because I was not actively involved in the school activities. To be an 'outsider', according to Brayboy and Deyhle (2000), refers to a researcher who does not participate in the activities of the group he/she is researching. Brayboy and Deyhle (2000) further mention that an 'outsider' is believed to have a superficial relationship with the group he/she is researching. In other words, the 'outsider' perspective in participant observation implies the objective identity and the distance that the researcher keeps between him/her and the participants. Since the purpose of my classroom visits was to understand literacy practices in the classroom, I became an observer-as-participant, which meant that my identity changed from being an 'outsider' to being an 'insider', based on the role I played.

The length of time I spent in the classroom (five months) allowed the teacher as well as the learners to change the way they viewed my presence in the classroom, from being an 'outsider' to being an 'insider'. In other words, the more learners and the teacher saw me in the classroom, the more comfortable they became with me. In that way, I was not viewed as being intrusive. The teacher and the learners began to ask for assistance at certain times. I developed a close relationship with the participants, whereby they accepted me as a member of their classroom. For example, the learners started requesting me to sharpen their pencils, and expecting me to play a

role of a teacher towards them. Sometimes the teacher would ask me to distribute worksheets and assist with marking. My presence at the school for three days a week was to facilitate my transition from being an ‘outsider’ to being an ‘insider’ and also not to lose focus of the purpose of my research study.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) are of the opinion that in qualitative research, observations are free-flowing in the sense that they are unstructured ways of collecting data. In other words, in a qualitative study, some degree of flexibility exists whereby the researcher could shift the focus from the planned schedule where he/she sees a potential data unveiling itself. However, Leedy and Ormrod (2002) caution against redirecting the focus of the researcher. Leedy and Ormond (2002) cite two possibilities that could happen when the researcher loses focus. Firstly, the researcher might overlook important data that relates to the research question. Secondly, the researcher’s presence might alter the participant’s everyday behaviour.

Polkinghorne (2005) defines observation as a technique to collect data through direct contact with the research participants. This means that the researcher has to be physically present in the setting and study the behaviour of the participants. Physical presence in the setting allows the researcher to document and explicitly describe the phenomenon. It also provides the researcher with an in-depth understanding of the site and not to generalize the findings.

Classroom observations were one of the techniques I used to collect data. I started classroom observation at the school from February until the end of June 2013. I observed 13 literacy lessons during my visits at the school. The lessons took approximately 30 to 36 minutes. I used an audio recorder as a tool to record the observed lessons. The time I spent observing provided me with the opportunities to record events which would have been almost impossible to learn by using another approach.

This technique was used to add quality and validity to the research. Participant observation was also used in order to help the researcher to get a better understanding of the informants in their social or natural setting (Kawulich 2005). In other words, participant observation enriched the study in the sense that it provided me with the holistic understanding of the practice being studied. In that way, participant observations allowed me the opportunity to get the participants’

sense of reality about their actions. They also provided me with tools to interpret what actually happened, and not what was reported during interviews (LeCompte & Preissle 2003).

My eagerness to study literacy practices through observations nearly made me to lose focus since my attention was at times caught by a lot of things in the classroom, such as the print in the walls and the different reading material. It was at this point that I drew up an observation schedule which I adapted from the CAPS (2011) document in order to cross reference the skills the teacher paid more focus on in the classroom, and the amount of time to be spent per skill in the classroom at a given time.

The descriptive observations, according to Whitehead (2005), allow the researcher to observe everything in the setting but that strategy seems to work for experienced researchers since they know which clues would be relevant and central to the research question (Mertens 2005). I focused on understanding literacy practices in the Grade 3 classroom as well as analysing pictures and other documents that were relevant to my study. I had ethical clearance to conduct research at the school, so the artefacts like the timetable, the lesson plans the teacher prepared and the reading and writing material that the Grade 3 learners made use of became important aspects of data analysis. I took pictures of what was pasted on the classroom walls, and exemplars of literacy activities that were on the chalk board. These pictures served as reminders of the kinds of books, texts and print material that the teacher and learners made use of in literacy lessons. Pictures were important in that they reflected the role of print material in literacy teaching. Some of these pictures are presented in the next chapter.

3.7.2 Interviews

Interviews are important in qualitative research. DeMarrais (2004) mentions that interviews are used when researchers want to gain an in-depth knowledge from participants about particular phenomena or sets of experiences. In-depth interviews, therefore, allow the researcher the scope to develop a clear picture of how things happened in a certain environment, using the words from the research participants.

DeMarrais (2004) defines conversational interviews as a style of interview that enables the participants to engage freely in the conversation. This implies that the participants, through informal interviews are able to go beyond what the researcher is enquiring because they do not

feel that the researcher is intruding in their space. In an informal interview, therefore, the researcher is able to probe for clarity and provide the participants the space to express themselves.

According to Wengraf (2001) an interview in research studies intends to get a better understanding of reality. This implies that the researcher intends to find out how the participants interpret and make sense of their world. The researcher, therefore, views the world through the eyes of the participants in his/her study. DeMarrais (2004) defines interviews as a long and focused conversation between a researcher and the participants. She further mentions that the conversation focuses on the questions that are related to the study. In other words, interview questions ask participants for their thoughts, opinions, perspectives, or descriptions of specific experiences that are of importance to the study.

In this study, interviews were conducted with the Grade 3 teacher, the Principal and the Head of Department (HOD). The HOD and the Principal were interviewed to establish the kind of support they provided to enhance literacy teaching of isiXhosa in the Grade 3 classroom. Based on their managerial positions at the school, they are tasked to monitor, guide and support the teacher in order to improve their practices.

3.7.2.1 Teacher Interview

Two types of interviews were used in this study, namely the conversational or informal interviews and open ended interviews. There was no structured time in which the informal interviews with the class teacher were conducted. In most instances, they were conducted after a lesson was presented or when I encountered something of interest to the study. I would request the teacher to elaborate on the issues so that I could get a better understanding of the phenomenon, as well as her own interpretation of the situation. The informal interviews were short, most of the time, and they addressed a specific area of interest like a discussion on the available resources, their mediational role and their quality to the teaching and learning of isiXhosa.

I prepared an interview guide in order to be clear about the areas I wanted the participants to address with regard to literacy practices and also to have a clear direction on how the conversation should proceed. However, I did not strictly keep to the interview guide. Sometimes,

through probing, the participant would lead through her answers to the area I intended to ask about. The interviews elicited the teacher's perceptions of literacy in isiXhosa, the mechanisms they put in place to support their learners' literacy levels and the challenges they experienced with literacy in the FP (see Appendices C and D).

Table 2: Interviewed teachers at the school

Teacher	Designation	Highest Qualification	Gender	Teaching experience
Thandi	Class teacher	Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma	Female	Less than 10 years
Zodwa	HOD	B.Ed (Honours) Degree	Female	Less than 15 years
Theo	Principal	B.Ed (Honours) Degree	Male	Over 21 years

3.7.2.2 Parents' Interview

As indicated earlier, a sample of six parents was selected for interview purposes. I wrote a letter in isiXhosa to the parents requesting time to conduct an interview on their perspectives about literacy (see Appendix E). Five parents were interviewed. Four parents, that is (parents B to E) were interviewed at their homes and the fifth one (parent A in the table) was interviewed at school because she worked irregular hours and it was difficult to find her at home. Parents A, C, D and E's interviews were conducted in isiXhosa because they chose to have the interview in isiXhosa. Parent B, on the other hand, chose to have the interview conducted in both isiXhosa and English. Unfortunately, I could not interview parent F as she was always not available for the duration of the time I was at the school.

The interview with parents focused on investigating their perceptions about their understanding of literacy in the Foundation Phase. Secondly, parents were interviewed in order to discover what role, if any, they thought they had to play with regard to developing their children's literacy at home, and how that literacy development could be translated to school literacy. Parents were also interviewed because the study wanted to investigate the kind of relationship that existed between home and school literacy as shown in Appendix F.

To adhere to ethics, the parent’s names were not used but were given alphabetic codes. The codes (A – F) were used to identify the six parents. These were the parents whose children’s workbooks were analysed.

Below is a profile of the six parents whose work books were analysed:

Table 3: Grade 3 parent profile

Parent	Gender	Educational qualification	Age
A	F	Sub B(equivalent to Grade 2)	40
B	F	Grade 11	32
C	F	Grade 11	35
D	M	12	25
E	F	11	36
F	Unavailable		



3.7.2.3 Limitations associated with interviews

As much as interviews add value to research by providing the needed evidence that the participants can pronounce through explanation, they also have some disadvantages. Anderson & Burns (1989) have identified two weaknesses associated with the use of interviews in research. Firstly, they mention that asking questions for research purposes in a research study requires special expertise that a novice researcher does not possess. Secondly, they assign weakness to the responses provided by the respondents. This implies that when the researcher assumes that the response covers or links to one of the intended questions, then he/she might experience challenges adapting his/her questions to cover what the respondent has not articulated. According to Anderson & Burns (1989) this may have a negative impact on the research findings. In this study, I probed for deeper explanations from the respondents.

3.7.3 Document Analysis

According to Miller and Alvarado (2005) documents are a resource for triangulation, and they play a role to increase comprehensiveness and validity of a study. Miller and Alvarado (2005) maintain that the researcher is in a position to study the research participants at a distance through document analysis. In other words, when the researcher is analysing the documents, there is no interaction between the researcher and the participants.

Bowen (2009) defines documents as texts that contain words and images that have been recorded in the researcher's absence. These texts include printed and internet transmitted texts. Bowen (2009) mentions that document analysis is a systematic process of evaluating and reviewing documents. Document analysis is another technique that could be used in qualitative research to increase the validity of data collected.

This study analysed Grade 3 learner's work books. The learners' work was analysed in order to identify the kinds of writing activities that the learners engaged with, and whether those writing activities enhanced literacy development. I also wanted to investigate what they wrote; whether the writing and reading activities were in line with the provisions of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) such as exposing learners to different types of questions, as well as providing adequate exposure to different genres. I was also interested to see how learners engaged in creative writing to show their understanding of the literacy tasks.

I also analysed the Grade 3 class time table, and the CAPS document and other teaching and learning materials, namely, print and other reading materials, such as the isiXhosa reading books. These materials were analysed in order to investigate their use and effectiveness in the classroom. In other words, I wanted to investigate whether learners were making use of the available print material in the classroom, and whether the teacher was making any reference to the available printed material for literacy development in her teaching. Below I discuss each of the documents that were analysed in this study.

3.7.3.1 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is a policy statement that is developed to improve the implementation of National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Its aim is to

provide a comprehensible curriculum by bracketing Subject Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guideline into a single document. Framed in the NCS principles, the CAPS aims at providing an active and critical learning environment. This principle seems to communicate a need for teachers to intentionally teach for critical thinking in order for the learners to academically achieve, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds.

CAPS was analysed in order to understand how it provided avenues for the teachers to effectively implement the policy with regard to literacy teaching and learning a Grade 3 isiXhosa classroom. Secondly, I wanted to see the approach the policy was proposing to show the inter-relationship between reading and writing and how this could be translated through literacy practices in the classroom.

Analysing the CAPS document and the learners' written work was meant to triangulate and provide an element of credibility and validity to the data I used in this study. The CAPS was used to investigate strategies the teacher was using in planning and administering intervention processes to help the struggling learners in literacy. Document analysis was also meant to investigate how the teacher supported learners' writing so that they could develop vocabulary, grammar and deeper comprehension of the texts and to use the language for literacy.

3.7.3.2 Classroom timetable

The classroom timetable was analysed in order to investigate whether the time allocated per subject areas was used appropriately as suggested in the CAPS document. The class timetable was also analysed in order to find out if it explicitly scheduled time for the teacher to teach discipline knowledge that was relevant to the development of literacy in a Grade 3 classroom, in such a way that learners were able to apply their literacy skills in other subject areas in the upper grades. In other words, the timetable was analysed to find out how literacy instruction was planned or organized and executed in the classroom.

3.7.3.3 Learners' writing tasks

Copies of learners' work were made as the permission to do so was granted by the parents and the teachers. The sample of learner's writing was analysed in order to see the kinds of literacy activities the teacher was exposing the learners to, in order to determine learner's literacy

development. The writings were also analysed to find out whether there was a relationship between classroom practice and literacy development as spelled out in the national curriculum policy (CAPS).

I was also interested in the kinds of texts the learners were writing. In other words, I wanted to know if learners were exposed to extended pieces of writing, e.g. paragraphs that Grade 3 learners are expected to produce. I also wanted to understand the types of activities that were covered in the literacy lessons.

3.7.3.4 Print and other Reading Material

The investigation of literacy practices in a Grade 3 classroom mandates a look at the readability of the print and other reading resources that are available in the classroom in order to establish their effectiveness in developing learners' literacy skills of reading and writing. According to Cohen (1976) readability of material implies the degree to which a given class of people finds certain reading matter compelling and comprehensible.

In the context of this study, readability of material implies the manner in which the literacy material provided developmental support to the learners as they progressed in the Grade 3 classroom, and how it prepared them for their future academic lives. The compelling and comprehensible nature of the reading material implied the manner in which the reading material developed the learner's comprehension abilities in such a manner that teaching and learning did not address certain literacy skills, but facilitated literacy development in an integrated way.

3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

3.8.1 Validity

There are various views on what validity in qualitative research means. Guion, Diehl & McDonald (2002) define validity in qualitative studies as a means of ensuring that the study findings reflect the situation under which the study was conducted, and that they are supported by evidence that has been gathered. Creswell and Miller (2000) perceive validity to mean the accuracy of the detailed description of the participants' realities by the researcher. In other words, validity in qualitative studies ensures that the participants' realities have been presented

to reflect their social world. Qualitative research employs different procedures to ensure the validity of the data collected and it also emphasizes on the naturalness of data collected in order to make sense of the data collection process (Robinson 1994).

Validity in qualitative research can be facilitated by a number of activities which include researchers' member checking, triangulation, thick descriptions of the setting and the participants' experiences, peer reviews, prolonged engagement in the field and external audits (Cresswell and Miller 2000, Guion, Diehl & McDonald 2002). According to Creswell and Miller (2000) and Stake (2005) triangulation is the manner in which the researcher explores different sources of information in order to minimize misinterpretation and to clarify meanings by identifying the different ways in which the phenomena could be seen. Likewise, Olsen (2004) views triangulation as mixing of data in order to validate the claims made by the researcher and to identify different realities.

According to Johnson and Waterfield (2004) the term triangulation is borrowed from land surveying and navigation where it is used to check where two co-ordinates meet each other. In other words, triangulation in the field of surveying and navigation is used to discover where two points meet. In qualitative research, the term triangulation is used to examine multiple data sources (Johnson and Waterfield 2004) to determine where they are similar. Houghton, Casey and Murphy (2013) view triangulation as a strategy to confirm data and also to refer to it as complete. According to Houghton et al. (2013) confirmation of data refers to a process of comparing multiple data. The completeness of data, according to Houghton et al. (2013) means portraying a complete picture of the observed social behaviour from a variety of sources.

Triangulation is a method used by researchers to check for validity of data by making use of different sources of information in order to establish categories for analyses. In other words, the researcher sifts through multiple data in order to find similarities and differences, and establishes themes that help answer the research question(s).

Triangulation, prolonged engagement in the field and the provision of thick descriptions of the setting were used to validate data for this research. Triangulation was as a method I used to establish validity of my data and to establish themes that emerged from the different sources of data i.e. classroom observations, interviews and document analysis.

Triangulation, prolonged engagement in the field and the provision of thick descriptions of the setting were used to validate data for this research. As indicated earlier, I spent five months in the field in order to get a deeper understanding of literacy practices and issues that addressed my research questions.

3.8.2 Reliability

In qualitative study reliability is said to be concerned with the quality and credibility of the findings (Golafshani 2003). According to Niemann (2000) reliability of data is the ability of the researcher to produce quality data and eliminate errors that could happen since data in qualitative studies is interpreted and described. Reliability, therefore, is a measure that is used by qualitative researchers to ensure that the inferences made on the data provide the interpretation of the evidence. It is believed that reliability in qualitative research deals with threats that may arise as a result of subjectivity of the research process. The threats could be eliminated through data triangulation.

To ensure reliability of my data, I consulted multiple sources of data collection methods as a means of triangulation. The observation schedule was drawn up in order to investigate which strategies the teacher used to facilitate learners' access to literacy and whether those strategies hindered or enhanced literacy development. Teachers were interviewed in order to understand how they facilitated literacy development in school and how they integrated home literacy in isiXhosa Home Language teaching. Parents were also interviewed in order to investigate their perceptions of literacy. Learner workbooks were analysed to determine learners' literacy development and the extent to which they were exposed to the different resources to make meaning of their learning.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to ensure that the study was conducted in an ethical manner, I negotiated access with people that were in positions of power in the school, namely the Principal, the Deputy Principal and the Head of Department. I also sought permission from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), as mentioned earlier. (See Appendix A).

Miller and Bell (2003) refer to people in positions of power as “gatekeepers”. Gatekeepers are important in qualitative research as they provide access to the research site (LeCompte and Preissle 2003). LeCompte and Preissle (2003) emphasize face to - face interaction with gatekeepers as that enhances chances of being granted entry because people respond positively to interpersonal meetings. In this study, ‘gatekeepers’ were the Directorate of Research at the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), the school Principal, Deputy principal, Foundation Phase (FP) Head of Department (HOD) and the Grade 3 parents of the class I studied. To get access to the teacher and the learners, I informed the Principal and the Deputy Principal who was responsible for the Foundation Phase about the study, and their right of voluntary participation in the study.

Protecting the identities of the participants by keeping them anonymous is crucial in research in order to safeguard their well-being (Perry 2003). I informed the teachers and learners who participated in the study that their identities as well as the school would be kept confidential at all times. I informed the parents of the nature of the research, and that they had the right to refuse permission for their children to participate in the study. I ensured them that their children’s identities and the school would be kept confidential and that the research would not have a negative impact on their school work.

In conducting the research, it is imperative that a contract is drawn to ensure that all the participants understand the research principles (Stake 2005; Miller and Bell 2003). The consent forms were made available to the participants because they were intended to formalize the relationship between the researcher and the participants. In other words, the consent forms served as a contract entered into by the researcher and the participants which stated clearly that the participation in the study was voluntary, and that the participant had the right to withdraw from the study at any time (See Appendix B). Stake (2005) concurs with Miller and Bell (2003) on the establishment of the contract with its principles clearly stated in dealing with research participants.

Having received the agreement from the teacher and the parents by signing a consent forms, I asked the teacher to identify six learners whose books I could analyse for literacy and writings. I then wrote to the parents of the six learners asking permission to analyse their children’s written

work, and permission was granted as shown in Appendix B. All these measures were taken to ensure that the study was conducted in an ethical manner.

3.10 Summary

This chapter focused on methodological framework that was used to carry out research for this study. An ethnographic case study design was used as it aligns with the qualitative approach of this study. Observations, interviews and a set of documents were collected and analysed to collect data from the various participants. The selection criteria of participants were discussed as well as ethical concerns were dealt with in this chapter. The next chapter will focus on the presentation and analysis of data in order to identify themes that emerge from the collected data.



CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present data with regard to language literacy practices in isiXhosa in a Grade 3 classroom. Data was collected by means of classroom observations, interviews, learner writings and other documents as reported in the previous chapter.

Firstly, I present data obtained from classroom observations where audio recorder was used to record literacy practices in the Grade 3 classroom. The recorded data was transcribed and coded with symbols in order to unpack participants' behaviours that the researcher could have missed, had the audio recording not been used.

Observation data is followed by a presentation of data that was obtained by means of interviews with the Grade 3 teacher in an attempt to gain an understanding of her perspectives on literacy practices. I also report on interviews collected from the FP Head of Department (HOD) and parents. Thirdly, I analyse a set of documents which include the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), print and reading materials and the lesson plans of the Grade 3 teacher. The four sets of data from classroom observations, interviews, document analysis and other print material served to triangulate my findings. The presentation of data is preceded by a brief description of the Grade 3 teacher's and HOD's profiles who participated in the study.

4.2 TEACHERS' PROFILES

The Grade 3 teacher who will be known as Thandi in order to keep her identity anonymous in this study, held a three years Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma, and she was less than 40 years of age during the data collection period. She had between six and ten years of teaching experience (See Teacher Profile Questionnaire: A). She had taught in the Intermediate Phase for 16 months. In 2008 the school experienced a shortage of teachers in the Foundation Phase and she was then asked to teach Grade 3. Her qualification allowed her to teach in the Intermediate and Senior Phases. To keep herself informed with curriculum developments, she attended workshops that the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) organised for the FP teachers.

For research ethics reasons, the HOD who was involved in this study is referred to as Zodwa. As HOD, Zodwa was entrusted to manage and provide leadership in the FP. Zodwa was an isiXhosa speaking female. She was not older 40 years of age at the time of data collection. She taught one of the Grade 3 isiXhosa classes. She held a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) Honours Degree. Her teaching experience was between 11-15 years in the FP. She had not received any literacy professional development in the past (See Teacher Profile Questionnaire: B).

The Principal of the school where the study was conducted is called Theo in order to protect his identity. Theo was an isiXhosa speaking male who was less than 50 years of age during the data collection period. He held a Junior Primary Teacher's Diploma (JPTD) and an Honours Degree which he received in the 1990s. He had over 21 years teaching experience. At the time of data collection, he confirmed that he received professional development in literacy workshops that were organised and conducted by the Department of Basic Education (See Teacher Profile Questionnaire: C).

4.3 DATA PRESENTATION

4.3.1 Data from Classroom Observations

As mentioned in Chapter 3, this study followed a qualitative approach and it made use of different strategies to collect data. Classroom observations were one of the strategies that were used to collect data. Observations were used to check how much time was spent on various literacy activities, as well as literacy events and interactions that occurred in the Grade 3 classroom. This section describes Grade 3 lessons that were observed for a period of five months. It is followed by the presentation of data that was collected by means of interviews.

There were 47 learners in the Grade 3 class that was observed. There were two mats covering the floor tiles. One was situated in front of the chalk board and the other one was at the back of the class. Four learners were seated on the mats. Three boys sat on the mat in front of the chalk board, and a girl made use of the other mat that was placed at the back of the classroom. According to the teacher, the learners who were seated on the mat were struggling with their work, and they were put on the mats for extra support. The rest of the learners sat in pairs on

tables facing each other, and the tables were arranged in three columns where every learner was able to face the chalk board.

4.3.2 Lessons observed

I observed 13 literacy lessons in total, from February 2013 until June 2013. I selected four (4) literacy lessons for data analysis as they related to my research questions. The four lessons focused on developing different aspects of literacy. For example, out of the four lessons I selected lessons A and D focused on reading comprehension, while lesson B focused on transactional writing. Lesson C aimed at developing language structure and use by learners as reported below.

Lesson A: Reading

To develop reading and language skills, Thandi used a text she took from a Grade 3 Life Skills book. She gave each learner the same book to read. After that, she instructed the learners to read individually and silently. While the learners were supposed to be doing silent reading, Thandi was busy looking for books so that all the learners could have the same text. The reading process was not monitored in order to support those learners who needed assistance. As Thandi was busy giving out reading books to other learners, the four learners who sat on the mats were not concentrating to what they were instructed to do, but were busy playing. At that moment, we had an informal talk about the learners that were seated on the mat and her response was that they struggled to read and write. Although she knew about the struggling learners, she did not make means to assist them so that they could benefit from the reading lesson. It seemed that there was no clear differentiation of the level of the text to accommodate readers of different abilities. This seemed to suggest that Thandi did not have plans to support the weaker learners in order to improve their reading performance. Text A below was used for a Shared Reading activity.

Text A:



After the learners had read the story, she asked them about the content of the story. Thandi’s instructions focused on listening comprehension because she instructed learners to individually read the piece of text in order to participate in a discussion after they had read it. To assess whether learners understood the text, she asked some questions. The questions focused on literal understanding of the text. The length of the lesson was about 30 minutes and the examples of the questions she used are recorded in excerpt 1 below:

Excerpt 1 form Lesson A

1	Thandi	“Le nto ugqiba ukuyifunda apha ingantoni?” What is the story about?
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2	Prince	¹ (?) (inaudible)
3	Thandi	Uthi kuthethwa ngomntwana obethwe yibhola... ² Khanya? He said it is about a child who was hit by a ball... Khanya (requesting to hear Khanya's views).
4	Khanya	Ubethwe yibhola. He is hit by a ball.
5	Thandi	Andikuva ndoda. I can't hear you, young man.
6	Khanya	Ubethwe yibhola. He is hit by a ball.
7	Thandi	Andikuva tu. I don't hear you at all.
8	Khanya	Ubethwe yibhola. He is hit by a ball.
9	Thandi	Ubani, ngubani lo ubethwe yibhola? Who, who is hit by a ball?
10	Khanya	Umntana. A child.
11	Thandi	Ngoku kuthiwa masenze ntoni kulo mntana ubethwe yibhola? Now, what are we requested to do to the child who was hit by a ball?
12	Khanya	Ayokosula. He must go and wipe off.
13	Thandi	Ayokosula ntoni? What must he go and wipe off?
14	Khanya	Igazi. Blood.

¹ Prince spoke softly, the audio recorder could not pick up what his response was.

² All the names are fictitious. They were given to keep the learners' names anonymous.

15	Thandi	...uphume igazi la mntana ukula mfanekiso? Did the child on the picture bleed?
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The responses to the above questions were given in single or two words. For example, in lines 4, 6, and 8 above, Khanya provided incomplete response with a short sentence that comprised of two words. Secondly, in lines 10, 12, and in line 14 Khanya responded by giving single word answers. In trying to engage the learners with the text, Thandi asked a vague question (refer to line 11 above) which then changed the purpose of the text. The purpose of the text was to understand how learners would handle themselves when they experienced nose bleeding. Instead, Thandi's question wanted to know what the learners could do to the character in the text, which was used as an illustration to make the text clear and interesting to the young readers. The purpose of the text was to equip the learners with information.

The step by step guide on how to handle themselves in a similar situation was intended to break down the information so that learners could easily understand the text. The heading also gave the reader a clue of the kind of a text it was. The heading read as: "Wenza ntoni xa usopha ngeempumlo" ("What do you do when you have a nose bleed?"). It is a procedural text as well as it gives guidance on how to provide first aid on nose bleeding. After the teacher had asked questions, she informed the learners about what was happening in the picture.

Thandi's teaching approach seemed to be dialogic. Dialogic teaching is an approach which is supportive to every learner's needs, where learners' ideas are valued as meaningful contribution to learning (Alexander 2009). In Thandi's class, there was interaction where she would ask questions, give information and learners would respond. However, sometimes Thandi's talk was sarcastic as a result of learners' behaviour, and this created a cold classroom atmosphere where learners were unwilling to participate freely in the lessons.

In excerpt 2 below, learners were expected to understand the school and classroom culture, with regard to the time allocated for play and the time for learning. The learning time was characterised by activities that enhanced collaborative or team work. But Thandi's teaching strategies often promoted individual guess work. For example, to consolidate the lesson reported above, Thandi made an attempt to integrate reading and writing. She asked one of the learners to

write the word “ilaphu” (a cloth) on the board. The learner wrote “ivesi” (a verse) instead of “ilaphu” (a cloth). Thandi did not correct the learner’s mistake, but she asked other learners to write the same word, without commenting on the incorrect word that was written by the first learner. All the four learners who were asked to write the word could not get it correct. Below are examples of the incorrect words that were written by the learners, without the teacher’s intervention:

Learner 1: Ivesi

Learner 2: ila ipu ila ipu

Learner 3: iinumaka

Learner 4: ilaphuphu

Out of the four words written by the learners, only two words were spelt correctly and the words were: “ilaphu” (“a cloth”) and “ivesi” (a verse”). The rest of the words were meaningless.

Thandi’s practice did not correspond with the “teachable moment’ that has to be observed in the teaching-learning process. According to DBE (2011), the “teachable moment” is the time when the teacher makes a decision on whether to proceed and intervene or to allow the learners a space to solve the problem on their own. Similarly, the lack of intervention and guidance by Thandi was noticed in a lesson on verbs. In that lesson, learners had to view the following picture, construct sentences based on the picture and underline a verb.

Picture 1



One of the learners, Thina, who was asked to write a sentence on the chalkboard, wrote:

[Ndibona umntu oqubhazo]. She underlined the word “oqubhazo”.

This sentence is correctly constructed except for a spelling mistake “oqubhazo” instead of “oqubhayo”. The correct sentence was supposed to be:

[Ndibona umntu oqubhayo] (I see a person swimming).

Instead of correcting the mistake made by the learner, Thandi called other learners to write the word “oqubhayo” (swimming). But of the four other learners she called, none of them wrote the correct spelling for the word, “oqubhayo”. The following are the different incorrect spellings of the word that were given by the learners:

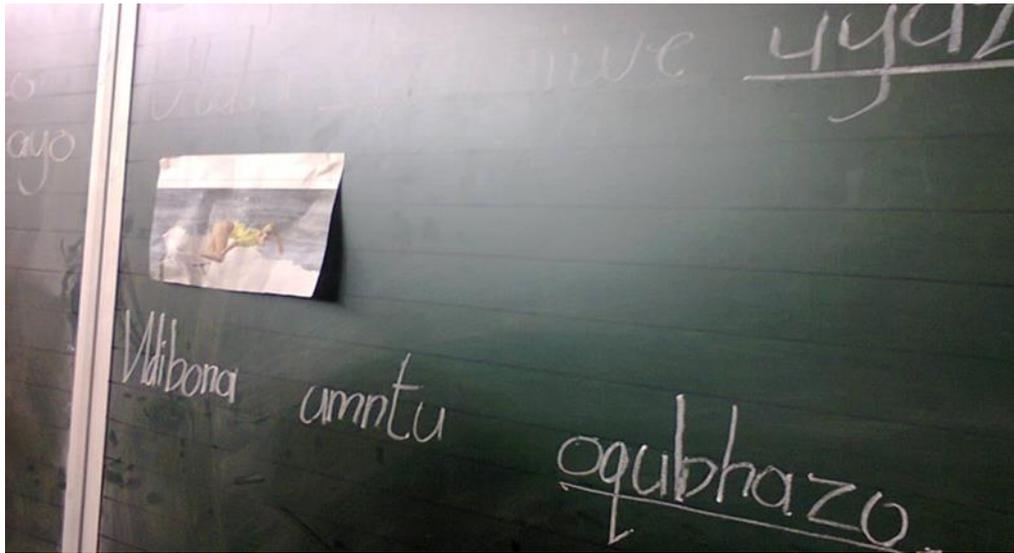
Learner 1: ‘oqubhazo’ (as shown on Picture 2 below).

Learner 2: ‘onqubhazo’

Learner 3: ‘onqubhayo’

Learner 4: ‘oqhubhayo’

Picture 2



In this instance, learners seemed to be guessing. It appeared that they could not differentiate between the letter [q] with the nasalised sound [nq] and the aspirated sound [qh]. Although Thandi seemed to be focusing on the weak learners to ensure that they could read or write the words, her strategy was not helpful in that she did not make the learners understand their mistakes. Instead the learners appeared to be humiliated and anxious, with low confidence.

Lesson B was chosen because it focused on the teaching of reading, which later developed into writing. As described above, the focus of the lesson on silent reading, but the lesson ended up as shared reading. Silent reading is done with the ability groups, but under the guidance of the teacher as Guided Reading (DBE, 2011). Thandi's strategy led to shared reading as she worked with the whole class, even though she was not using a "Big Book" or any form of a multimedia text. She did not model reading. Learners were not seated in groups so that the instruction could focus on a certain group to promote guided reading.

The lesson touched on word identification where she instructed some learners to show their understanding of phonics. She instructed learners to read individually and silently. This suggests that she viewed the learners as independent readers, although some of them had not yet reached that stage of reading. The steps of the lesson did not follow systematically, and this could be attributed to the fact that there was no lesson plan prepared for teaching the reading lesson. It also seemed that there was no clear purpose for the reading lesson. In other words, the lesson

outcomes were not clear and specific, given that there was no lesson plan. As a result, the lesson was not focused and the activities were not well prepared for.

At Grade 3 level, learners need more support and motivation to get into the culture of reading to learn in order to use the knowledge of reading and writing in subsequent years. They also have to read for enjoyment. At this stage, reading is still expected to be at the hands of the teacher who should act as a mediator. When reading is mediated for meaning making, it often reflects the developmental aspect that reading is supposed to possess. The teacher in this lesson seemed to distance herself and ordered the learners to read for understanding in preparation for the question and answer session. The instruction given by the teacher created an impression that all the learners in the Grade 3 classroom were in the ability group who were able to carry out an instruction with minimal teacher support. If learners are expected to read for understanding, it becomes the role of the teacher to use a variety of strategies for learners to understand the text and be able to use the information in different contexts.

The teachers' questions were phrased in such a manner that learners were able to provide single words as answers, as indicated in lines 9 and 13 in the reading lesson above. This is also evidenced in line 3 of lesson B below which focused on the teaching of letter writing. The questioning strategy seemed not to enhance literacy for academic development as the lesson was teacher-centred, with less pupil involvement. The teacher also took long to intervene, leaving the learners to guess the correct answers.

Lesson B: Transactional writing

The focus of the lesson was on letter writing. The teacher began the lesson by asking learners to name the uses of a written letter, and she drew a mind map on the chalk board. As the learners responded orally, Thandi wrote their answers on the board. The answers included the following: letters as form of reminders about account payments, notifying people about bereavement, sending money from one place to the other, etc. Learners also mentioned that letters were used by the government to inform people about their official documents that had been approved, e.g. a passport. The lesson proceeded as shown in excerpt 2 below:

Excerpt 2 for Lesson B

1	<u>Thandi</u>	<u>Uyibhalela ntoni ileta Zet?</u> <u>Why do you write a letter Zet?</u>
2	<u>Zet</u>	<u>Xa kukho umphanga.</u> <u>When there is bereavement.</u>
3	<u>Thandi</u>	<u>Yintoni umphanga?Mavis?</u> <u>What is bereavement? Mavis?</u>
4	<u>Mavis</u>	<u>Xa uwe nemoto.</u> <u>When you are involved in a car accident.</u>
5	<u>Thandi</u>	<u>Waze wathini xa uwe nemoto?</u> <u>And then what happens when you get involved in a car accident?</u>
6	<u>Thandi</u>	<u>Umphanga xa kukho umntu oswelekileyo, kuthiwa ngumphanga loo nto, siyavana nhe?</u> <u>Bereavement is when there is someone who has passed on , it is called bereavement, are we together, neh?</u>
7	<u>Thandi</u>	<u>Xa oosisi besihla besenyuka bephethe iimvulophu, sukuba besenza ntoni? Oosister noobhuti besihla benyuka befaka izinto zabo kwezi ndawo benzela ntoni?</u> <u>When we see our brothers and sisters walking up and down with envelopes, what are they doing? When our brothers and sisters walk up and down submitting their particulars in different places, why do they do that?</u>
8	<u>Zet</u>	<u>Uxolo Miss, bafaka isivi.</u> <u>Sorry Miss, they are submitting their cv</u>
9	<u>Thandi</u>	<u>For ukuthini?</u> <u>For what?</u>

10	Zet	<u>Ukuphangela</u> <u>To get work.</u>
11	Thandi	<u>Bafuna imisebenzi.Ubhala ileta xa ufuna umsebenzi, nhe.</u> <u>They are looking for work.You write a letter when you are looking for work,</u> <u>neh.</u>
12	Pumla	<u>Uxolo Miss, xa kukho umntu wakowenu ogulayo umbhalele ileta.</u> <u>Sorry Miss, when a family member is sick, you write him/her a letter.</u>
13	Thandi	<u>Xa kukho umntu wakowenu ogulayo umbhalele ileta, ileta ethi phila msinyane,</u> <u>nhe. Umhlawumbi uyagula usesibhedlela akakasweleki, uyagula usesibhedlela.</u> <u>Siphinde sibhale ileta xa sithuthuzela ifemeli ethile eswelekelweyo, nhe.</u> <u>Masibhale, masiyibhale nalo pisi, xa sithuthuzela sisebenzisa ileta.</u> <u>When a family member does not feel well you write him/her a letter, a letter that</u> <u>says get well soon. Maybe he/she is still sick at hospital, has not yet passed on.</u> <u>We also write a letter to a certain family when we offer our condolences. Let's</u> <u>write, let's that piece as well, when we offer our condolences we write a letter.</u>
14	Learner	<u>Miss, uxolo Miss umzekelo umam'am, wakho afumane ileta emkhumbuzayo.</u> <u>Sorry Miss,for example, my mother, your mother receives a letter that reminds</u> <u>her.</u>
15	Thandi	<u>Ewe iileta zamatyala, ityala netyala angakhange alibhatale.</u> <u>Yes, debt letters, that remind her of debt she did not pay.</u>
16	Mavis	<u>Xa uzokuthatha into eHome Affairs.</u> <u>When you are going to fetch something from Home Affairs.</u>
17	Thandi	<u>Uthi xa ipassport yakho ingaphumi okanye xa sele ifikile eHome Affairs,</u> <u>ubhalelwa ileta yena ke uqabela ngapha kweeborders zase South Africa aye</u> <u>eMaputo. Xa iipassport zabo zifikile eHome Affairs, utsho, babhalelwa ileta ethi,</u> <u>hambani niye kuthatha iipassport eHome Affairs, nhe. Ipassport ke yinto engathi</u> <u>yi-ID, yinto efana ne-ID, le ID ithi uwela ngapha koMzantsi Afrika ngayo,</u>

		<p><u>nhe.....yi passport leyo ikunika igunya lokuba uwele uye ngaphaya komda woMzantsi Afrika nhe.</u></p> <p><u>She said when your passport has not been released or when it has been released by the Department of Home Affairs, they write her a letter because she crosses South African borders to Maputo. When their passports are ready, they are informed by letters that inform them that their passports are ready for collection from the Department of Home Affairs, right. A passport is something that looks like an identity document that gives you a right to cross South African borders, right ... it is a passport that gives you a right to cross South African borders.</u></p>
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In most cases, Thandi would repeat the responses provided by the learners. This was done to correct the mistakes the learners made when constructing sentences or sometimes when the learner provided an incomplete answer. For example, in line 17 above, she extended the learners' knowledge about what a passport was and its role.

This lesson was also used to develop learners' vocabulary in that one of the learners mentioned the role a letter played in keeping the family ties together. Zet mentioned that letter writing was also used in informing family members about bereavements "xa kukho umphanga" ("when there was bereavement"). The teacher used questions to draw the learners to the expected answer in defining "umphanga" ("bereavement"). Thandi gave a summary of when people use the word "umphanga". Although she started off by interacting with Mavis, she cut off the interaction and gave a summary of what "umphanga" was.

Thandi also probed for further elaboration on answers. For example, in line 5 she asked, "waze wathini lo mntu uwe nemoto?" ("And what happened to the passenger involved in a car accident?").

She also tried to incorporate learners' daily experiences in her teaching in order to illustrate certain events and to expand their vocabulary. The excerpt below shows how Thandi related her lesson to learners' common knowledge of family life to facilitate learning.

Excerpt 2 for Lesson B

18	Thandi	UMamNgwevu athi,“Yhu!ivela kutata kaXhanti, Yhu! Avuye, ngokuba utata kaXhanti uthumele ntoni? MamNgwevu would be excited because it is from Xhanti’s father, because he sent them what?
19	All	Imali. Money.
20	Thandi	Bazothi bakwazi ukuthi batye imileqwa So that they will be able to buy “umleqwa” (a live chicken)
21	Zizipho	Uxolo Miss, yintoni umleqwa? Sorry Miss, what is “umleqwa?”
22	Thandi	Yinyama, yinkukhu, yinyama umleqwa It’s meat, it’s chicken, it’s meat
23	Learner	Zezi nkukhu zithengiswayo. Aniyazi ukuba kuthiwa yimileqwa? Nawe uthi utya umleqwa nje. It is the chickens that are sold. Don’t you know that they are called “imileqwa?” And you say you eat “umleqwa”.

Harmon, Buckelew- Martin and Wood (2010) assert that an ability to identify an unfamiliar word is an important skill in literacy learning. In this case, the learner is able establish a relationship between reading and text comprehension which enhances literacy skills. The ability to identify unfamiliar words in a text determines one’s comprehension of the text, and it also expands learners’ vocabulary.

After the above exercise which involved vocabulary learning, the teacher proceeded with letter writing. She guided learners on what information was required when a letter is written. Learners were asked to name the components of a letter. The features that the learners mentioned were the address which indicates the date when the letter was written, the receiver’s name and the writer’s

name, as well as the purpose for writing a letter. The use of questions by the teacher to stimulate learner's prior knowledge seemed to create an interactive classroom environment, even though some of the learners were dominating the lesson while others seemed lost.

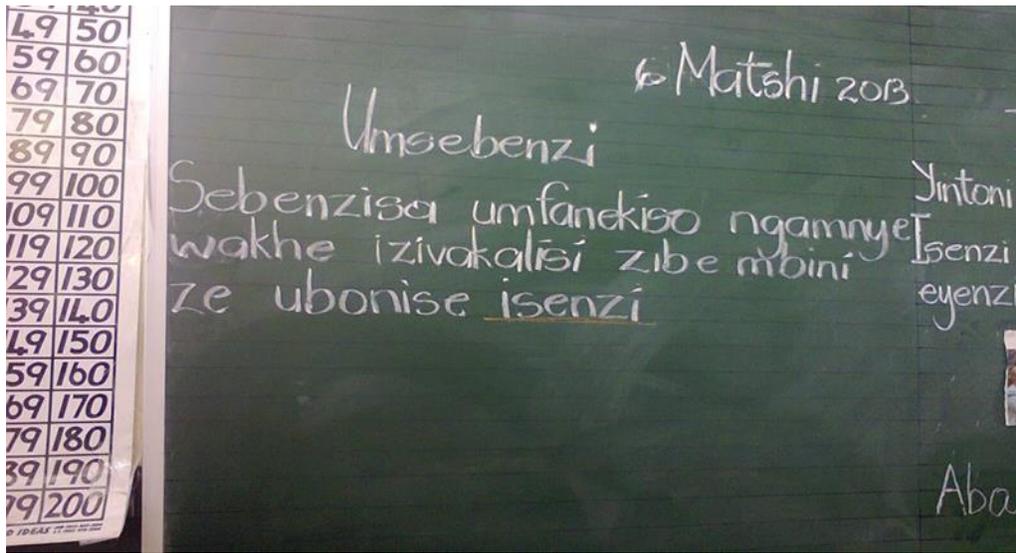
Thandi began to summarise the uses of a letter on the chalkboard. She asked the learners to read the summary she compiled on the chalkboard. Thandi ended the lesson by asking learners about the importance of writing an address. She then modelled writing the address on the chalkboard. Learners were asked to copy the letter that Thandi wrote on the board.

Lesson C: Language Structure and Use

Thandi started the lesson by pasting pictures on the chalkboard and she asked the learners to construct sentences based on the pictures. This lesson focused on verbs. To get the learners to understand the lesson, Thandi used different strategies. Firstly, learners had to view the pictures and individually write the sentences on the chalkboard. Secondly, they had to read what they had written and then identify a verb and underline it as shown on pictures 1, 2 and 3. Picture 3 shows the instruction of what the learners were expected to do after they had viewed the pictures. The instruction read as follows:

Sebenzisa umfanekiso ngamnye wakhe izivakalisi zibe zibini ze ubonise isenzi (Use each of the pictures and construct two sentences and identify a verb).

Picture 3



Picture 4 gives an explanation of a verb (isenzi). It starts with a question of what a verb is (Yintoni isenzi?). This question is followed by an explanation as shown below:

Yintoni isenzi? Isenzi ligama elichaza into eyenziwayookanye eyenzekayo. (What is a verb? A verb is a word that describes something or something being done)

Picture 4



In this lesson, Thandi made use of pictures she cut from magazines to make the lesson learner-centered, interactive and interesting. It seemed that learners enjoyed the lesson because they

were able to use their imagination to construct sentences. They were able to analyse and make connections with the pictures because the pictures were familiar.

Thandi then asked one learner, named Azola, to read what she had written, and then identify a verb. Azola constructed the sentence as follows:

Abantu bayabulisana (People are greeting each other).

Azola underlined the auxiliary verb “baya-” and Thandi asked her to read her sentence. In reading her sentence, the learner identified ‘baya-’ (they are) as a verb in the sentence. To get the learner to understand the verb, Thandi asked whether she noticed any action or something being done when she mentioned or read the helping verb “baya-”. Thandi then posed a question to the whole class to state whether ‘baya-’ denoted an action. The learners answered in a chorus, “No”. She further asked what the learner should have done as shown below.

Excerpt 3 for Lesson C

1	Thandi	...funda esa sivakalisi sakho. ...read your sentence.
2	Azola	Abantu bayabulisana. People are greeting each other.
3	Thandi	Uthi abantu bayabulisana. Sesiphi isenzi kweli gama ulikrwelileyo? She said, people are greeting each other. Which one is the verb from what you have underlined?
4	Azola	Baya- They are -
5	Thandi	Uthi “baya-“, “baya-” Ikhona into eyenziwayo xa usithi “baya-”? She said, “they are”, Is there any action when you say “they are”?

6	³ Class	No, Miss.
7	Thandi	Kufuneka etheni? Kufuneka enze njani? What must she do? How must she do?
8	Thandi	Usame njalo, ndifuna ukubuza ukuba yintoni ebangela ukuba uthi utata ubanjiwe, uyazisola? While you are still standing, what makes you say that the “father” was apprehended and he feels remorse?
9		Uxolo Misi, ndibona amapolisa kuyacaca umoshile Sorry Miss, I see the policeman so it is clear that he had misbehaved.
10	Thandi	Right, masiye kwisivakalisi sesibini, uthi “utata ubanjiwe uyazisola”. Sirayithi esa sivakalisi yena wakrwelela isenzi esithi ubanjiwe, neh? Urayithi, ikhona enye into ekufuneka eyenzile? Okay, let’s look at the second sentence, she says, “the gentlemen has been apprehended and he feels remorse”. That sentence is correct and she underlined the verb “apprehended”, neh? She is correct, is there anything she is supposed to do?
11	Mavis	Uxolo Miss, ikhona Yes Miss, there is.
12	Thandi	Ewe, iphi, yintoni? Yitsho Mavis. Yima masimamele uMavis. Yes, where, what is it? Speak Mavis. Wait, let’s listen to Mavis
13	Mavis	Uxolo, Miss, kufuneka akrwelele u-“uyazisola”. Sorry, Miss, she must underline the word “remorse”.

³ The class interrupted by responding without giving the learner a chance to think clearly and respond. Thandi also did not show much patience with the learner by supporting her so that she could come to the realization of where she made the mistake in identifying the verb. The sentence, according to Thandi, was correct but the learner could not clearly identify the verb.

Thandi's questioning seemed to limit Azola and her group members to share their understanding of verbs. Although they exhibited oral competence in the language, they could not identify a verb in a sentence. This could suggest that learners experienced less exposure in analysing sentences and identifying the different parts of speech. Secondly, it appeared that they had little experience in working with sentence and paragraphs.

After the class had provided the correct answer, Thandi then explained what a verb was and asked learners to greet each other by shaking hands. Using learners to model the actions in a sentence seemed to make the lesson clearer to the learners. The learners were then asked to use their knowledge of verbs to choose sentences in a story they had read and identify verbs. In this activity, learners were not encouraged to construct their own sentences but the activity encouraged them to copy what was already in the book. It seemed that there was little planning on the part of the teacher as there were no tasks prepared for this particular type of assessment.

Lesson D: Reading comprehension

The focus of this lesson was on reading comprehension. Learners were given a story to read on the previous day, and the purpose of the activity was to discuss and reflect on the story (see Appendix G). Thandi began the lesson by confirming the title of the story. She then ordered the learners to retell the story. Some of the learners continued to read the story even though they were instructed to keep their books closed in order to recall what they had read. Thandi then proceeded to facilitate learning by asking questions about the story. Thandi repeated what the learners had said, and this seemed to limit learner's use of language. For example, in the excerpt below Thandi asked questions that limited learner's chances of using the language for meaning making.

Excerpt 4

1	<u>Thandi</u>	<u>Balisa ke Prince, nanku efuna ukusibalisela.</u> <u>Narrate Prince, here he is, he wants to narrate for us</u>
2	<u>Prince</u>	<u>Kuthethwa ngoonesi.</u> <u>It is about nurses.</u>

3	Thandi	<u>Abatheni oonesi?</u> <u>Nurses, who have done what?</u>
4	Prince	Kuthethwa ngoonesi abazondwendwela esikolweni. It is about nurses who are going to visit the school
5	Thandi	Andikuva Prince. I can't hear you, Prince.
6	Prince	<u>...abaze kundwendwela esikolweni</u> <u>...who came to visit the school.</u>
7	Thandi	<u>Baze kuthini oonesi esikolweni Prince?</u> <u>What have the nurses come to do at school, Prince?</u>
8	Prince	<u>Baze kundwendwela.</u> <u>They have come to visit.</u>
9	Thandi	<u>Baze kundwendwela bafike benze ntoni esikolweni?</u> <u>They came to visit and do what at school?</u>
10	Prince	<u>Andiyazi.</u> <u>I don't know.</u>
11	Thandi	<u>Ewe, oonesi baze kundwendwela esikolweni, bafike bathini apha esikolweni oonesi? Uthini Prince?</u> <u>Yes, the nurses have come to visit the school, what did they do at the school? What are you saying, Prince?</u>
12	Prince	<u>Andithethi Misi</u> <u>I have nothing to say, Miss.</u>

The learner kept on mentioning the word, “ukundwendwela” (to visit) which was the common word that was used in the story. This could suggest that Prince was not sure of the meaning of the word hence he did not use a synonym when he tried to provide an answer. The interaction

between Thandi and Prince ended with Prince not benefiting from the reading exercise which was meant to provide him with information and expand his vocabulary. In most instances, she did not guide the learners to the correct answer. For example, in line 10, Prince replied that he did not know why the nurses visited the school. Thandi did not pay attention to his comment, instead she asked another learner to retell the story. The learner did not say anything different from what was said by Prince, as shown in lines 13 – 16 in the excerpt below.

13	Thandi	Awuthethi,yiza mfana wam. You are not talking, say something my boy (referring to another boy)
14	Matthew	Kuthethwa ngoonesi abeze kunceda abantwana. It is about nurses that came to help learners.
15	Thandi	Kuthethwa ngoonesi abeze kunceda, uthini wena? It is about the nurses who came to help, what are you saying?
16	Learner	Uxolo Misi, kuthethwa...[Sorry Miss, it is about ...[
17	Learner	Kuthethwa ngoonesi, xa uthe waxhuzula bakhawuleze beze The story is about nurses who respond quickly when they are called in an event a learner experiences fits.

The responses shared by other learners were not given any feedback to indicate whether they were correct or not. Thandi seemed to disregard the learners' contribution to the discussion when they shared what they generally knew about the nurses. For example, in line 17, the learner shared what he knew about nurses but Thandi seemed to neglect the learners' prior knowledge which would have been useful in leading the learners to understand the new story. She then proceeded with the lesson by asking learners to reflect more on what the story was about, without giving a clear indication of how the learner missed the point of discussion. In this case, the weak learners were not scaffolded to reach a maximum level of understanding. As the lesson proceeded, Thandi added new information in order to enrich learners' knowledge about the

subject matter. This helped the learners to understand the purpose of the text as in the teacher-learner interaction below:

18	Learner	Oonesi beza esikolweni beze kujonga abantwana abatya ukutya okungalunganga. Nurses come to school to check learners who eat unhealthy food.
19	Thandi	Oonesi....kuba ukutya okungalunganga kuyingozi. Nursesbecause unhealthy food is dangerous.
20	Thandi	Oku kutya nikubizileyo kutheni lento kusithiwa akulunganga? The food you have mentioned, why is it said to be unhealthy?
21	Unam	Uxolo Misi, kuthiwa masingakutyi. Sorry Miss, it is said we must not consume it.
22	Thandi	Kutheni lento kusithiwa masingakutyi? Why is it said we must not consume it?
23	Unam	Uxolo Misi, kwenza iintshulube Sorry Miss, because they cause intestinal worms.
24	Boyce	Uxolo Misi, utywala buyabumosha ubuso bethu benza ukuba sibe ngamaxhego Sorry Miss, alcohol damages our facial muscles, it makes us appear older.

The lesson proceeded with high order level of questioning as seen in lines 20 and 22. For example, in line 20 Thandi wanted learners to apply reasoning skills as the lesson warned them about consuming unhealthy food. Learners came up with interesting answers that indicated their experiences about eating unhealthy food. For example, in lines 23 and 24, Unam and Boyce mentioned the physical effects of unhealthy food (i.e. intestinal worms and facial damage) which were interesting to note. Learners mentioned other examples of unhealthy foods, for example, iilekese (sweets), isonka (bread), etc. Thandi then added information that “isonka esimhlophe” (white bread) was unhealthy. Learners displayed good understanding of the lesson as some of

them mentioned unhealthy practices such as picking up food from the streets e.g. “bangacholi ukutya okusesitratweni” (they should not pick up discarded food along the road). They also mentioned examples of healthy food and the types of fruits and vegetables such as amakhaphetshu (cabbages), isipinatshi (spinach), ithanga (pumpkin), ibhatata (sweet potato), etc.

As the lesson progressed, the teacher continued to repeat what learners pronounced and did not write the learners’ answers on the chalkboard. The learners also mentioned “itshizi” (cheese) among the healthy food groups. She accepted the “itshizi” as an example of healthy food. She then asked learners to name “itshizi” by its proper isiXhosa word. None of the learners seemed to know the proper Xhosa word for “itshizi”. She then gave them homework to find out the Xhosa word for “itshizi”. This was interesting as she was encouraging learners to conduct research, while allowing them to interact with parents and other community members for their literacy development.

Lastly, Thandi started to analyse the story by asking learners to name the characters in the story. She stressed the fact that the text was a discussion between two or more people. She made a comparison between the story and another story they had read before. She encouraged the learners to participate in a group activity where they were going to role-play a netball game. In this role-play activity, learners were supposed to decide what the topic of dialogue would be. However, the teacher’s instruction was not explicit and clear and the learners were not provided with cues on which roles they could play in the dialogue. That led to learners being hesitant about doing the role-play. The learners were confused as they were expected to role play netball which was not linked to the lesson they were taught on food. It appeared that the dialogue that the learners were expected to do was not well planned to connect meaningfully with the previous lesson.

4.3.2.1 Summary of classroom observations

Classroom observation data observed indicates that the teacher had a good understanding of reading and writing strategies, but did not plan well for her lessons. The lack of thorough planning led her to neglect certain literacy skills and focused more on others. For example, data showed that learners received more exposure in oral activities where they had to answer questions and less exposure in constructing their own sentences. They were also not encouraged

to work at sentence level where they had to identify different parts of speech in a sentence. Observation data also showed that the teacher did not plan for differentiated learning as she gave all the learners in the class the same book to read, and her questioning style seemed not to support and guide weaker learners. The following section describes data from the interviews.

4.4 DATA FROM INTERVIEWS

As mentioned in Chapter 3, interviews were conducted in order to get a better understanding of how the Grade 3 teacher and parents participated in the development of learners' literacy skills. The interview questions differed among the class teacher, the Head of Department (HOD) and the parents. I first present the teacher, followed by the HOD interviews, and finally, the parent interviews are presented.

4.4.1 Teacher Interviews

As mentioned above, interviews were conducted in order to get a better understanding of the teacher's views about literacy development and practices in Grade 3. Interviews were also conducted in order to investigate the availability of literacy resources and how those resources were used to enhance literacy in the Grade 3 classroom. Unstructured conversations took a form of informal communication, mostly after classroom observations to complement what was unclear during classroom observations.

On the question about how Thandi handled literacy lessons. She gave a synopsis of her typical reading lesson which is captured below:

Sisebenzisa incwadi enkulu, "Big Book". Abantwana bahlala phantsi emethini enkulu notitshala, siyijonge le ncwadi. Umphandle lo wencwadi siwucazulule. Sityhile ngaphandle sijonge si-analayize umfanekiso, abantwana baxele ukuba babona ntoni emfanekisweni. Before sifunde sibuze njengokuba ubona lo mfanekiso kuza kwenzeka ntoni apha ebalini. Bachaze kuza kwenzeka oku nokuya, sibuye sifunde. Ndiqale ngokubafundela ndakugqiba ukubafundela ndibanike ithuba lokuba bafunde. Ndibabuze imibuzo.

We use a Big Book. Learners sit on the mat and we first view the book. We then analyse the cover of the book. We then start to page the book and analyse a picture, learners then tell me what they see in the picture. Before we start reading, I ask them to predict what the story is about based on the picture. Then they share their thoughts and then we start reading. I begin by reading and then I give them a chance to read. Then I ask them questions. (Interview with Thandi, 12 March 2013).

Thandi applied different strategies with regard to teaching reading, as shared in the above excerpt. The manner in which Thandi narrated the strategies she applied when she teaches reading suggests that she stimulated learners' thinking processes as she used pre-reading strategies. These strategies activated learners' prior knowledge. Alyousef (2006) applauds the activation of prior knowledge as he believes that it motivates learners to read before the actual reading takes place. The pre-reading strategies allow the learners to make connections between the text and their lives. In other words, learners are mentally reading the text without pronouncing the words.

After discussing the pictures, Thandi claimed that she would then first read the text so that the learners would be able to hear how the words were pronounced, before they started reading on their own. Lastly, she would ask some questions to check learners' understanding of the text.

However, according to the reading activities that I observed, she would begin her reading exercise by asking questions based on what she asked learners to read at home. This activity would be followed by short pieces of writing which included dictation or use of blended sounds where learners would be expected to construct their words and sentences. Reading to them was not an act that she would do most of the time, in my presence. The teaching strategies that Thandi mentioned in the interview suggested her knowledge about guided reading strategies where all the learners had to read the same text in a group. However, in Thandi's case, learners were not divided into groups, but her teaching was focused on the whole class. She made use of text talk in order to inspire discussion which included the analysis of the pictures and discussion that was based on the book cover. She also showed an understanding of the relationship that existed between reading and writing as she concluded her reading lessons by re-writing the story on the chalk board.

When she was asked if her literacy practices provided learners with access to literacy and how that could be measured, Thandi responded by saying that access to literacy meant exposure to a variety of reading materials. The materials could be hardcopies like books, or exposure to computers. She went on to say that before the school underwent construction, they would take learners to the school library where they would read stories so that they could be exposed to writing activities about a particular story.

The interview illustrated that the teacher's understanding of measuring reading ability meant reading aloud and using punctuation strategies correctly when reading. This implied that Thandi's instructional practices were overlapping during the teaching of reading, resulting in the teaching of non-explicit outcomes.

On the question of low literacy performance by learners, the teacher responded by citing lack of parental support due to a variety of reasons. She mentioned that some of the parents did not know how to read or write and that became a barrier as parents were not able to support the children with their homework. Apart from the lack of support by parents, Thandi mentioned that the Department of Education's policy on promotion and progression made things difficult for them to retain the learner in the same grade, even when they noticed that the learner was not performing to the expectations of that particular grade. This resulted in learners being promoted to the next grade with underdeveloped literacy skills, particularly reading and writing.

Regarding measures of improving literacy practices, the teacher mentioned that the home and school relationship could help to improve literacy performance where learners are given books to read at home.

Abantwana banga-..., njengoba besenditshilo, bangafunda aph'eklasini... then nasekhaya. Umntwana anikwe incwadi afike ekhaya afunde angapheleli apha esikolweni qha ukufunda. Ekhaya afundiswe indlela yokufunda incwadi.

Learners' can-..., as I have already mentioned, they can read here in class and at home. The learner has to be given a book to read at home and he/she should not just read here at school. He must be taught how to read the book at home (Interview with Thandi, 12 March 2013).

In this instance, parents or older siblings who are able to read could help the child to read and write at home. This implies that parental support is important in strengthening learners' literacy development.

4.4.2 Head of Department (HOD) Interviews

The questions that were posed to the HOD wanted to find out about her understanding of literacy practices. They also elicited the support she received from the school's senior management or the Department of Education as the HOD, and the support she provided to the FP teachers and learners. Zodwa viewed literacy practices as continuous reading, exposure of learners to different media that they could read in the classroom, and it also meant a lot of talk by the teacher, "It's like teaching orally".

With regard to the contributory factors that impacted on literacy development, Zodwa mentioned the continuous policy changes that teachers experienced. She further mentioned that the new forms of teaching seemed not to serve the purpose of improving learners' literacy performance and that of numeracy. Her feelings are captured below:

I would assume it's because of these new forms of teaching, now we have CAPS...

but the problem is when we start grasping, now we start grasping, okay, now it's only now that I understand RNCS, and the following year we hear that no, the RNCS has been changed to NCS, when you start to grasp iNCS they change it to uCAPS. (Interview with Zodwa, 20 March 2013)

The second factor that could be linked to low literacy levels, according to Zodwa, was poor and insufficient in-service training of teachers. Zodwa had this to say:

...and also, and also to the lack of teachers.... Because the teachers maybe, they are not well trained'. But what the department does, they train teachers for a "day".

She also referred to the inconsistencies with regard to the quality of in-service development teachers as enactors of the policy received compared to what the Curriculum Advisers (CA) received. She claimed that:

... Departmental officials will go ...to Gauteng to train for three months... but what the department do they train teachers for a day.

To improve teacher practices, Zodwa said she would invite the CA to coach them in their classes so that they could exchange ideas with the teachers. In this way, teachers would gain much exposure to the strategies they are expected to implement in the classroom. This is captured in the utterance below:

...[ICA] yenza ilesson pha eklasini yam so that ndize kukopa le lesson yakho ndiyenze exactly ... because they will make i-examples ze-English, thina ke ngoku most of the time i-examples ze-English ayifithi kwindaba yesiXhosa. (... [The CA] models your lesson in my class so that I can copy your lesson and do it in my class...because they will make English examples and English examples do not fit in our Xhosa context.

Van Driel, Beijaard and Verloop (2001) agree with Zodwa's observation with regard to teacher professional development. Van Driel et al. (2001) emphasise on the important factor that time plays in bringing authentic changes in the teaching profession because they believe that when sufficient time is spent in bringing about changes in the classroom, teachers will not experience the kinds of superficial development which make the teachers unable to implement the policy changes.

When asked about her understanding of access to literacy, Zodwa said that access to literacy implied exposing learners to different kinds of literacy materials like books. Her strategy of exposing learners to literacy is captured in the following utterance:

...but what I normally do, I take them to the library, the school library. Because they are too young to go to the library that is in town, for, mostly, I take them to the school library or to the lab in our in our computers. At the lab we do have a programme they call Talking Stories.

Zodwa pointed out the advantages of exposing learners to Information and Communication Technology (ICT), especially the learners who struggle with reading and writing.

...so those that cannot read can look at the picture and listen, because there is also an audio for each and every story. So they can look at the story and listen to the story.

In light of the above, it could be said that the guided reading support that learners were exposed to was meant to strengthen literacy development as the learners listened to skilful readers and

were guided by the pictures in constructing meaning. Zodwa went on to say that the best readers were selected to read aloud to the principal. They were expected to know phonics and to read Grade 3 reading books.

Referring to the question of support that she provided to teachers as HOD, Zodwa mentioned that she monitored what the teachers were doing in class. She checked whether teachers differentiated work in the classroom in order to support learners individually. Zodwa went on to say:

...ubamonitarishe into ba bayayenza i-intervention, meaning you have to monitor if the intervene, whereby umntwana xa ubona ukuba umntwana uyasilela umnike, ...when you notice that a learner is struggling you give him/her an extra work to monitor if they do offer intervention when they notice a learner is struggling and give him/her extra activities.

With regard to the support she received from senior management, she said:

Oh-h I don't receive any support, ... ewe ke, because at times there is i-workshop ye-HODs, (whereby baza kukuxelela ukuba as an HOD this is what you are supposed to do, but I don't understand ke nge-support... e-e-e, besi- supporta njani, .. as an HOD bayasinika iiduties ekufuneka sizilandele but I'm not sure nge-support

Oh-h I don't receive any support, of course, because at times there are HOD workshops whereby they tell you that as an HOD this is what you are supposed to do, but I don't understand about support .. How they support us, as an HOD's they give us duties that we should do, but I'm not sure about support.

With regard to the implementation of the CAPS policy, she mentioned that the departmental officials, who visited the school or offered workshops, most of the times, were ineffective:

...most of the time, even i-department, loo mntu wase department uzileyo xa um-questiona ngezinto ezininzi, and then he will promise to come back, when when, she doesn't have the answers she promises to come back. She further said I-come back soze uphinde uyibone.

When you question the departmental official about a lot of things, then he/she will promise to come back,... when she doesn't have answers she will promise to come back and you will never see him/her again

She was also disappointed about the lack of support due to language barrier, as shown in the following excerpt:

Asikho esinye i-support because sometimes we will challenge them and say ,okay, go to my classroom, yenza i-lesson pha eklasini yam so that ndize kukopa le lesson yakho ndiyenze exactly, but you will find that most of our su- our advisors they can't speak isiXhosa.

There is no other support because we will challenge them to say, go to my classroom, model the lesson, so that I could copy and be able to deliver the lesson exactly the same way... but you will find that most of our su- our advisors they can't speak isiXhosa.

In light of the above responses, Zodwa was not pleased with the strategies that they were advised to implement in their classrooms because they were not working. Hence she suggested that the subject advisors should come to their classes and model the strategy in order for them to be able implement it with their learners. Zodwa was also angered by the language mismatch between the subject advisors' communicative language and the language used by teachers and learners in the schools they were meant to support. According to Zodwa language played a role in providing meaningful support to teachers.

Zodwa mentioned that they had resources, both hard copies and ICT resources, even though they did not have enough high quality isiXhosa resources. The problem lied in teacher professional development. With regard to the availability and the quality of resources, Zodwa mentioned that isiXhosa resources were few but as teachers, they tried their best to have reading materials. She said,

...i-most yeresources esinazo ezi ,ezi-, ezi-right ezi-adequate, ezi -right zeze-, zeze-maths, but eze- literacy zinqabile iresources, you have to, you have to maneuver, sizenzele ngokwethu, njengokuba ubona nawe,... mhlawumbi siza kufumana incwadi encinci ,we have to ukuba sizenzele ibig book njengala njengala-... njengeza-

poster,uzenzele ibig book,... uhambe uye ku- blowa ii- amafoto uzenzele iinto esa kuba bu-big book. Zinqabile iiresources zesiXhosa”

...the most resources that we have, those that are, ... that are,.. , that are good, adequate and correct,... and good resources are for maths, but for literacy, resources are scarce. We have to manoeuvre and develop on our own as you see we are,.. going to receive small readers , we have then to develop our own big books, just like the posters that you see. You have to go and blow up pictures and make something like a big book. There are few isiXhosa resources.

4.4.3 Principal’s interview

Interview with Theo was conducted to find out his perceptions about literacy practices and the role he played to support literacy instruction in his capacity as the principal of the school. In defining literacy practices, Theo related literacy practices to the learner’s ability to express himself/herself in writing and that it should be accompanied by the ability to read. He also viewed literacy practice as a skill that needs to be continuously practised in order for one to improve. His understanding of literacy is captured in the excerpt below:

... literacy is more about practice, it is a pragmatic subject. Because the more you learn, the more you have, the more you know.

Theo’s view of literacy implies inducting learners in a routine of reading and writing. Theo’s view, however, does not expand on how knowledge is constructed through reading and writing. His emphasis on practice indicated that he viewed learning as a direct result of continuously engaging in reading and writing activities. In that way, one acquires academic knowledge. He said:

...If you fail to learn, you fail to practice, learning is not occurring.

In this way, Theo’s view of literacy practice indicated a skills approach to literacy in that his responses did not imply a reader in relation to sociocultural context where reading has a specific purpose in a specific context and mostly reading to make meaning but where reading is done for fluency. Fluency in reading is an important skill but as mentioned by Fleer and Raban (2007) in Chapter 2 (section 2.6) learners might miss the importance of reading to construct meaning

where they would be able to engage with the text but the implications of fluency in reading could lead to phonemic awareness.

On the question that investigated factors that could be responsible for learners' poor performance, Theo made mention of three reasons. Firstly, he cited lack of adequate education and less interests by parents towards their children's education. Theo's generalisation of less parental involvement was contradicted by the actions of Parent A in Chapter 3 (section 3.7.2.2) as discussed. Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) are of the opinion that understanding different aspects of parental involvement is imperative in education in general. This suggests that there is no fixed nature of parental involvement but the concept "parental involvement" could be related to identifiable characteristics that parents present towards their children's academic life. For example, Parent Aas mentioned earlier in the discussion that she went to inform the class teacher about her child's medical condition indicated that she cared about her child's education and therefore is involved. The continuous practice according to Theo implied continuous reading not in the school premises only but learners should continue with the practice of reading even at home.

Secondly, he attached poor performance to insufficient resources they experience at school. When he was asked whether the lack of resources affected all subject and whether it was a challenge to all languages at the school, he was not very clear. He mentioned that even though they were experiencing difficulties with resources, they had to be patient and wait on the publishers who do not deliver the same books every year but he acknowledged insufficient supply of resources as a problem at the school.

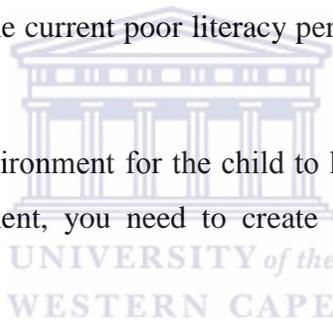
Thirdly, he mentioned that the school did not have a learner friendly reading environment that learners could enjoy reading freely. On the idea of reading for enjoyment Block (2006) states that it motivates learners to experiment with different genres and that results in learners' improved vocabulary and concept formation. According to Block (2006) learners' vocabulary is developed because of the exposure to linguistic context. In other words, the different genres bring with them different grammatical features that help to enhance learners' linguistic abilities. Block observed the advantages of reading for enjoyment when they at Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA) undertook a Free Reading in Schools Project between 2001-2004 (Block 2006). When he spoke about a space where learners could read for

enjoyment he mentioned an availability of an effective and functional library. He mentioned that at the library, learners get to be exposed to different sources of reading material than in the absence of a functioning library and reader friendly environment literacy development suffers.

He shared a different view with regard to the data or results of the systemic evaluations projects. He claimed that the assessment tool that was used for the high stakes assessment tests did not correspond with the context that their learners are exposed to. So the perceptions of results that are published after national and provincial testing did not accurately project their learners' performances.

When he was asked about his views on improving literacy at the school, he used a metaphor of a visit to a doctor's surgery. He said that a doctor did not give one medicine to heal the ailment, but the medicine generated a sense to heal. The metaphor was used to indicate opportunities that teachers could create to improve the current poor literacy performance by learners. This is what he said:

You need to crowd the environment for the child to have an interest to read...when you are in a reading environment, you need to create environment that is conducive for reading.



Theo's enthusiasm about creating opportunities for learners to experiment with the written word is supported by Giles and Tunks (2010) who state that when children's environment is crowded with print their responses to the words in the print encourage their experiences. Naturally, the exposure to a print rich environment influences their encounters with phonetic skills that are required for reading especially at school (Giles and Tunks 2010). Even though a lot of print material favours children coming from affluent communities because of the labelling that is normally found in food stuff that children have access to and billboards, Purcell-Gates (2011) disputes those claims as discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.6) and maintains that socioeconomic background should not be used as a deciding factor when one talks about reading but what needs to be remembered is that children need much exposure to print material in order to develop curiosity about the printed word.

Van Steensel (2006) concurs with Purcell-Gates (2011) on the view that socioeconomic background and exposure to print material are not mutually related because children coming

from impoverished communities experiment and are exposed to print through cultural literacy (Van Steensel 2006). Van Steensel (2006) further mentions that the cultural literacy practiced in impoverished communities include among other activities the reading of the Bible by family members.

However, Purcell-Gates (2011)'s take on crowding the environment with print is related to the print in other languages, for example in English which is not the language focus of this study. This study explores isiXhosa language literacy practices and therefore the availability and the quality of the print material in isiXhosa is of particular interest in this study. The unpleasing quality and few resources in isiXhosa were mentioned by Zodwa in an interview in section 4.4.2 above. Block (2006) also has reservations with regard to the quality of isiXhosa reading material because she claims that even though they are few, the manner in which they are used for public viewing relays a negative message and the positive messages are published in languages other than isiXhosa. This act according to Block (2006) indicates the lower value, power and disregard isiXhosa language holds.

On the question of how he supported the teachers, he mentioned a wide variety of relationships which helped to provide a holistic approach to teacher support and development. His response is captured in the following utterance:

... have to make sure that your systems are all up and running to make sure that you your relationship with the curriculum developers, curriculum managers from various phases you have to make sure that your relationship is good and you must also stand on your feet to make sure that there is necessary there are all the necessary resources are in place. If you support your educators in that way... then it means you are giving them extensive motivation. (Interview with Theo, 16 April 2013). (See Appendix C)

In relation to the above utterance, it seemed that Theo viewed himself as a monitor who is at the school to ensure that the educational policies are implemented and build teamwork among his staff members. He said, "You have to make sure that all systems are running". Ensuring that there is good working relationship between his staff members could imply that he wants to distance himself when inconsistencies are found out if there are any. The assumption could be carries out as being related to the space to he made available for the teachers to attend

workshops. The expectations of attending professional development are that teachers are supposed to share what they learned at the workshops which are a skill that Zodwa raised during the interview. She mentioned that after the workshop upon arrival at the school, she would workshop her colleagues so that they would be able to share ideas and improve their practices.

4.4.3.1 Summary of the teacher interviews

Thandi's and Zodwa's interview highlighted positive and some negative experiences with regard to literacy teaching. They expressed similar experiences about an existing gap between theory and practice. Their understanding of literacy practices implied the teaching of phonics. Apart from pronouncing explicit teaching of phonics, Thandi had a clear understanding of the approaches that were needed to be used in teaching reading but she could not play them out in practice. This suggests that teachers experienced challenges in implementing the theory they had with regard to literacy teaching.

On the question of access to literacy, both teachers believed that access to literacy suggested mastery of reading skills as well as exposure to different kinds of reading materials. Moreover, Zodwa applauded the audio support they had at the school library where the fluent readers got opportunities to listen to the programme called "Talking stories" and work on the illustrations that were provided. This combination made reading fun, especially for the fluent readers. However, Zodwa did not mention how the programme supported the weaker learners. According to Zodwa the ICT programme provided access to literacy. Her understanding was different from the scaffolding process that meant guiding learners until they reach their maximum potential in literacy.

With regard to the low literacy performance by learners and the availability of resources, both teachers cited the departmental policies as contributing to the problem. Thandi cited the inconsistencies that the policy on promotion and progression created to the schools. She claimed that as a result of the policy, learners got to be promoted, irrespective of their level of competence in literacy. Zodwa related the problem to the continuous policy changes which left teachers not properly trained for the implementation of the new policy. Bridging the gap between policy and practice seemed to be the problem at the school.

However, on the question of resources Thandi and Zodwa shared conflicting ideas. Thandi claimed that they had sufficient isiXhosa resources, though Zodwa painted a different picture. Zodwa mentioned that they received isiXhosa readers but they had to design their own isiXhosa Big Books that went hand in hand with the readers because the department proposed that they should use a Big Book, especially during shared reading exercises. This indicated that there was no uniformity between the teachers with regard to developing the Big Books as the expenditure towards developing the book would be incurred by the respective teacher. In all, what Zodwa shared with regard to resources was that they did not have enough isiXhosa resources to enhance isiXhosa literacy instruction.

The interviews also revealed that both teachers understood that learners were at different levels of literacy understanding and application, and that needed to be addressed. They understood that they needed to provide intervention support at different levels. In spite of their knowledge about the intervention support they needed to provide, that was not evidenced during the time I was at the school for observations. For instance, Thandi pronounced intervention measures she could implement that included informing the parents of the weaker learners about the challenges they faced and to design tasks that learners could do at home that could help support those learners.

Zodwa, on the other hand, seemed to understand her role as the HOD with regard to offering guidance and support to her fellow colleagues. She claimed that after attending a teacher development workshop, she shared whatever she learned with her colleagues. But, I did not experience this during the period of data collection. Apart from sharing information, as Zodwa had claimed, she also mentioned that she monitored whether teachers provided support to the weaker and over achieving learners in class, but that was not evidenced during the time I spent at the school.

With regard to the question of support that she received as the HOD from the Department of Education, Zodwa expressed some disappointments. Her first disappointment related to the nature of the workshops they received. She claimed that they were ineffective as they did not address the needs they had as the teachers of isiXhosa Home Language. This implied that although the workshops the Department of Education was offering were intended to generally support teachers, they were not specific on what the teachers needed to know. Another ineffectiveness of the support was a consequence of the language mismatch between the

Curriculum Advisers (CA) and the languages of the learners in their school. The mismatch tended to be a barrier whereby the CA would be asked to model the technique or the developmental support with the learners at the school. As mentioned earlier, the teachers at the school seemed to experience difficulties in implementing policy in order to enhance literacy practices at the school. The following section deals with parent interviews on their views on literacy.

4.4.4 Parents' Interviews

In Chapter 3 it was reported that five parents were interviewed in order to investigate their understanding of literacy and how they viewed their role in developing their children's literacy at home to support school literacy. Data from parents' interviews suggested different views about literacy. Out of five parents who were interviewed, one parent defined literacy as the language taught at school, which is better than the home language. She went on to say:

ndingathi mna lulwimi olona lubhetele,...angakwazi nokuba uphumile uye kwelinye ilizwe uza kukwazi ukuthetha nabanye abantu.

I could say it is a better language... he can be able to use it to communicate with other people in other countries. (Interview with parent C, 21 May 2013).

This parent's view of literacy seems to show the kind of respect she held for English. Although she did not specifically mention that she respected English, her response implied that English was an international language that learners should know in order to communicate with people from different countries. Secondly, she attached more prestige to English as the best language that learners should know because they already know their mother tongues. Her definition of literacy implied knowing different languages.

The second parent viewed literacy as exposure to story reading and separated it from writing as heard from the following utterance, (Interview with parent A, 28 May 2013)

...ndiya rhalela into yokuba ndiyazi iliterasi ukuba ithetha ukuthini okanye ndikwazi ukwenza isitori ngebali ndifundise ukuthetha ngaphandle kokubhala

(I would like to know what the term literacy means or to be able to narrate a story and focus on orality without writing)

Parent A's views on literacy seem to be focused on the use of oral skills (eg) speaking and reading. Parent E's responses did not come with ease even though she mentioned that literacy involved an ability to read and write. The interview was conducted on (21 May 2013)

Whereas the third parent viewed it as ability to read and write (parent D, 25 May 2013) and the knowledge of those literacy skills are acquired at school. Whereas, the third parent viewed it as ability to read and write and the knowledge of those literacy skills are acquired at school.

The fourth parent, parent B presented herself as a person who had no idea of what literacy is because she claimed that she left school years ago and she does not recall what literacy is all about. She seems to relate the question about her views on literacy as a question that was intended to investigate her academic qualifications. That is captured in the following utterance, (Interview with parent B, 4 June 2013).

...ndiphume kudala mna esikolweni... andisena memory into bana yokuba ndicinga ntoni nge literacy... ukhubone ndiyancedisa mna kwi homework kuloo homework and ngoku i-i-i-education itshintshile ukhubone. Ayisafani nezaa nto zethu besizenza kuqala. So ndinceda apho ndiqonda khona

(...I left school years ago...I no longer have a memory to recall what is meant by literacy...you see I help with homework in that homework and now the education has changed you see. It is the same as the one we did before. So I help where I can)

On the question of their role in supporting their children's literacy performance, the five interviewed parents responded by saying that they could support the school by helping their children with homework. Parent A added that she would request the tuition time to be extended in order to support learners' literacy development. Almost all the parents shared the same views about literacy even though they each identified a skill they thought was important than the other in defining literacy. For example, out of the five parents that were interviewed, four of them related literacy to the ability to write and read or speak, while the other one added the importance

role that play plays in developing literacy. This section is followed by a description of data collected from various documents.

4.5 DATA FROM DOCUMENTS

This section describes the documents that were analysed in order to triangulate data that was captured from interviews and classroom observations. Data was collected from learners' writings, books and prints that were hanging on the classroom walls. Miller and Alvarado (2005) claim that documents indicate many decisions about what to write and for what purpose. They further mention that documents reflect social and historical circumstances. It is through document analysis that researchers come to understand the historical background of the research participants. In the case of this study, it is the teacher's decisions about reading and writing preferences that I came to learn about the documents and resources that were used to support learner's literacy skills.

I first describe the learners' writing activities, followed by the description of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) with regard to reading and writing requirements at Grade 3 level. I also provide a description of books that were available in the Grade 3 class, and lastly, the print material that was visible in the classroom.

4.5.1 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was analysed in order to gain a better understanding of how the literacy aspects of reading and writing at Grade 3 level should be carried out. Although in the policy the skills of reading and writing and those of listening and speaking are described separately, this study does not view reading and writing as separate skills, but as integrated language skills.

The CAPS document was analysed in relation to Thandi's instructional practices, and the extent to which her practices were guided by the curriculum policy document. For example, the CAPS expects the teachers to be explicit about the area of focus when they are preparing for reading instruction. Reading and writing form the foundation of successful school and out of school life

experience. Secondly, planned instruction guides teachers on how to expose learners to different language processes for academic literacy. In other words, teachers are guided on how to scaffold literacy learning through the use of different kinds of questions. The document also makes recommendations for the teacher to help struggling learners in their writing by making use of writing frames. The writing frames serve to scaffold writing and provide clues about the topic for the learners, and how they can manoeuvre and negotiate meaning.

According to the CAPS document, learners should engage in different literacy processes for comprehension purposes. These processes range from literal, reorganisation, drawing inferences, evaluation and appreciation. The CAPS document expects learners to be exposed to creative pieces of writing of at least, but not limited to two paragraphs. Analysis of data indicated that Thandi made use of some of the suggestions proposed by the CAPS document but in a limited manner. For example, learners participated in Shared Reading activities but the engagement with the text seemed to have been limited due to the kinds of questions that Thandi used with the learners. Secondly, CAPS suggested that while the learners were analysing the texts, they should be exposed to activities that exposed them in showing processes of appreciation of the text by sharing their feelings about the content and the message the author brought to the audience. That was not evidenced in the kinds of questions that Thandi asked during instruction.

CAPS also suggested that the teachers should provide writing frames to support learners in their writing activities of at least a paragraph of eight sentences. There was evidence that learners engaged in creative writing of longer texts but their writing indicated lack of support in order to follow the correct structure of writing and in support of their thinking about the text. As already mentioned, Thandi was aware that she had to expose learners to extended pieces of writing as it is evident in the learner's personal recount pieces that are discussed in 4.5.3 below.

To build learners' vocabulary and sentence construction CAPS also suggested that learners should be given opportunities to use visual images that they could draw themselves and construct sentences. Data analysis also indicated that learners drew an umbrella and wrote about its uses as in section 4.5.3 (picture B) but the amount of writing seems to be insufficient for a Grade 3 learner because the demands for writing are greater in the subsequent years. All the learners whose books were analysed wrote two sentences, this amount of writing is a suggestion that the

CAPS document made for the Grade 1 learners but if the classroom practices allows for learners to write more sentences the policy is not against that practice.

The CAPS has allocated time per subject for each educational level or phase. The allocated time is meant to support the teaching of specific skills. In home languages, for example, the maximum time that is suggested is 8 hours per week. This time is allocated to content and skills that need to be taught in the Foundation Phase.

The Grade 3 class timetable of the school reflected that all areas that needed to be taught in the FP had been allocated time accordingly. However, it seemed that other aspects of the Home Language such as the stages of writing that could expose learners to different texts received less attention. According to the class timetable, 36 minutes per week had to be spent on writing, but during the four months I spent at the school, the teaching of writing received little attention. I experienced the teaching of explicit writing when the teacher taught learners how to write a letter only, where learners were asked to copy the summary of the letter she modelled on the chalk board. Other literacy aspects were assessed without being taught, but learners had to use their prior knowledge, e.g. writing in cursive. A sample of the time table is attached (see Appendix J).

4.5.2 Teacher's Lesson Plan

The lesson plan was analysed in order to see how the different aspects of literacy learning were catered for. Firstly, it looked at whether there was a link between knowledge, aims and values that are relevant to Grade 3 learners. Secondly, it was also analysed to check whether Thandi sequenced assessment activities in a developmental manner, and whether it took into consideration learners' prior knowledge. It was also checked to find out whether reading and writing were taught collaboratively. Lastly, it was analysed to check the extent to which it accommodated the diverse learners (academically strong and weak) in the Grade 3 classroom.

During classroom observations, I noticed that the teacher did not adhere to the lesson plans in her teaching. There were no lessons plans for some lessons, and some of the lesson plans that were drawn up did not focus on literacy. The teacher went to class knowing what to teach but it was not sequenced systematically. As a result, the teacher tended to pay more attention in certain literacy aspects, while neglecting others. The lesson plan on Appendix H is an exemplar of how she planned her lessons. In the lesson plan, Thandi mentioned that learners would engage in a

writing activity, but she did not mention what kind of writing the learners were to do. The skills that the lesson seemed to focus on were the development of phonics and the learners' comprehension of reading was not given much attention.

The lesson plan indicated that Thandi recognized the learners' prior knowledge in her teaching. For example, the teacher used questions, explanations and examples in trying to enable the learners to understand how a letter was written. The learners were given a letter where they had to re-arrange the events in a correct sequence. The following step of the lesson plan focused on phonics. The lesson plan seemed to be confusing. It contained a lot of activities that seemed to impact on learners' comprehension of the intended knowledge and skills. Learners were not given enough time to work and understand particular skills so that they could be able to apply those skills in another context.

Concerning the teaching of language structure, the language activities seemed to be taught in isolation. For example, the follow up activity from the letter focused on phonics where learners had to use their knowledge of phonics to spell and construct sentences. They were not taken from the letter that the learners were supposed to sequence.

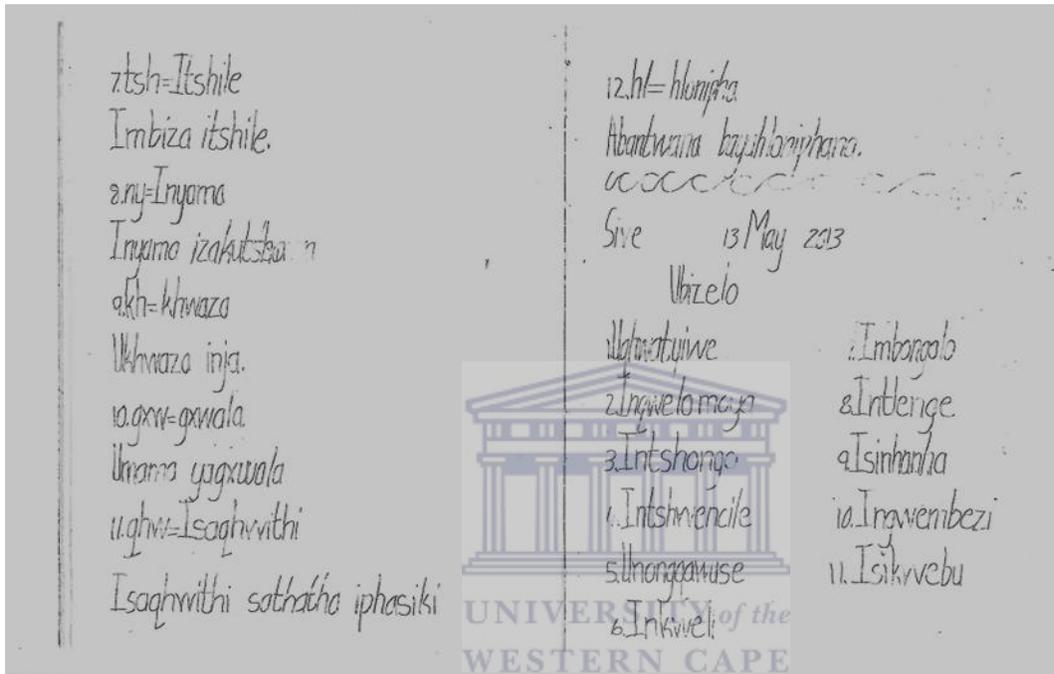
4.5.3 Learners' written work

As mentioned earlier, learners were exposed to different kinds of writing activities but the amount of writing activities seemed to be uneven. Thandi focused more on certain writing activities than others, e.g. dictation to teach the correct spelling of words. She spent less time on supporting learners to write longer pieces of texts. The dictation tasks were followed by activities that required learners to construct sentences where they were given sounds to use as guides. The dictation activities tested their listening skills. Thandi's instruction indicated use of decontextualized approach with an element of using the text as a foundation for writing. Her approach to writing is decontextualized because it emphasized on perfecting certain writing skills, eg spelling and at the same time the words or sounds that are used for the spelling task are taken from the text. That is why I think her approach had an element of using the text as a basis for writing.

Task A for Learner 1, Learners 2 and Learner 3 focused on building words using phonic knowledge. Secondly, the phonic knowledge was later used to construct short texts with simple

sentences. And then it was used to check the correct spelling of the words. Below is an example of the short writing activities that were used by Thandi to assess learners' writing.

Task A Learner A



Task A Learner B

<p>Ayabangsi Mayi 2010 Ulwimi lwasekhaya Izandi ezinxutyiweyo. Vakha igama ngesi sandi ngesinye wakugqiba wakhe isivakalisi nje gam elo u lakhileyo. intsho = intshantsho. intshantsho liya hamba. 2. mv = mvula Imvula imanzisa utata 3. ndl = indlu Umama uthenge indlu emkasi ni</p>	<p>ugcw = Ungwele Umntakwethu Ungwele da ana. 5. ng = Ingubo Umama uthenge Ingu hasisi entsha. 6. ntl = Intlanzi Ubhanti uthenge Intlanzi 7. tsh = Utitshala Utitshala utunetisa abo ana esikoleni. 8. ny = Unyaka yaba Unyaka uphelele mama. 9. kh = liyakhanya</p>
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Task A learner C

<p>Yakha igama ngesandi ngesinye Wakugqiba wakhe isivakalisi nje Gama elo ulakhileyo. 1. ntsh = ntshay udamu. 2. mv = mvale namu tothe. 3. ndl = ndawtha tothe. 4. gcw = gcwale mvale to namu. 5. ng = ngale gcw mvale. 6. ntl = ntlaw to gcw 7. tsh = gawe to wama 8. ny = waq ewa 9. kh = khge to waq 10. ngw = ngwes tngwas 11. ghw = ghws sewq</p>	<p>UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE 12. ndl = usisi uyahlamba Lonwabe 13 May 2010 1. Owmd 2. lcamfy 3. edl 4. Ontel 5. Olcamzo 6. lcali 7. pohli 8. lpbai 9. lsmam 10. lcamso 11. lscap Lonwabe 13 May 2010</p>
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Most of the learners' written work was not marked. Given that, it would take Thandi longer to identify learners with writing difficulties, and those who needed extra tuition and support. Activities that she normally marked were those that focused on word level, but long or activities that required the learners to write long sentences or short paragraphs were not marked. For example, the following are samples of learners' recount writing texts that were based on how they spent their December holidays. These texts were also not marked but a comment or feedback was provided to learner C's writing, but not to learners A and B's written texts. Although learner B's recount text was not marked, it shows that she required more support with regard to writing. The feedback given to learner C was not meaningful as it was just a report of the learner's inability to write a recount text.

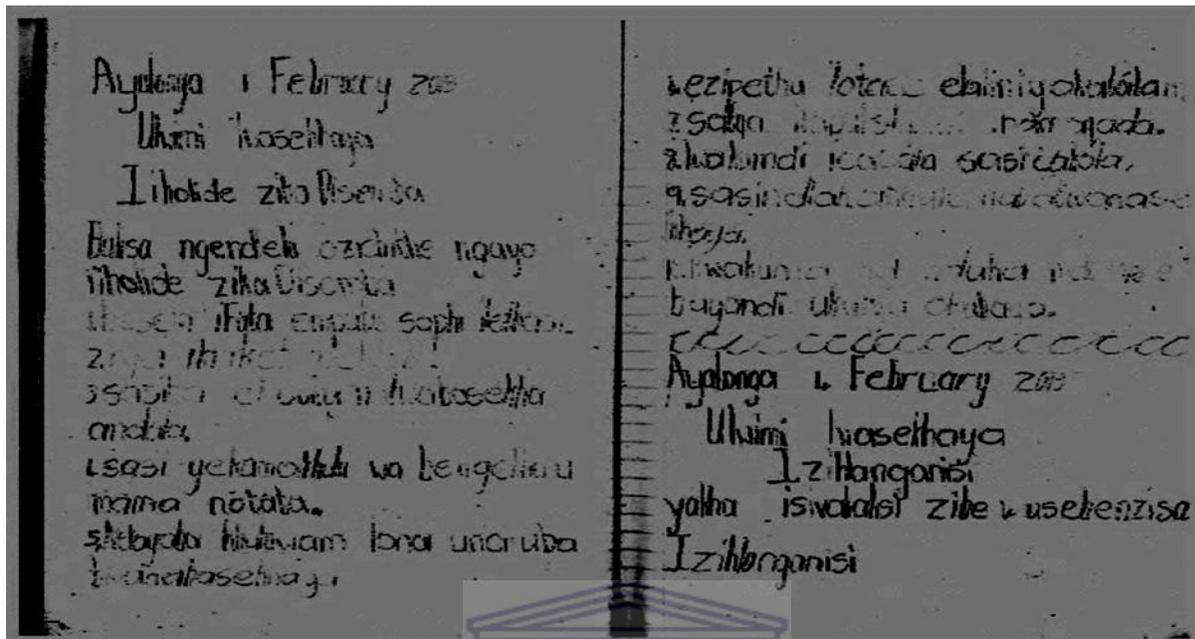


Learner A's recount text

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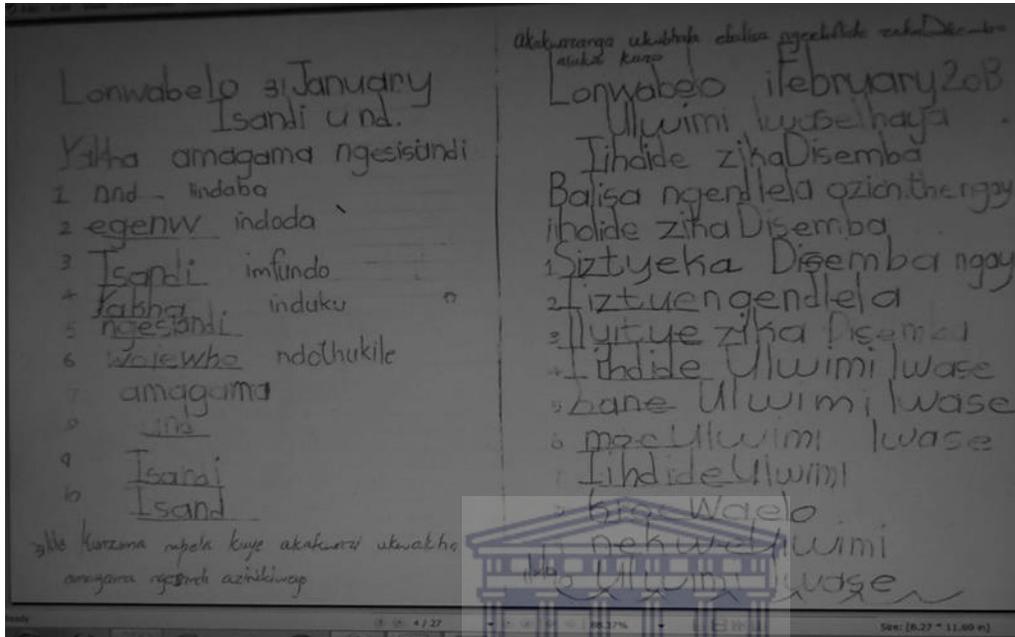
1. Iholidi zika'isemba	Utata ufuna ukutshaya kuba uragandibe
2. Balisa ngendlela ozicabhe ngayo iholidi zikakseba	le
3. Jenalije emakhoseni ngenobo	Uthuti ufuna ukusela amanzi ngoba unkonwe.
4. Sifika emakhoseni saqokutya kic	Ukisi uyopheka koba ulambile
5. Echamba sayo ewimpi saqokutya	Utata udumisa imoto kuba ufuna ukhamba
6. Sajo ebhini saqoku qubha	hamba
7. Sasaubha saquma emanzini	~~~~~
8. Schicabha salinda ukusome	Sie. 5 Februyi 2013
	Ummi lwasehaya

Learner B's recount text



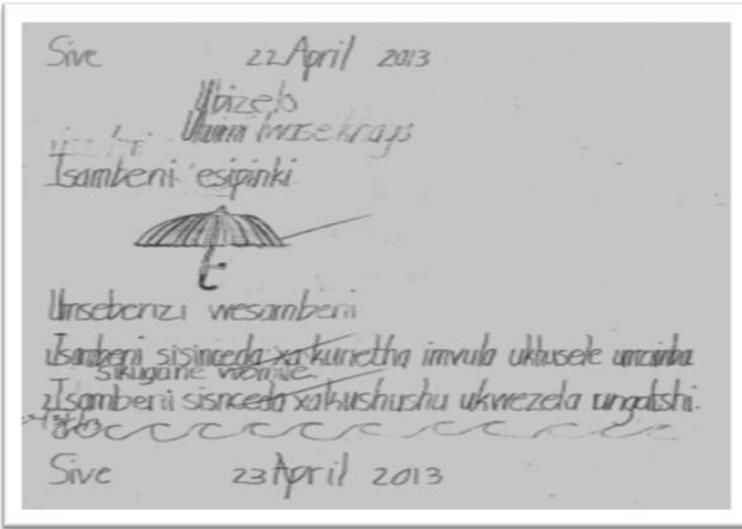
Learner C's recount text

It is difficult to read learner C's recount text because most of the words are incomplete.

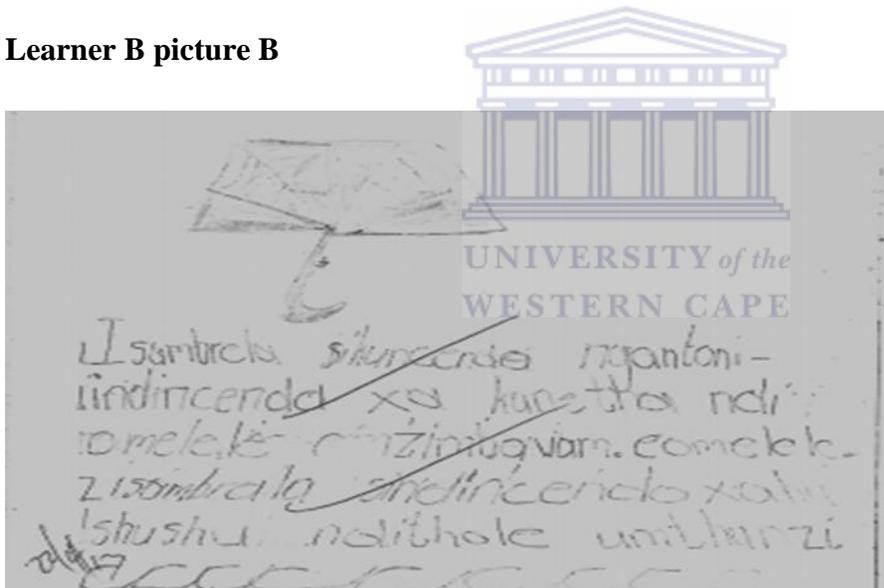


The recount texts were targeted to find out the kinds of texts that learners were exposed to and how learners' writings were scaffolded. Opportunities for learners to engage in short pieces of writing were also provided as evidenced in picture B below where learners had to draw a picture and write a short text based on the picture. According to the instruction, they had to write an information text about the uses of an umbrella. The following three texts show what the learners wrote.

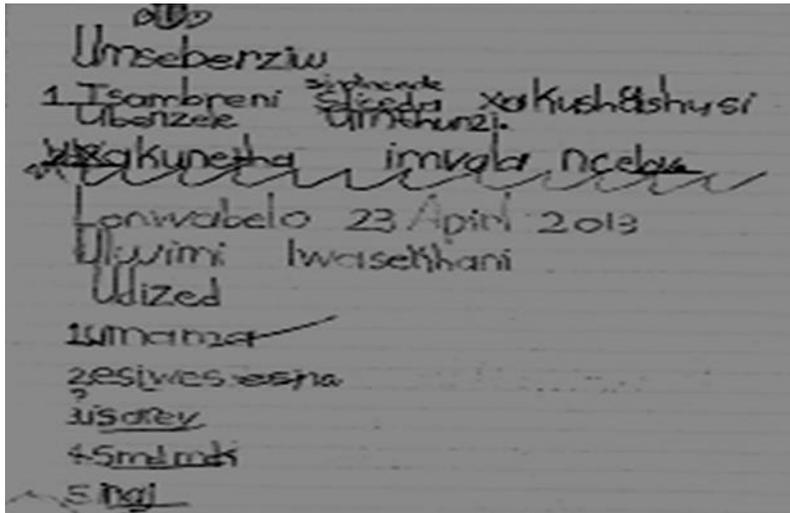
Learner A picture B



Learner B picture B



Learner C picture B



The three learners whose recount pieces were selected for analysis needed support from the teacher in terms of generating ideas and also in terms of using the correct text format. They had to be able to differentiate between different kinds of texts e.g. recounts and information texts.

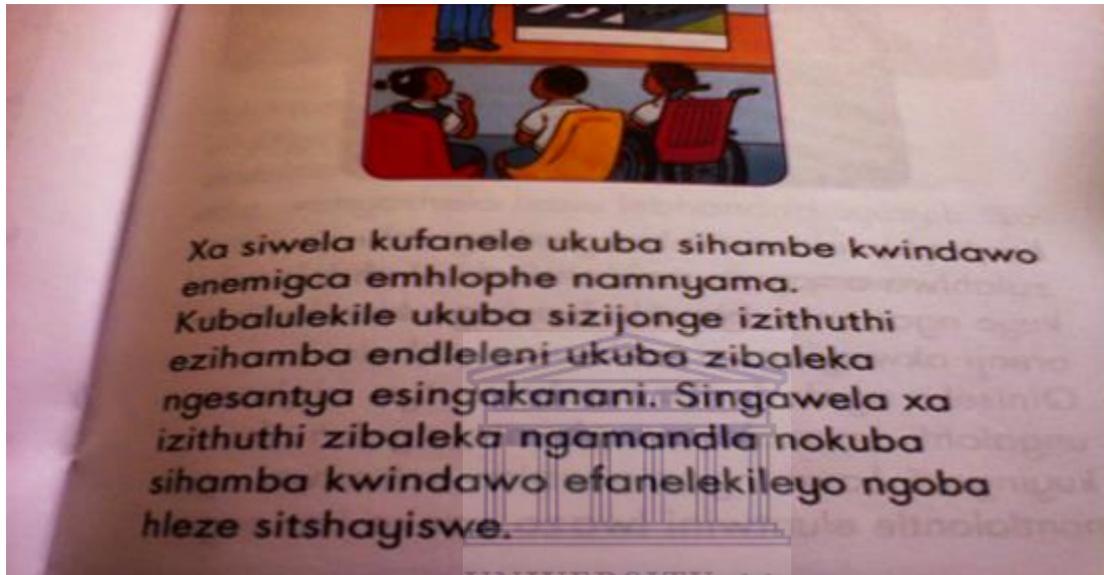
4.5.4 Reading Books

There were lots of books in the classroom although they differed in languages and grade levels. Some books were written in isiXhosa and others were written in English. The available books were placed in different sections on the book shelf, at the back of the classroom as shown in the picture below:



In analysing the available isiXhosa home language books, I observed that the books that were used to mediate learning contained some spelling mistakes. Some of the texts conveyed contradictory and confusing messages to the learners due to language mistakes as seen in the text below. The text that was taken from a textbook entitled 'Ukhanyo' (Grade 3).

Text: B



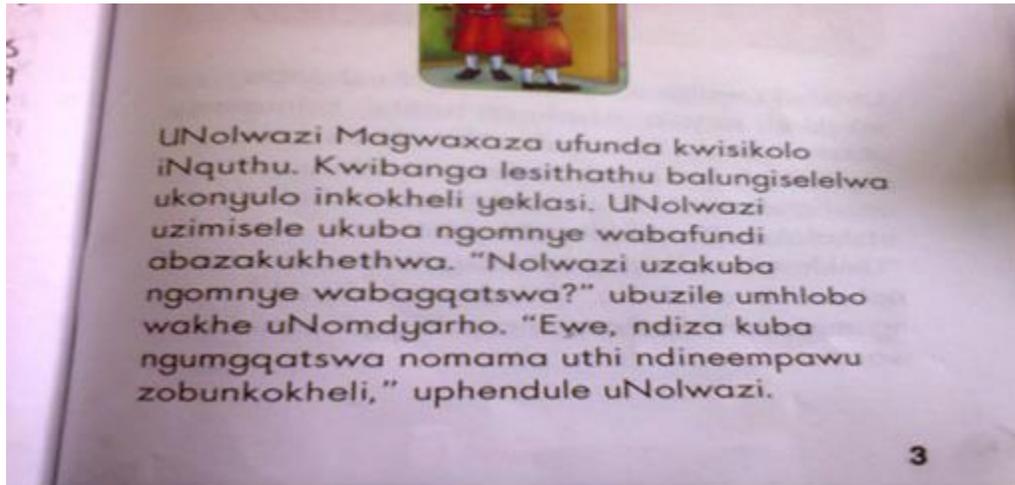
The purpose of the text was to equip learners with information they needed to know when crossing the road. It started by identifying the pedestrian crossing which is a demarcated space where pedestrians are supposed to cross the road according to road regulations. The text further informed them to evaluate the speed of the vehicle in order to be safe on the road. The last sentence then provided contradicting information than the one relayed earlier.

The meaning that the extract above communicates is misleading to the reader with regard to road safety. This is noticeable in the sentence that reads:

Singawela xa izithuthi zibaleka ngamandla nokuba sihamba kwindawo efanelekileyo ngoba hleze sitshayiswe

We can cross the road when vehicles are on high speed even when we walk on a pedestrian allocated area as we can be hit by a moving vehicle.

Text: C



A book is a mediational tool that is used to develop vocabulary, expose learners to language use and to convey meaning. Language mistakes can distort the meaning that the text is supposed to convey, and the learners may be unable to construct meaning from the story they have read.

In text C, there is a noticeable mistake that could weaken language development, especially in Grade 3.

Kwibanga lesithathu balungiselelwa ukonyulo inkokheli yeklasi

In Grade three they are being prepared for class leader election

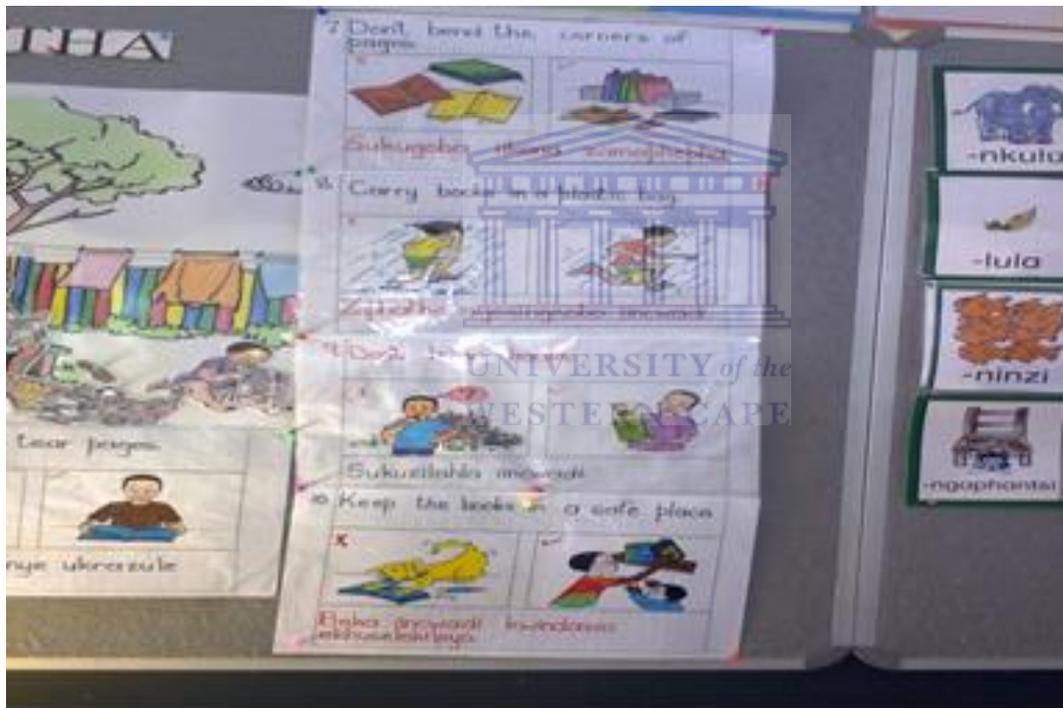
The mistake lied in the verb mood, “*balungiselelwa*” (they are being prepared for) instead of “*balungiselela*” (they are preparing for) and that is used in this sentence. The verb is also incorrectly used; “*ukonyulo*” instead of “*ukonyula*”. The incorrect use language could compromise learners’ language learning.

4.5.5 Data from print material

In an effort to make the physical space a resource for learning in the Grade 3 classroom, the teacher pasted different charts for different purposes on the wall. Other charts were communicating rules that learners needed to adhere to with regard to their school materials, e.g. books. Others were disjointed words that were meant to emphasise different phonic sounds, whereas other charts were on sentence construction.

What was noticeable, though, was the fact that the pasting on the walls were not sequenced to show integration of other subject areas that were taught in the Foundation Phase in a way that would make sense to the learner. Since this study focused on literacy practices, most pictures that were photographed focused on the ways in which literacy was made available to the learners. But they were also relevant for literacy development. The print material was also presented in a multilingual form as evidenced in the chart on guideline on how to handle a book in text C below. The chart was designed in such a manner that learners were able to access the message and meaning in a variety of forms.

Text: D



Some material was written in English and the other was mainly in isiXhosa as illustrated in text D above.

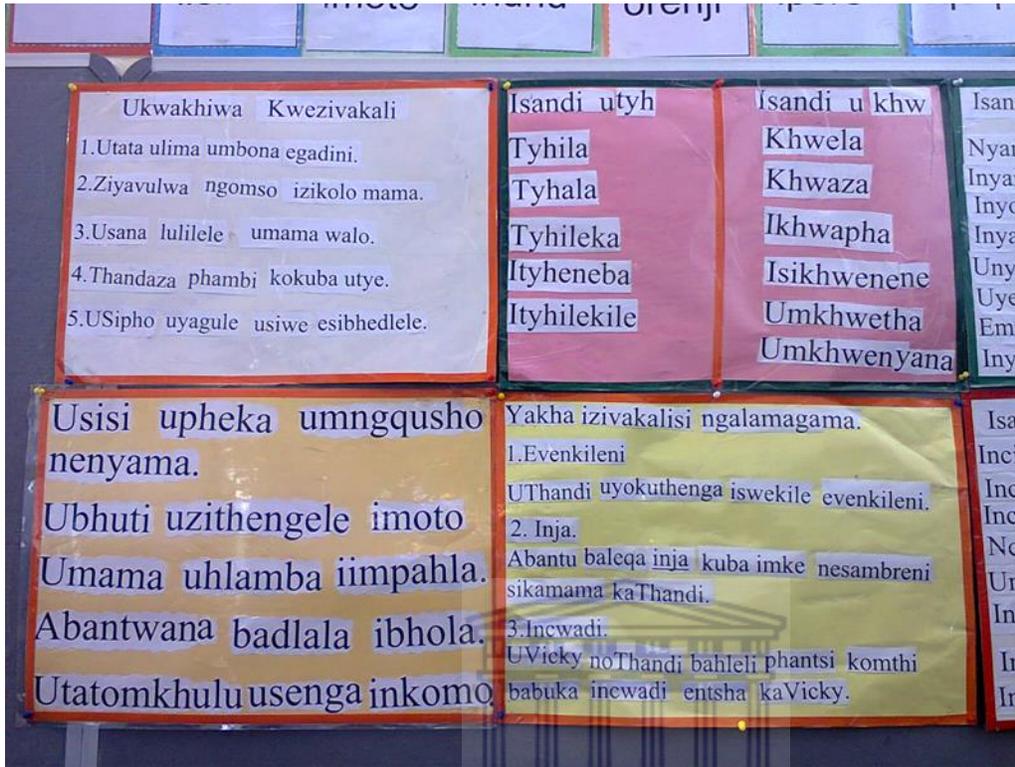
Text: E



Thandi seemed to understand what it meant to be a Grade 3 literacy teacher. This was evidenced by the print rich classroom which was conducive for literacy development. However, the written prints that were pasted on the walls seemed to have been designed long time ago because during the classroom observation, she never referred the learners to the print material. She barely referred the learners to the print on the wall to give them clues about sounds.

The pasted print, however, presented different forms of support for the diverse nature of the classroom as Thandi mentioned that some of the learners were still reading Grade 1 reading books. The information on the print material seemed to be disjointed because during reading, she did not make use of the language structure or teach grammar that came out of the print material. In addition, the print material on the wall did not contain extended pieces of writing that would expose learners to reading and writing of longer pieces of texts. This is evident in the charts reflected below.

Text: F



Also, hanging on the wall was an A4 size alphabet chart with sounds and pictures that provided a clue about specific sounds.

Text:G



There were class rules written in isiXhosa, a chart on body parts written in isiXhosa, as well as number charts in digits and in words, written in English and isiXhosa. This was an indication that learners were introduced to English in the form of print. In this way, they could associate some of the words and pictures with words in their home language (isiXhosa). This exposure to a second language (English) could be seen in line with early biliteracy.

Text: H



4.6 Summary

The section on data presentation indicated some inconsistencies between what the teachers pronounced during interviews and their practices. Thandi narrated a strategy that she followed when she teaches reading but that was not observed. Regarding the issue of support, all the interviewed teachers indicated and acknowledged that academic support they needed to be provided for over achieving and struggling learners, but during the time I was at the school there were no intervention measures implemented.

With regard to support by the parents, the class teacher and the principal agreed that parents were not supportive toward their children's learning but the parental interview shared a different perspective in that, Parent B mentioned that she supports her child with homework. Data also revealed that Thandi tried to scaffold and mediate learning but her strategies limited learners

interaction both orally and in a written form. The limited nature of Thandi's scaffolding was witnessed by the kinds of written activities learners presented in their class work books.

With regard to the analysis of books, it was discovered that the available books contained typographic errors and conveyed confusing message to the learners but Thandi was not aware of those mistakes. Thandi's lack of noticing the mistakes in the books she is supposed to use to mediate learning with indicated that the books were not sufficiently used. The two managers ie, Zodwa and Theo agreed that the school experienced problems with regard to availability of resources a sentiment that was not shared by Thandi who believed that they had enough resources. Although Theo and Zodwa agreed that they lack resources, Zodwa emphasized where the need for resources was most felt. Zodwa mentioned that they were in need of most challenge was experienced with regard to isiXhosa language resources. She mentioned that the department expected them to use a Big Book during a Shared Reading exercise and there was no supply of Big Book for isiXhosa language. That challenge led to them making Big Books. It was noticed that there was no uniformity among the teachers with regard to developing Big Books for isiXhosa language in the sense that the expenditure for developing a Big Book remained the responsibility of the teacher. The next chapter focused on data analysis.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the focus is on data analysis and discussion of findings. The data analysed in this chapter was collected through interviews with parents and teachers, classroom observations and analysis of documents. It pertains to language literacy practices in the Grade 3 isiXhosa classroom. The research questions were used to guide data analysis. Firstly, I give an overview of the approach chosen to analyse the data. Secondly, I analyse data in relation to the data presented in Chapter 4 in order to form categories. Finally, I discuss patterns that emerged from data analysis to show the extent to which the literacy practices enhanced or constrained literacy instruction in the Grade 3 classroom.

5.2 DATA ANALYSIS

As mentioned in the previous chapters, this study followed a qualitative approach to collect data in order to investigate literacy practices of isiXhosa in a Grade 3 classroom. Different scholars attach different approaches to analyse data which are governed by the data collection methods that were employed (Barbie and Mouton 2001; Leedy and Ormond 2005). For example, Bowen (2009) suggests two kinds of strategies that could be employed in reading and interpreting qualitative documents, namely, thematic analysis and content analysis. The two approaches are briefly described below.

Content Analysis (CA) focuses on the description of the practices of the participants, but it can also be used as a quantitative data analysis approach. This suggests that CA can be used quantitatively to measure the frequency of different categories and themes, subjecting the data to statistical analysis. It can also be used qualitatively to track common trends in data by making descriptive accounts of events (Braun and Clarke 2006; Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas 2013).

On the other hand, Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006) view the Thematic Analysis (TA) approach as a strategy used by qualitative researchers to search for themes that emerge in the description and the review of data. Likewise, Braun and Clarke (2006) perceive Thematic Analysis as a method used to analyse and report patterns that emerge across a set of collected data. This

indicates that the researcher does not focus on a single set of data, but looks for similar or contrasting themes from different data collection methods used in the study. This process involves recognising patterns in the data that seem important by reading and re-reading the data. The identification of themes helps to suggest meanings of data, and gives way to emerging themes that later develop to be categories for analysis. One of the identifying characteristics of TA is its flexibility in capturing important aspects in the data that relate to the research question(s) to provide detailed accounts of data (Braun and Clarke 2006; Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas (2013).

In this study, I employed Thematic Analysis in order to analyse data collected from a Grade 3 classroom which investigated literacy practices of isiXhosa. I used it to reflect on literacy practices of the Grade 3 teacher and learners, and on how they attached meanings to their experiences and practices. I also used it to triangulate data collected from classroom observations, interviews and from various documents which included curriculum policies and learners' written work.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, to record the data I made use of a tape recorder. As a first step of analysis, I transcribed the data in order to identify similarities and contrasting ideas, as well as to describe and explain the emerging patterns. Then I grouped the data to formulate themes which relate to the research questions stated in Chapter 1. The following three broad themes emerged from the data which relate to literacy practices in the Grade 3 classroom that was studied, namely, (i) literacy pedagogical practices, (ii) availability and use of literacy resources and (iii) teacher development and support. Below I discuss each of the themes, with different sub-themes to unpack the issues related to each particular theme.

5.3 LITERACY PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

Pedagogical strategies are defined as the evidence of a strong connection between the content of what learners need to learn, and the knowledge and skills the teachers have to carry out that learning (Podhajski, Mather and Nathan 2009). This means that pedagogical strategies are the methods that the teacher makes use of in order to support learners throughout the learning process. The connection between the teacher's knowledge and skills, together with knowledge that learners require in terms of literacy comprehension should be sufficient in order to empower

and enhance literacy development for conceptual gains. The established relationship between literacy content and the teacher's strategies forms solid pedagogical subject knowledge (Podhajski, Mather and Nathan 2009). In other words, the teacher needs to possess disciplinary knowledge in order to support the learners in the classroom and they should also possess a magnitude of techniques (pedagogical knowledge) to carry the knowledge across to every learner.

Alexander (2005) views pedagogy as a purposive cultural intervention in individual learners for learning and development. This suggests that a pedagogical strategy is a planned act of teaching that is located within historical boundaries of schooling where learners do not only learn, but also develop other skills. The nature of the connection, historical location and the strategies of how learning is experienced and imparted in the classroom is important to understand classroom practices which form the basis of this study.

In view of the above, pedagogical theme addresses the research question that relates to literacy teaching and learning in a Grade 3 classroom. It is also linked to the main research question which reads: What are the teacher's and learners' isiXhosa literacy practices in Grade 3? Different sub-themes have emerged out of the data that serve to unpack literacy pedagogical practices in the Grade 3 classroom. These sub-themes are: (i) classroom talk and learners' access to literacy (ii) questioning as a pedagogical strategy (iii) development of vocabulary (iv) learners' writing tasks and (v) the role of feedback in literacy development.

Classroom practice is communicative and Alexander (2005) believes that it is the power of talk that shapes the child's thinking, learning and development. The following section unpacks Thandi's classroom instructional or pedagogical practice. It explores the power of talk in order to understand how the teacher facilitated learners' literacy development in isiXhosa Home Language in the Grade 3 classroom.

5.3.1 Classroom Talk and learners' access to literacy

It is believed that classroom talk is one of the strategies that teachers make use of to help learners construct knowledge through thinking (Gibbons 2002). The Digest (2009), an Australian publication that is produced by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER),

defines classroom talk as a collaborative and interactive effort between the teacher and the learners that contributes to meaning making.

Besides being a collaborative and interactive process, Scott (2008) views classroom talk as a teacher- assisting- performance approach. In Scott's opinion, the teacher's interaction in the classroom could be viewed as the one that serves to offer individual support to learners in order to perform and master a task that the learner would not be able to perform if the teacher's support was not provided. In this case, Scott (2008) relates classroom talk to the scaffolding activity that the teacher performs with the individual learner, until that particular learner is able to perform the task without assistance. In other words, effective classroom talk suggests a curriculum delivery that is not directed to the whole class, but that is meant to cater for individual needs of the learners.

In this study, talk is defined in terms of language support or scaffolding where learners are supported by the teacher to carry out language tasks that they would not be able to perform without the support of the teacher. The kind of talk this study proposes and supports is in line with Vygotsky's mediation and scaffolding which are the key concepts in the Sociocultural Theory (Lantolf and Thorne 2006).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Sociocultural Theory claims that for human mind to develop and think critically and creatively, it needs interactional support from the society (Lantolf 2000). With regard to this study, the school as an institution of learning where the use of talk fosters academic and language development, serves the societal role. Gibbons (2002) supports this view and further mentions that through the effective use of talk, learners learn to explore by trying to solve a given problem and explain the ways in which they came to solve the problem.

In Thandi's classroom, talk was used, though for a brief period to scaffold learning in a limited manner. For example, interaction was briefly witnessed during lesson A and D's presentation. In lesson A, Thandi tried to use talk to interact with Khanya for a longer period time until Khanya was unable to correctly spell the word "ilaphu" (a cloth). The purpose of the interaction was to find out learners' understanding of the information text. The seemingly scaffolding dialogue between Thandi and Khanya stopped and focus shifted to the whole class. In this lesson, Thandi did not use talk to enhance Khanya's literacy and creative thinking in finding ways to learn how

to spell the word correctly, but the talk exposed him as a learner who struggled to spell words properly. It seemed that Thandi, as a knowledgeable and experienced person, left the dialogue between her and Khanya incomplete as she didn't assist her to arrive at the correct spelling of the word. In other words, she did not extend Khanya's processes of internalisation of the new knowledge. Internalisation is a process by which individuals develop coping mechanisms that they can use to self-mediate on their activities (Lantolf and Thorne 2006).

In the same way, in lesson D, excerpt 4, (lines 1 to 12) Thandi seemed to be carrying out a dialogic talk between her and Prince to assess Prince's understanding of the text. Using Prince's responses, she probed for more information until Prince decided to stop participating in the discussion. When Prince pronounced that he had nothing to say, Thandi shifted her attention and focused on another learner instead of assisting him to get the correct answer. This indicates that she was using limited talk, and that would impact on scaffolding and mediation to develop learners' thinking skills, as suggested by Gibbons (2002).

5.3.2 Questioning as a pedagogical strategy

Children's curiosity is regarded as a natural resource for classroom learning and inquiry (Gillies and Khan 2009). It can be stimulated by asking questions. Gillies and Khan (2009) are of the opinion that asking questions promote people's abilities to elaborate on the information they give and it allows people to draw on their prior knowledge. The question and answer strategy, therefore, promotes high level thinking.

In literacy instruction, questions help to support learner's thinking about what they read and they also guide the teacher in identifying learners who read without understanding, so that intervention or support can be provided.

Eun (2010) emphasises the important role the teachers play in the mediation process. According to Eun (2010) teachers need to become participant observers in the learning process to enhance contribution by every learner in a non-threatening environment. Mediating learning by asking questions, therefore, is an important aspect of co-constructing new information in the classroom.

Questioning could lead to different interactions in the classroom which take different formats with the aim of constructing meaning. For example, the teacher could interrogate a specific

scenario in order to encourage learners to think, or ask for information or ask somebody to do something (Droga and Humphrey 2005). Lantolf and Thorne (2006) further mention that through the process of using language as a resource to make meaning, higher thinking skills are developed. The manner in which language is used in sociocultural theory suggests that it possesses developmental function as far as learning is concerned. Gibbons (2002), influenced by the view of Sociocultural Theory suggests that learning is a social act and interaction between the teacher and the learner, and also an interaction among learners themselves.

In this study, questioning was one of the dominant pedagogical strategies that were used for literacy teaching and learning in the Grade 3 classroom as evidenced in lessons A, B and D. However, the manner in which Thandi mediated instruction using questions seemed to limit learner's thinking abilities because the questions she asked encouraged single to two word answers. More questions that she asked focused only on literal understanding of the text and did not develop the learners' higher order thinking skills. Instead of using questions and pictures to inspire interaction in the classroom, Thandi tended to ask closed and vague questions that did not allow the learners to express their views and understanding of the lesson.

In lesson B (line 6), for example, Thandi started by probing questions in finding out from the learners the meaning of the word 'umphanga' (bereavement). In providing an answer, Mavis, said 'umphanga' happened when the passengers were involved in a car accident. Mavis left out the crucial information about death which qualifies the incident as bereavement (umphanga). Instead of guiding the learner to arrive at the correct answer, Thandi interrupted the interaction by giving an answer to the question. Similarly, in line 22 of lesson B, Thandi did not probe about what learners knew about chickens. Rather, she elaborated on how people named the chickens that are reared at home and are normally slaughtered by hand. In that way, Thandi limited active interaction in the classroom.

According to Rose (2005) low order thinking questions suggest a surface scaffolding that does not lead to individual cognitive ability. This kind of scaffolding approach is different to the Learning to Read: Reading to Learn scaffolding approach suggested by Rose (2005), which requires teachers to change their mindset when it comes to teaching reading and writing. According to this approach, the teacher engages all learners by making use of prompts or cues in order to equip learners with knowledge and resources they need in order to learn for academic

success. This approach follows a cycle or a pattern that serves to deconstruct and reconstruct the text with the aim of negotiating meaning with the learners.

Again, in lesson B, questions were also used to mediate a discussion regarding why people write a letter. Unlike the type of questions Thandi used in lesson A, in lesson B she incorporated vocabulary as the content of the lesson relied mostly on the learners' general knowledge drawn from their own experiences. This lesson led to learners becoming more curious as more unfamiliar words kept coming up. For example, different unfamiliar words were experienced by learners, and those words could have been used to develop their vocabulary, e.g. words like “umphanga” (bereavement), “umleqwa” (chicken reared at home that would be chased and slaughtered).

There were also cases where learners had to draw from their personal experiences and share their knowledge with the rest of the class. Some of these experiences were personal and some were observed in the community. In lesson B, excerpt 2 (line 16) Mavis drew from her experience that when they applied or renewed their passports, the Department of Home Affairs alerted them through a letter. While discussing the exposition text, in lesson D, the learner drew from his knowledge about the assistance nurses normally made when a person experienced spasms as evidenced in line 17. Boyce made reference to the damages that people experienced as a result of alcohol abuse. Both learners who drew from their own experiences in lesson D might not have personally experienced the mentioned challenges, but they could have been exposed to them as members of the community.

The strategy of using cues to support text comprehension, according to Rose (2005), falls within the stages of the Curriculum Cycle. The Curriculum Cycle, as mentioned in Chapter 2, is a model that enables the reader to analyse the text by deconstructing reading and the writing tasks. The focus of the Curriculum Cycle is to negotiate meaning which is made explicit by the intervention and support that is provided by the teacher. Since the learners involved in this study were still young readers, an effective use of the pictures, accompanied by higher order questions could have played an important role in enabling learners to actively identify the information on their own. So, with regard to what I heard and witnessed in the Grade 3 classroom, there was limited the interaction between Thandi and the learners.

The CAPS document provides guidelines on how teachers can mediate and scaffold reading for comprehension purposes (DBE 2011). It proposes that teachers should select a text that is age and grade appropriate. This is followed by analysing the text, paying attention to illustrations and other diagrams or pictures that are available in the text and how learners receive the text by looking at the ways that they are making connections with it. Lastly, the learners, together with the teacher, interact with the text by engaging on a discussion. This kind of interaction was not fully explicit in Thandi's lessons. CAPS commands teachers to provide an instructional environment that exposes learners to different ways of solving problems by making use of different types of questions in order to support and develop high mental abilities of every learner. CAPS does this by providing a framework that teacher could follow to support learners. CAPS categorises questions from lower order to higher order to help develop thinking. The questions are summarised in the table below (DBE 2011).

Table: 4 Types of Questions as adapted from Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (DBE 2011).

Types of question	Competence developed
Literal comprehension	Readers are expected to locate and retrieve explicitly stated information.
Reorganisation	The focus is on retrieving information in the text that is placed on different areas of the text.
Inferential	The reader uses his/her personal knowledge to provide and connect information that is needed to answer questions.
Evaluation	The readers make judgements about the content of the text and evaluate the author's perspective. Secondly, the reader is able to apply his/her mind into whether the story is imaginary or is factual.
Appreciation	The reader emotionally connects with the text. In this case the learner is able to share his/her feelings regarding the message that the author.

The observation data showed that Thandi's instruction was dominated by questions that demanded learners to work on retrieving and reorganising information and did not pay much attention to questions that required learners to analyse knowledge, e.g. evaluation questions that allow learners to make judgments. According to Howie, Venter, van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, du Toit, Scherman and Archer (2006) these analytical and evaluation questions focus on the purpose of reading, which is reading for literary experience. Reading for literary experience implies that learners have to read and make connections with the text. This allows them to get a factual understanding of the text in order to be able to use that knowledge to make predictions and draw conclusions using their experiences. Howie et al. (2006) suggest that when learners read for literary experience, they have to employ certain processes of reading.

To read for literary experience implies that learners would be able to respond to the text and be able to apply different reading processes to show that they can connect the message the author tries to bring across to them and make meaning. In that way, readers engage with the text, by first understanding the purpose, the language used by the author and the context under which the text was produced. Such an understanding provides the learners with the strategies they could employ when they read for literary experience.

When learners read, they first scan the text to identify certain words that are used in the question that would allow them to quickly locate the answer. This skill is said not to require much effort because a proficient reader could easily identify similar phrases that could allow him/her to spot the answer.

After scanning the text, the reader makes use of his/her experience and connect ideas within the text in order to be able to answer the question. The personal experience affords the reader an ability to understand the hidden message that is brought about by the author, either by making use of metaphors or different parts of speech. It would then be through unpacking the message and making connection with personal experience that the reader would be able make straightforward inferences.

Readers employ different reading processes when they read for meaning. They also evaluate the content in order to establish whether the author was not biased in conveying the message. In establishing bias, the reader then makes informed judgements based on whether the text is a

fiction or a fact. This suggests that the reader needs to understand the purpose of the text so that he/she is able to make judgements and show his/her feelings about the text. This reading process allows the readers to have an internal discussion about the text the author's intentions about the written piece.

When the reader is able to connect with the text, he/she shows his/her views about the text. Readers at this point do not rely on what is written down, but they use their personal understanding of beliefs and cultural values. In most cases, when one asks questions that evaluate this kind of skill, different responses are provided because each respondent shows his/her view point and how that viewpoint is connected to the message the author conveys.

As mentioned earlier, making meaning is central to literary experience. Meaning making is accompanied by understanding the language features each text presents. The language or textual elements make the text communicative, and enrich language the development. They also guide the learners into noticing the grammatical features that are characteristic of a particular text. Noticing the grammatical features of a particular text enables the learners to make use of the correct structure when they have to write that particular text type. Identifying textual features can improve language learning in the classroom because the language features to be taught can be taken from the context, and not be taught in isolation.

This means that when a teacher sets questions to test learners' understanding, the questions should be designed in such a manner that learners would be able to discuss the hidden message the author is trying to bring across to the learners. Secondly, learners should be able to notice the vocabulary that is used in the text in order to understand its purpose. Therefore, setting questions should be done in such a way that they invoke certain thinking processes in a learner's mind.

Questions that require learners to provide a judgement could be used when the teacher is teaching a particular type of text (e.g. recount or narrative). In this study, Thandi exposed learners to a question where they had to reorganise information they had read by offering a definition of the concept "inkokheli" (the leader) (see Appendix I). These types of questions, according to CAPS, focus on literal comprehension and reorganisation of already stated information (DBE 2011). This line of questioning was evident in excerpt 1 of lesson A presented in the previous chapter, when Thandi asked learners to summarise and give the content of the

text. This was also evidenced in lesson C where learners were taught verbs. In lesson C, for example, Thandi spent more time on the auxiliary verb “baya-” (“they are”) instead of provoking the learner to use her knowledge of the language and experience to explain what she saw in the picture that was pasted on the chalk board. Such guidance could have helped the learner to arrive at the required answer of underlining a verb as was expected of her.

Although Thandi did not make use of evaluative questions, some learners, made reference to them when they offered extended or additional information on the topic of discussion. For example, in excerpt 4, (line 17), the learner shared her general knowledge about what nurses are generally known to do (i.e. to offer assistance when a person experiences a moment of seizure). She needed further stimulation and scaffolding from the teacher to enable her to reach higher order thinking levels. Eun (2010) refers to scaffolding as a dialogical process that happens in learning. Although Thandi tried to facilitate her lessons through questioning, her questions and scaffold to her learners were not strong enough to enable them to reach higher levels of critical and independent thinking. In other words, the questioning strategy used by Thandi during her lesson presentation allowed learners to participate in the discussion, but the discussion did not substantially inspire cognitive development because of the low level of questions that she made use of, as mentioned earlier in section. Such a practice contradicts Vygotsky’s concept of scaffolding that aims at assisting learners to reach maximum level of understanding, the ZPD.

5.3.3 Vocabulary Development

Apthorp (2006) defines vocabulary development as a skill that involves three processes which teachers or knowledgeable people use, namely, explaining word meanings, assessing and recording frequent encounters with new words. It involves encouraging learners to actively process and use new words in multiple contexts. One of the strategies teachers could use in shared reading is to develop learners’ vocabulary in order to minimize learners’ difficulties with reading and writing. Limited vocabulary knowledge could result in learners having limited understanding of the reading passage (Harmon, Bucklew-Martin and Wood (2010).

Harmon et al. (2010) refer to vocabulary knowledge as an ability to comprehend a given text. They claim that when learners know more words, they are likely to comprehend the text. For learners to develop adequate vocabulary, they should be given explanation of unfamiliar words

and use those words in different contexts. Since this study focused on a Grade 3 classroom, the learners' vocabulary knowledge was still underdeveloped.

Some scholars propose strategies that a teacher could use to improve learners' vocabulary (Justine 2002); Harmon, Bucklew-Martin and Wood 2010; Apthorp 2006). They agree that teachers could enhance text comprehension by including word meaning in their instruction. These strategies include, but are not limited to exposing learners to literature through reading aloud (Apthorp 2006). They believe that when learners hear different words used in a particular context, they implicitly and incidentally develop vocabulary knowledge.

Vocabulary development is believed to have a positive influence on general reading achievement (Apthorp, 2006; Biemiller and Boote 2006; Harmon, et al. 2010). It is also believed that the more the learners are exposed to new words, the more chances they gain to have their cognitive processes invoked. This indicates that adequate exposure to new words enables learners to make connections with the text, and allows them to analyse and ask questions about the text.

Furthermore, Justice (2002) notes that incidental learning of new words could also happen when children use the contextual clues that the teacher makes available during shared reading or during an interactive activity. This could be done by allowing the learners to incidentally pick up cues and use them to express knowledge and understanding of the text. This suggests that the learner and the teacher are both constructors of vocabulary.

Justice (2002) mentions that children often encounter new words when they analyse a text, or when they participate in classroom interaction. In this case, the learner's curiosity to understand the new word could mean that his/her conceptual processing and understanding of new words is being developed. Justice (2002) further suggests that learners' vocabulary could be developed during effective text talk where learners could be encouraged to make use of semantic relatedness activities. An effective text talk, according to (Apthorp 2006), implies exposure of learners to cognitively challenging questions or the use of cues that could encourage higher order thinking skills about word meanings. Semantic relatedness implies engagement with word meanings where the learners are supported to process and make meaning of the new words (Apthorp 2006).

Harmon et al. (2010) reiterate that after learners have been exposed to high level thinking skills, they need to be helped to understand how words work. In other words, Harmon et al. (2010) suggest that learners need to be supported in developing vocabulary by employing different strategies. These strategies include exposure of learners to activities that require them to make connections, classify and categorise information and create mental images they could use to infer required information when it is needed.

In the context of this study, Thandi's instructional practice touched on vocabulary development, although it appeared unplanned. For example, in Lesson D (lines 6 and 8), Prince repeated the word, "ukundwendwela" (to visit) and when Thandi asked what the nurse's purpose of the visits to school, he replied, "andiyazi" (I don't know). Prince's engagement with this text suggested that he had insufficient vocabulary that seemed to impact negatively on his understanding of the text, and therefore, could not make an appropriate connection with it. Harmon, et al. (2010) further mention that when learners experience insufficient literacy skills development, they become disengaged, and lack the ability to connect and cognitively comprehend the text. This is what happened to Prince when he did not understand the meaning of the word "ukundwendwela".

Likewise, in Lesson B (excerpt 2, line 21), the learner asked Thandi to explain the meaning of the word "umleqwa" (chicken reared at home, that would be chased and slaughtered). In this case, the learner's vocabulary seemed limited. According to Justice (2002) incidental learning of new vocabulary could happen indirectly through exposure to new words, as was the case with the learner who acknowledged and identified an unfamiliar word and was interested in understanding what it meant. Similarly, Apthorp (2006) agrees with Justice (2002) that children develop vocabulary knowledge easier in a non-threatening environment like home, where they listen to conversations or watch television. In a school situation, however, incidental learning mostly happens during shared reading activity (Apthorp 2006, Justice 2002 and Harmon, et.al. 2010). This was the case with the word "umleqwa" in Thandi's lesson.

Thandi also tried to expose learners to a semantic related activity by making use of questions that served as cues for learners to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words. For example, in trying to get learners to understand the word "umphanga" (bereavement) that was used in lesson B, (excerpt 2, line 5), Thandi used questions to guide learners to the expected answer. In this

instance, learners were expected to draw on their prior knowledge about the bereavement. The use of questions to enable learners to make use of words in different contexts is known as conceptual development (Justice 2002). According to Justice (2002) conceptual development enables learners to make judgements, predict or explain illustrations or concepts in the text.

Secondly, learners were expected to predict the meaning of words based on their imagination of what happened when a car was involved in an accident with a passenger inside. The visual clues were pronounced by Mavis who related “umphanga” (bereavement) to a passenger who died as a result of a car accident. Even though Mavis was not explicit in her answer, she associated the answer with her prior knowledge. However, Thandi limited the learners’ chances of exploring the meaning of the new word by providing the definition herself.

Biemiller and Boote (2006) caution that when children acquire less vocabulary during their primary years, they are likely to experience challenges with text comprehension later in their academic life. Thus Biemiller and Boote (2006) suggest that teachers in primary school years should support learners in vocabulary construction in order to minimise challenges that could impede literacy learning. As was observed in lesson D (excerpt 4), for example, Prince kept mentioning the word “ukundwendwela” (to visit) and did not provide additional information or a synonym to the word. The fact that he repeated the word, suggests his limited understanding of the meaning of the word which could have affected his general understanding of the text.

In short, data shows that some of the Grade 3 learners were able to identify unfamiliar words, but they were not given adequate support to understand the meaning of the words that were used in the text, and to use the words in meaningful ways. In fact, there was no reinforcement of the vocabulary to ensure that learners would be able to use them appropriately in different contexts. As mentioned earlier, limited vocabulary can constrain learners’ literacy development (Biemiller and Boote 2006). The following section focuses on learners’ written tasks as a means of enhancing learners’ literacy skills.

5.3.4 Learners’ writing tasks

Learners’ writings were analysed in order to understand the types of writing they were exposed to and how those writings were developed and mediated for learners to reach their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Turuk (2008) defines ZPD as the potential ability a learner can

produce when assisted by a knowledgeable person than when a learner acts on his own, without any assistance. ZPD develops when learners are given cognitively challenging activities and through mediation by means of language and other tools that help to support learning.

The CAPS document proposes a methodology that teachers should follow when they teach writing. This methodology follows a process approach to writing (DBE 2011). A process approach is understood to provide learners and teachers with task engagement that stresses the fact that writing is not an event, but a process (DBE 2011). This implies that, writing is a cyclical process where learners could be taught to follow certain steps when they write. These steps include drafting, writing, editing and presenting the final version of the written text (DBE 2011). The writing features include the audience, the generation of ideas, the generation of the text and the social purpose of the text (Badger and White 2000). Badger and White (2000) concur that writing is not a once off activity but is an activity that involves pre-writing activities that include planning and drafting. In this way, learners create their writing pieces where they are supposed to see their language and writing develop. However, Hyland (2003) identifies some flaws in following a process approach to writing in that it views writing as an exercise that is dependent on the teacher.

The data presented in this study shows that learners did not get adequate support in writing. As mentioned earlier, it appeared that the teaching of writing longer texts was not a priority in the Grade 3 classroom where the study was conducted. Observation data revealed that Thandi preferred to make use of activities that required learners to recall individual words after a reading activity. This was done through spelling or dictation activities. Learners in this class were rarely asked to write paragraphs where they had to use the language expressively e.g. to use connectives to join two or more sentences. They were often asked to write in numbered sentences.

In one of the activities learners were asked to write recount texts and use their holiday experiences to report on how they spent their holidays as evidenced task A in section 4.5.3. The purpose of a recount text is to retell events or past experiences. A recount text follows a certain structure. It starts with an orientation where mention is made of the time, place and characters and what the actual experience was. This is followed by a description of events in a chronological order. It also makes use of linking words to join ideas together. The conclusion or

the resolution is a coda. A coda in genre studies is the judgement that the reader provides after an emotional engagement with the text (Droga and Humphrey 2003). It indicates how the character felt after the experience.

The data presented in Chapter 4 shows that the writing activity was not preceded by any reading activity which would aid learners with vocabulary in preparation for their writing. In fact, data shows that the stages of teaching writing were not observed at all in this study. For example, in the recount text, learner A used the first sentence as an orientation phase where he indicated time by using a verb in the past tense. Throughout his writing the verbs were in the past tense. For example, the past tense verbs that he included in his writing were “Bendiye” (I went), “Safika (we arrived), “Sahamba” (we went), “Saya ebhitshini” (we went to the beach), “saqubha saphuma” (we swam and got out), “sahlala phantsi salinda” (we sat down and waited).

Secondly, he included himself as having been involved in the event as a character. “Ndi” in the word “Bendiye” is a first person personal pronoun. That means he included himself as a character in the report. He also indicated the place where he spent his holidays “emaXhoseni” (rural areas) and the actual experience he was reporting about. Learner A used sentences (2, 3, 4 and 5) to list events in a chronological order. He unpacked his holiday experience by first mentioning the mode of transport he used, “bendiye emaXhoseni ngemoto” (I went to rural areas by car). Secondly, he relayed a series of events as he experienced them, as shown in the text below.

1. Bendiye emaXhoseni ngemoto.

(I went to rural areas by car).

2. Safika emaXhoseni sayokutya KFC.

(When we arrived at the rural areas, we went to eat at KFC).

3. Sahamba saya eWimpy saya kutya.

(We went to Wimpy to have a meal).

4. Saya ebhitshini sayokuqubha.

(We went to the beach to swim).

5. Saqubha saphuma emanzini.

(We swam and got out of the water).

6. Sahlala phantsi, salinda ukuze some.

We sat down and waited so that we dry up.

Even though learner A did not use the descriptive language and linking words as required by this kind of text, when one reads his writing one could understand how the events followed each other. But, as mentioned earlier, he needed support in order to be able to write a recount text using a correct format or structure. Sentence 6 in learner A's recount text indicates a conclusion or a resolution because he mentioned that they waited until they were dry after they had swam. The tone of his recount text expresses happiness in the way he spent his December holidays.

However, learner B's and C's writings needed more support in terms of writing a recount text. Both learners seemed to have insufficient understanding of the general format of a recount text. Learner C's writing indicates her poor writing skills as her text doesn't make much sense. The format is incorrect and it seems that she didn't understand what she was supposed to do. According to CAPS, learners should have mastery of text structures from Grade 1. In this case, it appears that learner C had not mastered this skill at Grade 3 level. This is a concern, given that Grade 3 learners are expected to write for learning across the curriculum when they get to Grade 4.

Data from documents revealed that learners wrote an information text as well, where they had to give a summary of the uses of an umbrella. Summarizing, according to Kirmizi and Akkaya (2011), is a strategy that activates thinking processes and enhances the quality of learning. In summarising, readers relate the text to their own lives as evidenced in pictures B (section 4.5.3). Each learner related the use of an umbrella to their own experiences or how it was used by their families. However, Learner C seemed to be struggling with all kinds of written texts. Judging from the amount of writing that the three learners did, it could be deduced that the learners were not guided to write longer texts.

To support learners with writing difficulties, CAPS proposes that teachers should provide learners with cloze procedure exercises for sentence construction. A cloze procedure is the deletion of certain words in the text that could help learners when they read (Gibbons 2002). In other words, a cloze exercise could provide teachers with valuable data they can use for intervention purposes. Cloze exercises could be used to achieve different processes of reading like to teach grammatical markers (Gibbons 2002).

However, Gibbons (2002) warns that when a cloze exercise is conducted, the first and the last sentences should be left untouched as they provide the context of the text. This implies that when the learner does not understand the context which is normally contained in the first and the last sentences, he/she could experience difficulties in making meaning of the whole text. The difficulty could lead to frustrations about writing, hence supporting struggling learners with cloze activities is imperative.

According to Badger and White (2000) the context provides learners with awareness about the connections between the actual writing activity and how a text needs to be organised. They further mention that understanding the context allows learners to be aware of the important text features that they need to include in their writing. The context could imply the setting or the environment where reading and writing takes place, the audience and the purpose of the text.

In this study, it seems that learners B and C needed more support with regard to their writing, particularly in sentence construction, as evidenced in task A and recount text learner Band for learner C. Both these activities are found in section 4.5.3 of this thesis. The learners' writing difficulties could be attributed to a number of factors such as limited reading and writing opportunities, lack of appropriate vocabulary, the teacher's instructional methods and parental support. Grade 3 learners are still regarded as emergent writers so they need more support to produce meaningful texts that meet the required academic standard and format.

Although CAPS (DBE 2011) requires the teachers to use a process approach to writing, Thandi did not seem to have followed such a process. The observation data, for example, revealed that Thandi asked learners to recall their experiences of the December holidays and did not mediate the writing process by allowing the learners to generate ideas and present them with the correct structure in writing a recount text as they would be required to use that kind of knowledge in the

upper grades. This implies that Thandi's pedagogical strategies did not enhance learners' writing practices as independent writers.

In light of the above, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) mention that a variety of tools that provide different types of supporting activities that could improve learner's academic performance to function individually in future are available. These tools include language, diagrams, maps, computers, pictures and books. Thandi made limited use of the supporting tools to teach writing. For example, she did not use pictures and drawings to draw learners' attention to the topic at hand in order to enhance their writing skills.

In addition, Gibbons (2002) suggests a genre approach to teaching reading and writing in a collaborative manner. Gibbons (2002) and Derewianka (1990) identified four stages that teachers could use to teach reading and writing and they called them the Curriculum Cycle (CC) as discussed in Chapter 2. The stages of the Curriculum Cycle include building the field where the learners, together with the teacher, collect information that they can use to share the knowledge they can use about the topic, modelling the text type where the learners, working under the guidance of the teacher, unpack the purpose, the structure and the textual features of a particular text of the text.

The first two stages of the CC focus mainly on reading and speaking aspects of literacy development. The third and the fourth stages focus on writing. Writing could be a joint construction among learners as groups work under the guidance of the teacher, or it could be a teacher-modelled activity where the teacher models the correct way of writing. During the joint construction stage the learners work under the guidance of the teacher to jointly construct a written piece. All the learners can work as groups or with the teacher and contribute ideas towards the construction of a text. At this stage, all the learners become actively involved in the development of writing. In this activity, the teacher scaffolds writing by asking guiding questions as the learners are still emergent writers of longer texts. What is imperative during this stage is that learners are exposed to the actual writing activity. During the last stage which is independent writing, learners produce their own individual texts, taking vocabulary from the pool of words they shared during the first stage which is building the field.

In summary, reading and writing become a cycle in which language development is enriched. During the first stage which is building the field, learners collaboratively share information with the teacher who acts as their mentor. In the second stage, the teacher takes an active role in guiding learners about the structure of the text and its purpose, and looks at language that is normally used in that kind of text. During the third stage, learners work with the teacher to reconstruct the text. The teacher might use writing frames to scaffold writing. In the last stage, learners independently write their own texts using the scaffolded one as a model.

According to Turuk (2008) the learners' inner speech is important in cognitive development. Inner speech develops when a learner receives developmental feedback and is able to use the feedback to self-correct the mistakes he/she made. In order for learners to reach their ZPD, the teacher being the most knowledgeable person in the classroom, needs to provide opportunities for learners to develop cognitively through trial and error. The ZPD is one of the aspects of the Sociocultural Theory which aims at supporting and developing learners' cognitive and academic competence.

Data collected by means of document analysis shows that learners' written paragraphs were not marked, especially in the books of the learners that were identified as better achievers in the classroom. Although Thandi identified struggling learners in the class, there were no visible writing activities that the struggling learners were given in order to support them to reach their ZPD. There were written activities but they were not marked. In other words, no proper feedback was provided to scaffold learners' writing competences. The importance of feedback in learning is discussed in the following section.

5.3.5 The role of feedback in literacy development

Feedback is a procedure that is used both at home and at school to inform a learner about the progress he/she made, either academically or what he/she has been asked to do at home. In other words, giving response is not an exclusive activity that is done by a teacher or peers in a formal setting like the school only, but it is a continuous process that is practiced at home as well. Hattie and Timperley (2007) define feedback as information that is provided by an agent regarding one's understanding. Explaining an agent, Hattie and Timperley (2007) state that it could be a teacher, parent, peer, a book or the person himself/ herself. In support of this

statement, Shute (2008) mentions that feedback is a communication given to the learner to modify his/her behaviour for the purposes of improving his/her academic performance. This implies that feedback plays a role in knowledge construction by virtue of its mediational role.

In defining feedback, Shute (2008) mentions that it should improve learning if it is delivered correctly. Freedman et al. (1987) view feedback as an activity teachers could use to teach writing. This means that, when learners follow the process of writing where they have to submit different drafts of a written text, the teacher could make use of feedback to support learner's writing. This could be achieved through modelling the correct manner of writing, while giving comprehensive feedback.

Responses whether they are given orally or in written form are believed to play an important role in teaching and learning (Freedman, Greenleaf and Sperling 1987). In other words, they serve as a form of feedback. Feedback enhances learners' understanding and ensures that they are performing to the standards that are expected of them (Freedman et al. 1987). In other words, learners learn early about the instructional role of feedback provided and through self-regulation, they learn to monitor their writing.

In the context of this study, Thandi gave feedback in written form to the learners as shown in the three learners' recount writing pieces in section 4.5.3 in Chapter 4. As evidenced in learners A and B's work (See recount texts), Learners A and B's (See recount texts) writings seemed to meet Thandi's expectations in terms of what she instructed them to write. However, both learners needed support with regard to structuring their writing to meet the writing requirements of a recount text. The writing pieces, (recount text) needed to be supported in order to enable them to write a personal recount text using the correct structure of writing, e.g. by using conjunctions to connect the sequence of events as they were experienced. Gibbons (2002) suggests that teachers should scaffold writing by making use of writing frames in order to help shape the learner's thinking into using the correct connectives and structure the text appropriately.

Again, in learner C's work (recount text) Thandi drew lines underneath the words the learner had written. This was an indication that the learner was not doing well as she was struggling with writing. Drawing the lines was a form of feedback that Thandi provided to the learner. Thandi's

feedback strategy contradicted her claim about the measures she implemented when she identified a struggling learner as illustrated in section 4.4.1. In the interview, Thandi claimed that after identifying struggling learners, she would inform the parents in writing. The parents would reply and give consent by signing the letter so that she could start with the intervention classes for the struggling learners. During the time I was at the school, I never observed Thandi giving intervention tuition after giving feedback to learners. Thandi's practice also did not align with Zodwa's view (interview held on 4 June, 2013) that teachers needed to identify struggling learners and offer intervention support to improve their academic performance. Zodwa added that the support should be extended to all learners, including well performing learners as well. But there was a contradiction between Zodwa's claim about intervention support and her practice as HOD, because for the five months I was at the school, I did not witness her supporting or monitoring teachers who provided intervention support to struggling learners. This suggests that opportunities for literacy intervention programmes and support at the school were not explicit.

Likewise, the manner in which the feedback was delivered in learner 3's written piece indicated that little measure was taken towards improving learning. The lines drawn underneath some words could mean that Thandi acknowledged to have seen the learner's personal recount and other word construction activities, but the communication towards the learner was not carried out in a clear and developmental manner. This practice contradicted Shute (2008)'s opinions about the nature of feedback. In section 4.5.3 (in learner C's recount text), Thandi used the following words to give response to Learner C's personal recount text:

“Akakwazanga ukubhala abalise ngeholid kaDisemba asuka kuzo”

(She could not give a personal account of how she spent her recent December holidays).

So, the manner in which Thandi relayed her feedback was not academically supportive and developmental for the learners. It was also not useful to the parents as well as it did not give an indication of areas in which the learner was experiencing difficulties. It was a description of what the learner could not do, and not what the learner was supposed to do. In that way, the feedback was not useful at all.

5.4 Availability and use of resources

Data from observation suggests that the classroom was print rich. According to Wolfersberger, Reutzel, Sudweeks and Flawson (2004) a print-rich classroom provides access to literacy. Similarly, Guo, Sawyer, Justice and Kaderavek (2013) view a literacy rich classroom as the one that displays functional print. Functional print refers to the availability of books that differ in the levels of difficulty and genres, posters which address different literacy skills, signs, teacher and child writings, writing tools such as pens, paper, crayons, etc. (Guo et al. 2013). In other words, a print rich classroom environment enhances literacy acquisition.

Theo concurs that a classroom should be crowded with reading materials. In this instance, the teacher could make up for print scarce that is normally associated with children coming from impoverished backgrounds (Block 2006). According to Cohen, Raudenbush and Ball (2003) the effectiveness of the resources is dependent on the user. Resources are meant to be used for lesson planning. They can be used to set tasks, interpret learners' work and to manage time.

In this study, resources were analysed to determine how they were used to mediate teaching and learning. In the interviews, Thandi claimed that her reading practices involved pre-reading strategies that included analysing the texts. The analysis of the resources, however, revealed that even though Thandi used these resources for reading, she did not pay much attention to the kind of message they conveyed. They were not used to facilitate learning and to stimulate learners' critical thinking.

The analysis further indicated that the books that were used had language errors. This was disturbing as these books were meant to be used to promote reading to learn. If they had language errors, it could be argued that they did not assist the learners to read for meaning. Alfassi (2004) relates reading to the purpose of developing higher order thinking skills where the focus of reading is to understand the meaning of the text.

De Jong and Bus (2002) claim that exposure to book reading experiences increases learners' reading development and the construction of meaning. This suggests that learners view books as sources of information when they construct their own stories. In other words, reading books could enhance vocabulary development if they are used appropriately under the guidance of a knowledgeable person such as the teacher or parent (De Jong and Bus 2002). Engaging in

reading opens a discussion between the child and the mentor as the child is enabled to explain events in the book and relate those to his/her own experiences.

The Functional Approach (FA) (Derewianka 1990) to language teaching believes that meaning is constructed through interaction with other individuals, a philosophy similar to the Sociocultural Theory. For reading and writing purposes, a Functional Approach is a suitable tool to be used to analyse reading resources because it emphasises on reading and writing for a specific purpose. According to FA texts are important in exposing learners to different information about the context, the purpose of the text, the structure and the language that is used in each text.

In Thandi's class, the charts that were hanged on the walls consisted of individual words and sounds that focused on the spelling of words. Some of the learners could not read the words, but could only guess them. Therefore, it may be deduced that although the classroom was print-rich, the material was not used effectively to enhance learners' literacy skills.

In light of the above, Block (2006) raises a concern with the limited isiXhosa print material in many classrooms. She proposes techniques that teachers could use to develop and support the teaching of isiXhosa. She mentions that teachers could make their own reading materials. This view was supported by Zodwa (HOD) in the interview. Zodwa mentioned that there were few isiXhosa resources and they had to manoeuvre on their own and develop reading books, especially big books. Among other things, teachers could set time aside to read stories to children or let children explore books with their peers and also provide opportunities for learners to take risks by experimenting with writing (Block 2006). Block (2006) claims that exposure to resources like books affords learners with opportunities to use and understand the language in meaningful contexts instead of just naming words.

5.5 TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

According to Wa Ho (2010) a teacher who takes up managerial duties at school should possess a higher qualification to his/her subjects. This was the case with Zodwa (HOD) and Theo (Principal), who both held an Honours Degree in Education. The qualification affords the teacher with an ability to make informed decisions (Wa Ho 2010).

With regard to teacher support, both Zodwa and Theo mentioned in their interview that there was a monitoring system to ensure that teachers were doing what they are supposed to be doing in their classes. However, I could not get other information on this issue as my study focused on Grade 3 teacher and learner literacy practices. Thandi claimed that she received support from her HOD. Her performance was measured through the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). IQMS is a monitoring tool that was established to look into the general functionality of the school, curriculum implementation, delivery and use of resource material to support curriculum delivery.

Zodwa, on the other hand, claimed that they did not receive the support she needed as HOD From the DBE. Zodwa further mentioned that when they wanted additional support and modelling in their classrooms, the Curriculum Advisers (CA) promised to attend to their request, but they never fulfilled their promises.

Responding to his role as the manager of the school and how he supported his staff, Theo indicated that he believed in distributed leadership. He mentioned that leadership systems were in place which had an indirect but powerful influence on his colleagues. According to Harris (2004) shared responsibilities often result in an efficient and effective organisation.

Concerning Grade 3 literacy assessment results, Theo mentioned that there was a steady improvement. This was attributed to a developmental and sustained positive working relationship among the Foundation Phase teachers. He believed in collaboration and support among teachers in that Grade 3 learners' success was dependent on the work of the previous grade teachers. He believed in shared leadership which was built on trust, and which ensured a positive relationship and motivation among staff members. Waldron, McLeskey and Redd (2011) claim that motivation among teachers is likely to improve teacher and learner performance in schools.

Waldron et al. (2011) further mention that effective use of resources and professional development of teachers are important means of improving teacher practices.

Theo mentioned that all the teachers that were in leadership positions, e.g. Zodwa had experience and expertise to lead the phases they were responsible for. In the next section I provide findings which emanate from the data analysed in this section.

5.6 Preliminary Findings

From the analysed data, the following findings emerged with regard to literacy practices in the Grade 3 isiXhosa classroom:

- (i) Limited literacy dialogue
- (ii) Use of low order thinking questions
- (iii) Limited writing opportunities
- (iv) Underdeveloped learners' vocabulary
- (v) Ineffective use of literacy materials
- (vi) Insufficient support to learners experiencing difficulties
- (vii) Inadequate teacher support

5.6.1 Limited literacy dialogue

The SCT perspective of classroom talk is the one that leads to language development. According to Eun (2010) three categories of mediation exist, namely, mediation through material tools such as books, map, diagrams and any physical objects that the teacher can use to support learning. The second category of mediation involves the use psychological tools of which language is the most important aspect and the third category involves mediation through another person (Eun 2010, Rojas-Drummond and Mercer 2003). The latter category could involve peers, teacher, parents and group work where learners could be scaffolded to higher levels of development (i.e. the ZPD).

The analysed data shows that literacy instruction was characterised by more teacher talk, but the talk was not used effectively to scaffold and mediate learning. Most of the time the class was dominated by teacher talk, with learners making minimal contributions of single word answers.

Single word responses by learners indicate limited use of language which did not inspire the learners to make use of the language for communication.

The interaction in the Grade 3 classroom did not involve group work where learners could try to solve problems, but gain the tools to do so from the teacher. According to Gibbons (2002) effective talk has to be deliberately planned. Gibbons (2002) goes on to say one way of witnessing effective talk is to set up a group work activity. He further mentions that in a group activity, learners are able to share ideas and experiment with more language. In other words, group work contributes to accelerated input in language learning among the learners. Gibbon's view corresponds with the SCT claim that effective learning involves the use of language in a dialogic manner so that learning could lead to development (Rojas-Drummond and Mercer 2003). In the context of a classroom, effective interaction is motivated by learners working in a collaborative manner under the guidance of a teacher or a capable peer (Rojas-Drummond and Mercer 2003). In this study, a well-planned dialogue and group work could have enhanced literacy learning in isiXhosa, as the learners would communicate in their home language in which they had competence. Lack of dialogue could hinder learners' literacy development.

5.6.2 Use of low order thinking questions

From a sociocultural perspective, learning is socially constructed (Lantolf 2000, King 2002). This implies that learning happens through social interaction with other learners where the nature of the task inspires high level of cognitive processing (King 2002). Therefore, the teaching instruction should meet the demands of higher order thinking. This could be achieved by exposing learners to different inquiry based activities. Higher order thinking is developed by making use of different types of questions. These questions should allow learners opportunities to integrate ideas and be able to go beyond the presented print and build new knowledge (King 2002).

This study observed that the teacher made use of the question and answer strategy. However, her questions did not promote elaborative use of language by the learners as they encouraged them to recall and retell certain facts they had read from the text. Although CAPS provided guidelines for teachers to scaffold and mediate reading for comprehension, these guidelines were not followed. In this way, the learners were not guided and supported for high levels of cognitive thinking.

King (2002), Snow (2004) and Leat and Lin (2003) propose that teachers should give learners opportunities to ask questions. This can be achieved when a teacher designs question starters or have cloze procedures where learners participate in asking the questions (King 2002, Gillies and Khan 2008). In this strategy, all the learners have an opportunity to think or complete a question which will form part of the topic discussion because of the influence of the sentence starters provided by the teacher. The activity where learners are provided with sentence starters is communicative in nature and the learners have opportunities to make mistakes which can be corrected during discussion.

5.6.3 Limited writing opportunities

The analysed data has shown that the learners were not given sufficient time to read and write longer texts. The kinds of activities that were given allowed learners to work on word level, namely, dictation and spelling tests, but there was less exposure of learners to longer pieces of texts. In the texts that were given, learners were not scaffolded so that they would be able to write those kinds of texts later on their own. Derewinka (1990), Martin and Rose (2005) and Gibbons (2002) are of the opinion that learners should be explicitly supported to share knowledge and vocabulary before they engage in an effective writing process.

This finding does not align with Gibbons' (2002) and Derewinka's views of language teaching which should integrate various language skills. According to Derewinka (1990), Martin and Rose (2005) and Gibbons (2002) effective language learning should be provided a platform for language exploration and language should be used for real life purposes. They call the context of language learning the Curriculum Cycle (CC). As discussed in Chapters 2, in the CC the teacher designs a series of activities that aim at supporting learners through interaction. The interaction makes use of learners' prior knowledge where the learners and the teacher research the topic. The teacher's role in information gathering is provided by guiding the learners' thinking and motivating learners to collaboratively share ideas about the text. After they have sufficiently developed concepts and vocabulary about the text, then the process of writing begins with the teacher modelling how to write a specific text, using the correct structure and language features that normally characterise that specific text.

During the modelling of the text the teacher and the learners should choose a topic they will write about. Then, the teacher practices the think aloud process where he/she makes his/her decisions known about which words or concepts to use in writing the text (Compton-Lilly 2009). Modelling think aloud is an important strategy to use as the teacher shows the learners that writing is modelled authorship and when people write they do so for authentic purposes and meaning. The teacher might use the chalkboard to record his/her thought so that every learner has an opportunity to observe the process of writing. At first, learners do not work individually, they are given support either through writing frames or they work in groups before they work independently. In this process, the instruction is clear and explicit in order to give every learner an opportunity to participate and construct meaning. In the CC interaction makes use of all the language skills which include, speaking, listening reading, exploring language structure and writing. All the above language aspects are applied in a collaborative manner.

Given that the learners would be expected to write longer texts for learning in other learning areas in the upper grades, the fact that they were not adequately exposed to writing is a concern. It could be said that this practice impoverished the learners' literacy skills, as writing is a powerful tool for communication and expression of thoughts.

5.6.4 Underdeveloped learners' vocabulary

Lack or insufficient vocabulary and concept development is viewed a critical contributing factor for struggling learners since vocabulary development plays a crucial role in literacy instruction in early school years (Kindle 2010, Biemiller and Boote 2006) where learners are taught reading for comprehension. Exposure to vocabulary and new concepts is experienced during a shared Reading activity when the teacher reads aloud. The reading aloud by the teacher is viewed as a resource for learners to explore new words.

Biemiller and Boote (2006) concur with Kindle (2010) on the important role vocabulary acquisition plays in literacy instruction in early years. Biemiller and Boote (2006) are of the opinion that when teachers fail to expose and explain word meaning to young learners, teachers risk to handicap learners with reading because they have not mastered the skill of analysing the text in order to construct meaning. In other words, when learners lack the ability to engage with

the text, they will not be able to understand the purpose of the text because their focus will be on the printed word.

The teacher's instructional practices play a crucial role in developing and enhancing learners' vocabulary (Apthorp 2006, Biemiller and Boote 2006). The teacher could structure his/her instruction in such a way that he/she could define or explain the word meaning, design a word bank or classroom dictionary where the teacher and the learners could record words they encounter for the first time and encourage learners to the use of the new words in different contexts (Arthorp (2006). In this way, learners' vocabulary and word use could improve.

In the Grade 3 class where this study was conducted the teacher would not use the sociocultural context for the learners to develop vocabulary. On the contrary, she would normally ask learners to work on phonemic level or engage in a spelling activity. The instructional practice that the teacher followed seemed to limit learners' ability to add on their vocabulary bank. For example, as discussed in Chapter 4, the learners kept on mentioning the same word and could not engage with the content of the text. This indicated that the learners had insufficient vocabulary that they could use to indicate their understanding of the text.

5.6.5 Ineffective use of literacy materials

According to the SCT, resources like books, charts, maps and diagrams are used to mediate learning (Eun 2010) in SCT. The study discovered that The Grade 3 classroom was print rich but the print was not used to support learning. The analysis of the books revealed that some books carried confusing information that the teacher did not take notice of. This suggested that the reading that was performed was reading aloud and not reading for meaning.

Secondly, it seemed that there was no thorough engagement with the books where the teacher would expose the learners to the linguistic features of the text. There were literate messages on the walls but they seemed not to have been taken from the context of the lesson so that learners could draw from it or do free reading or reading for fun. Block (2006) is of the opinion that for learners to read for learning and fun, they need exposure to different genres which will later lead to more vocabulary and concept development. In other words, the more learners are exposed to reading for meaning, the more they are able to identify and develop vocabulary they did not have before they read a particular text.

5.6.6 Insufficient support to learners experiencing difficulties

Good 111, Gruba and Kaminski (2000) claim that an ability to read presupposes a variety of successes throughout life successes that are not opportune for learners that experience academic difficulties (Gruba 111 et al. 2000). They further mention that good readers encounter less reading difficulties as they progress in their academic life. On the contrary, learners who exhibit poor reading skills early in their academic lives are claimed to be candidates for difficult academic experience (Good 111 et al. 2000) throughout their school life. This implies that when teachers miss the opportunity to explicitly scaffold children's reading for learning by preparing an environment where all learners have an opportunity to read, they indirectly contribute to reading challenges faced by learners (Martin and Rose 2005).

Secondly, learners' reading difficulties could be minimised if teachers were to offer a comprehensive and developmental feedback to learners. In this study, the analysed data revealed that the teacher did not give regular and comprehensive oral and written feedback to learners. The written feedback she provided seemed not to develop the learners because it did not indicate the areas where the learner needed to improve as seen in the data presented in Chapter 4.

Martin and Rose (2005) claim that for a scaffolding process to be effective, the teacher should provide developmental explanation and feedback so that learners can make meaning of it. They maintain that the teacher is expected to give a series of written tasks to support learners in their learning (Martin and Rose 2005). Examples of tasks that could strengthen learners' literacy skills could include activities where learners manipulate sentence scripts, the teacher designing puzzles that differ in severity, making use of pictures, etc. This kind of mediated learning could help to improve the learners' self-esteem as well as enhance their literacy development.

In this study, it was noticed that the teacher was comfortable teaching the whole class than engaging in a scaffolding cycle until all the learners could understand the lessons, instead of paying more attention to academically achieving learners.

5.6.7 Inadequate teacher support

Reumann-Moore, Sanders and Christman (2011) are of the opinion that teacher support implies professional development that pay special attention to content knowledge and instruction which

are geared toward improving classroom practices. It seems that teacher support had been a thorn in South African education system hence the continuous curriculum changes, the latest being the CAPS. An integrated plan to address teacher support and development issues with regard to improving classroom practices was launched in 2009 and the plan was called, The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011-2025 (ISPFTED) (DBE 2011). The plan sought to design intervention mechanisms that could help teachers with classroom instruction (DBE 2011).

Reumann-Moore et al. (2010) suggest that the planned professional development should address the needs of the local context so that the fundamental changes could be made. In other words, the organisers of professional development programme should prioritise the needs of a specific school designed for it.

The duration of the development, candidates' participation in the workshop, the degree of content focus and the form or the kind of development are key characteristics of a professional development programme (Birman, Desimone, Porter and Garet 2000). Birman et al. (2010) suggest that for professional development to be effective, teachers should be provided with the content, the time and the activities to increase their knowledge.

The data shows that the teacher development programmes were ineffective. For example, the HOD shared her disappointment with the ineffectiveness of the workshops in Chapter 4 (section 4.4.2). Her disappointment pointed to the amount of time the department of education officials spent in schools. It was apparent that the Curriculum Advisors did not give sufficient support to teachers, and the language was one of the barriers to the effective implementation of the curriculum as discussed in Chapter 4. Birman et al. (2010) claim that a longer duration of teacher development programme provides teachers with a lot of experience to engage with the content subject. Good knowledge of the subject content knowledge facilitates high quality classroom practice (Birman et al. 2010).

Therefore, teacher developmental support is an imperative feature in improving classroom practices. The teacher support workshops should focus on providing opportunities that are necessary to improve teacher practices. Birman et al. (2010) suggest that school districts and

school should join forces and allocate funds for high quality professional development in order to improve the interpretation of policy by teachers.

5.7 Summary

This Chapter dealt with data analysis and research findings with regard to literacy practices. It made use of different themes to unpack how literacy practices could be realised by learning from the behaviours and actions of the Grade 3 teacher and learners. It was found out that there still exist challenges with regard to teaching reading and writing as a collaborative process.

It was also observed that the teacher did not make use of sociocultural backgrounds of the learners to mediate learning. It was also observed that the teacher attempted to engage learners in her literacy lessons, but her questions were not clear enough to serve as cues to develop cognitive abilities.

The analysed data also showed a strong gap between policy demands and literacy practices in the classroom. The teacher acknowledged that there were learners who were performing below the grade expectation and that needed to be addressed. The class teacher knew the steps she had to follow in order to set up an intervention literacy group to support the weaker learners but it appeared that there was inadequate support and monitoring of the intervention programmes.

The following chapter will provide a summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I, give summary of the findings that were discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to this study. I also discuss the conclusion and offer some recommendations that could be taken up as future research. This study investigated language literacy practices of isiXhosa in a Grade 3 classroom and the extent to which these practices promote or hinder literacy development. Three concepts were used to understand literacy in relation to this study. Firstly, literature regarding literacy as a social practice was considered. The second concept that helped to share light in understanding literacy came from the views of the Functional Approach (FA) to language teaching. Lastly, through the lens of the Sociocultural Theory that establishes the relationship between human mental functioning and the cultural and historical context where learning takes place, I was able to understand the interaction between the teacher and the learners in literacy lessons.

6.2 Summary of findings

One of the findings of this study shows that there was less meditational and scaffolding tools to enhance learners' literacy development in the Grade 3 classroom. This was due to the teacher's pedagogical strategies which were less interactive to allow learners to explore the use of the language in different contexts. Language and classroom interaction are important in developing literacy for academic achievement. The teacher should purposefully plan his/her instructional practice in an interactional or dialogical manner in order to enhance literacy development. The teacher could use the language to facilitate the transition from reading to writing for academic language development.

Gibbons (2002) believes teachers should create environments where learners explore and share their ideas. One of these settings is when a teacher allows learners to work in groups. In this way, Gibbons (2002), Mercer and Sams (2006) believe that learners use language effectively to mediate learning by using it to stimulate thinking aloud. This indicates that through language learners are able to express themselves freely and discuss issues as they solve educational

problems. In situations like these the teacher, as a knowledgeable person, could facilitate the discussions and offer advice to groups that are struggling.

Mercer and Sam (2006) also believe that group work activities offer learners valuable opportunities to jointly construct solutions through talk. Rojas-Drummod et al (2003) concurs with the view that through collaborative participation in a social context learners are able to communicate and negotiate meaning and in that way, their mental abilities could be developed. This kind of engagement in the classroom does not occur in whole class, but in small groups. .

The findings of this study show that there was less interaction through language in the classroom due to the teacher's questioning style which allowed learners to respond in single or two words answers. According to Gibbons (2002), this kind of interaction is called the "display". Gibbons (2002) explains that in the "display" interaction the teacher asks questions for the learners to show case what they have learned. This kind of question-answer interaction often limits opportunities for learners to use the language and to learn for meaning. Scaffolding is minimal in this kind of interaction as it does not guide the learner to become an independent reader because learners do not get an opportunity to explore language use. It does not encourage them to elaborate on their answers or to use language meaningfully in real contexts (e.g. through discussion, arguments, etc.). This study is influenced by sociocultural perspective which assumes that human mental processes are developed when the participants engage in meaningful social practices (Rojas-Drummod, Péres, Vélez, Gómez and Mendoza 2003). The use of dialogue is important in sociocultural environments such as the classroom as it allows individuals to construct meaning of the learning situation. In that way, talk is placed at the centre for human cognitive development. In the classroom context, when the teacher's instructional strategies are planned with sociocultural ideas in mind, talk serves to guide and enhance learners' thinking abilities by making use of the language. Learners' thinking abilities can be stimulated through reading and writing tasks.

This study has also established that there has been few reading and writing opportunities in the Grade 3 classroom that was studied. The teaching of reading is often regarded as a primary aspect of literacy and the importance of explicitly teaching writing is neglected (Christie 2005). This practice results from the view that writing is a by-product of reading. Proponents of this

view believe that learners have to be immersed in the culture of reading before they are taught how to write.

Learning to write is an important aspect of literacy instruction which should be attended to as early as possible. The demands of writing different kinds of texts increase in the upper grades. So in this case, learners need to be taught new knowledge about writing and the teachers need to have a repertoire of ideas on how to teach writing for academic development (Christie 2005). Assessing learners' understanding of learning is subject to the written word because what learners have written provides the evidence that learners have been taught and they have learned.

To develop knowledge for writing and exposure to writing opportunities that do not disregard the use of texts, Christie (2005), Gibbons (2002) and Rose (2005) propose an approach that focuses on context and culture. This approach develops ways of making meaning in an explicit manner. This approach is called the genre-based approach because it creates opportunities for learners to work collaboratively in organizing information and knowledge about specific information, under the guidance of the teacher.

The use of a genre approach in teaching reading and writing is important because it opens explicit environments for the teacher and the learners to use language for real purposes (Christie 2005; Gibbons 2002; Rose 2005). The collaborative explicit teaching of reading and writing is not limited to be used in language specific instances only, but it could be used across the curriculum to develop language for critical thinking in those particular subjects as well. The CAPS (2011) proposes that aspects of language in the Foundation Phase could be developed in other subjects as well. This view is not against the perspective of the genre-based approach that has been proposed. In fact, the CAPS also recommend the use of the Text-Based Approach to language teaching. To sequence explicit teaching and learning of reading and writing, Gibbons (2002) and Rose (2005) suggest a Curriculum cycle which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The Curriculum cycle is grounded on the construction of meaning which is very crucial in literacy teaching and learning.

Christie (2005) claims that a competent reader and writer should be able to recognize, reproduce and reflect on a text. In doing so, they engage in knowledge or meaning construction. Secondly,

the learner should be able to use his/her cultural knowledge to produce a text and should be able to engage with the text to make meaning.

Another finding of this study shows that there were limited opportunities for learners to develop their vocabulary. The teacher's instruction did not incorporate the learner's prior knowledge in literacy teaching. As a result, learners were not challenged to use what they already knew to make sense of some of the literacy activities as reported in Chapters 4 and 5.

Vocabulary is best developed during a shared reading activity (Justice 2002). As discussed in Chapter 4, the teacher mentioned that she followed strategies of pre-reading, during and post reading in order to support language and vocabulary development. This suggests that the teacher was aware of the literacy policy requirements, but she could not implement them effectively in her literacy instruction.

Christie (2005) is of the view that learners could develop new vocabulary by interacting with visual imagery in the text. Besides discussing the images in the text, Christie (2005) mentions that the written language for young readers should be minimal. The language could be systematically increased as the year progresses. In this study, the texts that the teacher used consisted of minimal written language, but they were not adequately used to develop learners' literacy skills.

Print environment stimulates thinking (Wolfersberger, Reutzel, Sudweeks and Flawson 2004). This implies that exposure to literate environments, either at home or at school, contributes to learners' engagements with texts. It increases learners' opportunities and abilities to construct meaning. In this study, data has shown that print was available but it was not used properly to develop learners' literacy skills. It appeared that it was just placed for display purposes. Some of the reading books that the learners were supposed to read for meaning contained confusing information. In other texts it was discovered that the texts contained typographic errors. The teacher seemed not to be aware of these errors. So, the reading materials that were available seemed not to be very useful in terms of developing literacy in the learners' home language (isiXhosa). This finding raises concerns with regard to Grade 3 learners' literacy development for future academic advancement as they should develop strong literacy skills in their home language before they shift to English (12) medium of instruction in Grade 4.

6.3 CONCLUSION

This study has shown that there are some positive prospects with regard to literacy development in isiXhosa. One of them is the fact that there was no miscommunication between the teacher and the learners as they communicated in their home language. In this sense, the importance of home language instruction in literacy development cannot be underestimated, especially among young learners. However, the study findings show that there are more challenges to literacy instruction in isiXhosa which could impact negatively on the learners' literacy development. These challenges include the teacher's pedagogical strategies, lack of parental involvement and inadequate use of literacy materials. Given that isiXhosa was a linguistic resource in classroom interaction, the teaching strategies used by the teacher seemed to undermine this advantageous resource. Parents were also not used as resources to develop their learners' literacy in the home language, isiXhosa.

This study was also revealed that the teacher did not explicitly teach reading and writing and use language effectively to mediate learning. The classroom discourse achieved minimal results with regard to literacy development because it was limited by the kinds of questions that the teacher asked as explained in previous chapters. The teacher did not create environments where learners could contribute to knowledge formation and sharing of ideas by discussing and arguing certain issues. The visual images such as pictures were not adequately explored to strengthen learners' literacy skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing.

While the findings of this study cannot be generalized due to the small sample that was used, it can be concluded that literacy instruction is still a challenge in the Foundation Phase. This could be due to a variety of factors such as teacher training and lack of resources, particularly in schools located in disadvantaged areas. The study has shown that teacher training is also a challenge as teachers do not get adequate support from departmental officials. Considering the national literacy crisis that has been reported in the first chapter of this study, the findings of this study seem to reveal one of the major causes of learners' poor literacy performance in the national assessment tests.

The study also shows that there is no direct relationship between the language of instruction and learners' literacy development. In this study learners were taught in their home language in

which they had good competence, but the teaching strategies that were used did not take advantage of the language resource. In other words, the use of the home language (isiXhosa) as a medium of instruction did not seem to influence the literacy practices in a positive way. Therefore, it can be concluded that literacy instruction or pedagogy determines literacy practices, regardless of the language used for learning and teaching.

6.4 Implications for strengthening literacy practices in the Foundation Phase

Teaching and helping children with their literacy is the central goal for success in and out of school (Bitter, O'Day, Gubbins, and Socias 2009). This indicates that teachers should be able to support learners to be good readers and writers, i.e. to become independent critical readers and writers who would be able to use literacy knowledge for academic and social development. Therefore, teachers should possess a sound pedagogical understanding of literacy teaching.

According to Pretorius and Machet (2004), the ability to read and write provides learners with access to information, ways to explore the vocabulary and to improve language skills. This suggests that literacy for academic achievement should be understood in terms of the relationship between reading and writing. In this study, literacy is understood in terms of cultural, social and linguistic abilities that learners bring from home as a result of participating in literate environments, i.e. literacy is a social practice. In other words, the home is the context where learning begins. At home children learn in a non-threatening manner where they learn to communicate, share information and express their opinions freely. This kind of literacy is called cultural literacy because it comprises general knowledge that is used to build understanding and communication. An understanding of learners' cultural literacy is important because it is the resource for the teacher draw on when teaching literacy. In the classroom context for example, cultural literacy could be used by the teacher to draw learners' prior knowledge in order to create a transition between the new content knowledge and what they already know.

In addition, cultural literacy is regarded as a set of social practices (Street 1995). This means that the different kinds of literacies that people make use of in their everyday lives, e.g. cultural literacy constitute social uses of literacy. Therefore, literacy is not an ability to read and write only, but rather competence to achieve social goals and to apply thinking to solve different problems. As a social act, literacy scaffolds different ways of thinking to meet different

challenges in people's everyday experiences. Teachers should be aware of literacy as a social practice, and their teaching should aim at supporting learners to use literacy for academic and social goals. This could entail making a connection between home and school literacy in their teaching. The parents and community members can be used as a good resource in this kind of literacy development, and the schools should recognize their role as literacy developers. Thus the Functional Approach (Derewianka 1990) to literacy learning is important in teaching as it suggests an instructional practice that focuses on the scaffolding and development of texts for real life purposes.

Concerning the use of texts in literacy instruction (Gibbons 2002 and Rose 2005), shared reading could be useful in stimulating learners' thinking and collaborative abilities. Reading can be used as a first step to develop writing activities. The teacher can model the thinking aloud strategies. Thinking aloud strategies are important as they are aimed at exposing learners to ways of shared thinking that could benefit everybody in the classroom. In these activities, the learners and the teacher collaboratively contribute to the development of the text. Thus FA develops an environment for the teacher and the learners to collaboratively explore how language works.

In this study, literature on Sociocultural Theory was consulted in order to understand the role that society plays in learning (Kuzolin 1998, Lantolf 2000, Turuk 2008 and Lantolf and Thorne 2006), as discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. The three fundamental concepts in SCT, namely, mediation, scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development were discussed. Following the SCT perspective, the teachers' guiding cues and questions serve to direct learners to critical and independent thinking. For example, it is the teacher's scaffolding questions and language support that would encourage the learners think critically about a particular text. The use of mediation tools such as texts, pictures, posters, etc. is important in developing learners' literacy skills. So, teachers should have an understanding of the theories that guide their teaching so that they can apply the most suitable methods for literacy development.

In light of the above, I make the following recommendations to respond to the findings of this study.

6.4 Recommendations

1. Teaching reading and writing should be a collaborative process. Classroom interaction should be structured in such a manner that all learners benefit from literacy learning.
2. The teacher should recognize and respect learners' cultural literacy and should try to build on it for strong literacy skills and future academic achievement.
3. The teacher should make a shift from teaching in a decontextualized manner and apply a variety of strategies that aim to scaffold literacy learning.
4. The teacher should use the text for social purposes where the learners would use their own understanding to analyse other texts.
5. With regard to professional development, this study recommends that teachers should be supported in areas where they need assistance and not just be given a general workshop that is not going to improve their classroom literacy practices.
6. Since learning begins at home, parental support is viewed as an important factor in enhancing literacy education. This study recommends that parents' literacies should be respected and used to build a connection between home and school literacy. Even though the parents' knowledge about school might not be as extensive as that of the teachers, but they seem to hold positive regard for the education of their children. This study recommends that parent be provided an avenue to participate in school affairs that aim to academically develop their children.

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APPENDICES
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APPENDIX: A

**PERMISSION LETTER FROM Western Cape
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**



REFERENCE: 20121122-0119

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Ms Someka Monica Ngece
E335 Mkhonto Street
Khayelitsha
7784

Dear Ms Someka Monica Ngece

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: INVESTIGATING ISIXHOSA LANGUAGE LITERACY PRACTICES IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY 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. Approval for projects should be conveyed to the District Director of the schools where the project will be conducted.
5. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
6. The Study is to be conducted from **01 February 2013 till 30 September 2013**
7. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
8. 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?
9. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
10. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
11. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
12. 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

for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**

DATE: 23 November 2012

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APPENDIX :B

CONSENT LETTERS

Appendix B: Consent letters: FOR THE PRINCIPAL

Researcher: Ms Someka Monica Ngece

Cellular number: 0732877575

Email: sngece@uwc.ac.za

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Research Title: Investigating isiXhosa language literacy practices in the Foundation Phase: an ethnographic case study in the Western Cape

I understand that the school's participation in this study is voluntary and at any given point the school has the right to withdraw from the study. I am also aware that the information collected from the school will be treated confidentially to protect the identity of the school. I am guaranteed that the findings will be used for research purposes not to damage the name of the school.

The project has been explained to me clearly in a language that I understand. I hereby agree to participate in this research project under the conditions stipulated above.

I..... (Name and Surname) hereby give consent to the researcher to conduct research at my school in a grade 3 isiXhosa classroom.

Principal's signature:.....

Date:.....

[To protect the identity of the principal, the signed consent letter is not included]

CONSENT LETTER FOR PARENTS/GURDIAN

Researcher: Ms Someka Monica Ngece

Cellular number: 0732877575

Email: sngece@uwc.ac.za

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Research Title: Investigating isiXhosa language literacy practices in the Foundation Phase: an ethnographic case study in the Western Cape

Dear Parent

My name is Someka Ngece. I am a registered Masters student at the University of the Western Cape. I wish to conduct research at your child's school where I would like to do intensive observations, collect some copies of learners' work and recordings of some literacy lessons in a grade 3 isiXhosa classroom. Since your child will be in one of these classes I respectfully request your written permission for your child to voluntarily participate in this study. It is important for you to know that the information gathered as a result of this study will be used for research purposes only. The following information may help you to make an informed decision regarding my request.

Aim of Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate language literacy practices of the isiXhosa Grade 3 learners in the Foundation Phase and the extent to which these practices promote or hinder literacy development. The study also seeks to understand literacy practices with regard to writing and reading in a Grade 3 classroom in the Western Cape Province where isiXhosa is used as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT). It also aims to identify available resources that would enhance literacy development in isiXhosa in a Grade 3 classroom.

My involvement in your child's class

In order to conduct this research I will have to be present in some of your child's literacy lessons only over a period of 6-8 months in order to observe literacy development specifically reading and writing skills. My presence in the classroom will not disrupt or interfere with any classroom activities. I may wish to record some of the lessons when and where appropriate only when the teacher gives me permission to do so. These recordings will not focus on any particular child, but will be on the classroom

activities and interactions. I would also need to make some copies of learners' written work with the permission provided by respective class teacher.

Child's Participation

No information will be directly linked to your child as I will keep the child anonymous at all times. No child will be referred to by name in the writing up and presentation of any data as a result of this research. Your child will at all times be treated with respect and sensitivity.

I trust that the above information has helped you to make a decision with regard to my request. If at any stage you have questions about the study please contact me directly at the above contact details. Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor, Prof. Vuyokazi Nomlomo on Tel. (021) 959 2650/ 2442

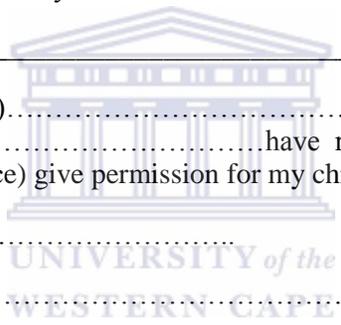
CONSENT FORM

Please sign the form below and return it to your child's class teacher. Thank you for your kind assistance.

I, (name of parent/legal guardian).....parent of (child's name).....have read the information provided above and do/do not (please circle your choice) give permission for my child to participate in this study.

Parent/ Guardian's signature:.....

Date:.....



TRANSLATED VERSION OF PARENTS' INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

IFOMU YESIVUMELWANO NABAZALI

Researcher: Ms Someka M Ngece

Cellular number: 0732877575

Email: sngece@uwc.ac.za

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Isihloko sophando : Uphando lwenkqubo yokufundiswa nokufundwa kweliterasi kumabanga asisiSeko: isifundo sokuchazwa kwezizwe kwiPhondo leNtshona-Koloni

Mzali obekekileyo,

Ndingu-Someka Ngece. Ndifundela isidanga seMasters kwiYunivesithi yaseNtshona-Koloni. Ndingwenela ukwenza uphando kwisikolo somntwana wakho apho ndiza kubukela eklasini yakhe ithutyana elithile, ndiqokelele imisebenzi abayibhalileyo ndishicilele kwa nenkqubo yokufundiswa kweliterasi kwigumbi lokufundela lebakala 3. Nanjengoko umntwana wakho ekwelinye lala magumbi okufundela, ndicela ngokuzithoba imvume yakho ebhaliweyo yokubandakanya umntwana wakho kolu phando. Ndikwafuna nokucacisa ukuba ukuthabatha inxaxheba kolu phando ayisosinyanzelo, kwaye lonke ulwazi oluqokelelwe kolu phando luza kusetyenziselwa iinjongo zolu phando kuphela. Le nkcazelo ingezantsi ingakunceda ekuthabatheni isigqibo malunga nesi sicelo sam.

Injongo yophando

Injongo yolu phando kukuqwalasela inkqubo yokufundiswa kweliterasi kumabanga asisiSeko ingakumbi ibakala 3 nendlela ezithi ezi nkqubo zidodobalise okanye ziphuhlise ngayo iliterasi. Esi sifundo sikwaqonda iinkqubo zokufundisa ukubhala nokufunda kumagumbi okufundela ebakala 3 kwiPhondo leNtshona-Koloni nalapho isiXhosa sisetyenziswa njengolwimi lokufunda nokufundisa (LoLT). Sikwajonge nokuchonga izixhobo ezinokusetyenziselwa ukuphuhlisa iliterasi kwisiXhosa kumabanga 3.

Ukubandakanyeka kwam kwiklasi yomntwana wakho

Ukuze ndikwazi ukuqhuba olu phando, kubalulekile ukuba ndibekho kwezinye izifundo zokufundiswa kweliterasi kwigumbi lokufundela lomntwana wakho kangangethuba leenyanga eziphakathi kwe 6-8 khona ukuze ndikwazi ukubona inkqubo yokuphuhliswa kokufunda nokubhala. Ubukho bam kwigumbi lokufundela lomntwana wakho alizukuba sisiphazamiso ekufundeni nangayiphi indlela. Ngamanye amaxesha kuza kufuneka ndishicilele ezinye izifundo. Olu shicilelo aluzukujolisa emntwaneni othile, koko luza kugxila kwizinto eziqhubekayo egumbini lokufundela. Kusenokufuneka ndenze iikopi zomsebenzi obhaliweyo wabantwana webakala 3 ngemvume katiishala wabo.

Inxaxheba yomntwana

Akukho nanye into eza kunxulunyaniswa nomntwana wakho ngqo, kwaye nelungelo lakhe lokungapapashwa kwagama lakhe liza kuthathelwa ingqalelo. Akuzokusetyenziswa magama abo

okwenyani xa kubhalwa iingxelo zolu phando. Ngoko ke, igama lomntwana wakho alisayi kuvela konke. Umntwana wakho uza kuphathwa ngesidima nangentlonipho ngalo lonke ixesha.

Ndinethemba lokuba le nkcazelo ingentla iza kukunceda ukwenza isigqibo malunga nesicelo sam. Ukuba unombuzo malunga nolu phando, nceda uqhagamshelane nam kule nombolo: 073 2877575. Kungenjalo unganxibelelana nomhlohli olikhankatha lam kolu phando, uNjingalwazi Vuyokazi Nomlomo kule nombolo: (021) 959 2650/2442

Ndibamba ngazibini.
Ozithobileyo

Someka M. Ngece

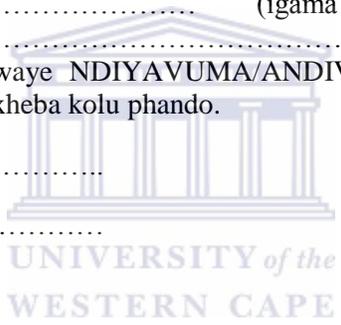
IFOMU YESIVUMELWANO

Nceda ugcwalise le fomu ingezantsi uze uyithumele kutitshala womntwana wakho. Ndiyabulela kakhulu ngoncedo lwakho.

Mna, (igama lomzali/umgcini womntwana osemthethweni) ongumzali ka (igama lomntwana) ndiyifundile le nkcazelo ingentla kwaye **NDIYAVUMA/ANDIVUMI** (rhangqela impendulo yakho) ukuba umntwana wam athabathe inxaxheba kolu phando.

Intsayino yomzali:

Umhla:



CONSENT LETTER FOR THE TEACHER

Researcher: Ms Someka Monica Ngece

Cellular number: 0732877575

Email: sngece@uwc.ac.za

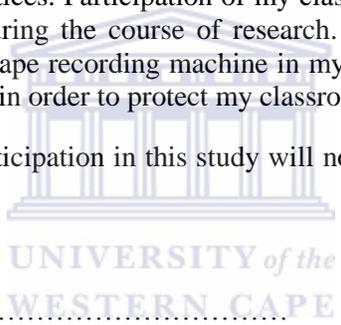
Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Research Title: Investigating isiXhosa language literacy practices in the Foundation Phase: an ethnographic case study in the Western Cape

I..... (Name and Surname) hereby give consent to the researcher to do observations and recording in my classroom.

The study was explained to me clearly and I understand that the presence of the researcher will not disrupt or interfere with daily classroom practices. Participation of my class in this study is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any time during the course of research. I understand that the researcher will inform me when planning to use the tape recording machine in my class. All information will be treated confidentially when writing the thesis in order to protect my classroom identity.

I am promised that my classroom participation in this study will not risk my job and my personal image will not be damaged.



Teacher's Signature:.....

Date.....

APPENDIX :C



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TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

APPENDIX C: TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How would you define literacy practice?
2. Reports have been published even by WCED about low literacy performance, what do you think contributes to this low literacy performance by learners especially in Grade 3?
3. To your understanding, what does access to literacy means?
4. In your view how can reading aspect of literacy be measured?
5. What kinds of practices would have to be employed in order for learners to exhibit those practices?
6. To you what does the concept home literacy practices means?
7. What role do you think home literacy plays in enhancing literacy at school?
8. As a Grade 3 isiXhosa Home language teacher, what kinds of support do you receive that allows you to improve literacy practices in your classroom?
9. How effective are your isiXhosa Home language resources helping in improving literacy in your classroom?
10. What kinds of challenges do you experience in managing your literacy programme?

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APPENDIX: D

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HOD/PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

APPENDIX D: HOD/PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How would you define literacy practice?
2. Reports have been published even by WCED about low literacy performance, what do you think contributes to this low literacy performance by learners especially in Grade 3?
3. To your understanding, what does access to literacy means?
4. In your view how can the reading aspect of literacy be measured?
5. What kinds of practices would have to be employed in order for learners to exhibit those practices?
6. As the HOD what support do you offer to teachers in order to improve literacy at school?
7. As an HOD do you receive any support to help support your colleagues to develop literacy at school especially isiXhosa Home language? From where and in what form is the support provided?
8. The literacy resources that is available at the school, is it adequate and appropriate for isiXhosa Home language development?
9. Is there any role you play in choosing Home Language literacy resources? Elaborate

[To protect the participants, their transcribed responses are not included but a questionnaire guide that assisted in generating the conversation is included instead].

APPENDIX: E



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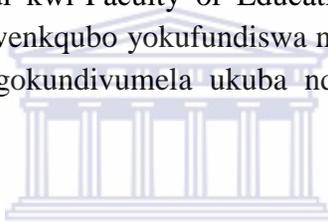
LETTER SCHEDULING AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE PARENTS

APPENDIX E: LETTER SCHEDULING AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE PARENTS

University of the Western Cape
Faculty of Education
Modderdam Road
Bellville
7535

Mzali obekekileyo

NdinguSomeka Ngece ongumfundi kwi-Faculty of Education kwi-University of the Western Cape. Isifundo sam singophando lwenkqubo yokufundiswa nokufundwa kweLiterasi kumabanga asiSiseko. Ndibamba ngazibini ngokundivumela ukuba ndithathe isifundo sam kwigumbi afundela kulo umntwana wakho.



Ndicela imvume yokuza kukwenza udliwano-ndlebe malunga neembono onganazo ngokusetyenziswa kweliterasi ekhayeni nokuba inganceda njani ukuphuhlisa okanye ukunceda umntwana wakho kwiliterasi efundiswa esikolweni.

Ndibulela ngokuzithoba okukhulu

.....

Someka Ngece



APPENDIX:F
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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PARENTS

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PARENTS

1. What are your perceptions about literacy?
2. Where do you think learners are supposed to learn literacy and why?
3. Which literacy aspect do you practice at home?
4. How do they help improve understanding of the needs at home?
5. As a parent, what do you think is your role as far as literacy development is concerned?
6. If you were given a chance to have an input in literacy teaching at a policy level, what would you say and why?

ISIKHOKELO SEMIBUZO YODLIWANO NDLEBE NABAZALI

1. Zithini iingcinga zakho nge literasi?
2. Ngokokucinga kwakho ingaba abafundi kufuneka belufumene phi ulwazi ngeliterasi, ngokuba kutheni?
3. Ekhayeni leliphi icandelo le literasi enixabisileyo ukulisebenzisa?
4. Eli candela nixabise ukulisebenzisa ekhayeni, linceda njani ukuphumeza iimfuno ekhayeni?
5. Nanjengamzali, ucinga ukuba galelo lini onalo ukuphuhlisa iliterasi?
6. Ukuba ubunokunikwa ithuba lokwenza utshintsho ngokufundiswa kweliterasi kwibakala lomgaqo, tshintsho luni obunokulenza ngokuba kutheni?



APPENDIX G:

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TEXT USED FOR READING COMPREHENSION

APPENDIX G: Text used for reading comprehension

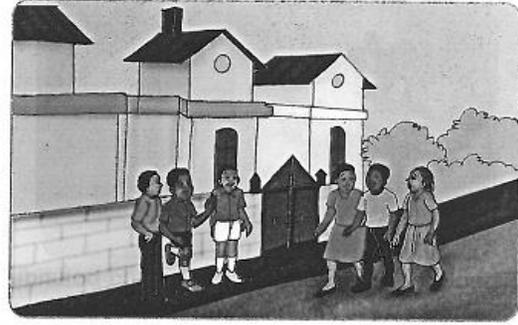


Emva komdlalo la makhwenkwe atyelela kwiindawo ezahlukileyo. Ngemini yokuqala aya eSoweto kwilitye lesikhumbuzo sikaHector Peterson. Bajikeleza iSowetho babona imyuziyam eyayingumzi kaNelson Mandela. Babona umzi kaDesmond Tutu. UNdyebo wayebilekwe ikhamera ngumhlobo wakhe waseNgilane. Wafota yonke into enomdla apha. Iinjongo zikaNdyebo yayikukuphathela utatomkhulu wakhe ezi foto. Ekugqibeleni baya kuboniswa nebala lemidlalo iSoccer City.

32

Ukuphila ngendlela eyiyo

Abafundi abathathu uTshatiswa, uNgqina noNozihlewele bancokola ngokundwendwela koonesi esikolweni sabo.



Tshatiswa:

Nivile ukuba oonesi baza kuphinda babuye?

Nozihlewele:

Ewe, sivile babuyela ntoni?

Ngqina:

Siyabonwa ukuba siyagula amazingo ethu abolile.

Tshatiswa:

Ngawam nakaNgqaleko amazingo abolileyo.

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33

Esikolweni utitshalakazi wabo ubaxelela isizathu sokuba oonesi baphinde babuyele esikolweni.



- Titshala:** Oonesi baza kubuya bafundi.
Ngqina: Yinyani kanti leyo?
Titshala: Ewe bazokunifundisa ngeendlela zokukhetha ukutya.
Nozihlwele: Kutheni singafundisani thina titshalakazi?
Titshala: Intle kakhulu loo mbono, unyanisile.
Ngqina: Intle nyani sicela titshalakazi usancedise nawe.

34

Abafundi bafuna ukucaciselwa ngutitshalakazi ngeendlela abazakufundiswa ngayo ngokutya ukutya okulungileyo nokungalunganga.



- Titshala:** Oonesi baza kuza kodwa niza kufundisana nina.
Nozihlwele: Baza kuthini oonesi xa siza kufundisana?
Titshalakazi: Oonesi ngabo abeze nale mbono kufuneka bekhona.
Tshatiswa: Nam nindibandakanye apho.
Ngqina: Haji Tshatiswa wonke umntu uzakubandakanywa.

35



Kungemini ekubanjwe ngayo ingxoxo abafundi notitshalakazi bamkela oonesi emva koko zizaqalisa iingxoxo.



Titshalakazi: Masamkele oonesi. Namhlanje yimini yengxoxo malunga nokutya okulungileyo okanye okungalunganga. Masiqalise sixoxe ngokwamaqela ethu.

Nozihlele: Mna ndithi ukutya okungalunganga makungatyiwa kuba kuyingozi.

Ngqina: Ewe kuvakala kumnandi kodwa kuyingozi.

36

Emva kwengxoxo oonesi benze ilizwi lombulelo nelenkuthazo. Unesi wokuqala: Mholweni bafundi.



Abafundi bonke: Mholo nesi Bendinganazi ukuba nikrelekrele kangaka.

Unesi: Enkosi nesi. Siyanibulela ke bafundi ngale ngxoxo. Xa sibuya kwakhona asifuni mntu otya ukutya okungalunganga.

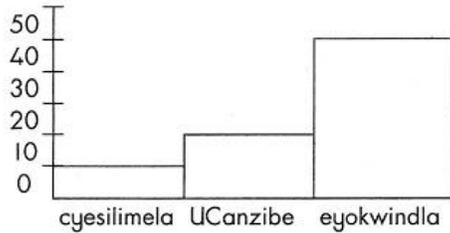
Abafundi bonke: Siyanibulela ke bafundi ngale ngxoxo. Xa sibuya kwakhona asifuni mntu otya ukutya okungalunganga.

Unesi wesibini:

37.

Igrafu

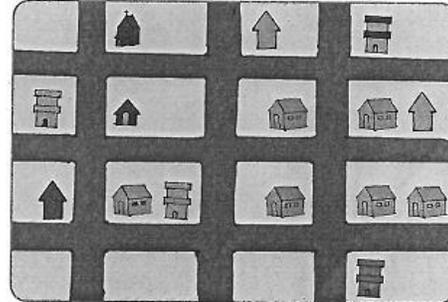
kwenziwe uphando malunga nenani leelitha zamanzi ezingena kwitanki lamanzi kwiinyanga ezintandathu. Qwalasela igrafu elandelayo wandule ukuphendula imibuzo.



38

Ukhuseleko ezindleni

Isigama esitsha: khuseleka, indlela, irobhothi, ukuwela



Kwisixeko saseMonti edolophini xa ungena kukho umbhalo eludongeni othi, 'Lubalulekile ukhuseleko xa usendleleni. Kufanelekile ukuba sithobeke imithetho yezendlela ngamaxesha onke. Jonga iirobhothi phambi kokuba uwele ngoba zisisixhobo sendlela esisinceda siwele sikhuselekile'. Oko kufaneleke ukuba sikwenze nokuba intliziyo ithini.

39



APPENDIX H:



APPENDIX H: LESSON PLAN

ISICWANGCISO SESIFUNDO

ULWIMI LENKOBE

IBANGA : 3

IXESHA : IUEKI 6

UMHLA : 22-26-04-13

INGQIQO

UMXHOLO

➤ Ukuphula-phula nokuthetha	Baxoxa ngemibonakiso esebekini
➤ Ukufunda nezandi	Bafunda ibali ze bakhuphe amagama avela phoqa abekini
➤ Ukubhala	Babhala imisebenzane ephuma abekini
➤ Ukubhala ngesandla	Babhala amagama ngezandi ezixutyweyo bakugqibe bathe izwakalisi ngegama elo bikhelile.

IZAKHONO: Ukusimela, ukufunda, ukubhala imibuzongqir-
lanelekayo, ukusebenzisa igama ukwalcha amagama
nezandi ezixutyweyo, ukwalcha ndabhalo izwakalisi

INTSHAYELO: Abantwana bahlali nemethini nothshalakazi
apho bagale banokuba zabo zokheli/zombela vekhi.
Dinikani amathuba bexele oko bakwenzileyo utshala
uphethe iphepha eliphakathi emulqutweni ebhalwe ngezandi

IMISEBENZI

Mvulo Bafundisa ngokubhalisa kuleta abo umbuzo ukuba zintu ekuhambeni zithga elete in Bayazibize. Idles, isebutiso umbu ebhabe ngayo ita uhlal-bakuyiba batyule ezincwadini zabo ku page 26 abo kutho ita etayo bawubona ngomkholiso bakufunde bakuyibisa baphandule imibuzo elapto engelele kuyo.

Lwesibini Banikwa ithaba lokabhala ita ebhalela umbuzo wakhe abho ememela kutholele idusika eziraye Sijonga idles, ebelelele, isituba, isiqo selet / mome ne phelo sayo

Lwesithathu Bona ulwazi lweziso lweziganeko ezizole kuleta ibhalela ubona abho babela izinkaliso abazinkaliso Banika i-sintu kumagama ^{isintu} ~~omqumbela~~ - emfeleni - emtsheni - izigama - amagabun - singabala - ndiyazi - sisitha zithetha amagama abemalukane kubo zezemadim pg 87 watho izinkaliso ngawo.

Lwesine Isand - ndu - ngu - ntu - ngu - ..
Butha amagama ngezicand zizumeneke ebathini.

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Lwesihlanu Fakela isand **UNIVERSITY of the** ..

① I — ane ② I — ita ③ i — ④ I — enkce ⑤ I — aze

② Tshatsha izinkaliso amagama aza:

1. ezandisi	① omqumbela
2. utyebile	② umkule
3. uyahlaka	③ phesuka
4. uyatika	④ ubhityule
.. 1 1 ..	⑤ .. 1 ..

UMSEBENZI

Nvulo

Umsebenzi pg 36-37 bafunda ileta ze baphendule
inombuzo

kwesigini! Bhala ileta ubhalele umhlebo wakho ummemela
kwiindlele zebusika ezizayo.

Siqwalasela! adilesi, isebuliso, umongo weleto, ileta nela kubani

kwesithathu! Hlanga-hlangisa ezi ziganeko kutlandelelana ku
clatemi.

- ① 1. Sakhiwela emithini, sisitsha iziqhamo
- ② 2. Ndingwenda ukuba singabhala emye inowethi skucele
usindwendwele.
- ③ 3. Mna ndiyaxhentso, umntakwethu ubetha amagubu.
- ④ 4. Uyakhumbala ukuba sadlala emfuleni sileqana nonojuba
- ⑤ 5. Inggando yam ayahlabi ixesha owanusindwendwele ngela
ngelohle ecalulileyo.
- ⑥ 6. Singawaja kakulu ukuba unjezi ekhansathini
- ⑦ 7. Nguwe futu ovalu itinwele zam zifane ekuhlaleni
wathatha itawuli wadikhama ngayo.

Ngeswetine! Nika isinye kalamagama abhalwe asisininzi
onojubalala, emithini, iziqhamo, sisitsha, unwele, Singawuya, an
sadlala, sileqana, singabhala.

②

Umbuzo 2

Khetha amagama amadlanu ku pg 37 wakhe ngawo
izivakalisi

xwaya waxwaya
phoxwa waphoxwa
xwaxwa wawaxwa

Umbuzo 3

Ixesha elidlulileyo

Bhala ezivakalisi zibe kwixesha elidlulileyo

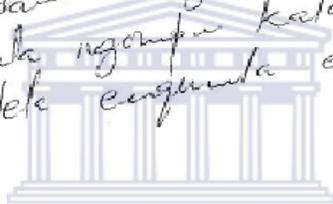
1. Abantu belali bacima umlib.

2. U Sibongile nohwazi badlala ngomatchisi

3. Uwela indlela kundawo elugqelwe ukwela abantu

4. Abantwana badlala ngompu katala

5. Sshambe kwindlele engumla elilathu.



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APPENDIX I:

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**TEXT USED BY LEARNERS TO APPLY PROCESSES OF
COMPREHENSION: REORGANISE INFORMATION**

APPENDIX I: TEXT USED BY LEARNERS TO APPLY PROCESSES OF COMPREHENSION: REORGANISE INFORMATION

Isiqulatho

1. Mhla savotela inkokheli yethu.....	13
2. Mhla uNdyebo weza nodumo.....	19
3. Ukuphila ngendlela eyiyo	33
4. Igrafu.....	38
5. Ukhuseleko ezindleleni	39
6. Umthetho wendlela kubahambi ngeenyawo	41
7. Ingozi yeparafini.....	44
8. Ukuzigcina usempilweni	46
9. Imibhiyozo	48
10. Imini yokuzalwa.....	50
11. Unyaka omtsha.....	52
12. Imini yeNkululeko.....	54
13. Izilwanyana ezisemngciphekweni wokubulawa	56
14. Iingcuka	59
15. Izithuthi	62
16. Abavelisi benqwelo-moya	65
17. Izileyi	66
18. Iinqanawa.....	67
19. Amalungelo kwakunye noxanduva	68
20. Okusingqongileyo	69
21. Khuseleka.....	71
22. Amaqhawe esizwe	73
23. Hlal'ucocekile	74
24. Intlonipho.....	75
25. Ndinelungelo nje ndonoxanduva.....	76

Mhla savotela inkokheli yethu

Abagqatswa, ukuchonga, unkhombandlela, ubugwenxa, edywida, ukuzigwagwisa, ukunxwala, ukugwexa



UNolwazi Magwaxaza ufunda kwisikolo iNquthu. Kwibanga lesithathu balungiselelwa ukongulo inkokheli yeklasi. UNolwazi uzimisele ukuba ngomnye wabafundi abazakukhethwa. "Nolwazi uzakuba ngomnye wabagqatswa?" ubuzile umhlobo wakhe uNomdyarho. "Ewe, ndiza kuba ngumgqatswa nomama uthi ndineempawu zobunkokheli," uphendule uNolwazi.



Utitshala wabo ubafundise ngokuchonga inkokheli kuqala. Abafundi bahleli bamamele utitshalakazi uSomdyalo. "Inkokheli inika abalandeli umkhombandlela," utshilo utitshalakazi. "Yintoni umkhombandlela titshalakazi?" ubuzile uNqaba. "Umkhombandlela yindlela yokwenza izinto," uphendule utitshala. "Inkokheli kufuneka ibe ngumntu onembeko nomamelayo," uqhube watsho.

4



Nkqel Nkqel Nkqel! Emva kweso sifundo kubethe intsimbi. "Yhu! Liyabaleka ixesha, seyilixesha lekhefu," utshilo uNolwazi. Baphumile baya kudlala abaninzi besacinga ngesifundo abasifundileyo. "Besimnandi esi sifundo, Lwazi," utshilo uNomdyarho. "Ewe, tshomi sifumene ulwazi oluninzi," uphendule uNolwazi. "Inzolo bafundi! Nivotele mna," utshilo uNqaba.

5



Uthe esabafundekela uNqaba yakhala intsimbi. Baphindele kwigumbi labo lokufundela. Baceliwe ukuba baphakamise amagama abagqatswa abahlanu. "Mna ndiphakamisa uNqaba," itshilo inkwenkwe enguSigwebo. Kuphakanyiswe uNolwazi, uNomnqophiso, uSigwebo noMadyasana. Bonke bamiswe ngaphambili. Utitshalakazi ubacelile balungise indlela yokuzithengisa kubafundi.

6



Utitshalakazi ubaxhobise ngendlela evumelekileyo yokuziphatha kwabagqatswa. Ubaxelele ngemithetho ekufuneka bezibophelele kuyo xa bebonke. Ubaxelele ukuba akufunekanga bathethe gwenxa kwabanye. Akufunekanga bagrogrise okanye balwe nabo bakhuphisana nabo. Akufunekanga bahambe benyanzelisa abanye ukuba babakhethe. Ubafundise ukuqulunqa amanqaku acacisa izizathu zokuba bavotelwe. Emva koko wabacela ukuba baye kuzibhalela ekhayeni.

7



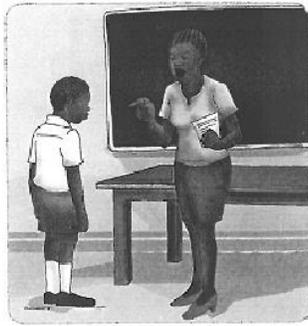
Sithe sakuphuma isikolo bagoduka bonwabile. UNqaba yena ufumene ithuba lokuboyikisa endleleni. Ubaxelele ukuba akukho ntombazana iza kubaphatha. Amantombazana azimisele ukulungenela ukhetho. Awamoyiki nakancinci uNqaba. "Nqaba ucinga ukuba ungasiphatha usonqena kangaka," utshilo uNomdyarho. "Unengxaki wena uthethelela lo mhlobo wakho," utshilo uNqaba. Bohlukana uNqaba sele ecaphuka.

8



UNolwazi ufike kokwabo wacela umama wakhe amncedise. Umncedisile ukubhala amanqaku anezizathu zokuba abafundi bamvotele. UNolwazi uyifundile eyiphindaphinda. Abazali bakhe bamkhuthazile bemxelela ukuba ukulungele ukukhokhela. Uvuke kusasa ngemini elandelayo waya esikolweni. Abafundi bebemtsalatsala befuna ukuva iimbono zakhe. UNolwazi wathula wathi tu. Kwakucacile ukuba ungoyena mfundi uyintandane.

9



Bangene kwigumbi lokufundela bengxamele inkqubo yemini. Kucace mhlophe ukuba uNqaba yena akukho mntu umthandayo. Abafundi bangxekile ngobugwenxa bokunxwala abanye. Bafike baxelela utitshalakazi ngesenzo sakhe. Utitshalakazi umbizile wamlumkisa ngokungalandeli imithetho. UNqaba ebebonakala ezisola ngesenzo sakhe sobugwenxa. Ucele uxolo kutitshalakazi nakubafundi. Abafundi abaninzi bambombozele kuba babemazi ngokungamameli.

10



Utitshalakazi ubize umgqatswa wokuqala aze kuzithengisa ngaphambili. UNqaba ubengowokuqala ukuphakama ephethe iphepha elishwabeneyo. Abafundi abamnikanga mbeko njengoko eqhele ukwenza naye. Utitshalakazi ubanqandile, uzithengisile ke egeza emane eveza nolwimi. Kulandele uNolwazi ephethe incwadana yakhe ecwangcwiswe kakuhle. Uthethe kamnandi abafundi bemamele. Uthe akugqiba kwaqhwyatywa izandla ngabafundi bonke.

11



Utitshalakazi ubancomile xa bebonke. Ubaxelele ukuba intetho zabo bezikwinqanaba eliphezulu. Ubaxelele ukuba bebengathi ngabafundi bamabanga aphezulu. Bavuyile bonke baqhweba izandla bevuyisana nabagqatswa. Utitshalakazi ubaxelele ukuba baza kuvotela abagqatswa ngemini elandelayo. Ubakhuthazile ukuba bakhethe umntu onyanisekileyo nosebenza nzima.

12



"Ndiqhube njani Nolwazi?" ubuzile uNqaba. "Nqaba andikwazi mna, buza kwabanye," uphendule uNolwazi. UNqaba ubonakale edanile kwaye enomsindo. "Uncedile umgwexwe Nolwazi," utshilo uNomdyarho. "Jonga Nomdyarho sukuthelekisa akandigwexanga," utshilo uNqaba. "Khaniyeke le nto nina bekuthiwe singalwi," utshilo uNolwazi.

13



UNolwazi ugoduke echwayitile engxamele ukubalisela abazali bakhe. "Uqhube njani sana lwam?" ubuzile umama wakhe. "Yhul Mama, ndiqhube kakuhle bandiqhwabele ndakugqiba. "Uyabona ke Lwalwa uza kuphumelela," utshilo umama wakhe. "Uyintombazana ekrelekrele wena," utshilo umama wakhe. "Uqhele ukutsho utitshalakazi uSomdyalo," utshilo uNolwazi.

14



UNolwazi uvuke kusasa waya esikolweni. Umama wakhe umlungisile wagqwesa ngobuhle. "Uhambe kakuhle Mamjwarha," utshilo umama wakhe. "Kulungile mama ndiyabulela," uvalelisile uNolwazi. Udibene nabanye abantwana endleleni. "Awumhle, Lwazi namhlanje," utshilo uNomnqophiso. "Enkosi, Nqophi," uphendule uNolwazi. "Hayi namhlanje uza kubayinkokheli yethu," utshilo uNomdyarho.

15



Bafikile esikolweni sele ekhona utitshalakazi wabo. Bangene nje wabakhumbuza ngento eza kwenziwa ngale mini. Utitshalakazi wabo ubaxecelele ukuba kufuneka kukhethwe umntu omnye. Ubabonise amaphepha anamagama abagqatswa. Ubaxecelele ukuba baphawule igama lo mgqatswa abakholwe nguye. Iphepha lokuvota kufuneka balifake ebhokisini. Amaphepha aza kubalwa ngabafundi abathile awaphinde yena.

16



Baqalisile ke ukonyula umgqatswa abakholwa nguye. Wonke umntu ebevotela ekhusini ukuze angabonwa ukuba uvotela bani na. Bawabalile amaphepha emva koko utitshalakazi wawaphinda. Abafundi bebengxamele ukwazi ophumeleleyo. Bona abagqatswa babenexhala. Utitshala uphakamise igama likaNolwazi nje ngophumeleleyo.

17



Bamvuyele abanye ngaphandle koNqaba. UNqaba uphakamile edyuduza wathatha ibhokisi enamaphepha okuvota. "Wenza ntoni Nqaba?" ubuzile utitshalakazi. "Ababalanga kakuhle aba titshalakazi," uphendule uNqaba. "Nqaba hlonipha utitshalakazi," utshilo uNolwazi. UNqaba ufune ukulwa naye kodwa wamqanda utitshalakazi. UNqaba uyalelwe ukuba abize abazali bakhe. "Ndicela uxolo titshalakazi ndohlwaya abazali bam," utshilo efuna ukukhala.

18

Mhla uNdyebo weza nodumo

agqwese, izandyondyo, imtyhafise, indyandya, ndwanya, ucalucalulo, imyuziyam



UNdyebo wayeyinkwenkwe endwebileyo kodwa ekrelekrele. UNdyebo wayehlala notatomkhulu wakhe uShwalakhe. UNdyebo wayethanda ukudlala umdlalo webhola ekhatywayo. Esikolweni naselalini wayedlalela amaqela amabini. Utatomkhulu wakhe wayethanda ukumbukela xa edlala.

19

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APPENDIX J:

CLASS TIMETABLE



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APPENDIX J: CLASS TIMETABLE

		PRIMARY SCHOOL ITHAYIMTHEYIBILE YEBANGA LESITHATHU					
		IXESHA	MVULO	LWESIBINI	LWESITHATHU	LWESINE	LWESIHLANU
UMTHAN	08:00		Imathematika Bala ngentloko ukuhlaziya (24miz)				
	09:24		Umsebenzi(M)	Umsebenzi(M)	Umsebenzi(M)	Umsebenzi(M)	Umsebenzi(M)
	30 miz (30MIZ)		Umsebenzi(M)	Umsebenzi(M)	Umsebenzi(M)	Umsebenzi(M)	Umsebenzi(M)
	09:24		LK Phula- phula,thetha(bulisa indaba) ORAL				
	09:35		L K Ukubhala ngesandla				
	09:35		L K Ukubhala ngesandla				
	09:50		Ukufunda notishala nangamaqela				
	9:50		Ukufunda notishala nangamaqela				
	10:00						
	10:00						
	10:20						
	10:20						
	10:20		READING PERIOD(30MIZ) Ukufunda notishala nangokwamaqela				
	10:50		Ukufunda notishala Nangamaqela				
	10:55		LK	LK	LK	LK	LK
	10:55		Izandi	Izandi	Izandi	Izandi	Izandi
	11:20		LK	LK	LK	LK	LK
	11:20		KB Ukuziphatha nentlalo	KB Imithambo ubugcisa	KB Imithambo ubugcisa	KB Imithambo ubugcisa	KB Imithambo ubugcisa
	12:20						
	12:30						
	12:30						
	12:30		LQN Ukuphulaphula nokuthetha	LQN Ukuphulaphula nothetha/ulwimi	LQN ulwimi	LQN ulwimi	LQN ukubhala
	13:06		KB Ulwazi olusisiseko				
	13:30						
	13:30						

APPENDIX:K

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TEACHER PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX K: TEACHER PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

Teacher's textual profile

Please indicate the appropriate box with a tick.

Statement	Answer		
1 Gender	Female		
	Male		
2 Age	20-29		
	30-39		
	40-49		
	50-59		
	60+		
	Other		
3 Home language	isiXhosa		
	Afrikaans		
	English		
	Other/specify		
4 Qualifications			
Highest <i>academic</i> qualification	Matric		
	Undergraduate		
	Honours Degree		
	Master's Degree		
	PhD		
<i>Professional qualification</i>			
Do you have a teacher qualification?	Yes		
	No		
If no, write your highest qualification.			
If yes, where did you get your initial teacher qualification	College		
	University		
	Other, specify		
	Junior Secondary Teacher's Certificate (JSTC)		
	Primary Teacher's Diploma (PTD)		
	Junior Primary Teacher's Diploma (JPTD)		
	Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma (SPTD)		
	If <i>university</i> , what qualification did you get?	Bachelor of Education Degree	
	5 Professional development		
Have you received any professional LITERACY development (workshops) from the department of Education (DoE) in the past 2 years	Yes		
	No		
If yes, write names of the workshops/courses in the blocks provided	Name of course	Year and duration	

	Other	
6	Teaching experience	
Years of experience	0-5	
	6-10	
	11-15	
	16-20	
	Over 21	
Years of experience in Foundation Phase	0-5	
	6-10	
	11-15	
	16-20	
	Over 21	
Position in the school	Principal	
	Deputy principal	
	Head of department	
	Phase Head	
	Grade head/Lead teacher	
	Teacher	
	Practitioner	
	Other, specify	
7	Learners in your class	
Number of learners in your class		
What grade do you teach		
Age of the youngest learner		
Age of the oldest learner		
Number of officially identified LSEN learners in your class	0	
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4 and over	
8	Learner's home language	
Language	Number	
isiXhosa		
Afrikaans		
English		
Other, specify		



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