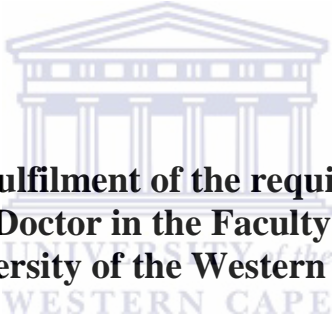


STORIES AS TEACHING TOOLS IN GRADE R CLASSES

Suzanne Lucille Anne Ross

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a classical building with columns and a pediment, with the text 'UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE' below it.

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Philosophiae Doctor in the Faculty of Education,
University of the Western Cape**

Supervisor: Prof. Juliana M. Smith

November 2013

DECLARATION

I declare that *Stories as teaching tools in Grade R classes* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.



Signed:.....

Suzanne L.A. Ross

November 2013

KEY WORDS

caregiver

integration

stories

creative arts

visual arts

performing arts

teaching tools

social skills

linguistic skills

Grade R children and teachers

fears and traumas



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ABSTRACT

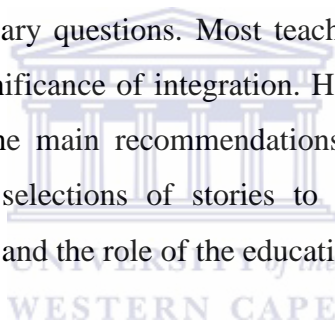
The rationale to embark upon this research is based on the notion that stories are effective tools to support the teacher in implementing the curriculum as an entity instead of fragmented sections. Learning Outcome 1 outlined in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 2002a:14) Languages Policy Document of the Grade R section states that the learner should be able to ... [understand] short, simple stories ...” by “ ... [joining] in choruses at appropriate points ... [draw] a picture of the story ... [connect] the story to his own life ...”. The goals of the proposed curriculum necessitated an investigation to firstly, establish whether stories are in fact used and if so how the stories are used. Secondly, I explored whether stories are integrated with other subjects in the curriculum. In the research the teachers were also assisted to expose Grade R children to stories whereby they could deal with traumas such as HIV and AIDS. The research was conducted before the implementation of CAPS (DBE, 2011b) but in the recommendations a model based on CAPS is proposed. The research was conducted with Grade R children therefore it was important to adhere to ethical considerations, such as anonymity and a protocol to follow the school programme. Of importance was to observe when you work with children you should acknowledge the sensitivity around their privacy and emotional needs especially with regards to fears and traumas.

Based on the assumption by Levine and Foster as cited in Jackson (2000: 276) that “... story telling ... art, and music could be healing tools”, there seemed to be a need to research whether these were used as learning materials to empower teachers in Grade R classes. The literature underpins the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework was based on story theory and the integrated approach

In order to assess the approaches of teachers I applied an epistemological paradigm emanating from a qualitative framework which was embedded in a constructivist/interpretivist approach. The research design was a case study. I used interviews and questionnaires as research instruments. Triangulation was applied to validate my findings. In analysing the types of stories, it served to establish which kinds of stories appealed to the target group and what effect these stories had on the children. The integration of stories and other areas in the curriculum possibly gave more scope for optimal utilisation of the imagination of children. It was imperative to

determine how teachers could be assisted to implement an approach whereby the imagination of a child is stimulated and optimally utilised in order to develop linguistic and social skills, as well as help learners to cope with trauma. The research was conducted in Grade R classes in the Western Cape, representing various strata of society namely a previously disadvantaged state school, a former model C school, a privately funded institution and a non-governmental institution. Ultimately the research was driven with the intention that once the approach had been negotiated and implemented the children and teachers would benefit.

The types of stories and activities in the programmes presented were of great significance. It also called for creative and innovative teachers, who were not only acquainted with the circumstances of all the children they taught, but similarly equally sensitive to the circumstances of the children. The findings were informed by the data gathered at the schools, based on the main research questions and the subsidiary questions. Most teachers recognised the importance and value of stories as well as the significance of integration. However, the integration was mostly reserved for language lessons. The main recommendations are with regards to the teaching approaches to integrate lessons, selections of stories to integrate lessons, an environment conducive to integration of lessons and the role of the education department.



Ethical Considerations

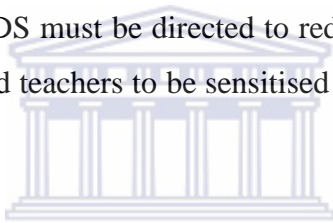
The ethical considerations were grounded in the following ethical protections suggested by Stake, 2005:459 namely voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality. With regards to the ethics in my research I gained permission from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) as well as from the non-governmental institutions. This was formally requested in a letter, stating details of the researcher and explaining the motivation for the research. This was done to ensure transparency and encourage the need to collaborate. Although not completely voluntary because I decided on the institutions beforehand, the WCED and the other institutions still had the right to deny me access to these Grade R classes. Teachers were not forced to participate against their will. When granted permission, the specific institutions were informed of the proposed programme where ideas were exchanged to find a common understanding of the intended approach. This ensured that there was informed consent. The programme included dates of visits and intended activities for example questionnaires, presentations, observations and meetings.

Meetings were arranged for teachers and/or supervisors where information was shared on the specific rationale for the research to be conducted, as well as establishing the availability and readiness to become part of such a venture. It was important to establish the willingness of people to co-operate to ensure informed consent. I found, a “gatekeeper”, in the principals who provided permission to conduct the research at the intended institutions (Ely, 1991:20).

As stated by Ely (1991:20), I had to persuade the person, amongst others, that I would not disrupt the basic routine of the institution and that I could give useful feedback. In my case I could give feedback during the sessions as well, in order to effect varied activities and responses. The initial session eventually lead to mutual sharing of expertise and acquired skills. Teachers shared their expertise and skills on teaching stories with me and vice versa. Sharing of information took the format of practical demonstrations. The participants were granted anonymity in the research paper, if so requested. No information was disclosed unless with the permission of the participants. All information was kept confidential. When children are involved, especially at such a young age, it is of utmost importance to be sensitive to their needs, emotions and levels of

communication. They should feel assured that their human rights and rights to privacy would not be violated. However, complete anonymity during research was not possible as I had to be in the classrooms to observe the interaction as my research was conducted within a qualitative research design.

As suggested by Thomas in the AIDS Bulletin (2002) the ethical research practice forms an integral part of the research design. Furthermore I agree with her that as a researcher I “occupy a very privileged position”. Her arguments focus specifically on research done on HIV and AIDS infected people, but I could relate it although it is not as directly linked to the actual infected people but more so to fears and traumas. I also concur with her that this position can be abused as it is also one of power. Therefore in no way could I abuse my position because I worked with teachers and children who should ultimately benefit from the research. Finally, her statement that research especially in HIV and AIDS must be directed to reduce stigma is supported by the fact that I intended to assist children and teachers to be sensitised to issues such as HIV and AIDS by using stories in a sensitive way.



My research was therefore guided by strong ethical considerations and processes to ensure the confidentiality of all participants. Any results will be kept confidential. Each participating institution is however, entitled to its own results. The intention to develop new materials will obviously be dependent on utilising results and ideas observed, but this does not necessitate disclosure of identities.

Ethics Statement

I, Suzanne Lucille Anne Ross hereby undertake to conduct research in line with ethical rules and to be sensitive to the needs and requirements of the participants.

.....

S. L. A. Ross

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS - Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AL - Additional Language
AS-Assessment Standard
ASs - Assessment Standards
ASSA-Actuarial Association of South Africa
B. A. - Baccalaureas Artium
B. Ed - Baccalaureas Educationis
CAPS - Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
C2005 - Curriculum 2005
DoE - Department of Education
ECD - Early Childhood Development
EMDCs - Educational Management Development Centres
FP - Foundation Phase
FAL - First Additional Language
Grade R - Grade Reception Phase
HE - Higher Education
HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HL - Home Language
HOD - Head of Department
HSRC - Human Sciences Research Council
HSUSY The Humane Society of the Unites States Youth
LA - Learning Area
LAs - Learning Areas
LAD - Language Acquisition Device
LP - Learning Programme
LPs - Learning Programmes
LOLT - Language of Learning and Teaching
LO - Learning Outcome
LOs - Learning Outcomes
LS - Life Skills
MRC - Medical Research Council
MRQ1 - Main Research Question One
MRQ2- Main Research Question Two
MRQs – Main Research Questions
NCS - National Curriculum Statement
NGOs – Non-governmental organisations
OBE - Outcomes-based Education
PE – Physical Education
RNCS - Revised National Curriculum Statement
SAL - Second Additional Language
SQ - Subsidiary Question
SQs – Subsidiary Questions
TPR - Total Physical Response
WCED - Western Cape Education Department



CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND

This research was prompted by my conviction that stories could play an important role in the reception year (Grade R) of the school programme. The Learning Outcomes of the Revised National Curriculum (RNSC) (DoE, 2001a:4) state that the children should engage with stories. I therefore wanted to explore whether teachers use stories as teaching tools and if stories are used across the curriculum to extend the involvement of the children. Initially it also seemed interesting to explore how teachers addressed fears and traumas such as HIV and AIDS education, stipulated in the RNCS, Life Orientation (DoE, 2003a:23) under Lesson Outcome 1: Health Promotion. Since the topic of HIV and AIDS is prominent in the curriculum I wanted to investigate whether it received any attention in Life Orientation and how teachers handled it. The idea was not to give HIV and AIDS too much prominence but rather extend the existing skills in teachers, to address fears and traumas by using stories. In turn teachers would then sensitise children. In no way would any child or school be identified as having HIV and AIDS children as it was undisclosed. In the course of the research the issue of HIV and AIDS did not emerge as a key area and the title of the research was subsequently adjusted to focus more on the use of stories which could indirectly address fears and traumas such as HIV and AIDS.

In order to conceptualise the importance of selecting Grade R it is necessary to contextualise the placement of Grade R in the South African curriculum. With the inception of a new government in South Africa the curriculum changed. This change was accompanied by subsequent changes in terminology, for example, the various standards in school became grades and the grades were grouped to form phases. The curriculum proposes two bands which are subdivided into phases (see figures 1 and 2). Grade R is the reception year in the Foundation Phase (FP).

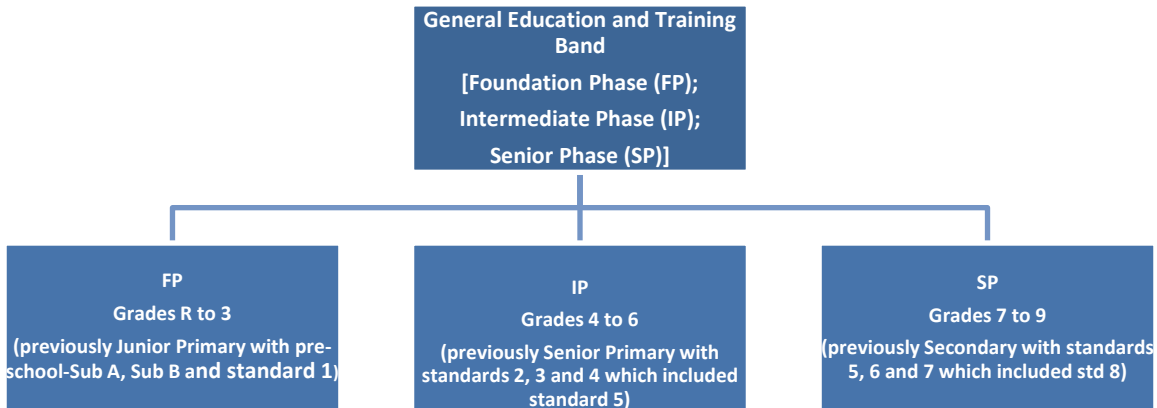


Figure 1: The General Education and Training Band

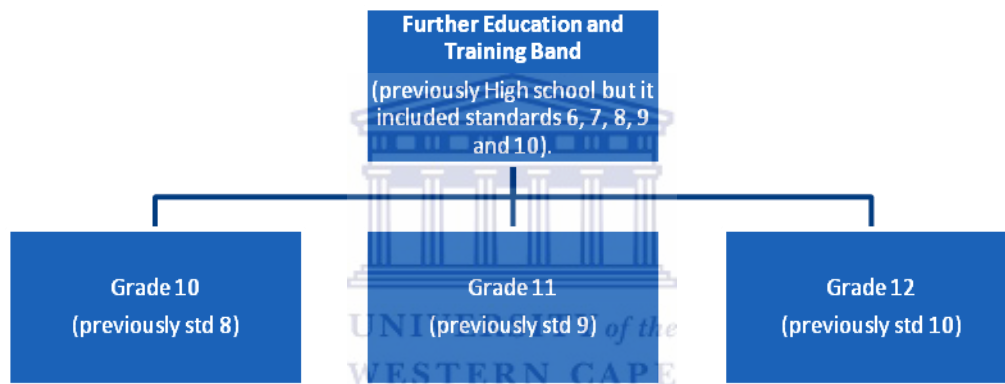


Figure 2: The Further Education and Training Band

I needed to investigate what happened in the FP, especially in Grade R. Stories could be an effective way for teachers to use in the classroom across the curriculum and to sensitise the children to fears and traumas for example HIV and AIDS, not an easily accepted phenomenon in the school society, but a reality. Children are often left without the primary caregiver, in most cases the mother, who is also responsible for development of language and social skills. The teachers fulfil the role in the absence of the mother or caregiver.

For Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002:258) the fact that children are orphaned when young mothers die, "... constitutes a serious social problem". These children are in most cases left to their own devices. The very young ones are taken care of by the older siblings. In the absence of the mother or caregiver they are often neglected both physically and socially. Their most basic

needs are not fulfilled due to socio-economic factors such as poverty. “Subtle emotional signals ... that influence the infant’s behavior ...” as Craig (1996:22) puts it, may most probably become the task of the teacher when the caregiver is gone. It is therefore imperative that teachers should be equipped and empowered with teaching tools to play a prominent role in assisting young children. Hepburn (2002:94-95) supports the same concern with regards to orphans and specifically primary education. She suggests various ways of caring for the orphaned children to meet the challenges. In short she proposes that the following aspects should be revised: the content and role of the curriculum; the organisation of the primary school, and that cost-effective community-based initiatives should be explored. However, it seems as if the problem of education at the community-based schools becomes the problem of the community rather than that of the government as reported in other African and Indonesian countries such as Malawi, Uganda, Zambia and Mali (Hepburn, 2002:95).

A significant aspect to establish was whether children in Grade R use their imagination in discovering and acquiring language. Egan (1988:1) suggests that the dominant teaching model tends to not fully explore how powerful the imagination of children is and how it can be used in education. The bond that is created by the mother or caregiver could be enhanced by stories and games and this bond is then hopefully extended to the rest of the family and the community.

Another important question that one needed to ask was how the absence of the mother affects the development of linguistic and social skills. These questions are prompted by the argument postulated by Craig (1996:205) that children who are raised in institutions or dysfunctional families are, “... retarded in language, social skills and emotional expression.” Normally, according to Craig (1996:216), the mother or caregiver would be responsible for the development of “intentional communication” when mother and baby “... initiate their own playful sequences of communication”. Intentional communication is defined by Craig (1996:216) as a “... milestone ...” where “... infants begin to develop a dialogue with others, ... looking at each other, playing short games and taking rests”. However, if the caregiver is no longer there, these interactions will have to be compensated for by somebody else to ensure continuous development in language and social skills. In the Grade R class the substitute for the caregiver is the teacher who takes care of the children, with or without mothers, for a number of

hours per day. Besides language skills when the mother or caregiver influences the infant by subtle emotional signals, these signals are referred to by Craig (1996:22) as social referencing.

In order to assist the development of language and social skills, an enabling environment, which could be created by using stimulating learning materials, is necessary to accommodate the absence of the mother. The research attempts to suggest ways to ensure that a more creative approach is used to develop learners' imagination in order to cope with trauma. The stimulating learning material could offer some form of escapism from reality. More important though, the Grade R children could be assisted to cope with reality in a meaningful and creative way. It should help them to deal with a traumatic situation if they are able to express themselves through stories of their own, performing arts, for example dance, song and drama, as well as visual arts for example drawing and painting.

Creative ways in presenting stories could be the tool to assist teachers in dealing with traumatic issues. The experience of dealing with fears and traumas will not only impact on them emotionally, but also socially, with devastating results; devastating when there is no intervention on the part of the teacher to prevent the affected children from being marginalized and stigmatised by their peers.

Donald, *et al.* (2002:67), cite Piaget to explain that children in the pre-operational stage, (which spans from two to seven years) still share a point of view similar to that of others. This is the result when they have not developed the capacity to do it from their own position. I support this statement, as it becomes evident that the children will not really know how to cope with fears in either their own situation or that of peers. However, they can be very understanding and full of compassion if informed properly. Most children in Grade R are very spontaneous and therefore the use of stories combined with other areas in the curriculum could result in a very creative exercise, provided the learning material fulfils the needs of the learners. The intended programmes that they would be exposed to could assist them to view the world differently. This would be their world and that of those around them. The world at school is often dictated by the curriculum proposed by the Department of Education (DoE) and the way in which the teachers

interpret and implement the curriculum. Subsequently a brief overview of the Languages curriculum is presented.

From 2002 pre-service training for teachers in FP focused on Outcomes-based Education (OBE). The RNCS Languages Policy Document (DoE, 2002a:4) divides the Language Learning Area (LA) in three sections namely, "... Home Language, First Additional Language and Second Additional Language". Home Language (HL), according to the RNCS, Languages Policy Document (DoE, 2002a:4) assumes that the child is able to understand and speak the language as opposed to First Additional Language (FAL) where the child may not have any knowledge of the language. The Second Additional Language (SAL) focuses on children who opt to acquire three languages. In this case the third language could be an official or foreign language. In the language programme for Grade R, the Learning Outcomes (LOs) are basically the same for all three sections. The children are assessed on various skills outlined in the RNCS Languages Policy Document (DoE, 2002a:6), namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Viewing, Writing, Thinking and Reasoning, Language Structure and Use. For the purpose of this research, I focused on selected outcomes relative to the use of stories and other areas in the curriculum for example arts and life skills as an approach for Grade R children. These outcomes were scrutinised to determine whether the value of stories were realised in the Grade R classes.

In 2012 yet another change came about namely the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2009). However, at the time of implementation of CAPS the research at the schools was already completed. The contents contained in CAPS (DBE, 2011a:11) is based on the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) without major changes in terms of content. In Table 1: RNCS compared to CAPS, (see p. 6) are extracts from the RNCS and the CAPS. The main research questions (MRQs) and subsidiary questions (SQs) focus on the approaches used by teachers, based on the RNCS. In order to address CAPS as part of the research, I suggest a model in Chapter Six which includes elements of what is proposed in CAPS (DBE, 2011d). This attempts to address the MRQ with regards to integration (see 1.4).

Table 1: RNCS and CAPS comparison

RNCS	CAPS
LANGUAGE OUTCOMES	
Listening, speaking, reading, viewing and writing Reading and phonics Writing and handwriting Thinking and Reasoning and Language Structure and Sounds words and grammar (RNCS, Languages, 2002:6).	Listening and speaking Reading and phonics Writing and handwriting Thinking and Reasoning and Language Structure and use, which are integrated into all 4 languages skills listening, speaking, reading and writing (CAPS, DBE, 2011d:11).
LIFE ORIENTATION OUTCOMES	
<p>RNCS Life skills</p> Health Promotion Social Development Personal Development Physical Development and Movement (DoE, RNCS, Life Orientation, 2002:4). <p>Arts creating, interpreting and presenting artworks; reflecting on cultural practices and Arts activities; participating and collaborating in Arts and Culture activities; and expressing and communicating through various art forms (DoE, 2002b:4).</p>	<p>CAPS Beginning Knowledge and Personal and Social Well-being (It addresses issues relating to nutrition, diseases (including HIV/AIDS), safety, violence, abuse and environmental health (DBE, 2011d:10).</p> <p>Creative Arts to develop learners as creative, imaginative individuals, with an appreciation of the arts. (DBE, 2011d:10).</p>

With regards to the Languages programme in the CAPS document (DBE, 2011d) the information with regards to specific content therefore do not seem to have major differences in outcomes. The Life Skills and Arts have some differences. However, the actual content does not differ radically. With regards to stories the following are extracts from the curriculum (CAPS, DBE, 2011d:23-26).

- Listens to stories and acts these out;
- Arranges a set of pictures in such a way that they form a story;
- Interprets pictures, e.g. makes up own story and ‘reads’ the pictures;
- Acts out parts of a story, song or rhyme;
- Describes characters in stories and gives opinions;
- Predicts what will happen in a story through the pictures;
- Answers questions based on the story read;
- Draws pictures capturing main idea of the stories;
- Listens to short stories with enjoyment and joins in choruses at the appropriate time;
- Tells stories and retells stories of others in own words;
- Arranges a set of three pictures in such a way that they form a story and a logical sequence of events when verbalised and relates the story created;

Makes up own story by ‘reading’ the pictures;
Sequences pictures in a story;
Responds to stories through movement and drama activities or rings;
Sings songs, recites rhymes and performs actions with the whole class;
Recites poems and rhymes and adds actions to them in a group;
Sequences pictures of a story.

These extracts indicate that stories can be extensively used in various ways. The activities however, are mainly in Languages. There is integration with arts where children can draw the characters or do actions related to the stories or songs.

Considering the value of stories in the development of language, it is emphasised by Jennings (1991:6) in the following extract:

Language most likely developed because of the need for communication ... Early story forms were attempts to explain the unexplainable ... Early forms of the oral tradition were ..., reflections of people’s self-perceptions ... [S]tory telling assists the language development of the teller.

In the RNCS Languages Policy Document (DoE, 2002a:9) the Grade R children are expected to “... listen to stories with built-in repetition of new words and structures when learning an additional language”. Stories are also deemed to underpin the foundation of a language. In the RNCS (DoE, 2002a:7) the language skills are integrated and I distinguish these from the understanding of ‘integrated’ in the intended research, which refers to integrating stories across the curriculum. Viewing the references to the use of stories in CAPS (DBE, 2011b), there are numerous ways suggested to use stories but it does not integrate stories across the curriculum.

1.2 RATIONALE

The rationale to embark upon this research is based firstly on the premise that stories could play a meaningful role across the curriculum in Grade R classes. Stories would empower teachers to assist children in Grade R to develop their linguistic and social skills. I therefore felt inclined to assist in firstly, empowering teachers to use stories creatively and secondly, to integrate the stories with other areas in the curriculum.

Stories, according to LO 1 of the RNCS Languages Policy Document (DoE, 2002a:14) are to create an opportunity where they listen for information and enjoyment, which is a relevant objective. However, no guidelines are given to assist the teacher in making an appropriate selection of stories to integrate life skills to deal with fears and traumas in related issues like HIV and AIDS. It is evident that storytelling is mainly the teacher's responsibility as none of the outcomes indicate that the children are expected to relate their versions of stories. The children are not really expected to tell stories, which could lead to very little development or enhancement of the imagination. There seemed to be a need to help the children discover that they could re-tell the stories in different ways or illustrate parts of the stories or sing about or dramatise the stories, using their imagination if teachers did not tap into this resource. However, in the CAPS (DBE, 2011b) the focus is stronger on the children.

According to Donald, *et al.* (2002:223), children will engage positively and actively with other people if they have a positive self-concept. A positive self-esteem would then assist them in coping with adverse situations for example HIV and AIDS. If, however, they have a low self-esteem it would compound the problem of coping with the situation. Similarly those affected by fears and traumas more indirectly need to develop social skills to avoid being prejudiced against their peers. Ultimately, the research was driven with the intention that once the approach had been negotiated and implemented, the learners and teachers should benefit.

The goals of the curriculum necessitated an investigation to firstly, establish whether stories are in fact used in Grade R classes. Emanating from this, teachers could be empowered by using activities to enhance their capacities for professional development. LO 1 in the Languages Policy Document of the Grade R section states that the learner should be able to ... [understand] short, simple stories ..." by "... [joining] in choruses at appropriate points ... [draw] a picture of the story ... [connect] the story to [his/her] own life ..." (DoE, 2002a:14).

Secondly it was imperative to assess whether stories are integrated across the curriculum. In doing this I could establish if the language and social skills developed and what are the characteristics and educational value of stories. LO 3 of the Languages Policy Document (DoE, 2002a:14) assesses whether Grade R children can memorise and perform action songs and

nursery rhymes. It can be assumed as an attempt to develop the creativity of the children. Learning Outcome 2 also focuses on memorisation and "... the right intonation, rhythm and pronunciation". An integrated approach by teachers would allow children to extend their imagination, not just memorise and imitate the teacher's example of proper intonation, rhythm and pronunciation.

According to research conducted by the DoE (DoE, 1999:34) under the auspices of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) in the National Early Childhood Development Pilot Project, "... [sixty four] percent of responses showed that practitioners believe that stories, songs, and rhymes encourage learning, develop communication skills, and extend knowledge of familiar and new situations". These were community-based practitioners. However, according to the research only "Nineteen percent of the respondents use stories, songs and rhymes for the learners' enjoyment, to encourage participation or to encourage learners to relax". The idea to relax seems to link with healthy development.

When Donald, *et al.* (2002:27) speak about "promoting ... healthy development" with the focus on "promoting what is positive rather than ... what is negative", you inevitably think of traumas and fears that confront children. It is therefore equally important to create and maintain a healthy, enabling environment at school. An enabling environment creates opportunities and spaces where the teachers and all children develop skills. A healthy environment should lead to healthy development. Therefore the research experiments with an approach to promote the positive rather than the negative. The idea is that we acknowledge that there are problems, but that we do not constantly focus on them, and that we become part of the solution rather than exacerbate the problem.

The research was directed at children and their teachers in Grade R classes in different school contexts (see Chapter Three, 3.6.2). It was to empower the teachers and assist the children to engage with stories. Children should be transported from stark realities, when they occur, where teachers implement a creative teaching tool like stories to provide a more enjoyable, pleasant environment. In finding a more appropriate approach to also assist Grade R children to cope with frightening or unknown situations, I needed to explore whether teachers used stories and if it was

integrated across the curriculum. Craig (1996:203) postulates that “The presence or absence of stimulation can speed up or slow down the acquisition of certain cognitive skills”. By implication, the child who grows up in a deprived environment could encounter problems in terms of language development and an environment which is stimulating will enhance cognitive skills.

1.3 THE AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The following aims of the research are formulated to articulate with the research questions as stipulated below (see 1.4).

The first aim was to research the way in which teachers use stories in Grade R classes. Linked to this aim are two objectives, firstly, to ascertain if teachers can be empowered when they use stories and secondly to ascertain whether they can use the demonstrations for their own professional development. The second aim was to assess in which way teachers utilise stories in an approach where they engage other areas with the stories. In doing this the objectives to be realised were firstly to assess the impact of the integration on Grade R children in terms of their social and language skills as well as their interest and focus. Secondly it was to determine the characteristics and educational value of stories. Egan’s (1988:18) idea to develop the child’s imagination optimally by using stories emphasises that “... we need to rethink our teaching practices and curricula with a more balanced appreciation of children’s intellectual capacities”, served as a basis for this aim.

Other issues which influenced the teaching and planning of the teachers involved whether the learning materials in these respective areas were in fact available and utilised to develop linguistic and social skills. If stories, integrating creative arts namely visual and performing arts were not used as teaching tools, the reasons prohibiting such an approach was researched. Subsequently the research problem and research questions are presented.

1.4 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research problem encompasses an investigation into the use of stories in Grade R classes. This investigation unfolds in the research questions and the subsidiary questions. Although the main research questions are presented separately they are interlinked, with the first one focussing on the approach used by teachers, specifically empowerment and professional development. The second one focuses on the impact of integration on the children. The first main research question (MRQ 1) is: *“Do teachers use stories in Grade R classes, and if so, how do they use stories?”*

The subsidiary questions (SQs) emanating from this research question are:

1.4.1 Can stories empower teachers?

1.4.2 Can activities as presented by the researcher enhance the teachers’ capacity or professional development to use stories and assisting children to come to terms with fears and traumas?

The second main research question (MRQ 2) is: *“Are stories integrated with other areas of the curriculum?”*

The subsidiary questions (SQs) emanating from this research question are:

1.4.3 What is the impact of the integration and creative use of the stories on the Grade R children with regards to outcomes such as language development, social skills, interest and focus on stories?

1.4.4 What are the characteristics and educational value of stories?

1.5 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to formulate a theoretical framework I consulted the relevant and current literature on story theory and integration. Literature included developmental psychology books, journals, language didactics books and reports, research documents of the DoE policy documents and theses.

1.5.1 Introduction

Although this is a hypothetical or even ideal outcome, it seems that the Grade R teachers acting as the surrogate mothers for children have an arduous task to realise these LOs. Some children

who speak with varying degrees of fluency and confidence already seem to pose a challenge to the teachers simply because of the current multilingual situation in schools. The learners need to be engaged in stimulating activities to build confidence and encourage fluency. Therefore the use of stories as teaching tools in an integrated approach should provide the teachers with creative ways in which to develop the language and social skills of the Grade R learners in their care. This opinion is based on the argument by Jennings (1991:12) who believes that children who are given opportunities to use language through the medium of stories will “develop and refine” their language skills, and she also sees the story as empowering the children. I examined the premise that Grade R teachers could be empowered to utilise stories in Grade R classes and integrate them across the curriculum. The use of stories across the curriculum therefore also attempts to address fears and traumas like HIV and AIDS.

The DoE documents mention integration where “Teachers must ... look for opportunities for integration both within and across Learning Areas (DoE, 2002a:6) but in the Revised National Curriculum Statement it is not clearly specified how teachers must integrate lessons across the curriculum. In devising a theoretical framework I include various role players in the educational hierarchy (see figure 3). When I refer to educational hierarchy it can be visually presented in the following organogram to highlight the traditional hierarchy. The importance of including the hierarchy was to illustrate how teachers and learners form the lower ranks.

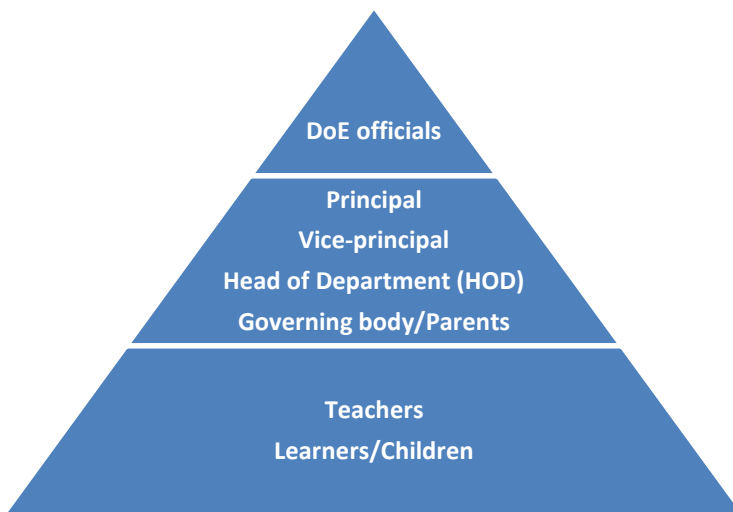


Figure 3: Visual presentation of the Education hierarchy

Although the government is deemed the main role-player, it is not included in this structure simply to make the visual presentation less cumbersome. The structure in figure 3 is top-down because the teachers are obliged to follow instructions and often do not question the instructions but dutifully carry them out. The base is more heavily populated with children and teachers who form the bulk of the education system. This suggests metaphorically that the lower strata in the triangle is the strong base on which the rest of the role-players rest. Teachers and schoolchildren provide the foundation of education. The lower two categories on the triangle are the most important sections, acknowledging that Grade R teachers could hold positions in the management sector of the school such as vice-principal or HOD. This was however, only at one of the schools selected in the research.

The Grade R teachers with their learners are therefore the main ingredients or foci in this framework. The approach, to use stories integrated with other areas in the curriculum focussed on the teachers and how they could empower themselves. The children in turn could respond to the teachers who then adapt or change accordingly to produce better interaction and engagement in the class which addresses the impact of the stories. The process is illustrated in the multidirectional cycle as seen in figure 4, and encompasses the theoretical framework of the research.

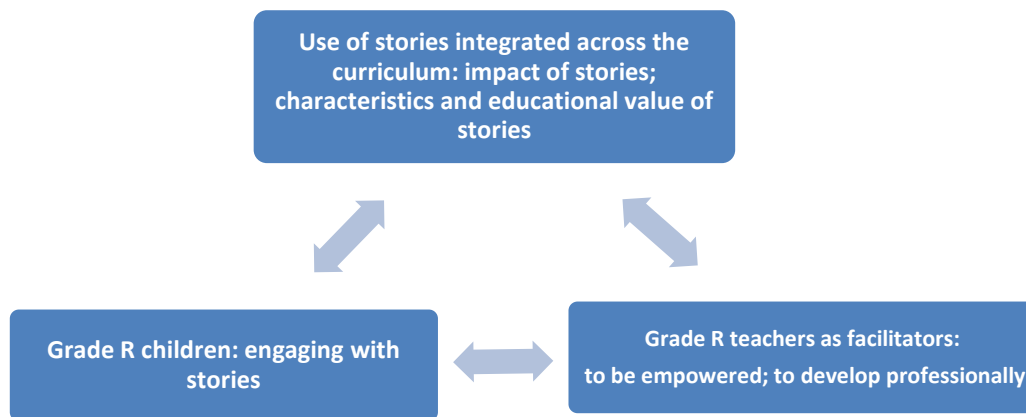


Figure 4: The multi-directional process as theoretical framework

The approach constitutes an on-going process rather than a top-down, one directional process. Movement occurs between all the role-players who design, co-design, apply and experience the

approach. The theoretical framework engaged an interpretive/constructivist approach which is discussed in Chapter Three. To answer the main research questions and subsidiary questions necessitated an enquiry into the various aspects such as theories on the use of stories, the impact when stories are integrated with other areas in the curriculum, creativity, conceptual categories of expressive engagement, planning and the power of stories.

1.5.2 Story theory

This discussion focuses upon what the story entails and whether the story-telling or story reading should be the modus of presentation. Storytellers and types of stories as suggested by literature are also explicated.

(a) What does “story” entail?

Egan’s (1988:2) idea that the story is “... a basic and powerful form in which we make sense of the world and experience”, still bodes important in the research. This is supported by Fenwick (1990:5) who argues that the reasons for sharing stories with children should be to “... augment what has already taken place in the home...” as well as “... compensate for its absence in some family environments”. It can be assumed that all children, irrespective of the nature of their home environment would have acquired some sense of their own world. Therefore they would be able to expand that world and sharing stories could compensate for undeveloped or underdeveloped language and social skills. The Grade R teachers need to create these opportunities to make up for the void left by some home environments. Jennings (1991:10) sees the story as “... a mystery which has the power to reach within each of us, to command emotion, to compel involvement, and to transport us into timelessness”. The Grade R children could therefore be assisted by using stories “... to reach within themselves ... be [transported] into timelessness”, as Jennings (1991:10) suggests. The creative use of stories could help the teacher and children to demystify certain traumatic situations.

Egan (1988:104) emphasises the importance of the oral tradition. To him messages are built into stories and he sees the story form as one of the few cultural universals. Moreover, Egan

(1988:104), regards the story form as one of the “... most powerful and effective sustainers of cultures across the world”. He continues to argue that we remember better when our emotions are linked to what we remember and that the story enables us to link emotions to the messages. An interesting notion by Grainger, Gooch and Lambirth (2005:108) is that the stories created by children should be recognized and used in class and not like in many cases disregarded in favour of stories chosen by the teachers. Stories created by the children boost the confidence of the children. They also add to the collection of stories in the classroom.

In response to the question why stories deserve a more prominent place in classroom activities, Jennings (1991:3) states that, “[i]n every language, in every part of the world, story is the fundamental grammar of all thought and communication we not only discover ourselves and the world, but we change and create ourselves and the world too”. Moreover, Christ, Wang and Chiu (2010:40) found that the use of stories provided opportunities for children to not only develop but also apply literacy skills. Craig (1996:286) cites Lillard to emphasise how preschool children can pretend not only about themselves but also others, events, actions or situations. When they dramatise stories, they are given an opportunity for this pretence. The possibility exists that such an opportunity was limited or non-existent in a deprived home environment where they were not exposed to stories. They probably never imagined to be any of the characters in the stories and should now be given that chance in Grade R.

Hayward (1993:27) argues that fables are “... a rich but untapped source of language teaching materials at all levels”. The following characteristics of fables are postulated by Hayward (1993:27): “... fables are short, [with] action-packed narrative, often full of dialogue ... readily engage the student’s interest ... fables are virtually universal, [and] accessible...”. The idea that fables are universal, for example, indicates the importance of using stories in various situations. The dialogue in fables could be a powerful tool to develop language skills. Likewise, the universality of the fables would assist almost all children to learn and/or develop social skills. Fables, because of their characteristics, are well suited to use in Grade R classes to address topics like HIV and AIDS as technique to develop language and social skills.

The following section highlights two ways to present stories.

(b) Reading stories or telling stories: which way to go ...

In addition to the comprehension of the story Ellis (1997:21-23) mentions listening skills as an advantage and distinguishes between listening quietly when a story is read and listening actively when a story is told.

According to Daniel (2012:58) storytelling is often confused with story reading and story writing. Wright (2007:18) offers some useful tips on how to read. These tips include reading the story before the time and actually practicing how to read fluently and with the necessary expression, not reading into the book, allowing for comments in between, showing pictures and reading for less than ten minutes in the case of younger children. Some teachers however, often read long stories until the end and therefore lose the children on the way even if the stories are interesting. This is due to the fact that the attention span of children is not that long.

Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer and Lowrence, (2004:158-159), citing Kaderavek and Justice, 2002; highlight what children can gain when teachers read stories to them. These gains include the acquisition of language and literacy skills and the extension of their vocabulary (Beck & McKeown, 2001:9). Added to these, there is also the skill to handle books properly as well as communicating when they discuss the visual and the printed text. Furthermore Isbell, *et al.* (2004:158), cite the studies of Silvern (1985) where the comprehension skills, use of complex sentences, concept development, increased letter and symbol development and a positive reading attitude are all attributed to storybook reading. Grades beyond Grade R would probably benefit more as they apply the listed skills. It is important to have interactive reading when teachers opt for reading stories.

The interactionist theory, suggested by Bohannon and Bonvillian (1997:50) is where children interact with the story. Daniel (2012:58) suggests that children should engage in the story and when this dialogic storytelling takes place, children become active listeners. The Text Talk approach of Beck and McKeown (2001:10) promotes interaction with the text whereby teachers should design questions to elicit responses which indicate that the children understand the story and these approaches are reiterated by Daniel (2012:73). Crosser (2008) warns against the notion

where children are expected to sit quietly until the end of the story because this tendency interferes with language development. Colon-Villa (1997:58-59) shares the idea that listening skills are developed when stories are told. Eye contact is proposed by Zeece (2001), as well as Malo and Bullard (2000:10) as a way in which you “establish a relationship with your audience”. Smith (2004:30) sees reading stories as creating a barrier where eye contact is missing. When the story is told you can observe the facial expressions of the children. The expressions highlighted by Wright and Maley (2000:11) are for example signs of enjoyment, sadness or irritation.

The Humane Society of the United States Youth (HSUSY) (2008), suggests various techniques to tell stories. One such technique is the “cartoon method”. For this method the storyteller must create a visual story board by using cartoons. Other techniques include the story box technique which was developed by Bromley (2004:11-12) using shoe boxes to initially hold various items in order to stimulate storytelling by children. A similar idea is recommended and used by Lambirth, Darchez, Nokes and Wood (2004:8-10) called story sacks.

Storytelling was not as extensively researched on preschool children but studies conducted on older children showed that children exposed to storytelling scored higher on comprehension and vocabulary measures (Trostle & Hicks, 1998). For storytelling to be effective you need good storytellers. Storytelling holds similar advantages as story reading but according to Ellis (1997:21-23) the development of the imagination is a major advantage although not an exclusion in story reading. Because the illustrations are not available when telling the story the listeners must imagine these visuals. Collins (1999:88) describes the visual imagination as “... [seeing] pictures in their heads ...”.

Reading stories seems to be the easier option for many teachers based on the assumption that they do not have to memorize it and could easily just pick out a book without any real preparation. Although studies indicate that story reading and storytelling are not mutually exclusive of one another, there are slight differences. Some teachers however, assume that they are not good storytellers. The qualities of storytellers and tips to improve the skill are discussed in the ensuing paragraph.

(c) Storytellers

You often hear teachers say, “I am not a good storyteller. I can perhaps read a story, but not tell one”. They will also compare themselves to their colleagues or even professional actors or television presenters to justify their self-assessments. Is it an excuse to escape the extra effort of preparing a story for the little ones, or genuinely a lack of confidence to tell stories? How does a person then define a “good story teller?” Does it by implication mean you get “bad” story tellers? A storyteller is described by Smith (2004:29) as someone who has enough confidence to perform, who plans the room and material carefully and has good voice management. He is of the opinion that any teacher should in any case have these qualities. Malo and Bullard (2000:11) advise against memorising the story and similarly the HSUSY (2008) proposes that a story should be told in your own words when done from memory rather than memorising it to tell it verbatim. Smith (2004:30) proposes that if the storyteller relates the story word for word the bond between the storyteller and listeners will be broken because the storyteller will struggle to remember every word. This could lead to lack of spontaneity on the part of the storyteller which will impact on the listeners. They will not respond well and you may lose them in the process. It seems that the important steps to follow are to select the story, prepare it thoroughly and then perform it. For the teachers who think that they cannot tell stories there are ways in which they can compensate or learn. Teachers should be sensitive when they select stories especially with regards to fears and traumas which the children might encounter.

Smith (2004:29) outlines various steps when you wish to engage in storytelling for the first time. This seems very useful especially for teachers who feel that they do not know how to tell stories. You need to observe other storytellers and use what Smith (2004:29) terms “key questions as a guide” to address the type of story told. Firstly, did the storyteller choose a story that matched the audience? Secondly, did the setting of the room enhance the story? Thirdly, did the storyteller use special effects? Fourthly, did the storyteller use his/her voice effectively? Fifthly, did the structure of the story include a beginning, middle and end? Finally, what was the effect of the story and what was the learning experience of the observer? However, he cautions that this might not be possible and therefore provides alternatives like recordings, observing social situations where people relate personal stories or tell jokes. These alternatives give the storyteller an idea of using the voice, gestures, facial expressions and aspects like the influence of the venue

or you could join a storytelling group or enrol for a short course. Most of the guidelines as proposed by Smith (2004) are shared by Malo and Bullard (2000:11-12).

Although these suggestions seem very helpful, it might be that very few teachers regard storytelling important enough to enrol for a course. They might opt to observe colleagues or presenters or television programmes. If the DoE introduces a course where teachers are expected to attend as part of their in-service training when it was not done as part of teacher training, it could become part of a more structured programme. Neuman (1999:300) “found impressive improvement on measures of literacy, when basic teacher training was combined with book readings in child care centres serving low-income children.” I argue that the same finding could be applicable to all children and not only for low-income children as more affluent children might have a similar need.

Malo and Bullard (2000:9) suggest that emergent storytellers can share their own experiences about things that happen on a daily basis or things that happened in the past. Every teacher experiences or experienced something at some time in some place whether as a child or as teacher. This can be the start of a story. Certainly the teacher will know what to include and what to exclude. I have experienced that even more senior students enjoy listening to you when you share a personal story. This adds to the bonding in the classroom and they realise that you are not that different from them. It is therefore important that the selected stories should adhere to certain criteria.

(d) Types of stories as suggested by literature

Wright and Maley (2000:11-12) regard the following aspects as important when you select stories: the story should engage the children from the start; the storyteller should like it; it must be appropriate for the children and the occasion; they should understand it in order to enjoy it and it should present them with a rich experience of language without long descriptive passages. Finally, the storyteller must choose a story which he/she is able to tell well. According to Smith’s guide (2004:30) you need to find and prepare a story. Smith (2004:30) suggests a variety of stories like myths, folk tales, legends or fairy tales because they are multicultural.

Griva (2007:27) postulates that stories used in classrooms should "... bring the real world into the classroom". The question arises whether the teachers in the Grade R classrooms are prepared to bring the real world, which includes fears and traumas like HIV and AIDS, into the classroom. According to Bhana (2007:433) teachers shy away from talks related to sexuality and if there is any indication that children are aware of sex, teachers will rather send their own children away from the school.

Furthermore, the importance of language is shared by Wright and Maley (2000:11), and Griva (2007:27) as a criterion for selection of stories where Griva focuses on the appropriacy of language and repeated language patterns for the target group. The importance of language and language development is underscored by Isbell, *et al.* (2004:157) who quote Rubin and Wilson (1995) citing the early childhood years as the opportune time to experiment and "... play with language" while they learn to appreciate the sounds and the meanings of words.

I agree with Wright and Maley (2000:11) that there should not be long descriptive sentences. We should therefore not confuse rich language where there is onomatopoeia or repetitive phrases with long descriptions. Some stories are purely for enjoyment while other stories serve as escapism from stark realities and stressful situations such as HIV and AIDS. According to the HSUSY (2008) good stories have the ability to make us integrally part of the lives, emotions and actions of others. The actual verb used is that the story "draws" the reader or listener "in". This is very powerful and underscores Wright and Maley's (2000:11) opinion, that the story should engage the children. I agree that children should feel connected to the story from the start or else there is no point in telling the story. If the story engages the children from the start, they will in turn interact with the story.

To engage the children in the story the storyteller should like the story if the children are supposed to like it. The story will be told with more conviction and sincerity if the storyteller likes it. Furthermore you often find that stories are not really appropriate for the children or suitable for the occasion. This will seriously hamper their understanding and enjoyment thereof. To implement the integrated approach propounded by experts like Gan and Chong (1998:39-45); Haddad (2002); Clark and Moss (2011), careful planning and preparation need to be done well in

advance. I selected three stories to present in the Grade R classes namely *Caterpillar's Dream* (Faulkner, 2003a), and the Afrikaans version, *Ruspe se droom* (Faulkner, 2003c); *The wide mouthed frog* (Faulkner, 1996) and the Afrikaans equivalent, *Platbekpadda* (Faulkner, 2003b); *Cheeky* (De Villiers, 2003) and *Parmant* (De Villiers, 2006), the Afrikaans version. These books are discussed in Chapter Three, and the selection was specifically done after reading and reviewing the books to find them appropriate and in compliance to the requirements for Grade R level. Moreover the books were selected to apply an integrated approach.

1.5.3 The integrated approach

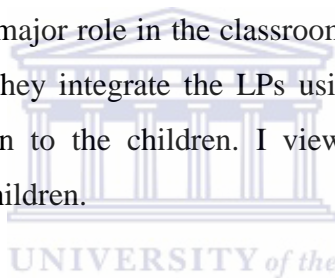
In order to discuss the proposed integrated approach I give a brief overview of the description given by the DoE in the RNCS Grades R-9 (Schools) Policy (DoE, 2002d:6). Integration in the literacy programme supposes the integration of the six LOs namely listening and speaking; reading and viewing; writing; thinking and reasoning; and knowledge of sounds, words and grammar. The RNCS (DoE, 2002d:6) document suggests texts to assist the teacher with the implementation of integration. Furthermore the assessment standards (ASs) for the various LOs are listed. I extracted and summarised only those which were applicable for this research namely that:

- (i) learners will be expected to listen with enjoyment to oral texts which include simple songs and stories where they act out sections of the songs and stories;
- (ii) they join in choruses, draw pictures of the stories or songs;
- (iii) they tell their own stories and retell stories;
- (iv) they talk about texts like stories to have their language structure and use assessed; and;
- (v) they create and use drawings to convey a message (DoE, 2002d:14-20).

However, this AS is not directly linked to the stories or songs. In the DoE curriculum stories are part of the Literacy Programme and the arts are termed Arts & Culture which must be integrated in the three LPs (DoE, 2002b:13). The first step to integration is therefore already taken. Based on the information in the DoE documents as stated earlier, the term “integrated” does not seem to have the same connotation as to what I propose. Integration is very aptly seen by Fenwick (1990:40) as a “seamless robe”. What is meant by this is exactly how I see the use of stories

across the curriculum. In my opinion the “seamless robe” presents the children with a global picture of their curriculum instead of compartments where they have to switch on and off between each lesson. They are exposed to a theme which is interconnected. Each lesson links with the previous one and the following one. There is a chain of activities. Fenwick also acknowledges that this approach of integrating the story in practically all lessons dates as far back as 1919 when introduced by Katherine Cather. Fenwick (1990:40) focuses more on the higher grades for example grades five and higher when he states that some lessons work better than others.

Integration is viewed by Ellis and Fouts (2001: 23-24) as an approach that is child-centred and where there is emphasis on “creativity, activities ... and ... experience”. This supports the research to stimulate not only the children but especially the teachers to develop and use an approach where creativity plays a major role in the classroom. The teachers need to explore and discover creative ways in which they integrate the LPs using the story as the binding factor. Creativity should then filter down to the children. I view creativity as a two-way process circulating between teachers and children.



In terms of the entire school programme for Grade R, time allocated to the use of stories across the curriculum seemed limited, considering the fact that the above-mentioned ASs only pertain to languages which form part of the Literacy Programme. With reference to integration across the curriculum the DoE does encourage this in the training manuals where it is stated that teachers should consider how they will apply integration across LAs (DoE, 2003a). Yet there are no clear guidelines. To use stories creatively could develop the creativity and the imagination of the children and the teachers.

1.5.4 Creativity and the power of the imagination

Starko (2010:6) claims that our visions of teachers and learners need to be shifted when education includes the goals of creativity. Furthermore, she views the learners involved in creativity as problem solvers and communicators rather than passive acquirers of information (Starko, 2010:17). Vygotsky (1995) cited in Smolucha, (1992:54) emphasizes that creativity, like

other learning, emerges through interactions with other individuals. Starko (2010:177-178) also posits that creativity requires new excitement where we assist children to see in new ways and “[t]he lesson becomes an invitation to create, not a demand to reproduce.” The idea links with MRQ 1, SQ 1.4.1 where teachers are empowered, as well as MRQ 2, 1.4.4 with the impact of stories on the children’s language and social skills.

The integration of stories with other areas of the curriculum gives more scope for optimal utilisation of the imagination of children. Grade R children have very vivid imaginations, but these are not always extended. According to Craig (1996:307) “Pre-school children often use social pretend play [involving] the construction and sharing of fantasies and imagination ...”. To listen to a story being told or read, is not adequate to establish whether the imagination is used, especially if the story session ends without any activities based on the story. When the children are allowed to talk about the story or re-tell the story in their own words, they give another dimension to the story, based on the imagination. In this regard Daniel (2012:8) cautions that the story is a social construct and thus the children also engage in the story. They are therefore part of the community of storytellers with the teacher as the principal storyteller but not giving a solo performance. When they are allowed to dramatise parts, they have to use their imagination, language skills and social skills in creative ways (see MRQ, SQs 1.4.3 and 1.4.4).

In a study on graphic-narrative play with five to eight year old children conducted by Wright (2007) it was concluded that the school provides opportunities for the voices of the children to surface. From these voices the adults could learn too. The children had to explain their drawings and use different voices and their own imagination based on stimuli provided. I observed a five year old who looked at an ice-cream and then told the most incredible story based on the visual stimulus. Nobody assisted her. The story ended where the king changed the ice-cream into a “wonderful human being”. This proves the power of the imagination if given the opportunity. In relation to the research the assumption can be made that dramatisation fills the void where children do not possess the vocabulary to express themselves. They will mime or gesture as was the case in Wright’s (2007) study. Gouch (2008:108) supports the importance of play with no interference with storying where children and teachers make up stories. Similarly Ashiabi

(2007:205) claims that play is important for the socio-emotional development of the child (see MRQ 2, 1.4.3).

The opportunity to pretend and imagine applies when they create sound effects, using musical instruments, sing or illustrate the story and perform dances depicting certain scenes. Ebersöhn and Eloff (2002:62) in Engelbrecht and Green describes “Dance [as] a wonderful therapeutic medium ...”. Furthermore, Ebersöhn and Eloff (2002:63) share a similarity with Craig (1996:286) on the importance of play when they posit that, “The facilitation of language and cognitive development *through play* is important during the early years”. Observing children when they play indicates how imaginative they can be. They create games and dialogue as they carry on playing. According to Craig (1996:290) “Play offers children the opportunity to practice and develop their ... language skills in an atmosphere of free expression ... Play allows children to manipulate reality, meanings, and their experiences”.

It was therefore valuable to research in which way Grade R children were able to remember their various pleasant and unpleasant situations by using stories. This was however, not to open up any wounds (Webb, 2002:266), but merely to acknowledge their situations to themselves and then find ways to start the healing process. By listening to stories they had to identify with characters in similar situations. Linked to this was the idea postulated by Jennings (1991:17) that children identify with incidents in the lives of other children if these events are similar to their own. These experiences refer to personal experiences. By using stories and arts they presented opportunities to relate to similar experiences in stories.

McKay and Kendrick (2001:529) conducted research to explore the images of literacy that children create or construct in their lives represented in their drawings. In the article titled “Children Draw their Images of Reading and Writing”, they used questions to stimulate discussion. The inclusion of this article in the research is mainly because the reading and writing form part of language development. After collating the drawings the researchers categorised them. Interestingly many drawings seemed to embed the literacy activities in the maintenance and extension of family relationships. If it is related to the HIV and AIDS situation in a South African context, we will probably find the same situation. Similarly you are able to see how

drawings done by HIV and AIDS affected and traumatised children reveal the need for the maintenance of the family. The development of language and social skills or lack thereof was also established by drawings when children had to explain or discuss their drawings. McKay and Kendrick (2001:532) concluded that the children's drawings presented them with a "window" to see how those children may be thinking about their reading and writing in their own lives. The metaphor of the window allows both the researchers and the children to see what went on in the minds of the children. The children were visualizing their innermost feelings by way of the drawings. Similarly you can infer what the Grade R children were thinking about their situations when their art representations were viewed or when they related stories. Their creativity provided information.

Lamwaka (2004) emphasises that stories can heal in saying that "... storytelling contains seeds of healing". Furthermore she postulates that by telling stories you offer the listeners tools to survive in a complex society. Although in their case the "complex society" refers mainly to war and child soldiers, the same holds true for children confronted by fears and traumas like HIV and AIDS. Children are also in a complex society because they have to cope with fears and traumas and therefore need to use their imagination to cope or come to terms with the situation in a less frightening way. In a study conducted by Morris, Ulmer and Chimnani (2003:138-142) it is clear that prevention education plays a key role in combating the spreading of HIV and AIDS. The youth under the age of 25 are most at risk and the highest incidence is in this group. Stories could serve as intervention tools to spread the message to younger minds. Grade R learners and their teachers can be educated and supported via stories and creative arts while simultaneously being assisted to understand traumatic situations. This is, however a sensitive issue, especially for such young children. In presenting lessons with stories as the nucleus from which other lessons flow, Sipe (2002:477-480) proposes five conceptual categories as explicated below.

1.5.5 Conceptual categories of expressive engagement

Firstly, according to Sipe (2002:477) there is dramatisation where children can role-play using dialogue or do it non-verbally (mime).

Secondly, talking back as expressive engagement is where children become involved in the story by chiming in as the story is told. They should get so carried away that they talk back to the characters.

Thirdly, children can suggest alternatives for the plot, setting, characters and other narrative elements by critiquing or controlling the story. They can decide that Red Riding Hood, for example, must visit her grandmother in a town and not in the woods. Children see themselves also becoming part of the story where they control and manage the narrative elements.

In the fourth conceptual category children inserted themselves or their friends in the story. This was an attempt to use the story as therapeutic measure. Lamwaka (2004), in a paper presented at the 29th IBBY Congress in Cape Town, came to the conclusion that the pain of these children was healed through storytelling and listening to stories. She realised that the stories "... broke through barriers no other mode of communication would". This intensified my own beliefs that stories are powerful teaching tools, but too often neglected. I concur with Hanson (2005:43) that "... stories [increase] confidence, pride, reading fluency, and respect for others".

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The fifth conceptual category assumes that children take over the story and manipulate it for their own purposes. Interesting here is that they do not consider any understanding or interpretation of the text. They express themselves by using the story as a launching pad for example to sing or make comments about the characters in any way they wish to. This links with the MRQ 1 where teachers are empowered to use stories in various ways, and MRQ 2 where stories are integrated allowing learners to respond to stories in various ways.

1.5.6 Planning of stories

The dominant teaching model, according to Egan (1988:1), is when planning lessons, the teachers start by identifying and listing their aims and objectives, after which they select content and materials, followed by choosing appropriate methods, and finally they decide on evaluation procedures. Egan (1988:1) also lists the guiding principles of this model whereby "... [a child's] learning proceeds from the concrete to the abstract, from the known to the unknown, from the

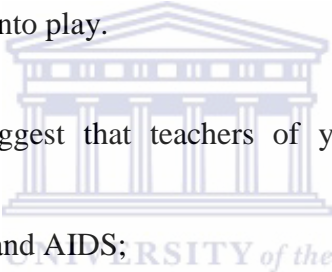
simple to the complex, and from active manipulation to symbolic conceptualisation". He argues that young children already have the ability to understand the abstractions in a fairytale, for example Cinderella, to make meaning of the concrete story. I concur with Egan that young children understand abstractions, based on my own experience when telling stories to my children and young relatives. Observing them when you relate stories about good or bad characters, their facial expressions and body language are indicative that, without prior knowledge of a witch for example, they show an understanding of the story. These observations I made with infants, before they were exposed and became aware in their home and pre-school environments of television.

Linked to Egan's notion that lesson planning should not overlook the fact that children can understand abstractions I support the description of the teacher as planner by Govindsamy (2010:35). These traits are amongst others being "knowledgeable and efficient to orchestrate a plan properly". In addition there should be flexibility to allow children to "lead the learning in their own direction". Although she suggests that the flow of the curriculum should not be interfered with, the idea is that there should be a balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities (Govindsamy, 2010:35). Teachers would then be reflective practitioners as they constantly have to reflect on what they teach, how they teach and then adapt their techniques. Dogani (2008:134), in a study on music with pre-service teachers views reflection as a way that investigates "possibilities to structure practice in a meaningful way". Teachers have to constantly review what they are doing, considering the responses of the children and meeting the challenges and risks involved. The multi-directional process therefore is a mechanism for reflection.

Children, when not in the care of their mothers or caregivers, will become the responsibility of the Grade R teachers to develop their language and social skills once they start attending Grade R. The teachers should also be able to help the children to cope with the stressful situation of having lost a parent or parents. Some children become inhibited or withdrawn after suffering stressful situations. Once more stories can help them to escape the stressful events and shed their inhibitions through movement, play, music and visual arts.

Franks, Miller, Wolff and Landry (2003:230) agree that the teachers in these classrooms need to be informed and supported with regards to HIV and AIDS instruction but admit that there is not much known about the skills of these teachers or their attitudes. This was a study conducted in the USA but the same is probably true in the SA schools. This links with the requirements postulated by Eliason and Jenkins, (2012:20); Kostelik, Soderman and Whiren, (2004:40), Zaslow and Martinez-Beck (2006:315) with regards to teacher qualifications and abilities. These are important assumptions for FP children, more so when confronted with fears and traumas like HIV and AIDS. Grade R teachers need to be sensitive to the situation in order to assist their children to be informed. Language development as an integral part of the development of social skills will become the responsibility of the Grade R teachers while the children are in their care. The approach to use stories as a teaching tool presumably assists not only the teachers but also the children to develop these skills. The tool is applied as an intervention measure where the imagination of the children comes into play.

Franks, *et al.* (2003:235-237) suggest that teachers of young children need to know the following:

- 
- (i) how children acquire HIV and AIDS;
 - (ii) the possibility that HIV and AIDS can be transmitted in the classroom;
 - (iii) the physical and emotional effects of HIV and AIDS on infected children;
 - (iv) how HIV and AIDS may affect the way the children function in class; and
 - (v) how to keep their children safe from HIV infection.

Using stories can empower teachers to engage children in meaningful ways across the curriculum to address fears and traumas which need not be HIV and AIDS only.

1.5.7 The power of stories to empower teachers

The power of stories is underscored by Mello (2001:548) who, like Egan (1988:3), views the stories as important developmental and teaching tools. The research conducted focuses on storytelling as teaching method (Mello, 2001:548). He refers to studies which investigated non-conventional fairy tales as education models for children's development. The studies conducted did not however, according to Mello (2001:549), use storytelling as the primary mode of

delivering information to the participants who were boys and girls. The qualitative study was conducted to investigate how children were affected by gender roles in the modern versions of tales by the Brothers Grimm and how they reacted to these stories.

In Mello's research stories were told aloud, which then elicited responses. The stories were told in Grade Four classes, where the sessions were taped and transcribed. Questioning, comments and interviews followed the sessions. Data collected were analysed, categorised and compared. One of Mello's (2001:554) findings is that storytelling by teachers are of utmost importance and is regarded as "...a simple, inexpensive, and accessible method that affects students' explorations, inquiry, understanding of story structures ..., and comprehension skills". This links with MRQ 2. I accessed the Grade R learners to explore the effect of stories by using a similar method.

Storytelling as a teaching tool involved intervention strategies to assist the children and teachers in their quest to face fears and traumas like the current situation of HIV and AIDS that is compounded by the fact that children are orphaned and left to their own devices. This begs sensitivity in teaching approaches. Webb (2002: 267) is of the opinion that when a parent dies, the normal psychological development of a child is threatened. It was therefore important to establish whether the prescribed curriculum provided sufficient opportunities to address this need. Furthermore, I established whether teachers were using interventions to help Grade R children to cope with fears. Most importantly I suggest that the creative use of stories as teaching tools could be integrated with other areas to provide the support for the Grade R children to develop their language and social skills (MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3).

To use stories as therapeutic measure, "... bibliotherapy ... a technique which attempts to help individuals understand or even to resolve some of their own problems" is proposed by Fenwick (1990:42). Although he cautions against using stories based only on human problems, there is the advantage that stories resolving problems, could have a positive effect on many children. Children seem to prefer stories with happy, rather than sad endings. The bibliotherapy could therefore address the issue of HIV and AIDS. Mellon (2000) with her multidimensional, cross-cultural training in healing through the arts has written extensively on the power of stories as

healing tool. Harper (2010) conducted research on bibliotherapy intervention and suggested that research should rather focus on how the use of bibliotherapy can be helpful in collaboration with other interventions instead of whether it is effective or not. In the research, a teaching strategy was explored to address fears and traumas in Grade R classes, and to understand as well as cope with such situations through experiencing stories.

Brandell's (2000) book, *Of Mice and Metaphors: Therapeutic Storytelling with children* outlines an approach prompting patients to talk about themselves by telling stories. The approach creates an opportunity to distance you while doing self-revelation. When children therefore tell stories, they reveal something about themselves. I argue that Grade R children need a safe environment where they can distance themselves, but without feeling that they isolate themselves from the situation. The Grade R children must be guided to understand, open up and deal with the fears and traumas like the HIV and AIDS situation. When they engage in self-revelation programmes through stories and arts, they are protected in role-plays or dramatisation. In the research, the children talked, sang, drew or acted out these experiences as self-revelation exercises. The activities were presented as a joint effort by the teachers and the researcher. The effect of the activities possibly reached the teachers as well, as often the teachers are exposed to the same kind of trauma. The art of stories could allow a form of escapism from harsh realities. Teachers could feel comfortable in the knowledge that the stories provided a route to deal with issues like HIV and AIDS at this tender age.

Amongst all the organisations available to assist HIV and AIDS orphans Jackson (2002:276) cites Levine and Foster who claim that "... story telling ... art, and music could be healing tools" to serve as traditional coping mechanisms. Based on this the need therefore arose to research whether these tools are used as learning materials to serve as a therapeutic measure at the institutions intended for the research. Children can become part of a more caring world. Everything depends on the type of stories and activities in the programmes presented. It also called for extremely creative and innovative teachers, who were not only acquainted with the circumstances of all children, but similarly equally sensitive to these circumstances. The story can be used as a stimulus for a multitude of activities with the Grade R class. When integrated with arts and other areas in the curriculum, the Grade R teachers can stimulate the learners in

various ways. Both role-players can be creative and at the same time apply ways in which they are assisted to cope with fears and traumas for example the topic of HIV and AIDS as part of the curriculum in Life Orientation.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following diagram illustrates various elements in the research.

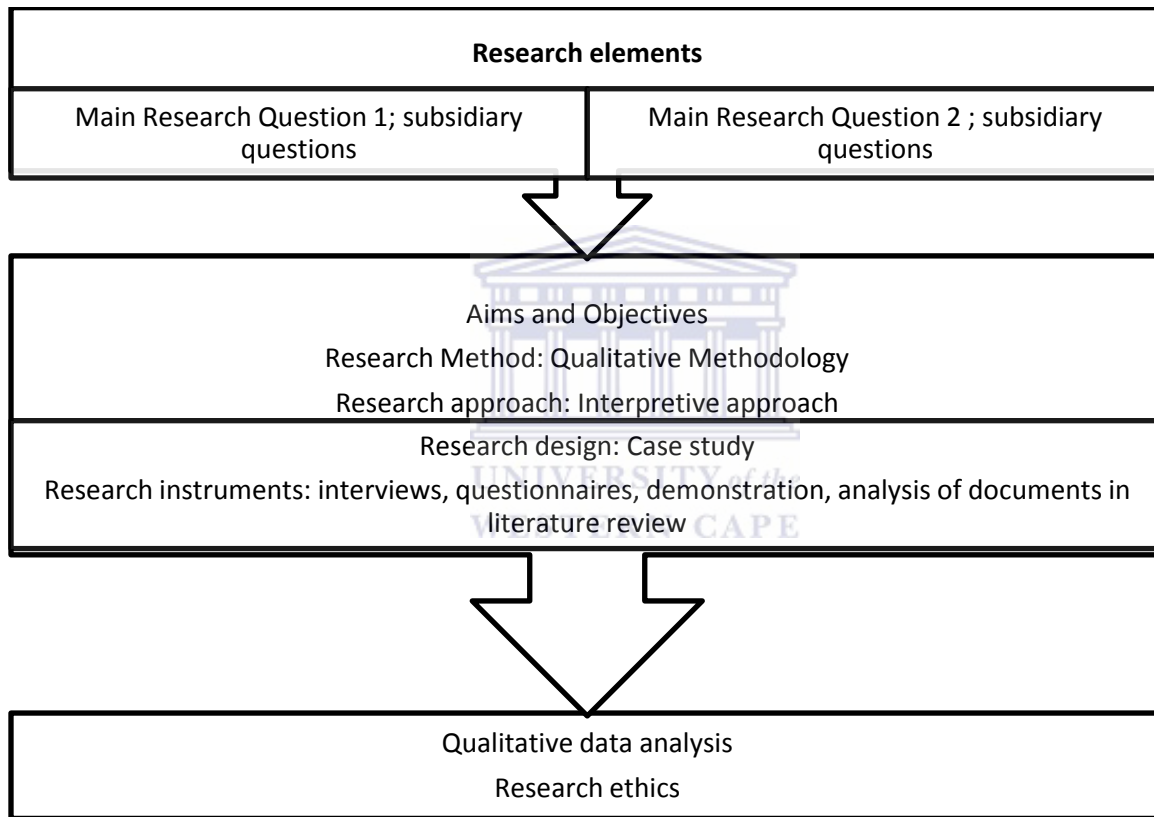


Figure 5: Research elements

Denzin and Lincoln (2005:22) postulate that researchers are bound by a set of premises namely ontological, epistemological and methodological which can be called a paradigm. According to these authors the ontology refers to the nature of reality, epistemology refers to the relationship between the researcher and the known, while the methodology refers to how we aim to derive at knowledge of the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:22). I therefore aimed to obtain knowledge by applying a qualitative methodology to address the use of stories in Grade R classrooms. The

research methodology would hopefully assist in addressing the main research questions with the subsidiary questions. I give a brief description in the ensuing paragraphs of my research methodology with a more detailed account in Chapter Three.

1.6.1 Methodological paradigm

I conducted the research within a qualitative methodological paradigm (Cresswell, 2005:44; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:30). This was informed by the notion suggested by Creswell (2005:45) that the researcher needs to understand a central phenomenon. In this research it implied the comprehension of stories as teaching tools to develop social and linguistic in Grade R classes. Qualitative research supposes the processes and meaning in the research where I would stress the nature of reality namely the Grade R classrooms; the close relationship between the teachers, children and myself and what I observed or taught, and the constraints that I experienced in terms of the situation at the various institutions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:30).

Quantitative research in contrast, has measurement and analysis as foci where mathematical models, statistical tables and graphs are used (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:32). Because I focused on the processes in the classrooms and the interactions between the various participants and myself, I opted for a qualitative paradigm.

1.6.2 The research approach

Within the qualitative paradigm I opted for an interpretive approach. Guba (1990:17) propounds that the interpretive framework assumes that a set of beliefs guides the actions of the researcher. Similarly Denzin and Lincoln (2005:42) regard all research as interpretive because the researcher interprets the information according to his or her own set of beliefs. The authors distinguish four interpretive paradigms which guide qualitative research namely positivist, post-positivist, constructivist-interpretivist and critical emancipatory. The positivist and post-positivist researchers rely on experimental, quasi-experimental, survey and rigid methodologies. The critical researchers question the political nature of institutional structures and arrangements and examine the processes of gaining, maintaining and circulating power relationships that exist

(Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:23). I focused on understanding rather than explaining why the participants namely the teachers and children behaved in a certain way and therefore my theoretical paradigm is an interpretive/constructivist one (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:53; Maxwell, 2006; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, Merriam, 1998).

1.6.3 The research design

The research design emanating from the qualitative methodological framework was a case study as propounded by Stake, (2005:443); Mertens (2005:237) Merriam, (1998) and Babbie and Mouton (2001). Stake (2005:445-446) postulates three types of case studies namely intrinsic case study where the focus is on an intrinsic interest to gain a better understanding of the particular case; instrumental case study where the researcher wants to draw a generalisation and the case is of secondary interest; and multiple case study where a number of cases are studied. The case was to investigate the use of stories in Grade classes, and whether stories were integrated with other areas in the curriculum. It therefore involves an intrinsic case study with the boundaries in the Grade R classes as part of a school system.

Field work was used at the participating schools to execute the qualitative research design. The choice to use a case study was informed by the interest that I have in the use of stories in Grade R classes as teaching tool to empower the teachers. The particular case that I argue encapsulates the story theory and integration of stories across the curriculum with the impact thereof. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002:181) claim that the case study provides a unique setting for the reader to understand real people in real situations. In the research I was able to understand the children and their teachers in the actual classroom situation. Furthermore, the case study enabled me to obtain rich descriptions of actual events in which I was integrally involved (Cohen, *et al.*, 2002:182). In Chapter Three I expand on the implementation and value of the case study.

1.6.4 The research instruments

This section attempts to provide an overview of the research instruments utilised, with a more detailed discussion in Chapter Three. Interviews are regarded as the most commonly used

instruments to collect data (Kelly, 2006:297). As research instrument I utilised the non-scheduled interview which, according to Bless and Hogson-Smith (1995:107) is "... an excellent technique when no comparison is sought between the responses of different participants. ...". This was used to conduct the initial interviews with the principal and teachers. In addition I used the non-scheduled structured interview which is described by Bless and Hogson-Smith (1995:107) as an interview "... where the interviewer has a much more precise goal and the types of questions to be answered by the interviewees are fixed ...". The lecturers were interviewed in this way. This was to ascertain the recent trends in teacher training to articulate it with the tendencies in the classrooms. Furthermore it could provide useful information for professional development (SQ 1.4.2).

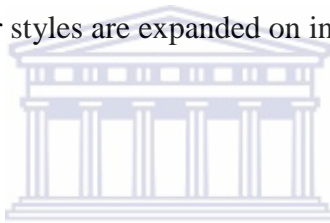
I also utilised, the structured questionnaire for the teachers and pre-service students, defined by Bless and Hogson-Smith. (1995:107) as "The most structured way of getting information directly from respondents ...". Some of the preliminary issues were addressed in the questionnaires. The responses partially addressed SQ 1.4.1. In administering the questionnaires I received immediate feedback. Consistency was ensured as it was not too time-consuming to deal with seven teachers (Gorard, 2001:82-84). From the interviews and questionnaires aimed at the teachers the following information was gathered: types of stories used, with motivations for their choices; whether there was integration with arts; the methods that were favoured by teachers; if there was integration, across the curriculum and whether it formed part of a structured time-table or if stories were just an ad hoc arrangement; if the children were allowed to tell or make up their own stories; asking about what happened to their efforts; whether there were specific stories dealing with issues like HIV and AIDS or other traumatic situations; the way children reacted to the stories; if stories were not used, the possible reasons why not.

Informal conversations with Grade R children determined which stories appealed to them in terms of main characters, settings and themes; did they prefer stories with happy or sad endings and why; did they love drawing, dancing, role-play. What did they like to draw, model/build, sing or dramatize; what did they dislike and why? Inferences with regards to SQs 1.4.3 and 1.4.4 could be made.

The specifics in terms of observation are explicated in Chapter Three. Observation as a research instrument was used to reflect on the responses of children to the different kinds of stories and storytelling techniques; their ability to use their imagination when dramatising or illustrating stories; their creativity to make up tunes or use percussive instruments (melodic and non-melodic) to accompany stories or create dramatic moments in stories. Furthermore with regards to language: did they give monosyllabic answers or did they communicate coherently, and how did they socialize with their peers? The observation informed SQs 1.4.3 and 1.4.4.

One of my roles during the research was to observe the teachers and the children while they interacted. Moreover I observed the children when I presented lessons. Ely (1991:45) distinguishes three observer styles namely “... the active participant, the privileged observer, and the limited observer”. My role as observer included all the styles mentioned. The motivation and discussion on the different observer styles are expanded on in Chapter Three.

1.6.5 Triangulation



Triangulation, as defined by Guion, Diehl and McDonald (2011:1) and Mertens (2005:255) refer to the attempt in research to validate the data collected via various ways. It will therefore be used in conjunction with observations. Triangulation is furthermore viewed as a way to secure validity and reliability in qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:275; Baxter & Jack, 2008:556).

The triangulation types postulated by Duffy (1993:143) and McKernan (1991:193) are:

- (a) data triangulation which indicates that data or information is collected in various settings;
- (b) investigator triangulation which implies that different inquirers are used;
- (c) theoretical triangulation where a research project is seen from different models or perspectives; and
- (d) methodological triangulation which involves collecting data by using multiple research methods such as participant observation with field notes, questionnaires and interviews.

To the above-mentioned triangulation types Guion, *et al.* (2011:2) add environmental triangulation which identifies various environmental factors like time, day, or season which

might influence the study. The researcher determines in which way the findings remain the same if the environmental factors change. I used multiple research methods as indicated in (d) above which curbed bias to an extent.

1.6.6 Access to schools

The schools were selected to include various socio-economic contexts to ensure representation of the school contexts. There are very specific guidelines and instructions with regards to accessing schools which I adhered to. Therefore I gained permission from the DoE to utilise state institutions. For the private institutions I made appointments to see the principals. The participants in the research were Grade R children at institutions in the Western Cape, selected from the schools registered with the Educational Management Development Centres (EMDCs) and an independent pre-school. The institutions comprised of a Grade R class at a safe haven for abandoned and abused children, Grade R classes at a previously disadvantaged public primary school in a semi-urban area, and one at an independent pre-school in an affluent urban area as well as a paediatric ward at a public hospital, with Grade R children who received tuition whilst hospitalised. The last school was accessed but did not meet the same requirements as the other schools to conduct the research.

Furthermore, Grade R teachers were observed to establish which teaching methods and approaches were implemented to facilitate the necessary outcomes. Examples of learning materials such as story books and additional apparatus used by the teachers and prescribed, where applicable, by the DoE were scrutinised to establish the suitability for the specific target groups. The idea was that teachers would eventually be empowered to develop their own learning materials to use in their classrooms for the Grade R learners. The DoE currently scrutinises all learning materials but teachers also need to be trained to supplement materials especially in Grade R classes to cater for the diverse needs of the children. Teachers need to be equipped with coping skills/ mechanisms and approaches to deal with traumatic situations as well.

Some sessions included activities suggested in the RNCS documents (which were presented by the teachers and observed by the researcher). Activities using stories that integrate other areas in the curriculum were presented by the researcher and observed by the teachers. These activities addressed the professional development of the teachers. The assessment was to establish the value of these programmes on the linguistic and social skills of the Grade R children. In addition these sessions indirectly attempted to educate Grade R children in the designated classes to be exposed to fears and traumas.

The role of the WCED as provincial representative of the DoE was explored. I needed to assess what input the WCED as agent of the DoE made to foster a good working relationship and to create an atmosphere conducive for teachers and children to use stories across the curriculum. Questions which I grappled with were, for example: How available, accessible and affordable were the learning materials? Are the pre-service teachers, currently engaged in teacher training at the Higher Education (HE) Institutions in the Western Cape, trained and/or fully informed to utilise the learning materials effectively and to the benefit of the children? How do they (DoE, pre-and in-service teachers, lecturers) assess the effective use of learning materials and programmes? The interviews with lecturers and questionnaires issued to FP students provided some information in this regard. I did not however, manage to secure any personal discussions with officials of the DoE and relied on the documents, personal experience as an ex-employee and teachers' input.

1.6.7 Data analysis

Because qualitative research is interpretive the data must be analysed to extract possible themes. A qualitative analysis of the presentations would determine whether stories are used and if so, how the stories are used to empower and develop teachers professionally. An evaluation of the approaches used would establish the impact of stories on social and linguistic skills as well as the characteristics and educational value of stories. The deductions I made after analysing texts and observations, were illustrated in a case study (Stake, 1988:445). In order to analyse the data I applied coding and content analysis. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:150-151) illustrates data analysis with Creswell's (2005) data analysis spiral. It involves four steps namely to organize

(organization) data in smaller units, record categories or interpretations (perusal), identify categories or themes (classification), and integrate and summarise (synthesis) data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:150).

1.6.8 Coding and content analysis as qualitative analysis

Content analysis was used to identify themes whereby I analysed the verbal and visual communication (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:134). I applied content analysis, specifically conceptual analysis as opposed to relational analysis and coded the data to construct meaning thereof (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:262, Babbie & Mouton, 2001:383). Firstly, I colour coded the data to see how often codes occurred and secondly, I recorded and identified any themes or categories which emerged to inform the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

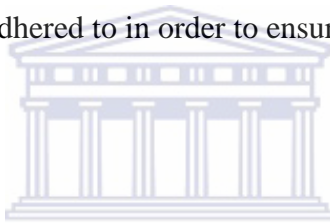
1.7 ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethical considerations are formalised on pp. xx-xxi. Permission to utilise Grade R at an SOS village, WCED Grade R classes (previously disadvantaged and more affluent groups) and a Grade R class at an independent pre-school was formally requested in a letter, stating details of the researcher and explaining the motivation for the research. This was done to ensure transparency and encourage the need to collaborate. When granted permission, the specific institutions were informed of the proposed programme. The written programme was discussed with the principals and teachers. Ideas were exchanged to find a common understanding of the intended approach. The programme included dates of visits and intended activities for example questionnaires, presentations, observations and meetings. The programme is detailed in Chapter Three.

Informal meetings were arranged with the teachers and/or supervisors, which served as information sessions or "... to clarify [my] intentions ..." Silverman (2000:270). Information was shared on the specific rationale for the research to be conducted, as well as establishing the availability and readiness to become part of such a venture." It was important to establish the willingness of people to co-operate. I negotiated to arrange, what Kelly (2006:312) calls the

“gatekeeper”. This person grants permission to conduct the research at the intended institutions. This was in all cases the principal or head of department. The initial session eventually led to mutual sharing of expertise and acquired skills and ensured that I did not alienate myself from the gatekeeper (Kelly (2006:312). As suggested by the literature, I needed to persuade the person that, amongst other issues, the basic routine of the institution would not be disrupted and that I would give useful feedback. The feedback was given during and after completion of the studies in order to effect varied activities and responses. Teachers shared their expertise and skills on teaching stories with me and vice versa. Sharing of information took the format of a practical demonstration. The participants were granted anonymity in the research paper, if so requested. No information was disclosed without the permission of the participants. A sensitive and caring approach was used towards the learners in order to respect their human rights, especially in addressing fears and traumas at this young age. The prescriptions of the DoE and the University of the Western Cape were strictly adhered to in order to ensure confidentiality.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE



This section outlines the chapters as presented in the thesis.

Chapter One is the introduction and delineates an overview of the research. The aspects covered in the overview are the background, rationale, theoretical framework (where the story theory and curriculum integration theory are explicated), research problem and research questions, aims of the research, research methodology, ethics statement and chapter outline.

In **Chapter Two** I present the literature informing the research. Furthermore, the focus is on the effect that the relationship of the mother/caregiver has on the development of the child’s language and social skills. In addition the curriculum of the DoE is briefly discussed as well as pedagogies pertaining to stories used in the curriculum. Reference is made to the new curriculum, namely CAPS (DBE, 2011a).

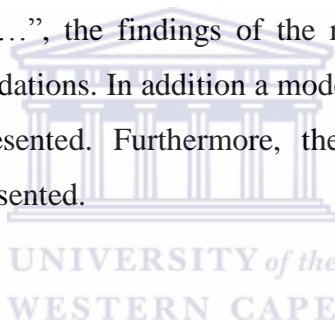
Chapter Three entails the methodology underpinning the research. The methodological paradigm is explained, and the research design is illuminated within the methodological paradigm. The research instruments utilised to execute the research are presented and the

participants and types of observers are highlighted.

Chapter Four presents the findings based on the research conducted. The findings are based on the main research questions which similarly are informed by the responses of the teachers to questionnaires, their presentations observed by the researcher, the responses of the children, and responses of lecturers and students to interviews and questionnaires.

Chapter Five includes the analysis and interpretation of findings, titled, “Creativity to capture the young minds”. It addresses the analysis to assess the effect of the integrated approach. It assesses how the Grade R children responded to the approach. The educational value of stories for the children is explored.

In **Chapter Six**, Conclusions and recommendations, with the title, “Living happily ever after, after all factors were considered ...”, the findings of the research are discussed to derive at conclusions and present recommendations. In addition a model based on the latest revision of the curriculum (DBE, 2011a) is presented. Furthermore, the limitations, future research and contribution of the research are presented.



1.9 CONCLUSION

Having set the scene for the research in Chapter One, the following chapter includes a literature review that informed the research. The chapter is an attempt to explore the literature which underpins the research.

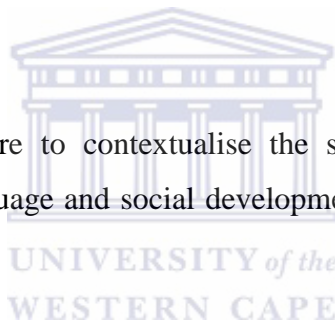
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review is the focus of this chapter. This research was conducted to address the notion that Grade R teachers could be empowered by using stories integrated with other areas in the curriculum as a core teaching tool. The literature underpins the theoretical framework, and in exploring the literature the main research questions (MRQs) and the subsidiary questions (SQs) are addressed (see Chapter One, 1.4).

2.2 THE LITERATURE

The relevant and current literature to contextualise the study on stories, play pedagogies, language teaching, as well as language and social development are explicated and informed my methodological paradigm.



In addition the documents pertaining to the curriculum of the DoE were scrutinised so that the various LAs with the corresponding outcomes could be discussed. This was viewed to gauge how teachers interpreted and utilised the documents to inform their presentation of lessons. It was also to establish if teachers received adequate information to guide them in the process of applying an integrated approach across the curriculum.

This chapter therefore also focuses on the relationships that mothers and/or caregivers have with their children with regards to the development of language and social skills, which address the context for development of language and social skills and link with the subsidiary question 1.4.3 (see Chapter One, 1.4). Consulting the literature I explored what happens if these relationships do not exist or are impaired by the death of the mothers and/or caregivers. The discussion necessitated a closer look at bonding between caregivers and children, as well as theories on development of language and social skills. Moreover, the integrated approach as well as the

teacher who should apply this pedagogy is highlighted in support of the second main research question (see Chapter One, 1.4.1). The literature review therefore attempts to provide evidence and support for the research. This was in order to establish how the findings pertaining to the use of stories inform the recommendations to empower Grade R teachers. To initiate the discussion and to contextualise the research, I focus on language acquisition in the child, which starts well before the child enters Grade R.

2.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SKILLS

I use Piaget's developmental processes as cited by Donald, *et al.* (2002:64) as basis for the ensuing argument. These processes are significant in Grade 0, Grade R and beyond Grade R. They will therefore provide a framework as basis for the development of the language and social skills of Grade R learners.



2.3.1 Piaget's developmental processes

According to Donald, *et al.* (2002:64) for people to match their experience of the world with their understanding thereof, they are involved in an on-going process of adaptation. "Infants are therefore building 'maps' of their world in an attempt to understand, and adapt to it", with the process of cognitive development manifesting in three continuously interacting processes namely "assimilation", "accommodation" and "equilibration" (Donald, *et al.* 2002:64). The following discussion aims to summarise the argument of Donald, *et al.*

(a) Assimilation and Accommodation

"Assimilation" occurs when children already possess some information based on experience, and add new information to this existing knowledge. If children, through experience, know that a dog is brown, barks and wags his tail, the new experience with a black dog will fit into the existing map and by assimilation this map will extend to include dogs of other colours. Similarly, if children are confronted with information that is in contrast with the existing map, they will have to accommodate the change. For example, if the dog does not wag its tail but growls or bites, the

existing map must accommodate this added information. You could therefore argue that children could assimilate information about traumas such as HIV and AIDS only if they have some existing knowledge. However, if there was no knowledge transferred before they attended school due to the absence of the mother/caregiver there will be gaps. The teachers then need to compensate and prepare the children for the initial knowledge. Children could then use the existing knowledge as scaffold to accommodate more knowledge. In order to interact with assimilation and accommodation and provide a balance you need equilibration.

(b) Equilibration

Whilst Piaget's processes of assimilation and accommodation interact continuously, as cited in Donald, *et al.* (2002:64; Hufford, 1983:3), "[p]rogressive accommodations open up more possibilities of assimilations, and vice versa ...". To organise these interactions and balance them in the different maps of children, Piaget suggests the term, "equilibration ... an active process of establishing and re-establishing equilibrium in the child's whole map or cognitive structure." When children are confronted with information or an experience that they cannot deal with, it is called "cognitive conflict" where they are, as posited by Donald, *et al.* (2002:64), challenged to modify the entire mapping structure. Craig (1996:50) defines Piaget's "equilibration" as a process where a person wants to establish a balance between the environment and their own structures of thought. Donald, *et al.* (2002:64) and Hufford (1983:3) concur with Craig. Children are confronted with the absence of the caregivers and have to modify or adapt to the prevailing environment which could lead to cognitive conflict. The thoughts and fears in the minds of the children have to be balanced with this threatening environment.

In the Grade R classes the teachers could provide a source of comfort and escapism from a threatening environment to the children by using stories and arts activities. These activities could help the children to deal with the environment and establish equilibrium between the thoughts and the environment. To establish which category fits the Grade R children I need to expand on the cognitive stages of development. Can you place the children neatly in one stage of development? If there is overlapping of these stages, characteristics extracted from various stages could possibly be applicable to the same grade because in the same grade the children

could be at different stages of development. Besides the developmental process discussed, it is therefore important to embark on a brief overview of Piaget's stages of cognitive development relevant to Grade R children with mentioning of the other phases.

2.3.2 Piaget's four stages of cognitive development

The stages of cognitive development, as proposed by Piaget, are viewed by Craig (1996:53) as development of a series of stages which are qualitatively different. These stages are briefly mentioned and defined below to illustrate how they fit in with the importance of the mothers or caregivers and their relationships with the developing children but more so with the Grade R class.

(a) The sensorimotor stage

In the first stage which ranges from birth to about two years; the children's schemata (different maps constructed about their world) are based on sensorimotor experiences. These refer to the connections between the senses. Children can, for example, touch, see, hear, taste and smell things. As children start moving around, the schemata become more complex as they explore the world.

Linked to this active exploration is the concept of "object permanence" where children see an object moving and then disappearing behind a fixed object. They will wait for it to appear on the other side, realising that it did not disappear, but will reappear on the other side, according to Donald, *et al.* (2002:65). When children represent external objects internally in the mind it is seen as the start of more powerful cognitive possibilities. Children will start to imitate someone or something. Language becomes possible as words like "mama/mamma" is an internal representation for the mother, an external object. The pre-operational stage of development follows on the sensorimotor stage.

(b) The pre-operational stage

The pre-operational stage includes the target group of the research, namely the Grade R children. In Piaget's pre-operational stage, according to Donald *et al.* (2002: 66), for children from about two to seven, the thinking, imagining, and problem solving develop faster. The schemata are based on perceptual experience. According to Donald *et al.* (2002:66) children now work with images and symbols, which are the "inner representation of outer reality". Piaget (1967:9) cautions that children in this stage do not see the world from a different view than their own as "... the child speaks only about himself". Furthermore, Piaget (1967:9) distinguishes three categories in ego-centric speech, which are defined as follows:

- (i) Repetition, where children repeat words and syllables and do not really engage in talk with anyone but merely talk for the pleasure of talking;
- (ii) Monologue, where children talk to themselves. It is as if they are thinking aloud. Once again they are not really talking to anyone; and
- (iii) Dual or collective monologue, where an outsider is associated with the action or thought of the moment. However, the outsider is not really expected to understand or attend to this action or thought of the moment, because his or her point of view is not considered by the children in this age group.

From the categories stated above the deduction can be made that the language is based on very ego-centric behaviour in the pre-operational stage, hence children are dependent on the caregiver to utter the words and syllables which they repeat. Monologues would then flow from words and syllables which they internalise by listening to caregivers. The dual or collective monologues occur where outsiders are merely associated with action or thought which suggest that there are no actual conversations between the outsiders and the children in this phase. This might lead to a situation where the children have very limited communicative skills and perhaps not even talk to themselves for the gratification of talking.

The children in the pre-operational stage have the "... illusion of being heard and understood ..." but they do not really want to influence the listener, according to Piaget (1967:9). Therefore, due

to the ego-centric nature of children during the pre-operational phase, it could present a challenge to the Grade R teachers to assist the children to see the world from the viewpoint of others. If all children are in the same age group, all of them might display ego-centric tendencies. However, you do not find all children in the same class at the same age or developmental level. All the children would seemingly not be ego-centric. For those who were ego-centric the opportunities to share ideas and opinions were presented when they engaged in listening to or telling stories, acting, singing, painting or when they were engaged in some creative activity where they were subtly encouraged to be less ego-centric.

Craig (1996:51) describes the pre-operational stage as the one where children have the ability to use symbols as language. Children also learn to expand their vocabulary through play experiences and learn words in their home environment (Skibbe, Connor, Morrison & Jewkes, 2011:42). In addition, Craig (1996:52) alludes to the fact that children find it difficult to distinguish between the object and the symbol representing it at the beginning of this stage. If they decided to make clay motorcars, for example, and the mother or somebody in the family destroyed the motorcar by rolling the clay into a ball, children in this stage would react as if they made real cars and become upset if the object is discarded. Craig (1996:263) furthermore divides the pre-operational stage in two categories namely the pre-conceptual stage from about 2 to 4 years and the intuitive or transitional stage from about 5 to 7 years.

The target group in this research, namely Grade R children, were in both the intuitive and transitional stages. Children in the pre-conceptual stage will be unable to "... distinguish between mental, physical and social reality ..." because this stage is influenced by their egocentricity where everything is viewed in relation to themselves (Craig, 1996:264). They will believe that anything that moves is alive, for example trees blowing in the wind, and that these inanimate things will obey their commands. Craig (1996:224) calls this cognitive pattern "animism". In line with these phases, children develop their artistic skills in phases.

Children in the intuitive or transitional stage begin to separate the mental and physical realities. The next developmental stage according to Piaget, cited by Craig (1996:52) and Donald, *et al.* (2002:67) is called the concrete operational stage.

(c) The concrete operational stage

This stage includes the age group seven to about eleven. According to Piaget's theory as presented in Donald, *et al.* (2002:67), the children in this stage "... gradually become less ego-centric and perceptually dominated" because they would be able to converse and reverse; comprehend the logic of a series of objects, and using a basic quality or characteristic they would group objects together. The concrete operational stage does not include the average Grade R children, but could be a guideline to establish how the development or lack of development of their language in the previous phase could impact or impacted on this phase. According to Van Dyk (2001:160), children in this phase may still display the inability to accommodate viewpoints of others, much like during the pre-operational phase. The next phase briefly mentioned is the formal operational stage as it is outside the realm of the target group in the research.

(d) The formal operational stage

Piaget defines this stage as the formal operational stage, according to Donald, *et al.* (2002:68) which includes adolescents. When children reach adolescence, they may engage in more abstract thinking and problem solving. Additional to the developmental stages it is also important to consider other theories with regards to language acquisition.

2.4 LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Language acquisition is discussed in two sections namely theories and the start of language acquisition.

2.4.1 Theories on Language acquisition

Crosser (2008) delineates various theories on how children learn to speak. Firstly, the Nativist theory suggests that children are driven by an inborn desire to make sense of the world and sort out meanings. By using language they make sense of the world. Crosser (2008) cites Waddington (1957) and Chomsky (1972) as exponents of this theory who postulate the following according to

Crosser: Waddington (1957) argues that behaviour is canalised and in turn genetic. The canalised behaviour is easily learned and includes learning to use tools and language. Chomsky (1972) expands on the Nativist theory by postulating that humans possess an inborn language acquisition device (LAD) in the brain and the LAD facilitates language acquisition. In addition Crosser (2008) claims that the brain is designed for language learning although the LAD suggested by Chomsky was never located and in support she cites Bickerton, (1984); Pinker, (1994); Lust, Suner and Whitman, (1994).

Secondly, Crosser (2008) identifies the Social Learning Theory as stated by Bandura (1989), where children imitate sounds, words and language patterns that they hear when they watch and listen to their parents, caregivers or other family members. However, Crosser (2008), argues that mere repetition of what is said by the role-models cannot result in the ability to formulate conversations using sentences or create poems or lyrics of a song. You could argue that some mothers often engage in conversations and correct the children. It is not merely repetition especially mothers who are themselves pre-school teachers or teachers and mothers who make time to spend with their children. Unfortunately not all children get quality time and attention because many mothers work and children are left with caregivers or siblings.

Furthermore, children listen actively to family members having conversations. At the onset of language acquisition children would not be expected to create poems and lyrics. Ring (2001:2) citing Vygotsky (1995) confirms my argument with the claim that children do not differentiate between the art forms because when they draw they also tell a story.

Therefore the third theory identified by Crosser (2008), namely the Interactionist Theory probably allays the concern that children cannot learn language simply by listening and repeating. The Interactionist theory postulated by Bohannon and Bonvillian (1997) assumes that children learn by interacting with others. A combination of the Social Learning and Interactionist theories could be responsible for the acquisition of language. To fully comprehend the influence on language and social development of the caregivers' relationships with the children, we need to understand how language is acquired.

2.4.2 The start of language acquisition

For Child (2004:92) the critical period for language acquisition starts in the womb. When infants are born, the section of the brain responsible for speech, namely the left side, is already active. We are aware that babies utter sounds from birth. Child (2004:93) mentions that these sounds are indicative of things like discomfort or pleasure. However, we do not always know exactly what causes pleasure or pain. This is sometimes very stressful or taxing for young caregivers, who must interpret the sounds and signal to the children whether their needs are correctly interpreted. In the opinion of Craig (1996:182), the predictable stages of cognitive and language development can be influenced by environmental factors. Craig (1996:182) defines cognitive development as a process of thinking, learning, perceiving, remembering and understanding enables to gain knowledge. Deprivation can therefore result in poor language development. This notion is underscored by Begley (1997:32) who argues that levels of stress hormones affect the brain negatively.

In a study by Akhtar, Jipson and Callanan (2001:428), they concluded that children learn to talk in a wide range of environments. The study focussed mainly on proving that children learn to talk not only by face to face conversations but also by overhearing. It is however, clear that whether the language skills develop by face to face conversation or by overhearing, the key persons are the caregivers. It is also evident that we do not deliberately set out to teach small children a language. This allows the children to acquire language in their own ways as illustrated in the discussion on virtuous errors.

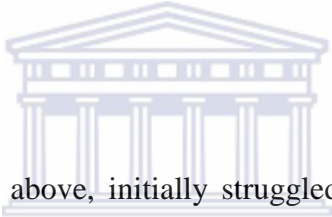
2.5 VIRTUOUS ERRORS

Child (2004:94) lists examples of what he calls “virtuous errors” where children form their own rules for past tense or plurals on analogy of what they hear.

2.5.1 Plural forms and verbs¹

These examples include the use of plural forms such as **mouses* and **sheeps*. Crosser (2008) regards these errors as indicative of progress because children are now becoming aware of the structure of language. This phase follows the telegraphic speech phase where they only used the most important words. In my own experience when I asked a three year old: “Where are you?” I received the following response: **“I’m are in the kitchen”* (real life experience, girl, 4 years old). She was exposed to both verbs, namely “am” and “are”, and obviously through communication overheard both, but could not yet distinguish when to use which one. However, she felt confident to use both in the same sentence. Other examples include past tense forms such as **brang* instead of *brought*. Especially adding the suffix -ed to verbs with unchanged past tense is a common phenomenon as for example, **putted* instead of *put* or **setted* instead of *set* the table.

2.5.2 Pronunciation problems



The four year old girl, mentioned above, initially struggled to pronounce the lateral alveolar sound [l] in words. For example “lovely”, was pronounced as “juvli” [yʌvli] and the trill alveolar sound [r] in words such as “running”, pronounced as “junning” [yʌniŋ]. The [l] sound presented pronunciation problems especially at the commencement of words and the [r] at the commencement and in other positions. Both are formed by using the apex of the tongue on the alveolar ridge. Interestingly, she also lisped. However, by frequently looking at the caregiver when words containing these sounds were pronounced, in other words having face to face conversations without insisting on correct pronunciations, she managed the [l]. At that stage she still struggled with the pronunciation of the trill sound [r] sound and compensated for this by using the [l] sound. The word “road” would be pronounced as “load” [ləʊd]. These pronunciation patterns were also presented by her older sibling, until he was five and her niece, until the age of four. Interesting to note is that the niece managed to vocalize the [r] sooner than the other two. This is possibly due to the fact that she copied them in all respects. Similar vocalization problems are cited by Foster (1990:38) to illustrate the communicative level of competence in children. It is important to acknowledge how positive influences of caregivers can

¹ An asterisk * indicates an incorrect form of a grammatical structure or spelling

affect development of language. In my observations the sound [s] was lisped, resulting in [θ], therefore “I thing” instead of “I sing”. It seems that problematic sounds are those which are formed on the alveolae.

Child (2004:204) postulates that the mental development is more dependent on a stimulating environment and the interpersonal relationship with the caregiver than a vast assortment of toys. Furthermore, Child (2004:276) underscores the value of reading picture books to young children and how open-ended questioning impacts on language learning. Hendrick (1984:364) argues that children imitate their mothers or others close to them simply because these caregivers or relatives reward them with warmth and pleasure. For the Grade R children the teacher fulfils this role to compensate for the absence of caregivers. They play an active part in stimulating social and language development. Language development furthermore signals three major dimensions.

2.6 THREE MAJOR DIMENSIONS OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The three major dimensions as cited by Craig (1996:192) are content, form and use. “Content” entails the meaning in a message, either conveyed verbally or written. “Form” involves the specific symbol to represent the message and include the phonetics, morphology and grammar. The message needs to be utilised and this dimension, where there is social exchange between the one who speaks and the one spoken to, is called “use”. The social exchange also presents itself in the Grade R classroom between teachers and the Grade R children and amongst the children with their peers.

In Craig’s (1996:192) argument regarding these dimensions he mentions that when children address somebody about something, for example food, then food would be the content. The manner in which it is done either by a statement or a question will refer to the form. This form indicates what the relationship between the speakers is. The process by which the information or content is conveyed namely form and use, adds to the meaning of the message. Important to note here is what Craig (1996:192) terms the deference shown by children to adults, and yet there is an openness, freedom and safety to make the request. If however, the caregivers are suddenly taken away from the children, in the case of illnesses like HIV and AIDS, the chances are that

this spontaneity and liberty might be jeopardised. Children affected by the sudden absence of the mothers or caregivers will have to start from scratch to foster a new relationship and bond with the new caregivers. The relationships in this study, between children and caregivers, should also be viewed against the relevant ecological systems because this research is situated in various systems. I selected Bronfenbrenner's (1979; 1994) ecological systems model to contextualise the school and home environments.

2.7 BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS MODEL

To understand the role of the school as part of society necessitates an understanding of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model. This model underpins the analysis of the biographical details of the schools and the school communities in the research. The school communities include the parents.



2.7.1 The various systems in Bronfenbrenner's model

The importance of a family's role in the development of language and social skills in children cannot be understated. Bronfenbrenner (1979,1994) developed the most influential model of human development utilised today. This model includes four inter-related, concentric systems namely the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem. Craig (1996:12-13) explains these systems as follows:

The microsystem refers to activities, roles and, interactions of an individual and [her/his] immediate single setting such as the home, day care centre, or school.

The mesosystem is formed by the interrelationships among two or more microsystems. A child's day-care centre may be affected positively by [her/his] parents' close communication with the teachers.

The exosystem refers to the social settings or organisations beyond the individual's immediate experience that ... affect her. For example, the child's mother may be employed by a company that allows her to work at home ... [some days].... [i]ndirectly [promoting] the child's development.

The macrosystem ... comprises the values, laws, and customs of the culture or society in which the individual lives.

Bronfenbrenner (1994) suggests that although interventions to encourage development can occur at all levels in this model, the macrosystem is the most critical. At this level every other level can be influenced. Whilst Bronfenbrenner (1994) postulates the ecological systems model for social

and language skills development, which depends on the interaction of various systems in the lives of children, Ebersöhn and Eloff (2002:80) propose the approach to coping as “eco-systemic”. An eco-systemic approach to coping is seen as a “process of interaction between an individual and an environment.” The individuals and their environments will have their own sets of “resources, vulnerabilities, potential and needs” (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2002:80). Yet, in many cases the resources will be limited due to poverty. Linked to this is the reality that if the resources are not intact and the children are vulnerable, they might not realise their potential or they have the potential of running the same risks as their deceased parents (Martin, 2004: 1-8). Their needs will be manifold. For the purpose of this research, the teachers are at least able to fulfil an educational need to the children in their care. The school will have to provide an environment conducive for the children to address sensitive issues. This environment could be made conducive with the appropriate teaching approaches and tools. Nelson (2008:205) confirms that for infected and affected children the school and education are regarded as hope and recovery, respectively which includes children who display fears and experience traumas.

Considering Bronfenbrenner’s model, all the systems refer to particular environments. This claim is supported by Anderson, Anderson, Friedrich and Kim (2010:34) who also see the model as overlapping systems of the child’s environment. Whilst the Grade R children need this environment while they attend school, orphans need an environment like the school or day care centre where the absence of the mothers or caregivers must be compensated for to assist with the development of the children.

In the mesosystem there could be two of the environments of the microsystem for example the home, day care centre, or school, seen by Bronfenbrenner (1994:40) as a linkage and process between two or more settings such as the home and school. The development of children is influenced by the interaction of parents and teachers, each representing one of the environments. Children might suffer delay due to the absence of the mothers or caregivers. Besides death the absence could also be related to other situations such as single mothers working away from home to provide an income. Some mothers often only come home once a year. Some parents work long hours, leave early in the morning and arrive late when there is little time for interaction. Once more the teacher’s role is prominent especially when the parent is absent.

Likewise in the exosystem the workplace of parents might no longer be part of the environment of children when parents are no longer employed due to prolonged illness or death and the community health or welfare systems might well become a more prominent feature in the lives of some children. Bronfenbrenner (1994:40) cites the workplace of the parents, social networks and neighbourhood communities as settings in the exosystem.

The macrosystem could include all the other settings. The link between a model for language development and coping mechanisms for Grade R children is made because we are dealing with children who will develop if the model proposed by Bronfenbrenner is in place. However, given the stark reality of HIV and AIDS and other traumas, the chances are that language will not develop as it should due to the absence of the caregivers. It is of paramount importance to have a system in place to help to cope. As Ebersöhn and Eloff (2002:80-81) state: "... the environment makes constant demands on the individual ..." and therefore "... children should have access to resources". The teachers are the support structures in the absence of the caregivers. In addition the physical environment also plays a role.

In a study conducted in Finland to establish how teachers view and apply play in pre-school and elementary education, teachers mentioned that the design of classrooms inhibited playing games and physical activities (Hyvonen, 2011:65). This is applicable to the South-African context as most schools are overcrowded and lack special facilities for physical activities, which are supported by the argument of Ebersöhn and Eloff (2002:80). Teachers need to be creative when they want to compensate for the lack of adequate facilities. Education in some cases also competes with duties like housekeeping and childminding that some children have to fulfil (Pharoah, 2004:2). Donald, *et al.* (2002:53) also discuss Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, but includes the chronosystem. This system recognises that interactions between systems and their influences are "... crossed by individual time frames". Time is therefore a factor in this system in a way which refers to processes. Simply put then, the chronosystem recognises that the interactions are linked to certain developmental time frames. Bronfenbrenner (1994:40), views the chronosystem as change or consistency affecting not only the characteristics in the human but also in his or her environment. This seems to have a direct link with the situation of traumas.

Children are often moved from their known environment when the parents die or the stable environment changes due to factors beyond their control.

Furthermore, they are of the opinion that the way in which children understand how to interact with their contexts, is based on their perceptions of these contexts. Donald, *et al.* (2002:53), argue that children are active participants in their own development and the environment does not "... simply influence the child". Therefore, children who feel threatened by their environment will not readily explore that environment, whereas children who feel secure will be more likely to explore the environment Donald, *et al.*, 2002:53).

Haddad (2002:26) conducted a study in the framework of the UNESCO Early Childhood and Development policies and used Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory to contextualise the whole notion of integrating education and care. The importance of recognising the role and impact of the different systems is underscored in this study. The mesosystem refers to the school environment against the background of the ecological systems propounded by Bronfenbrenner. The systems discussed bear a direct influence on the teachers and children and therefore link with the way in which teachers use stories in the school environment.

2.7.2 The environment

Van Dyk (2001:162) mentions that children younger than five years will display fear of separation from parents in their emotional development. Just that sudden feeling of being separated from the persons with who close bonds were formed, leave them with what Craig (1996:220) calls "separation anxiety". This anxiety can be explained by contrasting a stimulating environment to a non-stimulating environment. Concerned caregivers will provide a stimulating environment as indicative of their sensitivity around fears and traumas. In this environment the children must be communicated with and exposed to games which will encourage language development. I agree with Mischel (1999:120) that by talking or writing about traumatic experiences you can get rid of them or feel better. Grade R children will talk more than write but alternately their feelings might be expressed in their drawings. The impact of stories and the types of stories selected to allay these fears are addressed in MRQ 2, SQs 1.4.3 and 1.4.4.

Watson (2003:13) argues that children will not have problems to enter classrooms where their needs for friendship and belonging are met if the environment is conducive. Craig (1996:204) contrasts children who grow up in a “responsive environment” and those who are raised in “institutions or dysfunctional families”. The responsive environment will include all the shared interactions and activities linked to caregiving such as feeding, bathing, dressing and so forth. These, together with talking and playing games, will encourage the development of language. However, children who are growing up in institutions or with dysfunctional families or without caregivers who respond positively will not be afforded many opportunities of encouragement, especially if the care giving is done according to what Craig (1996:204) calls a “schedule”. Meerkotter (2002) echoes the important role that educational institutions should play in addressing and trying to alleviate the HIV and AIDS problem. In addition, the use of stories (MRQ 1) can assist to execute the important role of educational institutions.

Furthermore, Craig (1996:210) argues that the “... more restricted and deprived the environment, the more profound the developmental delay ...” of children in such environments, and concludes that their environments impact negatively on their emerging social and language skills. The deprivation is compounded by traumatic experiences such as rape where child rape victims are six or younger (Earl-Taylor, 2002:3). To cope with the fears and traumas children can be engaged in stories across the curriculum (MRQ 2).

2.8 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Besides the development of language, the social skills of children must also be developed. In the argument ensued thus far, it became clear that language development forms an integral part of the development of social skills.

2.8.1 What is social development?

Socialisation as postulated by Craig (1996:8), is a situation in which an individual becomes a member, either of a family, community or a tribe. The individual will acquire the attitudes, beliefs, customs, values, roles and expectations of the social group. Previously researchers saw

the behaviour of children as a consequence of how teachers and parents behaved (Craig, 1996:8). It was the belief that children were influenced by them and therefore behaved in a certain fashion. However, Craig (1996:8) cites the 1988 studies of Hetherington and Baltes, which indicate that there is a mutual influence on the behaviour of the adults and the children. For example, although children seem to copy teachers or parents, their behaviour similarly influence the way in which the teachers or parents behave. As Craig (1996:8) puts it: "... their very presence ..., forces family members to learn new roles".

Egan (1988:49) agrees that socialising is "... to make students familiar with their environment ... and the social expectations to which they should conform, ... " but at the same time cautions that "... schools are generally ineffective socializing institutions when they try to teach what is best learned from out-of-school experience". Egan (1988:50) also argues that children often know certain concepts but teachers should help them to make sense of those concepts. The teacher's task becomes more challenging when in many cases she has to teach the children basic social conventions like greeting and apologising for bad behaviour before they can socialise on other levels. Stories would assist children to inculcate certain social skills shared with them by their caregivers (SQ 1.4.3).



Dougal (1996:39), for example, suggests an activity in which students used old Christmas cards to create a story by using one symbol of Christmas. Bruner (2002:45) shares the idea that storytelling in fact forms part of our socialisation because our experiences are organised in story form. These narratives then provide meaning. It is therefore apt to establish the influence of the caregivers on the social development of children. As caregivers teachers can be empowered by using stories to assist in developing the skills (MRQs 1 and 2).

2.8.2 The influence of caregivers on social development

As in language development the caregivers are once more the first to influence the social skills of children. Normally the mothers or caregivers will instil in children the socially acceptable behaviour for example to say "please" and "thank you" or to wash hands before meals. Hendrick (1984:213) points out that children learn because they receive positive reinforcement. It is

therefore essential that the Grade R teachers should play a pivotal role to give positive reinforcement to the children in their care. It is especially crucial for Grade R children to be exposed to the topic of HIV and AIDS in the curriculum and to know that anybody affected by it is accepted by the teachers and their peers. Given the fact that the Grade R children are in a phase where they are ego-centric and therefore everything centres on them, the teachers face a major challenge to cultivate social skills. Teachers should help children to understand how other people feel as suggested by Hendrick (1984:215) and address issues through stories (SQ 1.4.3).

According to Van Dyk (2001:169), children in the FP (Grades 1 to 3) display egocentric perspectives and an inability to think logically. The perceptions of the children with regards to AIDS are linked to fear. They should therefore be answered honestly and a situation where anxiety is created must be avoided. However, the fears and anxiety can be transformed by using appropriate stories where they realise that other children also have similar fears (SQ 1.4.4).

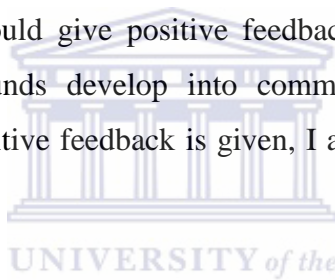
Webb (2002:667) posits that children who are part of HIV and AIDS families are subjected by, what she terms "... a particularly wounding experience that encompasses stigma, secrecy, fear of disclosure, multiple loss, and survivor's guilt". These issues need a sensitive approach. Clearly the experience encountered by these children could be circumvented if there are measures of intervention. If they are subjected to stigma, this would normally be by the community or even relatives, based on bias and often lack of knowledge regarding HIV and AIDS. Fear of disclosure is often linked to secrecy. Secrecy will be kept by the surviving parent or close relative to try and prevent possible stigma. The surviving parent or partner might experience survivor's guilt if he or she infected the deceased partner. Multiple loss is particularly stressful for the children of HIV and AIDS infected parents or close relatives. Sometimes the children, after having lost one parent, also loses the other parent soon after, followed by the loss of new caregivers. The children may experience increased "... feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, despair and detachment" because of secrecy and the fact that there is no communication about the situation facing them (Webb, 2002:267).

Teachers will have to be the ones who must continue to develop the language and social skills of the children. As intervention strategies, teachers need to devise activities to compensate for lack

of social interactions (MRQ 1 and 2). McNamee and De Chiara (1996:14) regard the teacher as the person who plays a pivotal role for the children who need support. The teachers need to provide materials for the children to cope with stressful situations.

2.8.3 Development through social interactions

According to Child (2004:93) infants have an inherent ability in their vocal systems to produce sounds. Social contact, however, will determine what will happen to these sounds. Considering this statement, I can therefore argue that the development of language is interlinked with social skills. If, for example, children perform certain actions and these actions are verbalised, they will be able to make the connections. When the caregivers hug or comfort the distressed infants and utter words of comfort, the infants will associate the social contact with the language expressed. Similarly parents and siblings would give positive feedback to the sounds expressed by the infants and eventually these sounds develop into communication as postulated by Child (2004:93). However, when no positive feedback is given, I argue that the communication could be hampered or inhibited.



Robinson and Acevedo (2001:402) in their investigation of “Infant Reactivity and Reliance on Mother during Emotion Challenges”, define “emotional vitality” as the “... infant’s increasing capacity to share [emotional] experiences with caregivers (reliance on mothers)”. This enforces the idea that children need to share what they feel with trusted persons like the mothers, those who understand their emotions and their needs. In the same study it was furthermore concluded that infants, who did not rely on their mothers because they were highly frightened, were expected to be more vulnerable to poor outcomes (Robinson & Acevedo, 2001:404).

The notion of Vygotsky (1995), cited by Donald, *et al.* (2002:70) that “... development takes place through social interactions ...” supports the idea that activities linked to stories create opportunities for social interactions (SQ 1.4.3). Social interaction, according to Donald, *et al.* (2002:70) is seen as the basis for cognitive development, and this is because language is an important tool of cognitive development. Furthermore, Donald, *et al.* (2002:70) conclude that children will develop cognitively and physically provided there is a stimulating environment.

Many of us have experienced the example cited by Donald, *et al.* (2002:71) where three-year-olds talk aloud "... to organise their actions, perceptions and experiences", which he uses as example to illustrate Vygotsky's (1978, 1995) theory of development of an inner speech as a key process in early cognitive development. In a study on multilingual classrooms Busch (2011:12) refers to this inner monologue as "head speech", a term coined by one of the children who stated that he had the speech in his head but could not pronounce it. If children suffered traumatic experiences or if the relationships or bonds formed with the caregivers are suddenly severed because the caregivers die or suffer long illnesses, children could display signs indicating that the development of social and language skills are affected.

Watson (2003:12) explains the importance of early relationships on the social and emotional development of young children. It is, according to Watson (2003:13), the responsive and sensitive caregivers who will foster skills and understandings in children to "... regulate their emotions and cognitively guide their own behaviour". In addition, Watson (2003:20) suggests that if there are children in the classroom who are mistrustful due to the lack of supportive early childhood relationships, the teachers have to avoid power assertion and find creative ways to guide, coach and support the children. The challenge was to present creative ways in which stories are used in an integrated way as teaching tool to support Grade R children. Yet for the teaching to be effective in order for language to develop, there should be bonding between caregivers and children.

2.8.4 Bonding between caregivers and children

The early relationships between mothers and/or caregivers and children impact on language and social development. Craig (1996:4) believes that "[i]nfants form bonds with those who care for them and, as their needs are met, learn to trust the world". These caregivers could be the mothers, grandmothers, day care mothers and in some cases the fathers. The irony is that many of these trusted caregivers like the parents are taken away from the infants, because of the HIV and AIDS pandemic or through attrition if it is the aged grandmother. Teachers therefore play an

important role in the lives of these children. Similarly for children whose parents are still alive the teacher plays a vital role for several hours during the day.

According to Van Dyk (2001:43) tuberculosis (TB) compounds the problem as it is regarded as the “... most common and most opportunistic infection ...” that the HIV-infected people in Africa are facing. The mortality rate for those infected with TB and HIV has increased (Van Dyk, 2001:44; World Health Organisation, 2000; UNICEF, 2005). When the children are orphaned or without the caregivers, they are then left in the care of siblings and have to form new bonds. Often the development of language and social skills in children are affected when the caregivers are suddenly absent. The negative influence on language development is due to the trauma that the children could suffer, because of the death of the caregivers. Sometimes the caregivers die when the infants are just starting to speak. The teachers in Grade R classes would be able to assist learners, by using stories, if they are faced with this situation, and thereby they empower themselves and the children (SQ 1.4.1).

Craig (1996:204) claims that the “... interpersonal relationship with the caregiver is a major influence on the child’s mental development”. Caregivers stimulate the child by talking and playing games. The fact that the mother is primarily the person who helps the child to acquire linguistic and social skills through stories and games raises the following questions:

- Who fulfils this role in her absence?
- Will the teacher in the absence of the mother/caregiver, using appropriate learning materials, for example stories, compensate for this role?

According to Duminy, MacLarty and Maasdorp (1990:75) the child goes into the world to explore and in order to do this, he or she has to access two things to assist him or her, namely “(a) the discovery and acquisition of language, and (b) a variety of play activities”. Hendrick (1984:364-365) claims that children acquire language by imitating others, especially the mother, and that the imitations are reinforced by rewarding them with parental warmth and pleasure. The play activities mentioned by Duminy, *et al.* (1990:75) are traditionally the task of the mother or caregiver. Gooch (2008) calls for more incorporation of playful pedagogies in the curriculum. The Grade R teachers can try and create an environment conducive to the development of language and social skills. In the absence of the mother or caregiver, the teacher is the opportune

person to fill the void in assisting the development of existing play activities to develop social and language skills (SQ 1.4.3) using appropriate stories (SQ 1.4.4).

Van Steensel (2006:379) opines that the literacy development of children is not just determined by the home experiences when they start school. However, Van Steensel's study was more quantitative and focused on the relation between the home literacy environment and their literacy development. Children should not feel intimidated or threatened and therefore the story presents the children with a "non-threatening activity" (Jennings, 1991:2). In addition to the positive environment the caregiver should have a positive influence on the children in her care.

2.8.5 Positive influence of the caregiver

The mothers/caregivers played an important role in assisting the three children (see 2.5.1) to overcome certain speech problems. This was, however, only possible because a close, secure bond was established. The caregivers constantly assured the toddlers of love and boosted their confidence. This links to Van Dyk's (2001:164) development of a positive self-concept that is discussed later. If children do not have this support, the chances are that they may not show enough confidence to communicate spontaneously. This example is supported by what Craig (1996:204) calls "responsive social environment" where children feel free and safe to communicate. Crosser (2008) supports the notion that a child's environment has an impact on language development and should therefore be free of abuse and stress. The Grade R classroom is an environment where language development can take place using stories.

The children, mentioned in Chapter Two displayed an extensive vocabulary, because "two way communication" was encouraged, a term proposed by Child (2004:108). If the caregivers assist the children to develop social skills as an integral part of language development, children will also learn when, where, what and how they should communicate in a socially acceptable fashion. In support of this opinion Watson (2003:14) argues that children, who do not have adults in their lives on whom they can rely to build relationships and who will meet their needs, will build their "attachment relationships" on mistrust. Exposure to stories, books and games, which are seen by Child (2004:109) as "important language contacts", furthermore enhanced the development of language and social skills in the four year old as it did with her sibling brother and niece. Malo

and Bullard (2000) argue that stories serve to develop skills which would prepare children for reading. Teachers in Grade R classes need to foster and develop these important social and linguistic skills using stories while integrating other areas of the curriculum (MRQs 1 and 2). Warm relationships and positive stimulation contribute to the development of language and social skills.

2.8.6 Warm relationships and positive stimulation

The Families and Work Institute, at a conference entitled, “Brain Development in Young Children: New Frontiers for Research, Policy and Practice” (June, 1996), concluded that warm relationships and positive stimulation, amongst others enhance the development in the lives of children. Furthermore, they stressed the decisive and lasting effect of early care on aspects like the development of people, as well as how they cope with stress. The conclusions also serve to underline the importance of strong relationships between children and their caregivers to enhance the development of language and social skills. From this paper is there is the idea that despite the “plasticity” or capacity of the brain to change, negative experiences or the absence of the proper stimulation can impact negatively and have sustained effects on the brain. Suggestions emanating from this conference are that prevention and intervention should be in, “[w]arm, responsive care” to overcome developmental problems. This suggests that all parents should provide care in order to foster and promote development in children at various levels.

Viewing what Van Dyk (2001:162) defines as social development the peer group plays a very significant role in the social development of children, especially because of the “experiences of comradeship (friendship) and relationships”. The notion that children who fail to develop appropriate social skills in early childhood will experience difficulty to interact with other children is shared by Baron and Byrne (1974:283). Teachers will have to ascertain whether there is an interrelationship in the various types of development.

2.9 INTERRELATIONSHIP OF PHYSICAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I focus next on what Donald *et al.* (2002:88) terms the “interrelationship of physical, cognitive, moral, social, and emotional development” in, specifically the pre-operational stage.

2.9.1 Views on the interrelationship of development: physically, morally, socially and emotionally

As stated earlier, most of the Grade R children think and relate egocentrically. This will affect their social relationships. Craig (1996:254) emphasises that pre-schoolers, the group in the pre-operational stage, must cover “... an enormous distance ... between the ages 2 and 6 in order to develop the thought processes necessary for them to begin school”. Furthermore, Craig sees language as the bridge between the child’s infancy and childhood.

In support of the arguments stated by Donald *et al.* (2002:88) and Craig (1996:254), the various types of development as proposed by Van Dyk (2001:160-163) namely cognitive development, emotional development, social development, sexual development and self-concept development are discussed. Although Van Dyk’s developmental types centre on the middle childhood years from 6 to 12, the 6 year old group could include Grade R learners. Cognition as opined by Van Dyk (2001:160) is the way in which we store, retrieve and use the knowledge that we acquire about the world in order to direct our behaviour.

In the phase on emotional development, Van Dyk (2001:161) highlights the most important emotion for HIV and AIDS children as the expression of fear, and mentions the fact that children of five years and younger have specific things that they fear. From this I wish to extract the phrases: “unfamiliar objects” and “being separated from their parents”. Children do not fully understand what the effects entail as they operate ego-centrally. Fear is an emotion experienced by all the children. Being separated from their parents will instil fear in them. If parents are suddenly taken away from them, they will fear the unknown and the prospect of being with other people or in other circumstances. Webb (2002:267) citing Rutter (1987), and Saler and Skolnick

(1992) states that there is consensus that the illnesses and deaths of parents are extremely stressful events for children.

Ebersöhn and Eloff (2002:78-79) underscore the fact the loss of mothers as "... primary family caregiver(s) [has] a profound effect on children's well-being". This is echoed by Craig (1996:204) where the roles of caregivers are seen as having major influences on the mental development of children. Social development, especially for HIV and AIDS education according to Van Dyk (2001:162), would be the ability of children to "... socialise with friends ..." and the "... ability to form prejudice". Ashiabi (2007:201) views social development as the ability to foster relationships. Van Dyk (2001:162) continues to qualify prejudice as something which develops during pre-school years and might well continue in middle childhood years. Viewing Van Dyk's definition against the Grade R context, the relevance of intervention by the teachers in the absence of the caregivers, becomes increasingly important. The teachers are challenged to change prejudices to positive socialisation in their classrooms (MRQs 1 and 2). This is possible by using, what is termed by Egan (1988:17) the most energetic and powerful learning tool in the early years, namely the imagination. The imagination can be fully exploited and tapped by using stories. Stories very often include moral lessons without preaching.

Moral development is seen by Van Dyk (2001:163) as a process which enables children to distinguish between bad and good behaviour, using certain principles. Piaget, cited in Van Dyk (2001:163) regards children younger than five as pre-moral, because they are not able to see when a rule is adhered to or when it is broken as they do not fully comprehend the rules. This seems to be a generalisation as children are in most cases taught basic manners and rules and are able to adhere to these rules. However, this could also suggest that children know what is expected from them and that punishment might follow when they contravene the rules. They will, therefore, obey the rules for fear of punishment, whatever form it might take, without understanding the rules fully. When they are older than five, they develop respect for rules (Van Dyk, 2001:163).

However, the children in the FP do not fully conceptualise illness or traumas and will describe it in terms of an observable feature as postulated by Van Dyk (2001:166). I argue that the

observable feature would be the increasing wasting away of the parents or increasing lack of energy and ability to take care of the children involved. They might see illness in terms of what the caregivers can no longer do for them or how the caregivers look. Not performing tasks normally done to provide care and security as usual, will impact on the relationship between the children and caregivers. These in turn affect the communication and subsequently the development of language and social skills.

Some parents and teachers regard sexual development as a sensitive topic and seldom know what to include and what to exclude. Due to this dilemma they often resort to ignoring the topic completely. By the age of five to seven Van Dyk (2001:164) sees the sex role as being formed, coupled with the acceptance that their gender is fixed but cautions about the messages sent by parents when they react with disgust if children are engaged in sexual exploration. Parents and teachers should treat such situations as opportunities to teach children about sexuality and prevent peers from relaying incorrect or distorted information. Stories are useful tools in this regard and will empower teachers (SQ 1.4.1).

The final phase regarded by Van Dyk (2001:164), the most important for children to make choices, is development of a positive self-concept. If children are afforded opportunities to develop a positive self-concept, they would be able to cope better with any adversities. What better opportunities than to become somebody else in a role play or a character in a story to build that self-concept? When they are engaged in role play as another character, they often forget their inhibitions because they do not have to be themselves. This exercise assists them to build self-confidence and depending on the response or reactions they elicit from their peers, the self-concept will develop. The teachers should once more guide the children to react positively to all the role-play efforts as negative responses could result in a negative self-concept. It is therefore important to select activities carefully to prevent a lack of development on physical, cognitive and social levels (SQs 1.4.3 and 1.4.4).

2.9.2 Lack of physical, cognitive and social development

Recognising the importance of an interrelationship between the various types of development, it is equally important to take cognizance of factors responsible for the lack of physical

development, cognitive development and social development. The first aspect is the poor socio-economic conditions to which children are exposed.

(a) Poor socio-economic conditions

When children are left without proper care their physical development will suffer because they often do not have decent meals to eat due to abject poverty, which Chidley (2005), a reporter, captured in images. Does this complete state of poverty imply that they lack every conceivable source, be it physical or mental stimulation? The lack of physical amenities and resources and provisioning in basic needs are however, evident but Dawes and Donald (1994:33) argue that poor children are not really culturally deprived, but they are not adequately exposed to structural learning situations, which would “prepare them for later school achievement”. Yet they came to the conclusion that the poor environment does not necessarily imply there is “stimulus deprivation”.

UNICEF reports the following statistics in “The State of the World’s Children 2005: ‘Childhood Under Threat’” (2005), which are called seven basic deprivations:

- (i) 640 million children do not have adequate shelter;
- (ii) 500 million children have no access to sanitation;
- (iii) 400 million children do not have access to safe water;
- (iv) 300 million children lack access to information;
- (v) 270 million children have no access to health care services;
- (vi) 140 million children have never been to school; and
- (vii) 90 million children are severely food-deprived.

The above-mentioned statistics are indicative that children are suffering because they are deprived of the most basic needs. The report puts the blame on governments who failed to live up to the promise made in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of Children which in turn, “causes permanent damage to children and ... blocks progress toward human rights and economic advancement” (UNICEF, 2005).

Coombe (2002:119) states that in 2001 at least 4.7 million South Africans were reported to be HIV positive. This definitely is cause for grave concern as it impacts directly on school going children. This is firstly, because their parents are affected and secondly, because many teachers also die of HIV and AIDS. Chelala (2004) is of the opinion that teachers in the impoverished areas are able to travel and afford “illicit unions with infected students and other women they meet” because they earn more than the general population. His concern is the paradox that teachers are so ill-informed or uninformed about HIV and AIDS prevention, yet education can be the best weapon against AIDS. He substantiates his concerns about the effects of the HIV and AIDS pandemic on education and the quality and management of education with the findings of a World Bank study where a warning is issued that in some the death rate due to AIDS is faster than replacements can be trained. The UNICEF report cited, endorses the threat to education as a major impact of HIV and AIDS on children, because the deduction is made that the deaths of adults destroy the protective network for children (UNICEF, 2005). This protective network of adults includes the teachers, parents and health workers.

In a report published by Statistics South Africa (StatSA), (1997-2003) and the South African government, titled “Mortality and causes of death in South Africa, 1997-2003”, statistics indicate that deaths increased by 57% between 1997 and 2002 where 8,7% were directly linked to HIV and AIDS, but fortunately the 2003 survey shows that the level of prevalence is more slowly. This indication could be due to the awareness campaigns on HIV and AIDS. Research done by the Medical Research Council of South Africa (MRC) and a computer model of the Actuarial Society of South Africa (ASSA) (2000) indicates similar results where HIV caused 165,859 deaths in 2000, with the MRC just 7% less than ASSA2000. Statistics will remain inaccurate as many death certificates do not indicate AIDS, since the cause of death is one of the opportunistic infections associated with it as was underscored in the StatsSA (1997-2003) report printed in the newsletter of the Treatment Action Campaign of South Africa, a group campaigning that the government acknowledges and treats the patients with ante-retroviral drugs.

Foster, Freeman and Pillay (1997:265) challenge “... society at all levels to accept the reality of the AIDS epidemic ... rather than ... marginalise HIV/AIDS into a concern for the poor, of women or those who are infected”. Children subjected to conditions of abject poverty are in the

region of 61% as cited by Ebersöhn and Eloff (2002:78), and suffer even more than those who are affluent or not so absolutely poor. In most cases the impoverished families use the little that they earn to pay for food, clothing, housing, education, and medicine. In the Sunday Times of 6 February 2005, Ntshingila, Güles and Pather reported on the grandparents who are bringing up the new generation. In the report Makiwane, the HSRC specialist called these grandparents the “unsung heroes of the Aids pandemic”. In incidents cited some grandparents started caring for grandchildren even before the parents died, where there are about “... 82 % of households using pensions as the main source of income”. This meagre salary, namely the state pension for the aged in South Africa, for example, was R780 per month in 2005 (Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation-Provincial Government of the Western Cape). In 2013 it is R1 400. Sometimes the family depend on welfare grants and in many cases they do not hold regular jobs that could secure a regular income.

In contrast with the poor, the affluent people can afford medical care. This opinion is supported by Bender and Baglin (1992:59) who concluded that many middle-class families can afford to seek professional help immediately once they suspect a problem. However, the low-income families depend on family members, community practitioners and community members to give advice, identify, diagnose and treat them. Bender and Baglin (1992:59) mention the phenomenon of mistrust and suspicion towards educators and health care providers by the patients and families because of cultural differences.

(b) Siblings as caregivers

Ebersöhn and Eloff (2002:78) postulate that the young children assume these “unfamiliar adult roles” for which they had no preparation. Clearly the young children are plummeted into a situation where they not only have to adjust to their own traumatic situations of being orphaned, but must assume new adult roles in addition. It seems as if they hardly have time to grieve. Van Dyk (2001: 334-335) sketches a very bleak picture of AIDS orphans. When they are orphaned the extended families can sometimes no longer care for these orphans because of their own impoverished conditions. The children are also often exploited by family members because due to the stigma the children are alienated, driven off their property and land on the streets where

they survive by begging. In the Sunday Times of March 6 (2005:2) La Franiere illustrated the influence of the paternal families when fathers die of HIV and AIDS. Situations like these leave the children in a position where they are robbed not only of parents, but also of their possessions. Siblings care for children who are still in their own dwellings. These are the child-headed households. Subsequently the lack of proper nutrition affects their cognitive development. Dawes and Donald (1994:139) posit that there is grave concern for the relationship between malnutrition and cognitive development. They also allude to studies conducted by Wilson and Ramphele (1989), where the effects of poverty and malnutrition are linked to the high rates of special education needed for these children. If you apply these findings to the current scourge of HIV and AIDS affected children, it becomes clear that children are often not at school to receive the special education intended for them. The older school going children who take care of their siblings, absent themselves from school, get up to mischief to obtain food to eat and this could affect their morals and values.

2.10 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT: THE REALITY

Ebersöhn and Eloff (2002:79) find the “... poor early childhood development and limited literacy on South Africa’s social, economic and political systems ...” disquieting. Children get caught up in a vicious cycle where they do not develop appropriate social skills. All the factors mentioned could result in traumatised children suffering emotional scars. The ravages of the situation described earlier as poor socio-economic factors, will inadvertently affect the infants in the family as the older siblings set the example. The interrelationship in the physical, cognitive, moral, social and emotional development will suffer. Although teachers cannot on their own resolve the situation, they can certainly play a major role in assisting the Grade R learners to become acquainted with fears and traumas. This is possible by utilising not only the creative skills of the teachers, but also those of the children. It was therefore imperative to explore how learners and teachers jointly tap into the imagination to create suitable activities to develop language and social skills (MRQs 1 and 2).

Finally the long-term psychological effects of emotional deprivation put the children at a higher risk of developing psychosocial problems. If they do not get love and care they may display

antisocial behaviour. This could however, be countered if there are measures of compensation by others such as teachers. It could lessen the impact. To assist teachers, the representatives of education, in providing knowledge and skills in order to cope and deal with fears and traumas in general, which could include HIV and AIDS, there should be a framework or guidelines to ensure some form of consensus, especially at government schools. This necessitates a discussion on what the South African DoE envisages in the curriculum. However, a background to contextualise the curriculum is necessary.

2.11 THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CONTEXT

In 1997 Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was introduced to counter the curriculum of the previous non-democratic government (DoE, 1996).

2.11.1 Background

Many challenges faced the implementation of C2005 and a Ministerial Review Committee appointed in 2000 suggested the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, (DoE, 2001a:7-8) with the following aims in mind to:

- Build on the vision and values of C2005.
- Ensure that constitutional and democratic values are expressed in it and that the values of a democratic state are built into the curriculum.
- Make education for justice and social citizenship a key feature of a curriculum designed for a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

I review and critique a selected few of the DoE documents to establish the focus and outcomes for Grade R classes with special focus on the use of stories and the how HIV and AIDS is incorporated in the curriculum.

2.11.2 Documents reviewed

The following documents were reviewed to grasp how the DoE communicated the intentions with regards to the Grade R learners:

Revised National Curriculum Statement (2001a);
 Education White Paper 6 (2001b);
 Revised National Curriculum Statement, Languages Policy Document (2002a);
 Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Arts and Culture (2002b);
 Revised National Curriculum Statement, English First Additional Language (2002c);
 Revised National Curriculum Statement, Grades R-9 (Schools) Policy (2002d);
 Revised National Curriculum Statement Teachers' Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes (2003a);
 Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Life Orientation (2003b);
 Education White Paper 5 (2003c);
 Revised National Curriculum Statement Numeracy Handbook for Foundation Phase Teachers (2009).

In the RNCS (DoE, 2002a:7) the three main Learning Programmes (LP) of the Foundation Phase are Literacy, Numeracy and Life Orientation. The Learning Areas (LAs) are integrated to cover these programmes. Languages and Arts & Culture are viewed as specific LAs, which pertain to Grade R, with Life Orientation as a LP. Teachers are expected to plan their lessons in order to accommodate all eight LAs under the three Learning Programmes. Below I suggest a diagrammatical presentation for FP:

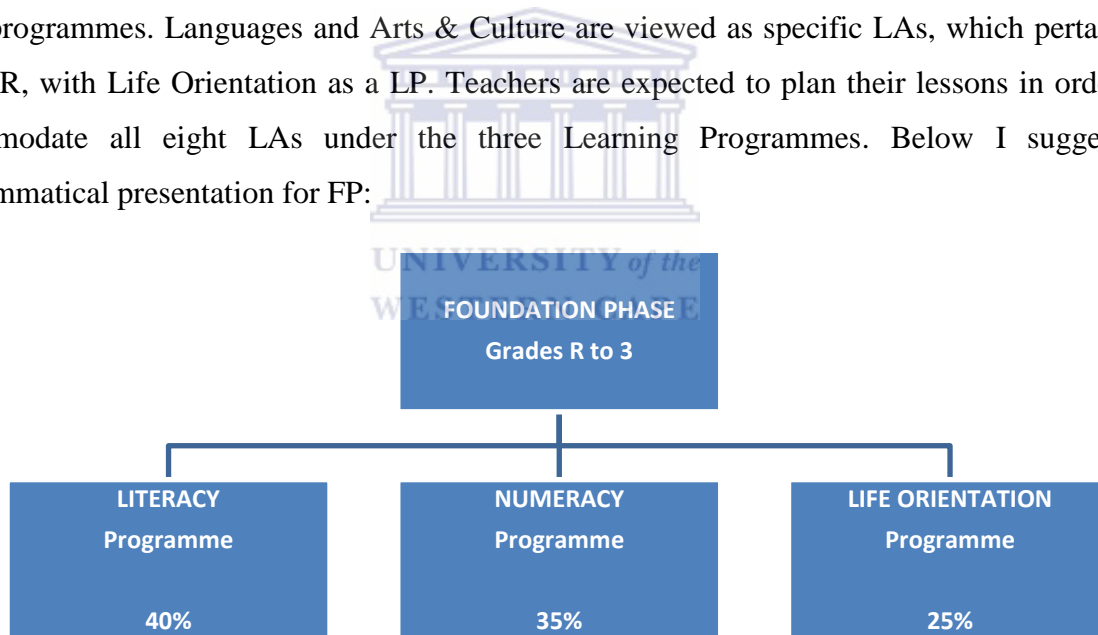


Figure 6: Presentation of the Foundation Phase Programme

It is clear that the LAs which include Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Technology, Economic & Management Science and Arts & Culture, must be integrated to cover all aspects. The teachers have a daunting task to plan and prepare a meaningful programme, taking into account the allocated time per week per programme, as well as the fact that some LAs involve more than one “subject”. Social Sciences, for example, involve

History and Geography; Life Orientation involves Religious Education, Natural Sciences, Human Movement Science as well as Arts & Culture. Teachers must plan and prepare thoroughly to accommodate integration and overlapping. Subsequently I focus on the RNCS in South African schools.

2.11.3 The Revised National Curriculum Statement

At the onset of the research the RNCS (DoE, 2001a) was the current curriculum of the DoE, used in South African schools from Grades R to 9. The South African schools were faced with a new curriculum that was informed by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) which provided the basis for transformation and development of the curriculum of South Africa. The prologue to the Constitution emphasises the democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights amongst others. Considering that schools were faced with multilingual and multicultural classrooms compounded the tasks of teachers. I needed to establish whether the intended outcomes pertaining to the use of stories as stipulated in each LP and LA (individual and groups of subjects) were implemented and how it was done. The following extract is LO 1 in the RNCS document on Life Orientation (DoE, 2003a:9):

The learner in the Foundation Phase is exposed to communicable childhood diseases. Therefore, the learner should have knowledge of these diseases, as well as of HIV/AIDS. At this age, the learner is vulnerable to abuse. Safety measures particularly relevant to the learner in this Phase should be addressed.

By means of observations I wanted to establish in which way the teachers imparted the information about diseases for example HIV and AIDS to learners to gain the knowledge. In order to establish the basis for the development of language skills in the curriculum I focused on the Languages and their Outcomes in the RNCS for Grade R.

2.11.4 Languages and the Outcomes for the Grade R programme

How are the teachers in Grade R classes able to assist the learners with their language development? In the ensuing section the outcomes are presented.

The Languages Learning Area Statement in the RNCS (DoE, 2002a:4) includes Home Language (HL) and First Additional Language (FAL). The HL is where children are expected to start school able to understand and speak the language. The FAL is where children do not necessarily have any knowledge of the language. Furthermore, the DoE promotes an additive language policy. This, for example, could be where children start school able to speak and understand isiXhosa, the indigenous black language in the WC, and then they acquire the additional language (AL) like English or Afrikaans. Additive multilingualism supposes that the HL is maintained and developed while they acquire the AL. Many schools in the WC are faced with classes where the medium of instruction is English, for example, but the HL is isiXhosa. The languages at the school might be English and Afrikaans. Often the parents choose the schools and preference might be where English is the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT), as English seems to be a passport to job opportunities and in some cases better resourced schools.

When Grade R learners enrol at schools the assumption is that they "... can speak with varying degrees of fluency and confidence" as outlined in the RNCS (DoE, 2001a:22). It therefore seems as if there is the understanding that not all children will be equally fluent or confident, hence the use of the phrase "with varying degrees". In the same document (DoE, 2001a:22) learners should be able to "communicate confidently and effectively in a spoken language in a wide variety of situations" to achieve LO 2. When children are forced into situations where they are instructed in languages other than their Mother Tongue/HL in Grade R, chances are that they will not communicate confidently and effectively. John-Steiner and Mahn (1996:203) present two domains in the development of the child, posited by Vygotsky, namely scribbling and dramatisation, and symbolic play. According to the authors Vygotsky regarded these domains as preparation to literacy. Moreover, the authors claim that children develop spontaneous concepts when stories are told or when they act in imaginative role-play. In conjunction with the LOs of Language, the Life Orientation outcomes form a necessary link to develop social skills (SQ 1.4.3). Life Orientation provides opportunities for imaginative role-play.

2.11.5 Life Orientation and the Outcomes for the Grade R programme

The Life Orientation Programme is defined in the RNCS, Life Orientation (DoE, 2003b:73) as the programme which should:

- (i) contribute to the full personal development of young learners; and
- (ii) provide them with some of the knowledge, skills and values needed for wider social and economic development and involvement.

LO 1 focuses on Health Promotion (DoE, 2003b:79), and states that the learner will be able to make an informed decision regarding personal, community and environmental health. In a 30 line explanation of this LO, HIV and AIDS is in the last line: “The HIV/AIDS programme can also be incorporated into Life Orientation: Learning Outcome 1” (DoE, 2003b:76). In the ensuing LOs referring to Social, Personal and Physical Development and Movement, no mentioning of HIV and AIDS is made. The LO referring to Social Development does, however, include basic concepts dealing with human rights, healthy environment, inclusivity and social justice. Grade R children can be afforded the opportunity to realise the Outcome where they develop the ability to avoid bias and prejudice. Considering that the topic of research was to explore whether stories were also integrated with other areas like the arts and then applied as teaching tool, I examined the policy of the DoE on the teaching of the arts.

2.11.6 Arts & Culture and the Outcomes for the Grade R programme

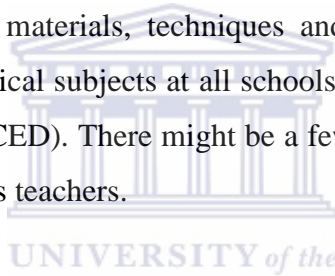
In the RNCS, (DoE, 2002b:4) the arts education forms part of the LA termed Arts & Culture. This LA covers a broad range of South African art and art practices (DoE, 2002b:4). As stated in this document, the main aim is to provide all learners with a general education in Arts & Culture.

Now where would the arts link with the art of story-telling and more specifically, “How does the curriculum make provision for such an approach?” The DoE is of the opinion that Arts & Culture will contribute to a holistic development for all learners which will be obtained by providing learners with opportunities to do the following as stated in the RNCS on Arts & Culture (DoE, 2002b:6):

- (i) to develop a healthy self-image;
- (ii) to work together and independently;
- (iii) to recognise and develop an understanding of the rich and diverse cultures and inheritances of South Africa;
- (iv) to develop practical skills in the various art forms;
- (v) to respect human dignities; and
- (vi) to develop lifelong learning skills as preparation for further teaching and work.

The LOs of the RNCS on Arts & Culture for Grade R (DoE, 2002b:6) propose the following:

For LO 1 (DoE, 2002b:15-16), learners are able to create, interpret and present work in each art form. Here the intention is that learners will be exposed to Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts. However, for the uninformed or untrained teachers it might be difficult to, for example, experiment with a variety of art materials, techniques and colour. The DoE no longer has specialists teaching specialist practical subjects at all schools since 2003 (Personal conversation, Curriculum: GET Coordinator, WCED). There might be a few schools that can afford to do this, but the idea is to have generalists as teachers.



LO 2 (DoE, 2002b:18) states that learners are able to reflect critically on cultural and art processes, products and styles in the present and past contexts. Learners are able to display individual and group skills in arts and cultural activities by means of individual and group participation for LO 3: (DoE, 2002b:19). One fact that seems relevant to the research is that learners will start to develop empathy by acting various roles. LO 4 (DoE, 2002b:20), claims learners are able to analyse and use various forms of expression and communication in arts and culture.

In the LOs listed above the only time when “stories” is mentioned, is in LO 2 and LO 4. Furthermore, LO 2 (DoE, 2002b:17) states that learners will discuss their own art works in the Visual Arts section and tell stories about them. For LO 4 (DoE, 2002b:19), learners will express stories through dance. They will create sound effects for stories in the Drama section.

Interestingly, the type of teacher proposed in the RNCS for Arts & Culture (DoE, 2002b:3) should be qualified, competent, dedicated and compassionate. They are furthermore regarded as facilitators of learning, interpreters and creators of learning programmes and subject matter, leaders, administrators and managers, subject specialists, researchers and life-long learners, community members, citizens and counsellors, assessors and specialists of LAs and learning phases. The above-mentioned definition is applicable to teachers in general not only Arts & Culture teachers. I explored whether teachers who needed to implement this very important LA satisfied the expectations listed above. However, the expectations are formulated as policy regardless contextual realities. The DoE phased out training of specialist teachers and therefore the expectation to have “subject specialists” seems to be a major contradiction. The “learners” envisaged by the DoE in the RNCS (DoE, 2002b:3) would be those who are inspired by values and who will act in the interest of a society based on democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice.

In conjunction with the Arts & Culture Programme proposed by the DoE, I focus briefly on the opinions of Taylor and Andrews (1993:26). The authors cite instances where children find expressive words and phrases to describe “vital stimuli”, because “... the arts engage feelings as well as minds” (1993:26). As an example of a teacher who implemented an integrated approach, called the ‘symphonic method’, Taylor and Andrews (1993:108) mention Marshall who used Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony to link the entire primary curriculum. Marshall’s idea, as opined by Taylor and Andrews (1993:138), that for children “To believe in their potential for creativity was ... the first half of the journey towards being educated beings”. This links with the RNCS policy that children should develop a positive self-image (DoE, 2001b:5). If Grade R children are made aware that they have the potential for creativity they will strive to realise this potential. As Webb (2002:267) points out: “Younger children may also express their wishes, worries, or feelings ... in play, drawings ...”. However, the teachers need to develop this urge and they need to stimulate learners, perhaps not with the Pastoral Symphony, but through stories where the arts are incorporated. To realise the Outcomes as stipulated in the RNCS the teachers are regarded as major role players, considering the expectations of the DoE.

A study conducted in 2004 – 2005 by Youm (2007:41-52) sketches the way in which music was used to integrate the first grade curriculum at a school in the United States (US). Although I could draw from the similarities to what I did, the main difference was that I used the story to propose an integrated curriculum for Grade R, and Youm used Music as the binding force. While in the US study more than one teacher was involved in teaching the children, this study used only one Grade R teacher per class, who taught all the learning programmes.

Nompula (2012:303) investigated strategies to integrate creative arts in Grades 7 to 9. The study was to propose possibilities for integration in Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011b) because the allocated times to teach the four arts subjects were too limited. Furthermore, although teachers responded positively to integration the author concluded that currently the reality indicated that schools could possibly not meet the new challenges and changes just yet (Nompula, 2012:304). The recommendations made seem implementable and useful, yet I am cautious to the suggestion that a competition will motivate learners to be more creative (Nompula, 2012:303). I am of the opinion that the learners who do not win the big prize might become de-motivated and/or feel inadequate. However, given the nature of the high school curriculum, it is more difficult to integrate all subjects across the curriculum on this level than in Grade R.

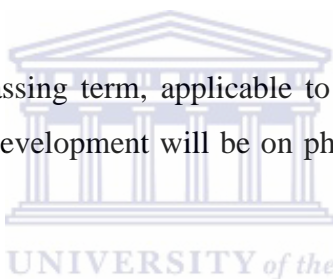
The very apt description, that the story “becomes particular to that group of children, in that context, and at that time” for the engagement of storytelling in itself includes elements of a story (Daniel, 2012:8). When the teachers capitalise on the opportunities offered in class the children become the characters in the classroom context at that time. Craig (1996:287) states that, “[o]nce children begin to draw representational objects, their drawings reveal how they think and feel.” Their artistic expressions could therefore serve as indicators of their emotions, because as Craig (1996:379) postulates, children can “... tell a story about their picture that is connected to the trauma in their lives”. Stories presented in a variety of ways, including play activities, could help the child in the discovery and acquisition of language. The reality for children would be that traumatic situations will in some way or the other affect them.

What then is the current situation in the schools with regards to Early Childhood Development (ECD)?

2.12 POLICY ON FOUNDATION PHASE LEARNERS

According to Notice No. 2 of 1998 and the National Education Policy Act (Act No. 27 of 1996) the FP children will range from 5 to 10 years. Children who turn six (6) can be admitted to Grade R in that year. However, in this document it is stated that Grade R is not compulsory. The document acknowledges the varying degrees of physical, emotional and intellectual differences. The Education White Paper 5 (DoE, 2003c:7) highlights the vision for ECD as proposed by the DoE and alludes to the background of ECD as follows:

- ECD is a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to nine years.
- ECD refers to an encompassing term, applicable to processes including children from birth to nine years whose development will be on physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, moral and social levels.



In the policy of ECD (DoE, 2001a:7-8) there are five key areas delimited as requiring attention. These areas include:

- (i) the extent of ECD provision;
- (ii) inequality in existing ECD provision;
- (iii) inequality of access to ECD services;
- (iv) variable quality of ECD services; and
- (v) an incomplete, fragmented legislative and policy framework for ECD that results in uncoordinated service delivery.

These areas are of concern to many people working in the ECD field. Hence it was interesting to see how the DoE tackled these areas of concern. In the Western Cape there are about 800 sites registered with the Department (WCED, 2004/2005). Sites that do not offer Grade R, must register with the Social Welfare Department. However, many private sites do not register. The inequalities therefore stem from the fact that many sites are under-resourced with not even

proper toilet facilities. Only parents who can afford to, can access ECD sites that offer suitable facilities and good educational programmes. The same reason applies to the variable quality of ECD services. The money available at the ECD sites influences the quality of ECD services. Looking at the ECD situation currently could shed some light on the areas of concern highlighted above.

ECD was apparently experiencing growth but is in need of help to be sustainable and keep ahead with trends and developments (Sheridan, Edwards, Marvin & Knoche, 2009:6). However, budgetary constraints were impacting negatively on this extremely important phase in the lives of children. The national DoE subsidised every 30 children per registered site with R2,00 per child. The WCED subsidised every 30 children per registered site with R3,00 per child. This was increased to R6,00 per child, based on a sliding scale of the relative poverty of the specific pre-school (WCED, 2004/2005:2).

Foster, *et al.* (1997:340) underscore the importance for early childhood development with their argument that ECD projects are important sites, but the funds for these sites were cut by the Western Cape (WC) provincial government to meet other commitments. If you consider that local governments get their monetary allocation from the national government, then it is evident why the most important phase in the development of children namely ECD, is often the most neglected item on the budget. The introduction of a general child support benefit introduced in 1994 (Foster, *et al.*, 1997:340) might alleviate some of the conditions in very poor families, but with the rising cost of living this does not secure a substantial improvement in living conditions for the children. Often the money is not utilised as it should be, but mismanaged by the parents. The question arises whether a few thousand rand can be stretched, considering all the ECD sites just in the WC.

Taken into account the monetary allocation per child per ECD site makes it an almost impossible task to attract teachers to this crucial phase in the development of children. The salaries of teachers have to be paid from the same allocation. Teachers at government schools who leave the system are not replaced. A statement by the DoE in The Education White Paper 5 (DoE, 2003c:19) states: "... Grade R is not compulsory" even though the Government Gazette

No.22756 (RSA, 2001:16) unequivocally states the medium goal for 2010 is that all children entering Grade 1 should have "... participated in an accredited Reception Year Programme".

Biersteker (2010:13) provides the following information with regards to Grade R: Grade R is financed since 2001 on a per learner basis in community-based ECD sites and a direct grant from provincial education departments (PEDs) paid to school governing bodies in public primary schools. An important statement articulated by Biersteker and Dawes (2008) in Biersteker (2010:14) mention that the subsidisation, although poverty targeted, was much lower in comparison with other grades with about seven times less in 2005 than in Grade 1. However, according to Biersteker (2010:14) there was a recommendation in White Paper 5 (DoE, 2003c) that the per-learner-cost for Grade R should be 70% of the Grade 1 learner (DoE, Communication to Parliamentary Portfolio Committee, June 2008). This information presents a slightly more positive, although far from ideal, picture for Grade R.

Franks, *et al.* (2003:234-237) agree that the teachers in these classrooms need to be informed and supported with regards to HIV and AIDS instruction but admit that there is not much known about the skills of these teachers or their attitudes. This was a study conducted in the USA but the same is probably true in the SA schools. I support the claim that FP need teachers who are well-prepared, who display positive teaching strengths, and have specialised knowledge on the developmental processes (Eliason & Jenkins, 2012:20; Kostelink, *et al.* 2004:40). In addition Zaslow and Martinez-Beck (2006:315) posit that qualified or appropriately trained FP teachers will provide quality care and education (MRQ 1). This is an important assumption not only for FP children but more so when they face traumas. The Grade R teachers need to be sensitive to the situation in order to assist their learners who are confronted with fears and traumas.

To support Grade R children with the conceptualisation of fears and traumas is complex, but the presence of the physically and/or mentally challenged children in a mainstream classroom compound the problem. The Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001b:55) states that "... learners are more independent after the Foundation Phase ..." and suggests that inclusion should preferably start after Grade 3. However, the possibility existed that there might be groups where inclusive education had been implemented. It could pose a real challenge to teachers. In-service

distance education third year students at the ex-College of Education (2003) had to discuss how they incorporated the HIV and AIDS situation in their English First Additional Language classes. They reported the dilemma that teachers at Education for Learners with Special Educational Needs (ELSEN) schools faced. Some mentally and physically challenged children had to learn other basic skills before they could interact in discussions regarding sexuality. The importance of the teachers' influence on the development of language and social skills cannot be underestimated (MRQs 1 and 2). However, I believe all children can benefit equally from a creative approach where traumatised children can come to terms with the situation.

2.13 CONCLUSION

Creativity, as discussed in Chapter One (1.5.4) is an important factor in the process where teachers need to teach in an interactive way when they use stories integrated with the creative arts. Besides suggesting definitions of creativity and ways of being creative in various subjects, the one important point that Starko (2010:8-11) propounds is that “[c]reativity is purposeful or an effort to make something work, to make something better, more meaningful, or more beautiful”. This summarises what teachers need to understand and internalise to be empowered as effective, creative teachers. If there is no purpose and effort to engage the children in the classroom they might not find the lesson meaningful and fail to produce work of aesthetic quality be it singing, dancing or other subjects. Grainger, *et al.* (2005:11) point out that creativity is misinterpreted as intuitive, childlike and undisciplined and also regarded as the domain of just a few. They suggest that teachers should encourage contributions that are innovative and then pass the control back to the children (2005:17). They should therefore empower the children. Grainger, *et al.* (2005:108), cite the following profound statement made by Crossley Holland (2000:10): “Stories are ‘the ground that humans hold in common, not what divides them’ ... they often recapture their personal involvement and convey with relative ease a sense of themselves and their social identity”. Teachers should internalise this value and realise that the creative use of stories are the tools to empower themselves and the children to establish this special bond. The research methodology is subsequently discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY - FINDING THE PURPOSE, FUNCTION AND RESPONSE TO THE TALE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the methodology applied to conduct the research. The research design is structured to encompass the research methodology that I implemented to find the purpose and function of stories. In addition the research methodology was applied to examine the responses of (i) the Grade R teachers, (ii) the Grade R children, (iii) the FP lecturers, and (iv) FP students to the use of stories as teaching tools.

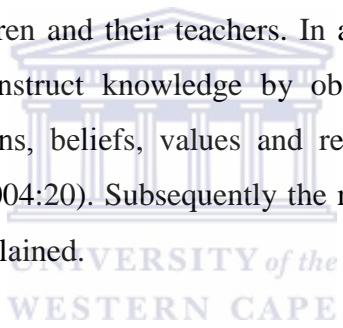
The selected research methodology was used to conduct social research. According to Mouton and Marais (1996:7) social science research involves a “... collaborative human activity” whereby a valid understanding of social reality is gained when studied objectively. Social science according to Babbie and Mouton (2001:20-21) evolved to produce three influential meta-theoretical traditions which are the positivist, phenomenology or interpretivist approach and critical theory traditions. Mouton and Marais (1996:8) also identify five dimensions of research namely sociological-where typical human activity is emphasised; ontological - the dimensions and disputes in which the research domains can be defined; ideological - the theoretical goals; epistemological - research findings to state the social reality as closely as possible; and methodological-focusing on objectivity.

The positivist theory focuses on experimental control, structured and replicable observation and measurement, quantification, generalisation and objectivity (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:27). According to Mouton (2001:141) the quantitative paradigm is linked to positivism while phenomenology relates to qualitative research and in summary focuses on unstructured observation and open interviewing, idiographic descriptions, qualitative data analysis and objectivity, which is understood as the inter-subjective attitude of the insider (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:33; Cohen, *et al.* 2002:9). The research conducted was informed by the phenomenology tradition. Furthermore Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:17) state that positivism makes

excessive assumptions and does not take into account how people make meaning or how interpretation is influenced by culture.

The critical theory, although it does not have a clear methodology, focuses on participatory research which includes terms such as action research, collaborative inquiry, endogenous research and experiential research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:38-39). In the critical theory the discourses are explored to present the power of discourses in which they shape the lives of people (Henning, *et al.* 2004:23). In addition Henning *et al.* (2004:23) state that critical theory focuses on the positive instead of the negative and understands events within social and economic contexts.

The research conducted was informed by the interpretivist tradition where the phenomena are the Grade R classroom with the children and their teachers. In applying the interpretivist tradition the researcher does not only construct knowledge by observable phenomena but also by “descriptions of people’s intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding” (Henning, *et al.*, 2004:20). Subsequently the methodological paradigm informed by the interpretivist tradition is explained.



3.2 THE METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM

I followed a qualitative paradigm as opposed to a quantitative one to address the main research questions, “*Do teachers use stories in Grade R classes, and if so, how do they use stories?*” and “*Are stories integrated with other areas of the curriculum?*” (see Chapter One, 1.4). In the ensuing paragraph I define qualitative research, and propose why I favoured a qualitative paradigm.

3.2.1 Qualitative paradigm

Qualitative research is defined as research which engages the researcher who gathers data in a natural setting rather than in a laboratory; and then generates new understandings that can be used (Rallis & Rossman, 2012:4-5), acknowledging that new understandings are not unique to

qualitative research only. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) and Merriam (1998:19), qualitative research accommodates the insider's perspective; the in-depth descriptions and understanding of actions and events are the primary aims; it attempts to understand social action in terms of the specific context and does not generalise to theoretical population; often the approach can be inductive where new hypotheses and theories can develop and the qualitative researcher is regarded as the main instrument in the research process.

Furthermore, qualitative research focuses on the process of implementation instead of quantifiable outcomes (Mouton, 2001:161). This entails what Creswell (2008:44) qualifies as measurable observable data in quantitative research and participants' experiences in qualitative research. Moreover, Creswell (2008:44) presents quantitative research as indicating a relationship among variables, with qualitative research as indicating thematic development. According to Bless and Hogson-Smith (1995:100), qualitative research is often considered to be the most adequate method to investigate specific areas of social reality. This is based on their argument that non-numerical data, in this case the qualitative data, may assist in interpreting numerical or quantitative data. If then the non-numerical data is not taken into consideration, the description of the social reality will be incomplete. Olsen (2004:7) underscores Silverman's (1993:94) argument that qualitative research acknowledges social relationships as subjective in nature.

3.2.2 A qualitative paradigm as opposed to a quantitative one

I opted for a qualitative paradigm instead of a quantitative one as it allowed me to conduct the research in a natural setting which in this case was the Grade R classroom. The characteristics of qualitative research as stated in 3.3 is extended in my application thereof by adding two differences between quantitative and qualitative research extracted from Denzin and Lincoln (2005:12). These included that (i) although both qualitative and quantitative research capture the point of view displayed by the individual, the qualitative researcher seemingly gets closer to the persons investigated by observations and interviewing. The quantitative researcher is more removed from the subjects. (ii) There is opportunity for the qualitative researcher to gather rich

descriptions (Cousin, 2005:424) as opposed to the quantitative researcher whose concern is not with detail.

The arguments delineated above (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:38-39; Schulze, 2003:8020) informed the choice to opt for a qualitative rather than a quantitative paradigm. I conducted the research within a paradigm where I was able to make inferences based on my observations of the various role players in the case studies. Mouton (2001:161) echoes this with the statement that qualitative research describes and evaluates the "... performance of programmes" in their natural settings. In this research the performance of programmes referred to how Grade R teachers and their learners engaged with stories in the classroom during their school programme. Furthermore I attempt to propose a pedagogy whereby teachers are empowered to use stories as teaching tool across the curriculum.

The natural setting in the research referred to the classrooms where Grade R learners were taught every day. Occasionally they were taken out of the classroom onto the playground, art or music room, but these areas were still part of their familiar environment, which formed part of the natural setting. The idea was however, to keep the environment as stable as possible to foster creativity. According to Hendrick (1984:287) a "... stable and predictable climate" ... forms a sound base for the generation of creative activity, which in turn contributes to the development of emotional health". This argument encapsulated my research as I wanted to motivate creativity which in turn had to impact positively on the emotional health of Grade R children and address fears and traumas such as HIV and AIDS.

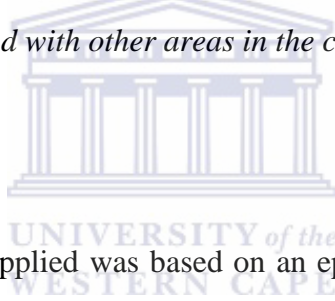
I agree with the researchers cited as the specific social reality in the research involved Grade R children in their classrooms which did not divorce their homes from the school environment. It was possible to present the physical dimensions or sizes of the classrooms and the number of hours spent on telling stories as well as the number of stories used over a period of time in order to give quantifiable or numerical data. This however, would not have given a complete description of the social reality of the participants. A qualitative paradigm allowed me to be in close proximity of the subjects as postulated by Babbie and Mouton (2001:646). Added to it

were, for example, aspects like emotions, their interest levels, their cognitive development, linguistic and social skills and their creativity when they were asked to interact with the stories.

Furthermore the Grade R teachers could implement techniques that they have not used, called empowerment evaluation for which Mouton (2001: 161) cites Fetterman (1989). The term in itself suggests that teachers could empower themselves simply by evaluating their own techniques and those of other presenters to address SQ 1.4.1 as part of professional development.

A qualitative paradigm afforded an opportunity to observe learners and teachers and then analyse their responses afterwards, followed by an account based on insider perspective on social action (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:53; Rallis and Rossman, 2012:5). I was therefore part of the process instead of an outsider and followed the approach as set out below. The approach accommodated the main research questions: “*Do teachers use stories in Grade R classes, and if so, how they use stories?*” and “*Are stories integrated with other areas in the curriculum?*”

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH



The research methodology that I applied was based on an epistemological paradigm emanating from a qualitative framework. The epistemological position was embedded in an interpretivist approach to interpret the interactions of teachers and their Grade R classes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In using the qualitative methodology underpinned by an interpretivist epistemology it assumed that the interactions of the teachers, the researcher and the children attempted to convey meaning (Merriam, 1998). The meaning refers to how the teachers and children engaged with stories and derived meaning from the interactions. In return the researcher interpreted the actions between the role-players as well as the interaction with the researcher. Furthermore the researcher had to understand the way in which the participants, namely the teachers and the children interpreted their social reality and offered interpretations or impressions of the children and teachers observed (Cousin, 2005:424).

This methodology allowed me to interpret the effect of the use of stories in a few selected schools rather than generalise it to all schools (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1998;

Maxwell, 2006). An interpretivist approach assumes that you aim to interpret or understand human behaviour rather than to explain or predict it (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:643). In using the interpretivist approach the researcher interprets how the participants interpret their social realities and then the researcher makes sense of the multiple social realities. I therefore analysed the way in which the children interpreted the stories presented to them and the responses of the children to the various stories that they heard. Additionally, I interpreted the methodology applied by the teachers when the stories were presented. The interpretive approach furthermore acknowledges that the resulting theory is an interpretation (Charmaz, 2006:130). The methodology involved techniques and approaches utilised by the teachers. At a later stage I analysed how the teachers interpreted the integrated approach that I applied. These approaches are discussed in detail in Chapter Four. Furthermore, I interpreted how Grade R children responded and interacted when they were allowed to tell their own stories or retell the stories they heard. This afforded the opportunity for children to interpret the stories told and then create their own versions. It was significant to analyse their responses to and interactions with an integrated approach where they could illustrate stories, sing songs relating to similar themes of the stories, act as some of the characters in the stories, illustrate stories and create their own stories. The stories presented an avenue whereby the teachers and children could interpret various themes and contexts to which they could relate and with which they could identify.

I opted for an interpretive approach as opposed to a critical one for two reasons extracted from Emerson's analysis cited by Babbie and Mouton (2001:57). The selected approach allowed me to be more reflective and sensitive to participants. In addition I was more critical of my own methods. I could evaluate my observations of teachers in a sensitive way and encourage them to engage in other approaches too. I also tested my own method to establish whether in fact it proved that an integrated approach assisted Grade R teachers to feel empowered (MRQ 1). Their empowerment was to assist the children to develop socially and linguistically as well as provide mechanisms to address fears and traumas (MRQ 2). Literature on the research topic was scrutinised to ascertain whether this approach was successfully implemented in Grade R classes. The literature that I scrutinised and interpreted included academic journal articles, theses, newspaper articles, books and policy documents. In order to establish which approach teachers applied to use stories and whether they integrated the stories across the curriculum whilst also

addressing traumatic situations, I opted for a case study as the design type applicable to my research

3.4 THE RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY

Babbie and Mouton (2001:79-285) define qualitative research in three design types namely:

- (a) ethnographic studies where behaviour of a particular society is directly observed;
- (b) case studies, which involve four issues that I discuss, but in essence the emphasis is on an individual unit; and
- (c) life histories which are useful to provide insight into historical and biographical dimensions of human experience.

The glossary in Babbie and Mouton (2001:647) defines the research design as a plan or structured framework of your intended process to solve the research problem. Case studies are also defined by a number of authors such as Merriam (1998:27); Stake (1995:xi); Yin (2003:13) and Zainal (2007:1) who suggest that a case study is a form of social enquiry in a single case or instance. Merriam (1998:29) regards a case study as an instrument able to explain causal links, while Yin (2003:13-14) defines a case study as an investigation in a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context. In addition Cousin (2005:423) cautions that a case study should not be confused with action research. Action research involves a change intervention with numerous reflective stages and the participants are co-researchers where the case study is more researcher centred, observing the participants (Cousin, 2005:423). Educational programmes can for example be evaluated to assess the effectiveness thereof in a case study (Zainal, 2007:1).

The case in the research is firstly, whether Grade R teachers use stories and if so, how they use the stories. Secondly, it is to see whether the stories are to integrate other subjects across the curriculum. Zainal (2007:3) categorises the exploratory, explanatory and descriptive case study. Furthermore, Zainal (2007:3) explicates the types as follows: the exploratory case study explores a phenomenon where data collection and fieldwork can be done prior to the research to propose research protocol; the explanatory type examines the data at both surface and deep level so that the phenomenon can be explained; while the descriptive type describes the natural phenomenon.

The case study type applied in the research was descriptive as I described which approaches teachers applied (Baxter & Jack, 2008:545-548). According to Stake (1995:135) the personal perspectives of researchers are encouraged. This links with an earlier statement that qualitative research conveys meaning as the meanings generated should be valued (Stake, 1995:135). The disadvantages of a case study amongst others can be lack of rigour and/or little basis for generalisation (Yin, 2003:21, Zainal, 2007:5).

A case study allowed me to observe the teachers and learners in a real life or natural setting (Baxter & Jack, 2008:548; Merriam, 1998:29; Stake, 1988:263; Babbie & Mouton, 2001:279). In a case study, according to Cohen, *et al.* (2002:185), a single unit is observed. It has certain physical confines and time constraints as well as specific activities within the physical confines and time allocation (Cousin, 2005:423). Although I observed seven groups the Grade R classroom constituted the single unit or bounded system (Cohen, *et al.* 2002:81). The schools were selected to include different strata in the community and represented previously disadvantaged schools (public school), private or non-governmental pre-schools, more affluent schools and a hospital classroom in the Western Cape. The case study was based on the interactions with the Grade R children and their teachers, as well as with me. I conducted the research within an ethical framework. At the schools I did field work and used the interview, questionnaire and observations as research tools. It must be stressed that the identities of participants were never revealed or discussed. Important also is that a case study is not representative of entire populations and therefore I could not generalise but just make tentative claims (Cousin, 2005:426, Zainal, 2007:5) unless the study is replicated by using the same theories. However, I acknowledge that a case study is open to personal bias (Watts & Nisbet, 1984:81).

The four issues involved in case studies are, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 282), the role of conceptualisation; the importance of contextual detail and in-depth discussion; the use of multiple sources of data, and analytical strategies. These issues I address as follows in my research and expand on them later in this chapter.

Firstly, in my conceptual framework in Chapter One, I deal with most of the aspects mentioned for conceptualisation which were my purpose of study, research questions and literature review. Secondly, I provide the contextual details of the case study. This was done with descriptions of the participants or what Bless and Hogson-Smith (1995:64) call unit of analysis, namely the teachers and learners. I expand on this in 3.7 of this chapter. The settings where research took place were the specific institutions. The various ways in which I collected data are described as well as how the data was analysed to provide readers opportunities to "... make judgements about the adequacy of the method and to permit replication" as postulated by Babbie and Mouton (2001:282). In the research the readers involved were the adult participants who were the teachers and the officials of the DoE, other educators as well as researchers who wish to replicate the study. Thirdly, I engaged in multiple sources of data as I used questionnaires, interviews, and observations as research instruments (see 3.5). Triangulation was applied to circumvent some form of bias.

Finally, the analytical strategies that I employed enabled me to organise my findings and make suggestions and recommendations based on the findings of the case studies. These analytical strategies included coding (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech & Zoran, 2009) and content analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). The various research instruments used are subsequently discussed in 3.5, interviews and questionnaires, and 3.6 to 3.7. In 3.6 the context for the observations (3.7) is explained.

3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The first research instrument I used was the interview. I used two types of interviews namely the informal and formal one.

A copy of the completed research with a separate overview of two to three pages stating the findings and recommendations would be submitted to the Director: Education Research as requested. In order to conduct the research within a qualitative paradigm, I utilised the various research instruments. In order to honour the conditions and requirements of the WCED I was bound by the ethics statement issued to the various participants.

3.5.1 Interviews

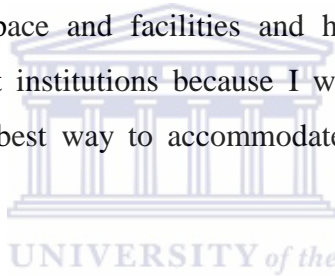
I agree with Babbie and Mouton (2001:289) that a conversation to gather information from my participants and establish in which direction to go would be the basis of the qualitative interview. Interviews are assumed to be more natural than the questionnaire and are also most commonly used in various types of research (Kelly, 2006:297). After permission was granted by the WCED I visited each school. The modelling of the proposed approach was then extended over more days. A day constitutes four hours and I spent approximately 11 days at a school. This totals about 2 months for all the schools. The table (see p. 98) indicates the programme followed at each school respectively to execute the research.

(a) Information sessions with principal as managers of the schools

Initially I arranged structured yet informal information sessions on Day 1 with the principals of the schools to explain my intentions and rationale for the research. As precursor to the interviews, and questionnaires with the teachers and children I discussed the research with the principals to foster their cooperation in the research project. I shared all relevant information and entertained any questions for clarification. The idea was to establish the willingness of the professionally qualified participants to cooperate. I explained that their confidentiality, if so requested, would be respected as stated in the WCED document. At this session I negotiated the roster that I followed in order to conduct the research. During the discussion I presented the principals with the permission document of the WCED to do research (see Appendix B) but mentioned that they were in no way compelled to participate. There was cooperation from each principal. The roster for the research accommodated the school programme without causing interruptions or disruptions to school's roster.

(b) Teacher interviews

On the second day I conducted the non-scheduled interview and the non-scheduled structured interview with the teachers, after the initial informal talks with the principal on Day 1, to explain the procedure. I issued the questionnaires to the teachers. The children were not present. In addition I observed the physical settings and resources where possible and especially when the children were dismissed on the third day. On the fourth day I discussed the intended programme and how it aligned with their work programme. The idea was also to gain information from teachers without comparing the responses to the questionnaires. Here I gained a general sense of what and how teachers engaged learners in storytelling sessions. Questions included a reference to their rosters where I could determine how often stories were included in the daily programme. Teachers also discussed why the specific time of day was chosen. They answered general questions about the classroom space and facilities and how they build up resources. The discussions varied at the different institutions because I was guided by the responses of the teachers. Teachers discussed the best way to accommodate their own presentations, which I observed.



Discussions about pedagogy were also done continuously during my stay at the schools. The discussions with the teachers were conducted in between sessions especially on Days 5 to 9 as well as in my role as participant observer, (see 3.5.3). During these discussions I made short notes where possible and mostly after the sessions in order to keep the interviews as spontaneous as possible. The responses were logged soon after each session. The interviews conducted with teachers and learners were transcribed and data was analysed. Field notes were made after interviews. I decided against using a tape recorder or any device to facilitate a less intrusive approach, which could impact on the spontaneity of the teachers and children.

(c) Interviews with Grade R children

Not all Grade R learners were able to read, and therefore I posed questions (see Appendices F1 & F2) to them orally. Writing down their responses as part of the conversations, did not impact negatively on the spontaneity of the learners.

I interviewed the learners specifically to determine their preferences for stories. The idea was also to acquaint them with the procedure and make them feel comfortable. The interview was therefore to prepare them mentally and set the scene. These interviews were very informal and could more aptly be regarded as informal conversations. They shared information with me in a free, almost playful way. Many of them were over enthusiastic to share information, at times not really focussing on the questions. I also conducted interviews with lecturers who train FP students in faculties of education at two local universities.

(d) Interviews with Higher Education lecturers

Questions were asked to gain information on the training programmes. They had to indicate the role of storytelling and the approaches used to teach it. Moreover, they had to expand on sensitisation of HIV and AIDS. The interview included close and open-ended questions (see Appendix G).

3.5.2 Questionnaires

I followed guidelines as given by Babbie and Mouton (2001:243-245) to construct the questionnaires namely:

- giving clear guidelines as to how to complete questionnaires; and
- pre-testing the questionnaire with a few of my colleagues or friends to ensure that there were no ambiguities.

Firstly the questionnaire in both English and Afrikaans (see Appendices E1 & E2) comprised three sections namely:

Section 1: a tick against 'Yes', 'No' or 'Not Sure' responses;

Section 2: responses involving a short motivation; and

Section 3 using Likert response categories: ‘Fully agree’/ ‘Agree’/ ‘Neutral’/ ‘Disagree’/ ‘Strongly disagree’ (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:242).

Secondly, I had a more focussed goal with more specific questions on their teaching methods, types of stories that they used, why they used them, how often they used stories, whether they integrated stories with the arts or other LAs and the outcomes that they aimed to realise.

More specific information in a second section of the questionnaire entailed that teachers motivated their selections of stories for example for enjoyment, for language development, as therapy for traumatised learners; that they evaluated their approaches and my efforts; that they applied other approaches and motivated them. The integration of stories with arts formed part of the questionnaire where teachers indicated whether they engaged in this approach and exactly which sections of the arts were included for example. Questions like: “Did the learners illustrate the stories?”, “Did they sing songs relevant to the stories?” and, “Did they act out the stories?” were prevalent. The questionnaires allowed teachers to post comments as well.

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The second questionnaire (see Appendix H) was aimed at education students who trained as FP teachers at a local university in the WC. These pre-service teachers had to respond to questions with regards to their training programme and their practical sessions at schools which both included the issues of storytelling and HIV and AIDS. The students were Afrikaans speaking. The rationale for the questionnaires was to triangulate the responses with those of the lectures’ interviews and confirm the pedagogy used to expose students to the art of story-telling as a teaching tool.

3.5.3 Observations

Besides the children, the teachers were observed while they interacted with the children. As stated in Chapter One, I used the three observation styles proposed by Ely (1991:45) namely active participant, privileged observer and limited observer. Observations reflected on the reactions of Grade R children to the different types of stories and the various story telling

techniques and storytellers. I observed how they used their imagination when engaged in creative activities such as dancing, drawing, singing, acting and storytelling. Initially I logged the observations shortly after each session in a notebook to ensure a more spontaneous atmosphere and to prevent subdued or inhibited reactions from both teachers and learners. Thereafter I organised, coded and analysed the responses. I originally wanted to use video recordings but the space in most of the classrooms did not allow for added equipment. I also realised it would detract from the spontaneity of the learners. I decided against hidden cameras as this technique would be intrusive and not cost-effective. Besides just observing as an outsider, I became an active participant in classes where it was requested by and arranged with the teacher.

a. Limited observer

As a limited observer on Days 4 to 6, (see Table 3, p. 100), I assessed whether the teachers were storytellers with the qualities of self-confidence and the ability to perform, as postulated by Smith (2004:28) and whether they established a bond between themselves and the Grade R children. I observed teachers to establish which approaches were applied, for example whether they integrated the arts and other subjects when telling stories. It was equally important to ascertain how teachers prepared themselves to tell the stories and whether they considered the needs of the Grade R children when they selected stories. It was not always possible to change these variables immediately as I needed to stay professional. As a visitor I was not in the position to address teachers on these qualities. I could at best make suggestions in terms of the approaches used during the privileged observer phase. In many cases, teachers needed to become just as actively engaged in the whole process of storytelling if they wished for the children to gain maximum benefit. Therefore teachers needed to be thoroughly prepared, fully informed and adequately trained for their jobs. I needed to ensure whether there was any quality assurance or assessment of programmes and who was responsible for these procedures. In a study conducted by Ayo-Yusuf, Naidoo and Chikte (2001) it was found that many primary school teachers were not adequately equipped to deal with HIV and AIDS and especially the teaching of it. The statistics in this regard is a cause for concern. A study conducted by Clasquin-Johnson (2011) confirmed my assumptions that Grade R teachers are passionate but that they need to receive training again.

b. Privileged observer

The role of privileged observer was assumed on Days 4 to 6 where I observed how teachers responded to my modelling and I could infer how they interpret this context. On the eleventh day, which did not follow immediately after the tenth day, I arranged a discussion group on story-telling as requested by the teachers. Six teachers who were in close proximity to the selected school attended. Teachers were expected to plan activities based on stories and share information with each other. It was important to ascertain how teachers prepared and if they considered the needs of the children. In this regard I could discuss follow-up preparation and planning, especially with regards to future collaboration.

c. Active participant observer

The role of active participant observer was done on Days 7, 8, 9 and 10. As active participant I told stories to the Grade R children and observed how they reacted and responded to the stories. The telling of stories integrated the arts and other subjects. I was not an outsider who did not take part in the activities but besides observing them, I interacted with them in order to observe them. The physical and mental proximity was much closer. This propinquity was brought about once I managed to gain their trust. Although I did not stay at the schools for a long period the interaction with them on different levels opened up the relationship. The presence of a stranger in their environment was accepted because of the informal conversations. As participant observer I could observe the interaction between the teacher and children as well as my own interaction with them. To engage in the actual research I followed the process outlined below. The access and participants involved are more fully discussed in the ensuing section.

3.6 ACCESS AND PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED

The discussion on access and participants is to present the context and background for the observations.

3.6.1 Permission to utilise institutions

I initiated this process by gaining permission from the WCED's research section to utilise the departmental institutions to comply with the specifications (DoE, Appendix A). Permission from the WCED followed a set procedure.

(a) Process prescribed by the WCED

A specific process must be followed as stipulated by the WCED (DoE, Appendix B). A letter of application was sent to the Directorate: Education Research (Appendix C).

- All literature relevant to the request for research was collected and scrutinised whereby the WCED interacted with the applicant if there was inadequate or contentious material. In such a case the applicant would then amend or revise the application. My application met with the approval of the directorate but I utilised only two of the stipulated government schools.
- The application had to include a full title, a synopsis of the research, copies of questionnaires, interviews and/or tests accompanied by the written permission of the research supervisor. The names of the departmental institutions where the research was conducted, respondents (Grade R children and teachers) who took part in the research and the period during which the research took place form part of the application.

The conditions governing the application were that:

- (i) There should be no financial implications for the WCED;
- (ii) Institutions and respondents were not be identifiable;
- (iii) The researcher should make all the arrangements regarding the investigation;
- (iv) A copy of the written approval by the WCED was presented to the head(s) of the institution(s);
- (v) If necessary, the permission of parents or legal guardians was obtained;
- (vi) Extension of research had to be approved by the WCED;
- (vii) No research had to be conducted during the fourth school term unless deemed necessary by the WCED;
- (viii) Research was limited to the indicated approved institutions; and
- (ix) A copy of the completed report, dissertation or thesis, accompanied by a separate synopsis of the most important findings and recommendations if not contained in the synopsis, had to be presented to the Director: Education Research.

(b) Permission from Institutions

Once approval by the WCED was granted I gained permission from the school principals and the teachers of both private and public institutions (see Appendix D). All documentation from the WCED and the University of the Western Cape was presented to the institutions. Ethical considerations were communicated to the institutions involved before the research was conducted.

3.6.2 Participants

The participants involved Grade R children and their teachers from various schools and institutions under the auspices of the WCED namely public stated aided, as well as independent pre-schools with mixed financial backgrounds. The purposive sampling as described by Guba and Lincoln (1994) in Babbie and Mouton (2001:277) included schools representative of more affluent and previously disadvantaged areas with Grade R children from varying backgrounds. The languages of teaching and learning (LOLT) were English and Afrikaans and the stories were presented in LOLT where there were multilingual groups. Table 2 illustrates the representation of the selected schools.



Table 2: Schools used in research

School	Type of school	No. of Grade R children interviewed	No. of Grade R teachers interviewed
One	Non-governmental, community-based	18	1
Two	Public governmental	20	2
Three	Non-governmental	21	1
Four	Public governmental	29	3
Five	Hospital school	Numbers changed as patients changed	Informal discussion with general teacher and principal

I concur with Ely (1991:4) that the participants will speak for themselves when you embark on qualitative research, which is an interactive process. The research is not restricted to only a few experts who do the research. The importance here is that participants do not only consider the curriculum and educational domains but the society in which they work and live, particularly the relationships that they have with this social system (McKernan, 1991:26-27). In the research this

argument became evident especially if you considered that you would probably focus on fears and traumas too and how the teachers deal with this situation. It spanned across the school environment but more so in the community from which the children and the teachers hailed. This supported what I mentioned earlier in terms of the link between the school environment and the community from which the children came as integral parts of their social reality. The programme followed at each school is indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Programme for research at each school

DAY 1	Visit to school to discuss research: meeting with principal; presentation of programme and permission document of WCED.	8:00 till 12:00=4 hrs
DAY 2	Interviews/Discussion with teacher with regards to questionnaire. Completion of questionnaires; collection of questionnaires.	8:00 till 13:00=5 hrs
DAY 3	Observation of physical settings and resources; making field notes.	8:00 till 13:00=5 hrs
DAY 4	Discussion with teacher of Grade R programme at the school; observation of teacher; discussion and feedback with teacher; making field notes.	8:00 till 13:00=5 hrs
DAY 5	Observation of teacher; discussion and feedback with teacher; making field notes.	8:00 till 13:00=5 hrs
DAY 6	Observation of teacher; discussion and feedback with teacher; making field notes.	8:00 till 13:00= 5 hrs
DAY 7	Conversations with children; demonstration of approach (story one); discussion and feedback with teacher; Making field notes.	8:00 till 15:00=7 hrs (3 hrs during after care time)
DAY 8	Conversation with children; demonstration of approach (story two); discussion and feedback with teacher; Making field notes.	8:00 till 16:00= 8 hrs (4 hrs during after care time)
DAY 9	Conversation with children; demonstration of approach (story three); discussion and feedback with teacher; Making field notes.	8:00 till 15:00= 7 hrs (4 hrs during after care time)
DAY 10	Conversation with children; Making field notes; Rounding up.	8:00 till 14:00=6 hrs (3 hrs during after care time)
DAY 11 (After a few days)	Follow-up visit and discussion of future visits with teacher to compile a teachers' guide after completion of research.	8:00 till 14:00=6 hrs (2 hrs during after care time)

The above-mentioned programme totals 55 days. However, considering the school day for Grade R ends at 12:00, the extra number of hours spent at the schools resort to 21 hours. This translates to 5 extra days of 4 hours per school day. The research was therefore conducted over 60 days (approximately 2 months).

The physical setting, resources and facilities informed me whether the environment was conducive to creative teaching approaches. The maintenance of the school grounds and facilities are the responsibilities of the school management. At public schools the South African Schools Act 84, section 36, currently expects that the governing body should take responsibility to augment the funds supplied by the state (DoE, 1996). Governing bodies are however, not required to charge school fees. The school should fully inform the parents regarding school fees, taking in consideration the financial circumstances of the parents. Nevertheless, in most of the schools parents are expected to pay school fees although their financial backgrounds may differ, and school fees differ from school to school. This impacts on the maintenance of the facilities especially when parents are unable to pay the often much needed fees. Government should really take more responsibility for education.

According to the current national Minister for Basic Education, Motshekga, (DoBE, 2011a) the DoE trained 10 000 practitioners in 2010. Furthermore, the DoE strive to expand the Grade R access to ensure that especially children categorised as socio-economically deprived and those who have low family literacy will enjoy quality programmes by 2014. All these good intentions need to be monitored. The following sections describe the participant schools where the programme in Table 3 was followed.

a. School One

The Grade R class of this institution, part of a day care and aftercare centre, was situated in a suburb divided into areas. In these areas or sections residents purchased or rented properties ranging from sub-economic flats to modern well-equipped houses. Some of the residents were affluent and many were professionally qualified in contrast with areas where some were unemployed and/or dependent on government pensions, disability grants or even raised their income by means of illegal activities such as drug peddling (Kinness, 2000; MRC, 2007). The teaching and learning took place in a church hall, petitioned off to create classrooms which were not soundproof. These petitions were removed over weekends to accommodate church activities and functions. The resources were basic with no technological equipment like computers. It was therefore not strange to find the only computer in the principal's office. Despite the modest yet

modern building, the playground outside was equipped with swings, slides and climbing apparatus for big motor development and agility skills. The teachers were the main caregivers during school time and after school until the children were collected by the parents or grandparents. There were books available in each classroom as the building could not accommodate a library. However, the teachers used the public library which was in walking distance from the school. A photo of the public park in the area can be viewed in Addendum M.

According to the principal the teachers responsible for the younger children were caregivers and not all were qualified pre-school teachers. However, the teacher responsible for the Grade R group had the basic qualifications obtained at an institution that trained pre-school teachers. She was registered towards undergraduate studies, and involved in practical sessions as part of her evaluations. To keep abreast with current trends, the staff regularly attended workshops applicable to their particular groups. The fees paid by the parents contributed to fund the salaries of the teachers. To augment the salaries the school ran fund raising efforts supported by the local community, mostly the parents.

Children from the age of two up to Grade R were accommodated in three groups. The particular Grade R class consisted of a co-educational (boys and girls) group of about 22 children, instructed in English. The children varied in terms of their financial backgrounds and living conditions. In the area there were many cases of drug abuse and HIV and AIDS affected and infected cases (Kinnes, 2000; MRC, 2007). Children could take their own food but received a cooked meal at lunch time and snacks during the day. The school year culminated in a school concert and graduation ceremony.

b. School Two

The second Grade R class, integrated in a public government school, was in a rural area. Fruit farms and vineyards provided jobs for many of the residents. Some residents were professionally qualified, and some were farm owners or labourers. Incidences of poverty and unemployment were encountered here. Some of the farm labourers earned meagre salaries as unskilled workers which resulted in economic pressure. The situation was compounded by the fact that it was a

small village where the farm owners and local businesses were unable to provide jobs for everybody. Many residents therefore sought employment elsewhere.

The two Grade R classrooms were adjacent to one another and for some activities they joined classes. Classrooms were suitably equipped with the basic teaching resources, and at the time of my visit they had received educational Grade R apparatus like big floor puzzles, supplied by the Education Department to assist in the challenges faced by the department at impoverished schools (WCED, 2004/2005:32-36). The playground sported swings, slides and climbing apparatus for big motor development and agility skills. A small library at the time was launched as part of a special project for FP students. Books in English and Afrikaans were donated by Biblionef, an organisation which promotes reading and issues free books to disadvantaged schools, and Vriende vir Afrikaans, an affiliate of the University of Stellenbosch.

The suitably qualified teachers were employed by the WCED. They obtained a qualification at a college of education. The last of these colleges in the Western Cape was phased out on government instruction in 2003. Yet, both teachers were keen to improve their qualifications and enquired about possibilities. Similarly, like at the first school, the teachers displayed an eagerness and urgency to develop the children. This stemmed from the fact that they had to prove they rendered indispensable services in the community, given the fact that the DoE did not at the time have Grade R classes at all schools. The national Minister of Education on enquiry about the statistics for qualified Grade R teachers in the Western Cape gave the total as 85. These teachers, according to the minister, were qualified to teach FP, but were not necessarily teaching Grade R classes (DBE, 2011a).

The teachers had a goal to prepare the children for a better future. On the one hand it was job security and survival, but on the other hand, their main reason was probably educational. At the time of my visit pupils rehearsed during intervals to prepare for a forthcoming talent show. As the school was not equipped with a hall the chairs and equipment had to be transported to the local community hall. To save on expenses the chairs were carried by the stronger children in grade seven.

Some of the children resided on the neighbouring farms and some in the village. More affluent parents, including some of the teachers at the school, could afford to let their children attend the ex-model C schools. The ex-model C schools were state aided historically white schools that received 75% of their budget via state funding and the remaining 25% was the financial responsibility of the school (Redpath, 2005:6). As stated earlier, most parents had to pay school fees and this school was no exception. Some children could not afford to pay school fees. The financial pressure on the school budget was compounded by the fact that families with more than one child were given rebates and therefore the fees did not always suffice for all expenses incurred. Hence the funds were augmented with donations from local businesses and fundraising efforts supported by the community. I observed co-educational classes with an average of 25 children per class, aged 5 to 6 years. The LOLT was Afrikaans in this predominantly Afrikaans speaking area.

c. School Three

This pre-school was situated in a quiet, well-kept suburb, was a so-called white area before the 1994 democracy. Both pre-school and after care facilities were provided. Furthermore the village, as it is called, had residences for the children where they lived as a family, although not biologically related, with a house mother, called the 'auntie'. The idea of calling it a village probably stemmed from the fact that it was a micro cosmos in a macro cosmos, which in this case was the town where the village was located. Internationally these safe havens are called villages. The pre-school depended entirely on donations locally, and funding from the overseas mother body of the organisation, located in Austria (Jackson, 2002:288). The organisation catered for the abandoned and abused children who stayed in this village until the age of eighteen. Even as adults, once they left the village, support and advice continue for as long as required. Some of the children visited their biological parents during weekends or holidays whilst others seldom saw any family members.

Teaching and learning took place in spacious classrooms which were well-maintained and equipped with stimulating apparatus. As funds became available, more equipment was purchased. On regular visits to the pre-school before the actual research, I observed how the

equipment steadily increased, as a result of fundraising efforts or donations. In the playground the children had suitable equipment to develop physically. Each classroom had a collection of books which were randomly selected. The school had access to EDULIS, the main education and library and information services of the Education Department.

Although a non-governmental school, all the teachers were previously employed by the WCED. They were therefore qualified teachers who trained at the former colleges of education, although not necessarily trained for pre-school. The LOLT was English with Afrikaans and isi-Xhosa speaking children also attending. It was a bonus for the school that the Grade R teacher could speak the three main languages of the province namely Afrikaans, English and isi-Xhosa. Especially during playtime this teacher was invaluable as she assisted all the children who found it difficult to communicate in English. In addition to the teachers, the resident children of the village had the services of an occupational therapist, psychologist and an educational psychologist who assessed their development. All the children with serious psychological problems had access to specially arranged sessions with a psychologist. The village therefore took great care to assist their children on various levels, and attempt to compensate for the absence of parents. Grade 0 (preceding Grade R) and Grade R were taught on the premises, and non-resident children in close proximity of the school could attend. This allowed the resident village children to befriend other children besides just those of the institution. At the time of my research there were 21 children in this co-educational Grade R class.

From Grade 1 onwards the children attended the neighbouring schools. At the neighbouring schools the children received tuition in either Afrikaans or English. This arrangement was to accommodate their home language preference, and therefore they did not all attend the same school. In the Western Cape there are three predominant languages namely Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa. Children with an African language, that is isiXhosa, were taught in English. They were transported when the school was not in walking distance. Although the children participated in sport codes offered at their schools, they were allowed to exercise extra options which interested them. Transport was arranged to take them to the respective venues if these codes were not offered at their schools. Some schools for example offered cricket but not soccer, or rugby but not tennis. Some took swimming lessons. This showed that the children were

allowed to develop to their full capacity if they wanted to take up the challenge. Their personal circumstances did not deter them from using any opportunities provided by the school.

d. School Four

Institution Four formed part of a primary school (ex-model C) in an affluent suburb. Only residents labelled white could live there during the times of the Group Areas Act of 1950. Since the act was abolished in 1990 (South End Museum.co.za, Act No 41 of 1950) anybody who could afford the properties could buy and live there. The suburb was close to the central business and entertainment areas with well-known chain stores, take-away food outlets and restaurants. Residents varied from middle class to rich and in the neighbouring townships on the outskirts poorer communities resided.

The pre-school was situated on its own site away from the main school premises with well-resourced classrooms and a music room. An after-care facility was available. Specifically designated rooms for the purpose of after-care also housed the cooking and sleeping equipment to cater for the children entrusted in after-care of two retired teachers. A well-equipped playground was fully utilised by the children although the lawns needed better drainage when I visited the school. Attention had been given to this issue in the meantime. A small section in the aftercare section housed book shelves with a few books. However, each teacher had a collection of books in the classroom which was either purchased or borrowed from the public library.

At the time of the research there were two co-educational Grade R groups, one Afrikaans class with 14 children and one English class with 24 children as well as one Grade 0 group. All the teachers were qualified with only one Grade R teacher employed by the WCED. The other Grade R and Grade 0 teachers were governing body appointments, paid with funds raised by the school. The work schedules of the Grade R classes were closely linked to the prescriptions of the OBE curriculum of the DoE.

The children who attended the pre-school came from the catchment area and were feeder learners for Grade 1 of the primary school. The children, although living in the area, were not all from

affluent families. They came from varied backgrounds in terms of parental income and housing. The school fees were affordable and included snacks but the children took their own main meals and after-care meals. The children who arrived too early stayed with the caregivers before the school started.

e. School Five

The well-resourced school was situated on the premises of a public government hospital. The circumstances varied considerably in comparison with the other research schools which precluded me from gathering data specifically focussing on Grade R. However, I had informal discussions with the teachers on duty and the principal.

The two trained teachers rendered a service to the children of the different grades. Specialist teachers from other institutions volunteered to teach art and music. Unfortunately the children were not enough to justify them being placed in a grade on their own. They were therefore multi-grade, grouped as juniors and seniors. The junior group comprised Grades R to 2 and the senior group, Grades 3 to 7. The children were assisted with their schoolwork so that they did not lag too far behind while hospitalised. They followed a special programme which included life skills. The inclusion of life skills with Arts & Culture as the focus served a therapeutic purpose. The children were assisted to cope with their situations which included diseases such as HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and diabetes. The session that I attended proved extremely valuable to these children who were hospitalised for long periods, often without seeing their parents for a while. Therefore these sessions, where they made music and were engaged in visual art, brought enjoyment to them. They were not in the wards surrounded by medical instruments and staff. During these few hours they were allowed to express themselves. However, they were in the school programme for only two hours a day. After this session they went back to the wards for their medical check-ups. The teachers would then go to the wards to assist those who were not able to attend the hospital teaching sessions because of drips, immobility or severe infections or diseases. There was no specific section to keep books and therefore the teachers kept their own small collections.

The Grade R teachers at all the schools had the basic qualifications although at School Four the teachers displayed much better skills with regards to teaching the arts than at any of the other schools. This was evident in the types of arts lessons presented by them. The music lessons were more structured and different media in the visual arts were effectively used. Schools Two, Four and Five had the best facilities. Considering the literature, many of the teachers were on the right track when they mentioned that language skills develop and vocabulary is extended when you tell stories (see Chapter Two, 2.18).

Imperative in the research was to observe the actual teaching process in the Grade R classrooms and to see how teacher used stories as teaching tool across the curriculum. The observations depended on the number of classes at the school.

3.7 PROCESS OF THE RESEARCH

I followed a research process as postulated by Babbie and Mouton (2001:98-102) and used their broad framework with minor adjustments. I started with the conceptualization of my research topic where I indicated my interest and rationale for the study, as well as the manner in which I intended to measure the variables (see Chapter One).

Secondly, I stated my research design as I explained in 3.4 of this chapter. Then followed the actual research which was conducted in a qualitative paradigm and finally I presented and analysed the collected data. I interpreted the data by engaging in specific steps. The analyses were followed by suggestions and recommendations as well as the limitations. A model informed by the CAPS (DBE, 2011b) was proposed in the recommendations. Future research and the contribution of this research concluded the process. The data collection was presented to encompass two principles namely objectivity and validity.

3.7.1 Objectivity

Objectivity, also called Muchhausen objectivity, was developed by Smaling with the main principle to do justice to the object of study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:274). To present data

which could lead to further research and adjustments to teaching approaches of some teachers made it imperative to stay as objective as possible. As stated earlier qualitative research is fairly subjective (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:25). I could however, not be influenced by any factors or situations that might impact on the objectivity of my research.

The framework in which I conducted the research was always considered to prevent any subjectivity. For example, working with schools from various backgrounds could easily influence objectivity, but the aim of the research was the main consideration, namely to establish the creative use of stories as an integrated approach to empower Grade R teachers. The aim was not to politicize the research in the context of the diverse school backgrounds. Similarly, the principle of validity was carefully considered. I intended to collect thick description (Cousin, 2005:424) using the responses of the participants.

3.7.2 Validity

Babbie and Mouton (2001:275) cite various ways in which to ensure validity and reliability which include triangulation, extensive field notes, member checks, peer review, reasoned consensus and audit trial amongst others. Of these I used triangulation, extensive field notes and member checks.

(a) Triangulation

Triangulation according to Ely (1991:96) is a way of contributing to the trustworthiness of the data. Furthermore triangulation is when information that was collected from different sources is checked for consistency (Mertens, 2005:255) and to validate the findings. Case studies as an instrument in qualitative research could not be generalised, therefore I had to triangulate. For observations as active participant I made use of triangulation to prevent any bias. The teachers observed me during this phase and I used an independent person who was not involved with the class, to provide inter-rater reliability for the first sessions (McKernan, 1991:184). This function was extended to include teachers from the school but not of the class that was used, for example, teacher A observed in class B and vice versa. I utilised this way of data analysis to converge the

data gathered by means of observations and questionnaires. That gave me the opportunity to make inferences and compare the responses recorded as field notes and by means of questionnaires. I could triangulate the actual presentations with the responses in the questionnaires.

Additionally I conducted interviews with lecturers who train FP students in faculties of education at two local universities (Addendum H) and issued questionnaires to FP students (Addendum I). The rationale to include lecturers and students was to ascertain the type of training with regards to stories currently implemented for pre-service teachers. It would inform me of the pedagogy of story-telling as used in the training. Lecturers therefore had to indicate the role of storytelling and the approaches used to teach it. Moreover, they had to expand on the sensitisation of HIV and AIDS. The interview included close and open-ended questions. With regards to the HE teacher training, the lecturers and students served to triangulate one another to increase validity and to clarify meaning as postulated by Stake (1988:263), especially with regards to the methodology in the training programme.

Considering the types of triangulation (see Chapter 1) by Duffy (1993:143) and McKernan (1991:193) the research utilised (a) methodological triangulation because I collected data via multiple methods. The methods included interviews and questionnaires as discussed in this chapter. According to Denzin (1989:189), triangulation is “advocation of combinations of research methodologies ...”. McKernan (1991:184) echoes this statement and argues that triangulation is when you use multiple methods to study the same object and suggests in McKernan (1991:193): “triangulation [is] within a single methodology”. I employed qualitative research as single methodology, but utilised questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis, case study observations with field notes as a measure of validating the research. The responses in the questionnaires of the students were triangulated with the interviews of the lecturers. Similarly the responses of the teachers to the questionnaires were triangulated with their teaching approaches and DoE documents. I triangulated the curriculum information as prescribed in the DoE documents against the observations in the classrooms.

As a means of validation triangulation is strongly recommended where multiple methods are used such as interviews and surveys (Olsen, 2004:3). I triangulated some of the methods mentioned above to reach conclusions and make suggestions.

In addition (b) data triangulation was used because I collected data in a variety of settings namely when:

- (i) the teacher responded in the informal interviews;
- (ii) the Grade R children responded to the informal conversations;
- (iii) the teachers responded to the questionnaires;
- (iv) the lecturers responded in the interviews; and
- (v) the FP students responded to the questionnaires.

(c) Investigator triangulation was used where different inquirers namely the teachers of the Grade R classes at different institutions as well as colleagues of mine acted as triangulators.

(d) Theoretical triangulation was utilised because I saw the research from the perspective of the children in Grade R, the Grade R teachers and my perspective. Often my perspectives could be influenced by the various settings.

(b) Extensive field notes

Newbury (2001:1) is of the opinion that there are no set rules as how to compile field notes, but that each researcher will find a style and format to suit the project and that is useful to the researcher. Between and after sessions I made extensive field notes to interpret my observations and the way in which the teachers and children interpreted their social reality. I then organised and analysed the notes to establish any emerging trends or patterns.

In recording the observations Kelly (2006:315) suggests two sets of notes. The first notes need to describe verbal communication and actions of people as comprehensive as possible and the second set of notes are an indication of the analysis based on the more detailed notes. Babbie and Mouton (2001:275) also mention two sets of field notes namely one describing the environment

in which the research takes place and one that is called theoretical memoranda, contradicting or enhancing original theoretical ideas. This was especially useful as I could continuously adjust my design to proceed to a higher level as the research progressed because "... information about humans and their social world is anything but static" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:275) which is indicative of Grade R children. The situation was unique in the sense that the Grade R children were commencing a school career and perhaps most of them were left in the care of somebody else for the first time, namely the teacher. The teacher, the other children and the environment were new to the children. Furthermore they came from different backgrounds with varying levels of social and linguistic levels as well as interests. These factors contributed to the fact that the information gathered could not be static.

Additionally, the research dealt with language and social development. Donald *et al.* (2002:70) based on Vygotsky's theory that social relationships impact on development, underscore the fact that the children who lose their caregivers at an early age need a substitute to ensure that they develop socially and linguistically. In addition Donald *et al.* (2002:70) postulate that people exist in "social contexts" where "meanings are socially constructed" and "not fixed or static". Grade R children can be unpredictable and certainly in a social context of flux. Therefore I had to adjust accordingly. Newbury (2001:2) postulates that the researcher uses field notes in a style and format which are workable and useful to him or her. Furthermore in the same article Newbury quotes Schatzmann and Strauss (1973:94) and compares them with Burgess (1982) in terms of keeping a research diary. The research diary according to Schatzman and Strauss (1973:94) in Newbury has the triad namely observational, methodological and theoretical accounts as compared to what Burgess (1982) in Newbury (2001:2) terms substantive, methodological and theoretical accounts. These are comparatively similar according to Newbury. The phases as postulated by Burgess (1982:75) in Newbury (2001) are as follows:

- (i) the substantive account represented how I proceeded from day one onwards therefore a chronological record of what I observed and did with the Grade R teachers and their children;
- (ii) the methodological account stipulated my involvement in the social situation as well as the methods that I used to conduct the research; and
- (iii) the analytical account indicated any questions or queries that either the participants or researchers raised, ideas to organise the data and concepts used by the Grade R teachers. The

data captured from the listed sources I used to analyse the materials namely the stories and accompanying songs, role plays, art works and dance routines as well as the teachers' presentations.

I substantiated the field notes by using member checks.

(c) Member checks

I drew from Kleining's (2001) methodology of qualitative research as cited by Cox (2006) with regards to participation by various role players during research. According to Kleining's (2001) methodology the subjects should be enabled to participate more fully in determining the research process with three possibilities, which I attempted in the research:

Firstly, he suggests that participants could be offered a place in the research process where they collect and analyse data themselves. Although I allowed participants, in this case the teachers and not the children, to collect data they did not analyse it on their own but they were involved in discussing the outcomes of the collected data in order to implement other approaches during their presentations of stories or adapt their approaches to make it more meaningful.

Secondly, he argues that the researcher learns and the participants think about a shared reality. During the research I had the opportunity to constantly think about the reality which I shared with the Grade R children and teachers and it was clear that the participants, especially the teachers thought about their reality which they shared with me.

Thirdly, I agree with the notion that not all the participants would become full researchers but that I could return to them to discuss what transpired during the first two phases. This is very aptly called 'involving the local experts with strong information of their social reality'. As I stated earlier, the social reality involved the Grade R children and their teachers. Teachers felt acknowledged that they could discuss their own involvement in the research process and that their expertise could be utilised to find other approaches.

Teachers involved in the research were given an opportunity to check the data and honestly say whether they agreed with what I recorded. The observers, namely fellow teachers, were also involved in this part of the process. Ultimately, data collected needed to be analysed and I followed the process as set out below. In addition the teachers will be involved in discussions to compile lesson material to improve or adapt their interactions with the children as was discussed in the follow-up visit on Day 11.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

After the data had been collected I followed two processes namely analysis and discussion. The analysis of the content was to identify themes and draw inferences (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009:308-319; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1278).

3.8.1 Content analysis

Maykut and Morehouse (1994:17-21) claim that qualitative data is mostly subjective and provides for the study of characteristics and qualities of a phenomenon as well as words and actions of the subjects, which in my research very aptly articulated with the situation. Teachers and Grade R children were observed in terms of characteristics displayed but more so their words and actions.

It was thus important to interpret the responses of teachers who did not apply an integrated approach when they observed how I integrated the arts in my story telling sessions. To construe whether the children in fact felt more sympathetic towards characters who suffered sad or traumatic moments was an important deduction that I made. The selected stories that I presented, made provision for the Grade R children to experience the trauma with the characters, but at the same time there were stories that transported them to a different, more pleasant setting. I took cognizance of the fact that children in this developmental stage are self-centred. The stories were used to help them cope with traumatic situations and to help them to develop social and linguistic skills as stated in Chapter Two. I coded the responses of the various role-players.

The two types of content analysis are conceptual analysis and relational analysis. While relational analysis deals with examining relationships among concepts, conceptual analysis focuses on the frequency of concepts represented by words and phrases (Siregar, Dagnino & Garaffo, 2009:103). The process of conceptual analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:492) is included in the following steps described by Palmquist (1992) namely to decide:

- (i) on the level of analysis;
- (ii) how many concepts to code;
- (iii) whether to code for existence or frequency of a concept; and
- (iv) what to do to with irrelevant information and added to the above-mentioned
- (v) developing rules for coding of texts, and
- (vi) coding texts and analysing results.

Conceptual analysis was applied to identify patterns in the responses of the teachers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:262). The application of conceptual analysis is used when the researcher is unable to observe every detail in social research. It then serves as an unobtrusive form of analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:388). The level of analysis was determined once data were collected. This influenced the number of concepts to code. I included concepts emanating from responses supplied by teachers and the Grade R children. I coded for frequency of concepts and existence where I checked how often existing codes recurred. Coding was done according to specified definitions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:388; True, Cendejass, Appiah, Guy & Pacas, 2008). Coding according to Babbie and Mouton (2001:384) include firstly, two operational definitions of the key variables in your enquiry. In the research these codes were the approaches and attitudes of the teachers. Secondly, you decide what to observe, which in this case, were the types of stories used, the lesson presentations and the challenges faced by the teachers. I analysed the results to include in the discussion and made suggestions based on the results. Furthermore, questions were answered namely who said what to whom. In addition, content analysis provides the 'why' and 'with what effect' it was said (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, 384-385). The research explored if stories were used and how it could empower teachers (with what effect). Creswell (1998:149) suggests that for a case study you should create and organise a file for data, form initial codes based on the margin notes you made while you read the text, describe the case and establish

categories. In the research notes were made during the observations and in between presentations done by the researcher.

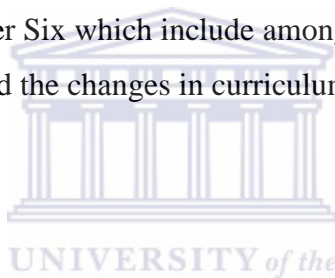
3.8.2 Discussion

I discuss the analysed data under various headings to come to certain conclusions and to suggest recommendations. A model to suggest a pedagogy informed by the new curriculum CAPS (DBE, 2011b) is presented. Research limitations and possible errors were included to stimulate further research.

3.8.3 Limitations

Limitations are discussed in Chapter Six which include amongst others, the time limitation, the circumstances of the researcher, and the changes in curriculum.

3.9 ETHICS STATEMENT



An ethics statement was sent to the participants, safeguarding their confidentiality. I did not disclose any identities or institutions in the research paper unless by prior consent of the participants.

The ethical considerations were grounded in the following ethical protections suggested: (Stake, 2005:459):

The researcher should take care not to expose or risk embarrassment on the part of the participant(s). In addition reporting and observation should be discussed with the participants beforehand. This was done in advance as I discussed the research with the principal and staff. The children were informed as we had the informal conversations. All information is kept confidentially as only participants were informed of any results and results that are publicised for educational purposes will not carry any identification that could be linked to the participants. This is the write-up that Stake (2005:459) mentions to indicate how participants are presented.

3.10 TEACHING APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

In observing the teachers, I wanted to acquaint myself with their methodologies. Some of the approaches where the children were engaged and challenged to work together included the methodological pillars of Suggestopaedia (Lozanov, 2010, Kariuki & Bush, 2008), Total Physical Response (Asher, 1973) and Constructivist Approach (Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky). If teachers use an interactive approach by integrating the stories with arts as a teaching tool across the curriculum the linguistic and social skills of the children could develop. This seems to link with the Hein's (1991) definition of Constructivism. At a Committee for Education and Cultural Activities (CECA) conference, he stated that constructivism is the action where schoolchildren can construct knowledge for themselves (Hein, 1991). An interesting addition to the definition is that meaning is constructed not only individually but also socially.

A direct link to the suggested methodology is the selection of stories. One aspect for the selection of stories that confronts us is that you should choose a story that you can tell well.

3.11 SELECTED STORIES FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

I subsequently list and present a brief review of the selected stories as well as propound my motivation for the choices.

3.11.1 *Caterpillar's Dream* (2003a) by Keith Faulkner.

The author introduces children to the caterpillar who dreams that she had wings. Everybody who hears about it teases and ridicules her about this dream. One day they realise that she is gone and they see only a funny looking object hanging from the tree. As they discuss the disappearance of caterpillar the cocoon suddenly opens up and the butterfly flutters by, none other than the caterpillar transformed. The fact that every child has a dream that can be realised if believed in, sparked my choice for this illustrated book. Children in child-headed households also have dreams and children who lost their parents have dreams too. Dreams can become true irrespective of your status or condition. Another theme in the book is the idea that friends can

sometimes be cruel, but can be proved wrong. Children should learn that you must respect the dreams of others and not poke fun at your friends. With reference to HIV and AIDS the support and empathy of friends to children affected, are very important life skills.

3.11.2 *The wide mouthed frog* (1996) by Keith Faulkner

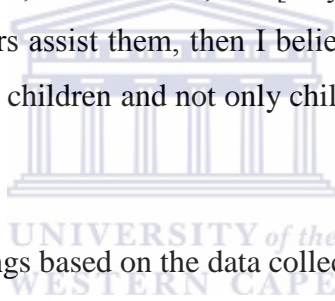
This book that delights even adults is illustrated with pop-up pictures. The wide mouthed frog is interested to know what other animals eat because his diet consists mainly of flies. He questions everybody with a wide opened mouth. On his journey he meets with a mouse that eats seeds, a bird that eats worms, and finally a crocodile that eats wide mouthed frogs. When he answers the crocodile it is in a tight-lipped fashion after which he jumps into a pool of water, scared to death. The crocodile can be seen as metaphor for the fear that children could experience at the thought of losing a parent to this disease, especially their mother. The idea to sensitise children to the dangers that prowl, even amongst known creatures, and the issue of HIV and AIDS, prompted the choice of this story. They could relate to the huge, scary danger in this way.

3.11.3 *Cheeky* (2003) by Leon De Villiers

This story sketches the adventures of a baby crocodile who is upset that most of the animals that he meets want to touch him in various ways. They compliment his body but it is clear that there are ulterior motives. The worst is the big old crocodile. Eventually he tells his mother about it who assures him that he can be touched but only by her. This story is ideal to warn children about the potential dangers lurking in people whom you know and often trust. You have to be careful and tell somebody like your parent or teacher with whom you feel at ease when somebody makes you feel uncomfortable. The contradiction that could arise is the fact that you want children to grow up and trust others. However, the reality shows you that this is not always a good decision especially in a world of abuse. Often children are left in the care of others who physically and sexually abuse them when the parents are no longer there to take care of them. This story will serve as a warning to children.

3.12 CONCLUSION

The essence of the research was to present teachers with a tool to empower them in Grade R classes. Furthermore, the Grade R teachers take the place of the mother or caregiver in the child's development of social and linguistic skills, especially when the mother or caregiver is no longer there. The tool was an integration of stories with other areas in the Grade R curriculum. In this context I focused on the environment that is needed to assist the children. Nelson (2008:203), in research conducted with HIV and AIDS affected children claims that children see the school as a beacon of hope with education symbolising recovery. Furthermore, Nelson expresses the idea that the classroom should be the place where children get answers to their questions which include correct information but the priority is for the teachers and learners to exude care (Nelson, 2008:204). Chidley (2005), a journalist had the following to say about the AIDS orphans that he met in Soweto, South Africa, "... [they were] determined to make it in the world, despite the odds." If teachers assist them, then I believe they have an even better chance of making it. This holds true for all children and not only children who have to deal with traumas and fears.



In Chapter Four I present the findings based on the data collected at the various schools. The data include teacher presentations; the responses collected from the children by means of interviews; responses collected by means of questionnaires from teachers; responses by means of interviews from lecturers who prepare FP teachers; and responses by means of questionnaires from Baccalaureas Educationis (B. Ed.) pre-service FP teachers at a local university.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS-“ONCE UPON A TIME ...”

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings based on the data collected. Firstly, I present the teachers' responses to the questionnaires. Secondly, the responses of the children's interviews are presented in themes. Thirdly, I introduce the responses gathered during semi-structured interviews with lecturers at two institutions for higher education. Fourthly, as triangulation to the lecturers' responses, the data, elicited by means of questionnaires from one pre-service B. Ed. group in FP is displayed. Fifthly, the lessons taught by the teachers are discussed. Finally, my own interactions with the children in utilising the stories are presented. The teachers responded to the questionnaire in the ways illustrated below. The observations served to triangulate the teachers' responses to the questionnaires.

4.2 ‘WHAT DO YOU SAY, TEACHER?’

The teachers had an opportunity to respond to the questionnaires before actual engagements in the classrooms. Questionnaires (see Appendices G.1 and G.2) were given to seven teachers. Six were participants in the research and one taught Grade R the previous year, but expressed an interest in the research. To protect the identities of the teachers they are known as teachers A to G (Tr A-G). The sequence of the teachers coincides with the sequence of the schools as set out in Table 2. Summaries of these responses are captured in Tables 4. - 6.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. I present each section with the total responses of all teachers at each question. This was an attempt to establish how the research questions were answered. The Afrikaans responses were translated with the English ones left unedited.

4.2.1 Questionnaire: Section 1A Presentation of teachers' responses

The following table illustrates the teachers' responses to Section 1A which consisted of twelve questions.

Table 4: Questionnaire: Teachers' responses to Section 1A

	Questions	Yes	No	Not sure
1.	Is storytelling part of you weekly programme?	7	-	-
2.	Do you use stories across the curriculum?	7	-	-
3.	Do you integrate stories with Arts e.g. music, art, drama?	5	-	1
4.	Are stories told as a reward when children do well or behave?	1	6	-
5.	Do you allow the pupils to choose stories?	6	1	-
6.	Is it important for you to tell stories that will help children to cope with traumatic experiences?	7	-	-
7.	Do you regard storytelling as an essential part of the curriculum?	7	-	-
8.	Do you regard it important to select stories that will accommodate the different gender groups in your class?	7	-	-
9.	Do you select stories randomly or according to themes in the broader curriculum?	5	-	-
10.	Do you vary the ways in which you tell stories?	7	-	-
11.	Do you use teaching aids when you tell stories?	5	-	-
12.	Can children relate to the stories that you tell them?	7		

The findings suggest that most teachers include stories in their daily programme. Furthermore, all the teachers indicated that they use stories across the curriculum; that they regard it as essential in the curriculum and that they should select stories to accommodate the different

genders in the class. In addition everybody varies the ways in which they tell stories and stated that children could relate to the stories told. However, one teacher was unsure about integrating stories with arts and one did not respond to the question. Only one teacher told stories as a reward for good behaviour or good work whilst six did not see stories just as reward. Five teachers used teaching aids when they told stories with two not responding to the question. This suggests that teachers have different views regarding integration and presentation of stories. Section 1B allows for more detail in support of choices made by the teachers to questions three, four and ten.

4.2.2 Questionnaire: Section 1B Presentation of teachers' responses

As this was an expansion of Section 1A, it focuses more on approaches than attitudes. Colour coding was used, as a first phase, to indicate frequency of linking words or phrases, to apply the concept of content analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:383, Creswell, 1998:149). The themes that emerged from the colour-coded sections were “social skills”, “language development” and “creativity”. These themes are embedded in the research questions.

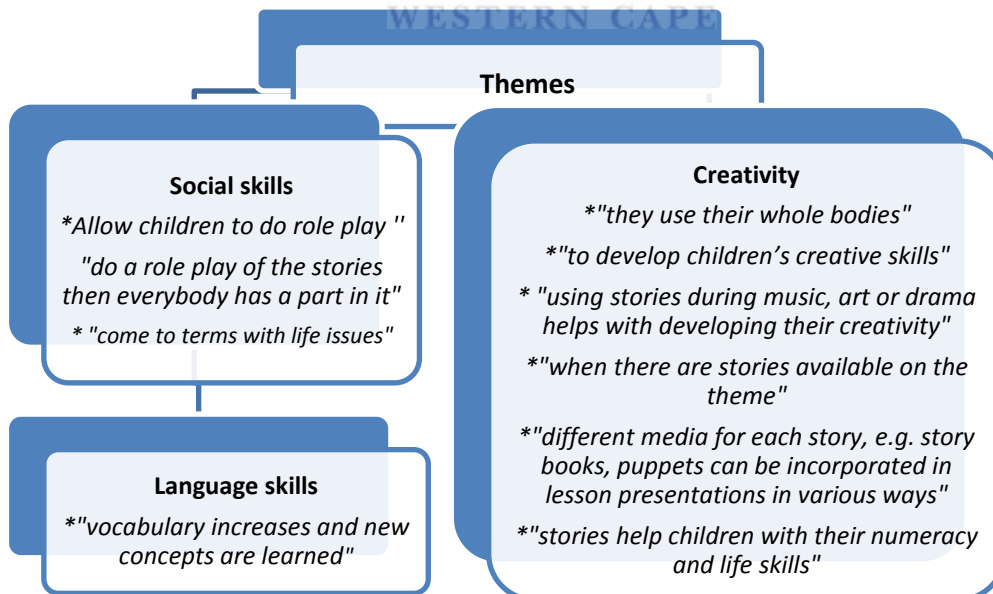


figure 7: Themes extracted from teachers' responses to questions 3, 4 and 10

There were mixed responses to the integration of music, drawing and movement. Whilst all the teachers indicated the importance to use arts, nobody integrated all the arts. Based on most of the responses, I gathered that the teachers used teaching aids although some used it more than others. The teaching aids favoured pictures with the exception of “... *different media for each story, e.g. story books, puppets*. Most of the teachers did not tell stories as reward for good behaviour as stories formed part of the daily routine in the classes. The idea that it was just a routine needed more investigation during the actual observations of their presentations. One response was somewhat confusing namely, “*I paste a star so that the learner who gives the answer can feel good*” with no clear indication of the significance why the star was pasted. I presumed it was on the child’s forehead as the children do not necessarily handle class work books during story time. Maybe a reward for having read or told a story could be included to motivate the children.

4.2.3 Questionnaire: Section 2 Presentation of teachers’ responses to open-ended questions

The responses stated above will be linked to those demonstrated in Section Two of the questionnaire (see Addendum F1 and F2) as listed below to present a global idea of the importance of stories. I could distinguish the themes as extracted in 4.2.2 above but in addition two broad categories namely the *approaches* (APP) used by teachers and their *attitudes* (ATT) towards the idea of storytelling emerged. An underlying category emerging from these was *challenges*, which is interlinked in the other categories.

Table 5: Questionnaire: Teachers’ responses to open-ended questions 3, 4 and 10 grouped as attitudes and approaches

	QUESTION	CODE
1.	Why is it important to tell stories to young children?	ATT & APP
2.	What is the educational value of stories, in your opinion?	ATT & APP
3.	Why do you regard stories as an important part of the broader Curriculum, if so?	APP
4.	What is, in your opinion, the most valuable educational contribution that stories make or have made in the lives of <i>your</i> learners?	ATT & APP
5.	What kind of support is given to teachers to equip themselves in presenting stories?	ATT
6.	Is there a special time during the school day when stories should be told as part of the Literacy programme? Why?	APP
7.	Are the children allowed to tell stories? Please explain.	APP
8.	How do you assess whether the stories that you tell appeal to your learners?	APP
9.	How do you assess whether the stories that you tell are appropriate for your learners?	APP
10.	Why do you think that by telling the children suitable stories, they could be assisted to cope with and/or be more sensitive to HIV/AIDS affected people?	ATT

It is clear that the teachers' attitudes impact on their approaches. For teachers to address all the issues and assess their own approaches is a challenge.

Using content analysis I grouped certain words and phrases in the responses as well as those that were used more frequently to establish trends. The table below illustrates the responses with the matching themes, which emerged and link with the research questions. The themes are language skills, social skills, creativity, and empowerment

Table 6: Questionnaire-Coding of teachers' responses to Section 2

Themes	Responses
Language skills articulate with MRQ 2	<p><i>Stories promote listening skills and extend vocabulary to communicate.</i></p> <p><i>Stories assist in extending the attention span and understanding.</i></p> <p><i>Their facial expressions indicate how they understand or appreciate the story.</i></p> <p><i>Stories help with logical thinking to communicate</i></p>
Social skills articulate with MRQ 2	<p><i>By using the stories the children realise that they are not alone with their issues.</i></p> <p><i>When they hear stories they learn different cultures.</i></p> <p><i>Stories encourage socialisation.</i></p> <p><i>The world of the child is broadened.</i></p> <p><i>Social and emotional development will improve.</i></p> <p><i>They learn to accept and respect HIV and AIDS persons.</i></p> <p><i>Children associate themselves with the characters.</i></p> <p><i>They learn to respect other people through stories.</i></p>
Creativity articulates with MRQ 2	<p><i>Stories help to develop children's creative skills and using stories during music, art or drama helps with developing their creativity.</i></p> <p><i>Yes, because children understand much better if they use their whole bodies instead of just listen (sic).</i></p> <p><i>Stories encourage the use of the imagination.</i></p> <p><i>Everybody has a part in it. Children create their own stories. Children can change the ending of stories or change the characters.</i></p>

responses indicating links with 3 themes	<i>Stories develop imagination, communication and socialisation. Their cognitive skills are developed.</i>
Empowerment articulates with both MRQ 1 and MRQ 2.	<i>They can learn issues, moral lessons, values Using stories is an interesting concept which I would try in future as children loved stories. (I ask their opinions. They tell stories of their experiences. They can identify with characters in the book who share their own issues. I do not use apparatus on a regular basis. I make apparatus if not available. New concepts are taught through stories. Teachers attend workshops to develop skills. It is very important and can be incorporated in lesson presentations in various ways. They are focused and participate and will ask you to read the story again,"</i>

The teachers were required to write a short motivation. The responses, “*Stories help children to understand the different cultures. They understand the world around them and learn to deal with issues that they may have e.g. loss of a parent through divorce/death, etc. They will realize that others also share similar problems and feel they are not alone*”, captured the essence of the first main research question, “*Do teachers use stories in Grade R classes and if so, how do they use stories?*” It addresses the attitude and approach as well. The themes of social skills, language skills and creativity surfaced again in, “*Their vocabulary increases and new concepts are learned each day*”. Furthermore, I took cognizance of the teacher’s response to the pertinent question on HIV and AIDS in the questionnaire. The rest of teachers focused broadly on items such as listening and speaking skills, extension of vocabulary and moral lessons as motivation for telling stories which link with the theme of language skills. One mentioned the importance of “*imagination and communication and socialization*”, which can link with all the themes as stated above (see SQ 4.2.2).

To the second question the theme of language skills emerged on the one hand, as the focus was on listening skills and vocabulary. While on the other hand the response indicating that, “... *Through stories the values and norms of the community are conveyed in a pleasing way,*” was

indicative that the teacher had given some thought to the broader impact of stories, namely socialisation. This addresses the SQ 1.4.4 because the educational value and characteristics of stories come to the fore.

The response to question three that “*It is very important and can be incorporated in lesson presentations in various ways,*” showed a direct link to the proposed approach of integration. The question that I needed to answer was whether it was in fact done. Considering the other responses most of the teachers regarded inclusion of stories in the curriculum as important to teach moral lessons, expose children to books to broaden their world, and language development. An indication of integration was also observed in the suggestion that “*stories help children with their numeracy and life skills*”. Once again the themes of language and social skills as well as creativity emerged (SQ 1.4.3).

The fourth question elicited various responses but the theme in these responses was no different to that of the previous questions namely “*Language is developed*”. This is however, a very relevant concept as stories assist in the development of language skills and perhaps it is the reason why it continuously surfaced in all the responses (SQ 1.4.3).

In terms of support given most teachers said “*No support*” was given. Sustained assistance was “*not provided by the employers*” according to the teachers. This could perhaps be attributed to a number of variables, discussed in the analysis.

Subsequently most of the teachers indicated story time was “*At the end of the day*”, with the exception of two who mentioned the morning and one who suggested “*Any time of the day is story time*”. One interesting comment was that “*The children are calm when the stories are told*” although for the one teacher this calmness set in after free play in the morning while the other one mentioned that they were calm in the afternoon. The three main themes namely language and social skills as well as creativity emerged here.

Question seven elicited a “*Yes*” response from all the teachers with variation in the explanations with regards to children who are allowed to tell stories. According to the teachers some children

gave an account of their own experiences while others shared daily community news. A more creative response was that, *“Any word or concept may trigger a memory/experience and the child is given an opportunity to tell his/her story. Characters in existing stories are given other names and they debate how many other ways the stories can end.”* In this response I gathered that the teacher positively exploited the opportunity for the children to use their imagination and creativity which addresses all the themes mentioned above.

Most teachers seemed to confuse questions eight and nine. The teachers seemed to gauge the appeal of the stories told by asking the opinions of the children, and by *“looking at their faces and how they react”*. In addition, the idea that the children listened eagerly and attentively and requested for similar stories or brought their stories from home to be read showed that the teachers understood the question. The rest of the teachers focused more on suitability which was actually the focus of question 9.

The penultimate question was misinterpreted by one teacher who gave a description of the type of stories that should have a *“simple story line, not too difficult words, not too long and with large colourful pictures”*. The only response directed at the question suggested that you *“Choose appropriate stories that are suitable for their ages.”* In answering this question I received responses more suitable for the previous question such as, *“They are focused and participate and will ask you to read the story again,”* although the last section of the answer focused on both appeal and appropriateness. In the responses I extracted the theme of social and language skills.

Finally 50% of the teachers agreed that stories can assist to sensitise children to HIV and AIDS while the rest of the teachers showed mixed feelings or were not comfortable to address HIV and AIDS even with stories as vehicle. The response that, *“It is less traumatic and they can understand better without adults just giving them cold, hard facts,”* encapsulated the whole idea behind engaging the children in stories to soften the cold facts. Whether it in fact happened in the way it was so aptly stated, remained to be seen in the actual classroom situation.

The questions in this section tapped into the attitudes of teachers in relation to the approaches which were indirectly addressed questions such as *“Is there a special time during the school day*

when stories should be told as part of the Literacy programme? Why?” The challenges were addressed in the questions on departmental support and the issue of addressing HIV and AIDS. In Chapter Five the findings are analysed to indicate any emerging trends with regards to the various teachers’ approaches and attitudes as well as underlying challenges.

4.2.4 Questionnaire: Section 3 Presentation of teachers’ responses to Likert scale statements

In this section of twelve questions (see below), the teachers were expected to tick the appropriate column, to indicate whether they fully agreed (FA), agreed (A), were neutral (N), disagreed (D) or disagreed totally (DT) with the given statements according to the Likert Scale (5 to 1). I grouped the responses in broad themes namely approaches and attitudes of the teachers.

Table 7: Presentation of teachers’ responses to Likert scale statements

	Question	5 FA	4 A	3 N	2 D	1 DT	Code for category
1.	Young children prefer stories with happy endings.	4	3	0	0	0	ATT
2.	Young children should only hear stories based on their own environment.	0	1	2	3	1	ATT
3.	I can use stories as a valuable teaching tool in all lessons.	3	3	1	0	0	APP
4.	I am the authority to decide which stories are the best for my class.	1	4	1	0	0	APP & ATT
5.	I can allow the children to choose stories under my guidance.	6	0	1	0	0	APP & ATT
6.	When I tell stories I develop language and social skills.	4	3	0	0	0	APP
7.	I do not think that children need to hear stories about HIV/AIDS.	2	0	1	1	2	ATT
8.	I should allow children to share their own stories.	7	0	0	0	0	APP
9.	It is important to let children interact with the content of the stories.	3	3	1	0	0	APP
10.	I think children can draw pictures to illustrate their understanding of the stories.	3	4	0	0	0	APP
11.	The curriculum allows enough time for storytelling.	4	1	2	0	0	ATT
12.	I think all teachers have the qualities of a good story teller.	0	5	0	0	2	ATT

The graph below visualises the responses captured in the table above.

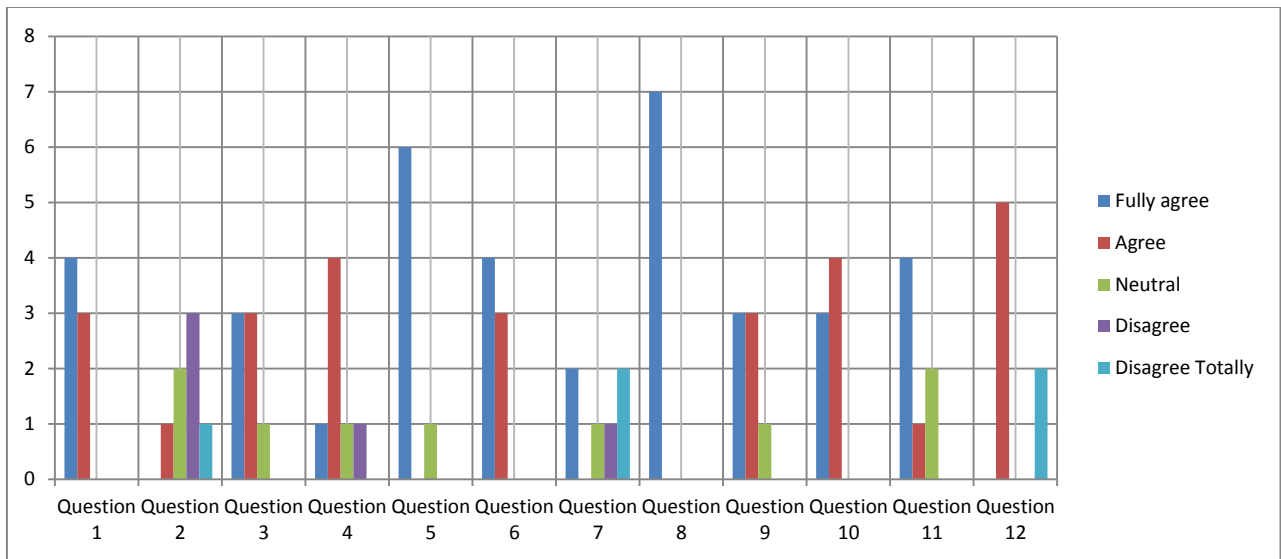


Figure 8: Graph reflecting teachers' responses to Likert scale statements

In comparing the teachers' suggestions I could establish apparent similarities or differences. All teachers seem to realise that children should share their own stories. Most teachers also allowed children to select stories under their supervision. Furthermore the responses to the other questions indicated that teachers differed with regards to attitudes and approaches. Considering these responses some trends emerged in terms of the methodology and/or approaches of teachers but more so about their attitudes. The ensuing section highlights the observations at the different schools. Using field notes I recorded the observations. The field notes were then analysed and thematically organised and categorised. Qualitative content analysis serves as a form of triangulation.

4.3 OBSERVATIONS AT THE INSTITUTIONS

Based on ethical considerations, the information of the schools is presented anonymously. Although full programmes with each activity for the day were observed at the schools only the most salient points with regards to the teachers' presentations are discussed. Where it occurs, the attempts at integration are depicted. Most teachers followed similar programmes at the schools although the scheduling of the activities differed. The schools' follow-up visits were planned after the research was completed, recorded and analysed.

According to the RNCS (DoE, 2001a:74) there is a relationship between the various outcomes of the different LAs. The LOs drive the development process (DoE, 2001a:10) and the LOs are defined as a specific focus on knowledge, values and skills that should be achieved at the end of the GET Band, which spans from Grade R to Grade 9. The ASs indicated the level at which the learners had to be assessed (DoE, 2002b: 16; 2009:5) in the particular grade. In the Life Orientation Programme the Arts & Culture, Technology, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences are combined to equip the learners with the necessary life skills. I agree with the reason stated by the DoE that effective integration equips the children to make choices (DoE, 2003a:74). It has to be noted though that suggested changes in the curriculum were implemented in 2012. In 2010 the national Minister of Education announced that the LAs will be called subjects as from 2011 in the latest adjusted CAPS (DBE, 2010b).

The relevance of the integration becomes clear as the stories are presented. In observing the teachers I wanted to establish how the teachers integrated the knowledge, skills and values in the various lessons; and importantly, were the teachers integrating the lessons across the curriculum. In addition I wanted to see how well the teachers were equipped to deal with the question of fears and traumas such as HIV and AIDS. The links that I expected were to give a response to a combination of the research questions namely, *“Do teachers use stories in Grade R classes and if so, how do they use stories?”* and *“Are stories integrated with other areas of the curriculum?”*

Presented in the next discussion are my observations with the relevant LOs and ASs as part of the observations applicable to activities. This was to determine how effectively the activities articulated with the intended LOs and ASs. Although there were commonalities and similarities between the LOs and ASs at the various schools, the implementation and execution thereof were not identical. This could be attributed to the fact that the activities varied from school to school.

4.3.1 Discussion of findings at the schools

The programme (see Chapter Two) was followed and the instructions of the DoE were considered in order to observe the children and teachers. Furthermore the MRQs and SQs were addressed. Where more than one teacher was responsible for Grade R at the same school, I present only activities which differed substantially from one another. This is specifically with regards to Trs B and C as well as Trs D and E.

To present the findings based on the observations (classroom activities) I link the LO's, MRQs and SQs to indicate the themes that emerged. The observations (classroom activities) were recorded using field notes and subsequently triangulated with the responses to the questionnaires.

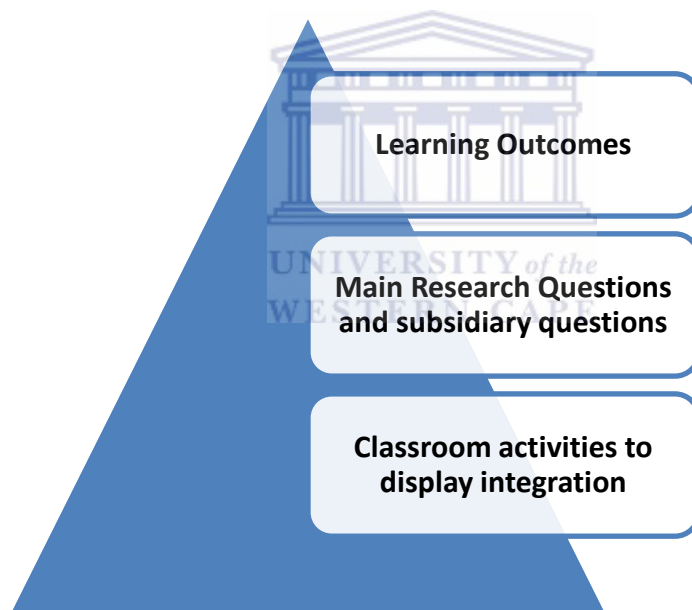


figure 9: Links with regards to observations

The following discussion is based on how teachers interpret the curriculum in the various areas.

4.3.2 Findings based on the areas in the curriculum

The ensuing discussion focuses on the activities within the different areas in the Grade R curriculum.

(a) Organisation in the classroom

The use of recorded tunes and stories set an atmosphere conducive for integration because the children interacted spontaneously by clapping to the beat and singing the songs they knew. The teacher extended the activity by allowing them to clap hands while they recited short rhymes until she completed the classroom arrangement. The other teachers organised their classrooms the previous day and practised other life skills like saying prayers in different languages or washing hands.

(b) Literacy

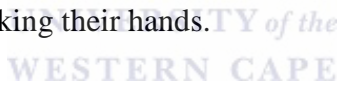
Only the relevant LOs and ASs are presented to illustrate possible integration. To achieve LO 1 of Literacy, namely 'Speaking', it was expected that the children should show the skill to listen for information and enjoyment. The AS linked to this LO suggested that the children had to listen with enjoyment to oral texts such as simple songs, rhymes, short poems and stories, and they had to show of the story to be able to act out parts of a story, song or rhyme; and join in choruses at the appropriate time. Furthermore, they had to be able to draw a picture of the story, rhyme or song (DoE, 2002d:14). They would display their creativity when they illustrated their comprehension of the story. In order to eventually realise LO 2 of Literacy which comprised 'Listening', the children had to communicate confidently and effectively in the spoken language in a wide range of situations (DoE, 2002d:15; 2003a:44). To achieve the accompanying AS the children had to tell their own stories and relate stories of others in their own words (DoE, 2002d:15). The outcomes articulated with the MRQ 1 and MRQ 2.

Linked to MRQ 1, SQs 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 the teaching strategy of Tr A included demonstration of visual apparatus and questioning. She used finger puppets to tell the traditional story of "The Three Little Pigs" in her literacy section. Telling the story was interrupted with questions for example: "*How many pigs had to build a house of straw?*", "*Who built the house of bricks, was it the first or the last pig?*" These questions prepared them for the numeracy session that followed and also to see whether they listened and understood the story to comply with the relevant AS. Besides answering questions, they repeated phrases like: "*Not by my chinny chin chin*" and "*I*

will huff and I will puff and I will blow your house over". The motivation for this activity was to consolidate phonics with the consonant [č] as in "chin" and the vowel [ʌ] as in "huff" and "puff". A good attempt at integration was made and was in response to MRQ 2.

The session in Tr C's class was preceded with warming up exercises and ice breakers to organise and settle the children. They had to find the first letter of their names among other letters which each child completed in different time spans. Then they had to put the letter on a white board. They were asked to clap the number of syllables in their names or names of seasons for example, Ja/mie; Car/ley; Sum/mer; Win/ter and say how many times they clapped. This served as link to establish whether there was any integration with stories and thereby address MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3.

Tr D used the theme, "Things with wings" to integrate lessons on Literacy and Life Orientation. The children shared news that they encountered or experienced the previous day. They could illustrate their news on a flipchart. Some shared news about new siblings or pets or family matters. A few reported on small accidents in the home or pleasant events like birthdays. A rhyme, "I wiggle my little fingers" was recited with actions. The actions included movements like wriggling their fingers and shaking their hands.



The outcomes in the curriculum indicate clear guidelines on integration and some teachers attempted integration but not with the story as core element. Therefore there was incongruence in the actual presentation and the responses to the questionnaire of some teachers.

(c) Numeracy

LO 1 of Numeracy included numbers, operations and relationships (DoE, 2002b: 60). The focus of this outcome was so that the children should achieve skills and knowledge to be able to recognise, describe and represent numbers and their relationships, and to count, estimate, calculate and check with competence and confidence in solving problems. The values attached to the skills and knowledge formed part of this LO. To assess their level in terms of this LO, the AS stated that they should be able to recognise, classify and represent numbers and that it should include ASs which start with "count" (DoE, 2002b:60). Linked to the research I could evaluate

whether stories were presented in a way which integrated other areas in the curriculum and if so, what was the effect of this approach (MRQ 2). In this case it included Numeracy, one of the three major LPs in the FP (DoE, 2002b:3).

Moreover, I wanted to establish if stories could assist in the development of language and social skills. Were the learners therefore more comfortable to communicate the answers to the problems because they were using the story as vehicle to exchange their ideas? Teacher A integrated Numeracy by using fairly simple drawings to practise numbers and shapes. Activities included questions based on the drawings. This session addressed MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3. The following examples illustrate some of the questions with the answers in brackets:

- (a) How many ears do the three pigs have altogether? (*six*);
- (b) How many ears does the wolf have? (*two*);
- (c) Do you know how many trotters the three pigs have altogether? (*six*);
- (d) What shape does the pig's face resemble? (*circle*);
- (e) How many circles on each pig's face? (The answers varied as learners had to include the nostrils, eyes and snout.);
- (f) How many houses were built of straw? (*one*); and
- (g) How many chimneys were on the brick house? (*one*).

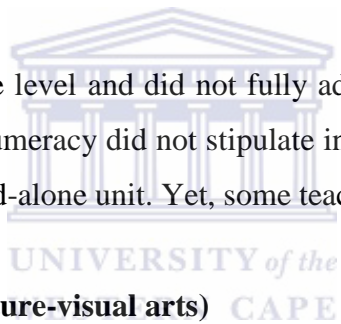
As a numeracy activity the children chose numbers between one and seven on instruction of Tr C. For spatial orientation they put up their right hands, then their left hands followed by a turn either to the right or the left. The activity linked with the Literacy activity where they were requested to put the letters of their names in front of them, and to follow a particular sequence. In addition the children were given money bags with pictures and numbers. They were engaged in matching the picture with the appropriate number from one (1) to five (5). They constructed their own ways of solving the problem indicating a constructivist approach (Hein, 1991) with the teacher facilitating. She assisted the children without solving the problem for them when they needed help and guidance. Although there was integration (MRQ 2) the story was not the core.

To enable the children to achieve LO 5, the anticipation was that the children would be able to show the knowledge and skills in collecting, summarising, displaying and critically analysing

data from which they were expected to make inferences and make predictions, as well as interpret and determine chance variation (DoE, 2002b:62). To show the successful implementation of the AS they should be engaged in collecting and organising data, giving reasons for collections and constructing of pictographs, describing collections of objects and reading and interpreting data (DoE, 2002b: 62).

Tr E issued an A-4 card to each child which displayed the number eight. to which the children applied glue on the number and attached small buttons to fill the entire number. Without assistance from the teacher they sorted according to the size, shape or colour of the buttons. Afterwards they were allowed to explain their efforts in other words their collections. The children applied their visual competences to execute the skill of sorting and their linguistic skills to explain. Integration with regards to Numeracy and Arts & Culture was applied.

The integration was mainly on one level and did not fully address MRQ 2 where the story was used. However, the outcome for numeracy did not stipulate integration and therefore most of the teachers taught numeracy as a stand-alone unit. Yet, some teachers saw the need for integration.



(d) Life Orientation (Arts & Culture-visual arts)

The children had to be able to achieve skills, knowledge and values to create, interpret and present work in all the art forms (DoE, 2002a, 16) to show that they were competent in LO 1 of Arts & Culture. The associated AS, to assess this LO, expected from the children to demonstrate that they could create freely in various media (DoE, 2002a:16).

Arts & Culture, was integrated with Literacy in this session which supports MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3. The children in Tr A's class were divided into three groups. Group work encouraged social and life skills of sharing and team spirit. From this activity, I could infer whether the teacher in fact integrated knowledge, values and skills. The learners had to use mixed media to create art works depicting items or characters in the story. Different groups were assigned different tasks. Afterwards all the works were displayed for everybody to see. The skills to draw, cut, handle paint brushes and glue firmly to a surface were practised. In this session the teacher was

empowered too (SQ 1.4.1) and integration took place (SQ 1.4.3). To allow the children to experience LO 3 for Life Orientation which focused on 'Participation and Cooperation' they were expected to show personal and interpersonal skills by means of individual and group participation in arts and culture activities (DoE, 2003b:18). By means of active participation to create art would indicate whether they realised and achieved the appropriate level of the AS (DoE, 2003b:18).

As an Arts & Culture activity, each child was given a two-dimensional cardboard parrot prepared in advance by Tr D. They cut on the dotted lines and coloured their parrots with crayons. To guide them the teacher displayed a colourful, stuffed toy parrot. Although the parrot on display had specific colours they could choose their own colours allowing their creativity to come to the fore. To communicate freely Tr E encouraged the children to discuss their visit to the zoo which encompassed the AS to relate their own stories. They mentioned the animals, describing them in terms of colour, size and hides. They shared their personal experiences in terms of fears, excitement and joy. Everybody then, under the teacher's guidance, without assistance from the teacher, drew their favourite animals using crayons. Furthermore they responded to what they observed by deciding which animals to draw and in which colours to present these animals. Integration of the Life Orientation (Arts & Culture) and Literacy was applied. In doing this the MRQ 1 was addressed to show how teachers used stories which in this case were the children's own stories.

Although in most cases the teachers did not base the art works on a specific story the children were given the freedom to express themselves visually and in some cases they shared the stories on which they based their drawings. For young children the drawing or art work is a way in which they communicate and interpret their social reality.

(e) Life Orientation (Arts & Culture-performing arts)

In order to achieve LO 1 the children had to display the ability to create, interpret and present work in all the art forms (DoE, 2003b:16). To establish the levels of competence for this AS, it involved movement in response to various rhythms and tempo changes (DoE, 2003b:16). The

original AS of the DoE stated that they had to create freely in the medium of clay (DoE, 2003b:16) which was adapted. In close relation to the afore-mentioned LO and AS, integration of LO 3 for Life Skills namely 'Participation and Cooperation' was addressed. The children had to be engaged in personal and interpersonal skills by means of individual and group participation in arts and culture activities (DoE, 2003b:18). To establish whether the children achieved the LO the goal was to display active participation to create (DoE, 2003b:18).

Mainly non-melodic percussion instruments such as bells, triangles, rhythm blocks and tambourines were used by Tr A in an interactive approach to integrate music with literacy. The children represented the three houses by using the instruments. They played loudly (*forté*) on tambourines and rhythm blocks to depict the brick house. The stick house was represented by playing medium loudly (*mezzo forté*) on cymbals and the straw house was represented by playing much softer (*piano*) on the bells and triangles. When they had to ward off the wolf everybody played very loudly (*fortissimo*) on all the instruments. This exuberance was repeated when the first two houses fell down. They came down with the clashing of cymbals and rhythm sticks, and the shaking of tambourines, bells and triangles. Integrating the story with music, afforded me the opportunity to ascertain the significance and value of the approach with reference to the responses of the children. This addressed MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3 namely the development of social and language skills. The fact that this class included children with learning disabilities allowed me to evaluate the educational value of stories as teaching tool to address fears and traumas (SQ 1.4.4).

The children in Tr D's class sang a song, "Two little bees in the garden" as an Arts & Culture activity with the accompanying actions as they sang. Actions included flapping their arms to represent wings and running on tiptoe around the classroom. Some made buzzing sounds and put up two fingers to show how many bees were in the garden which linked Numeracy. In addition they sang "Little Bird you are welcome". They were thereafter introduced to various items with wings, on display in the classroom. They identified the items. Some objects could be viewed in illustrated books and included items such as aeroplanes, birds and insects. The teacher used the available books and items to illustrate the theme, "Things with wings". She pointed out that some items were part of nature and some, like aeroplanes, affected nature negatively, although

we need them. I determined the efficacy of integration across the curriculum. In this integration involved Life Orientation (Natural Science) and Literacy. Even though the story was not the base, integration was applied (SQ 1.4.4). By means of their movements the children communicated their interpretation of the songs.

The implementation of activities by Tr E where the children were engaged in the respective LO and AS, took place in the music room. Tr E played songs and the children did eurhythmics of the different note values like | ♪♪♪ | running as well as walking, skipping and galloping. They performed the movements in tune to the music for example swinging and jumping. In addition they performed movements to illustrate the tempo like fast and slow. Furthermore they made movements to express tone for example loud and soft and stretched and curled up to depict the pitch such as high and low. Finally they did relaxation exercises to calm them down after all the movement and excitement. They returned to the classroom accompanied by music. The objective to determine whether the activities in fact provided an opportunity for the children to achieve the prescribed AS where they could move to the beat or listen to perform the relevant movements, was realised. Similarly the SRQ 1.4.4 in terms of the value of stories was addressed. There were opportunities to engage in activities in order to reach the intended outcomes although the story was not used.

To address the relevant AS Tr F let the children sing, “Five green bottles hanging on a wall”. Then they imagined they were acorns growing into big trees. They first swayed in a gentle breeze and then were blown about by a strong wind. An opportunity arose to imagine that they could be whatever they wanted to be. In doing this I was able to verify whether stories were integrated with other areas across the curriculum and the effect thereof if applied. The values that they added were encapsulated in the imaginary world namely “I can be anything I want to be.” The song linked with the theme and in a way related to life skills. In terms of the MRQs it was only done within Arts & Culture which linked to the theme.

(f) Life Orientation (Physical development)

LO 4 of Life Orientation involved the skills, knowledge and values of Physical Development and Movement where the children had to use the acquired life skills to achieve and extend personal potential to respond effectively to challenges in their world (DoE, 2003b:77). They had to be engaged in activities to develop fine and gross motor skills. These skills were necessary to use a range of objects and implements in order to demonstrate their level of competence for the relevant AS (DoE, 2003b: 77). Related to this, the life skill was LO 3 of Arts & Culture which focused on participation and cooperation and therefore the children had to be able to create, interpret and present work in all the art forms (DoE, 2003b: 18). In order to show that they achieved the required level expected for the AS, they had to be able to respond to instructions in a space without knocking against one another (DoE, 2003b: 18). The social context was extended to a bigger group which linked with SQ 1.4.3, and not just to the person next to them in the desks.

The children in Tr A's class were assigned different characters and received apparatus to portray the movements for example of the wolf and pigs. Their emotions towards the wolf were evident in their facial expressions. Clearly the girls associated the wolf with something bad and evil. A real show of camaraderie was displayed as they all stood up against the big bad wolf. When a child could not execute an activity in a group the rest of the group showed their dismay. The activities integrated the story and articulated with the responses in the questionnaire.

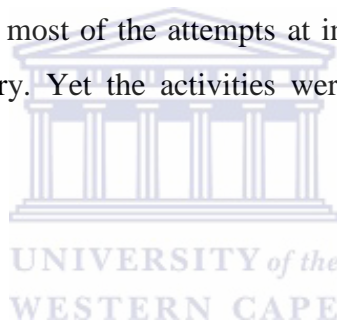
During Life Orientation the children in Tr B's class did eurhythmics, which entailed movement to music. The indoor area which was utilised forced them to observe the limited space. They had to move carefully to avoid bumping into one another which links with Life Orientation. Simultaneously they had to show respect towards one another. The teacher beat on a drum and alternated with a tambourine, while the children made the movements. After the movement session the children were allowed outside to engage in more movements while they sang songs like "Old MacDonald had a farm" and recited an Afrikaans nursery rhyme "*Die koei*" (The cow) which both linked with the theme 'Pets'. Clearly the choice of material indicates a limitation to song choices and nursery rhymes which include animals in a broader sense rather than pets. The

children clapped hands as they recited. This was a form of physical engagement to consolidate the rhyme, although at that time it did not seem very appropriate. These activities were selected to link with the theme. In a sense the teacher integrated the activities around the theme but not necessarily across the curriculum using stories as an integrating element.

The children passed balls to one another in an open space outside. They practised eye-hand coordination as well as working together in pairs and groups. Tr C allowed them to change positions frequently and the sizes of the balls were varied from time to time. To exercise their listening skills they listened to the instructions of the teacher, and when she blew the whistle they could change either partners or positions. Movement and language were integrated although not linked to a story.

With the exception of one teacher most of the attempts at integration were based on the theme for that week rather than the story. Yet the activities were to an extent congruent with the response in the questionnaire.

(g) Literacy using the story



In order to accomplish LO 1 with the focus on ‘Listening’, the children had to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations (DoE, 2002a:14). The associated AS was to listen for enjoyment to oral texts like stories and show some understanding of these oral texts (DoE, 2002a:14). Furthermore teacher A integrated LO 3 of Life Orientation, focusing on ‘Participation and Cooperation’ with the accompanying AS. The interaction of the children was to display personal and interpersonal skills by means of individual and group participation in Arts & Culture activities (DoE, 2002b:18). I was able to assess the educational value of stories by observing how the children engaged and interacted with the story (SQs 1.4.3 and 1.4.4).

An additional story: “A windy day” was read by Tr A. As introduction she asked them which house in the story of “The Three Little Pigs” was the strongest. She linked the new story to the idea that the wolf could blow as strongly as the wind. Furthermore she enquired which season it

was and how they knew it. As stimulus she used actual leaves suggesting autumn. These leaves were observed, touched and described in terms of shape, size, texture and colour tapping into the senses of the children. Less familiar words and phrases within the context of autumn were explained, like “changing colour”, “bare trees”, “leafy carpet”. The children were engaged in the story and participated as characters during the role-play. This linked with MRQ 1, SQs 1.4.1, 1.4.2 and MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3.

Tr B used a story of dogs to link the theme, “Pets”. It was encouraging to hear how spontaneously the children spoke about their own pets. Some of them did not have pets but expressed which pets they favoured. These utterances displayed their creative sides where they gave the imagination free reins. The technique of explaining to get the children involved in making clay animals and painting them was applied afterwards. After completion of the art works they had to count up to ten. The value and integration of stories across the curriculum were addressed (see MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.4). The children showed how they understood the story which was linked to their social reality.

The story was titled “*Swart Snoete*” (translated: “Black Snouts”). The children listened to the story as Tr B read it. They were questioned in between and interacted by discussing the pictures of the black puppies. She asked them about their own pets and to describe the puppies in the pictures in terms of their colour. In addition they had to identify the body parts, and tell her whether the puppies looked happy or sad. The teacher integrated Numeracy by asking the children to count the number of paws, tails, ears and puppies. She showed them the happy faces of the children in the story. They were encouraged to re-tell the story and echo repetitive phrases. Hereby the story was reinforced, and it allowed the teacher to determine how well they comprehended the story. Integration was applied in different areas (MRQ 2).

Tr C read the story “*Drie Rammetjies Rof*” (Val, 1993) the Afrikaans version of “The Three Billy Goats” at the end of the daily programme. The story was related to the theme. They looked at the pictures as the story progressed, and were allowed time to discuss the illustrations. There was reference to their own environment when they mentioned the bridge close to their school integrating Life Orientation. As they were looking at the pictures they repeated some of the

dialogue which included many examples of alliteration for example *Drie Rammetjies Rof*, with alliteration on [r], and onomatopoeia allowing the children the opportunity to imitate the sounds made by the hooves of the goats when they crossed the bridge. The teacher integrated Numeracy by letting them count the teeth, horns and hooves of the goats in the pictures for example two horns of the Billy goat, six hooves of the three Billy goats. This activity addressed MRQ 1, SQ 1.4.2 and MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3 where the story was linked with other areas in the curriculum and the teacher used the story in various ways. It furthermore verified the response to the questionnaire.

Finally story time arrived for the children in Tr D's class. The children sang a song while moving onto the mat. The session started with a short discussion of the insect found on the playground. Then the teacher read a story from a book titled, *The Talking Parrot*. She asked questions in between to check their understanding and keep them focused on this long story, for example: "*Why did the princess imitate the parrot?*"; "*What happened to the parrot?*" Some children interjected with their own stories or experiences of parrots or known birds, for example pigeons. This phenomenon was indicative of the vivid imagination inherent to the children, which teachers often neglect to tap into. The interjections could at the same time be the result of other reasons such as lack of interest in the actual story. A measure of integration was evident, supporting MRQ 2 because an attempt was made to link Life Orientation with the story.

As introduction to the story Tr E showed the children a picture of a mole. The first activity involved tapping into their existing schemata when they guessed which animal it was. They described the animal and discussed the habitat. Then she read the story of the mole. The technique that she applied was to have the pictures facing the children with the text at the back for her to follow. This allowed her some freedom to look at the children most of the time while she could read the text too. The children answered questions based on the story. These questions were for example "Have you seen a mole before?", "Where did you see a mole?" "Where does the mole live?", "Are moles useful animals?" "Why do you say that?" "What happened to the mole in the story?", "How do you feel about the mole in the story?" Besides linking Life Orientation (Natural Science) Tr E included Literacy too by allowing the children to answer questions and therefore integration was applied in this session (MRQ 2).

In Tr F's class the story was the last item in the daily programme. A discussion where the teacher used concrete apparatus such as leaves, branches of various trees, pine cones and seeds served as introduction. Her objective was to integrate the theme of trees. The teacher read the story, "*The whistling thorn*" by Helen Cowcher. To stimulate the children and make them more inquisitive, the teacher interrupted the story reading session with questions. Closure to the session had the children reciting the rhyme, "Five fat sausages" while they moved to their seats. The story served to integrate Life Orientation (Natural Sciences) and Literacy, dealing with SQs 1.4.3 and 1.4.4.

(h) Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Social Sciences)

The goal to be able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations was the focus of LO 1: for Literacy namely 'Listening' (DoE, 2002c:14). In conjunction with this, the expectation was that they display skills in LO 2 namely 'Speaking' where they were required to communicate confidently and effectively in a spoken language in a wide range of situations (DoE, 2002c:15). Similarly for the AS, they should listen for enjoyment to oral texts like stories and show some understanding (DoE, 2002c:14). They had to be skilled in telling their own stories and relate stories of others in their own words (DoE, 2002c:15).

Tr E engaged the children in an open discussion on trees and identification of indigenous trees. They shared information and mentioned the colours of the autumn leaves. Clapping their hands was to indicate the number of the syllables in each of the tree names for example two claps for pine/ tree; and five claps for eu/ca/lyp/tus/ tree. To link the LOs and ASs the teacher emphasised the importance of trees in the environment and the fact that trees are responsible for oxygen. She also mentioned that everybody should protect our trees and possibly plant trees. I set out to assess whether the use of a story could have assisted in the development of language and social skills. Integration was present but was based on the theme and not the story.

(i) Life Orientation (Religious Instruction) and Arts & Culture

LO 2 for Life Orientation, with the focus on 'Social Development', had to engage the children so that they could be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities (DoE, 2003b:13). Likewise, in order to successfully achieve the relevant AS, the children had to identify basic rights and responsibilities (DoE, 2003b: 13). I adapted the AS because the expectation was more the development of tolerance towards one another which in effect included rights and responsibilities. Tolerance might not always seem a very appropriate word as it could suggest a forced action instead of a spontaneous one.

Most of the children in Tr E's class were engaged in singing hymns. Three different children were appointed every day to select the hymns. The teacher rotated the duty and in doing this gave each child a chance to make choices as well as empowering them. Furthermore, they were encouraged to show tolerance towards the choices executed by fellow learners. The singing was followed by the Bible story of Zaccheus to link with the theme. As the story was read the children answered questions. They could also present information with regards to similar experiences. One boy mentioned how his cat sat in a tree because he was scared of a dog. Another girl mentioned how her father was tasked to get their kite from the tree. The moral of the story focussed on the values of acceptance and tolerance irrespective of who you are. At the end of the session, the children did exercises stretching their bodies, shaking their hands and their legs and curling up to create an atmosphere of closure in preparation for the next session. In this session the Biblical story integrated Life Skills as well as Arts & Culture (singing). For the children to achieve LO 4 for Arts & Culture the expectation was that they display the ability to use and analyse various forms of communication and expression in arts and culture (DoE 2002b:19). They should therefore be able to respond to what was observed in the natural environment and thus their competence in the relevant AS (DoE, 2002b:19). The children communicated and therefore SQ 1.4.3 was focused on.

The activities afforded me the chance to establish whether teachers used stories in Grade R and how they use stories as teaching tool. In addition I wanted to see how the story was integrated with other subjects the visual arts, drama and music and if so, what the effect of this approach

was. In observing the teachers I found that most teachers utilised the concept of integration but it was mostly within the literacy section of the curriculum. The most effective use of stories was when the story was told or read. Teachers then linked various sections of the curriculum to the story. Occasionally Life Orientation was linked although it seemed on an ad hoc basis. The story was not specifically selected to implement as a teaching tool across the curriculum. In addition not all the responses to the questionnaires supported the actual presentations of the teachers.

In order to collect more information about stories directly from the children I embarked on short informal conversations with them. Subsequently the importance of the storyteller and types of stories also surfaced. According to Sipe (2002:476) children respond to stories in numerous ways and one that I need to mention in this regard is that they compare and contrast situations in the stories to those of their own lives. For the interpretive researcher it was important to see how the children interpreted their social reality. The informal conversations with specific questions rendered some interesting information shared by the children.

4.4 ‘TELL ME MORE, CHILDREN ...?’

As I had conversations with the children I realised that some questions linked very closely to other questions which I prepared beforehand, and therefore I grouped the responses under themes as an aspect of content analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:388). Therefore the analysis in Chapter Five involves themes rather than the individual analysis of each question.

4.4.1 Questions and themes

I had informal interviews with 88 children at the various institutions using the questionnaire (Appendices F1 and F2) as guide. I reformulated some questions when I noticed lack of understanding at times. I coaxed them to try and elicit responses but when this did not work, I assured them that it was in order and moved on to the next question. I did not want them to feel pressurised in any way but much rather wanted to build a trust relationship with them. The interviews depended on availability of the children and their ability to respond to a “stranger”. Where the teachers’ responses focused mainly on MRQ 1, the children’s responses had to

articulate with MRQ 2. The twelve questions posed to the children intended to address the subsidiary question 1.4.3, “*What is the impact of integration and the creative use of stories on the Grade R children with regards to language and social skills, and focus of stories?*” as well as subsidiary question 1.4.4 “*What are the characteristics and educational value of stories?*” To address the aspects encapsulated in the subsidiary questions, the responses were grouped in the following six themes:

Theme one, “*Starting the conversation*”, Theme three, “*General preferences and dislikes and telling the favourite story*”, Theme four, “*Interaction with stories*” and Theme five, “*Feelings about the story and the main character*” link with SQ 1.4.3, “*What is the impact of the integration and creative use of the stories on the Grade R children with regards to outcomes such as language development, social skills, interest and focus on stories?*”

Theme two, “*The storyteller*” and Theme six, “*Motivation for listening to stories*” link with the SQ 1.4.4, “*What are the characteristics and educational value of stories?*” Of significance was to know whether the storyteller displayed any of the characteristics required to deal with the children in various situations. Moreover I established the impact of stories on children.

I could gauge if the children could verbalise their likes and dislikes. Although this was not the only variable to infer that the stories were solely responsible for development of language and social skills, stories could be regarded as a support structure or valuable teaching tool because the children used the language skills to communicate the responses. The social skills came into play when they engaged in activities like role play. In addition I could establish the way in which the children understood the stories. Their responses to the different stories would be indicative of their understanding of the stories. With regards to emotions children often identified with the main character and shared the feelings portrayed by the main character.

Teachers indicated the educational value of stories when they completed the questionnaire. It was therefore a valid point to find any connections between the responses of the teachers and the children as well as the activities presented by the teachers. Although the themes that emerged are presented separately, they are all interlinked. The relevance of the themes in terms of the

research is presented in the discussion that follows. As the themes indicate, this is an attempt to address the relevant subsidiary questions that emanate from the main research questions.

4.4.2 Let the children respond

All the individual responses at each school were recorded by means of field notes, but to avoid repetition I do not state every response. Hence, I focus on the more relevant ones or those that were different from most of the others. The direct responses are unedited and the Afrikaans responses were translated.

When the stories are integrated with other areas of the curriculum the teacher might be able to observe more ways in which the children express themselves in response to the stories that she tells. The question is important as it will allow me to determine the language and social skills of the children. Children were interviewed at four of the five institutions. Because the fifth institution did not teach Grade R in a separate class as explained in Chapter Two I was unable to take them out of the class. They follow a very structured programme to fit in their hospital rounds. I could however, observe how they interacted with the rest of the group with regards to music and art activities. At the four institutions I had informal conversations with 88 children.

(a) Responses to Theme one, “*Starting the conversation*”

With the exception of three children everybody liked to listen to stories. The negative responses were because “*Stories are too long*”, “*No, I sometimes watch movies*” and “*I don’t know*”. This question was to initiate the conversation but one child was unresponsive due to a learning problem. She eventually warmed up and as the lesson progressed she became more involved although she hardly communicated at the start. Towards the end of the lesson she already contributed in a mono-syllabic way. It is evident that in a few cases children were perhaps not exposed to suitable stories often enough. However, the same children watched stories on television.

(b) Responses to Theme two, “*The storyteller*”

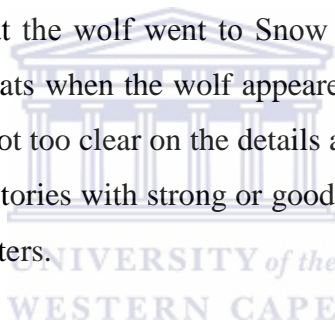
At the school where more affluent children attended most of the children identified the storyteller as, “*Mum and Dad read to me*” with a few children who said, “*Grandma reads to me*” or “*I read a book and my sister*” (sic). The girls mostly mentioned their mothers as the storytellers. For most of the children however, the teacher was the storyteller at the schools where poorer children attended. Family members who were involved in storytelling were either the older brother or sister or the grandmother and one said, “*My oupa*” (My grandfather). At the private church subsidised institution the storyteller rated more or less equally between a family member and the teacher. One said, “*My mommy but not lots*” (sic). The teachers and the aunties were the main storytellers at the haven for abandoned children. In another response a girl stated that her dad tells her stories because her mother died, but her granny and auntie also tell stories. “*My daddy but not anymore*” was the response from a fairly quiet girl. A boy first said “*Nobody*” but then changed his response to, “*I think of my brother when I sleep*”. One mentioned the aftercare teacher as storyteller. It is clear that depending on the circumstances the storyteller varies between the teacher and a family member where the family member was more evident where home circumstances allowed for time and books available to tell or read the stories.

(c) Responses to Theme three, “*General preferences and dislikes*”

Responses included: “*I like stories because my teacher has a lot of stories*” and “*They dress up and do stuff*”. The boys generally opted for animal stories, robot stories and stories about the superheroes like Superman and Batman. They also liked stories about the Transformers and one indicated that he liked stories about God (“*God se stories*”). A few preferred Bible stories. The girls preferred the traditional fairy tales as well as stories about children and animals. However, most of the girls did not like stories about monsters because, “*They are ugly for you*”(sic) and one did not like, “*stories with a man*”. One girl disliked stories about snakes, nobody had dislikes. The girl’s body language evidenced her dislike. Yet another girl said, “*Ugly stories like my mummy buys me*”, “*Winnie the Pooh and Barney because it is baby stuff*”, “*Witch stories and scary stories*” and “*boys’ stories*”. The boys disliked stories about fairies, Barbie, boring stories

and stories about “*dollies*” (the diminutive for dolls) and one said, “*Ghost stories ‘cause they’re evil*” and “*Barbie girl stories*”.

When they had to speak about their favourite story it was not as easy as I thought it would be. Some of them could not remember the favourite story and some told me about the most recent story that their teacher told them. The boys related stories about superheroes and “*Transformers because they could change into cars*”, Power Rangers because “*they kicked bad guys’ butts*” and “*Lion King*”. *Goldilocks* as well as *Beauty and the Beast*, while *The Ginger Bread Boy*, *The Little Matchstick Girl* and *Bratz* featured amongst the favourites of the girls. To share their favourite story presented more of a challenge at the farm schools than the others. Some could not give an account of any stories. A few could give a reasonable account of the story they heard that day while some spoke about what sounded more like the news in the local pony press. One boy was very creative and told me that the wolf went to Snow White’s granny. Then she saw the seven dwarves and they hid the goats when the wolf appeared. In comparison with the boys the girls knew a few stories but were not too clear on the details although a few could give a detailed account of *The Three Little Pigs*. Stories with strong or good main characters were favoured and they wanted to be like those characters.



(d) Responses to Theme four, “*Interaction with stories*”

Almost all the children loved to illustrate their visual and audio experiences of the stories. The boys especially liked to draw the superheroes. The few who did not like to draw said, “*Because I can’t.*” The children were not requested to motivate their opinions as I wanted them to feel relaxed and not threatened. I also realised that I should save them embarrassment. As one said, “*I like to draw beautiful stories at home*” and the other one said “*If I do not get it right, my brothers will help me*”. The few who did not indicate a preference to illustrate stories however, participated in the class activities.

(e) Responses to Theme five, “Feelings about the story and the main character”

Responses to theme five included mostly positive emotions when the children were asked how they felt about happy stories whereas sad stories made most of them feel sad. One boy responded as follows, *“I feel happy because the story loves me”* (sic) and another one said, *“I like Superman because he is strong and I want to be like him”*. A little girl said, *“I feel happy because Cinderella wears my favourite colour”*. Yet another one said, *“I feel very, very, very happy!”* One of the younger girls said, *“I feel like I have a doll”* while one of the more interesting responses was, *“I feel like eating yoghurt when a story is happy.”* Some of the emotions that they experienced when the story was happy included, *“I feel better”*, *“I felt that the story makes me happy and smiling”*, *“I feel good and nice and happy”*, *“I want to be quiet when teacher reads”*, *“I feel happy and excited”*. One girl said, *“I feel happy and I go with them to my family”* (sic). Other responses were, *“happy”*, *“nice”*, *“I like it”*, *“I want to laugh”*, *“Then I do not cry”*, *“I feel good”*, *“I feel O.K.”* while a few did not respond. To sad stories I heard, *“When my mom says a sad story then I feel sad and it breaks my heart”*(sic), *“I feel sad too”*, *“When the story is sad then I’m not going to read it”*. One boy said, *“I feel good because I want to be cool”*. Furthermore they stated, *“Then I feel bad”*, *“Then I don’t like it”*, *“Then I cry”*, *“I also feel like that”* meaning sad, *“I like him because he is unhappy”* referring to the main character in a story, *“Sad because they are rude”* with reference to characters in a story. The stories that were sad elicited sad responses from most boys with the same one who said that he can sleep when the story is happy, saying that he cannot sleep when it is sad. One girl said, *“Sad because of bad stuff in my house. I want to be happy whole day”* (sic). The children were able to verbalise their feelings about stories.

(f) Responses to Theme six, “Motivation for listening to stories”

Only a few children found difficulty in stating why they listened to stories and said, *“I don’t know.”* Other responses were verbalised as, *“Because it’s fun”*, *“Because my Grandma reads it”*, *“Because teacher reads stories to us”*, *“Because I have a book at home”*, *“I have been loving stories for a long time already”*. Another interesting response was, *“Because I like to listen to magic.”* In addition I was told, *“I like to read and it lets me learn”*(sic), *“Because it’s special for*

me”, “*I like stories because they learn me*”(sic), “*Cause it helps me to read and know how to tell people things of stories*” and “*Cause they’re my favourite*”.

Various factors seem to have an influence on the responses but I will elaborate more about these possible factors in Chapter Five. From these responses I gathered information to inform me if the teacher played a significant role in the absence of a mother figure in terms of language and social development. Secondly, I gauged which stories appealed to the children, and whether any stories were specifically used to sensitise them to fears and traumas which could include HIV and AIDS. Thirdly, I was able to infer if there was a general trend at a specific institution with regards to the storyteller. Who was the main storyteller in their experience? Finally, I established how children responded to stories. The responses therefore served to inform me of the general overarching value of stories in the curriculum which I analyse in Chapter Five. Because the situation did not lend itself for the specific research I did not interview children at School Five. However, I managed to get information regarding the context and background of the children from the principal and teachers.

4.5 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The fact that a few children did not like stories was negated in the actual storytelling sessions both by the teachers and the researcher as the same children eagerly participated (Theme 1). This question addressed MRQ 2. From some responses I inferred that teachers do use stories in class (MRQ 1) as the children indicated the teacher as the main storyteller (Theme 2). With reference to their preferences (Theme 3) it was evident that certain stories had a greater impact on them than others and this was dictated by their background. Their social schemata influenced their preferences and in that way they made sense of their reality (MRQ 2). In addition there was confirmation for the fact that children view their artwork as part of their own reality because most of them preferred to illustrate stories (Theme 4). The responses verified those of the teachers to the questionnaires. In verbalising their emotions it was clear that boys and girls did not differ too much in terms of what made them sad or happy (Theme 5). Finally the impact of stories with regards to their motivation for listening to stories (Theme 6) rendered a variety of responses which could be attributed to their language skills and subsequent ability to formulate a

response. From the responses the impact of stories seems evident and the use of stories is relevant.

To get a sense of how the teachers are trained for the FP, I gathered data at two higher education institutions. In order to address SQ 1.4.2 the information can serve to empower teachers with regards to professional development. The responses to the interviews are presented in the following section.

4.6 THE ROLE OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) INSTITUTION IN TERMS OF TEACHER TRAINING

Besides the views of the in-service teachers it was important to get a sense of how teachers are trained for the FP. I therefore interviewed lecturers working in faculties of education at local universities in the Western Cape, SA. In the conversation with the first lecturer she shared information not included in the actual questions asked, for example the sessions at the practicing schools and the assignments based on stories given to students. She mentioned the concern expressed by students that although stories were told regularly at the schools the selection and presentation of stories needed clearer guidelines. The teachers depended on the pre-service teachers to share ideas with them. Assignments given to the students were valuable in the sense that the students had to do research with regards to the selection of stories and story types for the grades in the FP. The information informed current practices and teacher development, linking MRQ 1, SQ 1.4.2.

These HE institutions offered teacher training in various degree courses of which the B. Ed. degree (FP) is one. The interview questions (see Appendix G) for the lecturers were formulated to get information on the general training programme with regards to storytelling as a technique and the inclusion of first time exposure to HIV and AIDS information for Grade R children. Consequently I present the data gathered from the lecturers in the separate interviews.

4.6.1 ‘What do you say, Lecturer?’

The responses of the lecturers verified the notion that teachers are empowered when they use stories as teaching tools (MRQ 1, SQ 1.4.1). In addition the idea of integration is favoured (MRQ 2).

“Do students get training based on the curriculum/syllabi of the DoE?” elicited a “*Yes*” response from both lecturers while lecturer two added that the programme was a stand-alone module in a subject called Professional Studies as well as integrated in the teaching subjects like Literacy. Students were expected to plan lessons whereby concepts like ‘outcomes’ and ‘assessment standards’ were applied in a practical way. In-service teachers are also guided by outcomes and assessment standards in their planning.

Question two enquired whether storytelling formed an integral part of the training programme to which both responded positively. If the answer was “*Yes*”, the respondents had to state whether the programme included both theory and practical. To this question the answer was also in the affirmative. The second respondent added that storytelling was evident in the course work over the four year programme. Furthermore, storytelling was used as a main outcome as well as introductions or conclusions to lessons. Newly-trained teachers are therefore equipped to utilise stories as teaching tool (MRQ 1).

The next question was, “In addition to question three, are there any approaches that you propose to your students?” Respondent one said, “*Yes, the students are exposed to different storytelling techniques suitable for the FP for example big book, characterisation, dramatisation, using puppets, draw and tell, flannel-board stories, and others.*” Respondent two mentioned that “... *an interactive, multi-sensory approach that engages learners with auditory (listening to stories), visual (puppets, pictures, objects), kinaesthetic (feely bags), and other sensory activities (like tasting an orange if the story includes it)*” was suggested. If the reply was “*No*” to question three they had to motivate why. Based on the responses the notion to use stories in different ways to allow interaction in the class is of importance in teacher training.

In the next question I asked, “How do students react if and when they have to present stories?” The first respondent stated that, “*The majority of students were very natural and loved using dramatisation, while the minority appeared shy, self-conscious and intimidated.*” The second respondent replied that, “*Most students seemed to have a natural flair and interest in storytelling. Some have anxiety about it in the beginning (in first year) but they soon acquire the skills for dynamic storytelling to young learners in the foundation phase.*” In addition she encouraged peer assessment in order to improve their skills. In both instances the word “natural” cropped up when referring to the skills of the students and both lecturers mentioned attributes of the students like shyness and anxiety.

When asked, “How do you assess the students’ presentation of stories?” respondent one answered, “*I use peer group assessment with a prepared rubric.*” Respondent two stated that she first briefed students formally. They were briefed that there should be alignment of the storytelling with the selected outcomes, assessment standards and a theme. In addition the various multi-sensory and interactive aspects had to be incorporated. The assessment counted 20% of the weighting in the first year. While the lecturer assessed, the peers of the assessed students observed. Assessment was therefore not confined to the lecturer only which proposes engagement by various role-players to develop the skills.

Subsequently the respondents had to respond to the question, “How will you encourage the use of stories in the FP?” To which the first respondent replied that, “*Teachers should read stories to children every day, even more than once a day if possible, especially at Grade R level. Story reading should continue throughout the FP and even in the intermediate and senior phases.*” The second respondent said that the use of stories would be encouraged in the teaching of “*thinking, language and all concepts (colour, number, shape, etc.)*” as she found it to be a useful teaching tool in all subjects. Stories are therefore regarded as valuable to enhance existing skills and develop latent skills.

I then posed the question, “What is your opinion about integration of stories across the curriculum in the FP?” Respondent one’s reply was, “*A very suitable and useful mechanism for integration of new knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.*” Respondent two stated that

integration is *“vital to achieving what is set out in the curriculum ... It is well-aligned to the overall developmental ‘level’ of foundation phase learners. Any teacher who is not telling stories in the FP is not effectively achieving the curriculum and is not catering for what these young learners thrive on.”* The responses signal a commitment to utilise stories across the curriculum.

Subsequently I wanted to know, “Does your programme include sensitisation to HIV and AIDS from Grade R? The reply of respondent one was verbalised, *“Yes, but through the medium of stories and value lessons.”* In this regard respondent two mentioned that it was done within the *“framework of diversity and non-stereotyping.”* Furthermore, they used storytelling as a tool with the persona dolls approach. According to her description these dolls provided a child-friendly approach to address HIV and AIDS. The dolls were purchased by the faculty and the students could use them during the practice teaching. Clearly there is an understanding of the importance to address sensitive issues at a young age, using stories but also added resources.

When asked, “Do you agree/disagree that HIV and AIDS should form part of the FP level?” respondent one answered, *“Absolutely!”* and this was echoed verbatim by the second respondent. In addition she viewed this as a *“real-life issue ... embedded in many related issues like health, mortality, sexuality, morbidity, etc.”* This was followed by the question, “If you agree to the previous question, which mechanisms or methods would you suggest to your students to introduce the concept HIV and AIDS?” In the opinion of respondent one these should include, *“Stories, dramatisation, puppets, music, art, role play.”* Respondent two mentioned stories but added that these stories should be culturally relevant and that students should integrate HIV and AIDS *“tangentially in all stories”*, meaning that it should be linked at all angles possibly. The responses echoed the use of stories to engage children and teachers in real life issues which could be any other fears and traumas.

The final question, “If you disagree to question eight, which entailed whether HIV and AIDS should form part of the FP at school level, what are your reasons?” produced no responses as they were in agreement that HIV and AIDS should be included in FP. In addition to the responses of the lecturers I elicited the following responses from the pre-service education students by means of questionnaires. These students were at the same institution as the first

lecturer. The responses informed me of the training currently included in HE to equip the teachers in FP Phase in preparation for the teaching profession. I triangulated the responses of the lecturer with those of the students.

4.6.2 ‘Pre-service teacher, are you equipped for the task?’

Of the twenty questionnaires issued, I received the responses of fourteen students (see Appendix K). The first two questions required a “Yes” or “No”. They firstly had to state whether their training was based on the WCED curriculum and secondly, if storytelling was included in the programme. Both questions were answered in the affirmative by all respondents. These responses articulated with those of the lecturers which in turn linked with MRQ 1, SQ 1.4.2. In question three they had to indicate whether their training included practical and/or theory. The responses of eight students supported what the lecturer stated that training included both practical and theory whilst two said only practical and four stated theory. Furthermore these responses supported MRQ 1, 1.4.2.

Question four read, “How do you respond when you have to tell stories?” and question five, “What is your opinion about integration of stories across the curriculum in FP?” Question four generated the following responses: “*I love it, because the children love learning about stories*”, “*I really enjoy presenting stories*”, “*I really enjoy it. During my Grade R practical I had lots of practice doing storytelling*”, and again “*I really enjoy it. I try to make it fun for those listening*”; two more said “*I enjoy it*”, while another student said, “*Presenting stories is a great, fun way to interact with learner as they learn about language*”. One said, “*Stories are always exciting and I feel excited when reading*”. Yet another said, “*I look forward to it*”. Amongst these responses were also: “*Nervous*”, “*Nervous, but it’s a good skill to have and to develop*”, “*At first nervous-then when I begin, I really enjoy it*” and one said, “*Telling stories is a weak point for me-I just need practice*”. What was stated by the lecturers was evidenced here, namely that the students felt nervous. Considering the responses the importance of empowerment for teachers and professional development comes to the fore as formulated in MRQ 1, SQ 1.4.1 and 1.4.2.

To the question on integration, a variety of responses surfaced including, *“It is very nice. I think it’s a great idea”*; *“I think that it is good”*, *“I feel that it is very good as learners can relate well to stories”*, *“Learners’ literacy improves by hearing stories”*. One said, *“Integration will improve literacy levels”* while another said, *“Vitality important and quite easy to do”*. There was also one who stated that, *“Children learn through stories so I think they are valuable”*. Another response read, *“I feel it is very important as it is a way for learners to learn in a fun way. It teaches them morals as well as language”*. Another opinion was that, *“It creates a great context and is very important for bringing language into all aspects. (The written is seen in things we hear/say)”*. One responded as follows, *“I think that it has an important and meaningful role to play in a holistic development”* while another stated that, *“It is necessary”*. Other opinions included, *“I think it’s a wonderful idea, it is such an integral part of development”*; *“Very good idea. It is an important part of teaching”* and *“Very good. Learners love stories and thus it helps introducing new contexts especially”*. The responses regarding integration support MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3. Additionally the responses of the lecturers were verified.

The second part of the questionnaire focused on HIV and AIDS with the first question, *“Does your programme include sensitisation to HIV and AIDS from Grade R?”* Everybody responded *“Yes”*. To the question, *“Do you agree/disagree that HIV and AIDS should form part of the FP at school level?”* all of them agreed but two added, *“to an extent”* and *“very basic”*. Subsequently they had to respond briefly to, *“Was the concept HIV and AIDS addressed to Grade R at your practicing school? Please explain.”* To this only one stated, *“Yes, they had little booklets they work through with their learners. Unfortunately the books weren’t available yet when I did my practical”*. The lecturers’ responses articulated with the above-mentioned responses and supported the idea that carefully selected stories can be used to address fears and traumas which are captured in MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.4.

Finally, they had to motivate why if they disagreed in question seven. These responses served to triangulate the response presented by the lecturer from the same institution. From the responses based on the interviews and questionnaires it was clear that there is strong articulation between the responses of the FP pre-service teachers and those of the HE lecturers. Both groups value the importance of storytelling as part of the curriculum. The challenge is mostly at some schools

where they are bound by the set programme. Moreover the pre-service teachers sometimes feel insecure as storytellers. In order to implement the approach whereby I used various stories, I had to make a selection of stories. One aspect for the selection of stories that confronts us is that you should choose a story that you can tell well. I subsequently list the stories that I selected as well as propound my motivation for the choices that I made. With regards to the research questions it is evident that the training provided to pre-service teachers addresses the importance of using stories in the Grade R curriculum and that integration with other subjects can have an impact on the language and social skills of the children.

4.7 STORIES TO IMPLEMENT IN AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

This section attempts to present the integrated approach which I applied as discussed in Chapter Two, 2.16. I highlight the rationale for my view on the integrated approach. A description is therefore given of the way in which I told stories in an integrated fashion.

I linked the integrated approach with the different LPs as described in the FP curriculum of the DoE. “Learning Programme” refers to the programmes for all the grades in the particular phase which include “structured and systematic arrangements of activities and content” (DoE, 2003a:6) while “work schedule” in this case refers to the plan for the year with more details for the elements of the Learning Programme (DoE, 2003a:11). “Lesson plans” on the other hand is the term used for the daily activities (DoE, 2002d: 2). It is therefore clear that with every phase of the development plans, more information is added. These LPs are Numeracy, Literacy and Life Orientation. I integrated the stories with the performing arts for example role play, music and movement; and the visual arts for example drawing. The motivation for this was, to allow the children to be creative and work collaboratively, when they do art, sing, dance or act out roles. Interactive group activities involving stories, integrated with arts, allowed them to socialise and develop their linguistic skills in a non-threatening environment. At the time of the presentations the CAPS (DBE, 2011b) was not implemented yet. However, the main idea is the universal use of stories rather than the specific outcomes and assessment standards in a curriculum. Although it serves as a guideline it is not a boundary.

Based on the methodology in Chapter Three I engaged in the activities by following a specific lesson plan or process which included the outcomes, suitable teaching aids and activities based on the stories. The methodology as stated in Chapter Three involved case studies. Within the schools I not only observed the teachers and children but was an active participant. Furthermore, it was important to engage with the children, when possible, to observe and analyse their responses to and interactions within an integrated approach where they could illustrate stories, sing songs relating to similar themes of the stories and act as some of the characters in the stories. The first step was to select suitable stories.

In order to implement the integrated approach using the selected stories, I embarked on the procedure as outlined below. I focused on two modes only namely reading and telling of stories although there are other forms such as electronic versions and stories on television. The schools used only printed media.

4.7.1 ‘Gather round! Let us integrate and interact’: Activities based on selected stories

All the activities were based on the stories as discussed in 4.7.1 (a) to 4.7.1 (c). The aspects and procedures included LOs, ASs, teaching and learning aids and an approach involving activities in an integrated way. The approach is intended to empower Grade R teachers to use stories creatively and to develop pedagogy where children are sensitised to fears and traumas such as HIV and AIDS situation.

As I discuss each lesson, I indicate how integration is intended and how to link sensitive issues. The integration in the rest of the curriculum did not form part of the demonstration but formed part of the information that will be issued to teachers after completion of the research. The activities served to address the main research questions (MRQ 1 and 2) and the subsidiary questions (SQ).

Some of the approaches that I used are based on ideas taken from the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach (Asher, 1973), and Suggestopaedia of Lozanov (2010) where applicable. All the stories have the overarching objective to address the MRQ 1 which focuses on the teacher, and

therefore I only indicate the SQs which refer to the MRQ 2 as this pertains mainly to the children.

(a) *Caterpillar's Dream*

As teaching aids I opted for the illustrated storybook, a story box with items in it, paper plates, old magazines, straws, starch paste, non-melodic instruments for example drums, triangles, tambourines, recordings of songs, a CD with appropriate nursery rhymes, a CD player and insects in a jar. Most of these items were cost-effective and readily available.

(i) Session One: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation

For the children to apply LO 1, namely 'Listening', they had to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations (DoEa, 2002:14). Therefore the children listened for enjoyment to *The Caterpillar's Dream* and show some understanding to satisfy the AS (DoE, 2002a:14). Furthermore they had to be able to communicate with confidence to address LO 2 which is 'Speaking'. To illustrate that they achieved the AS they had to express their feelings with relation to the stimuli and the story presented (DoE, 2002a: 15).

I set the scene for the story by presenting a few harmless insects in a glass jar and releasing them to fly. Then I asked the children to tell me what they saw and how they felt. The children responded excitedly when they saw the butterflies and moths flying around. Some were apprehensive and some even scared. They were all keen to share their experiences and told me where they encountered insects, and identified them as butterflies, ladybirds and moths. When I asked who liked flies and spiders only a few boys responded in the affirmative. The children also expressed their feelings about insects. These feelings included expressions such as, "*I love butterflies.*" / "*I was so scared when I saw a cricket!*" / "*I did not move when I saw the spider.*" / "*I screamed!*" / "*I wasn't scared.*" / "*I tramped on it.*" / "*I caught ladybirds and butterflies and kept them in a jar.*" To this someone responded by saying, "*You mustn't do that, hey, Teacher?*" The activities addressed SQ 1.4.3 with special focus on language skills, interest and focus.

(ii) Session Two: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Natural Science)

I focussed on LO 1 of Literacy namely ‘Listening’ as formulated in Session One (DoE, 2002a:14). For them to illustrate that they reached the relevant level in the accompanying AS they had to listen for enjoyment to oral texts like stories and show some understanding of the story (DoE, 2002a:14). In addition they also had to relate their own stories in their words as AS (DoE, 2002a: 15). To display understanding they had to be able to act out parts of a story, song or rhyme; and join in choruses at the appropriate time (DoE, 2002a:14). The AS linked to this LO expected that learners had to listen with enjoyment to oral texts such as simple songs, rhymes, short poems and stories, and they had to show understanding in order to display their competence.

When telling the story, I used different voice modulations for the different characters, namely a caterpillar, an ant, a ladybird, a dragonfly, a cricket and a butterfly. No pictures were shown the first time, to allow the imagination free reign and to help them to listen attentively. They discussed the story briefly and some of the children shared their own experiences with regards to some of the insects. They shared the locality of these insects and time of their encounters which were in the playground, at home or in some public park or garden. Furthermore they spoke about the habitat and outward appearance of the insects which linked with Natural Science. Some of them repeated the feelings that they expressed in Session One. I tried to establish the effect of this approach with regards to the language and social skills of the children. The integration addressed MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3.

(iii) Session Three: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Health Promotion)

For this activity I took cognisance of LO 1 for Life Orientation namely ‘Health Promotion’ whereby the children had to be able to make informed decisions regarding personal, community and environmental health (DoE, 2002a:76). For them to illustrate that they reached the appropriate level of the AS, they had to display the ability to decide what was important with regards to their own health, and they had to investigate changes in their environment (DoE, 2002a: 76). This linked with the theme of the story showing the metamorphosis of the caterpillar.

Similarly the link with regards to the research was illustrated in the idea that HIV and AIDS can change people physically but should not change the attitudes of people around them (see SQ 1.4.4).

I repeated the story and the learners saw the pictures as the story developed. The visuals briefly interrupted the story but did not in any way interrupt the flow of the story. It added to the excitement. The children answered general questions to indicate their understanding of the story, for example, “Who are the friends of the caterpillar?” / “What happened to the caterpillar?” / “What was the caterpillar’s dream?” During the repetition of the story they could join in where they felt confident to interact (see SQ 1.4.3).

I conveyed the idea that everybody has the right to dream like Caterpillar and to believe that the dreams will come true. The idea that even very sick people with diseases like cancer or tuberculosis or HIV and AIDS can dream of getting better was a link with Life Orientation. They had to know and understand that they can make informed decisions regarding personal and community health issues. These very sick people feel lonely if we isolate them. The idea that friends should not make fun of one another but rather be supportive was another link with LS. The corresponding LO 3, focussed on ‘Personal Development’ and especially the values of acceptance and human rights link directly with the research that the story can be a powerful teaching tool to assist Grade R teachers to use stories creatively (see MRQ 1). Grade R teachers then teach and guide the children to make informed decisions and choices on a very basic level when they are confronted with personal and community health issues. The important link with the story was therefore to instil values like caring, friendship and positive attitudes in the Grade R children (see SQ 1.4.3). The children generally expressed feelings of caring.

The story was thus instrumental in conveying the message that friends are there to support one another even at a very early stage like in Grade R. The importance of choices in terms of reaching your own dreams and supporting others to reach their dreams was another focus.

(iv) Session Four: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Arts & Culture)

Linked to this session, LO 4 for Arts & Culture was integrated where the learners were expected to use and analyse various forms of communication and expression in their arts and culture (DoE, 2002b:16). The corresponding AS to satisfy the level of competence, required from learners to respond to what was observed in the natural environment (DoE, 2002b:19). Based on the LO, what I expected from them was to role-play short scenes, based on the story, to establish whether they achieved the AS. Furthermore they were requested to draw a picture of the story (DoE, 2002b:14). The Arts & Culture was integrated with LO 2 of Literacy where they could tell their own stories and stories of others in their own words to illustrate the appropriate level of knowledge and skills as the relevant AS (DoE, 2002b: 15).

After the second rendition, the children acted the story in two short scenes to show the metamorphosis of the butterfly. Volunteers were asked to be the caterpillar, dragonfly, ladybird, cricket and ant. The shy children who did not volunteer were asked to huddle together to form a caterpillar. Some were the branches of the tree or flowers. I read the dialogue and the children who acted the parts could join in. After the first scene other children were asked to role-play the second scene where the caterpillar changed into a butterfly. Roles were reversed to give more learners the opportunity to be the main characters. However, nobody was forced to take part, rather gently coaxed (see SQ 1.4.3 & 1.4.4). Some children were more spontaneous than others but the less spontaneous ones took part nonetheless.

(v) Session Five: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Arts & Culture)

To achieve LO 1 of LS, specifically in the Arts & Culture programme, the children were expected to show that they have the knowledge and skills to create, interpret and present art (DoE, 2002b:16). In this session their ability to use a song as an art form (performing art), was the focus of the AS allowing them to create art freely (DoE, 2002b:16). My interpretation of the concept “create freely” was that they could paint, dance, role-play or move to music, a link to an integrated approach. Furthermore they had to show personal and interpersonal skills by means of

individual and group participation (DoE, 2002b:18). To indicate that they were on the expected level for the AS, they had to show active participation to create art (DoE, 2002b:18).

The children listened to a song, “Butterflies” sung to them (see Appendix N1-4). The song was taught by rote. The less familiar words for example “flitter and flutter”, “gay”, were explained in context. I questioned them on the general content of the song to establish their knowledge of the content. They listened again and joined in or just hummed along where they felt comfortable or remembered some of the words. They also moved to the tune of the song but were not dictated to in terms of the type of movement that they had to make. If they wanted to join hands with somebody or just move along on their own, they were free to do so. This activity therefore linked with the research in terms of illustrating to the children that everybody is free to express themselves in their own way. In addition to this, they were socialising with one another while moving freely and without constraints (see SQ 1.4.3). The only constraint was the limited physical space. I was able to establish the value of stories integrated with other areas in the curriculum as tools to develop and enhance social skills. For the presentation, I opted for the Suggestopaedic approach. In the definition by Lozanov (2010) who initiated this approach I extracted one particular phrase namely that it is “joyful learning”. The children created their own movements to interpret the song whilst at the same time interacting with their classmates.

(vi) Session Six: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Arts & Culture)

This session focussed on the same LO as the previous session but here the children used visual arts instead of performing arts to create, interpret and present work in all the art forms. The children made a collage to show their skills in order to achieve the AS (DoE, 2002a:16).

This time they were asked to make a collage of their favourite character in the story or any character of their choice. They used colourful pages from old magazines and tore these into different shapes and sizes. Then they glued the bits of paper on paper plates to create their characters. They could also add wings or antennae using straws. The children introduced their insects to the rest of the class. Afterwards the art works were displayed on the walls. Songs of insects were played in the background and they could join in where they knew the songs. The

intention was to see the impact of stories which were presented in a way that integrated visual arts. More so, I wanted to establish if the children were able to present the stories visually using their imagination (see SQ 1.4.3). The outcome was positive because the children succeeded in creating their own interpretations of the characters. This once again illustrates that children interpret the world around them by means of drawings or other forms of visual art.

(vii) Session Seven: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Arts & Culture)

The LOs for Literacy and Life Orientation were the same as for Session Five with the exception of the AS for Literacy, where they were expected to illustrate their ability to listen to instructions (DoE, 2002e: 14). My approach was the TPR of Asher (1973). Children were physically involved where they listened to instructions as listed below, and carried them out (see SQ 1.4.3):

- (a) fly like butterflies (make slow graceful movements while one played on the triangle);
- (b) hop like crickets (short jumps while one played on the drum);
- (c) fly like ladybirds (small flaps of the arms while one played on the bells);
- (d) fly like dragonflies (bigger swinging movements while one played on the tambourine); and
- (e) walk fast like busy ants (while one played the cymbals).

I ended with a more calming movement after all the excitement experienced by the children. The calming movement was flying like butterflies as suggested in the song they learnt, “So gay, so light, so free”. This brought everybody’s attention back to the main character in the story. The MRQs were addressed in this session.

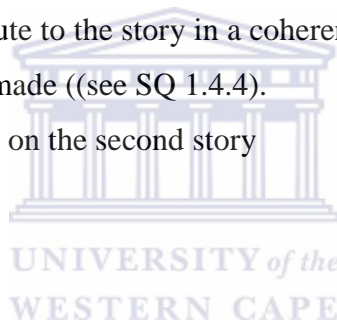
(viii) Session Eight: Literacy

With the focus on LO 2 for Literacy, namely ‘Speaking’ and the accompanying AS, the children had to show that they knew the story and had the skill to share it with the rest of the class. Furthermore, they had to understand the theme of the story which underscored that they practiced the right values.

The children were encouraged to tell their own stories similar to *Caterpillar's Dream*, using a story box (Bromley, 2004:8-10; Lambirth, *et al.*, 2004:9). I have experienced the success with this technique even with teacher education students who had to learn a new language. I put various items linked to the story in attractive boxes (or shoe boxes covered with gift wrap). These items included insect wings, toy insects such as ants, butterflies, dragon flies, lady birds, crickets and caterpillars as well as branches. Because of time constraints I did not give each child a turn to tell a story but grouped them and allocated a box to each group. Each child in the group selected an item and as they displayed the items they had to add on to the story. In classes where they were hesitant I started the story. However, if somebody just said anything, not quite related to the item, I allowed the input to ensure that they felt part of the group and still developed their social and linguistic skills. This however, was in no way a contradiction to the LO where the children had to show that they understood the story. It was more to encourage their participation. Most children were able to contribute to the story in a coherent way with a few exceptions where mono-syllabic contributions were made ((see SQ 1.4.4).

The following presentation focuses on the second story

(b) *The wide mouthed frog*



The story addresses the MRQs but for the individual activities I indicate the SQs. To present the story I chose the illustrated storybook, play dough, non-melodic instruments for example drums, triangles, tambourines, CD with appropriate nursery rhymes, small box with tinsel, crayons, newsprint and a CD player as resources. Once again these were readily available and teachers could see they need not spend additional money to present stories creatively.

(i) Session One: Literacy and Numeracy integrated with Life Orientation (Arts & Culture and Natural Science)

I attempted to realise the outcomes for Literacy where, for LO 1, the children were expected to listen for information and enjoyment (DoE, 2002e:14). Their ability to prove their achievement of the outcome meant that they were able to listen for enjoyment to oral texts like stories and showed some understanding in order to achieve the AS (DoE, 2002e:14).

Furthermore, the idea was that they would be able to show personal and interpersonal skills by means of individual and group participation in Arts & Culture to illustrate that they achieved LO 3 of LS. This LO included participation and cooperation (DoE, 2002c:18). In presenting this session I allowed the children to express themselves and to experience the story through movement and role-play. Therefore to show active participation they had to create art as the evidence that they met the required AS (DoE, 2002c:18).

I introduced the story by playing the song “Five Little Speckled Frogs” (See Appendix K1-4). They were allowed to move along to the beat of the music. We discussed the song briefly. They shared their own experiences of frogs: the habitat, season when the frogs were around as well as physical appearance. They were allowed to croak like frogs. This song lends itself to integrate with Numeracy as well. Therefore they answered questions based on the song for example: How many frogs did you sing about? (*five*). How many were left when one jumped into the pool? (*four*). Were there any speckled frogs left when they all jumped into the pool? (*No*). Show me three speckled frogs with your right hand. (*Children responded which indicated orientation*). Thereafter I showed them different seeds, pictures of flies, worms and frogs and asked them if they knew who would eat these items. Naturally there were some cries of disgust. I did not reveal the answers but told them that they would find out when they listened to the story (see SQ 1.4.4).

(ii) Session Two: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation

Here I focussed on the same outcomes as for session one. In addition, they were also expected to show their personal development as stated in LO 1 of Life Orientation where they would be able to make informed decisions about their personal health (DoE, 2002a:12). What I tried to assess here was whether they could make the link to spot potential dangers and be aware of safety in the school and at home (DoE, 2002a: 12).

I used different voice modulations for the different characters namely the frog, mouse, blue crane and crocodile. To stimulate the imagination I did not show the pictures immediately. I allowed the children an opportunity to escape from reality and become part of an imaginary world, also using their imagination. They were focusing to hear the story and as with the previous story it

became clear when I questioned them that they were not acquainted with all the animals. The blue crane was unknown to them and this was to be expected from most Grade R children. They discovered that it was not quite so unknown when I showed them the South African 5 cent coin (see SQ 1.4.3).

(iii) Session Three: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation

My intention was for the children to experience LO 3 for Literacy where they read and view for enjoyment and information (DoE, 2002c: 16). Although the AS that accompanied this LO stated that the children started recognising and making meaning of letters and words; in this case it was more making meaning of the pictures (DoE, 2002c:16). However, some children could also associate some of the pictures with words when they read the pictures.

Not knowing all the animals mentioned in the story prompted me to show them the exceptionally well-illustrated sketches during the second telling as the story developed. They could join in by repeating familiar sounding phrases or sounds. The life skill that I shared with them was to take care when they wandered around as it was not always safe. There are dangers all over and you can be abused by known people and unknown people hence like the frog in the story we need to be careful whom we trust. More importantly, the children needed to be sensitised to the fact that HIV and AIDS is a dangerous disease but it can be prevented. It was also necessary to stress that you can still be friends with HIV and AIDS affected and infected people. The crocodile was the symbol of the nasty one who does not want to play with HIV and AIDS affected children or did not want to be seen with them. It can also be the person who abuses us, who lures us away from our family and friends and has no respect for our bodies (see SQ 1.4.3).

(iv) Session Four: Life Orientation integrated with Literacy

Both LO 4 for Arts & Culture, where the children should be able to use and analyse various forms of communication and expression in the arts and various cultures (DoE, 2002b:16) and LO 3 of Life Orientation, namely participation and cooperation, were incorporated in this session (DoE, 2002c:18). These learning outcomes assessed the skill whereby the children showed their

expertise to participate actively and create freely as the supporting AS (DoE, 2002b:18) to the LO.

After the second telling, volunteers role-played the story. The shy ones could again be the background environment like trees, stones, flowers or they could choose to just observe and join in as soon as they felt comfortable to do so. I encouraged them to at least make some movements such as swaying their bodies or swinging their arms. The groups acted their parts and some were able to say their words on their own or with me (see SQ 1.4.3).

(v) Session Five: Life Orientation integrated with Literacy

This session allowed the children the opportunity to express their ability in LO 1 where they had to be able to create, interpret and present work in all art forms (DoE, 2002a:16). If they were skilled to create freely with the medium of clay they achieved the AS (DoE, 2002a:16). I gave them play dough and they could mould any of the animals in the story. In small groups these animals were then used by the children to try and re-tell the story, addressing SQ 1.4.3.

(vi) Session Six: Life Orientation (Arts & Culture) integrated with Literacy

In order to realise LO 4 for Arts & Culture the children had to be able to use and analyse various forms of communication and expression (DoE, 2002a:20). They were assessed by displaying the ability to listen to the song (DoE, 2002a:20). However, I added the requirement that in addition to listening they had to be able to join in and sing with as soon as they knew some of the words.

The children learnt the song that they heard in the introduction by rote. I sang the song once, followed by questions on the general content of the song to establish whether they knew what the song was about. Then I sang it again and they could join in wherever they wanted to or felt free to do so. Those who could not sing with immediately hummed along or clapped their hands to the beat. They were free to do actions relevant to the song and some accompanied the singing with non-melodic instruments. This encouraged participation by most of the children and especially those who did not sing spontaneously (see SQ 1.4.3 & 1.4.4).

(vii) Session Seven: Life Orientation integrated with Literacy

The children had to be able to participate in activities that promoted movement and physical development for LO 4 of LS namely Physical Development and Movement (DoE, 2003b:15). The relevant AS allowed them to make expressive movements with their bodies (DoE, 2003b:15).

I applied TPR allowing the children to imitate the movements of the various animals. Their contribution was to establish what kind of movements would be appropriate, for example jumping and hopping like frogs, running in short steps like mice, flapping their arms to imitate the bird, sliding on their stomachs supported by their arms to imitate the crocodile. The literacy link was the story because they had to remember what they heard to recreate the movements of the animals. They were able to integrate their knowledge of the story with physical movements which focused on SQ 1.4.3 & 1.4.4.

(viii) Session Eight: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Arts & Culture)

In the final session the focus was to establish whether the children were able to communicate confidently and effectively in the spoken language in a wide range of situations (LO 2, DoE, 2002a:15). To support their AS abilities they had to tell their own stories and stories of others in their own words as described in the next paragraph.

To revert back to the actual story after their physical encounters as characters in the story, all the children shared their positive and negative experiences of the story. Although I did not know which learners were no longer in the care of their mothers due to traumas like HIV and AIDS, it remained important that children developed linguistically and socially. I felt empowered to use this technique to assist the learners with their linguistic and social skills using the imaginary world as stimulus (see MRQ 1, SQ 1.4.2). Hopefully the same would hold true for the teachers.

After they shared their positive and negative feelings about the story they took turns to tell their own stories using a story box as explained in the first story or even a story sack (Lambirth, *et al.*, 2004:9), which works on the same principle. I used a small box filled with tinsel in one

classroom. As I opened it I told them that the magic dust sprinkled over them, which created excitement in the class, will help to tell their stories. I guess the excitement stemmed from the word “magic”. Already they imagined that something magical was going to happen. They illustrated their own stories using crayons and newsprint afterwards. The impact of the stories was the focus (see MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3).

All the activities that I embarked upon served as stimulation to develop their creativity. Furthermore, they used their associations and their observations of the story, developed a frame of reference and transferred these to create something. In addition, the story was to convey an awareness to be careful (see SQ 1.4.4).

The next story focuses more acutely on the care children should take with regards to their own safety.



(c) *Cheeky*

As teaching aids I used sketches of the animals in the story, masks of the animals on skewer sticks, the illustrated story book, white newsprint sheets, crayons, old newspapers and old magazines. These items illustrated to teachers that old newspapers and magazines can be used creatively. Teachers could also improvise and use other resources instead of masks. Instead of sketches specially painted, the drawings in the book could be used.

(i) Session One: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation

The first session intended to allow the children to demonstrate that they could communicate effectively and with confidence as stated in LO 2 of Literacy (DoE, 2002c:15). Furthermore, in the AS for LO 2, they had to verbalise their own personal experiences and use the language (DoE, 2002c:15). To integrate the Life Orientation they had to demonstrate their knowledge of their environment with regards to identifying wild and/or dangerous animals. The skill to identify the dangerous animals was to make the connection with other dangers in life.

As introduction to the story I showed the children the painted drawings of the various animals, and this simultaneously served to stimulate a discussion. They first had to identify the animals. These animals were the crocodile, the rabbit, the elephant, the meerkat, the monkey, the jackal, the warthog and the leopard. Most of the animals were known to them except the warthog. Afterwards they were given the masks to hold up and the person who had the matching mask had to come and stand next to the drawings. In addition they were asked to identify which animals were more dangerous. This allowed them to make comparisons. They opted for the leopard, jackal, crocodile and elephant. I added a picture of a baby crocodile which they decided was less dangerous (see SQ 1.4.3). The children displayed their knowledge of the environment.

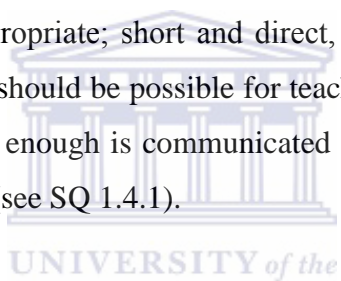
(ii) Session Two: Literacy (various skills) integrated with Life Orientation

After the initial discussion I told them the story of Cheeky, the baby crocodile. This session focussed mostly on determining whether they would be able to listen for enjoyment and information as reflection of LO 1 of Literacy (DoE, 2002c:14). A game was played where they had to guess the animal, based on about three features that I used to describe the animal for example: it is green, has a long tail and big sharp teeth (crocodile); it has sharp teeth, sharp claws and spots (*leopard*). Then I told the story using various voice modulations to depict each animal. In round one I did not show them the pictures as the story progressed. They had to imagine themselves and had to build on the introductory activity and their own schemata.

I repeated the story and with the second round requested them to join in where they remembered words or phrases. This was to indicate whether they would be able to achieve LO 1 of Literacy by communicating effectively and confidently (DoE, 2002c:15). Hereby I confirmed if they were able to join in choruses to determine the relevant AS (DoE, 2002c:14). Furthermore, LO 1 of Life Orientation was an important focus as they had to be able to identify dangers and appropriate precautions on their way to school, as well as realise there are situations that could lead to sexual abuse (DoE, 2002c:16). These ASs had a direct link with my research as children were often abused and then exposed to infections like HIV and AIDS. They had to be sensitised to dangers.

I then questioned them on the content of the story. Questions were, for example: *Who was the first animal that Cheeky met? What did he want to do? What did Cheeky say to all the animals? Can all of you repeat what Cheeky said?* Whilst questioning them I stressed the dangers in life. I also indicated that there are diseases, called HIV and AIDS. However, if it affected some of our friends or family members, we should not isolate them, yet we must observe the rules regarding health care. I intentionally stressed the importance of not allowing anybody to touch you if it made you uncomfortable and to share it with your parents or teacher if you had nobody else whom you trusted. This linked to the research with regards to the educational value of stories for, and using stories as tools to address fears and traumas.

An interesting phrase to warn small children was observed when I interacted with three year olds on an informal occasion. The mother warned the daughter by saying, “*Private parts remain in panties*”. It struck me as very appropriate; short and direct, understood by the child (Informal personal chat, 11 March, 2012). It should be possible for teachers to create similar conversations with the boys and girls where just enough is communicated to get the message across, but in a sensitive and professional manner (see SQ 1.4.1).



(iii) Session Three: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Arts & Culture)

To ascertain how they visualised the story they were requested to imitate the movements of the various animals while music was played in the background (TPR and Suggestopaedia approaches). They enjoyed making big movements like the big crocodile, warthog and elephant, smaller movements to portray the rabbit and the monkey while the jackal and leopard included a mix of fast and slow movements as well as grabbing actions. This session illustrated LO 4 of Life Orientation where the children were expected to be able to participate in activities that promote movement and physical development while they listened to music and visualised the story. They used their imagination to portray the movements of the animals (DoE, 2003b:7). LO 4 for Arts & Culture was also incorporated where the children had to use and analyse various forms of communication and expression in Arts & Culture which focused on dramatising the animals (DoE, 2002b:7 & 17). In realising the LOs the MRQs were observed with special attention to SQs 1.4.3 and 1.4.4.

(iv) Session Four: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Arts & Culture)

Subsequently the children were engaged in more creative activities to display that they were able to use and analyse various forms of communication and expression in Arts & Culture. In doing so they had to draw the animals using mixed media like crayons and the collage technique. This was to address LO 4 of Arts & Culture (DoE, 2002b:7 & 17). The children were assessed to establish their ability to create art.

After the movements in the previous session the children were asked to draw the animal of their choice. The medium was crayons on newsprint, enhanced with newspaper or magazine strips applying a collage technique. It served to calm them down after the excitement of the previous session. In essence the focus was on MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3.

(v) Session Five: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Arts & Culture)

I embarked on a more challenging activity where the children had to role play the story. It would portray how they represented the ability to integrate most of the performing art forms as well as the literacy skills to listen and speak. They decided on their roles. Once again nobody was forced to take part and those who merely observed, practised their listening skills. Eventually everybody joined in at the chorus where Cheeky told the animals that it was his body and nobody could touch it. This activity integrated movement as well as role play and I asked some of them to hum along with the tune that was played in the background. I displayed the sketches again that I used in the first session. Their art works were displayed too. The activities encapsulated MRQ 2, SQs 1.4.3 and 1.4.4.

Finally, they viewed the pictures in the book and said something about each animal. They could indicate their preferences or dislikes. Furthermore they motivated why they opted for one or the other. Soothing music played in the background. The focus was to stimulate the children to develop their creativity and to allow them to use their associations with the story, contribute their observations and develop a frame of reference which they could transfer to create something. More importantly, though, they had to realise that similar to the animals that pestered Cheeky,

we also find people who pester children. It was stressed that they have the right to be firm and resist these people. If these people were not exposed, others can fall prey to them and this abuse could in turn result in dangerous diseases.

In doing the last activity I observed the effect of an approach whereby stories are presented in creative ways which integrate other areas, like visual and performing arts. The observations addressed the MRQs.

4.8 CONCLUSION

The findings presented in this chapter serve to illustrate what was happening at the schools and what was possible with regards to the creative use of stories as teaching tools to empower teachers in their work. Moreover, the findings articulate with MRQ 2. Following the research protocol of qualitative research the data was collected, field notes were used while teachers presented lessons and these notes were organised afterwards by colour coding certain key words and phrases frequently used. Thereafter the key words and phrases were organised into themes that emerged. Some interesting insight was gained with regards to the role and place of stories in the schools. I compared what teachers engaged in and what was still possible within the context of the research as well as within the boundaries or limitations of the school curriculum. The activities of the teachers in some ways showed incongruence with regards to their responses in the questionnaire. There were however, some similarities between the responses of the children and those of the teachers. The teachers were not directly asked what their conception of stories is, but all the questions centred on various aspects of stories. The assumption was therefore that they would have a clear definition of stories in order to answer the questions. In addition the findings indicate that lecturers and FP students share similar views pertaining to the importance of stories as a central element in the FP classroom. The following chapter attempts to analyse the findings presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA: CREATIVITY TO CAPTURE YOUNG MINDS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

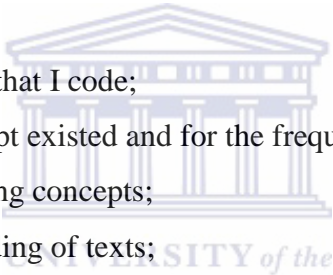
The theory that underpins the analysis of the research is based on qualitative research and specifically the interpretivist theory as discussed in Chapter Three. Interpretivist theory according to Charmaz (2006:135) aims to make connections and ask questions based on the social reality. In the analysis the findings based on the case study data are therefore examined and categorised (Yin, 2003:109) to find patterns (Neuman, 2003:426). The rationale for the analysis was to establish how the teachers and children interpret their reality which is the classroom. The procedure that preceded the analysis was to record field notes, organise and colour code from which themes and/or key words and phrases emanated.

This chapter analyses the use of stories and if so, how stories are used. I analyse the responses which I collected: firstly, via questionnaires completed by the teachers; secondly, via the biographical details of the various schools to establish whether there was an impact on what the teachers were able to present; and thirdly, via the presentations of the teachers. In addition, the responses of the children are interpreted within the themes which emerged (see Chapter Four), and are analysed to establish whether there are trends which overlap or differ.

In analysing the responses of the lecturers and students the SQ to establish the professional development of teachers are highlighted. These responses act as triangulation for the responses of the lecturer at the same institution as well as compare her responses with those of a lecturer at another institution. The analysis of my own presentations with those of the teachers is to detect any similarities and/or differences even though qualitative research does not call for comparison. In doing this, I might be able to find ways in which I can produce a teachers' guide to assist those who potentially struggle to incorporate stories effectively in the curriculum. Stories are an integral part of the curriculum but not all the teachers feel that they are fully equipped or guided to do this, a sentiment expressed in the questionnaire by a teacher.

While I analysed the skills of the teachers as an interpretive researcher, (Borko, 2004) I made deductions and inferences of the impact, value and effect on the social and language development of the Grade R children, based on the approaches used by the teachers. I acknowledge that teachers are influenced by various aspects such as environment and socialisation besides just professional development (Borko, 2004). I simultaneously tried to evaluate the quality and suitability of the stories in comparison with what is suggested by literature.

The rationale to utilise content analysis is because the context is central to the interpretation and analysis of the data (Kohlbacher, 2005). I utilised the one type of content analysis namely contextual analysis as discussed in Chapter Three (Palmquist, 1992, in Babbie and Mouton 2001:491-495) where I decided on the following steps:

- 
- (i) the level of analysis;
 - (ii) the number of concepts that I code;
 - (iii) code because the concept existed and for the frequency of the concept;
 - (iv) how to distinguish among concepts;
 - (v) develop rules for the coding of texts;
 - (vi) what I should do with information that was not relevant;
 - (vii) code texts; and
 - (viii) analyse the results.

With regards to the level of analysis, I decided on key words and phrases linked to the MRQs. For the selected sections I considered the existence and frequency of concepts rather than to decide on a specific number of concepts before-hand. Furthermore, I identified concepts that were related to the themes, for example, those extracted from the responses of the teachers and children. This linked with the rules that I set, as irrelevant information was not discussed in detail. Irrelevant information was disregarded and the codes for the texts were used to group similar concepts to assist in the analysis. In terms of the research the texts are the responses that I gathered via the various research instruments namely questionnaires, interviews and observations.

As a qualitative researcher I aimed to describe and understand the ways in which teachers present their lessons in a natural, concrete context (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:272). The natural context was the Grade R classes, and I wanted to ascertain the approach that they applied to additionally address fears and traumas. I therefore used field notes which I triangulated (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:277; Cohen, *et al.* 2002:255) and then analysed as a case study in an adaptation of what Babbie and Mouton (2001:273, 279-280) propound as social group studies. Furthermore, I analysed the observations that I made, both as limited, privileged and participant observer (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:293). As participant observer I recorded notes in between sessions where notes could be made during sessions as limited and privileged observer.

5.2 ANALYSES OF TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Sections in the questionnaire are analysed using content analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:383-385). As stated in Chapter Four, the teachers were respondents to a questionnaire (Appendix E.1 English and E.2 Afrikaans). Teachers followed their set programme which in one way seems indicative of the strict adherence to instructions coming from the authorities but also signals the dedication in which teachers execute their duties.

5.2.1 Analysis of Section 1A of teachers' questionnaire

Everybody indicated that storytelling forms part of the weekly programme and with hindsight I realise the question could be more specific, to read "... *your daily programme*". In addition I could start the questionnaire with a question where teachers define the concept "stories". The curriculum stipulates that storytelling must be a daily activity although teachers might not include it every day. Nonetheless, the general tendency was to include storytelling as a daily activity and teachers seem very committed to carry out stipulations of the curriculum. This supports MRQ 1.

Although teachers all responded positively to whether stories are used across the curriculum observations in the actual classroom context showed the contrary. Even though most of them indicated that they integrate arts with the stories one said "*Sometimes*" and said "*Not sure*".

Unfortunately there was no consensus with regards to this important issue even though integration featured in the Literacy section of the curriculum. A cause for concern was where stories were told as a reward. Do I infer that when children, according to the teacher's perception, did not do well or misbehaved, they did not hear stories that day or that the whole class was punished if a few misbehaved? I was particularly interested to see whether children were allowed to choose stories, and only one teacher said, "No". Whether children should be allowed to choose stories or not, is debateable. It is advisable to pre-select suitable stories which give you the assurance that children can choose stories from the selection and feel empowered. Empowerment (SQ 1.4.1) is therefore not restricted to the teacher only.

Notwithstanding the fact that at all the institutions there were children who seemingly suffered some form of trauma at one stage or another, the teachers did not address the issue. This creates tension between what they applied and what was suggested in the questionnaires. However, the absence of dealing with traumatic issues could be because the specific themes at the time of the research did not necessarily, in their opinions, include trauma. The impact of stories for this aspect was therefore not addressed by teachers. Therefore SQ 1.4.4, to assess the value and characteristics of stories, did not surface in this regard. Yet the whole notion of sensitivity around such issues should not be ignored.

The teachers were unanimous about stories as an essential part of the curriculum which substantiates the notion of both the students and staff at HE institutions. I cannot imagine them responding in any other way as stories are useful in any part of the curriculum. Furthermore, teachers took cognisance of the preferences regarding the gender groups with regards to the selection of stories. Four out of the seven teachers selected stories according to themes and not randomly. One selected according to themes if stories were available to suit the themes, but two unfortunately did not respond. Yet the schools generally seem to favour themes.

My observation during the time that I spent at a school confirmed the unanimous response that teachers all varied their methods of storytelling. The variation was between reading and telling. Linked to ways in which they tell stories, five of them subsequently stated that they used teaching aids when they told stories, with one just using it sometimes and two not responding at

all. In terms of using teaching aids, I am of the opinion that sometimes you can do without teaching aids. This will assist the use of the imagination. All the teachers answered “Yes” with regards to suitability of stories in all the classes yet I observed the contrary because some stories were not suitable for the level of the children. Because they did not understand the story they could not relate to it. Furthermore, it is possible that a suitable story is selected and enjoyed but not all the children relate to it.

I adjusted and simplified the version of Babbie and Mouton (2001:388-389), and opted to conceptualise the communication of the teachers.

5.2.2 Analysis of Section 2 of teachers’ questionnaire

The open-ended questions in Section 2 posed a bigger challenge as teachers had to explain their choices for questions three, four and ten. As indicated in Chapter Four the themes which emerged in the responses of the teachers are communication, socialisation, creativity, empowerment, and thinking skills (see table 6, Chapter Four).

These responses focused on the children and therefore on MRQ 2 more than MRQ 1. All words and phrases are indicative of the way in which teachers view and interpret their reality. From the response it can be inferred that teachers feel empowered when they assist children to deal with life issues and values (see SQ 1.4.1). Similarly they see stories as tools to develop different linguistic skills as shown in the codes which relates to MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3. The varied responses were indicative of the fact that it was more complex for some teachers to integrate stories as the key word was “*sometimes*”. Yet, in most cases the teachers explained how they used musical instruments and dramatisation or allowed the children to draw. They realised the value of integration and could therefore state it on the questionnaire (MRQ 2). However, most of the times the story was told at the end of the day and nothing in terms of integration with the other subjects like the arts was forthcoming. In one or two institutions the children were reminded of the story the next day and asked to draw or dramatise the story. The idea to extend the story was commendable but at times it seemed ad hoc.

While they showed the intentions to integrate, the implementation was not explicit in the actual presentations. This indicated a tension between the intent and practice. For example, when “*Stories help to develop children’s creative skills and using stories during music, art or drama help with developing their creativity*” (sic), I would suggest that stories are used with music, art or drama instead of “during”. The responses, “*Yes, because children understand much better if they use their whole bodies instead of just listen*”(sic), and “*This will help them to come to terms with life issues that they are dealing with*”, suggest that the teacher realised that children have to deal with various issues. Although the same teacher saw the need for instruction in terms of HIV and AIDS, stories were not used for this purpose. The ideas of using drums to indicate danger and bells to indicate happiness seemed a good start to introduce the issues that children face. This response supports MRQ 1, SQ 1.4.1. The teacher who used this as an example of integration could extend the idea even more. This seems to indicate stories can empower teachers.

It was encouraging to hear that four of the participating teachers regard stories as an integral part of the daily programme. One teacher indicated that stories *should* form part of the daily programme and this could be interpreted as a possibility and not a reality or to stress that stories must undoubtedly form part of the programme. I could also assume that the intention did not materialise in action. This was unfortunately a written response and the voice modulation could not be picked up to ascertain the correct interpretation. The teacher’s response which stated that to include stories as an integral part of the curriculum was an “*interesting concept which I would try in future as children loved stories*” was indicative that stories did not form an integral part of the daily programme although it was indicated on their rosters. There were teachers who agreed that stories were not told as reward but formed part of their daily programmes. They differed in the way stories were presented as two “told” stories while one “read” stories. Both are acceptable ways of sharing stories for different reasons as indicated in the conceptual framework (see 1.5.2 (b)).

I was not clear whether the star that was pasted by one teacher for good answers linked to stories but inferred that maybe the teacher focused on the word “reward” rather than stories. She pasted stars as rewards “*to make the children feel good*” and stories were not used as rewards. The answer was therefore not directly linked to the question. From the responses given to question

ten, some teachers mentioned that the use of teaching aids for stories was not a regular occurrence as confirmed by the words “*sometimes*” and “*not on a regular basis*”. Similarly the second teacher used the word “*sometimes*” when asked about the apparatus which again suggested that this was an ad hoc occurrence. Yet, this is not viewed as a negative aspect because without any teaching media the children have to depend on their imagination.

My inference when a teacher uses different media for each story is because the school is better equipped than some of the other schools. This however, did not in any way prove that the children were advantaged compared to those children who heard stories in the absence of teaching aids. Again I base this on the fact that the imagination and listening skills are developed when they have to focus on what they hear. The idea that the children could role play linked with what I saw as a way of integrating stories with the arts. Similarly the colleague of this teacher allowed the children to role play where “*everybody has a part in it*” which links with MRQ 2, SQ 14.3. This indicated integration and creativity on her part as she wanted the children to experience the story. It was probably just an oversight on the part of the last teacher who failed to respond to this question or maybe she did not use teaching aids.

5.2.3 Analysis of Section 2 of teachers’ questionnaire

This section expected a short written reply from the teachers and yielded various responses as indicated in Chapter Four.

The first response to the importance of story-telling was carefully formulated and included the very apt answers which linked closely to what Griva (2007) suggests as reasons for storytelling. Of these reasons suggested that storytelling “*develops students’ listening skills and concentration skills*” although Griva’s research was more based on foreign language teaching. Yet the concept and ideas are transferable to the Grade R classes. It also goes without saying that when the attention span develops it links closely with the listening skills. This articulates with the response that “*stories promote listening skills and extend vocabulary*”. *Furthermore stories assist in extending the attention span*” (SQ 1.4.3).

It was clear that the second teacher was aware of the value of stories as a tool for the development of language which also included a wider vocabulary (MRQ 2, SQ 14.4). Interesting in her response was the idea that stories can develop life skills like cultivating a love for books, literature and reading. Furthermore, she acknowledged the idea that the children can identify with the characters and in doing so learn valuable lessons. I concur with the suggestion that children identify with the characters. The evidence is often in the honest and spontaneous way in which they portray the characters during role play.

The idea of attentive listening and concentrating was reiterated in the response that “*children develop listening skills and concentrate better*”. The extension of their vocabulary was an additional advantage of stories according to the teacher (MRQ 2). Added to this was the one major objective of story-telling namely that “*Children always enjoy listening to stories*”. In this case the value of stories, as a tool to enhance life skills, was underscored when the teacher mentioned “*moral lessons*” (MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.4). The idea that the stories open up the world for children is something that Fisher (1996) describes very aptly when he says that a story gives the “child the chance to ‘decentre’ from the immediacy of their personal lives”. In support of this I could see how the children were often transported from their environment to a new world when listening to stories, realising SQ 1.4.3 to indicate the impact of stories.

The response by the teacher who focused on the different cultures that “*Children learn when they hear stories from other countries and culture*” was a very relevant comment as the classrooms in the South African context are multi-cultural, and therefore teachers can use stories to expose to other cultures as well as be sensitive towards other cultures. Another interesting comment by the same teacher deals with personal loss, and relates closely to the value of stories as healing tools, displaying the impact of stories (SQ 1.4.3). By using stories the children realise that they are not alone with their issues. Once again they can identify with characters in the book who share their own issues. This was a particularly valid reason for the use of stories.

The rest of the teachers also mentioned the extension of vocabulary and the development of listening and speaking skills. In addition, the imagination was used, which therefore alluded to the research that social skills should be developed (MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3). However, no clear

indication was given in which way the social skills were developed. I was not sure whether it was purely by listening to the story. There was nevertheless an indication by one teacher that “*Children dramatise stories and thereby they express their feelings*”. This linked with what Saunders (2005:23) postulates when she says that “stories imitate life” and children should therefore be encouraged to verbalise their feelings about certain issues. Furthermore, “*children broaden their world view*” which linked with the impact that stories have with regards to the values and characteristics of stories (SQ 1.4.4). Again, the idea that the stories support them to come to terms with certain issues came to the fore. She did not expand much on this and therefore this needs further discussion.

Although the teachers expressed valid reasons for the use of stories nobody specifically mentioned that they use the stories to inform the children about HIV and AIDS. Retrospectively, there seemed to be opportunities where they could incorporate it.

In terms of the educational value of stories teachers made it clear that they used it to improve the listening skills of the children and to advance their general knowledge. In some cases the responses did not differ much from the responses given to the previous question. Once again they mentioned the development of vocabulary, moral lessons, and that the world of the child is broadened. The teachers did not really differentiate between the importance of storytelling and the educational value of storytelling. Maybe they saw these questions as very similar. Closely linked to the research was the response that social and emotional development improved as they related to stories (MRQ 2).

One teacher suggested that stories help with logical thinking, and that “*Stories convey the values and norms of the community in a pleasing way*”. This seemingly indicated that the teacher analysed how the children responded to various stories. I deduced that sometimes the values in the community were conveyed in a less pleasing way. In most cases the responses of all teachers indicated that they had a set of objectives in mind when they thought about the value of stories (MRQ 2). These objectives are verified during the presentations of the teachers.

From the responses to the question: “*Why do you regard stories as an important part of the broader curriculum, if so?*” it can be inferred that most teachers realised the importance of the stories as part of the curriculum and as an integrated part of the curriculum (MRQ 2). Nonetheless, although some teachers verbalised the importance of the place of stories in the curriculum, there was tension between what was suggested as important and what was actually implemented. It was noted though that the emphasis of stories to develop listening skills was adhered to as it was not only a statement made but applied in class. Amongst the responses it also appeared that teachers realised the value of stories as a tool to inculcate values “*without preaching*”. I particularly appreciated the comment that it “*broadens their world*” as this indicated that she took cognizance of the fact that stories can transport children to various worlds. Similarly it relates to SQ 1.4.4.

The responses that “*New concepts are taught*” and “*a love for language is fostered*”, were in line with the research to establish whether teachers used stories creatively as teaching tools to develop language and social skills. The teachers or caregivers need to assist and sensitise children to deal with fears and traumas such as HIV and AIDS in the development of these skills. The responses also included the development of life skills which in turn linked with the idea that stories assisted in the development of social skills (see SQ 1.4.3). The relevance of life skills surfaced again and was indicative to what extent stories were able to contribute to education in the lives of the children (SQ 1.4.4). Because most of the teachers, once again considered improvement of vocabulary and language, displayed their perceptions that stories carry a measure of empowerment with regards to language (SQ 1.4.1). In viewing the various responses which included the emotional and social development confirmed that the teachers definitely had a good understanding of the contribution that stories can make or made in the lives of the children (SQ 1.4.3).

The teachers’ responses in terms of support by the employees given to equip them came as no real surprise as most managers at schools or departments of education probably do not regard stories as that important to warrant special treatment or support. Schools where support was given were in the minority, although the sample group could not be regarded as representative enough to make such a general inference. The importance of storytelling often seems to be the

Cinderella at schools when it comes to monetary allocations for this very relevant cornerstone of education. Given the situation at many schools with regards to funding and finances for storytelling and related activities will be at the back of the queue in terms of priorities. When books are purchased for schools the budget will first and foremost be used for texts books, and storybooks will probably be last on the list. This is especially true in the township areas where parents struggle to pay school fees and principals then in turn have to decide whether the electricity bill must be paid or whether library books must be bought for the school. This is however, no excuse not to have storybooks at school. In the Western Cape where the study was conducted, there are numerous ways of acquiring books which I will address in my chapter on recommendations. With regards to the question of support it was therefore pleasing to see that in some cases teachers found their own ways of gaining support. Clearly there is a dire need to run workshops to support these teachers.

Most teachers regarded storytelling as a relaxing way to end the day or to end the first session of the day. It therefore seems as if stories were told to conclude activities and especially to calm the children down after energetic sessions. The only exception was the teacher who stated that “*Any time is story time*”. In my opinion there is merit in what the teacher suggested provided it is not an ad hoc arrangement. On the contrary this teacher did not integrate her activities carefully with the stories.

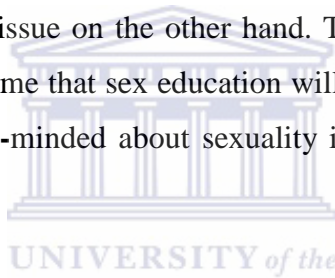
In reply to the question whether children were allowed to tell stories a variety of responses were yielded. In analysing these responses I could infer that the stories were mainly personal stories and the experiences of the children. Although my expectation was to hear about stories in which the children shared those that they read or listened to, I was pleased to hear that they in fact told their own stories. Sometimes these stories related awkward situations or sad personal stories. This in turn linked to the assumption that some of the children were not exposed enough to stories or did not receive adequate stimuli to tell stories. Nevertheless, the positive side of this experience was that children were at least allowed to tell stories and there is nothing wrong in telling your own story. One teacher linked this experience again to the listening skills of the children as well as sequencing abilities. This was a good motivation for the exercise of telling stories.

The teachers responded in various ways to the question where they had to assess whether stories appealed to their children. I am in agreement that you can ask for their opinions about the story and “*observe their facial expressions to gauge whether the stories appealed to them*” (SQ 1.4.3). To state that the story should be on the level of the children or to ask questions to ascertain whether they listened did not quite demonstrate whether the stories appealed to the children because you might be able to understand or remember the stories without having liked them. Perhaps the teachers argued that if the children could answer the questions they must have listened, and if they paid attention the story must have appealed to them. This did not quite convince that listening to and understanding the stories equalled appeal.

Similarly the answer, “*simple story line, not too difficult words, not too long and with large colourful pictures,*” did not indicate that the stories appealed to the children. They were features to consider when you choose stories suitable for the Grade R children though. The response that illustrated some understanding of how to assess the appeal was formulated by the same teacher who stated that stories can be told “*at any time of the day*”. Her apt description to assess whether the stories appealed was verbalised as follows: “*They will listen eagerly and attentively and will request for similar stories or bring their stories from home to read.*” Smith (2004:27) articulates the experience of the story when told as a “*form of virtual reality*” where the imagination of the child is extended.

Teachers’ attempts at the second last question indicated that some of them were in control of the situation and observed their children as they told stories. This suggests teachers felt empowered (SQ 1.4.1). Others did not quite answer the question as the responses focused more on the approach of the teachers than on the responses of the children. Only two out of the seven managed to capture the essence of the questions. One teacher was sure that the story was appropriate when the children were focused, participated and wanted her to repeat the story. This seemed a relevant way to assess the suitability of the story although not the only way. Attention span was also mentioned and, as in the previous response, is one acceptable way to gauge the suitability of a story. Some of the answers mentioned characteristics of stories which did not quite address the question. The responses did not indicate a general trend, which could be attributed to misinterpretation in some cases.

It was clear that some of teachers were not ready to address the issue of HIV and AIDS. Looking carefully at the responses it seems as if they got stuck on the term HIV and AIDS when they read the question. The phrase “suitable stories” seemed to have been missed because the response “*ready for such stories*” gave the impression that the issue of HIV and AIDS was not really considered as an inclusive aspect of the teaching and learning scenario. In my opinion the teachers have to be empowered to use suitable stories to address issues as the stories need not be about HIV and AIDS specifically. There also seemed to be a reluctance or fear from the teachers’ side. These teachers were in the minority as most of the teachers expressed the reality of HIV and AIDS in communities but still did not directly answer the question. Only two really mentioned the need for suitable stories and explained how these stories would help children to understand HIV and AIDS in a less traumatic way, and accept and respect HIV and AIDS affected people. In this section I was presented with the realisation of HIV and AIDS on the one hand but hesitance to address the issue on the other hand. Teachers still regarded it as a taboo topic, seemingly because they assume that sex education will have to be incorporated. There are teachers who seemed very narrow-minded about sexuality issues and some seemed to try and shield the children from reality.



It is evident that most of the teachers were aware of the importance of stories as an integral part of their daily programmes. They used some form of art for example, role play or dramatisation as well as drawing. In addition they acknowledged that stories develop the creativity and imagination of children and those children can identify with the stories. The suggestion that life issues are addressed via stories was an important factor. Added to that, the importance of stories to develop language and social skills were underscored. With regards to the themes which emerged from the codes, the attitudes often informed the approaches (Chapter Four, Table 5).

5.2.4 Analysis of Section Three of teachers’ questionnaire

These responses were indicated on a Likert scale (Chapter Four, Table 7) and for the first statement more than 50% of the teachers ‘fully agreed’ while the rest ‘agreed’ that young children prefer stories with happy endings. I think this is an assumption based on the idea that children prefer the traditional “And they all lived happily ever after” stories. The teachers were

divided in their opinions on the next question and this is probably because of their own experiences. Most of them either 'strongly disagreed' or 'disagreed' that children should be exposed to stories based on their own environment only. This indicated that most of them believed that stories open up new environments for children. However, it is a concern that almost 50% either agreed or remained 'neutral' on this issue. It is however, a small sample group to generalise the finding. To use stories as a valuable teaching tool left one respondent 'neutral', which is cause for concern. This could be attributed to the fact that the teacher is not quite sure how to use stories as teaching tool and needs guidance in this regard. The rest all 'agreed' or 'fully agreed'.

Whether the stories are used as teaching tools was not really evident in their presentations. Most of the teachers were of the opinion that they were the authorities to decide on the choice of stories while one 'disagreed' and one remained 'neutral'(MRQ 1). This was not surprising as at this level the teacher is in authority and makes all the decisions. The idea to guide such young children is acceptable but the children should also be guided in a way where they can make choices. If they were exposed to a carefully selected range of stories then the chances are that they will make the right selections. Once again one teacher remained 'neutral' on the issue that children can only choose stories under the guidance of the teacher. Most of the teachers felt that they should be present when children choose stories but in my opinion when these children visit the local library the teacher will not be there.

The teachers all 'fully agreed' or 'agreed' that stories are a vehicle to develop language and social skills (SQ 1.4.3). This probably linked to the fact that stories are mentioned in the curriculum. HIV and AIDS is clearly a debatable issue because there was no clear consensus whether it should be included in stories. The tendency though is more towards the idea that it should not be excluded. The only question that elicited full consensus was that children should share their own stories. This could be linked to the daily news session in the programmes where children in fact tell their own stories. Interaction with stories also met with mostly positive responses and one neutral response. From the responses to the next question the tendency showed that teachers were in 'agreement', some stronger than others, that children should illustrate the stories to show their understanding thereof which teachers allowed.

Interestingly, two teachers remained ‘neutral’ on the issue whether the curriculum allows enough time for storytelling. These teachers were probably not sure what is deemed enough whereas the rest thought the time was adequate. Two teachers ‘totally disagreed’ that all teachers have the qualities of a good story teller, while five ‘agreed’ but nobody fully agreed. This suggests that there are still teachers who do not have confidence in their own abilities to tell stories. Once again the idea to develop support structures for such teachers must be considered (SQ 1.4.1).

The questionnaire presented a number of general tendencies with most teachers suggesting the same ideas while in other cases the teachers differed on some issues. Based on content analysis with regards to the questionnaire the level of analysis was a few words namely social skills, language skills, creativity and empowerment. Emerging from these themes are broad categories namely attitudes, approaches and challenges. In addition to the questionnaire it was important to assess what was the impact of the physical set-up and resources on the performance of the teachers and children to present a global view of the context.

5.3 DO THE BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE SCHOOLS IMPACT ON WHAT IS PRESENTED AT A SCHOOL?

The ensuing information portrays how I interpreted the impact that the physical state and ethos of the school could possibly have on the teaching and learning at the school. When I examined the biographical details of the schools my intention was not only to examine the different facilities and teaching aids but at the same time to see whether the school provides a safe environment for children. I wanted to establish if the children were in an environment described by Nelson (2008:210) as a place where they were accepted and felt they belonged as opposed to being stigmatised and their “... losses not acknowledged”.

Cognizance must be taken that most of the teachers and caregivers in Grade R were not appointed at state schools, either because they did not qualify or because the appointment of Grade R teachers did not seem to be a priority for the DoE. Since 2010 the pre-school phase attracted more attention. The following current figures for Grade R children were supplied by the Minister of Education (DBE, 2010b): Western Cape has 689 teachers for 30 627 children with

the ratio of teacher: child at 44.5. There are 543 799 children nationally with a 39.3 teacher: child ratio. This indicates that the Western Cape is above the national ratio. At all the institutions the children were engaged in activities that were planned to address the curriculum needs or the programmes planned for the institution. The teachers used the available resources to the best of their abilities, often compensating for lacking facilities by approaching private companies and/or recycling old apparatus with a dab of paint. In general the best facilities and resources can prove useless if the teachers do not use them effectively whereas the most simple and inexpensive facilities and resources can be effectively used.

To assess the impact of storytelling at the schools I observed the teachers and in the subsequent section I analyse these presentations.

5.4 'TEACHERS, HOW DO I INTERPRET YOUR CREATIVITY WITHIN THE CURRICULUM.'

The ensuing discussion represents the schools and the accompanying activities. This serves to display general trends in which way the MRQs and the emanating SQs are addressed. The main activities at the schools are grouped under Organisation in the classroom, Literacy, Numeracy, Life Orientation and Free play. These observations are used to substantiate the questionnaires (see 5.2) issued to the teachers.

The preliminary talks were an advantage and a useful way to secure the relationship with the teachers. I honoured my agreement to the WCED and the schools so that teachers could complete their curriculum. This allowed me little time to do presentations but I managed valuable observations in a structured environment. The general feeling of belonging to the groups was prevalent at all the schools. In no way did I feel that I was intruding into their space.

5.4.1 Is organisation the same in all classrooms?

The introductory session at the schools, focused on organising the classroom and children. This session showed traces of integration as children listened to stories and songs at one of the

schools. However, these traces were unintentional. Children could spontaneously clap hands to the beat of the recorded songs. The atmosphere created by means of recorded stories and tunes were not fully utilised as no discussion took place during this session. In essence it was more a routine session to keep the children busy while the teacher organised the classroom. The teachers normally took charge of the classroom organisation as it involved arranging furniture or teaching aids. At one school the teacher instilled healthy personal practices like washing hands and classroom etiquette. The children were very cooperative and disciplined in this regard. Tidying up the classroom was a common practice at most of the schools which linked with life skills. At the end of sessions or at the end of the day the children were expected to assist in tidying the classroom and packing away apparatus. This instilled some pride in them with regards to their classroom as well as teaching them teamwork and discipline. There was no relevance with regards to the MRQs in this session other than the incidental life skills but no stories were prevalent.

5.4.2 ‘Teachers, do you use stories in the Literacy section?’

Emerging from this session were key words like storytelling, storyteller, and words related to language skills like vocabulary, oral and listening abilities, comprehension, imagination, social skills and enjoyment. The use of concrete apparatus, like finger puppets by Tr A to illustrate the well-known Three Little Pigs immediately caught the attention of all the children in the first school. The fact that she used finger puppets allowed her to keep eye contact with the children and tell the story. At the same time she could move around freely in the room without distracting them. The questioning in between the storytelling forced them to pay attention, and kept them engaged in the activity. Their spontaneity proved that they enjoyed interacting with the story. The teacher, although not the best storyteller in terms of voice modulation and body language, by her own admission, certainly managed to keep the attention of the children. This supports what Rooks (1998:24) says about storytelling namely that “Everyone is a storyteller ... once set loose the storytelling impulse” will allow even those who never thought it possible to utilise their “... unsuspected linguistic resources and strategies”. This was certainly the case with this teacher. Smith (2004: 29), in the same way shares the idea of Rooks as he claims that to tell a story is not a “... a gift or something restricted to the very talented teacher ...” as it possible for each teacher

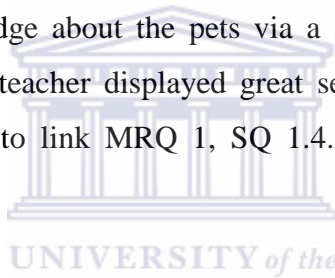
to apply this skill. This teacher did not seem inhibited because she felt that she was not the best storyteller. Her focus was the children and what they could gain. Clearly the activities supported the response in the questionnaire which addressed the use of stories in the Grade R classroom.

The enjoyment of the children was apparent when they repeated phrases from the story like, “*Not by my chinny-chin-chin*” and “*I will huff and I will puff!*” The teacher’s intention to consolidate phonics [č] in **chin** and [ʌ] in **huff** succeeded with this activity as the children learnt while having fun. Clearly the story had a very special function here. This exercise was a way of extending their vocabulary, oral and listening abilities as well as comprehension. I concur with other researchers who found that storytelling allowed children opportunities to express themselves after they listened to the stories (Rooks, 1998:27; Malo & Bullard, 2000:6). Storytelling therefore enhanced the listening and oral skills of the children. This links with the hypothesis to prove that storytelling integrated with other subjects in the curriculum can assist children to develop socially and linguistically. The MRQ 2 with SQ 1.4.3 was addressed. In the study done by Rooks (1998:25) it was found that children shared ideas, and were learning in what she terms the “most natural and comfortable way”. It was also my experience that the children enjoyed what they did when the environment was non-threatening.

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The idea to use another story that linked to the theme of the other lessons, in this case Life Orientation seemed relevant. However, the children could not immediately make the connection. The fact that they had to rely more on their imagination in this case, was probably the reason why they struggled at first. The excitement that accompanied the story of “The Three Little Pigs” was absent here. The reason for the contrasting mood in the story was because the children had to settle down after all the excitement. Given the physical setting of the school, it was clear that the other classes could be distracted by all the exuberance from this class. Furthermore, it was time for the toddlers to sleep and this was probably the overarching consideration in the choice of the story. Nevertheless, some of them interacted with the story and were keen to be the characters in the role-play. The role-play presented the opportunity to sharpen social and language skills as they used the words from the story and made up their own dialogues which in turn linked with MRQ 2, specifically SQ 1.4.3.

In comparison with the previous teacher, Tr B used the story for the first time fairly late into the day. The only integration was the theme. Many children wanted to share their own stories which were indicative of the power of the story as teaching tool. The knowledge in terms of pets came across as well as the values of caring for pets. At this point it would have been opportune for the teacher to link the caring of pets to the caring and empathy of classmates or other people who were ill or suffered traumas. However, this value was not conveyed. The skill of communication formed part of this session. Most of the children eagerly participated, often to the irritation of those who did not get a chance. Those who expressed the desire to have their own pets were given time to express their reasons. Unfortunately, the reasons for not being allowed a pet or not owning a pet did not surface. The teacher probably wanted to save them the embarrassment of admitting that they could not afford pets or did not have the resources for pets, was my deduction. Yet by using a story about animals gave those children who never had pets an opportunity to gain some knowledge about the pets via a story (The Humane Society of the United States Youth, 2008). The teacher displayed great sensitivity towards the needs of her class and the opportunity served to link MRQ 1, SQ 1.4.1, indicating how the teacher was empowered when using stories.



Reading the story instead of telling it to the children was an outcome with various reasons. Firstly, it was probably the fact that teachers often feel safer to have the book in front of them. Secondly, the outcome in the curriculum does not specify that when the children listen to the story the teacher should read or tell the story. The safer option would then be to read rather than tell the story. Although the teacher did not suggest any resistance or problems to deal with HIV and AIDS in the classroom during my personal interview and discussion afterwards, there was no mention or reference to HIV and AIDS at all during the presentations. The SQ 1.4.4 with regards to including the educational value of stories for specific situations was not addressed.

Although the reasoning behind the second literacy session of this teacher made sense, the idea to consolidate phonics could be integrated with the previous session. The children could repeat words taken from the rhymes and recitations. This would create a stronger sense of integration. For the children there would then be a less disjointed and fragmented lesson. They would have been able to form a more holistic picture of the content. Furthermore, it would have minimised

teaching short bits every time, leaving more time for consolidation. Having said this, I am aware of the limited concentration span of the human mind but in an interactive, well-planned situation this should not be a problem. The fragmented approach is often due to the prescriptions and instructions of a curriculum as well as the fear that exist in teachers to implement change or use their creativity. Often they do not trust their own resourcefulness. The MRQ 1 to ascertain how teachers use stories was addressed but the literacy was done in isolation and not based on the story.

Tr C used an activity where the children had to find the first letters of their names. It was a literacy session but more a memory test as it was expected of the children in this grade to be able to write their names. To them this was a game but it proved to be challenging to some as they were still unsure of the first letters of their names. It was still early in the year but the pressure was sensed amongst those who were still busy while some of the others had finished the activity. Although the teacher attempted to link or integrate the numeracy with literacy here, I predict that if she used the story earlier, the link would be stronger and more effective. Any integration of stories with the other subjects to address MRQ 2 was not prevalent in this session.

A subsequent literacy session involved reciting a nursery rhyme, “The little squirrel” which linked with the theme of the week which was “animals”. The approach to rotate the boys and girls and asking them row by row to recite the poem, provided some variation. This was of course a very traditional, almost unimaginative approach. Some of the children spontaneously made their own movements. Fortunately the teacher picked up on this and then encouraged more of them to join in with the others who started it. However, except for this, once again there was no direct integration with a story.

As an added literacy activity one group of children had to recognise their own names which were on magnetic boards. This provided an opportunity to find the matching capital and small letters of their names and place these letters on a magnetic strip. Simultaneously the other group wrote their names on white boards while the third group matched illustrations with corresponding colour shapes. To establish whether stories could assist in developing language and social skills rendered no results at all. Firstly, the activities within this session could be done earlier when

they had to identify their own names in Session One as it had a more direct link with that session. Secondly, the activities seemed uncoordinated as matching of illustrations did not have any connection with the identification and writing of names. The children did however, verbalise their joy or frustrations when they managed or failed to complete the tasks. This indicated a minor link with the SQ 1.4.3 whether social and language skills were developed although not in the way that I envisaged.

The excitement at the prospect of a story was contagious during this session. To present the story the teacher opted to read rather than tell the story. The rationale for telling rather than reading the story was to show the pictures as the story progressed. The children enjoyed viewing the pictures and commented on the different characters in the story. The comments were verbalised with appropriate descriptive words such as “*groot bok*” (big goat); “*klein bokkies*” (small goats), “*lelike, kwaai trol*” (ugly, angry troll). This proved that the use of the story in which the children are engaged can elicit suitable vocabulary and enhance or develop language skills (SQ 1.4.1). The sheer enjoyment when they repeated sounds and dialogue furthermore substantiated the power of the story as teaching tool to enhance language skills. However, the integration was more ad hoc than planned. What was commendable was the reference to their environment with regards to the bridge. This brought the story closer to them and to their own frames of reference. During this session their knowledge schemata was integrated with their formal schemata as they used their own background to describe certain features in the story.

The elements of Numeracy were successfully integrated when the children applied their language skills to count or add the different body parts of the goats as instructed by the teacher, at the same time using the pictures. This was the first real attempt at integration across subjects (MRQ 1). Still the mentioning of HIV and AIDS remained an undisclosed term. Again I am of the opinion that it was not intentional. After my visit to the second school I was interested to see how Tr D at the third school applied the use of stories across the curriculum in order to find answers to the MRQs and SQs.

Although the children shared their own stories and illustrated them, this session did not link with the theme at the school. It was a traditional news session as done by most grades in the FP. The

children were expected to share news that they either heard or experienced and thus they shared news about their birthdays or accidents. They did, however, achieve the intended AS because most of them listened and then responded appropriately. Yet there was no story that linked to the theme. It was possible to ask them to come and tell the class something about “things with wings”. This would probably have aided them to produce illustrations of their stories as they struggled to do this. In no way do I suggest that they may not share good news about a birthday or new baby but such news snippets could be shared in a special time frame other than the first literacy session. With reference to the research I was unable to determine any relevant links where stories were used as teaching tools.

The story was reserved for a special time on the roster which is acceptable but it was not fully integrated into other activities. With the approach of the story session you could sense the excitement amongst the children. It was therefore clear that this was a regular session after lunch. I was able to explore the educational value of stories for children (SQ 1.4.1).

In the ensuing section I gauged the use of stories and how stories were used (MRQ 1). Setting the tone for the story with a class discussion was a good idea. Also the fact that the teacher integrated the playground experience with the insect that they found there was a useful exercise. The teacher opted to read the story as it was a fairly long story. This story was a mixture of the traditional Cinderella and Scheherazade tales. It was clearly too long, and asking questions in between did not really succeed in getting them to understand or really appreciate the story. This was exacerbated by the fact that the story was above their level. In my opinion the children interjected with their own experiences because they lost track of the story line, and when the teacher questioned them they answered with whatever they linked to the idea of a parrot or any other bird. This is why it is important to choose stories on the level of the target group. The teacher at the first school was more successful with the simpler well-known “Three little pigs”.

At the fourth school the teachers started off with a biblical tale that linked with the theme of the week. The integration was in terms of their life skills to care for the environment. However, there was no link with the previous lesson and the purpose why Zaccheus used the tree. The notion of

caring and respect not only for the environment but also for your friends was not addressed although the opportunity arose.

At the end of the day a story was used to close the activities of the day. It was an opportunity to establish the use of stories. The teacher's introduction to the story created a sense of expectation amongst the children. They were curious to hear more about the mole. Her technique to show the pictures with the text at the back allowed her to keep eye contact most of the time. The children answered the questions spontaneously. The responses showed that they had a fairly extended knowledge of the mole. Yet, I missed the connection with the theme, "Trees".

When they were asked how they felt about moles, there were mixed responses such as, "*I don't like moles*"./ "*They eat my mummy's plants*"./ "*Moles are naughty.*" From these responses it was clear that the mole was not favoured by them. In comparison to their responses earlier where they projected feelings of caring towards Zaccheus the feelings towards the mole were completely opposite. The reason is probably because their schemata with regards to the mole are negative. In the case of Zaccheus, not a popular or well-liked person, it did not evoke the same feelings. It could be that it is easier to feel negative towards an animal than towards a person. This was perhaps the time when the teacher could address fears and traumas like HIV and AIDS issue. It was possible to make a link between the two stories where Zaccheus personified the HIV and AIDS affected children. Their negative feelings towards the mole could be an illustration of the feelings that they should not display towards friends who suffers illnesses. If the teacher used the lesson to integrate songs as well there would have been a more direct link or preparation for the story in this session. However, the use of stories to develop language skills and integrate other areas of the curriculum was successful (MRQ 2).

The second teacher at the same school also presented the story as a finale to the day's work. The discussion of the concrete apparatus namely trees and leaves, presented an ideal setting for the story that followed. The reading was interrupted with questions which made them more inquisitive but on the other hand broke the flow of the story line. Whilst observing the teacher I was able to determine the value of the stories as teaching tools as well as the effect of the stories when integrated with the other areas in the curriculum (MRQ 1 and 2). When the children

answered the questions I could ascertain the value of stories in enhancing and developing language skills. They used some of the new words and phrases that they heard in the story. Although the rhyme, “Five fat sausages” was used more as an interim activity to get them back to their seats, the choice did not fit the theme. Of course the children enjoyed reciting it. In the FP you often find that teachers use rhymes to bring closure to activities or to get children back to their seats. In this class there was an attempt to integrate some lessons (MRQ 2).

The recurrent word in the story sessions was “reading”. All the teachers read the stories except the first teacher who told the story of the *Three little pigs* but then read the second story. As I stated in the comparison between reading and telling a story the second approach is definitely favoured in the literature. However, “excitement” and “enjoyment” prevailed in all classes during story time irrespective of the approach that was implemented. This addressed MRQ 1. When teachers succeed to engage children in the story sessions and add to the excitement and enjoyment of the children then at least they have achieved some of the goals of storytelling. Smith (2004:26) cites Norris Nicholson (1994) whose concern is about the issue of HIV and AIDS that poses a threat for storytelling where there are changes in family and community life. This concern is especially relevant in the lives of children as they are often separated from their dying parent or parents. In reviewing the documents of the DoE with regards to the Language Curriculum it does not seem as if stories are afforded the core place they deserve. I therefore support the concern raised by Smith (2004:27) that “... this ancient but incredibly, effective communication tool ...” is not fully utilised by all teachers. Hayward and Schneider (2010:1) confirm that stories provide a more holistic language context simply because the stories allow children to combine words and sentences.

5.4.3 Numbers and stories – ‘Can they work?’

After the story was integrated with literacy Tr A extended it to integrate numeracy. She used the story to great advantage in getting the children to interact on a numerical level. They enjoyed counting or guessing the answer to the questions. Their responses were enhanced by the fact that they could see the pigs and the wolf and count how many ears or tails or eyes each animal had. Besides simple calculations they managed to identify shapes, for example the circle, resembled

in the snout. This was an innovative idea on the side of the teacher to bring the story closer to the reality. In my opinion the teacher made an attempt to integrate numeracy and literacy with the story as the frame of reference thus addressing MRQ 2.

The use of stories in other areas of the curriculum was tested in the numeracy lessons (MRQ 2). In contrast with Tr A, the other teachers all taught numeracy as an isolated subject. I ascribe this tendency to the fact that if teachers are not geared towards integration on a broader scale it is a daunting task, especially with Numeracy.

The constructivist approach (Piaget, 1967; Vygotsky, 1995; Bruner, 2002) where each child makes an attempt to solve the problems, and then reaches consensus for the solution worked very well in some numeracy lessons. Donald *et al.* (2002:108) view the constructivist approach as opportunities that teachers should create for “active engagement”. For the children to match the pictures with the corresponding numbers on the money bags, involved that they collected and organised data. The idea of teamwork was present where they in turn used their language and social skills to solve the problems and as a result they were actively engaged although not linked to a story (SQ 1.4.4).

For the children to sort items and then glue those items on a card to depict a number was complex for some children in the younger group as they were not all as dextrous as the older group. The teacher patiently guided them to complete the task. The patience paid off as their sense of achievement showed on their faces. However, although the social skills were included the link was not based on the story. In an attempt to integrate arts as well the teacher could include patterns in songs or rhythms too.

Although it was not the case in Session One, the integration with Arts & Culture in the numeracy lesson at the second school was addressed in this session. An attempt to work across the curriculum surfaced, much to the enjoyment of the children. Although the children found the activity to make clay animals stimulating, the story was not used. This was an opportunity where the teacher could use the story as stimulus. The children could listen to the story and then use their knowledge and skills to make the clay animals. The link with Arts & Culture was not strong

enough, yet under the circumstances it was a brave attempt at integration. Unfortunately no values were addressed in this session.

It is evident that the teachers still regarded numeracy as a stand-alone area in the curriculum. I acknowledge though that it was probably not easy to integrate in the entire programme. Using a story though would have assisted them to make the activities more meaningful and at the same time allow the children to have a Gestalt or whole experience of the work. It is easier to understand the work when they have a global picture and see the connections between the various parts than to see the parts only. Clearly the idea of using a story was not imminent other than in the case of Tr A. Again the curriculum is not specific in terms of integration here and teachers follow their own devices to the best of their abilities.

5.4.4 Life Orientation and stories: ‘Is creativity featuring here?’

This session attempted to find how the story was used across the curriculum (MRQ 2). During the Arts & culture session Tr A managed to successfully present works of art, given the small space, and keep order. It was challenging for some of the children to use a pair of scissors to cut the body parts or to handle the paint brushes. Although all of them seemed to enjoy the art lesson there were exceptions.

The teacher managed to sharpen and develop their skills, knowledge and values. Most of them managed the skills to create a picture. They gained knowledge with regards to using the various media to create a picture. The value instilled in them was that they shared the paint, glue, newspapers and pictures. One value that stood out for me was that they realised they had to share the limited space. Now and again one would complain that his or her friend was in the way of a prospective art work or refused to pass the paint containers. However, someone in the class reprimanded the child by saying, “*Teacher said we must share*”. This showed that the teacher inculcated values at an early age. She substituted as caregiver and fulfilled the role to the best of her ability. Once again the story had a prominent focus in the lesson and addressed the MRQs. The story was used to good effect and the teacher was empowered.

In the next Life Orientation activity the children responded well to the instructions of the teacher. The integration of the story in this session certainly added to the values of participation and cooperation (MRQ 1, SQ 1.4.1). The teacher was empowered to use the story.

Nevertheless, the cooperation to defeat the big, bad wolf displayed a united front against evil. This could be linked to the fight against other fears and traumas like HIV and AIDS but more specifically in this case it displayed the idea that everybody joined forces and nobody needed to feel alienated. In this situation the wolf could be symbolic of bad things like lack of sympathy, picking on your friends, refusing to share or play with your friend for your own selfish reasons. The pigs could be representative of the children who must fight against negative feelings. The value of stories as teaching tools was underscored as the children seemed to understand the need to "... maintain a balance between personal agendas and well-being and social approval" (Zeece, 2001:237). The aim was to have the children in role play in order to understand the story. They seemed to understand that they were in roles here and their personal likes and dislikes were not a priority. The characteristics and educational value of stories were addressed (SQ 1.4.4). The story was used as a powerful tool in this regard. As teamwork effort it was accompanied by their own instructions how to outwit the wolf. They would for example shout, "*Duck down!*" or "*Push him over!*" or even "*Help me!*" The fact that they relied on one another and responded to verbal instructions proved that the social and language skills can be developed or extended in early relationships (SQ 1.4.3). To solve the problem they were challenged to formulate definite, clear instructions and listen carefully to execute these instructions.

The activity where the children passed the beanbag, rendered less camaraderie as the child who dropped the beanbag was criticised. What transpired here was that children did not take too kindly when they were disappointed or if there was a weak link in the team. Therefore it is important to guide the children in Grade R to be patient with friends who are not as strong or healthy as themselves. In all the excitement this unfortunately was not addressed by the teacher. However, I do not think it was deliberate.

The use of non-melodic instruments presented the integration of Literacy and Arts. As mentioned in Chapter Four, 4.5.2 (a), the music session allowed the children with learning disabilities to express themselves through music. The focus on their speaking abilities was less prominent. An

interesting phenomenon was that by using instruments they felt more confident to express themselves even though the verbal interactions were brief. The instruments were their vehicles of communication. Observing their facial expressions when they interacted with the instruments exhibited the positive effect of this session. Again the use of the story to establish the influence thereof on social and language skills proved very valuable. The girl, who refused to interact, overcame her anxiety because the percussion instrument served as a source of support. She gained confidence to execute her task in the group. This notion is underscored when Rooks (1998:25) states that children with learning disabilities participate in activities where storytelling is the teaching tool. This again proves the value of stories as teaching tool to empower the teachers and the children. The idea that children are expected to conform to the rules and regulations may cause the children to feel pressurised. When the teachers therefore use stories and role play the children are allowed some freedom and escapism from reality (Zeece, 2001:237).

Whilst the eurhythmics provided an opportunity for the children to integrate various skills like listening and movement, the teacher could allow some of the children to use the non-melodic instruments after her demonstration. Furthermore, the two sessions could easily be combined where they acted the nursery rhymes while they were singing and some of them use the non-melodic percussion to indicate the beat. The sessions were too fragmented.

My intention for the next activity was to test whether stories were presented in a way which integrated other areas in the curriculum, and if so, what was the effect of an approach where stories were integrated with the arts (MRQ 2). Stories would serve as the nucleus from which the other subjects were integrated. The opportunity to test this approach was when the children passed balls to one another in an open space outside. No story featured in this session but their listening skills were practised when they listened to and carried out instructions given by their teacher. Changing partners practised their social skills as they often choose their own partners. However, in this case the choice was determined by the teachers because they had to choose according to the physical positions they found themselves in. If, for example, the whistle blew and they were not necessarily next to their favourite partner, they had to partner that child next to them at that moment, irrespective if it was their best friend or not.

The MRQ to establish the impact of integration and the creative use of stories to develop social and linguistic skills was not directly addressed at the second school. Yet some of the intentions in the broader research were indirectly addressed. In this case the games indirectly forced the children to socialise with one another. When the children sang the song, “Two little bees in the garden” as their Arts & Culture activity with the accompanying actions, there was an attempt to integrate at least the arts and some form of communication. The lyrics were clearly articulated, and the actions created a platform for enjoyment. Similarly, they expressed their creativity when they flapped their arms to represent wings and tiptoed whilst buzzing like bees in the garden.

The actions which accompanied the nursery rhyme, “I wiggle my little fingers” were met with enjoyment by the children. Added to their pleasure was the painting session where they made the imprints of their own hands by dipping their hands into paint. This was a brave attempt by the teacher as some of them tended to mess rather than paint. Nevertheless, the tactile experience was a way in which she included more than just the integration of Literacy and Arts and Culture. She simultaneously developed life skills as the children had to share the paint and help one another to display the works of art. However, no discussion was entered into after completion of the painting session. Although the story was still amiss, this effort was an attempt to develop the children in various ways (MRQ 2, SQ 1.4.3).

My observation of the following activity displayed an effort by the teacher to integrate the theme, “Things with wings” with the Arts & Culture activity. The song, “Little Bird you are welcome” was sung with enthusiasm and each one wanted to express themselves in one way or the other. These expressions ranged from flapping arms which represented wings to hopping on their haunches to imitate the birds. Fortunately the teacher did not put a damper on the enthusiasm despite the increased volume. They sang the song with no questions based on it. The link that she made with the items in nature and the man-made items like aeroplanes was very relevant. At the end of session there was no repeat of the introductory song which could round off the session. She then engaged them in another activity, integrating the theme, “Things with wings” as well as visual arts. As a skills exercise, the children had to handle a pair of scissors. The skill to colour the parrot was guided by the stuffed toy parrot, but they were allowed some creativity in choosing their own colours. Though it may sound a fairly simple activity some of

them struggled to handle a pair of scissors but this would improve with more practice. Most of them chose to colour the parrot identically to the sample provided. In terms of integration there was an attempt made but on only one level where they integrated art and the story (MRQ 2). The children did not explain why they chose specific colours or why they preferred one colour to the other. Had they done this, it would have integrated their language competency too. The integration would not have been restricted to only two sections of the programme. However, they enjoyed the activity which was a plus. My research in terms of integration where the story is the core focus surfaced in this session.

At School Four the singing of the hymns preceded the story of Zaccheus but the chosen hymns did not link directly to the story. What linked the “Trees” theme was that the story was about somebody who sat in a tree. This indicated an attempt at integration. The children listened to the story, and discussed it. The teacher used this information to enhance their existing knowledge. They were all very clear on the moral of the story and echoed the importance of mutual respect, tolerance and caring for your fellow-men. I regarded this as an opportune time for the teacher to address tolerance as the children displayed so much understanding and emotions for the “victim” in the story. Their own experiences of related incidents or where they showed tolerance were integrated in the discussion which was a commendable initiative of the teacher. This was complex as the class was of mixed religions and cultures. It therefore had to be handled sensitively and carefully. The teacher addressed the knowledge and values that emanated in this session effectively. Although there did not seem to be any direct link with the theme or the story, the relaxation exercises, an attempt at Suggestopaedia (Lozanov, 2010), done at the end of the session served as closure and helped them to get ready for the next session

In the next Life Orientation activity the discussion of the visit to the zoo presented an ideal stimulus for the Arts & Culture experience that followed. Not only was there integration between Literacy and Arts & Culture but certain life skills indirectly came to the fore like respecting the opinions or choices of others (MRQ 2). Nobody was allowed to criticise the preferences of their class mates. After the discussion they excitedly set about to illustrate their favourite animals. This integration could perhaps be more meaningful if a story was linked to the experience at the zoo. The theme, namely “Trees” was not linked here although there were trees that provided

shade and food to the animals in the zoo. Maybe to ask them what the advantages and disadvantages of keeping animals in a zoo were, would have been too ambitious. Yet it could link with the notion of caring that emerged in the Bible story. Animals are in a protected environment in a zoo, especially endangered species. Similarly, Zaccheus felt protected in the tree. Besides the lack of some links as mentioned, the children enjoyed the activity and there was some form of integration (MRQ 1).

When the teacher engaged the children in an activity of arts the Suggestopaedic approach created a relaxing and stimulating environment. It involved extra planning to have different activities for the different age groups though. The groups enjoyed the tactile experience when they used the various colours to produce their art works. A separate session followed the previous Arts & Culture one, but this time the focus was movement to music (eurhythmics). During this session nobody wanted to hold the hand of a new girl when they had to work as partners. When the teacher noticed their attitudes towards this little girl, she reminded them of their own stories when they listened to the story of Zaccheus. This reminder resulted in many of them changing their attitudes and working with the little girl. This proved the value of the stories as therapeutic tools and indicated how the teacher was empowered to resolve an issue using a story (SQ 1.4.1). Once more the proper choice of stories, not necessarily Biblical stories or stories with moral undertones, can work if creatively applied and integrated.

Whilst they moved back to their classroom the rendition of the song, “Five green bottles hanging on a wall” was done with the necessary actions like swaying, swinging and blowing. The children enjoyed mimicking the actions. In the first verse the link with the theme was however, not clear to me. When the children imagined that they were acorns growing into big trees, the link with the theme became clear. In terms of the research I was able to verify the power of stories as teaching tools to develop language and social skills. The song told a story with the theme that you can become anything in an imaginary world. This was a powerful link with HIV and AIDS too but not integrated in the lesson. The children could learn that irrespective of your conditions or circumstances, be it some illness or condition, you can still become anything you wish to be, even in the real world. Still, the teacher achieved her intended goal with this session because the children could listen to music and move to the beat whilst singing the song.

With regards to Life Orientation in the respective schools, the teachers valued the importance thereof but similar to the other areas this was also taught almost entirely in isolation with a few exceptions which in some cases seemed more incidental than planned. In essence the story could serve as a powerful tool to integrate the LO sessions and all the other activities.

5.4.5 ‘Let’s eat before we play’

Similar to their first activity for the day Trs D and E practised life skills at lunch time. The children once more engaged in activities like washing hands, saying prayers, and sharing food or snacks with one another. In a small way the socially acceptable behaviour linked to the idea of acceptance of one another when they observed the different ways of saying grace. Playtime was under the watchful eyes of the teachers who enjoyed their lunch while looking after the children.

5.4.6 General comments

The creative way in which Tr A used the story of the three bears, is commended although there are many recommendations that can improve and/or enhance the general presentation of her lessons. An effort was made to integrate the various learning areas with the story which is a good start (MRQ 2). You need to take cognisance of the fact that the teacher had no formal training in either music or art. It proves that you can enhance the learning environment and not feel inhibited due to lack of training in specialised fields like music or visual art. This empowers the teacher (SQ 1.4.1). Your own creativity can be applied to the benefit of the children as long as there is no risk involved. By risk I mean the safety of the children as well as their self-esteem. Although in most cases the teachers chose stories to fit into themes the one used for the integration worked well. It proved that a well-known story can be used and even adapted to implement integration (MRQ 2).

The second story about the wind was not quite on their level because they did not respond too well to questions. This confirmed that stories need to be selected well in advance and on the level of the children. In terms of the integration of music the teacher could organise the

accompaniment on the non-melodic percussion instruments in a more structured way even though she had no formal training. At times the instruments were banged and not played, and the musicality suffered as a result. By allocating specific sections to each child or group of children before-hand would have helped to create a more musical performance. With regards to support from the DoE, there were no resources for the teachers as it was a private pre-school mainly supported by the parents. The teacher was therefore doing well with the available resources. On the whole this presentation was the closest to what I would regard as an integrated approach where the story spanned across the curriculum, attempting to integrate arts as well (MRQ 2).

Trs B and C adhered to the prescriptions of the DoE curriculum. The prescribed programme of the DoE seemed to dictate a fragmented presentation whereas the story could be more effectively used to connect the various subjects. Each LA was done observing the selected theme, “Trees” but it focussed mainly on the literacy section. Yet the lessons were taught with conviction and dedication. Although the will to teach the various sections were present the frame of reference to connect literacy, numeracy and life orientation seemed to be underdeveloped. Teachers could try and integrate across the curriculum. The fact that integration was not prominent across the curriculum but mainly in literacy and occasionally in visual arts, stems from the fact that the curriculum states the various LAs as separate sections and teachers have to use their own discretion on how to present the learning material. It seems that integration is inhibited because the curriculum is divided into areas. The story could serve to cross this divide.

The idea of Tr D to plan lessons around a theme, “Trees” was a start at integration even though mainly in literacy. It is difficult to get material for all lessons to link with the theme. Therefore teachers should plan well in advance and hereby I do not suggest that it was not done in this case. Nevertheless, if teachers choose stories their task to collect related material might be easier. Tr D was very diligent and thorough in her work which was evident in the way she approached and managed the children and the carefully planned lessons. She stuck very closely to the prescribed curriculum. Whatever the teacher did was done with conviction, and learning took place although not always in an integrated way. As the only permanent Grade R teacher, her appointment was funded by the DoE. In comparison with the other institutions this one was better resourced and the resources were put to effective use. The curriculum was followed

religiously and therefore the integration across the curriculum in which stories were used, was not in all cases evident here. The integration was in the theme and the story was a stand-alone activity linked to the theme. Although the art works were of a very high standard, the children did not discuss their efforts, which rendered the art works decorative and for enjoyments although meaning was attached to it. In no way was Outcome 2 of Arts & Culture realised.

The theme, namely, “Trees” was also used in the English speaking class at the same school. Because the activities were the same as in the Afrikaans group, I only analysed the activities which focused on Literacy where the story was used and on activities which differed. Where the activities were the same I make a general comment.

The fact that Tr E did not have to prepare activities on two levels as her Afrikaans speaking colleague allowed her to spend more time with each child. This in no way suggests that the children in Tr D’s class did not get individual attention. The time spent with each child was just shorter. In these sessions as in the other group I was unable to determine the relevance of the story as teaching tool to empower the teacher in developing language and social skills. Tr E’s children heard the same Biblical story and displayed similar feelings of caring towards Zaccheus who was treated as an outcast in the story. The story however, did not include the issue of HIV and AIDS.

The emerging themes extracted by applying conceptual analysis proved that there is some form of integration. Within the broader categories namely attitudes, approaches and challenges, teachers are still faced with many challenges. The challenges impact on the approaches and eventually on their attitudes. The curriculum suggests integration but teachers seem to integrate mostly in the language sections. This could be ascribed to the fact that it is not specifically mentioned that integration should be across the curriculum. However, the CAPS curriculum (DBE, 2011b) attempts to address the vacuum of the previous curriculum.

My informal conversations with the children are subsequently analysed.

5.5 WHAT THE CHILDREN SHARED WITH ME

Initially I had to establish a trusting relationship with the children as I was a stranger to most of them except for the two of the institutions where I previously told stories as part of community outreach. Most of the children eagerly participated, except for a few who had to be coaxed to respond. The safe, non-threatening environment either during playtime or aftercare added to the spontaneity of most children. They were not moved to an environment unknown to them or with only a stranger present. The teachers were always around as the stabilising factor.

5.5.1 Analysis of the questions and themes

With reference to Chapter Four I reiterate that the responses were grouped into themes because the questions elicited answers that overlapped.

Theme one: Starting the conversation;

Theme two: The storyteller;

Theme three: General preferences and dislikes and telling their favourite story;

Theme four: Interaction with stories;

Theme five: Feelings about the story and the main character; and

Theme six: Motivation for listening to stories.

I linked the main research questions, “*Do teachers use stories in Grade R classes, and if so, how do they use stories?*” and “*Are stories integrated with other areas in the curriculum?*” with the themes that emerged in the responses of the children.

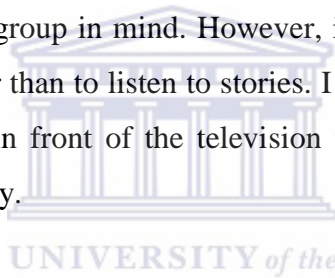
5.5.2 Analysis of Theme One, Starting the conversation

These interviews could be termed informal conversations rather. In the ensuing discussion I use the codes S1 to S4 to indicate the various schools. I do not discuss S5 because the hospitalised children were in two groups, which included all the grades as mentioned in Chapter Four (see 4.3.5). At S1 the positive responses came as no surprise to me when I posed the close-ended

question whether they liked stories. The only surprise was the lack of interest by the one little girl, who had a medical condition. Interestingly, though was how she eventually joined in when the stories were told, where she could do art and move along to the tune of the songs. This certainly proved the power of stories as teaching tools. Furthermore the therapeutic value of stories could not be underestimated, especially in the case of vulnerable children.

Similarly the informal conversations for Theme One all resulted in positive responses at S2. They all liked stories which did not seem a very unlikely response. Maybe it was because it was a close ended question and they thought the proper thing to do, is to answer, “*Yes*” when asked whether they liked stories. Some of them seemed shy and just nodded their heads.

Most of the children at S3 stated that they liked stories, so I focus on the negative responses rather. Analysing the negative responses might seem valid in some cases where teachers do not select the stories with their target group in mind. However, it was also clear that some children preferred to watch television rather than to listen to stories. I assumed that some parents found it easier to keep children occupied in front of the television than to tell them stories especially when they get home after a long day.



The children at S4 queued to talk to me. Most of them were very confident, even the younger ones. What transpired for the first theme was that most of them liked to listen to stories with the exception of one boy, while some rather watched TV than listened to stories. The influence of the TV was obvious in these cases.

It was safe to assume that the majority of children liked stories and in choosing an opening where they had to say whether they liked stories set a positive scene for the rest of the conversations. Their views on storytellers presented mixed responses. The impact of stories was therefore clearly communicated and related to MQ 2.

5.5.3 Analysis of Theme Two, The storyteller

The mixed responses at S1 when they had to identify the storytellers in their lives could be ascribed to the varying home circumstances. When the story-teller was the grandmother, the

reasons could be any of the following: this was a single parent, the parents worked late and the grandmother was the caregiver or the worst case scenario was that the mother was deceased where HIV and AIDS might have been the cause of death. Those who had a more stable home environment were lucky to have both parents to tell or read stories to them. This does not imply that where the mother read or told the stories an unstable environment existed. It was probably more a case of the mother was expected to fulfil the role of storyteller. On the odd occasion where the sister read the story it was because the sister was older and had to take care of the siblings while the parents were doing household chores after work. At S1 the notion of mothers, as opposed to teachers as storytellers, weighed heavier because parents generally could afford books and were not as heavily burdened. A culture of reading existed in their homes.

Where they had to elaborate on the storyteller the teacher featured more prominently as storyteller at S2. Because the parents did not feature as prominently as grandmothers and one grandfather it could be ascribed to various factors. I did not intend to pry into their private lives and could therefore not prove this claim. My premise is that the teacher was the main storyteller because often the parents as farm labourers worked long hours and were probably too tired to tell stories. Some of the children also lived with the grandparents during the week or some had single parents, and thus the teacher had the main responsibility of educating the children.

As for S3, there did not seem to be a bigger preference for either the teacher or a family member. This is possibly because the children came from mixed backgrounds. Some had parents who would tell stories and others had to rely on the teacher to tell stories. It could thus be attributed to the fact that some children were the abused and neglected children, resident in the village, while others came from more stable backgrounds and were not resident in the village. This does however, not suggest that all children who were not living in the village necessarily came from stable family backgrounds. The duty of story-teller was fairly evenly spread between the teacher and caregiver at home.

The focus of storyteller at S4 shifted from teacher to the mother. It could be the background where quite a few of the mothers were teachers themselves. Many parents were also in a better position to buy storybooks, and there was a library in the area as well as on site. The little girl who claimed that she read to herself, was the one who came from a “problem” home as the

teacher mentioned, while the HIV and AIDS case was where the mother died. Here the role of the teacher was very important but the granny and aunt substituted as well. During this session it became evident how important stories were especially in traumatic situations such as death. The role of the fathers as storytellers surfaced too although this phenomenon was rare. In general it seems as if mainly females fulfilled the roles of storytellers as the majority of pre-school teachers were female and traditionally mothers were expected to tell stories. Gathered from the responses the impact of the story as relating to MRQ 2 was accounted for but similarly the empowerment of the teacher surfaced in many cases where she was the primary storyteller (SQ 1.4.1).

5.5.4 Analysis of Theme Three, General preferences and dislikes and telling their favourite stories

Based on the likes and dislikes of the children's responses at S1, my assumption was that they did not really listen to stories but watched the current stories of super heroes and heroines on television. Their responses seemed limited even though the teacher read stories to them. My first inference was that they could not remember right there when questioned or maybe the stories that they heard did not make such a lasting impression on them. However, when they told me about their favourite stories it was evident that their repertoire was not as limited as I presumed. It was nevertheless clear that the super heroes still dominated amongst the boys while the girls told the more traditional fairy tales with a princess as the heroine.

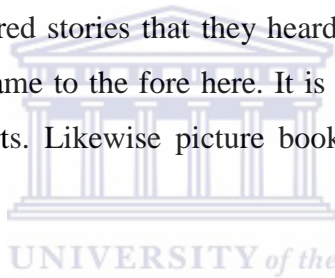
Theme Three regarding the boys at S3 yielded mostly stories about animals. This could be because of their background on the farm. The fact that a few boys liked the traditional fairy tales whilst one indicated that he liked stories about God, was in all likelihood the influence of the stories told at school. It was interesting that the girls favoured a bigger variety of stories than the boys. The inclusion of ghost and monster stories was something that a person could assume to be the choice of boys rather than girls. No dislikes were formulated except for the one about "dollies" (the diminutive for dolls) and this was to be expected from a boy. The dislike for snakes and the accompanying body language displayed by one of the girls was indicative of the fact that she probably had a bad experience with snakes or was warned against snakes. Snakes were not uncommon in the farm area.

To assume that if they could state their preferences and dislikes they would be able to tell me more about their favourite stories was maybe too ambitious for some children. It was, as I stated in Chapter Four (see 4.5.2), a real challenge. In comparison with S1 these children had less exposure to stories. When the teacher is the main storyteller the extra sessions at home are almost non-existent and therefore their ability to retell stories were not as good as to be expected. In addition, they were able to give better accounts of the story which they heard on the day of my visit. It supports the notion that stories can be used as teaching tools to develop and/or enhance language and social skills (SQ 1.4.3). As mentioned in Chapter Four (see 4.5.2) some children gave accounts of the local news in the pony press. Often these were horror stories of murder and rape but the newspaper was affordable and therefore the only source of printed matter in some households.

I particularly enjoyed the account of the creative mix-up of the fairy tales where the wolf went to Snow White's granny, saw the seven dwarves and then hid the goats when the wolf appeared. This at least was indicative that he heard a few stories even though he could not remember them as separate stories (SQ 1.4.4). The other children did not seem to know any better because normally when somebody makes a mistake other children would quickly rectify the child. My experience with the girls was similar, with only a few who could retell a story that was told by the teacher. It may also be that the children were not quite prepared to speak to a stranger so soon.

My inference that television stories were preferred at S3 when I analysed their preferences and dislikes for stories was confirmed. The stories that they favoured were stories about television programmes such as Barbie and the Transformers. I did not want to pry when a girl said that she did not like "*stories with a man*". Taking in consideration that this institution took care of abandoned and abused children too, it was possible that the response was related to a personal experience. The boys wanted to impress upon me how boring the stories were that featured girls or fairies. When the children had to tell their favourite stories there was a direct link with their preferences. These stories included fairy tales and movies. The responses did not include a wide variety of stories even though story time was a regular feature on the daily programme. Perhaps they just did not remember so well.

The preferences of the girls at S4 included stories of princesses and Biblical stories which were stories heard at school. Television stories were those that they were exposed to at home. Yet there seemed to be a healthy balance where television did not dominate. Interestingly, with the boys the younger group still favoured stories like “*Ginger Bread Man*” and “*The Three Bears*” while the older group included animal and monster stories. This being a school where religious education was a very prominent feature in the programme, it was not surprising that the dislikes included stories about devils, ghosts, witches and naughty children. The fact that one regarded the story books purchased by the mother as “ugly” and therefore he disliked it was an interesting response. Maybe this could be attributed to the fact that children want to select and make choices irrespective of the good intentions of the parents. In general, Theme Three did not reveal many dislikes for stories. Similar to some of the other institutions, the favourite stories that the boys shared were those that they watched on television for example the super heroes. With the exception of one boy, nobody shared stories that they heard at school. The strong influence of visual literacy via the television came to the fore here. It is possible to recreate this in class by integrating the stories with the arts. Likewise picture books present the children with visual stimuli.



The responses to various types of stories, read or told, link with MRQ 2, which indicates that the use of stories enhances the language and social skills.

5.5.5 Analysis of Theme Four, Interaction with stories

While most of the children at S1 loved to draw what they saw or heard in stories it was clearly not a natural link with storytelling because it did not flow from the story. Often this was a separate stand-alone lesson of Arts & Culture. They did not always illustrate an aspect or character related to the story. I abandoned the idea to get a motivation from children who indicated that they did not like to draw because they could not draw. Firstly, I made the decision because I did not want them to feel pressurised and secondly, I was not sure that they could motivate their answers. A more feasible assumption is that children often compare their efforts to those of the teachers. This is contra-productive as they go through various developmental stages and are not expected to match adult standards (Hufford, 1983; Personal conversation with Fine

Arts lecturer, 2012). The fourth theme therefore rendered positive and negative responses. I am of the opinion that the children who claimed they could not draw could be stimulated. Furthermore, when the teachers decide to teach art lessons all the children have to participate irrespective of their talents or not, leaving children to draw freely. The teacher should stimulate, not direct by means of drawing an example to copy.

It was interesting to hear from the S2 children that they all liked to draw except one of them. It appeared that this child did not really understand the question. In addition he displayed disruptive behaviour at times, and seemed unable to concentrate for very long. The fact that some of them liked to draw for their mothers and grannies indicated the importance of the mothers and grannies in their lives. This seems to support my inference that they were in single parent families or in the care of the grandmother.

Regarding the illustration of stories almost all the children at S3 gave positive responses. The single negative response was not that the child did not like to do it but rather that he thought he could not draw. Those who responded positively did so because they loved to draw things that they liked. This seems to suggest that if stories were carefully chosen, the children would enjoy the stories and automatically love to illustrate them.

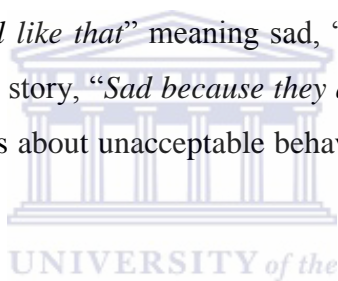
Although most children at S4 showed an affinity towards illustrating the stories, one did not like to draw about the stories. The same argument that was presented at some of the other institutions was raised here namely, "*I can't draw right*" (sic). Although I did not explore it and have no evidence for my claim, it might be that somebody told these children they could not draw.

5.5.6 Analysis of Theme Five, feelings about stories and the main character

The responses that I received from S1 for theme five were not unexpected. For them to feel happy when the stories are happy and sad when the stories are sad therefore came as no surprise. The exceptions were interesting especially the one who said "*The story loves me when it is happy.*" This suggests the total interaction that this boy experienced when he heard happy stories. The emotion of love was linked to happiness. Similarly some of them dream about being like the

super heroes as echoed in words such as, “... *he is strong and I want to be like him*” with reference to Superman. Even their own favourite colours were associated with happy stories where their preferences stated the close link and sense of connection. This was suggested in, “*I feel happy because Cinderella wears my favourite colour.*” Besides favourite colours, taste also featured in one of the very original and creative responses. “*I feel like eating yoghurt when a story is happy*” illustrated the happiness elicited when stories have happy endings. From the responses I gathered it was indicative that the senses played an important role when you enquired about their feelings.

At S2 the responses were not really different to those at S1. Often they just said the opposite to the happy stories as response to sad stories. For example the child who said “*Then I do not cry*”, responded to sad stories by saying, “*Then I cry*”. They all clearly understood the feelings of happiness and sadness. “*I also feel like that*” meaning sad, “*I like him because he is unhappy*” referring to the main character in a story, “*Sad because they are rude*” in reference to characters in a story. This indicated his values about unacceptable behaviour. The sad feelings were in line with the sad stories.



Most of the feelings expressed at S3 towards happy stories were in line with my expectations. Similarly the sad stories were experienced as sad. However, one boy felt “*cool*” when the stories were sad and I guess this was his way of showing he is different. “Cool” was probably his way of showing he is not a baby or he does not really conform. To some of the children who were residents at the institution the story was a real escape from reality as inferred from the responses, “*I feel better*” and “*I felt that the story makes me happy and smiling*”. I could also sense that some stories created a sense of longing for parents with some of the resident children as alluded in, “*I feel happy and I go with them to my family*” (sic). This confirms that stories can transport children from their stark realities to their imaginary environments.

The children at S4 formulated their feelings very similar to those at the other institutions, ranging from “*sad*” for the stories with sad endings and “*happy*” for the stories with happy endings. The exceptions were feelings expressed in terms of an object as in, “*I feel like I have a doll*”. This suggests that the happiness in the stories was linked with a favourite toy that brought happiness.

One linked his happiness to his sleeping patterns which suggests that stories were told at bedtime because *“I can sleep when stories are happy but I cannot sleep when stories are sad.”* Some more intense feelings surfaced when one girl linked her personal experiences with sad stories as follows, *“Sad because of bad stuff in my house. I want to be happy whole day”* (sic). This response was evidently linked to some experience at home. Stories can therefore act as therapeutic tools to get traumatised children to share their experiences in a non-threatening environment.

5.5.7 Analysis Theme Six, Motivation for listening to stories

Most of the children at S1 formulated their reasons why they listened to stories with the exception of a few. The children listened to stories because they regarded the activity as fun, and stories are meant to be fun. The fact that the grandmother read it and therefore they liked it, could be ascribed to the fact that the grandmother was the caregiver and thus read the stories or that the grandmother was a good storyteller. Another interesting response, *“Because I like to listen to magic,”* was really what encapsulated the essence of stories. When this child responded the eyes were all shining and twinkling as if the child was transported to another world.

The responses in theme six confirmed the idea that the teacher at S2 was the main storyteller. The reasons why they liked stories were, *“Because teacher reads stories to us”*. No one mentioned any family member. *“I have been loving stories for a long time already”* was one of the more interesting answers to hear from a five year old child. *“I don’t know”* was again from the child who seems to have problems concentrating. There was no real effort to try and answer the question and no pressure was exerted to get an answer.

Most of the children at S3 formulated the reasons why they listened to stories as learning experiences such as *“Cause it helps me to read and know how to tell people things of stories”*. This relates to the unique situation of most of these children at the safe haven. For many of them it is probably important to get out of the circumstances their parents were in, hence the focus on reading.

Similar to the other institutions the children at S4 stated that they listened to stories because they loved them or because their parents read stories. In addition, they stated that stories assisted in learning. The responses from all the children indicated that stories made an impact on them (MRQ 2).

The analyses allowed me to make certain inferences about the value of stories and how children viewed stories. Firstly, it became clear that some children who listened to stories more often were able to re-tell stories. They showed a fairly good understanding of the stories and had the vocabulary to express them. By no means do I claim that stories are solely responsible for the language skills that were displayed. However, the children who only heard stories at school during a set time of day as a separate activity were not as coherent as the other children who were more exposed to stories. They also struggled to remember stories that were told recently.

The responses of the children are therefore indicative of the impact of stories to develop social and linguistic skills (SQ 1.4.4).

Generally the responses to most themes were similar with very few exceptions. The differences occurred mainly when they stipulated their likes and dislikes. There does however, seem to be trends with regards to the choices of boys and trends with regards to the choices of girls. Comparing this to the responses of the teachers in the questionnaire it seems important that teachers should be sensitised to the individual needs of the children. It is not always possible to address all these individual needs but it is possible to make pre-selections or have a fairly inclusive selection of stories available to the children. Teachers can still be in authority but they have to empower the children too (MRQ 1 and 2).

In addition, it was important to analyse the characteristics of the children who presented the responses in these themes.

5.5.8 Characteristics of children

Most of the children at the institutions conformed to the school policy in terms of classroom rules and dress code. They seemed fairly happy and enjoyed their stay at school. Moreover, they

seemed to love the socialising with friends of their choice although they were often forced to form new groups during classroom activities. In the Grade R classes where I conducted the research the children were from different backgrounds and they found it less problematic to identify with the story if the content was on their level. Animal stories appealed to them.

In my observations I came across a few children who were either withdrawn or displayed disruptive behaviour at the tender age of approximately five to six years. A few children were unresponsive and some were shy but responded with gentle coaxing. Some children did not always understand all the questions in the interviews. Sometimes in class, even when these questions were rephrased, they did not respond as expected. They were, nonetheless in the minority. However, with regards to their feelings about stories it was indicative that even at this young age they are aware of what Egan (1988:27) calls the binary opposites. In these cases it would for example be happy and sad, good and bad, life and death, rich and poor, hungry and fed, alone or together with friends which also transpired in their own lives (Chapter Four, 4.5.2). This could be because feelings and emotions are so integrally part of them.

In some cases I observed children who intimidated others. It was obvious that she craved personal attention. Once she became more engaged in the activities based on the story she seemed less agitated and demanding. At a follow-up visit to the school the teachers reported that she developed in a more disciplined child but it took a while. Another boy clearly showed that his mother was the most important person in his life. She featured in practically all his conversations and interactions. In most cases where the children showed signs of disruptive behaviour or were passive during activities they were in families where the mother was absent or in a new relationship. Stories in a way allowed them to escape from the reality, or gave them opportunities to identify with the characters in similar situations. In addition stories paved the way to develop socially and linguistically (SQ 1.4.3).

I also encountered excellent storytellers who used the appropriate voice modulations and facial expressions, like real actors, yet for some it was difficult to string two coherent sentences together. This was sometimes the pushy child who vied for personal attention, but did not pay much attention to the work done. One child had a speech impediment but tried his best to

participate in all activities. There were also the spontaneous ones who were excited to share all their experiences. Then there were the hyperactive ones who had to be kept busy all the time to get rid of all the energy. Active participation instead of passive listening countered this behaviour.

At times I observed some intolerance towards peers who were viewed as weaker for example to resist the wolf in the story. Some were not as dexterous when they had to handle a pair of scissors which could be because they were slightly younger and their fingers were not as developed yet. They showed some impatience at their own inability, and I had to reassure them that they could finish at their own tempo. Judging from the different kinds of children and their behaviour the need for stories emanated once more and more so to assist in the development of social skills. Furthermore, the teachers needed to be aware when they could feel empowered or when they needed to empower the children (SQs 1.4.1 and 1.4.3).

In addition to the roles of the teachers and the input of the children, it was important to gather information on teacher training. This was to get a sense of the place and role of stories in the curriculum of FP pre-service teachers at the HE institutions. Furthermore, the training of teachers has an impact of what transpires in class.

5.6 ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE THAT THE HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) INSTITUTION PLAYS

I interviewed the lecturers separately. The information that follows is an attempt to analyse the data given by these two lecturers.

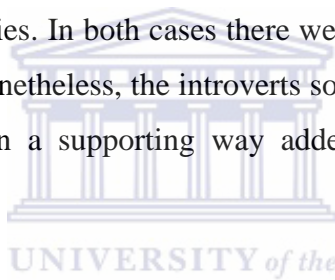
5.6.1 Analysis of what the lecturers said

Besides the positive responses by both lecturers the additional information by the second lecturer was significant in the sense that it informed me of the central role that the curriculum plays in the training of teachers. It suggests that the curriculum of the DoE informs the programme of the

teacher training. Similarly this information showed that the theory is translated into practical implementation.

Linked to the first question the “*Yes*” responses of both stated that stories do have a prominent place in the training programme of the pre-service teachers. The fact that stories were used in various phases of lessons as well as a stand-alone lesson supported the notion that stories are important in the programme. At this stage no mention was made of integration yet. From the responses to the follow-up of question three it was evident that the lecturers proceeded in a very structured way to impart the ideas of varied approaches for storytelling techniques. I particularly liked the ideas where the various activities included a multi-sensory approach.

Based on the responses of the lecturers, the students at the two institutions presented very similar attitudes when they had to tell stories. In both cases there were students who were confident and those who were self-conscious. Nonetheless, the introverts soon acquired the skills to tell stories. I assumed that peer discussion in a supporting way added to the changed behaviours and attitudes in this group.



Linked to the previous question the peer assessment surfaced again but knowing that students are sometimes hesitant to give an honest assessment it was a good idea to brief them before the assessment. Students do not always have the skills to assess if they were not given guidelines. Personally, I would like to believe that they do not perform well only because the storytelling is linked to a mark or a percentage of their course work. However, I know that marks often serve as motivation why students work harder.

I view this question as part of the previous one as I mentioned that assessment should not be the only motivation to use stories. It is important that students should realise that telling of stories need to be spontaneous and not something that is forced upon them. Clearly the lecturers regard storytelling as vital in the daily programme. I needed to triangulate this with the perspectives of the students in this regard. The one lecturer already at this stage alluded briefly to the value of stories as teaching tools in various situations and across the curriculum. Linked to the previous question was the idea of using stories in an integrated way across the curriculum. Both regarded

such an approach as useful and in addition, lecturer two stated very clearly the significance of telling stories. She seemed adamant that the role of stories is one of the most important building blocks in the lives of these children.

To address the topic of HIV and AIDS was clearly a priority and both mentioned the use of stories in this regard. An interesting approach was the 70 cm tall cloth persona dolls that the faculty purchased for this purpose suggested in the thesis of Smith (2009). The dolls served a similar purpose as stories where the children could identify with the dolls. They also served to symbolise the HIV and AIDS affected people. The idea of diversity and non-stereotyping mentioned by the second lecturer linked closely with the life skills, and with the research that stories can be used to sensitise children in order to minimize or prevent intolerance towards HIV and AIDS.

The fact that both lecturers agreed that HIV and AIDS should form part of the FP at school level confirmed that at least at training level students get this message. The information added by the second lecturer portrayed just how important she regarded this inclusion. The fact that she used the verb “embedded” stresses the necessity of the inclusion in the programme especially if HIV and AIDS are embedded in issues like “mortality, sexuality, morbidity” that link closely to it. Their responses to the following question both included stories as mechanism or method to introduce the concept HIV and AIDS. Furthermore, the use of puppets, music, art and role play for example, supported the method that I wish to convey to teachers. The relevance of stories as well as the integration at all possible angles is a very salient point. In the interviews of the lecturers the importance of stories as well as the impact thereof is underscored. Both MRQs are hence addressed.

As a form of triangulation I present the analysis of the responses from the pre-service education students of the same institution as the first lecturer.

5.6.2 Analysis of the input by pre-service teachers

Viewing the data gathered from the relevant lecturer it was not surprising to find that all their training was based on the WCED curriculum, and that storytelling was included in the programme. These responses aligned with the response of their lecturer. I could not deduct whether their training included practical and/or theory with regards to storytelling as eight of the students indicated that both practical and theory were included while two indicated practical and four indicated theory. This seemed confusing as it gave the impression that two students did not get the theory and four did not apply the theory on a practical level. These responses did not articulate with the lecturer's response that the training included both theory and practical. In my opinion the students were exposed to practical during their teaching practice at the schools although this does not address the issue of the training programme at the university where the lecturer includes the practical. Perhaps the students who indicated either theory or practical did not fully comprehend the question.

When I analysed the written responses to the fourth question it was obvious that most students regarded storytelling as an enjoyable activity for both the students and the children. It was an interactive activity that added excitement to their lessons. However, I was not surprised that a few students felt nervous. Fortunately one student's initial nervousness turned into enjoyment. The realisation to develop the skill indicates that this student was aware of the importance of this technique as this was part of lesson presentation.

In summary the question on integration stated that it is a good idea because it "*improves the literacy levels and holistic development of the children*". The reference to literacy could however, refer to either literacy just in a language context and not necessarily across the curriculum. It would be interesting to know what exactly is meant by the concept literacy. The opinion that it is "*vitaly important and quite easy to do*" posed the question to me whether the student really understood the concept "integration" when she decided it was easy to do. When you have not worked out a programme yet, it might be a bit presumptuous to decide that it is easy. The one that was closest to grasping the full implications of integration said that it helps to introduce new contexts. I am of the opinion that most of the students focused on the story as a

stand-alone lesson in the literacy programme and not really as integrated across the curriculum. Perhaps the question had to be formulated differently to make it clearer.

It became clear from the students' responses regarding HIV and AIDS that it was important and it formed part of their training. Although the responses that it should be part of the Grade R programme, was not a "Yes" by all, most of them agreed that it should be included. Two were more specific and stated that it should be on a very basic level. Considering their responses to this question it was not necessary to respond to the final question where they had to explain if they were in disagreement to include HIV and AIDS in the Grade R programme.

With the exception of one student, nobody stated that the concept HIV and AIDS was addressed to Grade R at their practicing school. However, the material to address this important aspect at the school where it was included in the programme was not available. There was therefore no evidence that it was in fact included in the programme.

Based on the responses of the pre-service teachers and their lecturer the articulation was fairly good. There was good correlation between what the lecturer said and what the students said in terms of the integration of stories in the FP curriculum as well as the importance of stories. The theory included in the course was implemented in the practical components of the course. However, with regards to the HIV and AIDS issue it did not always seem possible for the students to apply their theory at the schools. If the teachers were not prepared to include it the pre-service teachers were unable to take command and teach such lessons. Pre-service teachers are given lessons to teach and have to stick to those lessons. I do feel that there are ways to address this and will expand on this in my recommendations. The general perception of what the students expressed culminated in the idea that stories are important in the FP programme and should be an integral part of the curriculum. Furthermore HIV and AIDS should be addressed but was still an issue that many of the teachers did not include or discuss with the children. The students agreed that stories could be a useful tool to address this important aspect of the curriculum. Additionally the responses of both lecturers and students supported the MRQs. These responses are furthermore verified against the presentations of the researcher. In terms of content analysis the themes of integration and empowerment featured strongly.

I carefully selected stories to compare the responses of the lecturers and those of the teachers, and the presentations of the teachers to my own methodology. My approach was therefore based on the MRQs namely, “*Do teachers use stories in Grade R classes and if so, how do they use stories*” as well as “*Are stories integrated with other areas of the curriculum?*” As I presented the stories the subsidiary questions were addressed in the various sessions. Before I embark on my own presentations I need to explain the rationale behind the choice of stories.

5.7 SELECTION OF STORIES

I was sensitive to the fact that I worked with mixed abilities children but moreover, the children differed in terms of background and personalities. Of course the main focus was encapsulated in the idea of illustrating how the stories could serve as teaching tools to empower the teachers to use their available resources. Of these resources the story is one of the most available, accessible, cost-effective and powerful ones.

The selected stories in no way mentioned HIV and AIDS in the story at all. I could however, see how the stories could be manipulated to address the issue of HIV and AIDS. I wish to present my analyses in the section to follow. The selection by no means indicates that these are the best stories. There are indeed many other stories which can be used effectively.

In using *Caterpillar's Dream* (Faulkner, 2003a) I managed to transfer the idea to the children that each of them and especially children who are seriously ill are allowed to dream and hope that the dreams will come true. Some of them shared their dreams which mostly included places that they wanted to see or careers that they wished to pursue. At the same time they became aware that often your friends or family might laugh at your dreams but you had to believe in these dreams and hopes. What surfaced was that they understood the difference between the dreams they have when asleep and the dreams which portray their hopes, and that no matter what the circumstances are, they or any member of their families could dream. It was not that difficult or emotionally trying to tell them that Caterpillar can be seen as somebody who has a fear or serious illness like HIV and AIDS but refused to give up on her dreams. The teacher saw the connection too and how simple it can be to sensitise the children without too much detail. In this

lesson the idea of acceptance and support was illuminated (SQ 1.4.1). The teachers and children interpreted their own social reality by realising their own potential (SQ 1.4.3). Teachers could be empowered and subsequently empower the children.

With reference to the second story, I believe that any person is allowed to be anywhere in the environment, and that the perpetrator does not have the right to accost you, yet the reality still remains that children cannot defend themselves when in danger. *The Wide Mouthed Frog* (Faulkner, 1996) therefore served as an excellent example to warn children against dangers lurking around them, sometimes even in areas where you least expect them. The fact that children are explorers, often lead them into dangerous areas and people who are not trustworthy. I used the story to warn them against dangers or traumas in life but added that HIV and AIDS are like some dangerous situations or a dangerous disease but as with the caterpillar in the first story, you can confront the disease. There are support structures available. It is however, good to steer clear from situations which are as dangerous as the big crocodile in the story. In terms of interpreting their reality the children became aware of lurking dangers but in a sensitive way. Many children are constantly bombarded with the stark realities in society and become desensitised. The teachers realised that there are more euphemistic ways to impart the stark realities and still get the message across which will empower them (SQ 1.4.1). I used the animals in the Afrikaans translation as they were more familiar to the children in the South African schools. They could identify better with the more well-known animals. The English version had the kangaroo, koala bear, possum, and emu with the more familiar bad crocodile.

The story of *Cheeky* (De Villiers, 2003) worked very well as the children were informed that it is important to regard their bodies as private. More importantly, other people should know this and respect it. This proved to me that it should not have been that difficult for teachers to address the issue of HIV and AIDS. Yet, when I presented this story I realised that there could still be children who will not confide in somebody when they have been abused because their trust was broken. Although they might have been threatened by the perpetrator to keep quiet about it, they could mistrust most people.

To convey to children that HIV and AIDS could be the result of improper conduct seemed to be the difficult part and challenge for the teachers. Nevertheless, to tell them that sometimes people get diseases because they were in contact with other people who have the diseases seemed to be an option. There was no need to go into detail about sexuality. It is however, necessary to be clear that contact is more than just holding hands. Children seem know that their parents love one another and share intimate moments. The story assisted in conveying the message that HIV and AIDS is dangerous and life-threatening to anybody, irrespective of age, but this does not mean that you have to isolate people with HIV and AIDS, provided they respect your privacy and body. Besides addressing the research questions, the implementation of the approach provided an opportunity for the children, to experience and enjoy the stories. In the presentation of the stories the teachers realised how they could be empowered by using stories, especially when the stories are integrated with other areas in the curriculum (SQ 1.4.1). In addition they became aware that their capacities or professional development could be enhanced if they applied the observed activities by adjusting them to meet their specific needs (SQ 1.4.2).

5.7.1 Analysis of the integrated approach

The activities based on the stories as listed above included LOs, ASs, teaching and learning aids and also the approach and activities.

As I discuss each lesson I indicate how integration was intended and how fears and traumas like HIV and AIDS could be linked. In my presentations integration did not always form part of all aspects of the curriculum but will be included in the information that will be issued to teachers after completion of the research. The next discussion is the presentation of the first story.

(a) Analysis of *Caterpillar's Dream*

Although this story does not directly use the terms HIV and AIDS it was used as link to sensitise children to the needs of others and to illustrate the impact of an uncaring society as shown by Caterpillar's fellow insects. Most of the teaching aids were easily accessible, and teachers could adapt them to suit their own needs and situations.

(i) Analysis of Session One: Literacy integrated with Life Skills

The children were immediately interested when they saw the insects in the jar so I achieved the objective to stimulate them. Their excitement increased when I set the insects free. That the stimulus worked, was evident by the exciting interaction that followed.

(ii) Analysis of Session Two: Literacy

The children enjoyed listening to the story told in different voice modulations for the different characters. The fact that no pictures were shown during the first telling allowed their imaginations free reign. This was evident when they briefly discussed the story. The power of the imagination was even more obvious when they shared their own experiences with regards to some of the insects. The encounters that they shared with these insects were at times highly impossible but added a different dimension to the lesson. Both the fellow-listeners and I enjoyed these stories. They were all engrossed, and it became clear that those who were more exposed to story-telling, were more imaginative. This claim is made because I asked them about story-telling at home. In contrast, during the discussion, there were children who did not really know all the insects.

During this session I managed to elicit enjoyment from the children. They showed some understanding of the story (DoE, 2002c:14). Some of them made brave attempts to relate their own stories in their own words (DoE, 2002c: 15). Although they were shy initially they were able to act out parts of the story, and join in choruses at the appropriate time (DoE, 2002c:14).

(iii) Analysis of Session Three: Literacy integrated with Life Skills (Health Promotion)

When the children discussed how the caterpillar changed into a butterfly they were dealing with the metamorphosis of the butterfly. The idea of a tiny seed changing into a baby over nine months could be linked here as teachers find this a difficult topic to introduce or even include in their programmes. Stories could be effectively used for this purpose and teachers did not have to

go into detail. The importance to teach this must be stressed so that teachers can eventually make the link to HIV and AIDS, sexuality and sex education. Therefore I wanted them to connect the idea that HIV and AIDS could change people physically but should not change the attitudes of people around them.

When the children viewed the pictures, it not only added to the excitement but also seemed to serve as confirmation for what they knew. Their knowledge only referred to the known insects. In my opinion and also the nods from the teachers who observed, it was clear that the children felt some sense of empathy towards Caterpillar. They agreed that everybody has the right to dream like Caterpillar and to believe that the dreams will come true. I emphasised that even when you are very ill, for example, like people with diseases like cancer or tuberculosis or HIV and AIDS, you or somebody in a similar position can dream of getting better. Furthermore, they seemed to understand that people with infectious diseases are not excluded from making informed decisions regarding personal and community health issues. It was interesting to see how they looked at one another before agreeing that very ill people should not feel lonely. This will not be necessary if you speak to them or play with them. There was no problem to agree that a true friend should at all times support one in need. The fact that they agreed was by no means a guarantee that they would do it. At least I conveyed the idea about values like caring, friendship and positive attitudes. I deliberately steered away from tolerance. The concept, “tolerance” poses a problem as it could suggest a superficial or forced feeling with “acceptance” as the better option.

The story was implemented to sensitise the children about the importance of reaching your own dreams and supporting other to reach their dreams.

(iv) Analysis of Session Four: Literacy integrated with Life Skills (Arts and Culture)

This session focused more on my approach where learners were taught in an integrated way. I allowed them to role-play where they depicted some scenes from the story. Most of the children participated spontaneously while a few were initially shy but eventually took part. When the shy children were allowed to role-play scenes where no talking was required they were more willing

to take part. With the second round some of the shy ones already started interacting on a verbal level too even though with just one or two word sentences. This showed that the story can assist to encourage linguistic skills (SQ 1.4.3). In addition they illustrated scenes from the story.

(v) Analysis of Session Five: Literacy integrated with Life Skills (Arts and Culture)

The fact that the children interacted with a story about a butterfly probably ensured that they could learn the song “Butterflies” (Appendix K1-4) so quickly. They were able to answer the questions based on the song. Repetition and their keenness were contributory factors. Additionally, a person can ascribe the freedom that they were given as another factor in the success of the session. I managed to address the development of social skills as well because they were interacting with one another as they performed the relevant actions (SQ 1.4.3).

(vi) Analysis of Session Six: Literacy integrated with Life Skills (Arts and Culture)

As a link to the performing arts in the previous session the children used visual arts in this session to illustrate the story. Their creativity knew no boundaries as they intently focused to produce their insects. Perhaps the music in the background served as further stimulus to produce the collages. It was interesting to observe that some children put the paste on the brightly coloured side instead of the dull side. This indicated that it was probably just an error on their part or perhaps they did not listen to the instruction. At this level children would most likely prefer a bright picture to a monochromatic picture. I remember how a five year old child said that a book with black and white pictures is not a real book. On questioning her she replied that a real book has colour pictures (personal conversation with 5 year old, Aug. 2012). This supports the notion that the children did not intentionally reject a monochromatic picture although the example cannot be regarded as a representative sample to generalise.

(vii) Analysis of Session Seven: Literacy integrated with Life Skills (Arts and Culture)

During this session I could once again establish the link between language skills and arts. The way in which the children carefully carried out the instructions was indicative of their listening abilities. Some children first looked at the others and then followed. Most of them therefore could fly like butterflies, hop like crickets, fly like ladybirds, fly like dragonflies or walk fast like busy ants. Those who played on the non-melodic percussion instruments were not always very rhythmical but nevertheless produced some sounds and enjoyed doing so (MRQ 2).

The more calming movement was necessary after all the excitement but did not bring everybody to a halt as to be expected after all the energetic movements. The calming movement may not have calmed everybody immediately but they were focused on the main character again namely the caterpillar that changed into a butterfly. I do realise that they wanted to carry on longer with the movements but there were unfortunately time constraints. This session was indeed exciting and enjoyable to both the children and me.

(viii) Analysis of Session Eight: Literacy

The children already showed that most of them understood the story and were now expected to create their own stories. In doing this it would prove to me that they had an idea of the right values.

The story box was a good choice to stimulate creativity. In addition, the children had to display their linguistic skills. What added to the success was that these items were in a box so that they did not know beforehand what they would get. The collection of miniature insects and branches served as stimuli and immediately aroused their curiosity and interest. Similarly, this added to the challenge because they had to think quickly once they took the item out of the box. I did, however, allow them to think so that they were not embarrassed by not being able to contribute. Furthermore, in their groups they were allowed to help one another when they got stuck. I realised that at this level the stories would be short and not always very coherent. The groups

worked well as this enhanced the development of social skills. I was convinced of the power of the story as teaching tool and especially to act as a binding tool across the curriculum (MRQ 2).

(b) Analysis of *The wide mouthed frog*

Once again the teaching apparatus used was not inaccessible and could easily be adapted or replaced by items that could produce similar results. Non-melodic instruments could be replaced by using empty tins filled with seeds or sand or pebbles to produce sound.

(i) Analysis of Session One: Life Orientation (Arts & Culture) integrated with Literacy

Similar to the previous story the idea was the overarching intention to establish the value of stories as teaching tools to develop linguistic and social skills. Furthermore the subsidiary research questions were addressed in the specific activities.

The opening song, “Five Little Speckled Frogs” (See Appendix K 1-4), has a catchy tune which immediately sparked spontaneous movement amongst some of the children. They also thoroughly enjoyed sharing their experiences about frogs. I again sensed that some were not real experiences but rather imaginary ones. Using the imagination is always a welcome feature in any lesson. The interaction with the song, especially the croaking, was met with great enthusiasm. The cries of disgust by some when I enquired who would normally eat worms were probably because I did not qualify it clearly. They assumed that I was referring to them instead of one of the characters in the animal world. They eagerly awaited the answers which were in the story.

(ii) Analysis of Session Two: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation

It was necessary to use different voice modulations for the different characters so that the children could follow the story better. The idea to withhold the pictures helped to tap into their imaginary world. Perhaps with the blue crane I should have described it in the story and explained to them that it is the national bird of South Africa and is found on the five cent coin. Nonetheless, I showed them the pictures afterwards which allowed them to identify and associate the pictures with the animals or birds.

(iii) Analysis of Session Three: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation

It was interesting to notice that some children could associate some of the pictures with words. They were thus already reading. When I showed them the pictures their proud faces served as confirmation when they discovered that they were correct in their descriptions. They could also see how animals, which were unknown to them, looked.

They displayed good listening skills as they could easily repeat the familiar sounding phrases or sounds. It was not such a big issue to tell them about the lurking dangers because they are bombarded with this at home, through the media and at school. This is as result of all the crimes committed especially involving children. For the teachers this should therefore not be a difficult task but I assume that their problem is embedded in their fear to address fears and traumas like HIV and AIDS. When they use the story as teaching tool it should empower them to include fears and traumas (SQ 1.4.1). I communicated to the children that the crocodile could be the nasty one who avoids people with serious illnesses. It was also possible to tell them that the crocodile can be seen as the person who abuses us, who lures us away from our family and friends and shows no respect for our bodies.

By using the animals as metaphors and symbols for HIV and AIDS issues I wanted to show the teachers how they could use the story to transfer this information. Similarly the children had an idea of HIV and AIDS. Although the children agreed that the crocodile was the symbol of evil I cannot conclude that they will be able to transfer this metaphor to the real world. It will be the duty of the teachers to inculcate these values where the children recognise danger and share their fears.

(iv) Analysis of Session Four: Life Orientation integrated with Literacy

Once again I did not experience any deliberate unwillingness to get participation and cooperation from the children. The volunteers were not difficult to get. In my opinion, the response is better when you ask for volunteers at this level because often most of them indicate willingness. Yet sometimes this request might backfire if nobody responds. I have fortunately always experienced that at this level there is an eagerness to please the teacher. At this stage the shy ones were fewer

than with the previous story. This could be ascribed to three things: firstly, they had become used to me; secondly, they had gained confidence, and thirdly, they were in role play and not themselves. Moreover, the inference that I could make here was that the story assisted them in their linguistic development because they were able to articulate some of the dialogue on their own (SQ 1.4.3).

(v) Analysis of Session Five: Life Orientation integrated with Literacy

The art works were obviously not exact replicas of the original animals but good enough representations on their level. In this case it was more the tactile enjoyment to work with the dough. It furthermore served to tell their story. Viewed in this regard and evaluating the pleasure it gave the children I can safely conclude that the outcomes were realised.

(vi) Analysis of Session Six: Life Orientation integrated with Literacy

For the children to sing came very naturally although not always in tune. This was however, not a major consideration at the time. I reminded them to listen to the person next to them. This was to prevent them trying to shout or sing louder than their peers. It also assisted with the pitching. My main objective was for them to learn a song that linked to the story.

The rote learning worked for this group but mainly because they understood the content. Repetition was another factor that ensured the memorisation of the tune and lyrics of the song. At this stage children cannot really read and therefore they would not have been able to read the lyrics, staff notation or tonic solfa.

True to children, at this level it was not difficult for them to create actions for the song. Playing on the non-melodic instruments to accompany the singing was merely rote playing. They would probably have been able to recognise the eurhythmic values like the crotchet for walking. In saying this, I could have attempted to show them these note values to imitate notes and accompany the tune in specific sections. This is a suggestion that I can present to the teachers.

(vii) Analysis of Session Seven: Life Orientation

The physical development as a sub section of Life Orientation was well received by all the children. At this stage some of them seemed to have used much of their pent-up energy but many still had surplus energy. As they were not instructed which movements to make, there was a mixture of movements to depict each of the animals. There was a variety of mouse-like movements, flying birds, hopping frogs and slithering crocodiles. The movements were enhanced by accompanying sounds. It was clear that the story presented a myriad of opportunities to free the creativity in children.

(viii) Analysis of Session Eight: Literacy

Finally the focus was on the language skills per se. This involvement with the story forced the children to share their positive and negative experiences of the story. I sensed that teachers did not feel empowered enough to deal with the issue of HIV and AIDS. It follows that most of them did not think that children in this phase should be informed at all. The story box was therefore used to show them how to bridge this gap and feel empowered to deal with the fearful and traumatic issues (MRQ 1). In doing this they would similarly assist the development of linguistic and social skills (MRQ 2).

You can acquire substantial information by just analysing the drawings made by children. In the same way you can get to know your children better if you listen to their stories. Although I found the stories that they told very entertaining, I only recorded a few (see Appendix Q). Some children were extremely good at sharing their negative and positive feelings about the stories. The opportunity to listen to them gave me an idea of their verbal skills. Clearly the children who were more spontaneous were slightly better than those who were more reticent. This is however, not a generalisation as there were shy ones who could articulate clearly but just lacked confidence.

This story served to engage the children on various levels. They were able to talk about the story, sing related songs, draw and make clay models as well as move to suitable tunes that linked with the story (MRQ 2). In addition, awareness was hopefully created with regards to their own

safety. There are of course many other activities that could be used if there were no limitations such as time.

The analysis of the next story is an additional way to suggest the value of stories in the curriculum.

(c) Analysis of *Cheeky*

If it is not possible to draw the pictures yourself there are ways of getting it done or with modern technology the teachers can access the pictures and download printable pictures. However, if it is a school with limited resources, the old fashioned overhead projector can be utilised to make drawings and project pictures for the children to view.

(i) Analysis of Session One: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation

My goal in this session was to establish whether the children could relate to the pictures, and in doing so, conduct a discussion. The identification was not too difficult, and they seemingly enjoyed the activity with the masks. The problems were only with the identification of the warthog which was not surprising as it was not an animal that they had frequently encountered. There seemed to be some recollection when I mentioned the story of the Lion King. I added a picture of a baby crocodile which they decided was less dangerous. The fact that they did not deem the baby crocodile as dangerous was surprising seeing that they regarded the other animals as dangerous. They opted for the leopard, jackal, crocodile and elephant. I did not ask them about the rabbit and the meerkat as I wanted to focus on the dangers. Maybe I should have included them to hear their opinions on these animals too. It was evident that the children could fairly accurately articulate the dangerous animals and hopefully also other dangers in their immediate environments.

(ii) Analysis of Session Two: Literacy

The children at first struggled to guess the animals correctly by just listening to the clues but eventually managed. Telling the story using voice modulations added to their delight and they soon joined in to imitate Cheeky's words. Again repetition was a factor to assist them in memorising the words.

Their responses to content questions indicated that they were sensitive to such dangers and to the fact that there may be children in their midst who need support. They grasped the issue of HIV and AIDS and it was obviously not something that they heard for the first time. When I asked them where they heard it they were not quite sure. I decided not to involve the teacher in the discussion because I did not want the children to feel intimidated by two adults.

(iii) Analysis of Session Three: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Arts & Culture)

This session presented an interesting mix of movements to portray the different animals. What one child perceived as big movements was not necessarily what the next child perceived as big movements. They were anxious to do their best and the spontaneity was infectious where one child did not want to be less energetic than the other. When you observe how they almost competed to come up with original movements to present the story it was clear that their vivid imaginations were applied to great effect. The imagination is too often neglected and should be regarded as a tool of learning (Egan, 1988:17). This view is in a way shared by Saunders (2005:24), although just phrased differently, when she speaks about performance drama. In her opinion, words come alive when you link them with movements. This was my experience when I saw the children expressing the story in this way. Their movements were linked to the story.

(iv) Analysis of Session Four: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Arts & Culture)

The expression in another art form this time served to support their ideas and thoughts about the story. They now had a very clear picture of the story having listened to it, discussed it and moved

to it. As with the clay models based on the first story, again the pre-schematic stage will show what the child perceived as most important about the subject (Lowenfeld & Edwards, 1987). Their drawings had certain sections more pronounced than others which were in line with the pre-schematic phase. Some of the children fitted in the lower range of the schematic phase, five to eight years, where the drawings are more proportional and realistic with order in spatial relationships (Lowenfeld & Edwards, 1987). Their pride knew no boundaries when they saw their own art works on display.

Drawings could be analysed on a deeper level to find out more about the child but this was beyond the scope of the research. However, the idea need not be abandoned but could be considered for further research.

(v) Analysis of Session Five: Literacy integrated with Life Orientation (Arts & Culture)

The activity where the children had to apply various skills proved to be more challenging than I imagined. At first they had to be able to organise themselves into roles. This took care of linguistic and social skills (SQ 1.4.1). One had to assume the role of a leader who guided the rest. I acted as facilitator because I wanted to see how well they could do the exercise. The leader was nominated by the peers and turned out to be a capable leader. In follow-up sessions I decided to rotate this role so that other children had the opportunity to develop leadership skills. I found that the shy ones were now keener to participate in the activities although still a bit reserved. The children were excited to participate and especially Cheeky's words were shouted at the top of their voices. The pictures served as stimuli for their movements where the various animals were imitated. Dramatisation not only enhanced their creativity and innovation, as stated by Saunders (2005:24), but the stories reflected many human characteristics and situations such as love, sadness, fear and joy. For the Grade R children these were of the important characteristics which they could engage in when dramatising sections of stories. According to Saunders (2005:23) "... stories provide a safe and secure environment to learn about difficult aspects of life ...". The Grade R children and those presumably affected by HIV needed this safe environment to help them cope with the situations they faced. They could escape into this safe environment while

listening to the stories and identify with the characters often without revealing their own position or situation. This addresses the impact of stories (SQ 1.4.4).

The final activity where they had to say something about the pictures in the book was met with enthusiasm with very few of them not eager to join in. It was easier for them to mention their likes and dislikes with regards to the animals. Here their likes and dislikes were mainly based on the kind of animal that they liked and disliked. To motivate their likes and dislikes was more complex. My intention to sensitise them to understand that we might get pestered by other people but that we have the right to resist unwanted attention seemed to have been conveyed to them. However, this has to be stressed all the time and I do not doubt that the teachers do this. The only concern is that teachers do not necessarily connect these experiences and warnings to HIV and AIDS. The teachers who shied away from the topic became conscious of the possibilities opened up by using stories.



5.8 CONCLUSION

In the sessions with children and young listeners, I realised that the more I told the story, the better I became in understanding how to approach the children as I was just a visiting teacher. Certainly there has to be the confidence and the will to tell stories and I believe these attributes will also become part of you with more exposure and practice (SQ 1.4.2). In my opinion you definitely have to enjoy what you are doing to impart this to your listeners.

As I intended to find out whether teachers integrated their learning material across the curriculum by means of stories as teaching tools (MRQ 2), I need to reiterate Fenwick (1990:40) with regards to the “seamless robe”. The “seamless robe” I interpret as a way in which stories integrated with the other subjects to assist children to make those connections with the various subjects. This in turn would not only empower teachers but also the children. I can confirm that stories help children to make connections. As mentioned in Chapter Four it would possibly have added to the data if the teachers formulated their understanding of the concept “stories” and it was not just assumed that they knew, based on the fact that they answered the questions about stories fairly comprehensively.

In the presentations I attempted to reach the following objectives:

- (a) To allow Grade R children an opportunity to escape from reality and become part of an imaginary world and use their imagination (SQ 1.4.4);
- (b) To allow the children to express themselves through singing, movement and role-play (SQ 1.4.3);
- (c) To allow them to interact with the story by re-telling the story and tell their own stories linked to the same theme (SQ 1.4.3);
- (d) To develop listening (aural) and oral skills (SQ 1.4.3);
- (e) To stimulate the children to develop their creativity and to allow them to use their associations of the story, their observations and developing frame of reference and transfer these to create something (SQ 1.4.4); and
- (f) To convey values of caring, friendship and positive attitudes (SQ 1.4.4).

The stories I selected encapsulated Sipe's (2002) expressive engagement as mentioned in Chapter Two. Children who are traumatised respond more spontaneously when they are part of a story and their own status or identities are not necessarily revealed. In my opinion, in this ego-centric age group this was an ideal situation to allow them to live out their ego-centricity in a structured way or within a specific setting like a story, while they develop language and social skills. This addresses the impact of stories (MRQ 2, SQs 1.4.3 & 1.4.4).

Smith (2004:30) sees reading stories as creating a barrier where eye contact is missing. The added advantage in the presentations was that I could also observe the expressions on the faces of the children. I could see when they were enjoying the story, when they felt sad or even irritated. These are the same aspects highlighted by Wright (2007:11). As soon as I noticed that they were getting tired or that their attention wavered I could intervene and allow them to participate in various ways, often not planned but spontaneously. By this I do not suggest that I did not plan the presentation but rather that I allowed for moments dictated by the situation. The teachers can similarly be empowered when they use stories and integrate the stories with other areas in the curriculum (SQ 1.4.1). As the planning and presentations develop the teachers will become more efficient and enhance their capacity and professional development (SQ 1.4.2). This

is an on-going process where teachers will learn from one another as they share best practices and ideas.

In Appendix N examples of stories that children created are presented. The stimuli that gave rise to these stories were very unique, for example the crocodile story was prompted by two Provita biscuits held together and snapping it. It can be assumed that the creative ability was the result of constant exposure to good renditions of stories at home and at pre-school but also that there was freedom to express themselves.

The question remains whether I reached the objectives that I listed. Observing the children and especially some of them with traumatic or insecure backgrounds, I seemed to create an opportunity for them to escape from reality and become part of an imaginary world as well as identify with characters that had similar situations. Secondly, the children expressed themselves through singing, dancing and role-play with the story as the frame of reference. Thirdly, they were interacting with the story by re-telling the story, and telling their own stories linked to the same theme. Fourthly, they were at all times exposed to listening and speaking on more than one level where they listened to me speaking as well as listening to themselves, their peers and verbalising their own stories or opinions about the stories they listened to. Finally, it seemed that most of them were stimulated to develop their creativity, and I allowed them to use their associations of the story, their observations and developing frame of reference and transfer these aspects to create something. These creations were either art works like drawings, movement or stories which they shared. The MRQs were therefore adhered to and realised to a great extent.

The analysis and interpretation in this chapter indicated to what effect teachers applied stories in their programmes. In applying conceptual analysis I made notes while observing the teachers and children. I then organised the data to derive themes and categories. These themes and categories link with the MRQs. Although integration was not always with other subjects in the curriculum, it cannot be generalised that the teachers do not realise the educational value of such approaches. However, it was evident that the teachers needed some more guidance to plan lessons. Besides, they had to be convinced that they have to plan using stories as their frame of reference. The planning seemed ad hoc with regards to the selection of the stories as the stories were not always on the level of the children. In most cases the story was a regular feature on the programme but

not carefully considered with regards to integration with the arts and across the curriculum. Too often the story as a compulsory part of the curriculum was just read as an activity at end of the day or to get the children to be calm. This did not articulate with the responses that the teachers gave when I questioned them about the value of stories. Most of them did not regard the story as a reward but in some cases the reality proved otherwise. This was therefore something that needed much more attention. The presentations thus attempted to illustrate how teachers could use stories and in doing to be empowered (SQ 1.4.1). In presenting activities it was also to establish if teachers could enhance their professional development to use stories and link it to issues like HIV and AIDS (SQ 1.4.2). Additionally stories were integrated with other areas in the curriculum to assess the impact of integration and the creative use of stories on the Grade R children with regards to language and social skills, and the focus of stories (SQ 1.4.3). Moreover the characteristics and educational value of stories were investigated (SQ 1.4.4).

The teachers did however, realise the value of stories and also that stories need not be reserved for language lessons only. They realised that the use of stories could empower them to be more creative. From their responses I gathered that they understood the concept “stories” as well as how the notion of integration could work. The children responded more spontaneously but there were still a few who were a bit hesitant to be fully submerged into such an interactive approach in almost every lesson. Using content analysis allowed me therefore to establish firstly, whether Grade R teachers use stories and if so, how they use the stories; secondly, whether the stories are to integrate other subjects across the curriculum in this case study.

The conclusions and recommendations that I have arrived at are explicated in the next chapter. Furthermore, I attempt to highlight the limitations that I experienced.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: LIVING HAPPILY EVER AFTER, AFTER CONSIDERING ALL FACTORS ...

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the conclusions, recommendations, limitations and further research are presented. The conclusions are based on the findings while the recommendations link with the conceptual analysis of the findings. Limitations are presented, followed by future research and the contribution made by this research.

In consideration with the research questions the afore-mentioned sections are presented. The main research questions are examined namely *“Do teachers use stories and if so, how do they use stories?”* and *“Are stories integrated with other subjects in the curriculum?”*

The subsidiary questions emanating from the main research questions are:

- a. Can stories empower teachers?
- b. Can activities presented by the researcher enhance the teachers’ capacity of professional development to use stories and link them to issues like HIV and AIDS?
- c. What is the impact of integration, and the creative use of stories on the Grade R children?
- d. What are the characteristics and educational value of stories?

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions were based on the teachers’ responses to questionnaires and their presentations. Furthermore the conclusions include the biographical details of the schools and the responses of the informal conversations with the children. Issues pertaining to the DoE are addressed and finally I deduced conclusions from the lecturers’ interviews and those of the students. Teachers’ responses include their attitudes and approaches as stated in Chapter Five and the challenges that they face. Interlinked in the ensuing discussion are the research questions.

6.2.1 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS

Considering MRQ 1 the following discussion is evidence that teachers are empowered to handle the Grade R classes. However, the empowerment is not always based on the use of stories. Teachers allow children to make some decisions which then empower the children.

The fact that all the teachers were not necessarily qualified pre-school teachers did not deter them from trying to create a learning environment. I found it especially encouraging to see how dedicated the teachers were even though pre-schools did not seem to be a priority with the DoE if you consider the allocation per child in pre-school (see Chapter Two, 2.12).

The FP teachers tried their best for their children and deemed them the caregivers in the absence of the parents. They displayed a deep sense of commitment to execute their tasks. It was clear that they could provide the necessary support to assist the young children in developing socially and linguistically while at the same time empowering themselves.

Getting the teachers to attend to all the children on demand sometimes posed a challenge. Interestingly, in all the classes some of the children had a way of demanding attention even when the teachers were busy. Often they were reprimanded in a motherly way to be patient when they could not be attended to immediately. The most impatient children were most likely those who received little attention at home. I observed them to be more disruptive or noisy. The fact that Tr E for example, did not have to prepare activities on two levels like Tr D, allowed her more time to spend with each child. This in no way suggests that the children in Tr D's class did not get individual attention. The time spent with each child was just shorter.

Whatever the teachers did was done with conviction, and learning took place although not always in the most creative ways. Tr D, one of three permanent DoE appointees, and Tr E were very diligent and thorough in their work. It was evident that the teachers had a positive attitude towards their children and their work. The positive attitudes towards their work augured well to extract the best from the children. Whilst the teachers fostered good relationships with the

children and used stories not all of them addressed fears and traumas like the issue of HIV and AIDS.

6.2.2 SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS BASED ON TEACHERS' INPUT:

THE APPROACHES

These conclusions are based on specific activities presented by the teachers. I observed similarities and therefore do not engage in every single one.

(a) The curriculum requirements are often too strictly adhered to in the teaching approach

As a result of their diligence and commitment teachers stuck very closely to the prescribed curriculum. This resulted in an almost fragmented approach which contrasted with the notion of integration across the curriculum. In the ensuing sections the conclusions with reference to their presentations are reflected. These presentations highlight the areas where stories integrated with other areas in the curriculum could provide opportunities to develop social and linguistic skills. I observed a variety of activities to reach conclusions about the teaching approaches of the teachers. Due to similarities in some of the activities presented by the teachers I do not engage in every single one.

(b) Stories integrated with performing arts are often presented in a fragmented way

Whilst eurhythmics provided an opportunity for the children to integrate various skills like listening, movement and social skills, the teachers did not always allow the children to use the non-melodic instruments. There were several reasons for this. In some cases the teacher tried to prevent the class from becoming too boisterous. This, in my opinion inhibited the creativity of the children. Another reason was that there were insufficient instruments to give one to each child. In this case the teacher did not rotate the instruments. Often these music lessons were too fragmented or done in isolation. Proper planning with regards to coordination across the curriculum was in some instances not evident but enthusiasm on both the part of the teacher and the children was apparent.

Songs were in most cases not integrated in the lessons to create a direct link with the stories. However, some songs were linked to the selected themes. Teachers included singing in their daily lessons which included mostly nursery rhymes and well-known songs, for example Old MacDonald had a farm, Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star and religious choruses. In addition, some teachers seemed to feel ill-equipped to use music if they were not trained or could not play an instrument. The singing was often left to the devices of the children resulting in discordant shouting. In defence of this bit of chaos it must be added that the activity was executed with enthusiasm and the children enjoyed what they did.

In terms of the integration of music the teachers often organised the accompaniment on the non-melodic percussion instruments in an ad hoc way. This resulted in a free for all where at times the instruments were banged and not played, much to their own delight and sometimes irritation of the teachers in the adjacent classrooms. However, there was more structure in the music room where a teacher accompanied the children on the piano. Eurhythmics was better planned to produce flowing movements. Teachers' approaches sent out signals of a positive approach yet they faced challenges with regards to their own musical training.

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(c) Planning for visual arts is essentially done but in compartments

Visual arts activities were applied in more creative ways by Trs D and E than at the other institutions. Children were left to create the drawings with little interference from the teachers. These teachers were obviously trained to teach art as it was evident in the way they stimulated the children to produce the works of art. Yet, all the teachers attempted activities even though they were not necessarily trained. It seemed as if they were more comfortable to be involved in these activities than in the performing arts like singing or movement where their expertise was put to a greater test. The challenge here was mostly suitable space to execute the lessons.

To teach lessons where visual arts are used you need to plan carefully to realise the potential of the children to the maximum. It was seemingly easier to ask children to illustrate characters or scenes depicting the stories. Teachers did not always use the stories as point of departure but rather allowed children to draw or make clay models based on the themes such as animals or

trees. Although they still encouraged creativity in doing this it could have been more meaningful to link the theme to the story and then to the various activities across the curriculum. Most of the time the children finished and displayed their art work, but discussion did not follow in all classes afterwards. Observing the satisfied expressions on the faces of the children made me curious about how they felt about their completed products. If they discuss the art works their linguistic skills would also be displayed (SQ 1.4.3).

(d) Role play or dramatisation made integration more accessible

Role-play in all the classes was a productive and enjoyable activity for both teacher and children. I could conclude that it was a well-established technique in classrooms and therefore more successfully implemented to dramatise stories. The teachers did not need any specific talent or training to apply it. Most of the children were spontaneous. Additionally, this was a cost-effective activity with the children and the classroom space as the only props. Extra props were not a necessity to ensure interaction. It is clear that teachers have a sense of integration even though it is not consistently with other subjects in the curriculum. It should not be difficult to convince teachers that using the story as nucleus could seemingly ease an otherwise daunting task and not only integrate around a theme and language lessons (MRQ 2). This would have an impact on the linguistic and social skills of the children (SQ 1.4.3).

6.2.3 UTILISING STORIES ASSISTED TEACHERS TO EXECUTE THEIR TASKS IN A MORE MEANINGFUL WAY

Using a story assisted teacher A to make the activities more meaningful and at the same time allow the children to have a Gestalt or holistic experience of the work. It is easier to understand the work when they have a global picture and see the connections between the various parts than to see the parts only. Clearly the idea of using a story across the curriculum was not imminent other than in the case of Tr A (MRQ 2). The attitude of the teacher showed that she felt empowered (SQ 1.4.1). Yet the curriculum of the DoE is not specific in terms of integration and teachers follow their own devices to the best of their abilities. The CAPS (DBE, 2011a) however, is more specific but I assume the teachers need more training and exposure to implement the

suggestions. In selecting stories there are two aspects to consider namely the level of the children and the relevance of the stories for the children.

(a) Stories were not consistently selected to suit the level of the children

The story “*A windy Day*” used by Tr A, who fairly successfully implemented an integrated approach across the curriculum (MRQ 2), was not quite on the children’s level, which confirmed to me that stories were not selected well in advance. Often the stories were chosen based on the length or pictures in the book not considering the level of the children. It seems as if the skill or lack thereof to select suitable stories result in choosing any story that shows a distant link to the theme. Furthermore, the teachers seemingly have limited resources to choose from. With the exception of one school, stories were linked to a theme but it was evident that the theme and not the story was the deciding factor in the planning. Therefore the story was not linked to or referred to in any of the other subjects.

Randomly selected stories were not always on the level of the children. This resulted in children losing attention and in some cases not being unable to understand, enjoy or engage with the stories. Often the children were not considered to help in selecting stories from a pre-selected corpus of well-chosen books. It was clear that some of the teachers were not always sure what to choose. In some cases there was a limited selection of books available and no school librarian to give guidance. Sometimes teachers chose books which they preferred. There is help available if the teacher does not have the skills to select suitable books or the school does not have a well-equipped library. This is addressed in the section on recommendations.

Some teachers selected books that were available in their libraries or reading corners with no specific focus regarding the content. Hence there was never any intention to link the stories to fears and traumas like HIV and AIDS. Admittedly the teachers did not display a lack of knowledge with regards to HIV and AIDS, but they often did not show an eagerness to address the topic.

(b) Stories were not always relevant

In some activities I was unable to determine the relevance of the story as teaching tool to empower the teachers in developing language and social skills. To read an adapted, drawn-out version of Scheherazade and her one thousand and one nights of storytelling would not interest a Grade R child. This does not imply that the children should not be exposed to a variety of stories but the exposure should be gradual with more relevant stories first. Once they have acquired more linguistic skills to understand the stories they should hear a bigger variety of more challenging stories.

The use of the Biblical story of Zaccheus highlighted the theme of caring towards Zaccheus who was treated as an outcast. It would have been an appropriate story to elaborate on the issue of HIV and AIDS. This by no means implies that teachers should only select stories that address HIV and AIDS. Stories used in the other classes were based on the theme of animals or trees and obviously not all the stories would be applicable to address the HIV and AIDS issue. Neither is it possible to link all lessons to HIV and AIDS. When the class, for example, engaged in activities based on the *The Three Little Pigs* they relied on one another and responded to verbal instructions to team up against the wolf. This proved that the social and linguistic skills can be developed or extended in early relationships (SQ 1.4.3) and proves the educational value of stories (SQ 1.4.4). Teachers should apply various ways to introduce children to stories.

The proper choice of stories, not necessarily Biblical stories or stories with moral undertones, could work if creatively applied and integrated with the arts although Biblical stories are not excluded. These stories have a place in the curriculum but it should be selected to include all the children and not exclude anybody. With regards to Life Orientation in the respective schools the teachers valued the importance thereof but similar to the other areas this was also taught almost entirely in isolation with a few exceptions which seemed more incidental than planned. In essence the story could serve as a powerful tool to integrate the Life Orientation sessions and all the other activities across the curriculum. In most cases though, the selection of stories seemed to be an ad hoc activity and did not address topics like HIV and AIDS. Teachers steered clear of the topic notwithstanding the fact that they regarded it as important when they responded to the

questionnaires. With regards to the choice of stories I conclude that stories were selected from available sources irrespective of the relevance. Teachers seemed to be comfortable that at least they presented stories and covered the curriculum requirements. This is commendable and the lack of suitability is by no means an indictment on their commitment.

Based on the discussion teachers used stories in Grade R classes but the way in which stories are used can be extended and adjusted to empower both teachers and children. The SQ with regards to the impact of stories with the subsequent characteristics and educational value of stories was addressed. Furthermore the discussion indicates that stories have educational value (SQ 1.4.4). Yet the characteristics of stories need to be scrutinised in order to select the most appropriate stories.

6.2.4 THE APPROACHES TO PRESENT STORIES ARE VARIED

In my observations some teachers often read stories that were too long and therefore lost contact with the children even if the stories were interesting. If the story exceeds more than ten pages I would consider it too long. This is based on my observations and confirmation I sourced in Wright and Maley (2000:18). The attention span of the children is short and therefore they need shorter versions of stories.

Stories were mostly, although not in all cases, used for the purpose of relaxation and enjoyment. Although these are relevant outcomes it should articulate and integrate more carefully with the other lessons. The Life Orientation curriculum (LO 1, Health Promotion) specifically states that the learner should be able to “*say ‘no’ to sexual abuse, and describe ways in which to do so*” (DoE, 2002a). If teachers do not address the issue because they are too embarrassed to speak about sexuality or because they feel these children are too young, then the children will fail to acquire this AS. With regards to fears and traumas like HIV and AIDS it was therefore more their attitudes that marred the inclusion of this important issue. The initial discussion could be introduced by using an appropriate story.

A few teachers found it much easier to read stories than to tell stories. They argued that they were not born storytellers and felt more confident with a book in their hands. Reading stories seemed to be the option chosen by many teachers as they do not have to memorise it and could easily just pick out any book without any real preparation. In some of my observations at schools I encountered this and often the stories were not appropriate or suitable for Grade R learners. In one instance the teacher asked the children which story they would like to hear. I am in agreement that the children should be allowed to choose. In this case though, I observed that it was more because the book was used often and the children knew the repertoire presented by the teachers. Repetition is not bad to enhance certain skills and often children love to hear the same story repetitively. In support of repetition of stories Joubert, Bester and Meyer (2008:44) argue that the teacher knows the story well and can tell it anytime. The disadvantage though, would be that the children are not exposed to new stories if the same stories are repeatedly told or read. Their repertoire was not extended. In addition the method of storytelling was not varied. Storytelling can be viewed as a form of bonding. This is especially important when you deal with Grade R children in your care. In terms of the use of stories (MRQ 1) it is evident that teachers utilise stories regularly as indicated on their time-tables. The teachers seem empowered but there is a need to extend the skills and approaches with regards to storytelling. The observation of other activities could enhance the capacity of their professional development (SQ 1.4.2).

6.2.5 INTEGRATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM WAS NOT APPLIED IN ALL CLASSES

The idea to plan lessons around a theme, as most teachers did, was a start at integration. It is difficult to get material for all lessons to link with the theme but not impossible. Teachers should therefore plan well in advance and hereby I do not suggest that it was not done. Nevertheless, if teachers choose stories as a core element their task to collect related material might be easier. The curriculum suggests integration but teachers seemed to integrate mostly in the language sections. On the whole the presentation of Tr A was the closest to what I would regard as an integrated approach using stories as teaching tools. The integration applied by all the teachers except for Tr A, was in the theme and the story was a stand-alone activity linked to the theme.

Thus the story was not the binding factor. As mentioned the theme was then mostly applied to the literacy lessons.

The notion that teachers need to use stories integrated with other areas in the curriculum suggests that they have to be creative. The way in which Tr A used the story is commended although there are recommendations that can improve and / or enhance the presentation. She created a situation where a well-known story like *The Three Little Pigs* was used to integrate the different subjects. An effort was made to integrate the various subjects with the story which was a good start. Cognisance needs to be taken of the fact that the teacher had no formal training in either music or art. It proves that you can enhance the learning environment by using your own creativity in lesson planning to the benefit. Although the stories were chosen more on an ad hoc basis the one used for the integration worked well. It proved that a well-known story like *The three little pigs* can be used and even adapted to implement integration. With regards to the other attempts the integration was more in the Literacy section and not always extended to the other areas in the curriculum. This is a challenge faced by the teachers.

6.2.6 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS AND RESOURCES IMPACT ON TEACHING

All the schools were not equally well resourced, but the teachers used whatever they had to their disposal to the advantage of the children. In comparison with the other institutions S4 was better resourced and the resources were put to effective use. Ironically, at some institutions lack of resources often resulted in teachers being more creative. Lack of state of the art facilities did not inhibit the dedication of the teachers. Clearly sufficient facilities and resources would allow teachers more time and energy to plan the content of the lessons. They would not spend too much time on designing teaching aids. In my opinion teaching and learning would be more successful if the environment was conducive.

6.2.7 THE PRACTICE AT SCHOOLS DOES NOT ARTICULATE WITH CURRENT TEACHER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Triangulating the responses of the lecturers to those of the students indicated that storytelling formed a very prominent part of the curriculum of teacher education. Contrary to this the pre-service teachers were not always afforded the opportunity to apply their skills at their practicing schools as they were bound by the curriculum and lessons as stipulated by the in-service teachers. This posed a challenge to the pre-service teachers. Teacher training at the HE institutions articulated well with what could be regarded as an integrated approach and a focus on HIV and AIDS. Hence I am of the opinion that if more teachers are trained for the pre-school, and if all children receive this solid foundation, the education regarding integration and using stories to address fears and traumas like HIV and AIDS would improve (SQ 1.4.1). The trouble taken to present interesting lessons, both on the side of the lecturers and students, was evident in the responses that I received. I can therefore conclude that there is a fairly strong correlation between the lecturers' responses and those of the students.

In addition to the teacher training programmes the DoE should play a prominent role in supporting the in-service teachers, especially in the FP. For an approach to be championed and then accepted by the teachers it would be ideal if all teachers were trained to implement the intended approach. For those teachers who qualified long ago refresher courses or workshops need to be implemented which provide training in the integration of stories across the curriculum. This will ensure that teachers are firstly empowered (SQ 1.4.1) and secondly enhance their professional development to use stories (SQ 1.4.2).

6.2.8 THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE DoE WITH REGARDS TO TEACHER SUPPORT IS NOT PROMINENT ENOUGH

The DoE needs to play a vital role in ensuring quality assurance, in-service training and providing resources to teachers. Although workshops and training sessions are arranged and many documents and circulars issued there still seems to be support lacking in the crucial initial education steps regarding the FP, especially Grade R. The specific focus on stories as powerful

teaching tools seems underrated. Perhaps it is assumed that anybody is capable of telling stories. One of the aspects which caused confusion was the DoE documentation and workshops. This claim is reiterated by the statement in the CAPS documentation by the national Minister of Basic Education in the following: “We ... trust the curriculum is now more accessible ...” (DBE, 2011e:3). This seems to confirm that the curriculum was not very clear and accessible.

The importance of stories seems underestimated in the DoE curriculum. This however, is not unique in South Africa as Rooks (1998:24) also argues for a more “fundamental place for storytelling” in her study which claims that although it features in the curriculum it does not get the rightful place. Hopefully this was not an oversight by the DoE but rather an opportunity for creative teachers to see the curriculum as a guide rather than a prescriptive document. It was therefore important to consider that there are many aspects related to the use of stories. This supports the idea that teachers can improve their capacity and professional development by observing colleagues or attending workshops (SQ 1.4.2).

(a) Documents and workshops are often cause for confusion

These policy documents often caused confusion as stated in the following: “*I do not exactly know what is expected from me,*” and “*If only documents are simplified*” (personal conversations with Grade R teachers, 2009). The sentiment is shared by another teacher who said, “*I am so confused, such long sentences and vague descriptions*” (personal conversation with Grade R teacher, 2010). Workshops arranged to clarify the documents are often planned during well-deserved school holidays. One can argue that teachers get enough holidays, but then it should be considered that they often have marking to complete because assessments were done up to the last day of the term. In Grade R although informal, it is still time-consuming for the teachers. In addition teachers complained that the workshops or information sessions were not always logically or clearly presented. This depends on the presenters as well as the attitudes of both presenters and attendees. Sometimes the teachers went to the workshops with negative attitudes or they were overtired and stressed because of a long day with undisciplined children in overcrowded classrooms. Sometimes the DoE used inexperienced presenters who did not have the presentation skills to captivate an audience for long hours. In my own experience sessions

were often cramped into two or three days of long hours which resulted in lack of internalising and absorbing the important information. No feedback was arranged or no tracking of how teachers applied the information. The responses of the teachers with regards to support, was fairly negative although some schools do receive apparatus from the DoE.

(b) Support and quality assurance regarding selection of stories are inadequate

Although the DoE provides workshops with regards to general curriculum issues, these workshops do not focus specifically on the integration of stories. The workshops recently focussed on the transition and adjustments from the RNCS of 2002 to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements of 2011. At the private institution, where funding is not provided by the government, funds are often insufficient to send the teachers on such workshops. The funding is utilised for the sole purpose of maintaining the institution and salaries. There are instances where workshops are free of charge but teachers need to have substitutes in place when it is a full day workshop. These substitutes need to be compensated. Travelling to and from the workshops involves money. The training is then not completely free of charge. So although there are sometimes opportunities, these opportunities are not a regular feature, and cannot be attended by everybody at all times. Pre-schools not registered with the DoE often lose out on opportunities to get training or to be assessed for quality. These pre-schools are in the majority and thus it implies that more caregivers are left to their own devices than those who receive some form of support or training.

It needs to be mentioned that in the case of Trs A and D the DoE was not a role player to supply any resources as these were private pre-schools mainly supported by the parents and non-governmental organisations. The teachers were therefore doing well with the available resources. In the case of the other teachers the departmental assistance for resources were based on quintiles (see Appendix I) where schools were graded according to their background and pre-democracy status. For example if a school was situated in a better resourced area they would get less monetary assistance from the DoE. There was however, no distinction made when workshops for teachers were presented by the DoE. All teachers could attend. Generally no workshops were arranged specifically to address the teaching of stories. I observed that due to the current systems

at public schools where the managers or principals are in charge of financial management library books were placed lower on the lists of priorities. Utility accounts and more necessary text books were regarded as priorities because library books were not specifically listed. This is underscored by Hart (2002) who alludes to the inability of the DoE to provide libraries and yet "... it demands information literacy outcomes" in the curriculum.

Arts & Culture as LA forms part of the curriculum but at many schools the teachers are general teachers and not specialists. This emerged when training of specialist teachers was abandoned in 2003. With the introduction of OBE in 1997 and the revisions thereof which led to the RNCS in 2000 and then the NCS in 2002, the arts were grouped together as Arts & Culture. The Arts & Culture formed part of the Life Orientation offering. Before the RNCS arts were taught as separate subjects by specialist teachers.

Currently specialist teachers in practical subjects such as art, music and physical education also have to teach other subjects. Teachers are no longer appointed for their specialist skills unless the school can afford them. This led to a decline in focus on specialised areas. In the past these specialist teachers were responsible for the subjects that they were trained in and presented the classes to all the children at the school. At some schools there are still specialist teachers but they are in the minority.

In the absence of specialist teachers those not skilled or trained need to be assured that to integrate stories with Arts & Culture, and apply such an approach across the curriculum does not always require special training in the arts although it can be a bonus. Yet cognisance should be taken that integration of stories with Arts & Culture, and across the curriculum could involve workshops in all or some of these areas to equip the teachers. This is a challenge as teachers have to attend to their classes and are not so free to attend workshops.

(c) The teachers do not always interpret the curriculum in a creative way

Because the teachers followed the curriculum so religiously, the integration across the curriculum in various subjects where stories were used was not evident in all cases. With the exception of one all the teachers followed a set curriculum. They adhered to the prescriptions of the curriculum. Once again I observed that because of the prescribed programme there seemed to be a fragmented presentation whereas the story could be more effectively used to connect the various subjects. Still the presentations were done with conviction. Although the will to teach the various sections were present, the frame of reference to connect the various areas in order to integrate seemed to be underutilised. Teachers seemed to underestimate their abilities to recreate the curriculum. The fact that integration was not prominent or a specific focus presumably stem from the fact that the syllabus lists the various LAs as separate sections and teachers have to use their own discretion on how to present the learning material. Although Gooch (2008:95) posits that teachers will use stories in play contexts despite the demands of the curriculum, I observed that teachers seldom allowed children to drive and lead the story constructions as suggested by Gooch (2008:95). They were too influenced by the dominant pedagogical demands. The message that came across from the teachers was that there is no real support from the DoE when it comes to storytelling and specific training. The professional development will therefore have to be the teachers' responsibility (SQ 1.4.2).

6.3 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

I can firstly assume that early relationships have an influence on the linguistic and social skills of the children. Secondly, the educational value of stories is underrated, not only by the DoE but similarly by some teachers or else there would have been a greater prominence in suggested curricula and in the training of in-service teachers as well as in the planning of the programmes presented by teachers. Thirdly, the schemata of the children influence their responses to the different stories. Some children have an impoverished literacy background as the parents do not tell stories and the teachers need to compensate for this void. The impact of stories is therefore amiss in some households when there is no opportunity to tell stories.

Conclusions were based on observations of a few schools which might not be representative of all the schools in the province. It could however, serve to initiate further research. There are well-resourced schools with specially trained teachers who might engage in methods as suggested. However, the focus was to observe schools which represented various types of schools and compare the availability of resources. There seems to be an attempt at integration by using themes rather than stories. Stories as the focus could provide these themes to which the other activities across the curriculum are linked. The definition of “stories” either in the questionnaire or in a conversation with teachers could be included. As stories form an integral part of the curriculum the responses to the questions based on stories indicated that teachers have an understanding of the concept “stories”.

The following recommendations could form the basis of a teachers’ guide to assist teachers in their teaching. It supposes an attempt to apply the proposed approach of stories as teaching tools integrated with other subjects in the curriculum. The follow-up visits to discuss such a publication will follow once the research is completed.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Fenwick (1990:29) offers as solution the idea of bringing skilled practitioners into the classroom. Although this seems an excellent idea to assist teachers who do not feel skilled enough, I would not encourage the practice all the time. Firstly, because I view the place of storytelling as extremely important and at some stage the teacher responsible for the Grade R children has to become skilled enough to take charge. I furthermore regard the storytelling sessions as some form of bonding between teachers and Grade R children. This is especially important when you deal with fears and traumas. The class teacher has to assist the children to deal with the situation and has to observe how their social and linguistic skills develop. I am however, not discarding the occasional visit of authors or other practitioners to visit the class and tell stories to allow for variety. Secondly, I propose that the story should as far as possible be integrated in the curriculum of the Grade R programmes. To implement integration effectively the teachers need to select the stories before the time as well as use stories for most if not all of the lessons. Therefore the visiting storyteller will for practical reasons not be a regular occurrence because

the planning with the teachers and the selection of stories are left to the teachers as they have to plan in advance. Thirdly, there are always costs involved even if only to cover the fuel. In most of the schools the funding is limited. It is thus important that teachers select stories to form an integral part of the classroom programme.

The following recommendations are general ideas that focus on the teaching approach. Firstly, suggestions with regards to planning and selection of stories are highlighted. Secondly, the biographical details of the schools are scrutinised with accompanying recommendations. Thirdly, I suggest how pre-service teachers can assist the teachers to deal with HIV and AIDS in the school programme.

6.4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS WITH REGARDS TO TEACHING

Evidently most of the teachers engaged in this research were not comfortable to address fears and traumas like HIV and AIDS. Hence teachers must be guided and encouraged to attend workshops to change their attitudes and mind sets. If the school is in possession of Internet facilities they can access reliable websites to inform them how to approach this sensitive but necessary issue. Workshops are also frequently presented by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in communities. The Grade R teachers need to provide a secure environment by creating opportunities where children are active participants of their environment. They will have to develop social skills which will enhance and support their language development. The teachers will have to be sensitive to the situations of these children. Nonetheless, teachers have to start with planning and preparation.

(a) Plan and prepare to teach effectively

Of importance was that the teachers needed some guidance to plan integrated lessons across the curriculum. In addition they have to use stories as their frame of reference to integrate the other lessons. Children get tired quickly if they are bored. As soon as I noticed that they were getting tired or their attention wavered I could intervene and create time for varied participation, often not planned but spontaneous. Hereby I do not suggest that I did not plan my presentation but

rather than I allowed for moments dictated by the situation. Although you plan properly, it is important to allow the children to interact whilst still staying in control. When I tell stories I make the stories my own without digressing from the author's initial intent. Telling stories made me feel more in control of the situation because it boosts your confidence. Furthermore, I kept eye contact with the children because gestures and facial expressions enhanced the story telling. The next discussion highlights the observations that I made when the teachers were in action.

The Longman dictionary defines "*planning*" as "*the process of thinking about and deciding on a plan for achieving or making something*" (Quirk, 1978:1248). This definition suggests that teachers cannot just enter a class and start teaching. The word "process" is a key factor. To achieve or make something could suggest the product, namely the lesson within the classroom context. The process is therefore important to produce a successful lesson. You could argue that some teachers have been doing it for years so they know what to do but the children do not remain static in the classrooms. Children are the most important factor to consider, hence careful planning is vital. The teacher must anticipate a variety of children in class. In addition all children might not come from stable home environments. Moreover, some might be victims of traumas or illnesses like HIV and AIDS. Careful consideration should therefore be given to the learning outcomes and content of the lessons.

Teachers who work in the same grades should ideally plan together. This was done at the schools that I visited. As I stated in the previous chapters, the teachers planned to present lessons using themes. I suggest that these themes could be extracted from carefully selected stories. The lessons should then flow from these stories and integrate the other subjects. When the teachers work in their groups they can pool their ideas. First of all they can brainstorm and just generate ideas which they jot down on newsprint or transparencies. After considering all factors they can begin to select the most appropriate ideas to link with relevant stories. These ideas are then drafted into themes. For this reason they must decide how the rest of the curriculum will fit into the themes. Finally they plan the lesson content with the suitable teaching and learning aids.

Another way to generate ideas is to compile mind maps (Buzan, 1993). Teachers can apply the mind map in many ways for example problem solving, decision taking, presentations,

organization, task scheduling and as a brainstorming exercise. You start from a nucleus. This nucleus can be a theme based on a story. All new ideas are generated from this nucleus (see Appendix J). In the next section an attempt is made to highlight possible adjustments to enhance activities presented by the teachers. The idea is not to cover all activities but rather a selected few to serve as guidelines.

Currently with the implementation of CAPS (DBE, 2011a) a manual called the National Early Learning Development Standards (NELDS) (DoE, 2011f:9) for planning, teaching and learning is available to assist teachers. However, this document only focuses on the children up to age four to fill the gap that exists in the needs of children from birth to four years (DBE, 2011f).

(b) Apply existing creativity to enhance more integration

Although the activities discussed in the presentations of the various teachers (see Chapter Four, 4.3) were executed fairly successfully and with dedication I would like to suggest adjustments to further enhance integration which could possibly develop language and social skills. Because some activities overlapped a selection was made to illustrate the ideas.

(c) Engage more actively in nursery rhymes as literacy activity

Nursery rhymes are probably one of the most extensively used elements in the FP classrooms. Instead of just reciting the rhymes the children could therefore engage more actively with the wide selection of nursery rhymes available. The teacher could engage them in a discussion about the content. Thereafter she could devise characters to role play the rhyme. In addition they could sing the song with the same lyrics while some play on the non-melodic percussion instruments. In the observed lessons the nursery rhymes were fillers between two activities or unrelated nursery rhymes not fitting into the themes. If they engaged more actively in nursery rhymes the meaning would become more significant and relevant. The nursery rhyme could be utilised in the same way as stories to create a connection between the other lessons. There is a wide range to select from so that the nursery rhyme integrates with the story and the rest of the lessons.

(d) Numeracy need not be a numbers game only

With reference to a specific lesson where the children just clapped the number of syllables of their names the link could be to pick a corresponding number. Because most names consisted of two or three syllables she could ask them to pick numbers where two names were joined for example, Peter and Josephine would pick number five. Cindy could pick number two or Rosalind could pick number three. Furthermore, the spatial orientation could be integrated by asking them to pick the number with the left or right hand instead of just putting up their hands or turning either to the right or the left. It seemed more challenging for teachers to integrate numeracy. The result was that these lessons were stand-alone lessons in most cases.

To integrate the literacy with the numeracy they could also sound their names which would link with phonics. An interesting exercise could be to ask them to rap their names as this would bring their outdoor experience into the classroom. Of course the teacher needs to organise carefully to avoid chaotic situations. She could use one basic sentence and every time they insert their own names for example “*My name is Cindy and I love to sing*”. The verbs could also be substituted to provide more variety for example *dance, play, read, eat, sleep*. She could ask the children to provide more action words (verbs).

It is evident that the teachers still regarded numeracy as a stand-alone area in the curriculum. I acknowledge though that it was probably not easy to integrate in the entire programme. Perhaps if numeracy is taught in a more creative way already in Grade R the rating for Mathematics competency in the country might improve.

(e) Life Orientation is a useful way to link more lessons

Life Orientation as stated in the curriculum of the DoE involves Religious Education, Natural Sciences, Human Movement Science, EMS and Arts & Culture. At best it serves to teach children life skills in various ways. More lessons should therefore integrate by using stories.

(f) Symbolism in stories assists to address HIV and AIDS and to teach values

Considering the wolf in “*The Three Little Pigs*” could, for example, be symbolic of bad things like lack of sympathy, picking on your friends, refusing to share or play with your friend for your own selfish reasons. The pigs could be representative of the affected or infected children who must fight against a common enemy like HIV and AIDS. To solve the problem they were challenged to formulate definite, clear instructions and listen carefully to execute these instructions. In this way more stories could be used to address HIV and AIDS.

(g) Lack of training in music need not hamper your approach

Even though a specific teacher had no formal training she used non-melodic instruments in her lessons. However, the accompaniment with non-melodic instruments could be better organised. By indicating before-hand which child would play an instrument and telling them how loud or soft they had to play she would not lose so much of the musicality. A simple music score could help. Furthermore, symbols like circles or dots could be used to indicate the amplitude. If they had to play loudly they had to look for the dots, or if they had to play softly, they had to look for the circles. Similarly the tempo could be indicated by symbols. In using a score they would be encouraged to read and interpret which integrated visual literacy. It was however, encouraging to see that teachers made an effort to use the instruments even though they had no formal training in music.

Playing of instruments begged a more creative way by planning how to use it. In addition the children could be asked to create accompaniments. The teacher could ask them which instruments would be more suitable for the different effects in terms of tempo or amplitude. If they had to produce lighter effects the triangles or bells would be more suitable than drums or cymbals for example. They could explain why they chose the specific instruments which would then address the linguistic skills. Together with the teacher they could help to create a simple score in small groups to address the social skills. In doing such activities the whole idea of creativity would also surface.

In the Music section the learners listened to and moved to the beat of music. The movement, in my opinion, could form part of the Dance section as well. The opinions expressed here had not been tested in the classroom situation and were therefore tentatively based on the documents. I observed the methods used by teachers when they implemented the programmes, considering their background and training in the respective programmes.

(h) Lack of training in visual arts need not hamper your approach

Most teachers engaged children in some form of visual arts even though they did not receive special training except for two teachers as I stated. The missing link to integrate was that children did not explain what they did. I therefore suggest that the children exhibit their drawings or models and discuss their work which would link the linguistic skills. As alternative they could also talk about it as they were busy producing it. I sensed the teachers were pressed for time therefore no discussion followed afterwards. In discussions with the children where I had a chance it was fascinating to hear how accurately the children could recount their art experience in all the steps. This proved that they enjoyed and internalised the experience. In most of the cases the children were deprived of an opportunity to freely create. The teacher provided an outline of an animal and they were expected to fill in details as visualised by the teacher. At the school where art featured fairly prominently and good art works were produced there was an exhibition for the parents. Though it is a good idea I would still encourage the children to discuss the process that was applied to create the product. They could explain this at an ‘art exhibition’ in their classrooms.

(i) Dramatisation should be extended to other lessons

By using stories the Life Orientation lessons could be dramatised too. The basic idea already existed and teachers needed to explore how to extend this to other lessons. Sections based on social sciences like History and Geography can be dramatised. Similarly in Natural Sciences the movement of insects or other animals can be dramatised. The children can create their own dialogues under the guidance of the teacher to present role-plays which include the habitat or eating habits of animals. Practically any lesson lends itself to dramatisation or role-play and even

miming. Fortunately teachers utilised role-play quite extensively. The only shortcoming was that it was reserved for language lessons. Numeracy did not feature at all which is probably due to the nature of the content. Yet content such as shape and space can be dramatised. Children can form different shapes and present themselves by chanting rhymes or raps for example: 'I am a circle. I am round.'/ 'I am square with four equal sides.' This is not the only numeracy lesson that can be dramatised. Role-play could be utilised in more ways to consolidate the other lessons.

(j) Rewards are necessary but needs careful consideration to avoid exclusion

As reward when children participated in class one teacher suggested that she pasted a star but did not expand where. I assumed it was in the children's books or as I observed on their foreheads. However, to paste the star in a special place as well where everybody could see it, for example a wall chart would be more lasting and relevant. The children would then appreciate the values of praise and acknowledgement. She could also paste stars for the number of stories they read or told or when they included shy peers in their playground games. This could establish the idea that you do not exclude those who are seriously ill or infected. They will in turn develop social skills. To encourage the children to communicate and thereby develop their linguistic skills the teacher could ask them to explain the games they played and who were involved.

6.4.2 SELECT SUITABLE STORIES TO INTEGRATE LESSONS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

An important aspect was to assess the characteristics of good stories and presenters, in particular for traumatised children and to establish who assessed the quality of stories presented to the children.

Because teachers seemed to select stories randomly I therefore recommend that teachers study the curriculum carefully. The next step would then be to select suitable stories which articulate with the curriculum. Careful planning as discussed earlier follows. The stories are used as nucleus and the other lessons are planned around the stories. The stories can be linked to themes. Types of stories should address the needs of the children although this might not be possible in

one lesson all the time. In the conversations with the children it was evident that boys and girls do not have the same preferences. The teachers can overcome this by selecting a variety of stories to fulfil the needs of both genders and use it on a rotational basis. There are stories which address the preferences of both genders in the same story.

As I alluded the selection of stories was not always a priority. Teachers need to be encouraged to select stories well in advance. Furthermore, teachers should work in teams to make the selection of stories less daunting and share ideas as well as motivate why some stories are favoured. I experienced that when you work as a team you are more careful to avoid criticism. The pool of ideas is also bigger.

Considering the curriculum the stories should be selected across the curriculum which will then include the arts. The HIV and AIDS issue will possibly be easier to incorporate. Although Tr A used the story, *The three little pigs* effectively, she could link the united front against the wolf in the fight against negative attitudes, for example. More specific in this case it displayed the idea that everybody joined forces and nobody needed to feel alienated.

When teachers choose a lengthy story on the level of the children they can split it into meaningful sections and thereby stimulate the curiosity of the children to hear the rest of the story. Similarly they can ask the children to predict the rest of the story. These predictions can be role-played or illustrated. The predictions must not be discarded when they do not match the actual story but rather developed into more versions of the same story. This will empower the children to take ownership of stories and apply their creativity.

In addition, the role of the DoE should be more supportive. Teachers who are successful in applying a more creative approach could be used in teams to assist other teachers at neighbouring schools (SQ 1.4.2). However, to implement such a venture the DoE must engage in quality assurance at the schools to identify such teachers.

6.4.3 STORYTELLING CAN BE A VALUABLE PEDAGOGICAL TOOL

The ideas suggested by Smith (2004), delineated in Chapter One, see 1.5.2 (b) are very useful to extend and develop existing skills with regards to storytelling. These suggestions and questions can be helpful especially to teachers who are not convinced of their talents to tell stories.

The questions are whether the storyteller chose a story that matched the audience, if the setting of the room enhanced the story, did the storyteller use special effects, did the storyteller use his/her voice effectively, did the structure of the story include a beginning, middle and end, what was the effect of the story and what was the learning experience of the observer. However, Smith (2004) cautions that this might not be possible and therefore provides alternatives like recordings, observing social situations where people relate personal stories or tell jokes. These will give the storyteller an idea of using the voice, gestures, facial expressions and aspects like the influence of the venue or you could join a storytelling group or enrol for a short course.

Although these suggestions seem very helpful, it seems as if few teachers will regard storytelling that important to enrol for a course. They might opt to observe colleagues or presenters or television programmes. Only if the DoE introduces such a course where teachers are expected to attend as part of their training or if an incentive is offered it might become part of a more structured programme as in some teacher training institutions.

There has to be the confidence and the will to tell stories and these attributes will become part of you with more exposure and practice. You have to enjoy what you are doing to impart this to your listeners. Although this seems an excellent idea to assist teachers, I think it would only be applied occasionally. If there are stipends involved to attend workshops many under-resourced schools will not choose such an option. Funding is a major problem.

I concur with Malo and Bullard (2000:9) that emergent storytellers can share their own stories such as things that happen on a daily basis or things that happened in the past. Every teacher experiences or experienced something at some time in some place whether as a child or as teacher which can be the start of a story. Certainly the teacher will know what to include and what to exclude. I have experienced that even more senior students enjoy listening to you when you share a personal story. Bonding in the classroom is fostered and they realise that you are not

that different from them. This proves that utilisation of stories as teaching tools could develop language and social skills.

6.4.4 AN ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE TO TEACHING COULD STIMULATE CREATIVITY

An environment to stimulate creative teaching should ideally include traits like availability, accessibility and affordability for teachers and children to cope with the fear and trauma of HIV and AIDS. I believe that to tell a story a teacher does not need state of the art equipment. A story can be told in any situation. With regards to integration of the arts though, there might be problems to execute lessons which involve movement. Not all schools are equipped with all the facilities and equipment. In one of the schools the available space restricted the production of visual arts where the children are engaged in painting and other activities. Seeing that role-play is such an accessible approach it must be nurtured.

(a) Find cost-effective resources at school

Often there are resources at school which are cost-effective to implement in the use of stories integrated with arts across the curriculum. The creative use of the resources will not only empower teachers but also develop them professionally (SQ 1.4.1 and 1.4.2).

(b) Make an attempt to hone in extra resources and support

Although the following recommendations do not claim to be an extensive list for support outside the school they could possibly initiate an awareness to implement an approach where teachers use stories integrated with the arts. This approach could empower the teachers to utilise resources.

(i) Approach the curriculum advisor of the DoE as they do not visit the schools often enough or are not aware of the dire situations at schools. In doing this the teachers could suggest initiatives to broaden the idea of storytelling across the curriculum. This could in turn lead to

more grades becoming involved and eventually more schools. A culture of storytelling and storytelling circles can be initiated. The DoE need to fund such initiatives which could improve literacy levels. This encompasses the capacity and professional development of the teacher (SQ 1.4.2).

- (ii) Approach organisations such as the Vriende van Afrikaans who provide workshops and arrange for book donations. Although this organisation focuses on the promotion of Afrikaans they are willing to arrange books in other languages and assist in setting up libraries especially in rural areas. In accessing this resource the teacher focuses on the value of stories by utilising a variety of carefully selected stories and/or books (SQ 1.4.4).
- (iii) Approach the Education Library and Information Sources (EDULIS) of the Western Cape DoE to present workshops and donate books. EDULIS also has a loan division where schools can get books for a certain period which they either collect or have delivered. The evaluators for the different school subjects select suitable books on request from the schools. They also compile book lists when schools need advice on purchasing library books. These book lists include all the biographical details of the books such as ISBN number, price, publisher and grade suitability. Furthermore teachers can read truncated reviews of the books on the EDULIS website. The evaluators and librarians at EDULIS will on invitation have book displays and book talks at schools or at the EDULIS premises. There is also an annual open day for all schools. Once more the utilisation of EDULIS will address the empowerment of teachers as well as the impact of stories (SQ 1.4.1 and SQ 1.4.3).
- (iv) Approach the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) (www.ibby.org) for information that can lead to networking. This organisation has annual conferences on the latest developments and publications of children's literature. The professional development of teachers will be addressed (SQ 1.4.2).
- (v) Approach BIBLIONEF for book donations. This non-governmental organisation will also have book displays and book talks on request. They also donate collections of books to schools who cannot afford to buy their own. In addition they have follow-up visits to see if the books are utilised as these "book chests" are fairly expensive. Both the development of teachers as well as the impact on the children are addressed here (SQs 1.4.2 & 1.4.3)

- (vi) Approach the librarian specialist on children’s literature of the local universities for advice or workshops as they are well-qualified for the job. The value and characteristics of stories will be highlighted (SQ 1.4.4).
- (vii) I found the idea to arrange a story fair where children and adults tell their stories, with costumes and visual aids, as well as a “make-up-your-own-ending” contest very useful and empowering to the broader school community (Fenwick, 1990:30). I would extend this invitation to neighbouring schools as well once it has been tested at the school that initiates it. This will not only empower teachers but also children (SQs 1.4.1 & 1.4.3).

6.4.5 READING STORIES SHOULD BE CREATIVELY DONE

In Chapter One the advantages and disadvantages postulated by Wright (2007) can serve to assist teachers when they read stories. To encourage reading you can show them the book from which the story was told so that they can borrow the book afterwards or get it from the library. Tips by Wright (2007) include reading the story before the time and actually practicing how to read fluently and with the necessary expression; not reading into the book; allowing for comments in between; showing pictures and reading for less than ten minutes in the case of younger children. Based on observations some of the teachers read into the book because they probably did not prepare the story before the time. In the case where the story was read for more than ten minutes it was too long. I am of the opinion that some teachers felt inhibited to read in my presence and this impacted on the fluency and expression when they read. When reading the teachers should still know the story well enough to make eye-contact or interact with the children in between. Again the approach is important and the outcomes of the lesson must articulate with the approach. The teacher must know why reading is favoured for a particular lesson. This is a challenge faced by some teachers which could be addressed if there are workshops for professional development (SQ 1.4.1).

6.4.6 THE ROLE OF THE DoE

The transition from the first NCS in 2002 to the RNCS (DoE, 2002d) and now to CAPS (DBE, 2011a) influenced the approaches used by teachers as well as the documents of the DoE used in the research. Some of the terminologies which I suggest have now become part of the CAPS (DBE, 2011b, c & d) which can be regarded as a positive change.

However, change will not be overnight if there is no will from the government to provide the much needed classrooms and then appoint these very important teachers. Stronger advocacy to train as FP teachers must be done to attract more teachers, offering bursaries and more lucrative salaries. For in-service teachers more opportunities should be in place to allow teachers to improve their current qualifications and specialise in FP. The DoE should provide more consistent and continuous support and do quality assurance with regards to implementation of curricula, especially when changes abound.

Although the DoE provides documents on HIV and AIDS the methods and/or approaches to convey the information are lacking. As stated in Chapter Two (see 2.11) the DoE documents indicate that children should be informed about diseases. Yet there is no indication how the teacher needs to apply this. If the opportunities from the employer's side do not arise then another avenue should be explored.

I observed that when the DoE arranged workshops only the few teachers who were willing to go after school would attend or in the senior phase only the teachers responsible for Life Orientation opt to attend. HIV and AIDS workshops or information sessions should be the responsibility of the entire staff because it is a national problem. The areas where the pre-schools are not part of an existing school but a community based pre-school are not necessarily included, although welcome, to attend such sessions. These centres probably need the information much more as often in the so-called disadvantage communities day care mushrooms with no training for caregivers, and much less adequate facilities to take care of the children. Often the grandmother or neighbour runs the day care facility. The Department of Health and Welfare should therefore make a serious attempt to address this void.

The subsequent section includes an extra story that teachers can use in a similar way as discussed above.

6.5 A MODEL INFORMED BY PEDAGOGY OF INTEGRATION

Considering the importance of stories as teaching tools it became evident that such an approach could empower teachers in more way than one.

6.5.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2012 CAPS (DBE, 2011a) replaced the NCS (DoE, 2002d) in the FP. The subjects include Home Language, previously Literacy for 10 hours; Mathematics, previously Numeracy for 7 hours and Life Orientation for 6 hours, consisting of Beginning Knowledge (BK) for 1 hour, Creative Arts (CA) for 2 hours, Physical Education (PE) for 2 hours and Personal and Social Well-being (P&SW) for 1 hour (DBE, 2011a,b,c,d).

I propose a model informed by CAPS (DBE, 2011a). In presenting the model I drew from Camp and Oesterrich (2010) who propose a learner-centred approach as opposed to a teacher-centred approach. The underlying theoretical framework is to assist teachers to attempt an integrated approach across the curriculum. Additionally they are presented with an approach to ease them into the CAPS (DBE, 2011a). An interactive approach does not only empower the teachers but simultaneously allow the children to take co-ownership for their learning. The approach was used in the presentations where I used the other three stories but then it was based on the RNCS (DoE, 2002d). Although the outcomes do not differ fundamentally there are minor changes in terms of the subjects as mentioned in the introduction of this section.

This model takes care of all the subjects in an integrated way and is not demarcated as in the prescribed times. Therefore pedagogy of integration is implemented as an organising element. It suggests an approach whereby teachers could be stimulated to develop a full programme. The content is based on the suggested subjects for Grade R. The DoE documents suggest integration but it is not explicitly set out. I was therefore prompted to develop the model by screening the extracts taken from CAPS documents (DBE, 2009:14-15) as discussed below:

- (a) The preamble to Mathematics written by the Deputy Director-General: General Education and Training (DoBE, 2009) suggests a child-centred approach whereby teachers should present many opportunities for children “to do, talk and record their mathematical thinking”. Using stories children will be afforded these opportunities, more so when the stories are integrated with creative arts.
- (b) From the Life Skills areas I focused on the following in each section:
- (i) Beginning Knowledge and Personal and Social Well-being
- Beginning Knowledge drew from Social Sciences with the key areas listed as relationships, interdependence, conservation, cause and effect, place, adaptation, diversity and individuality, and change; Natural Science with key concepts listed as life and living, energy and change, matter and materials; planet earth and beyond; Scientific process skills; the process of enquiry which involves observing, comparing, classifying, measuring, experimenting, and communicating; Technological process skills; investigate, design, make, evaluate, communicate.
- (ii) Personal and Social Well-being has as focus to help learners make informed, morally responsible and accountable decisions about their health and the environment, with HIV and AIDS included.
- (c) Creative Arts (DBE, 2011c) attempt to expose learners to four art forms: dance, drama, music and the visual arts to develop learners as creative, imaginative individuals, with an appreciation of the arts. It is very reassuring to notice that the children will be allowed to use “their natural inclinations to use their imagination, manipulate and work with materials, move and make music and tell stories”. Moreover it is acknowledged that creative games are used as tools for learning skills. In addition the children can create music, movement and drama individually and collaboratively which links with my research of social development through creative arts and stories.
- (d) Physical Education develops the gross and fine motor skills of the children. Therefore I include movement in various ways such as role-play, dance and music in the proposed activities.

(e) The Languages (DBE, 2011b) section unfortunately starts with Grade 1. It is encouraging though, to see more attention is given to stories: “Listening to stories being told is an excellent way for children to acquire their additional language”. The teacher needs to: choose a story with a simple, repetitive structure, which allows for vocabulary and grammar to be recycled (e.g. The Three Little Pigs) (DBE, 2009:14). Also, “tell the story several times, gradually involving the children more and more, for example by joining in the refrains (e.g. *He huffs and he puffs and he blows the house down*). It is also suggested that “learners can begin by acting out stories the teacher has told or read to them, speaking some of the dialogue. “With the teacher’s help the children can retell the story” (DBE, 2011b, 14-15). Listening to stories is proposed as a teaching method (DBE, 2009:15).

Hereafter is an attempt to highlight integration of a story across other areas in the curriculum.

6.5.2 *The Pond Goose* presented as tool for an integrated model

The selected story, *The Pond Goose* (Church) is an added example to attempt integration in Grade R classes. This story illustrates how an outcast became a hero. I discuss the basic activities to integrate the arts. Furthermore there are suggestions to apply the approach across the CAPS (DBE, 2011c). Methodological approaches include TPR, involving role-play, singing and dancing, as well as visual arts. In figures 8.1 and 8.2 are graphic representations of the proposed model. Figure 8.1 indicates the main subjects while figure 8.2 indicates the activities.

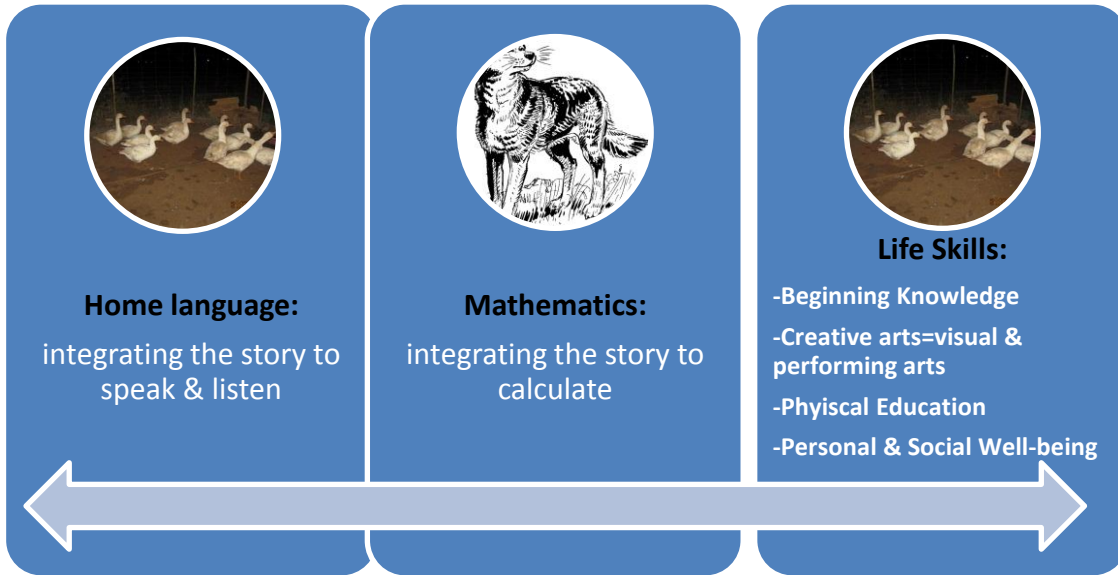


Figure 10.1 Representation of subjects based on model

The activities discussed in 6.5.3 as graphically presented in figure 8.1 are integrated as the arrows indicate in a cycle.

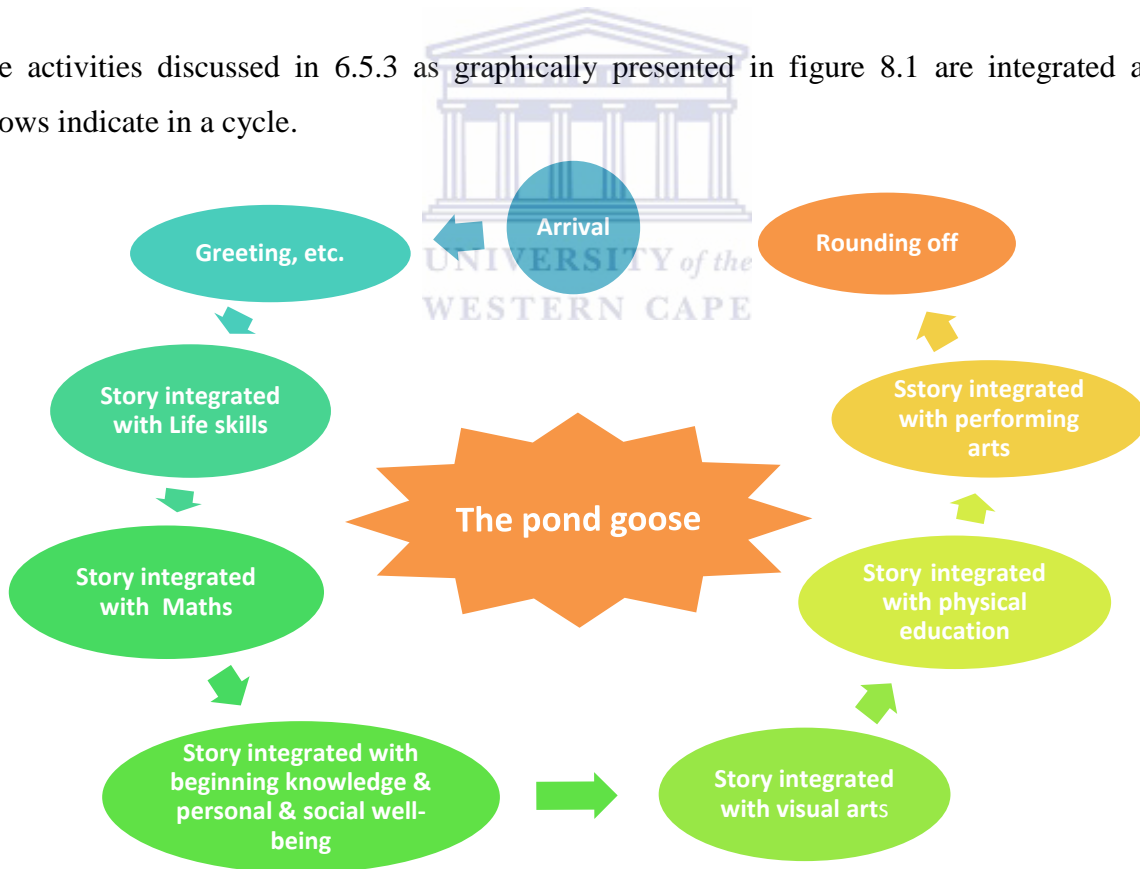


Figure 10.2 Representation of proposed activities based on model

6.5.3 Activities to integrate across the curriculum

The activities serve merely as suggestions and therefore do not attempt to provide lessons for an entire week or term. Phases in the discussion refer to the slots on the suggested time-table or Grade R daily programme.

Phase One: Arrival and free play for 30 minutes

Children put down their bags and engage in games outside. Play as stated in Chapter Two (see 2.14) is an important part of the development of the children. Values such as respect, acceptance and sharing are inculcated while they play. In addition they develop socially and linguistically. The types of games can serve as a precursor to the story although teachers may not always be involved in the choice of games. Alternately games such as board games can be incorporated in the story to consolidate vocabulary. Free play need not be unstructured or without guidance from the teachers.

Phase Two: Greeting, register, birthdays, weather and news.

The teacher greets the children and if it is part of the programme they engage in prayers and hymns/choruses. After the greeting she can announce that the story for the day is dedicated to the children who have birthdays that day. Then she does the birthday chart. A special card is attached with “*Story*” written on it and a big question mark. The question mark indicates that it is a surprise. When the weather chart is discussed the teacher warns them that they have to check what kind of weather prevails in the story. Language is linked in the way the information is introduced. In terms of the Mathematics they can count how many children have birthdays that day. In addition they can guess the ages. Once they know the actual age they can give the concrete representation in bottle tops or other concrete apparatus. They can count from one to five if the child is five. In addition they can make up rhymes or songs to consolidate the numbers. The teacher can group them in the number represented by the age of the child who celebrates the birthday for example groups of five or six. They can perform a celebration dance moving like geese in order to link with the story. The news of the day is obviously the birthday

and other news-related items. It might not be possible to have all the news snippets connected to the story.

Phase Three: Language integrated with Life Skills - The story

The story is not reserved for a specific time of the day but implemented as core activity to create links to all the other subjects. The teacher can stimulate their interest by playing animal sounds. They try and guess which animals made the sounds for example cows, geese, donkeys or lions. She can decide to use just poultry or birds, depending on the abilities of her class. Questions are asked to help them guess who will be the main characters in the story of the day. If this proves too difficult she can tell them it is the sound that they heard first or last, depending when she played the sound of the geese.

(i) Activity One: Introduction of the story integrating language and life skills (performing arts)



The children listen to sound of geese again and imitate the sound. Thereafter they listen to a song *Be kind to your web-footed friends* (Appendix N1-4). The teacher questions them on the content of the song to establish their comprehension of the song. They can explain their understanding of the word “kind”. If they struggle with the word “web-footed” the teacher can show them pictures of geese, ducks and frogs. Thereafter they listen to the song a few times while they try and join in as they become familiar with the tune and lyrics. The sounds and song serve to create a setting for the story. They can move their bodies to the tune of the song if they wish.

(ii) Activity Two: Telling the story integrating language and life skills (performing arts)

The story is told to the children with the song playing softly in the background. Questions are asked to establish whether the children listened carefully and understood the story. Vocabulary such as “*gaggle of geese*”, “*gleamed*” are dealt with in context. The story is repeated if most of the children did not follow the story. At this stage the pictures accompanying the story can be displayed to guide them. After the story telling they interact with the story as follows:

(iii) Activity Three: Language integrating life skills-‘Tableau vivant’ (creating a still life of the story without dialogue).

With this activity the teacher uses performing arts and language. The teacher gives a section of the story to each group. The children work in their groups and create their own scene of the story. While each group demonstrates their scene the other groups guess which scene it is. If they get stuck they are allowed to consult the book and use the pictures as a guide, especially as many may not be able to read yet.

(iv) Activity Four: Language integrating life skills

Using role play with dialogue the teacher integrates performing arts and language. Each child is assigned a role. This story lends itself to accommodate the entire class as the gaggle of geese can be any size. The role of the fox and the pond goose can be alternated by the children. They use the dialogue of the story but the expectation is not a verbatim rendition. The idea is that the children should experience how it feels to be isolated from a group. After the role play the teacher asks them in their opinion, how the pond goose felt when nobody wanted to be his friend. Because they have to explain these feelings the values and knowledge are developed. Furthermore, they develop their linguistic skills when they explain and use dialogue. When they engage in role-play their social skills are developed or enhanced.

(v) Activity Five: Life Skills (visual arts) integrating language and mathematics

Visual arts are used in conjunction with language and mathematics. Materials like old newspapers, newsprint, crayons, pencils or charcoal and a variety of items for example egg boxes, strips of coloured paper, buttons and glue are on display. Although I suggested the materials for the pictures the children are given freedom to use the material as they deem fit. The visual art activity is preceded by questions to establish how well they remember and correlate their knowledge with the materials presented to them. Questions could be: Where does the pond goose live? Where do the geese swim? Who wants to catch them and eat them? More challenging questions must be included such as: How do you think the pond goose felt when the others did not want to be his friends? How do you think children feel when they are isolated? If

children say “Yes” to the question, the teachers needs to explain to them why it is not proper and why it is not acceptable. Perhaps a lively debate will ensue with children expressing differences in opinion.

In addition they can have a tactile experience by touching various items such as leaves, feathers, bark, fur or pebbles. They have to say where these items are possibly found in the story. They work in pairs to construct a picture of the pond goose/geese. The teacher leaves everything to their imagination. The items can alternately be used in a story box where they construct their own stories using the items and then illustrate the stories.

Possibilities for the visual arts activity could be any of the following or something totally different: They can, for example, draw the outline of their picture with the pencil or charcoal or crayon on the newsprint. Strips or crumpled newspaper could be used to make the goose/geese/fox. Buttons are used for the eyes and strips of orange paper for the feet which they glue onto the goose. The egg boxes can be used for the beak and coloured with crayons afterwards. In addition the teacher can encourage them to colour the background in their favourite colours or add the pond. These suggestions are just possibilities because the children should really be left to create freely and not forced into an idea conjured up by the teacher. They must decide how to use the available resources to create something. It could include collages of the scenery on the farm or mobiles of geese too.

To integrate literacy in this activity they can explain their pictures. As an extra link the teacher can ask them to express their feelings when they see a specific colour, for example red could signify anger. They can tell the class why it is their favourite colour to consolidate their knowledge of colours. Furthermore, she/ he can refer to the colours of the pond geese namely white and black. They must explain the effect of these colours as it is significant in the story. The colours serve to camouflage the pond goose but the other geese are exposed to the fox. Additionally they can try and explain how the pond goose felt when he was black or white, given the context of the story. Colours also link with mathematics but in addition they must count how many eyes/feet the pond goose has. The question can be adjusted to include various numbers of geese for example, *How many beaks/wings will five geese have?* For spatial orientation they can

explain where the goose or the fox is in relation to the pond or on the farm, for example in the middle of the pond, on the side of the pond, or in the bushes on the farm.

(vi) Activity Six: Life Skills (BK and P&SW) integrating language

The children already know the story and how the pond goose was treated by his friends. As life skill the teacher can question them on the reaction of the other geese towards the pond goose. She asks them why the other geese acted the way they did. Using the pond goose as metaphor the teacher then introduces HIV and AIDS, and the children can say whether they heard the term before. Other questions could be: Do you think it is a good thing to isolate people who have HIV and AIDS? Why do you say so? The children must be sensitised that people who have HIV and AIDS should not be isolated like the pond goose. The story of Nkosi who became a national hero can be linked to this story as the pond goose also became the hero in the story. They must learn the life skill that we should show the same compassion to somebody with HIV and AIDS as we show to people who suffer other illnesses, disabilities or sadness. Perhaps the fox can be compared to negative feelings that are sometimes displayed towards HIV and AIDS affected or infected people. This is something that has to be eradicated in classrooms.

(vii) Activity Seven: Mathematics integrating life skills (visual arts and PE)

The song of the introduction plays in the background while the children are engaged in a game where they match pictures with the correct numbers for example three, or any number that they know, white geese are matched with the numeral 3. On completion of the activity they colour the pictures and paste it on cardboard. They can decorate the picture with feathers to form a frame. The teacher puts down three hoops and the children waddle like geese to the hoops. They move into the hoops in groups of three. The number of hoops placed on the ground determines how many children must be in the hoop. Following this they all make a grabbing movement like the fox then jump forward one step like the fox. They use auditory discrimination to execute the task while at the same time mathematics is integrated (one step, two steps).

Another activity is to complete a puzzle where they look at the numbers on the back of the puzzle pieces and assemble them to form a goose but they have to get the numbers in sequence from 1 to 10. They can count from one to ten once the puzzle is completed. Although ten is suggested the teacher can decide up to which number they are able to count.

(viii) Activity Eight: Visual arts integrating mathematics

Each child gets a container with multi coloured beads or buttons. They have an outline of a goose or fox on a board, and have to fill the picture using the beads and/or buttons. The teacher probes them to remember their earlier encounter with the story and how the animals looked. However, they are not forced into the teacher's interpretation. They use their imagination and creativity. They are challenged to sort buttons and/or beads while they create the picture. As an extra link to mathematics they can count the beads or buttons of each colour that they used. The story is the language link. They could link with the visual arts by counting the number of geese in the mobile made earlier and even do subtraction sums based on it.

(ix) Activity Nine: Performing arts integrating language

The children hold hands and sing the song which they learnt in the introduction. They make the appropriate movements while a few children move to the centre of the circle as the fox, geese and the pond goose. While the children in the outer circle use percussion instruments, those in the inner circle act the roles. The teachers asks them which instruments can be used to depict the geese and which can be used to depict the fox. For example triangles are used when the geese appear and drums or cymbals are used when the fox appears. The children can improvise their own movements and sounds. They can for example curl up to pretend they are the fox who does not want to be spotted by the geese or spread their arms in an attempt to fly away from the fox as frightened geese. These movements will not be made on command of the teacher but rather as result of careful questioning where they propose the movements.

(x) Activity Ten: Rounding off

To get the children to relax the teacher can play some soothing music or play the song again. They must make small movements to find a space where they can curl up and sleep peacefully just like the geese did after the farmer dispersed of the fox.

6.5.4 Conclusion

Considering the latest revision and adjustments to the curriculum namely CAPS (DoE, 2011b) it might prompt a more aggressive attempt to integrate the subjects. This could allow the children especially in FP to have a more holistic experience of the curriculum. In this regard the training for teachers should be planned with all the challenges that teachers face in mind. These challenges include, for example, overcrowded classrooms, often children with learning disabilities, classes with mixed level abilities (spiky profiles), ill-disciplined children and possibly children who suffer fears and traumas as well as serious illnesses like are HIV and AIDS as well as a more positive approach from government with regards to Grade R. I am of the opinion that if the environment is conducive to teaching and learning with the necessary resources teachers will be able to address the needs of the children placed in their care.

I envisaged that learners were afforded opportunities to develop a healthy image when they engaged in appropriate activities. Activities where they worked together and independently, while using stories and arts simultaneously, provided opportunities to develop a healthy self-image. I integrated art forms with stories where they were encouraged to respect human dignities and develop lifelong skills as preparation for further teaching and work. Similarly, I observed whether teachers were in fact aspiring to develop learners whilst establishing how teachers implemented the Outcomes proposed in the Arts & Culture Programme.

6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The research was influenced by limitations which include restrictions in terms of DoE, time allowed to do the research, the mode of the informal chats to the children, the questionnaire and

the availability of easily accessible Grade R classes as well as my own availability to go to schools as part-time student.

The DoE stipulated very specifically when research was allowed and when it was not allowed. Unfortunately for me the time which would have been more opportune for me was not the time that I was allowed to visit the schools. However, I was given time off at work to fit into the brief of the DoE. Yet this was curtailed by the fact that the schools had a programme to complete and I agreed to minimal interference in their programme. I was allowed to test my approach at the non-governmental institutions. As I work full-time and do research on a part-time basis, I found it extremely difficult to spend enough time with the Grade R classes while they were still in class.

The informal chats that I had with the children were originally planned to be video-taped but I realised that this might influence the spontaneity of the children. It therefore took more time to make field notes and then transcribe these notes accurately afterwards.

To track the impact of the approach was problematic because the Grade R children moved on to Grade 1. The only solution would be to go back to the teachers to gauge whether they applied the same or a similar approach. The switch in the curriculum had an impact on my research as I completed the field work when the curriculum change came about. Additionally I could not read and incorporate the myriad of resources available on the storytelling although the specific topic about integration did not yield as many.

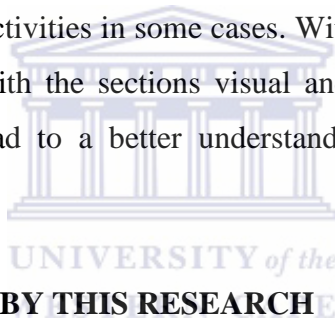
With regards to the research tools the formulation of some of the questions could be more direct. To reiterate the idea as mentioned in Chapter Four it could possibly add another dimension to the data if the teachers formulated their understanding of the concept “stories”. This could be a pertinent item in the questionnaire. However, it was assumed that they could define the concept “story” if they answered the questions about stories fairly comprehensively.

A final limitation was that I did not observe lessons in isi-Xhosa because I did not speak the language. However, I felt an interpreter would detract from the authenticity of the presentation.

6.7 FURTHER RESEARCH

It would be interesting to visit more schools and promote an approach using stories integrated with other areas across the curriculum. More importantly the idea is to foster an approach whereby teachers feel comfortable to address fears and traumas such as HIV and AIDS as it seems a taboo topic in many Grade R classes although teachers are aware of the importance thereof. To explore the hospital school where the patients are affected and infected can provide valuable and interesting qualitative data. However, the target group will be a multi-grade and not single grade group. This specific research can be in collaboration with the medical personnel.

It would be valuable to see how teachers implemented the CAPS (DBE, 2011a) especially as it seems as if the DoE invested in more planning and collaboration with experts in the field. The documents and guidelines with examples are much clearer. Arts & Culture in my opinion resulted in uncoordinated ad hoc activities in some cases. With the CAPS the name was changed to Creative Arts (DBE, 2011c) with the sections visual and performing arts as I used in my research. I believe this might lead to a better understanding of this important subject and probably better integration.



6.8 CONTRIBUTION MADE BY THIS RESEARCHER

Teachers applied specific approaches and similarly displayed various attitudes towards their work. From these two categories emanated the challenges that they face. This research could address some of the challenges that the teachers face.

The DoE expects teachers to address the issue of HIV and AIDS. Yet there seems to be resistance to do this which could be based on the lack of knowledge and skills to execute this important task. It could also stem from their backgrounds as I observed. They did not feel comfortable to address this issue with such young children. The integration across the curriculum using stories as teaching tools integrated with the arts could serve to include the HIV and AIDS issue in a non-threatening simplified way whilst at the same time developing social and linguistic skills.

Furthermore, the curriculum indicates that teachers should integrate lessons. The integration done by teachers was however, only as far as language lessons go. This research attempted to indicate ways in which lessons could be linked. Suggested activities could perhaps not seem entirely new to teachers but are packaged in a way to make the daunting task of integrating across the curriculum more accessible and manageable. The idea was to use sources readily available and use them in a meaningful way where the children experience the whole rather than the part in a fragmented or ad hoc way. In using the term ad hoc it is not suggested that no planning went into the observed lessons but rather that the planning did not always create scaffolding to convey meaning.

In an attempt to support teachers I intend to provide a manual with guidelines for the teachers. The manual will include titles of stories with ideas on integrating it with the arts, and how to use it across the curriculum. In addition it will have to articulate with the curriculum as prescribed by the DoE. The teacher will keep a checklist or journal and tick off which ideas were used. Furthermore there will be space provided to write down comments on any changes that the teacher wants to achieve with regards to activities and teaching aids. In addition the teacher can add comments about the children with regards to their experiences. Teachers can use each other and the researcher as life lines to discuss and/or present or observe lessons. A community of effective Grade R teachers need to develop in the absence of properly trained teachers. This is to create a community of reflective practitioners. The teachers in the rural areas and those in the private pre-schools who have limited resources could benefit from a support network.

At HE institutions there are many students who need to learn a new language in order to survive in class. This is linked to the language policy and plan of some universities. Often international students study at South African universities and do not have the command in either Afrikaans or English to survive in their environment, socially and academically. I have successfully implemented stories in many of these language acquisition/language development courses for students in various faculties to learn the concepts and language structures in their specific disciplines.

6.9 CONCLUSION

These recommendations merely serve as stimuli to initiate more ideas. Once teachers formed support groups they should be able to expand and/ or adapt the suggestions. The intended follow-up discussions with teachers could initiate a support group.

The skills needed to develop a well-rounded child and eventually a citizen who will not be a burden to the community but rather an asset, should not be the task of the teacher only. This has to be the joint effort of the teacher, parents and DoE. However, the teachers seem to be solely tasked to deliver this important service. Added to their task is the responsibility of the teacher when the children are orphaned as the caregivers at home are often the grandparents who might not have the resources to feed into the social and linguistic needs of these children. In addition even the children who still have parents are also the responsibility of the teacher for the time that they are in her care and often also aftercare hours. The situation where children are in community day care centres with little or no resources remains a source of concern.

With regards to utilisation of stories the teacher seemed to be the main storyteller in most cases. This reinforces the notion that teachers must be adequately trained and prepared to champion approaches where they utilise their own potential and that of the children in their care. Stories integrated with the arts proved to be useful as teaching tools whereby teachers are empowered to not only tap into the creativity and imagination of the children but similarly address the issue of HIV and AIDS in an accessible way.

Based on the research teachers should be furnished with all the support they can get to assist them. This support was listed in the recommendations which elucidated various ways for the teachers to see that they need not be isolated in this important and rewarding task of cementing the foundation right at the start of a child's education. The major contradiction is that the DoE documents have very specific traits which define the teachers required to teach in these programmes but the teachers are often not qualified for the jobs. Although some are not qualified for the specific jobs they are still very dedicated.

It is often a thankless job but the reward is much greater when you look at the joy and pleasure the children experience by engaging them in a cost-effective and efficient method. This method starts with “once upon a time” and hopefully ends where “all lived happily ever after” because they were engaged across the curriculum using the stories integrated with other areas in the curriculum as a powerful teaching tool. However, the story does not end there as the actual application of the approach needs to be explored and tested in the new curriculum.

I suggest an approach where the Social Theory and the Interactionist Theory combine. This approach will hopefully manifest in an eclectic way to empower teachers to use stories creatively across the curriculum in Grade R classes.



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APPENDIX A CIRCULAR OF WCED



Directorate: Research (DRS)

Director: Research (DRS)

Andile Siyengo

Secretary: Simamkele Dalasile

Tel: 021 467 2023

Address: Private Bag X9114, Cape Town 8000

Purpose:

To plan, manage and co-ordinate education research.

Functions:

1. Plan required research activities.
2. Undertake and coordinate departmental research activities.
3. Manage and coordinate research activities.
4. Publish and report on research findings.



APPENDIX B
LETTER FOR PERMISSION TO WCED

6 Waterboom Avenue
Belhar
7493
10 July 2007

The Head: Education
(For Attention: The Director: Education Research)
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
Cape Town
8000

Dear Sir

I have registered as a part-time student to complete a Ph. D (Education Department) at the University of the Western Cape. My specific research topic is: "The story as teaching tool for HIV/AIDS affected Grade R learners: an integrated approach" flowing from the broader UWC project: "Addressing the direct and indirect impact of HIV and AIDS on pre and school going children in South Africa".

I need your special permission to conduct research in Grade R classes at -----Primary School or ----- , -----Pre-Primary School, and possibly -----Primary, if I can find a suitable interpreter. If not I will use -----Primary. I will communicate any changes to you if they should occur. The nature of my research unfortunately forces me to conduct it during school hours, as I need to observe how teachers use stories in their classrooms and then I will demonstrate how to integrate stories with Arts, if it is not done yet. However, this should cause no disruption to the existing time tables. A partnership with the teachers will be formed. Teaching materials could develop from the research to assist teachers across the curriculum. Please note that the term "affected" is used instead of "infected" so that no child is possibly identified, but rather that all children are sensitized to become more sympathetic to the HIV/AIDS situation. After you have granted consent, I will send a similar letter to the principals and arrange a special meeting with the principals and teachers of the schools to explain the research.

Attached please find copies of the questionnaires and interview questions, a concise description of the research, a letter of my supervisor and an ethics statement.

Thanking you in anticipation

.....
Suzanne Lucille Anne Ross

Note: The topic has since been adapted to the current topic on the cover page of the Thesis in collaboration with the supervisor.

APPENDIX C LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM WCED

Navrae
Enquiries
IMibuzo
Telephone
IFoni
Faks
IFeksi
Verwysing
Reference
ISalathiso

Dr RS Cornelissen
(021) 467-2286
(021) 425-7445
20070726-0023



Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement
Western Cape Education Department
ISEbe leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Mrs Suzanne Ross
6 Waterboom Avenue
BELHAR
7493

Dear Mrs S. Ross

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE STORY AS TEACHING TOOL FOR HIV/AIDS AFFECTED GRADE R LEARNERS: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH.

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 participate in the research.
2. The research should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **21st January 2008 to 27th June 2008.**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December 2008).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the Principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the following schools: **Belhar Primary, De Kuilen Pre-Primary, St Augustine's Primary and Pniel Primary.**
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Education Research.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

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

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Ronald S. Cornelissen
for: HEAD: EDUCATION
DATE: 28th November 2007

MELD ASSEBLIEF VERWYSINGSNOMMERS IN ALLE KORRESPONDENSIE / PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBERS IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE /
NCEDA UBHALE IINOMBOLO ZESALATHISO KUYO YONKE IMBALELWANO

GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LAER-PARLEMENTSTRAAT, PRIVAATSAK X9114, KAAPSTAD 8000
GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LOWER PARLIAMENT STREET, PRIVATE BAG X9114, CAPE TOWN 8000

WEB: <http://wced.wcape.gov.za>

INBELSENTRUM / CALL CENTRE

INDIENENEMING: EN SALARISAVRAGE/EMPLOYMENT AND SALARY QUERIES ☎ 0861 07 33 22

Note: The topic has since been adapted to the current topic on the cover page of the Thesis in collaboration with the supervisor.

**APPENDIX D
LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS**

6 Waterboom Avenue
Belhar
7493
14 April 2008

The Principal

Dear Sir

I am a registered Ph.D. student at the University of Western Cape. My research topic is: The story as teaching tool to empower teachers in HIV/AIDS affected Grade R classes: an integrated approach. I hereby wish to request permission to conduct research at your school. My research will in no way disrupt your schedule at school. I will explain the procedures to you and the teachers as soon as I have been granted permission. The term “affected” in my title does not intend to single out or identify any specific learners as all learners are included in the programme. Furthermore I pledge confidentiality, if you so request, and will share all findings with the school as the research is intended to eventually assist teachers.

Attached please find the WCED letter of consent; the questionnaire for the teachers and the informal interview with learners as well as my ethics statement.

I thank you for your cooperation in this regard. Kindly inform me of your response in whichever way convenient for you.

Yours faithfully

.....
Suzanne Ross

Contact details: 08293934411/ 0219520222 (H) / 0218082900 (W)

e-mail: suzanne@sun.ac.za (work)

NOTE

The topic has since been adapted to the one on the cover of the Thesis. This was discussed with the supervisor who presented the change to the HDC.

APPENDIX E1
TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS

The questionnaire consists of THREE sections.

You are under no obligation to respond if you do not feel comfortable to answer. Please do not fill in your name.

SECTION 1A

Please answer the following questions by making a tick (√) in the appropriate block

		Yes	No	Not sure
1.	Is storytelling part of you weekly programme?			
2.	Do you use stories across the curriculum?			
3.	Do you integrate stories with Arts e.g. music, art, drama?			
4.	Are stories told as a reward when children do well or behave?			
5.	Do you allow the pupils to choose stories?			
6.	Is it important for you to tell stories that will help children to cope with traumatic experiences?			
7.	Do you regard storytelling as an essential part of the curriculum?			
8.	Do you regard it important to select stories that will accommodate the different gender groups in your class?			
9.	Do you select stories randomly or according to themes in the broader curriculum?			
10.	Do you vary the ways in which you tell stories?			
11.	Do you use teaching aids when you tell stories?			
12.	Can children relate to the stories that you tell them?			

SECTION 1 B

If you answered YES/NO to questions three, four and ten above, kindly EXPLAIN very briefly.

You may also write it on a separate page and attach it to the questionnaire.

Please mark it section 1B

3	
---	--

4	<hr/>
10	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

SECTION 2

Please respond to the following by writing a short motivation in the spaces provided. You may do this on a separate page if the space provided is insufficient. If so, please mark it Section 2 and attach it to this section.

1.	Why is it important to tell stories to young children? <hr/> <hr/>
2.	What is the educational value of stories, in your opinion?
3.	Why do you regard stories as an important part of the broader Curriculum, if so? <hr/> <hr/>
4.	What is, in your opinion, the most valuable educational contribution that stories make or have made in the lives of <i>your</i> learners? <hr/> <hr/>
5.	What kind of support is given to teachers to equip themselves in presenting stories? <hr/>

6.	Is there a special time during the school day when stories should be told as part of the Literacy programme? Why?
7.	Are the children allowed to tell stories? Please explain.
8.	How do you assess whether the stories that you tell appeal to your learners?
9.	How do you assess whether the stories that you tell are appropriate for your learners?
10.	Why do you think that by telling the children suitable stories, they could be assisted to cope with and/or be more sensitive to HIV/AIDS affected people?

Section 3

Please tick your response in the appropriate column

		5	4	3	2	1
		Fully agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Totally
1.	Young children prefer stories with happy endings.					
2.	Young children should only hear stories based on their own environment.					
3.	I can use stories as a valuable teaching tool in all lessons.					

4.	I am the authority to decide which stories are the best for my class.					
5.	I can allow the children to choose stories under my guidance.					
6.	When I tell stories I develop language and social skills.					
7.	I do not think that children need to hear stories about HIV/AIDS.					
8.	I should allow children to share their own stories.					
9.	It is important to let children interact with the content of the stories.					
10.	I think children can draw pictures to illustrate their understanding of the stories.					
11.	The curriculum allows enough time for storytelling.					
12.	I think all teachers have the qualities of a good story teller.					

Thank you for your participation and cooperation
Yours sincerely

Suzanne L. A. Ross (Researcher)



APPENDIX E2
ONDERWYSERS SE VRAELYS

INSTRUKSIES

Die vraelys bestaan uit DRIE dele.

Moenie u naam invul nie. U is ook onder geen verpligting om dit te voltooi indien u ongemaklik voel om te antwoord nie.


Afdeling 1A

Beantwoord die volgende vrae deur 'n regmerk (✓) in die toepaslike blokkie te maak.

		Ja	Nee	Nie seker nie
1.	Vorm die vertel van stories deel van u weeklikse program?			
2.	Gebruik u stories oor die kurrikulum heen?			
3.	Integreer u stories met kunsvorme soos musiek, kuns, drama?			
4.	Word stories as beloning vertel vir wanneer kinders goed presteer of hulle gedra?			
5.	Laat u kinders toe om stories te kies?			
6.	Is dit belangrik vir u om stories te vertel wat kinders sal help om traumatiese ervarings te hanteer?			
7.	Beskou u stories as 'n belangrike deel van die kurrikulum?			
8.	Beskou u dit as belangrik om stories te selekteer wat die verskillende geslagsgroepe in u klas akkommodeer?			
9.	Selekteer u stories lukraak/na willekeur of volgens algemene temas in die kurrikulum?			
10.	Varieer u die maniere hoe u stories vertel?			
11.	Gebruik u hulpmiddels wanneer u stories vertel?			
12.	Kan die kinders hulself in verband bring met die stories wat u hulle vertel?			

AFDELING 1B

Indien u JA/NEE op vrae drie, vier en tien hierbo geantwoord het, verduidelik asseblief kortliks. U kan dit ook op 'n aparte vel papier skryf en aan die vraelys kram. Merk dit asseblief duidelik afdeling 1B.

3	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
4	<hr/> <hr/>
10	 <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

AFDELING 2

Skryf asseblief as respons 'n kort motivering in die spasies wat voorsien word. U mag dit op 'n aparte vel papier skryf. Indien wel, merk dit asseblief afdeling 2 en kram dit aan hierdie afdeling vas.

1.	Waarom is dit belangrik om stories aan jong kinders te vertel? <hr/> <hr/>
2.	Wat is, na u mening, die opvoedkundige waarde van stories? <hr/>
3.	Waarom beskou u stories as 'n belangrike deel van die breër kurrikulum, indien wel?

4.	Wat, na u mening, is die waardevolste opvoedkundige bydrae wat stories maak of al in u leerders se lewens gemaak het?
5.	Watter ondersteuning word aan onderwysers gegee om hulle toe te rus om stories aan te bied of te vertel?
6.	Is daar 'n spesiale tyd van die dag wanneer stories as deel van die Geletterdheidsprogram vertel moet word? Waarom?
7.	Word kinders toegelaat om stories te vertel in u klas? Verduidelik asseblief.
8.	Hoe assesser u of die stories wat u vertel byval by die leerders vind?
9.	Hoe assesser u of die stories wat u vertel gepas is vir u leerders?
10.	Waarom dink u dat kinders, deur gepaste stories vir hulle te vertel, gehelp kan word om MIV/Vigs geaffekteerde persone te hanteer en/of meer sensitief teenoor sulke mense te wees?

Afdeling 3

Tik asseblief u respons in die gepaste kolom

		5	4	3	2	1
		Stem heeltemal saam	Stem saam	Neutraal	Stem nie saam nie	Stem glad nie saam nie
1.	Jong kinders verkies stories met gelukkige eindes.					
2.	Jong kinders moet net stories hoor wat op hulle eie omgewing gebaseer is.					
3.	Ek kan stories as waardevolle onderrigmiddel in al my lesse gebruik.					

4.	Ek is die kundige om te besluit watter stories die beste vir my klas is.					
5.	Ek kan kinders toelaat om stories onder my leiding te kies.					
6.	Wanneer ek stories vertel, ontwikkel ek taal- en sosiale vaardighede.					
7.	Ek glo nie kinders hoef stories oor MIV/Vigs te hoor nie.					
8.	Ek moet kinders toelaat om hulle eie stories te vertel.					
9.	Dit is belangrik dat kinders interaktief met die inhoud van die stories omgaan.					
10.	Ek dink kinders kan prentjies skep om hulle begrip van die storie te illustreer.					
11.	Die kurrikulum laat genoeg tyd toe vir die vertel van stories.					
12.	Ek dink alle onderwysers het die kenmerke van goeie storievertellers.					

Dankie vir u deelname en samewerking.
Die uwe

Suzanne L. A. Ross (Navorsers)

**APPENDIX F1
CHILDREN'S INTERVIEWS**

Researcher will record the responses on a check list. It will be arranged with the class teacher.

1. Do you like to stories?
2. Who tells you stories?
3. Why do you like to listen to stories?
4. What kind of stories do you like?
5. Tell me why you prefer those stories to other stories?
6. Do you like to tell stories?
7. Are there stories that you do not like?
8. Do you like to draw about things that you have heard in the stories for example the animals or people or places?
9. How do you feel when the story is happy?
10. How do you feel when the story is sad?
11. Tell me about your favourite story.
12. How do you feel about the in the story?
(Here the main character in 11. mentioned by the learner will be added)

APPENDIX F2
KINDERS SE VRAELYS

Navorsers sal die response op 'n oorsiglyk aanteken. Dit sal met die klasonderwyser uitgeklaar word.

1. Hou jy daarvan om stories te hoor?
2. Wie vertel vir jou stories?
3. Waarom hou jy daarvan om na stories te luister?
4. Van watter soort stories hou jy?
5. Sê vir my waarom hou jy liever van sulke stories as van ander?
6. Hou jy daarvan om stories te vertel?
7. Is daar stories waarvan jy nie hou nie?
8. Hou jy daarvan om dinge wat jy in stories gehoor te teken soos diere of mense of plekke?
9. Hoe voel jy as die storie gelukkig is?
10. Hoe voel jy as die storie hartseer is?
11. Vertel my van die storie waarvan jy die meeste hou.
12. Hoe voel jy oor in die storie?
(Hier sal die hoofkarakter ingevoeg word van die storie wat in 11. genoem is).

APPENDIX G
LECTURES' INTERVIEW

1. Do students get training based on the curriculum/syllabi of the DoE?
2. Does storytelling form part of your programme?
3. If you say “Yes”, does the programme include theory and practical?
4. In addition to no. 3, are there any approaches that you propose to your students?
5. If you say “No” to no. 3, please motivate.
6. How do students react if and when they have to present stories?
7. How do you assess the presentation of stories when students engage in this activity?
8. How will you encourage the use of stories in the Foundation Phase?
9. What is your opinion about integration of stories across the curriculum in Foundation Phase?
10. Does your programme include sensitization to HIV and AIDS from Grade R?
11. Do you agree/disagree that HIV and AIDS should form part of the Foundation Phase at school level?
12. If you agree to no. 8, which mechanisms or methods will you suggest to your students to introduce the concept HIV and AIDS?
13. If you disagree to no. 8 what are your reasons?

The identity of the respondent is protected.

Thank you for your cooperation
Suzanne Ross
021 8082900 (w)
021 9520222 (h)
suzanne@sun.ac.za

APPENDIX H

VRAELYS VIR GRONDSLAGFASESTUDENTE (STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE)

Afdeling A

- Omkring asseblief J (Ja) of N (Nee) vir vrae 1 en 2.
- Omkring asseblief T(Teorie) of P (Prakties) vir vraag 3.
- Voltooi asseblief vrae 4 en 5 in die spasies.

1. Kry studente opleiding gebaseer op die kurrikulum/sillabusse van die Departement van Onderwys?

J / N

2. Vorm die vertel van stories deel van jou opleiding?

J / N

3. Indien “Ja” op 2, sluit die program teorie en prakties in?

T / P

4. Hoe reageer jy wanneer jy gevra word om stories te vertel?

5. Gee jou opinie oor integrasie van stories regoor die kurrikulum in Grondslagfase.

Afdeling B:

- Omkring asseblief J (Ja) of N (Nee) vir vraag 6.
- Omkring asseblief stem saam of stem nie saam nie vir vraag 7.
- Voltooi asseblief vrae 8 en 9 in die spasies.

6. Sluit jou program blootstelling aan MIV en Vigs vir Graad R in?

J / N

7. MIV en Vigs moet deel van die Grondslagfase op skoolvlak vorm.

Stem saam / Nie saam nie

8. Indien jy nie met nr. 7 saamstem nie, gee asseblief redes.

9. Is die konsep van MIV en Vigs by jou proefskool aangespreek?
Verduidelik asseblief.

Die identiteit van die respondent word beskerm.

Dankie vir jou samewerking

Suzanne Ross

suzanne@sun.ac.za

APPENDIX I

QUINTILES SYSTEM FOR SCHOOLS (DoE)



REFERENCE: 5133
3/1/11/1/5

ENQUIRIES: See Paragraph 12 TEL: 021 467 2658 FAX: 086 568 2858

CIRCULAR : 0009/2013
EXPIRY DATE : 31 March 2014

TO: DEPUTY DIRECTORS-GENERAL, CHIEF DIRECTORS, DIRECTORS, CIRCUIT TEAM MANAGERS, IMG MANAGERS, HEADS: IMG CO-ORDINATION & ADVICE, DEPUTY DIRECTORS AT EDUCATION DISTRICT OFFICES, AND PRINCIPALS AND GOVERNING BODY CHAIRPERSONS OF NON SECTION 21 ORDINARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BRIEF SUMMARY: *Particulars of the financial allocation to NON SECTION 21 schools for the 2013/14 financial year and guidelines for the procurement of goods and services*

SUBJECT: **NORMS AND STANDARDS FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS – FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FOR THE 2013/2014 FINANCIAL YEAR TO NON SECTION 21 SCHOOLS**

1. Allocation

Details of the Norms and Standards (N&S) allocation for your Non-Section 21 school for the financial year extending from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 are available on CEMIS. Schools can access them in the following way:

- Log on to the CEMIS.
- Select "Public Ordinary".
- Select your school.
- Click "Proceed". Point to the "Administration" menu item and click on "Norms and Standards Allocation". Select N&S 2013.
- Print the page.

Your attention is drawn to the following: *SITY of the*

- 1.1 Allocations are calculated in accordance with the prescripts in paragraph 108 to 113 of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSFF) in Government Gazette 29179, dated 31 August 2006.

According to paragraph 109 of the NNSFF, the provincial education departments must use the national poverty distribution table (poverty table) to determine how the targeted amounts are to be allocated in each province. The amended table below indicates the percentage of learners in the Western Cape that may be placed in the various national quintiles (NQs).

	NQ1	NQ2	NQ3	NQ4	NQ5	Total
National	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	100%
Western Cape	9.5%	13.6%	16.9%	22.1%	37.9%	100%

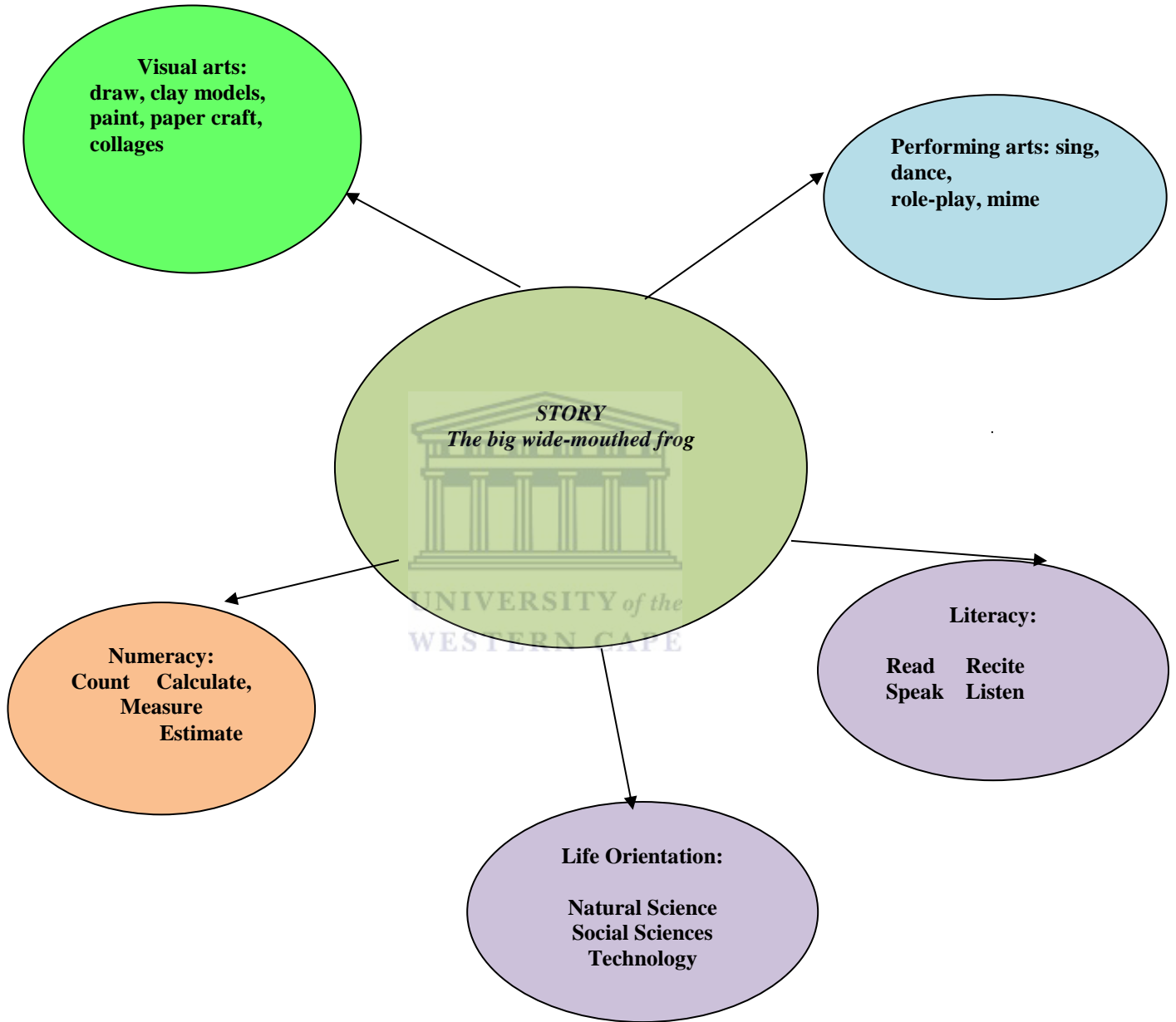
- 1.2 The allocation letter includes the allocation for 2013/14, as well as provisional allocations for the next two financial years, i.e. 2014/15 and 2015/16. All allocations were calculated on the 2012 Annual Survey of Schools (ASS) enrolment figure.
- 1.3 **The funds allocated in terms of this circular must be spent by 31 March 2014.**

2. Payment schedule (Form WCED 032)

2.1 Schools charging school fees

Non-Section 21 schools must, before 28 February 2013, divide their N&S allocation for the financial year ending 31 March 2014 into the four categories on form WCED 032, namely learning and teaching support materials (LTSM), local purchases, municipal services and maintenance. On receipt of the

**APPENDIX J
MIND MAP**



**APPENDIX K 1 TO 4
SONGS USED**

Five little speckled frogs

Five little speckled frogs
sitting on a speckled log
eating a most delicious fly
(ya, ya, ya, ya, ya-ya)

One jumped into the pool
Where it was so nice and cool
Then there were four
little speckled frogs

Four little speckled frogs
sitting on a speckled log
eating a most delicious fly
(ya, ya, ya, ya, ya-ya)

Three little speckled frogs
sitting on a speckled log (etc.)

Chorus

Two little speckled frogs (etc)

Chorus

One little speckled frog
sitting on a speckled log
eating a most delicious fly
(ya, ya, ya, ya, ya-ya)

One jumped into the pool
Where it was so nice and cool
Then there no
little speckled frogs
Not one?
Not one
Are you sure?
I think so

A-goong went the little green frog

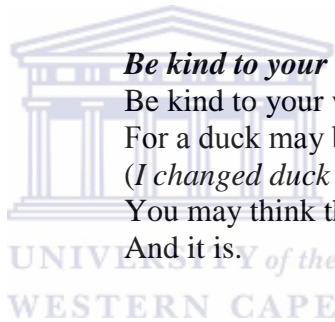
A-goong went the little green frog
A-goong went the little green frog
A-goong went the little green frog one day
And his eyes went, A-goong. (X3)

Butterflies

One, two, three, white butterflies I see,
They flitter here, they flutter there,
They flitter through the garden air.
Now high, now low, then off they go,
So gay, so light, so free.

Be kind to your web-footed friends

Be kind to your web-footed friends
For a duck may be somebody's mother
(*I changed duck to goose to match story*)
You may think that this is the end
And it is.



APPENDIX L
EXAMPLES OF ART WORK DONE BY CHILDREN



**APPENDIX M
PHOTO OF PARK**



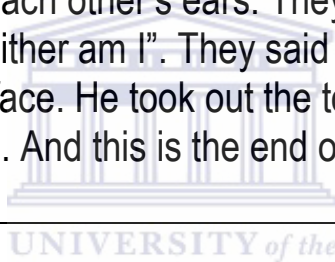
APPENDIX N
EXAMPLES OF STORIES TOLD BY CHILDREN

The selfish, snappy crocodile (told by 6 year old)

There was once a selfish crocodile. He never let anyone in his lake. He never let anyone drink the water in his lake. He'd always been like that since he was born. That was rude!

And so he said to the animals in the jungle, "Leave this jungle, leave this lake or leave this forest!" The animals decided to leave the crocodile alone in the jungle. They all went off with a little bit of food and a lot took their beds too.

And so the animals heard some screaming. It was the selfish crocodile. He said his tooth a toothache. Just a teeny little mouse came to see what was going on. They all heard him screaming, "My tooth! My tooth!" The mouse looked at the animals. They whispered in each other's ears. They said, "I'm not going to repair his tooth". "Neither am I". "Neither am I". They said to one another. The mouse climbed onto the crocodile's face. He took out the tooth and took it to his house where all the other mice lived. And this is the end of the story.



The ice-cream (told by five year old)

Once upon a time there was an ice-cream sweet who was very lonely and wanted some friends. But nobody wanted to be his friend. Everybody just wanted to eat him. Every day he was hoping somebody would not eat him where he was sitting in the shop. Then one day a king came to the shop. He was wearing beautiful clothes and a crown. The ice-cream sweet thought the king was going to buy him and eat him. Then the king really bought him and he was very scared. But then the king said, "I am going to change you into a kind human being". And he lived with the king and queen in the castle and had many friends.

APPENDIX O
DECLARATION OF EDITOR

I hereby declare that I language edited the thesis by Suzanne Lucille Anne Ross titled, Stories as teaching tools to empower Grade R teachers”.

Hzybrands

Helena Zybrands

Lecturer and Coordinator: Academic Literacy and English for Academic Purposes
Language Centre, Stellenbosch University

2013-02-01

