



**UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE**

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A GRADE R
SCHOOL READINESS LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAMME IN TWO
PREVIOUSLY DISADVANTAGED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE
TOWN METROPOLE**



BY

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A full thesis in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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SUPERVISOR: Dr T. Moodley

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DECLARATION

I declare that this present study: Factors influencing the implementation of a grade R school readiness intervention support programme in two previously disadvantaged primary schools in the Cape Town metropole is my own work that has not been submitted to any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Mariotte Marianne Merle Hans

November 2018

Signed: M. M. M. Hans



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Most importantly I thank God for allowing me to walk this journey, giving me courage, endurance and strength to complete what I have started.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors that impacted positively or militated against the implementation of a learning support programme (ISP) in grade R classes at two primary schools located in the same poor socio-economic area within the Cape Metropole of the Western Cape Province, South Africa. Learner Support Teachers used this programme to enhance learning in grade R and was called an Intervention Support Programme (ISP). The purpose of the ISP was to improve the school readiness skills of the Grade R learners in four domains: language development, gross and fine motor skills, auditory perceptual skills and visual perception.

The study followed a qualitative research approach and was guided by a case study research design. The sample comprised both designers as well as implementers of the ISP who were school-based as well as education district-based officials to explore their views and/or experiences of the ISP. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews after all ethical protocols were followed. The data was analysed using a thematic approach. The findings highlighted, that despite the learners experiencing barriers to learning, they improved by participating in the ISP. The study identified the following factors that facilitated the successful implementation of the ISP: the grade R teachers and LSTs' work experience and qualifications, their positive attitudes and commitment towards teaching, the designers, implementers and grade one teachers' positive views about the ISP, the constant review of the ISP, and adapting the ISP to suit local learning and teaching contexts of the schools. The study also identified the following factors that militated against the successful implementation of the ISP: the non- involvement of the ISP implementers (grade R teachers and LSTs) in the input and design of the ISP, the non-alignment of the school curriculum (CAPS) with the ISP, the manner in which ISP learners were selected, time constraints regarding the delivery of the curriculum, the non- or under-involvement of parents and the community in their children's schooling, the non-involvement of principals in the ISP and the unrealistic expectations of the district- based officials with regard to the ISP. The study also makes recommendations about how the ISP could be improved to enhance its effectiveness.

List of Key Words

Auditory perception

Auditory Perceptual skills

Curriculum

Effectiveness

Gross and fine motor skills

Intervention Support Programme

Language development

Parent involvement

School readiness

Socio economic

Visual perception

Learning Support Teacher



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ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBST:	District Based Support Team
DCES:	Deputy Chief Education Specialist
ECD:	Early Childhood Development
FET:	Further Education and Training
HOD:	Head of Department
IMG:	Institutional Management and Governance
ISP:	Intervention Support Programme
LOLT:	Language of Learning and Teaching
LSA:	Learner Support Advisor
LST:	Learner Support Teacher
MNED:	Metro North Education Department
NEPI:	National Education and Policy Investigation
SBST:	School Base Support Team
UNESCO:	United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children Education Forum
WCED:	Western Cape Education Department

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Background to the study

It has become critically important to be school ready these days, to be competent academically throughout one's formal and informal learning journey. Research has shown that children who begin their early years of schooling on a sound foundation academically have a better chance at succeeding in primary schools (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006). Children growing up in poverty can experience adjustments when entering school (Sasser, Bierman, Heinrichs and Nix, 2017). It can be improved by school interventions. According to Gredler (1992) school readiness refers to learners being mature and having good social skills. Vygotsky (1978) describes children as being school ready when they are able to learn with a peer or adult. Their level of language, cognition and general knowledge should be ready for learning. School readiness programmes can be more acceptable by parents and children who are firm believers in their own beliefs and practices that will help to overcome cultural and linguistic challenges by providing high quality child care learning programmes (Hyde and Kabiru, 2003). When quality programmes are in place, few learners will repeat grades in the Foundation Phase.

Factors such as differences in child rearing conditions, poverty, violence in the community, developmental delays or inherited characteristics add to learners not being ready to learn in grade one (Ladd, 2005). Learners come to school with different developmental levels; it therefore impacts on grade R progress.

The policy for promoting inclusive education in South Africa, Department of Education, (2001) states clearly that educators should refine their skills to include all learners irrespective of their disabilities. All children can learn differently with diverse learning needs, but with equal value. The emphasis in Grade R is in preparing the child for learning and to prepare the learner for the different learning processes (Rossouw, 1991). For example, although we do not speak in syllables such as “c-a-t”, learners in grades R and one acquire the semantics of learning to read. If a learner comes to school with academic challenges, the teacher should be prepared to help the learner with their challenges using different

learning styles to accommodate the learner. Class and learner support teachers gain knowledge on how to accommodate and respond to the learners who may need different learning processes by applying support intervention programmes. Based on my experience, these programmes play two roles. Firstly, teachers become more aware of the barriers that learners are experiencing when doing a baseline assessment because it helps them to decide who to choose for the intervention support programme. Secondly, their knowledge gained in the baseline assessment can be used to assist the learners with barriers.

I was a mainstream teacher for 24 years and then decided to focus on learning support. Being a learner support teacher (LST) for fourteen years motivated me to have an in- depth look at why learners repeat grades during their Foundation Phase schooling (Grade R-3). I have been part of the Grade R intervention programme project, which has been implemented formally since the beginning of 2013. To enhance learning in grade R, an intervention support programme was used by the learner support teachers (ISP). The aspirations of learner support teachers are to prevent learners from repeating grades and becoming part of the statistics of being “at risk” academically. However, this approach was not that effective because there were just too many learners who needed learning support. Since the failure rate in grade one was very high, it made sense to shift the learning support focus to the Foundation Phase, especially grade R. The aim was to address barriers to learning during the Foundation Phase years so that there were fewer learners who struggled in the intermediate and senior phases, since learning barriers contribute to the school drop-out rate. Previously the learner support teachers concentrated on Grades 1 to 7, helping the learners who were at risk academically.

1.1.1 The intervention support programme

Metro North Education Department (MNED) introduced throughout the district, a focused learning support intervention programme for grade R learners in 2013. It was also called “The Turn- around Project” running concurrently with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum in class in the Metropole North Education District (MNED) since the beginning of 2013. This programme aimed to prevent learners from repeating their grades in the foundation phase. This ten- month support programme was divided into four key areas: language development, auditory perception, visual perception, as well as gross and fine motor skills that create the building blocks for learning. It was used

as an informal diagnostic tool to identify and address the learning barriers faced by Grade R learners. Eight possible learners in each class (thirty learners in total at each school) were identified by their grade R class teachers as experiencing barriers to learning. The baseline assessment that was conducted by the grade R teachers as well as observing the learners was used to decide who the eight learners were with possible barriers. The Learner Support teacher used the pre-test programme to evaluate these eight learners of each class. They received more intense support in terms of academic support by the learner support teacher with the whole class or by means of withdrawal, to complement the support they received from the class teacher. The learner support teacher made the decision as to how many times to either withdraw these eight “at risk” learners, or work with the whole class (called collaborative teaching) so that all learners benefited from the programme. The programme’s specific goals were to:

- support all learners so that they were “school ready” for grade one
- Support learners who have been identified as “at risk academically.”
- use the data emanating from the project at the end of a specific year to guide future curriculum support planning

The intervention support programme was incorporated into the CAPS to enhance the learning of Grade R learners so that they were ready to embrace the curriculum of Grade one by addressing the four important areas in two half-hour sessions per week. This programme complemented CAPS, as it was integrated in class. Metro North Education District (MNED) implemented the intervention support programme at the beginning of 2013 and statistics thus far indicated much success working with learners who were identified by their teachers as being at risk academically.

The initial development of the intervention support programme was compiled by the following WCED officials

- Early Child Development (ECD) Practitioner, Institutional Management and Governance (IMG) official, based at WCED, Head Office: Deputy Chief Education Specialist in Learning Support, Special Needs from MNED
- A group of seven Learning Support Advisors based at MNED

These personnel had knowledge and expertise related to learning in early childhood. They decided to develop a learning support programme based on the following building blocks for learning: language development, auditory perceptual skills, visual perception, and gross and fine motor skills. This project

supported Grade R learners in their classrooms for one hour per week, by means of withdrawal of the learners at risk and collaborative teaching (teaching to the whole class while the teacher observes) implemented by the learner support teachers. The intervention programme commenced with grade R learners being pre-tested during the month of March /April. Then the support programme was implemented. Finally, a post-test was done in November of the same year with the same learners to gauge the efficacy of the intervention programme. The pre- and post- tests were identical.

MNED had a total of 87 schools and was divided into seven circuits. A circuit is a conglomerate of schools clustered in the same area. Thus far most of the schools in the district have participated in this learning support programme. The statistical data at the end of a particular year guided the planning for the next year. The statistical data showed both the pre- test and the post- test results of all participating schools. The results of the two tests included the overall test scores as well as the individual performances in each of the four areas per school.



1.2 Rationale for the study

Researchers in education may study a topic to find out answers concerning educational programmes (Babbie, 2011). The rationale for this study was based on the intervention support programme designed for Grade R learners to be better prepared for formal learning in Grade one (WCED, 2014). The main reason for implementing the support programme was to help learners who may have been at risk academically. This was aimed at reducing the failure rate of learners in the Foundation Phase. The intervention support programme was driven by the MNED officials that included class visits from the learner support advisors to supervise the implementation of the programme, workshops to inform all the learner support teachers and feedback questionnaires at the end and beginning of the year. Changes were made, guided by pre-and- post test results reflecting the extent of the learner progress, thus the effectiveness of the intervention programme. (Metropole North Education Department, 2013). If there were any changes in the programme, we met at MNED and discussed the changes as was indicated by other officials of MNED such as learning support teachers with much experience associated with the programme. Continuous discussions and feedback were aimed at improving the intervention programme.

It was important that learner support teachers implement what they had learnt through workshops, integrating the changes into their programmes at school, to improve the quality of the programme.

The programme ought to have had a positive effect on learners in Grade R. However; there were factors that influenced the implementation of intervention programme. I investigated the factors that influenced the successes and challenges of the intervention programme based on the statistics made available with regard to learners' pre-and post-test results.

The 2014 pre-and-post-test statistics of the data indicated relatively satisfactory progress made overall when looking at the results of all participating schools. There was consistent progress made in areas of language development, auditory perception visual perception, and gross and fine motor skills. However, closer examination of the data indicated that there were also mixed performances when looking at the four areas within a school and amongst schools, (Metropole North Education Department, 2014). Certain schools showed better progress in some of the intervention support programme components compared to other schools, and vice versa. This divergence in performance in these areas piqued my interest. I was therefore motivated to explore the factors that influenced the implementation of the intervention support programme at identified schools with contrasting performances.



1.3 Problem statement

The 2014 intervention support programme (ISP) statistics indicated that all the participating schools in Circuit 6 had shown progress, with certain schools in particular, having excelled. However, the statistics also indicate that some schools did not show satisfactory progress in some of the areas of the programme. For example, one school achieved an increase from 14% to 76% in language development and from 24,5% to 63% in auditory perception. Conversely, another school did not make much progress in both areas and achieved far less. It was interesting to note that the schools did not make similar progress in the different areas of the programme (Metropole North Education Department, 2014), despite them being located in the same socio- economic and geographical area, and having received similar support by the relevant district officials in the implementation of the intervention programme. This occurrence was in my view worthy of investigation and had therefore motivated me to pursue an academic study in exploring the factors that influenced the implementation of the intervention programme at two identified

schools. To my knowledge, hardly any research had been conducted in South Africa, let alone the Western Cape to explore the factors that influence the implementation of intervention programmes at school. Given the significance of school readiness and early childhood education as the foundations of further learning, the findings of this study would have hopefully contributed to the body of knowledge that informs intervention learning support programme implementation at schools.

In order to reach these objectives, this study used qualitative research methodology. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with the role-players related to this intervention programme (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). These role players included grade R class teachers, learner support teachers, heads of department in the foundation phase, principals, learner support advisors and management teams connected to the development and implementation of this programme. The two schools were invited to participate in the study and identified after an analysis of 2014 results of the pre- and –post baseline assessment.



1.4 Research aim

The aim of this study was to explore the factors that hindered or facilitated implementation of the Grade R intervention support programme at two selected schools in terms of the auditory perception, visual perception, gross and fine motor skills and language development areas.

1.5 Research objectives

This study had two objectives:

- to explore the factors that facilitated the implementation of the Grade R intervention support programme at one primary school.
- to explore the factors that militated against or constrained the implementation of the Grade R intervention programme at another primary school.

1.6 Research questions

The Western Cape had the grade R intervention programme relating to language development and auditory perceptual skills in primary schools for two years in order to improve the learners' academic performance. However, some of our schools were performing poorly. The main question this study wanted to answer was: what were the factors that contributed to this intervention support programme in terms of language development, auditory perception, visual perception and gross and fine motor skills at two identified schools? The two sub-questions are:

- What were the factors that facilitated the implementation of the Grade R intervention support programme at these two selected schools?
- What were the factors that militated against the implementation of the grade R intervention support programme at these two selected schools?



1.7 Conceptual framework

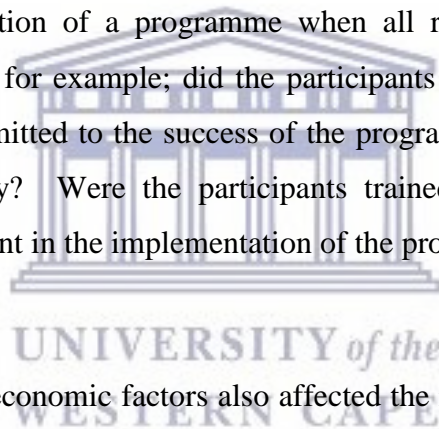
Jarabeen, (2009) describes a conceptual framework as a network with inserted concepts that are put together to provide a comprehensive understanding of an occurrence. A conceptual framework is also a design of what the researcher thinks is going on with the occurrences of the study (Maxwell, 2008). Therefore, this conceptual framework was guided by the factors that influence the implementation of the intervention programme and the analysis of the findings. Factors such as commitment to a programme, contextual factors; socio-economic and political factors, the CAPS and capacity to implement policy were key conceptual categories that can influence the implementation of a programme (Stofile, 2008). These were key elements that may have influenced the effectiveness of the programme under scrutiny.

The approaches used in developing and implementing an intervention programme may play a key role in the nature and extent of its impact. Two approaches that seemed relevant to this study were the top-down as well as the bottom-up approach that may be used when designing a programme. The fact that the study's participants were drawn from the different post levels representing both education management and supervisory portfolios (school and district officials) as well as those who implemented the programme at school level deemed it appropriate for the study to focus on the approach used in the

design and implementation of the ISP. It therefore aimed to include as many role players as possible who were in some way, associated with the development and implementation of the intervention programme in the two identified schools.

The framework of this study consisted of key elements such as: commitment to the programme, contextual factors (socioeconomic and political factors, the National curriculum - Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and the capacity to implement policy. This framework was relevant to this study because it investigated the importance of these elements in the design and implementation of the ISP.

Commitment is abstract and cannot be measured (Stofile, 2008). It is an important component that added much success to the implementation of a programme when all role players were committed and dedicated. Questions were asked for example; did the participants affiliated to the programme have ample resources? Were they committed to the success of the programme? Did the teachers deviate or follow the programme religiously? Were the participants trained to contribute positively to the programme? Were they all confident in the implementation of the programme?



Contextual Factors such as socio-economic factors also affected the implementation of the programme in different ways. Children who come to school from high poverty contexts such as malnutrition, usually experience poorer school outcomes and performance (UNICEF, 2012). The two schools under scrutiny were both in an underprivileged area. Biersteker, (2010) confirmed that racial discrimination and apartheid policies have left socio-economic inequities among black and white, rural and urban South Africans. Poverty, unemployment, high crime and violence levels affect a large number of young children. Low levels of literacy among crucial caregivers makes it difficult for them to support their children's early education. Policies such as Education White Paper Five (Department of Education, 2001.) were the vehicles through which grade R was highlighted above other forms of Early Childhood Development (ECD), locating grade R classes in public schools. The Children's Act, Act 38 of 2005 (Department of Social Development, 2005) amended by the Children's Amendment Act, Act 41 of 2007 (Department of Justice, 2007) covered Early Childhood Development (ECD) and provided for norms and standards. Key initiatives, to name a few, are to help young children in South Africa include: child

subsidies, the phasing in of grade R as a first year at school, according to (Biersteker, 2010). During interviews in this study, questions such as the following arose: What structures influenced the implementation of the programme? Were finances available to provide adequate service to the implementation of the programme?

The curriculum for the reception year (grade R) was part of Education White Paper Five (Department of Education, 2001) National Policy, the incorporation of Curriculum for five year-olds to form part of the National Curriculum Statement for the Foundation Phase, grade R to three. According to the Department of Basic Education (2011, pg. 4-6)

The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (January 2012) represents a policy statement for learning and teaching and teaching in South African schools and comprise of the following; National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), National Protocol on Assessment (NPA) and the National Policy pertaining to Promotion and Progression Requirements(NPPPPR) . The learning areas for grade R are; Home Language, First Additional Language, Mathematics and Life Skills.

These subjects indicated above are taught by the class teachers in grade R who were trained in 2011 to implement the curriculum effectively, yet we have learners failing in grade one. Questions that arose were directed at the grade R teachers and included questions such as: Did the intervention programme enhance and complement the curriculum of grade R? Do the topics or themes run parallel with CAPS? Were their parts of the programme that they did not agree with and why? Did they feel more confident about the child that they send to grade one? What did they think of the programme after they have experienced it? Did the programme address knowledge and skills gaps found in CAPS? What in their opinion did the programme address that CAPS lacked? Were they trained efficiently to use the programme effectively?

According to Brynard and De Coning, cited in Stofile, (2008) general systems; namely structure and functionality influence the implementation of policy. It can be an intricate process where many factors can influence the effective implementation of a programme. Honadle, (1981) explains policy as the ability to perform duties namely; to change and expect change, make educated decisions about policy,

improve programmes, attract and use resources, manage resources and assess activities. These qualities were appropriate for the current study because it addressed issues such as teachers having the confidence and sufficient resources to implement the ISP. Other relevant aspects related to the implementation of the ISP were aspects such as the type of preparatory training received, the nature of monitoring that took place while the problem was implemented, the possibility of collaborating with other colleagues or schools and the kind of support for all role players including the learners. Early intervention programmes are aimed at developing the skills of young children with disabilities to help them perform more effectively in school (Murphy & Burns cited in Faran 2011).

1.8 Clarifications of key concepts with regards to the intervention support programme

The four areas of intervention regarded necessary were: auditory perception, visual perception, language development and gross and fine motor skills. According to Louw, Bay and Eigelaar (2007), learners should experience a solid foundation in their reception year, however this is not happening as the failure rate is high in their first two years of schooling. Research by Louw et al (2007), has shown that a high percentage of learners repeat Grades 1 and 2 in the low socio-economic areas of the Western Cape. Learners, who are not taught in their mother tongue experience much difficulty (Bloch, 2002). It takes time to understand this new language and to interact in this language especially if children experience barriers to learning. It is recommended that high quality education programmes be implemented to prevent children from failure in their reception years. Learners in poor socio-economic areas will have more challenges relating to the curriculum, especially when they come to school with a poor vocabulary (Louw et al, 2007). Learners may not have learning difficulties in perceptual areas (Smith, 2008 in; Nel & Nel, 2013), however if they do, it can influence their reading, spelling, letter formation, sounds and Mathematics later in their schooling years.

This section described the existing literature on the topic of being ready for school. The following discussion pertains to each of these concepts and also explains how these concepts applied to the current study.

1.8.1 School readiness

Being “school ready” has become pertinent by educational decision makers: the child has to be a certain age to progress satisfactorily, social experiences of the child maturing at their own time and the child’s

own experience to learn, skills and capabilities in the learner and to do certain tasks or subjects (Ausabel, 1962; Gagne, 1985; Gredler, 1992; Vygotsky, 1978). The “age of readiness” is influenced by cultural and background experience, specifically emphasising the quality education children receive and subject readiness for further learning (Ausabel in Gredler, 1992). Pieterse, (2007) describes being school ready is being ready to learn formally at school with confidence. The child should be stimulated in all the developmental areas for example: language, emotionally and socially, perceptual development (visual, auditory), development of movement, intellect, and be able to understand creative play and rich experiences. Gilford (2014) explains how schools have changed to serve classrooms of children. It is important that learners also function well within an organised situation. Children will be ready and able to meet the daily challenges of the curriculum if they have the skills and information experience that can give them the opportunity to be independent learners.

An important requirement for school readiness is to have acquired a good language skill. It is a valuable tool for any child to express themselves in words. Schools expect much of all children who come to school for the first time. If they do not meet the criteria of being school ready, they may find it difficult to meet up to the expectations of being school ready. Detailed developmental handicaps only show at school. For example: if they have emotional problems, lack of confidence or perhaps show anti-social behaviour (Pieterse, 2007). Children should be able to cope with demands like communicating with strangers, assert themselves in a group or handle conflict, be self-confident, work on their own, concentrate and complete tasks and use basic language to learn to read, write and draw to name a few of the criteria to be school ready (Pieterse, 2007).

1.8.2 Language development

Joubert, Bester, Meyer and Evans (2008) stress that language is the foundation for learning. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document obliges that ten to twelve hours be devoted to teaching the development of language and literacy. Children need to come to school with language skills in place. For instance, understanding when spoken to and interacting in the same language with proficiency to be able to learn with ease. The learner should have knowledge of a developmentally appropriate use of language and high frequency words.

The learner comes with a language experience from home and certain aspects needs to be in place. If the learners' home language differs from the language of teaching and learning, they struggle to understand and grasp the language of teaching and learning. Children are different and thus it takes longer for some children to grasp the new language. The language aspects mentioned above indicated the learners' level of proficiency in the language. It also indicated if they had the language to describe a picture, using verbal reasoning, can use verbs and pronouns correctly and can construct sentences (Hauptfleisch & Grove, 1982). Aspects of the language will be explained in chapter two.

1.8.3 Auditory perception

Auditory perception is the ability to attach meaning to the sounds you hear, (Pieterse, 2007). You need to hear and make meaning of the spoken word. It is important that learners can be able to listen, respond and follow instructions. The intervention support programme that was relevant to this study assessed aspects like auditory sequential memory, rhyme detection, auditory sequential, auditory synthesis and auditory analysis.

Auditory sequential memory is the ability to remember words in the order that you have heard them. In the ISP, learners had to repeat three to four words in the order they had heard the teacher say them, for example: *cat, dog, bird*. A child with poor auditory memory will struggle to retell a story and to carry out oral instructions especially when it is more than one instruction. Auditory discrimination occurs when the brain is able to discern similarities and differences between sounds. A child with poor discrimination of sounds will find it difficult to differentiate between sounds like sh- and ch-. A detailed explanation with regards to the auditory perception of the ISP will be clarified in chapter two.

1.8.4 Visual perception

Visual perception allows the learner to interpret, identify and categorise what he/she sees (Pieterse, 2007). In the current study, the intervention support programme test assessed the following: the learner drawing a picture of himself/herself, identifying nine shapes and nine colours, counting blocks up to thirty for number concept, visual memory, spatial relations as well as analysis and synthesis. The ability to draw oneself indicates body perception and it also indicates one's level of emotional maturity. Colours are abstract concepts and can be remembered with association for example: red like blood. Some learners find colours challenging to remember. Visual memory was tested by showing learners ten objects for a

short time, then hiding the objects from view and asking learners to recall as many of the objects that they had seen. If they struggled to remember, then this may indicate that learners experience difficulties in remembering what they had seen. Problems with visual memory have a potentially negative bearing on learning as the learner could find reading and comprehension difficult later in school (Hauptfleisch & Grove, 1982). Spatial relations were tested by learners observing how the teacher stacked blocks in a certain way and they were required to re-stack the blocks in exactly the same way. This task also required learners to remember how the blocks were stacked, thus relying on visual memory as well as spatial orientation. Spatial orientation helps with Math concepts and enables the child to read and write numbers in the correct sequence (Grove & Hauptfleisch, 1982).

1.8.5 Gross and fine motor skills

Movement and coordination of the big and small muscles of the body is referred to as the gross and fine motor muscles. If a child's gross motor muscles are not adequately developed this can lead to the child being clumsy such as bumping into things or may be unable to participate in sport. It can also present itself in class as slouching when they sit on a chair (Hauptfleisch & Grove, 1982). Laterality is also addressed in the ISP; to be internally aware of left and right. Learners who have difficulty in midline crossing will only draw or write on the right or the left side of the page without crossing the midline (Grove, 1981).

In order to write, a learner should be able to control small objects and be able to handle writing materials. In the current study, learners' visual motor integration was tested by giving them eleven images (shapes) to copy from one column to the next. These skills are important when they start writing later in school. Problems with this activity may indicate that their fine motor muscles in their hands are not developed enough to control the writing object with skill. How the learners manipulate the pencil grip was observed while learners were copying the motor integration pictures. Learners' hand –and- eye dominance was determined by asking them to pick up a toilet-roll holder and peep through it using one eye. Eye movements were observed by asking the learners to follow a bright coloured object with their eyes (while not moving their heads) that moved horizontally, vertically and in a circle. This determined the strength of the eye muscles, later the ability for learners to read and write from left to right. The eye movement and the coming together of the two eyes for visual perception and finally reading, is important (Nel, Nel

& Hugo, 2013). Hand-and eye coordination, as well as the extent to which the fine muscles worked efficiently are important for writing later in grade one (Grove & Hauptfleisch, 1982).

The ISP pre and post- tests consisted of four grouped criteria. During assessment of learners in the ISP, each item was scored with a mark ranging from zero to three marks. The allocation and criteria for scoring marks will be explained in detail in the next chapter. The pre-test was followed by the intervention programme. The ISP was taught collaboratively to all learners for nine months. In addition, more intensive support was given to the identified 30 learners who were given the pre- test, then the targeted intervention by the learner support teacher and finally the post-test. The post-test was implemented in November of the same year. Results of the pre- and post-test of all schools in the MNED were captured for guidance on improving or restructuring the programme holistically.

1.9 Research methodology

The purpose of the methodology is to explain to the reader which strategies and methods were used in conducting the study. A detailed explanation of the methodology is found in chapter 3 of this thesis. I will only briefly highlight the methodology followed in this section.

1.9.1 Research paradigm

The interpretive paradigm seemed appropriate for this study. The interpretive paradigm explains what the individual understands. It is an explanation of how people interpret events differently. The researcher wants to make meaning of observing people and work directly with them. According to Mack, (2015) there can be more than one perspective on one case. This paradigm is used by researchers who want to make meaning of human behaviour and who want to understand the different opinions of people. This paradigm was appropriate for my study as I interviewed all the role players connected to this programme (Mack, 2015).

1.9.2 Research approach

A qualitative research can be interpreted as an approach that requires observation, explanation and these components are important (Atieno, 2009). Thus this approach requires validity and studies all the circumstances to evaluate the complex situations. I used this approach for my research since it was appropriate for exploring human and other factors that influenced the development and implementation of the Grade R intervention support programme. Lofland and Lofland (1995) suggest that direct observation and to understand the social world better, are primary considerations in qualitative research. The analysis reflects a certain epistemology that allows a face-to-face interaction with another human being (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). The researcher used the pre-and-post test results of the ISP to identify the two schools that participated in the study based on their relative performances as well as their location in the same socio-economic area.

1.9.3 Research design: Case study

An in-depth investigation of the experiences of the participants at various post levels with regard to the implementation of the intervention support programme was conducted. Yin (1984) describes a case study approach as implementing a qualitative analysis. Data is collected by observing the participants and having in-depth interviews with the participants. The case study tries to understand the problems being investigated. Teachers perceptions can give valuable input to an in-depth study especially with regard to programme implementation, (Han & Wiess, 2005; Beets, Flay, Vuchinich, Acock, Li & Allred, 2008).

1.9.4 Population and sampling

Morrison (2002) advised that purposive sampling be done on participants with first- hand experience. In this study, participants were directly or indirectly related to the design and implementation of the ISP with school-based participants working at two identified schools located within the same socio-economic area. The population was all potential participants that fulfilled the aforementioned criteria. The sample consisted of: six teaching staff of school A, five teaching staff of school B and two WCED officials related to the development and implementation of the Grade R intervention programme in MNED.

1.9.5 Data collection methods

According to Creswell (2005) interviews involve the researcher asking open-ended questions to participants. The researcher conducted individual interviews to provide narrative data of their experiences with regard to the intervention programme. The purpose of these interviews was to understand the success, barriers, sustainability and to identify ways in which the programme could be improved.

The researcher did not deviate from the wording when modifying what the interviewer explained. Semi structured interviews were held. The data that was recorded was transcribed as accurately as possible. Semi structured interviews were held at school at the convenience of the interviewees. It was scheduled in advance at a location that was away from everyday events. A set of predetermined open-ended questions and other questions that may arise between the interviewer and interviewee were asked, to encourage the interviewee to give a detailed description of how they perceived the ISP. Open-ended questions allowed the interviewees to give their own opinions relating to the programme.

1.9.6 Trustworthiness

The concept of “trustworthiness” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) is equivalent to the quantitative concepts of reliability and validity in qualitative research. Trustworthiness, in turn consists of four components: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. In relation to qualitative research, these concepts assure that the study is valid, reliable and add value to the research. Guba and Lincoln (1982) used these benchmarks to evaluate the quality of qualitative inquiry. According to Yin (1994), as well as Guba and Lincoln (1989), “trustworthiness” is essential to test the quality and the goal of the research. They restate the necessity of a trustworthy research based on these concepts to produce a valid study.

When completing a project, two qualities; validity and reliability are achieved when reviews on the completion of the project are made known. Qualitative research strategies include responsiveness, methodological coherence, theoretical sampling and sampling adequacy, an active analytic stance. These strategies force the researcher to correct the direction of analysis and the development of the study, ensuring validity and reliability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

See chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of trustworthiness.

1.9.7 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data in this study. The thematic analysis steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used in this study. See chapter 3 for a full description of the method of analysis used in this study.

1.10 Ethical considerations regarding the study

DiCocco-Bloom (2006) advises that the researcher explains the purpose of the study to all participants. When the research is completed, the participants will understand the benefits of presenting an ethical research project. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to all participants. The protection of privacy and anonymity of individuals are to protect the interviewees' information. Data reported the exact finding that arose from the study to avoid falsification (Piper & Simons, 2005).

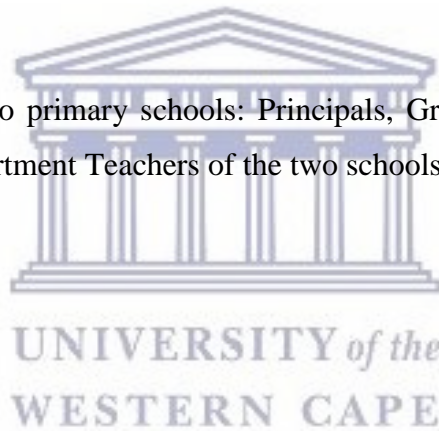
Before commencing with the study, the researcher applied for ethical clearance from the University of the Western Cape. Once the university gave permission, the researcher was granted written permission to the Western Cape Department of Education. Thereafter, the researcher approached the potential research sites (schools) and was granted permission from relevant school principals. Thereafter, the researcher approached potential participants and invited them to participate in the study after giving them detailed information about the study. The researcher explained the nature of the study to the participants. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were applied strictly, so any sensitive information was not shared with the school principal or any other WCED official. This was important firstly to get the interviewees participating and secondly to be honest in the interviews about their views. I explained verbally to the potential participants and their "gatekeepers", in this case the principals as suggested by (Lambert, 2012). The researcher used a tape recorder device so that interpretation of the interview was as accurate as possible to the interview data. A test of how well the recorder picked up sound was done of the participants before the interview process.

A password was used on the computer to protect the data that was stored. Names were changed to numbers, and raw data was destroyed when no longer in need as explained by (Lambert, 2012). Permission was asked and in written form by means of letters. The interviews were held at school after making appointments to see all the interviewees at their convenience. The two schools were not named

for complete confidentiality and possible monitoring from the WCED. The researcher respected the participants' dignity, sense of self and worth when doing the interviews. They were also given preference to participate in the interview using their language of choice with regard to English or Afrikaans. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Seidman (2006) suggests that the researcher organise themselves by filing and copying the consent forms, label audio tapes of interviews when using it and to be able to trace the interview data to the original source. It saves time when doing the formative stages of the study. I was granted written permission from the:

1. Directorate of the Western Cape Education Department
2. Directorate of Metro North Education Department: Education specialist and Learner Support advisor.
3. All role-players of the two primary schools: Principals, Grade R Teachers, Learner Support teachers and Head of Department Teachers of the two schools involved.



1.11 Chapter outline:

Chapter two discusses a review of related literature including the philosophy of inclusive education, clarifications regarding the ISP, the conceptual framework guided by the bottom-up and top-down approaches and factors influencing the implementation of intervention support programme.

Chapter three provides information concerning the research methodology, research paradigm, research approach and research design that was selected for this study. Research instruments such as population and sampling are also provided in this study. The data collection process and ethical considerations were also discussed in this chapter.

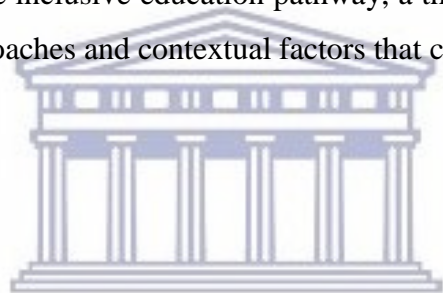
Chapter four presents the presentation, analysis of data, a discussion of the findings of the interviews held with all participants. The data analysis and discussions were done in relation to the theoretical framework and literature review in Chapter two.

Chapter five addresses the explanation and conclusions drawn based on the research findings of chapter four.

Chapter six presents the summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations made for the grade R teachers, LSTs and district based officials and future research.

1.12 Conclusion

A general overview of the study under focus has been presented in this chapter, explaining the introduction, motivation, statement of the problem and the objectives of the study. Reference was made to the theoretical framework and the methodology employed in the study. The next chapter presents the literature review, an analysis of the inclusive education pathway, a theoretical framework that analyses the bottom-up and top-down approaches and contextual factors that could militate against or support an ISP.



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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections; the literature review and conceptual framework. The key focus areas from the literature review explain the importance of an intervention support programme built on the pillars of inclusive education and focuses on the implications of a school readiness intervention support programme with regards to the perceptual development of grade R children such as language development, auditory perception, visual perception and gross and fine motor skills. A detailed description and the outline of the scoring will be explained. It studied global and national inclusion and how inclusive education trickles down from the policy to the classroom mentioning the different departments working together such as the inclusive policy globally, nationally, district, SBST, LST to the learner in class. Multi- dimensional support for all learners were discussed. The conceptual framework explains the factors that influence the implementation of intervention support programmes using two top-down and/or the bottom-up approaches. Factors that impact on a school readiness programme such as policy implementation challenges, social issues, curriculum and commitment. Issues such workload of teachers, capacity of teachers, class size and the involvement of the learners' parents with regards to this study are discussed later in this chapter. I linked these two sections as the literature review explains why it is important to support learners and the conceptual framework explains the factors that militate against the implementation of the intervention support programme.

Being school ready is important and has value for future child development and academic achievement (Cooper, Osborne, Beck & McLanahan, 2011). Many children are raised in poverty in South Africa and are in dire need of effective support when they come to school to be school ready (Education White Paper 5 on early childhood education, 2001). This includes perceptual skills such as auditory skills, visual skills, language development and gross and fine motor skills. A compulsory school year, grade R is therefore implemented by the Department of National Education so that support programmes can support these learners in grade R and one. The goal for this implementation of support programmes is to minimize the gap in the abovementioned perceptual skills that are needed for all learners to reach their full potential academically. Biersteker (2012) implicates that better monitoring and evaluation including research of

intervention programmes that improve children's academics cost successfully, can benefit many children. These interventions should be of quality rendered to those children who need it most. This intervention support programme can also break the poverty cycle. A learning support programme was designed for pre-school children and their parents in an under-resourced community in Cape Town. It was designed to support and develop under-lying skills for grade R learners (Pitt, Luger, Bullen & Phillips, 2013). A team consisting of an occupational therapist and a community worker developed a grade R programme, on request of grade R teachers to assist struggling learners in their classes. This study highlighted the importance of parents participating in their children's' education and early support before they go to school.

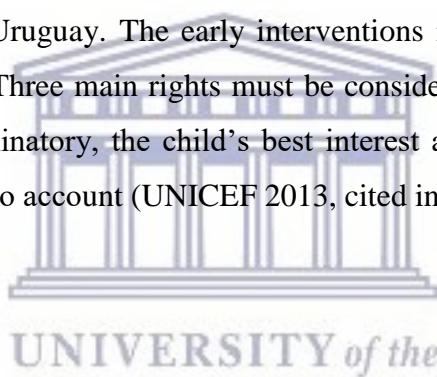
2.2 Inclusive education

The term inclusive education implies the reality of learners with a broad spectrum of educational needs (Inclusive education, 2010). Inclusive education does not include children with disabilities; on the contrary, it focusses on including all learners in the school system.

The Education White Paper 5 states that if learners are provided with quality early childhood education, it will eradicate the "under preparedness" learners face when entering schools. Inclusive education wants teachers to be receptive to the whole child and not just to one aspect or individual (Sapon- Shevin, 2007). In this section inclusion will be discussed globally and nationally (South Africa) and the different components of inclusion such as support from the learner support teacher, the district officials and the School Based Support Team. Support programmes such as the one discussed, render support to all grade R learners as recommended by White Paper, (2001) so that all learners benefit from this support programmes. This initiative is supported globally as all children have the right to quality education. In South Africa educational programmes give support that trickles down starting from the inclusive policy via the district based team, then to school in the form of learning support (learning support teacher) after the learners have been discussed in the SBST at school for holistic support in any barrier. These different support structures were explained in the rest of this section. The different sections with regards to the intervention support programme were also clarified such as the importance of a grade R learner to be equipped in language development, auditory perception, and visual perception and gross and fine motor skills. The factors that hamper such an intervention programme was also explained.

2.2.1 Inclusive education globally

The United Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is an international body that focusses on human rights, children rights and education. Inclusive education is built on these values that all children have the right to education and should be valued and respected (Nel, Nel, & Hugo, 2013). It concerns inclusion such as working towards a democratic society with an equal and quality education system that can accommodate all learners with diverse learning needs (DoE, 2001). According to Salamanca Statement, UNESCO (1994) the fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, regardless of difficulties, or differences they may have. Inclusive schools should recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities”. Support programmes are beneficial to learners who are possibly at risk academically and have been proven in countries such as Argentina and Uruguay. The early interventions improve later academic outcomes (Coetzee & van der Berg, 2012). Three main rights must be considered when making decisions about children: it should be non-discriminatory, the child’s best interest at heart should be considered and children’s view should be taken into account (UNICEF 2013, cited in Dickins, 2014).



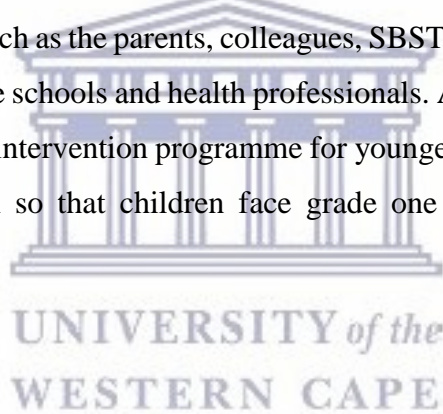
2.2.2 Inclusion in South Africa

In the previous apartheid system education was segregated based on race and disability and therefore needed to change to an inclusive education system. White Paper 6 (2001) is the policy on which inclusive education is built in South Africa. White Paper 6 (2001) states that inclusive education means “a learning environment that promotes the full personal academic and professional development of all learners, irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning styles and language”(White Paper 6, 2001). White Paper 5 on early childhood education stated that grade R be compulsory for all children in 2010. These principles allow for support to all learners with different needs. In South Africa studies were mainly focused on the health of children, whereas various programmes were aimed to improve children’s readiness for grade R called the Sobambisana programme in South Africa (Coetzee & van der Berg, 2012). South Africa is in the beginning stage of its grade R implementation of support programmes. This Western Cape programme under scrutiny enables learners who come to school with a back log academically to improve and support them so that they are more prepared for grade one with this intervention support programme rendered by the learners support teachers.

2.2.3 Learner support

Learner support is help that is available to all learners with diverse needs and therefore consists of a multi- functional support team. Learner support teachers fulfil the role of collaborating with teachers, learner support teachers, parents, the school and other professional supporters. Inclusive education is therefore challenging for learner support teachers to extend their services beyond their traditional roles (van Graan, 2010). To promote inclusive education practices at school, it is important to include a whole school development concept. Learner support within an inclusive education concept implies the restructuring of support and the roles of responsibility of all role players in the school community.

Diagnostic assessments take place in the class where the learners' needs are identified by the teacher and have been observed regarding the barriers to learning experienced. Learning support is offered after consultation with all role players such as the parents, colleagues, SBST, learning support teachers, special school resource centers, full service schools and health professionals. According to van der Berg, (2012), grade R requires a specific type of intervention programme for younger children particularly in language and emergent literacy in grade R so that children face grade one with ease, knowing that a good foundation phase has been laid.



2.2.4 The scope of support in South Africa

The Education White paper 6(DoE 2001) provides a collaborative support system where all role players are responsible for the needs of all learners (Landsberg, 2011). The function of the national Department of Education is to convey policy. The focus is on addressing the needs in the system and providing access to education for all, supporting personnel, monitoring and evaluating developments in the whole system on a national level.

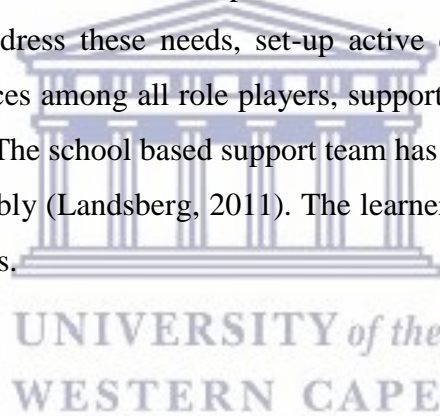
2.2.5 District-based support teams

According to Landsberg (2011), each province is divided into several districts where a managing team provides inclusive education in that district. It is called the *district-based support team* and it provides

support service to educational institutions such as schools, special schools, full service schools and local communities. According to DoE (2005), a flexible team consists of support personnel, curriculum specialists, management specialists, administrative specialists, specialist support personnel, government professionals and community role players at the DBST. The district support team compiled the intervention support programme currently under scrutiny.

2.2.6 School-based support teams

The key role of a School based Support Team (SBST) is to liaise with the district based support team and other support providers to recognize and provide to the needs of the specific institution. According to DoE (2002), the school based support team has functions to fulfill which is the following: to coordinate support to teachers, curriculum and school development in schools, identify needs and barriers to learning, develop strategies to address these needs, set-up active communication between learners, teachers and parents, share resources among all role players, support and monitor learner progress and confirming parental involvement. The school based support team has a strong role to implement in each school and should function adaptably (Landsberg, 2011). The learner support teachers play a vital role in supporting SBST at their schools.



2.3 Clarifications of key concepts with regard to the intervention support programme

The intervention programme consists of four areas regarded necessary for success in grade one. These are: auditory perception, visual perception, language development and gross and fine motor skills. The intervention programme consists of an increase level of difficulty to allow for learners to be fully equipped when entering grade one. Gradual progression allows learners to build on previous knowledge.

Learners are prepared for learning by playfully learning the four concepts as is mentioned above. According to Louw, Bay and Eigelaar (2007), learners should experience a solid foundation in their reception year, however this is not happening as the failure rate is high in their first two years of schooling. Research by Louw et al (2007), has shown that a high percentage of learners repeat Grades 1

and 2 in the townships areas of the Western Cape. Learners, who are not taught in their Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT), experience much difficulty (Bloch, 2002). It takes time to understand this new language and to interact in this language especially if children experience barriers to learning. It is recommended that high quality education programmes be implemented to prevent children from failure in their reception years. They should feel comfortable with school in their Foundation Years. Berliner (2009) suggests that the South African Department of Education revise the Language Policy in South African to accommodate learners in their home language for teaching and learning. Learners in poor socio- economic areas will have more challenges relating to the curriculum, especially when they come to school with a poor vocabulary (Louw et al, 2007).

Early intervention programmes are important for learning (Whitehurst, & Lonigan, 1998). It improves the language skills in low-income families. Learners may not have learning difficulties in perceptual areas (Smith, 2008 as cited in Nel, Nel and Hugo 2013), however if they do, it can influence their reading, spelling, letter formation, sounds and Mathematics later in their schooling years.

This section describes the existing literature on the topic of being ready for school. Some of the main themes dealt within these various written sources are: the importance of school readiness, the intervention support programme, language development auditory perception, visual perception and - gross and fine motor skills.



2.3.1 School readiness

There are many views of being “school ready” that have been identified by educational decision makers: the child has to be a certain age to progress satisfactorily, social experiences of the child maturing at their own time and the child’s own experience to learn, skills and capabilities in the learner and to do certain tasks or subjects (Ausabel, 1962; Gagne, 1985; Gredler, 1992; Vygotsky, 1978). The “age of readiness” is influenced by cultural and background experience, specifically emphasizing quality education children receive and subject readiness for further learning (Ausabel in Gredler, 1992). Pieterse, (2007) describes being school ready is being ready to learn formally at school with confidence. The child should be stimulated in all the developmental areas for example: language, emotionally and social, perceptual development (visual, auditory), development of movement intellect, and is able to understand creative play and rich experiences. Gilford (2014) regards the three R’s (reading, writing and arithmetic) no

longer the only measure of proficiency, but to be emotionally, socially and cognitively efficient. Gilford explains how schools have changed to serve classrooms of children. It is important that learners also function well within an organised situation. Children will be ready and able to meet the daily challenges of the curriculum if they have the skills and information experience that can give them the opportunity to be independent learners.

Having well developed language skills is an important requirement for school readiness. It is a valuable tool to any child to express themselves in words. It is the root of all learning. Schools expect much of all children who come to school for the first time. If they do not meet the criteria of being school ready, they may find it difficult to meet up to the expectations of being school ready. Developmental gaps may only show when children come to school. Specific developmental handicaps only show at school. For example: if they have emotional problems, lack of confidence or perhaps show anti-social behaviour (Pieterse, 2007). He suggests that children should be able to cope with demands like communicating with strangers, assert themselves in a group or handle conflict, be self-confident, work on their own, concentrate and complete tasks and use basic language to learn to read, write and draw to name a few of the criteria to be school ready.

Bearing all these views in mind, the intervention programme aims to support the learner if he/she needs extra attention to cope with the demands of the curriculum, to prepare learners for grade one. The intervention programme consists of an increase level of difficulty to allow for learners to be fully equipped when entering grade one. Gradual progression allows learners to build on previous knowledge.

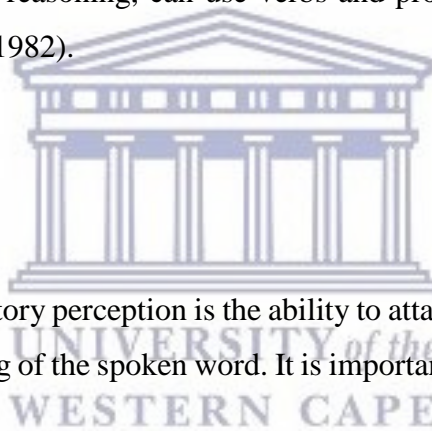
2.3.2 Language development

Joubert, Bester, Meyer and Evans (2013) assert that language is the basis for learning. The current curriculum obliges that ten to twelve hours be devoted to teaching the development of language and literacy. Children need to come to school with language skills in place. For instance, understanding when spoken to and interacting in the same language with proficiency to be able to learn with ease. The learner should have knowledge of a developmentally appropriate use of language and high frequency words.

The learner comes with a language experience from home and certain aspects needs to be in place like; whether the learner uses baby language or can they speak fluently when spoken to. If the learner pronounces his/her words correctly or does he/she has difficulty in pronouncing certain sounds. Can the learner formulate their thoughts with ease? It is expected of them to know their name, surname, and age, repeat short sentences, follow instructions and retell events in the right order.

If the learners' home language differs from the language of teaching and learning, they struggle to understand and grasp the language of teaching and learning. Children are different and thus it takes longer for some children to grasp the new language.

These are the aspects the intervention support programme assesses like vocabulary, prepositions, comparisons/ relations, categorising and verbal reasoning. The language aspects mentioned above will indicate the learners' level of proficiency in the language. It will also indicate if they have the language to describe a picture, using verbal reasoning, can use verbs and pronouns correctly and can construct sentences (Hauptfleisch & Grove, 1982).



2.3.3 Auditory perception

According to Pieterse (2007), auditory perception is the ability to attach meaning to the sounds you hear. You need to hear and make meaning of the spoken word. It is important that learners can be able to listen, respond and follow instructions.

The intervention support programme that is relevant to this study assesses aspects like auditory sequential memory, rhyme detection, auditory sequential, auditory synthesis and auditory analysis.

Auditory sequential memory is the ability to remember words in the order that you have heard it. These are the aspects that the intervention support programme tests. Learners repeat three and four words in the same order as they have heard the teacher say it e.g. *cat, dog, bird*. A child with poor auditory memory will struggle to retell a story and to carry out oral instructions especially when it is more than one instruction. Auditory discrimination is where the brain is able to discern similarities and differences between sounds. A child with poor discrimination of sounds will find it difficult to differentiate between sounds like sh- and ch-. The test focusses on rhymes where the one word sounds like the other word e.g. *rat* sounds like *cat*. Auditory Synthesis is tested where learners hear the teacher sound a word and they identify the picture that looks like the word that was sounded to them. Auditory analysis is when learners can identify which word was said last and first when they listen to three words the teacher says and the

beginning sound of a word e. g. *cup*. They have to understand first and last concept and listen attentively to distinguish between the beginning sound of the word. Poor listening skills cause learners a poor understanding of the spoken word.

2.3.4 Visual perception

Accurate visual perception allows the learner to interpret, identify and categorise what you see (Pieterse, 2007). The intervention support programme test assesses the following: draw a picture of myself, identify nine shapes, nine colours, count blocks up to thirty for number concept, visual memory, spatial relations and analysis and synthesis. The ability to draw yourself indicates body perception and it also indicates your level of emotional maturity. Colours are abstract concepts and can be remembered with association for example: red like blood. Some learners find colours challenging to remember. The visual memory is tested by showing learners ten objects and then they have to remember as much as they are able to while teacher closes the items. If they struggle to remember, they may experience difficulties in remembering what the eyes have seen. They will find reading and comprehension difficult later in school (Grove & Hauptfleisch, 1982). Spatial relations are tested where learners watch how the teacher stacks the blocks in a certain way and they re-stack it exactly the same way. The example of the teacher is not there for learners to copy; they have to remember how it was stacked. A child with spatial orientation does not understand the space around him. He finds it difficult to find left, right etc. To test their analysis and synthesis ability, they are given a twenty-four-piece puzzle and need to complete it in fifteen minutes to see if they can complete it in the time frame. If a learner struggles with this activity, the learner may experience problems with hand and eye coordination, foreground and background discrimination, thinking and reasoning etc

2.3.5 Gross and fine motor skills

Gross and fine motor skills are the movements of the muscles of the body. If a child's gross motor muscles are not developed they can be clumsy, bump into things or may be unable to participate in sport. It can also present itself in class as slouching when they sit on a chair (Grove & Hauptfleisch, 1982). The intervention support programme test assesses the following aspects: if a learner is able to balance standing on one leg for fifteen counts, hopping and skipping within five metres and being able to do six

star jumps. Their bilateral ability is assessed to see if they are able to skip rhythmically using a left right motion. Laterality is to be internally aware of left and right. Learners who have difficulty in midline crossing will only draw or write on the right or the left side without crossing the side of the page (Grove, 1975). They are assessed by rotating their hands on the laps to determine their efficacy in fine motor skills e.g. use scissors and writing from left to right with ease.

A school beginner should be able to control small objects and be able to handle writing materials. Their visual motor integration is tested by giving them eleven images (shapes) to copy from one column to the next. They must be able to control the pencil or crayon skilfully and copy the shapes with straight, sturdy pencil lines. This is important when they start writing later in school. When they find it difficult, it indicates that their fine motor muscles in their hands are not developed enough to control the writing object with skill. Pencil grip is observed while they are copying the motor integration. The hand and eye dominance is determined by asking them to pick up a toilet-roll; this will indicate their dominant hand and their dominant eye. Eye movements are observed by asking the learners to follow a bright coloured object with their eyes that is moved horizontally, vertically and in a circle. This determines the strength of the eye muscles, easing the ability for learners to read and write. They are asked to cut with scissors on a straight line, a cone and three other shapes to see if they are able to hold and handle scissors correctly. This is important because they show that they are able to control their hand and eye coordination, fine muscles in the hand and can focus on the task at hand (Grove & Hauptfleisch, 1982).

The pre and post- tests consists of four grouped criteria. Each item is allocated zero to three marks if the learner successfully demonstrates the skill or knowledge. The test is thus scored in four groups namely; gross and fine motor skills (27 marks), visual perception (30marks), auditory perception (24 marks) and language development (33 marks). These groups amount up to the total out of 114. Learners' scores are used to identify those who are considered to be "at risk" when they score less than eighty-five. When they score from eighty-six to ninety-nine, they are regarded as at risk, but progressing. The learner is regarded as functional when they score from one hundred to one hundred and fourteen. The intervention programme is given to all learners for ten months after the pre-test. The same test is implemented called the post-test in November of the same year. Results of the pre- and post-test of all schools in the MNED are captured for guidance on improving or restructuring the programme holistically.

2.4 Challenges to implementation of support programmes

A review of the literature showed that there are a few facts that influence the success of the intervention support programme. In today's inclusive climate, all role players affiliated with children must provide opportunities for all children to suit their individual needs regardless of whether they have identified needs or difficulties as good early years is vital (Wall, 2011). A statistical investigation completed by van den Berg (2013) states that in order for grade R learners to overcome disadvantages in early education, is to make use of a powerful programme in grade R. He mentions a few intervention strategies such as providing teachers with practical supportive learning opportunities to observe and apply this knowledge practically again, learning programmes appropriate for children from poor backgrounds and evaluating curriculum delivery with quality. However, there are challenges concerning this programme as it has been used for three years. It has also shown remarkable success based on the statistics and interviews held with the grade R teachers who observe and utilize the programme when the learner support teacher is not there. Based on a study conducted by van der Berg (2012), he cited the positive impact of grade R learning outcomes in South Africa to be effective among affluent schools, but weak in weaker schools, in the Western Cape. Qualified teachers who took the role as academic leaders have had the biggest impression on quality education (Dickins, 2014). This can also be seen as a challenge as grade R teachers' qualification and enthusiasm towards their work differs.



2.4.1 Policy implementation challenges

Van der Berg, (2012) indicated that it is hazardous to make a direct leap to policy recommendations concerning early childhood support in their development because ECD regard interventions as worthy investments. It can diminish inequality in underprivileged children and increase productivity, however it is difficult to design programmes and it is costly. Research such as the progression of children from grade R to grade one will provide evidence for policy and interventions to enrich quality teaching in grade R. UNICEF (2011) stated that South Africa only have forty-three percent of learners under five years old attend an early childhood development programme, be it at home or at a centre. The Western Cape Department however saw the lack of children performing academically in grade one and took on the challenge to prevent learners from repeating grade one by utilizing a programme designed by their

own colleagues in the district for grade R learners. This programme is designed especially for learners who are possibly at risk academically.

2.4.2 Workload of teachers

Research seem to identify that there are two key areas influencing the quality of pre-school teaching which is teacher training, quality teaching and their knowledge of how children learn (van der Berg, 2012). There is a lack of clarity on what qualification a Grade R teacher is expected to have, and a lack of access to appropriate further teacher education opportunities for many existing Grade R teachers.

2.4.3 Capacity of teachers

SAIDE, (2010) identified a need to teachers for ongoing support and monitoring pertaining workshops and how to utilize resource materials. Another theme that was highlighted was the curriculum support for both ECD sector and provincial departments. It was recommended that grade R teachers, who do not have the necessary qualification such as level 6 or a Bed, to put measures in place for them to attend outline courses and to have consistent support for these grade R teachers. Van der Berg (2012) recommends that grade R teachers improve their training more effectively with different approaches how to assist learners. Provide teachers with ongoing strategies to support them in class with the curriculum. Learner Support teachers go into the grade R classes and utilize this intervention support programme simultaneously to teach the programme to the learners also to show teachers how the programme is implemented. They observe the lessons so that they can also use the programme and gain knowledge how to implement it.

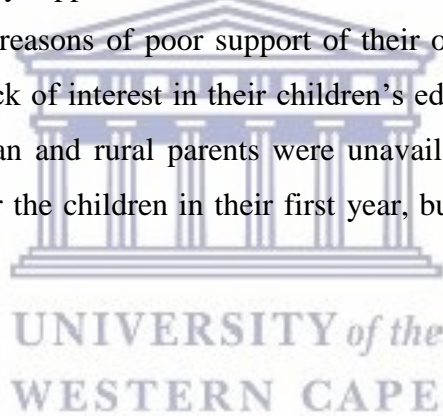
2.4.4 Class size

Factors such as class size and children per teacher are important aspects as noted by (van der Berg, 2012) in his findings of the impact evaluation to problems of implementation in the quality of grade R. SAIDE

(2010) recommended that teaching in overcrowded classes with no assistants prevented good teaching strategies to materialize.

2.4.5 Parental involvement

Parent involvement in the early years of a child has substantial impact on a child's perceptive development, literacy, learner achievement and number skills (Dickins, 2014). A study conducted by van der Berg (2012), implies that children who attend pre-school may perform better in academics because their families know the value of education. According to Girdwood, (2012) parents, family and communities are the primary source of care and stimulation givers of young children. However, there are reasons why the rights of children should be protected by the state. The home environment of most children is not what it is perceived by supportive nuclear families. Parents are single, unemployed, young, work long hours and many other reasons of poor support of their own children. Academic failure is increased when parents show a lack of interest in their children's educational ability (Dickens, 2014). Mohamed, (2013) stated that urban and rural parents were unavailable to prepare their children for school, which made it difficult for the children in their first year, but could be remedied with a good support programme.



2.4.6 Collaboration

Referring to collaboration, van der Berg (2012) has quite a few intervention ideas to establish a strong grade R learner irrespective of their disadvantaged background. He suggests teachers improve their training through FET Colleges to ensure that teachers use effective strategies to support learners with different needs. He also mentioned that the teachers be supported with curriculum delivery to ensure quality lesson plans, quality relationship between child and teacher and South African story books in all languages. He encourages the DBE to cover 100% quality grade R pre-schools. It is imperative for Curriculum advisors and district officers to monitor and support programmes in the foundation phase, especially grade R (SAIDE, 2010).

2.5 Theoretical framework

2.5.1 Introduction

A conceptual framework describes in a narrative form, the main things that will be studied – thoughts, key aspects and relationships among these concepts, (Maxwell, 2008). Maxwell (2008) explains further that a conceptual framework is a description of the world in a simple form aimed to simplify and explain some aspects of how it works. Prior research findings, theories, beliefs and policies will guide the research, drawing on people’s personal experiences of their understanding with regard to the topic. This chapter focusses on the development of a conceptual framework that guides the investigation and analysis of the findings of this study. The objective of this study is to investigate; firstly, if a similar intervention programme is used internationally and nationally, secondly, to clarify the conditions necessary for the implementation of this intervention support programme currently under scrutiny by looking at factors that can influence the implementation. This study will be guided by a conceptual framework with regards to the top-down and bottom-up approaches to examine the success and constraints of the programme. The literature review will also investigate the implementation of contextual factors that influence the implementation of an intervention programme at schools.

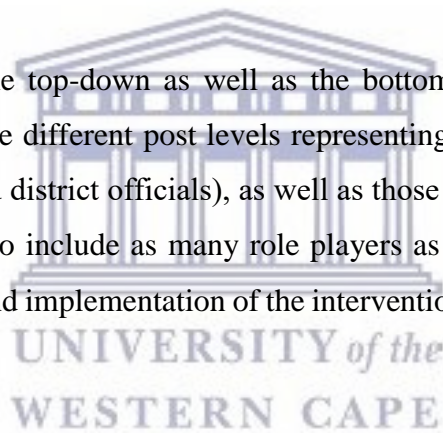
Key conceptual categories that can influence the implementation of an educational programme could be capacity to implement policy, commitment to a programme, contextual factors; socio-economics and the curriculum, (Stofile, 2008). These are key elements that bring success or not to the programme under scrutiny.

Quality services are also imperative for the effective implementation of the programme such as appropriate learning material to encourage development, an all-inclusive curriculum, financing and total support for quality education (Biersteker, 2008). Biersteker claims that the quality of Early Childhood Development (ECD) services such as funding programmes, holding different departments responsible, monitoring and evaluating interventions can benefit a great number of children.

However, problems can arise when implementing a programme and can only be identified and improved once a programme is implemented and experienced by all the role players (Biersteker, 2008). The approaches used in developing and implementing an intervention programme may play a key role in the nature and extent of its impact.

The top-down and bottom-up schools in this literature review are seen as providing the most effective methods for studying and describing implementation of programmes (Matland, 1995, pp.145-174). Stofile (2008) cites various studies (Dyer, 1999; Elmore, 1980; Gornitzka, Kyvik, & Stensaker, 2005; Lane, 1993; Maharaj, 2005; Matland, 1995; Sabatier, 2005; Sehoole, 2002; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975) who agree that it is an appropriate method to use for investigating factors that influence the implementation of a programme.

This study aims to utilise both the top-down as well as the bottom-up approach since the potential participants will be drawn from the different post levels representing both education management and supervisory portfolio's (school and district officials), as well as those who implemented the programme at school level. It therefore aims to include as many role players as possible who were in some way, associated with the development and implementation of the intervention programme in the two identified schools.



2.5.2 The top-down approach

The top-down approach evaluates the efficacy of an intervention programme (Chen, 2011). According to Chunu-Brayda, (2012) this model is appropriate for studying programme implementation, because it provides strong evidence to understand if an intervention is effective. When the intervention proves to be effective, it is distributed to other participants who need similar intervention.

Hornung, Rousseau, Jurgen, Angerer and Weigl (2011) describe the top-down approach as interventions and programmes being managed and led by management. The management team are the decision makers who take advantage of other individual's skills. Furthermore, Hornung et al (2011) regard the top-down

approach as an entity where the workers perform their duties, individuals make sense of their work roles and they try different ways to accomplish their tasks. With regards to my own study these approaches are evident in the WCED through district initiatives, school leadership and teacher involvement. These entities follow the top-down and the bottom-up approaches (Petko, Egger, Cantieni & Wespi, 2015).

Matland (1995) recommends the top-down approach as most effective to study implementation of an intervention programme. He describes this approach as appropriate for policy designers, who can manipulate factors at central level in an authoritative way. The top-down approach accentuates command, control and uniformity in policy implementation. Policy implementation is also sometimes politically motivated and not educationally motivated (Matland, 2012). An example of this approach is in the Gauteng Province, South Africa where a programme was used to improve the matric results of schools in a cluster (Fleisch, 2006).

According to Chen and Garbe (2011), the top-down approach can be used to look at factors that influence the implementation of an intervention programme. These factors also influence the effectiveness of an intervention programme and whether it can be used in the real world. These factors thus refer to the views and experiences of stake holders of an intervention programme that is practical, affordable, suitable, valuable and helpful. Chen and Garbe (2011) state that the evaluation of a programme requires an in-depth study and an understanding of the views and experiences of all the stake holders. In this study the stakeholder consists of the managerial component, i.e. the education specialists and learner support advisors. The top-down approach promotes goal achievement and system integration.

Van der Berg suggests the implementation of a sustainable intervention programme that will prevent learners from repeating their grades and this can only be done by firstly doing an in-depth evaluation and through the managerial component. Van der Berg (2012) did an evaluation study for the current grade R learning outcomes and how learners' achievement in these outcomes can impact on their future learning. The key policy findings highlighted the importance of early intervention strategies for grade R learners, improving and understanding the curriculum by management and a quality programme that can reduce disadvantages. Van den Berg (2012) recommends that a grade R programme is continued and stresses ways to improve its effect to be explored. He advocates that success be measured by what is really accomplished to restrict inequalities. The top down approach emphasises then that all parties should be involved to create a sustainable intervention programme, thus the effectiveness of the intervention

programme under scrutiny will be measured by interviewing the decision makers such as the education specialist responsible for the initiative of this programme, the Learning Support advisors and the education specialists.

2.5.3 The bottom-up approach

Bottom-up theorists however, argue that policy is made at local level and emphasises the roles of teachers and other participants in policy making (Matland, 1995). These theorists argue that these role players have valuable contributions with regard to the intervention programmes as they have experience implementing the programme and the challenges that may occur (Chen,2010).

The bottom-up approach is applicable when an intervention programme is in its beginning stage, as barriers can quickly be identified and challenges met. It meets the expense of an opportunity to improve the quality and usefulness of the programme (Chen, 2011). Matland (1995) regards the bottom-up theorists as the people who deliver the service and reasons that the implementation of a study should be viewed by looking at a policy from the understanding of the service deliverers.

Matland 1995 further argues that local service deliverers have expertise and knowledge of the true problems that arise when using a programme and is in a better position to propose policy. However, top-downers see local implementers as barriers to successful implementation. Elmore's theory (Matland, 1995) recommends that a concept of forward and backward mapping should be attempted to join top-down and bottom-up designers. Forward mapping describes policy makers to explain the objectives of implementation of a programme and clear outcome criteria. Backward mapping suggests that decision makers need to include everyone from the bottom to find a find a tool that will present solutions to policy difficulties. Sabatier cited in Matland (1995) recommends a combined perspective where policy is used for more than ten years to learn the policy so that legal instruments, socio economic conditions and basic government structures can be reviewed. However, a policy can change when studied for such a long period of time.

2.6 Factors that influence effective implementation of a school readiness intervention support programme

The conceptual framework of this study consists of key elements such as capacity to implement policy, commitment to the programme, contextual factors (socio economic and political factors) and Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). It is relevant to this study because it investigates the importance of these elements to make a success of the intervention programme

2.6.1 Policy

Although there are no formal compulsory policies in place to implement intervention programmes in grade R classes, it influences the decision making of the policy implementers with regards to future learning. Policy implementation is a key issue with regards to the improvement of learning at schools. Biersteker (2012) advises that further research be done with regards to interventions to increase the quality education for young children cost effectively and guarantee that resources assist most children before attending school formally.

Policy formulation for Early Childhood Development (ECD) began in the 1990s as a priority, for the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (Biersteker, 2010). With the beginning of democracy in 1994, ECD was noted as a focus area where the White Paper of 1995 on education and training identified early childhood as the starting point.

Biersteker, (2010) focuses her attention on the awareness of the South African government to realize the importance of capitalizing in early childhood development services to address the rights and necessities of all children. Early childhood services have to intervene and invest in the growing up of young children in South Africa, as early as possible to prevent developmental risks (Berry, Biersteker, Dawes, Lake, & Smith, 2013). South African policies and National Development Plan acknowledges the state's responsibility to have an effective and integrated system to protect the rights of vulnerable children.

The goal of ECD is for all five year olds to attend a reception year prior to grade one, by 2010, where formal schooling begins and where accredited Grade R programmes can run in the public primary school system. According to Biersteker (2010) it will be phased in as a first year of Foundation Phase school

year in 2014 according to President Zuma's State of the Nation Address, June 3, 2009, but is not enforced yet.

However, there is much political and budgetary commitment with regards to grade R (Hoadley, 2013). Grade R teachers are not formally included in the education post and remuneration structure. The department of higher education intends to upgrade Grade R by the year 2020. All grade R educators should have a professional qualification by then. The implementation of an early intervention programme is influenced by the qualifications of the Grade R Educators as some of them do not carry the correct qualifications and the learners are not taught proper skills. MNED, WCED took the initiative to help learners who are possibly at risk as stated by ECD policy.

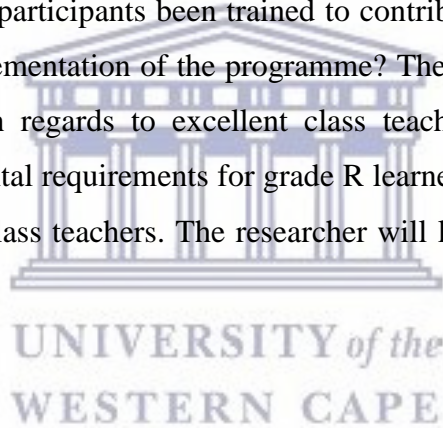
2.6.2 Commitment

Commitment is abstract and cannot be measured directly (Stofile, 2008). However, it is an important component that adds much success to the implementation of a programme when all role players are committed and dedicated. Educational Administration Quarterly (2008) suggests that leadership motivates teachers through organizational commitment and teacher empowerment, because it can be established through two main methods. Leaders should add value to the goals that were discussed. They should show they are consistent with school objectives. By keeping to the mission and vision of a programme, such leaders practice a positive attitude on followers. These types of leaders allow teachers to be part of decision making and the opportunity to be involved with the programme. Active participation encourages willingness to be committed, willingness to carry out commitment in their work and a greater trust of acceptance of information discovered by them. Teachers enjoy the ownership they feel when being part of the programme. Participative leadership allows teachers to share responsibility in the planning and controlling of activities. It also validates their professionalism. Self-determination and self-actualisation increase motivation and performance of teachers.

Commitment to teaching is referred to a "teacher's psychological attachment to the profession" (Daniels, Mandzuk, Perry and Moore, 2011). The efficacy of committed teachers will reflect in their experience and knowledge in the curriculum, reflecting on their experiences and ethical considerations that can impact on commitment to the profession.

According to Lewis, (2013), he experienced as a project manager and teacher of an education programme that the following factors produce a committed teacher; when that person can reflect content knowledge, understand the school and communities where they work and question educational rules. They can think critically. In order to commit and be knowledgeable of your job description, grade R teachers can share and develop their own thinking and reasoning skills. When they construct the knowledge gained through dialogue with colleagues, questioning skills and the willingness to find out more of content knowledge, as mentioned by (Lington, Excell & Murriss, in Francis, 2011). In this way they are empowering themselves and feel in control of their content knowledge concerning the curriculum.

Questions can be asked for example; do the participants affiliated to the programme have ample resources? Are they committed to the success of the programme? Do the teachers deviate or follow the programme religiously? Have the participants been trained to contribute positively to the programme? Are they all confident in the implementation of the programme? These issues were of concern for van den Berg (2012), especially with regards to excellent class teachers, a quality curriculum and a superiority reaction to developmental requirements for grade R learners. Questions can be answered by the learner support teachers and class teachers. The researcher will listen to verbal statements of how they feel about programme.



2.6.3 Socio-economic factors

Socio economic issues are relevant to the study as it has an impact on the learners who are “at risk” of this study. Contextual Factors such as socio-economic factors affect the implementation of the programme in different ways. Poor communities are often branded by poverty. In this study the two schools under scrutiny are both in an underprivileged area. (Biersteker, 2010) endorses the fact that racial discrimination and apartheid policies have left socio-economic inequities among black and white, as well as rural and urban South Africans. Poverty, unemployment, high crime and violence levels affect a large amount of young children. Low levels of literateness among crucial caregivers make it difficult for them to support their children’s early education. The Department of Education (2001), White Paper Five was the vehicle through which grade R was highlighted above other forms of Early Childhood Development (ECD), locating grade R classes in public schools. The children’s Act No38 of 2005, amended by the

Children's Amendment Act No 41 of 2007, covers Early Childhood Development (ECD) and provides for norms and standards. Key initiatives, to name a few, are to help young children in South Africa include; child subsidies, phasing grade R as a first year at school from 2001, according to (Biersteker, 2010). The norms and standards are there, however, the learners are struggling. Questions that arise are the following; are finances available to provide adequate service to the implementation of the programme? These questions can be answered by the officials of MNED.

Pre-school programmes make available opportunities for learning especially for learners who are possibly at risk academically (Berliner, 2009). Out-of-school factors such as medical and nutritional factors, family stress and low birth weight bring to school sociological and psychological problems ranging from attention disorders, neurological problems, underdevelopment and oppositional behavior. These are the trials teachers face. Intervention programmes can bring positive differences to low income children of lesser educated parents. It can bring a change in their academics and social skills. Early interventions can reduce the gap between poorer and more affluent learners in pre-school (grade R). This will ensure a good start to their early school years (Berliner, 2009).

An increase in the learners' math and language skills were improved in The United States of America; Oklahoma and Argentina because of a pre-school programme (van der Berg, 2012). Pre-school intervention programmes promise achievement and thus address a few of society's imbalances. Deep rooted economic problems and social problems cannot be overcome by the school alone. Grade R is not a "magic stunt", but quality programming can be responsible for assistance for children who have been disadvantaged for generations. It is in this year before formal school that the most can be done to help narrow the gap or remedy the disadvantages.

South Korea has spent much of their budget on early childhood education and care, in learning –related social skills, fine motor skills and story comprehension abilities of five-year-old children living in poverty (Lim, Ahn and Kim, 2014). They state that research shows children's school achievement is imperative in their early academic years. They claim that uneven educational experiences exist among children in poverty, despite Korean government trying to improve the quality of early childhood care (Lim, et al. 2014). The Korean Panel Study on children of the Korean Institute of childcare and education began in 2008 and will continue till 2020. This study was implemented to inform policy decision makers. Children from poor communities are often deprived of preschool stimulation at home and should not be

underestimated when following a programme to narrow the gap of deprivation academically (Bruwer, 2014).

2.6.4 Curriculum.

The curriculum is an important issue to discuss as it addresses the needs of the learners. In order to understand the role of the teacher with regards to the curriculum we need to know that a curriculum is a list of learning outcomes and it stipulates what is to be learnt and what is to be taught by teachers (Pring, Pollard, 2011). It must imitate the educational aims and ethics which was sanctioned by society and assigned to teachers to teach. Teachers are no longer required to deliver a curriculum, but to implement trained decisions about the best way to achieve the educational aims.

When South Africa became a democracy in 1994, a few educational curricula were followed such as Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), then the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) and what we are currently using, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) according to (Maharajh, 2016). *“A quality curriculum, a quality teacher and a quality response to the particular developmental realities of children arriving in grade R”*, (Excell and Linington cited in van der Berg, 2012) are of vital importance. Van der Berg, (2012) states that a South African study found when there is a language delay of children between grades R to three, it can suggest that the education received was not powerful enough to make a difference for quite a few of these learners. The size of the class and the ratio of the learners in the class per teacher are essential and crucial in this early stage of the learners’ academics. Child centered activities where learners can learn through play and manipulate concrete objects, are engaged in storybook reading and discussions, are serious elements that add to a valuable early school experience (van der Berg, 2012). He describes that there is a link between language skills and achievement at school. Learners with insufficient mediated language experiences lack higher- order thinking skills and this leads to deprived conceptual thinking, impaired knowledge and limited potential to achieve in school. He reiterates how important it is that children be exposed to reading, pictures and mediated explanations of text in the pre-school years, especially in low income areas in South African literature. Most learners from poor communities suffer from low literacy levels which results in inadequate school preparation that leads to “special needs”.

The grade R curriculum has a key role to play by closing or narrowing the gap for children who do not come from print-rich homes. Letters and sounds, sound awareness and developing children's vocabulary can be introduced through play in grade R to develop and enhance the children's learning experiences for grade one. Pre-school intervention programmes work internationally and nationally. Children can become state beneficiaries of state support, instead of the support through mediated third parties. Grade R teachers should know the significance of the curriculum in grade R. South Africa should take cognizance of the implementation of grade R as it is in its beginning phase to be vigilant of the general education problems (van der Berg, 2012).

The curriculum for the reception year (grade R) was part of Education White Paper Five National Policy, the incorporation of Curriculum for five year olds to form part of the National Curriculum Statement for the Foundation Phase, grade R to three. According to Basic Education Department (2011 page 4-6): Education Republic of South Africa, "The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (January 2012) represents a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools and comprise of the following; National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) during the period 2012-2015. The learning areas for grade R areas are; Home language, First Additional Language, Mathematics and Life Skills". It is taught by the class teachers in grade R who were trained in 2011 to implement the curriculum effectively, yet we have many learners failing in grade one. Questions that arise will be directed at the class teachers of grade R; what do they think- does the intervention programme enhance and complement the curriculum of grade R? Do the topics or themes run parallel with CAPS? Are their parts of the programme that you do not agree with and why? Do you feel more confident about the child that you send to grade one and why do you say so? What do you think of the programme after you have experienced it? Does the programme address knowledge and skills gaps found in CAPS? What in your opinion does the programme address that CAPS lack? Were you trained efficiently to use the programme effectively? Do you have anything else that you want to share concerning the programme?

According to Bruwer, (2014) teachers have a responsibility to adapt to curriculum to meet the diverse needs of learners which is in accordance with Education White Paper 6, namely that inclusive education is about changing attitudes, curricula and teaching methodologies to meet the needs of all learners. The document states that inclusive education is about reducing the barriers to learning. However, teachers are overwhelmed by the demands of highly vulnerable children and under much pressure to meet the diverse needs of the learners. Policymakers and curriculum writers are not listening to the voices of the

teachers who know much about the learners in grade one. According to the grade one teachers, learners are not ready to meet the challenges and the keeping up with the pace of the curriculum which makes them feel discouraged and develop a poor self-esteem that has negative implications with long-term effects on their academic performance. Bruwer, (2014) states that Curriculum writers and policy drafters should refer to knowledgeable grade one teachers for guidance when they draft policy measures for supporting and teaching learners in grade R.

2.7 Summary

There is significant evidence that intensive early education interventions lead to substantial short and long run benefits, (van der Berg, 2012). Studies conducted in South America show much evidence that the first year at school is crucial because it can lead to long term academic results. A South African programme called Sobambisana aimed at improving children's readiness for grade one, showed mixed results. It showed that some factors are beyond the programmes' control. According to research many children are raised in poverty in South Africa and are in dire need of effective support when they come to school to be school ready. However, in developed or developing countries, pre-school interventions work. SAIDE (2010) reiterated the importance of quality programming so that learners in grade R benefit from this new knowledge they are expected to require and to prepare them for formal learning in grade one. According to the statistics and interviews with role players involved with the programme, most potential "at risk" learners gain from the intervention support programme. Although there are substantial evidence of the successful intervention support programme assisting grade R learners in language and perceptual skills, van der Berg argues that sometimes it is not enough. For some learners the gap is too big to fill and poverty has prevented some learners to spend more time by repeating grades.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the factors that influence the support programme. Literature on inclusive education from different aspects was explored. In retrospect it is still work in progress as we are not yet fulfilling White paper 5 (2001a) and 6 (2001), focusing on the needs of the vulnerable persons in society that do not have a voice to speak. The literature on inclusion improved my understanding of how far we are to make the grade R learners our priority in the school system so that we can decrease the amount of learners who do not matriculate especially in our society. Some of the key issues that emerged were the

quality of the grade R teachers who feel inferior because they are not part of the foundation phase formally and opportunities to study in their field are not always possible due to financial constraints. A compelling issue is also the involvement of parents as they have a vital role to play in their children's academic success. In the next chapter the research design and methods used in this study will be discussed.



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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that influenced the implementation of a grade R intervention support programme at two different schools. This study examined why two schools located in the same socio-economic area had performed differentially after the intervention support programme (ISP).

The intervention support programme (ISP) commenced in February 2014 with the initial focus being all Grade R learners. The learner support teacher (LST) conducted ISP lessons a few times a week with each grade R class, thus there was whole class teaching by the LST and is known as collaborative teaching. Thereafter, collaborative teaching was supplemented by the LST also working with learners who were identified as academically at risk by the end of March. The identified academically at risk learners are referred to as ISP learners in this study. The focused intervention commenced with a pre-test, then the LST implemented the focused intervention (besides still doing whole class/collaborative teaching). The ISP lasted until October and ended with the same pre-test being conducted with ISP learners to gauge the extent of their academic progress, thereby also providing an indication of the efficacy of the ISP.

The results of the pre and post-tests were captured and emailed to the education district office with the aim of further tracking these learners for as long as possible, even until they complete matric. The impact of this programme was quantitatively computed by the district office, one of the education districts in the Western Cape. An analysis of the pre- and- post-test results of each school revealed that both schools showed tremendous improvement in the learners' progress across all four ISP components. However, there were differences in performance for each of the schools when calculating the magnitude of progress made by each school in relation to each component. The magnitude of progress was calculated by subtracting the pre-test results from the post-test results for each ISP component, as indicated in Table 3.1. School B performed much better than school A in Language development, with an improvement of

62% vs. 37 %. School B also performed marginally better than school A in Auditory perception, about 35 % vs. 34%. Conversely, school A performed better than school B in both Visual perception (37% vs. 33%) and gross and fine motor skills (44% vs. 34%).

Table 3.1: Pre- and post- test results of the two schools under focus in 2014

<u>ISP Components</u>	<u>School A</u>			<u>School B</u>		
	Pre- Test results	Post-Test results	Difference In pre-and post-test results	Pre-Test results	Post- test results	Difference in pre-and post-test results
<u>Language Development</u>	24%	61,4%	+ 37%	14%	76%	+62%
<u>Auditory Perception</u>	29%	62,9%	+33,9%	38,5%	73,1%	+34.6%
<u>Visual Perception</u>	42%	79%	+ 37%	47,9%	81,1% %	+33.3%
<u>Gross and Fine Motor Skills</u>	39,2%	83,4%	+ 44.2 %	52%	84,4%	+34.4%

3.2 Aims and objectives

This study had two objectives:

- To explore the factors that facilitated the implementation of the Grade R intervention support programme at these two primary schools.
- To understand the factors that militated against or constrained the implementation of the Grade R intervention programme at these two primary schools.

3.3 Research questions

- What were the factors that facilitated the implementation of the Grade R intervention support programme at these two selected schools?
- What were the factors that militated against the implementation of the grade R intervention support programme at these two selected schools?

3.4 Research paradigm

As described in Cohen and Manion (1980) a paradigm is a collection of assumptions that are of interest to the researcher. Paradigms have different aspects. Two concepts intimately related to a paradigm are its ontology and epistemology (Mack, 2010). One's view of reality and being is described as ontology while the view of how one acquires knowledge is understood as epistemology. Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge or how we come to know (Trochim, 2000). Epistemology is related to ontology and methodology; as it includes the philosophy of what happens now. It poses the questions like "what" and "how", (Mack, 2010).

There are different paradigms used in research, for example, the positivist, interpretivist and critical paradigms. The positivist paradigm is a research in scientific methods and uses statistical and experimental methods. The critical paradigm not only focusses on understanding and giving an account of behaviours in society, but they also try and change the behaviour. The interpretivist paradigm explains the meaning of what an individual construct. The interpretivist tries to understand, explain and make sense of reality as seen through the participant's eyes.

The current study is located within the interpretivist paradigm. Lather (1991) and Habermas (1972) regard epistemology of the interpretive paradigm as more than one truth. According to Henning (2004), interpretivist knowledge describes the beliefs, values, reasons and self-understanding of people who have experience in their field of expertise. Interpretivists are informed by experts and endorsed by other people with the same experience of a certain subject. The interpretive researcher looks for the frames that shape the meanings such as the way participants describe a concept, how it was said and what meaning can be made of it. Therefore, it is concerned with understanding social phenomena and more specifically, to

understand individual participants, their experiences, perceptions and professional roles as they experience them daily in their work environment, (Henning, 2004). Researchers interact with the subjects of study to attain data. These descriptive data can be identified as themes and categories. The inquiry of a certain field of study can change both researcher and the person who is interviewed. Both subject and knowledge is context and time bound (Coll & Chapman, 2000; Cousins, 2000).

There are, however, advantages and disadvantages to using the interpretative paradigm. As viewed by Goduka (2012), Interpretivist work with others and make sense of their viewpoints. The data is meaningful to the interpretivist as the researcher understands what people think and feel. The researcher should avoid running the risk of being biased because of the close involvement with regards to the study. The researcher followed this ISP at the schools where she taught. Self- reflection is recommended.

This current study used the interpretive paradigm because it wanted to gain an in-depth “insider” view in answering the research questions. The study of these participants was intimately linked to the intervention programme, some had been involved in its development, others were involved in its implementation, so the participants had first- hand knowledge and experience about the intervention support programme. The researcher used the pre-and-post test results to identify the two schools that participated in the study based on their relative performances. These results were computed by the relevant education district office- MNED. The interpretive paradigm, therefore, facilitated a narrative of the role players who had either being involved in its development or its implementation.

Their insight, values, knowledge and understanding of the programme added a rich description. Self - reflection was recommended. The researcher followed this same intervention support programme at schools allocated to her, however remained unbiased towards the study. Through qualitative data analysis, the researcher was an active participant in the process to making meaning of the data (Krauss, 2005). The researcher used the qualitative research approach to data collection since this approach complemented the interpretivist paradigm. This current study’s research explained the approach in the next section.

3.5 Research approach

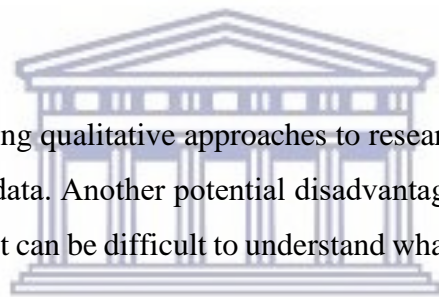
There are different types of research approaches namely qualitative and quantitative research. In line with the interpretivist paradigm, the qualitative design is interpretive in nature. The qualitative research approach was used in this study. I used this approach in my research since it was appropriate for exploring human and other factors that influenced the development and implementation of the grade R intervention support programme, the focus of this study.

According to Atieno (2009), qualitative research can be interpreted as an approach that requires observation, explanation and describes these components as important. It requires validity and studies the whole circumstances to evaluate the complex situations and to consider the exclusive factors. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than outcomes, in meaning how people make sense of their lives. Qualitative research is inductive in that the researcher constructs perceptions, hypotheses and concepts from information given by participants (Atieno, 2009). It is concerned with understanding how people choose to live their lives, giving meaning to their experiences and their feelings about their conditions (Newby, 2010). According to Creswell (2008), there are steps to follow in the process of qualitative research: First, you identify a research problem followed by the reviewing the literature. The next step is to specify a purpose and to start collecting data. The data is analysed and interpreted which is followed by reporting and evaluating the research. Thus data analysis in a qualitative research enables us to acquire “social knowledge”. Qualitative research highlights the political, social and experiences other people experience in their natural settings (Punch, 2011). Qualitative approaches are soft, descriptive and concerned with how and why things happen as they do (Newby, 2010). The task of the qualitative researcher is to look at how people behave as an outsider, but also to understand how individuals perceive the world.

According to Lofland and Lofland (1996), direct observation and understanding the social world are primary considerations in qualitative data and allows the analysis to reflect a certain epistemology. It allows a face to face interaction with another human being, understanding what they are saying and participating in what the person describes (Lofland & Lofland, 1996). Social knowledge refers to the various human activities, perceptions and ways of being social or “knowledge of doing”. The qualitative

researcher pursues to understand social occurrences rather than gain the knowledge and to interpret what was said than measure, for values and facts (Coleman & Briggs, 2002).

The advantages of using the qualitative method are that it seeks to focus more on how people behave in their surroundings and the circumstances that shape their lives (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008). Events are observed and described as they transpire. The researcher seeks to understand the reasons why behaviours occur as they do and how they happened. Qualitative research includes the interests and perspectives of the participants. It is good at simplifying and handling data without destroying the complexity and content of the information (Atieno, 2009). Qualitative research allows the researcher to demonstrate quality in research, to be open to all that was done and to believe in its value to resolve research issues (Newby, 2010). It focusses on understanding people's life experiences, thus it requires researchers to look in-depth at their subjects.



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There are also disadvantages in using qualitative approaches to research. For example, it can take much of the researcher's time to collect data. Another potential disadvantage is that environmental influences can sometimes be so complex that it can be difficult to understand what is transpiring (Drew et al., 2008).

In line with the interpretivist paradigm, I tried to answer the research of the current study as a qualitative study as it enabled me to develop an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon. The qualitative approach was appropriate for this research study because I wanted to describe people's lived experience of this programme. In order to explain the participants' lived experiences, I needed to make use of a research design to elaborate on their knowledge. I used this approach in my research since it was appropriate for exploring human and other factors that influenced the development and implementation of the Grade R intervention support programme, the focus of the study.

3.6 Research design (case study)

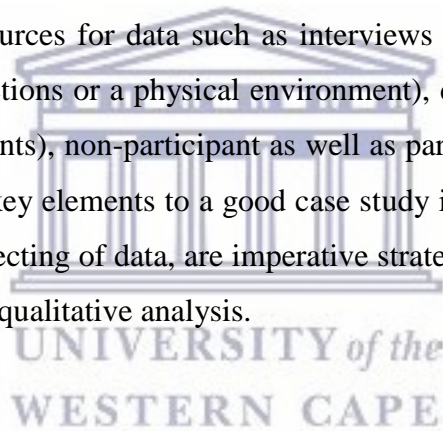
A research design comprises of all the concerns involved in planning and accomplishing a research project (Punch, 2011). This includes identifying the problem right through to reporting and publishing the results. The important part of the design is the reasoning or ideas as to how the study will unfold to

answer its research questions, referred to as the strategy. Strategy motivates the design. There are different types of case studies such as intrinsic, instrumental and collective case studies (Schurink, 2009). A case study is an investigation that explores a current occurrence within its real-life framework using many bases of evidence (Noor, 2008). According to Yazan, (2015) a qualitative case study is a description and an investigation of a bounded phenomenon such as a programme, an individual or a social unit. He also mentions that Miriam (1998) defines a case study as a unit with boundaries. Researchers need to specify the phenomenon of interest and draw boundaries in what they will find out. The case study focusses on a particular event or programme, giving a rich description of the study. This current study aimed to use a case study method to study the responses of a group of participants in depth and to get a comprehensive understanding of their lived experiences. Case studies lead to an awareness and understanding of knowledge that was not familiar previously. In-depth interviews lead to a deeper understanding of and appreciation of people's experiences. Seidman (2006), suggests that researchers organise themselves by filing and copying the consent forms, label audio tapes of interviews when using it and to be able to trace the interview data to the original source. It saves time when doing the formative stages of the study.

This study aimed to give a rich description of the phenomenon. There are diverse views as to what a case study entails. According to Marrelli (2007), case studies can be used successfully in a various range of applications such as programme evaluation and development, training and the development of performance interventions. Programmes related to government, education, nonprofit organisations and the private sector use case studies. A case study is a significant method for evaluating employee learning and development programmes. The employees' achievements and failures can make a positive impression on their organisation. Case studies can offer in-depth information about factors that enhance or hinder the value of training (Marrelli, 2007). It requires a high level of analytical ability and writing skill. Discretion should be applied when deciding which information should be included and how to present and interpret it subjectively. Case studies give a detailed description to decision-makers how complex the outcomes and performance are of other role-players. It also offers a personal approach to collecting data and attaining rich insights into topics. According to Henning (2004), a case study is used more likely in education and gives an in-depth understanding of the experience and beliefs of people with regard to their every-day work situations and how they make meaning of it. The interest of the research is in the process and not in the results as much. Case studies can be described also as a thorough, intensive study with numerous data collections and that the occurrence is studied in a framework. It can

be described as collecting information from people with different perceptions on what is observed. Case studies raise many inquiries at the design stage (Ritchie, 2003). This allows the researcher to understand the complexities of the process, to explore un-researched subjects and to gain valuable knowledge of new topics (Gable, 1994).

As suggested by Henning (2004) research interviews concentrate on what individuals' think, know and feel, which makes us realise that humans have the same experiences. To have a rich description of people's experiences, the power of interviews lies in the minds of ordinary people on the street. Case studies are effective when used for performance analysis, identifying the needs to detect the root cause of problems that may be missed in less intensive research methods such as surveys or focus groups. Case studies can be used for turnover rates in an organisation. The personal experiences of the employees in a work group can provide leadership deficiencies that can be hidden by a manager (Marrelli, 2007). Case study research has a variety of sources for data such as interviews (i.e. open-ended questions, direct observations concerning human actions or a physical environment), documents (i.e. student records or statistics, archival records of students), non-participant as well as participant observations (Yin, 2012). He also remarked that one of the key elements to a good case study is to have a theoretical framework that guides the design and the collecting of data, are imperative strategies. Yin (1984) describes a case study approach as implementing a qualitative analysis.



According to Rule, Davey and Balfour (2011), the advantages of a case study is the ability to create a rich description of a phenomenon, manageable in a limited period of time with restricted resources. It can use a selection of procedures suitable to the context. Participants have an opportunity to offer their own interpretations of the events. Case studies can be fun and interesting for both researcher and reader of the researcher's work. The information collected is about real people and their knowledge about colleagues. The personal perspectives collected through case studies can identify issues and problems that are not easily uncovered through other methods of data collection. Yin (2012), also suggests case studies are acceptable when research is done on previously un-researched subjects. The suggestion made by Newby (2010) is that a case study should be pursued to detect the learning that can be conveyed to other organisations that face similar difficulties. Another advantage of a case study is that the participants buy into the programme because they are directly involved in providing information through interviews

and have an opportunity to voice their opinions. It brings to light topics that have not been subjected to much prior explorations (Marrelli, 2007).

There are a few disadvantages concerning case studies. Some critics question a case study's usefulness in speaking and addressing social concerns. A case study can place too much emphasis on the uniqueness of a phenomenon that the outcomes lead to the inconclusiveness of the study (Rule et al., 2011). As suggested by Marrelli (2007), case studies can be labour- and time-intensive in collecting data and writing the case study. According to Newby (2010), people forget what to say if the actions took place some time ago. Participants may reconstruct the truth to interpret them in a good light. A few people have enough confidence to disclose their own shortcomings. When researchers seek to show something, it can happen that they make the wrong conclusions and struggle to be neutral.

In this study, a qualitative case study was used that required an in-depth investigation of a few individuals, through interviews, based on the implementation of the intervention support programme. Intervention support programmes are influenced by their different contexts; therefore, in the context of the current study, it made sense to have explored the factors that influenced the implementation of the Grade R intervention programme. Data was collected from a group of participants via in-depth interviews. Han and Wiess (2005), as well as Beets, et al. (2008), indicate that an in-depth study of teachers' perceptions is usually responsible for programme implementations and their views are valuable when they are studied. The case study tried to understand the problem being investigated. With thorough analysis and description of data, the researcher attempted to explain the factors that impact on an intervention support programme.

3.7 Population and sampling

In academic research, the population of a study refers to people who are selected for a purpose in a process who are partaking in the study (Newby, 2010). It is explained as the deliberate selection of certain people, events or settings for their important information they provide (Martella, Nelson, Morgan & Marchand –Martella, 2013). In this current study, the population were all MNED (district based as well as school based) personnel involved in the design and or implementation of the grade R intervention programme at primary schools located in a specific low socio-economic community. In research, a

sample comprises the actual participants in a study that are shown from the study population (Newby, 2010). In this study, the sample was drawn from all relevant personnel that were involved in the design and/or implementation of the grade R intervention programme at two particular primary schools. These included the: Grade R Teachers, Learner Support Teachers, Heads of Departments of the Foundation Phase, School Principals, and district officials.

According to Punch (2011), purposive sampling or deliberate sampling is a sample drawn from the population in a deliberate way according to the logic of the research. In qualitative research sampling is selected purposefully to fit the study and to encourage information-rich cases (Coyne, 1997). The researcher can learn much about issues of importance when using purposeful sampling. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to handpick the participants chosen for a specific reason (Morrison, 2002). In this study, the sample consisted of different participants involved in the development and implementation of the ISP at the two schools under focus. The inclusion criteria for participation were: (1) the participants had to be developers and /or implementers of the ISP, (2) they had to be either grade R teachers or learner support teachers or Head of Department Foundation phase teachers, or principals of the selected schools as well as the relevant district officials.

School A is a primary school offering classes to learners from grade R to 7. It is surrounded by sub-economic houses, in a residential area where gangsterism is prevalent. The school is more than 50 years old; having opened in 1956. The school comprises of three grade R classes and all three teachers participated in the study.

School B is also a primary school offering classes for learners from grade R to 7 just as school A. It is encircled by sub-economic houses, in an area where gangsterism is predominant. The school is more than fifty years old and has served the community since 1960. There was a fire in 2014, which resulted in the partial burning of the grade R classes, which influenced learning for a while.

The six teaching staff at school A; five teaching staff at school B, and two WCED officials related to the development of the grade R intervention programme in one Western Cape education district in the Western Cape.

Table 3.2 details the post levels as well as the number of participants included in the study. Based on the ISP, post-test performances in the previous year, 2014, (see table 3.1) the researcher chose the two

schools that were in the same socio-economic area, yet the ISP grade R post-test results were different when comparing the results of the two schools. The schools fell within the same circuit which meant that they were managed by the same district officials. The grade R teachers and LSTs were chosen to be part of the study as they were directly linked to the ISP. The grade R teachers observed the lessons and also consolidated the lessons in class when she noticed while observing that learners need consolidation. The HOD teachers at school worked with the learners when they entered grade one, so they will observe whether the learners are ready to learn, having experienced the ISP in grade R. The principals of the two schools were interviewed because they were the leaders at school who has insight in the academic results of grade R and one and the day to day issues at school. The two MNED officials were interviewed because they were knowledgeable with regards to the programme.

Table 3.2: Participant post-level profile

Participants	School A	School B
Grade R Teachers (Afrikaans)	3 (post level 1)	2 (post level 1)
Learner Support Teacher	1 (post level 1)	1 (post level 1)
Head of Department Foundation Phase Educator	1 (post level 2)	1 (post level 2)
Principal	1 (post level 4)	1 (post level 4)
District Based Officials		
Learner Support Advisor	1 (post level 3)	
Chief Education Specialist	1 (post level 6)	
Total:	(6 +2 = 8)	(5)

3.8 Data collection and strategies

The data collection method followed a qualitative perspective. To investigate the views of the different participants, semi- structured interviews were conducted (Iyitoglu & Bülent, 2015). Semi-structured interviews are the most frequently used interviewing format and can be used for individuals or groups. The in-depth interview allows for personal and social matters to understand the different experiences in

a safe and comfortable environment. Interview research adds to the “truths” of human experiences (Di Cicco-Bloom, 2006).

Individual interviews are used frequently in qualitative studies as they reveal an in-depth understanding of different peoples’ perspectives (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). An in-depth interview approves the interviewer to examine deeply into social and personal matters regarding the topic (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). The researcher had individual interviews with the participants for this study since it is one of the most commonly used methods to gather information (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008). As Creswell (2005) explains, interviews arise when the researcher asks open-ended questions to one or more participants. As suggested by Newby (2010), interviewers have the freedom to clarify people’s understanding of and to ask follow-up questions to explore a viewpoint. The capability to ask more questions will support and enable the investigator to appreciate the subject better. Great care should be taken not to influence the participant. It requires great skill to concentrate, listen, and anticipate questions while encouraging respondents to talk. It also requires impartiality on the researcher’s side to remain unbiased. To be able to have a successful interview session the correct tone of voice and words that speak of empathy should be used, (Newby, 2010). In this current study, open-ended questions were asked to individual respondents and interviews were conducted to provide, data of the interviewer's experiences with regards to the design and/or implementation of the grade R intervention programme. The development of the items in the interview schedule was informed by the content of the ISP as well as by the theoretical framework of the current study that is explained in chapter 2.

There are advantages in using interviews such as the times of the interviews can be flexible to accommodate every participant. Questions can be clarified to encourage response and to make available a greater depth of facts (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008). According to Newby (2010), advantages of semi-structured interviews are that it contains rich data, it allows for questioning to discover issues that are discussed, it can explain confusions that may arise and it can reflect research inquiries.

However, there are also disadvantages when using interviews. It can be an expensive commodity as it involves travelling to the participants. It also involves much time to transcribe and interpret the information. Interviewers must be trained how to ask questions and monitor the data they collect. Some

people may be a sceptic of their situation and may not give a true reflection of issues that are discussed. A few pilot interviews were held with the grade R teachers that were not part of the study sample. This was done to get the feedback about the manner in which the interview was conducted in terms of aspects such as: the phrasing of questions, the manner in which the interview was conducted, the extent to which the participants felt at ease, and suggestions in which to improve the interview together in terms of interview questions posed as well as the interview process. Thus hopefully enhanced the trustworthiness of the study.

The factors that guided the researcher to ask certain questions were based on the factors that influence the programme such as the curriculum; socio-economic issues, policy implementation and commitment towards the programme. The anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents were of the utmost importance.

A convenient timetable was drawn up ahead of time to meet the participants at a designated location that suits both the interviewer and interviewee. The purpose of these interviews was to understand the success, barriers, sustainability and to identify suggestions regarding the Grade R intervention programme as seen and experienced by all participants.



Data was collected by using semi-structured interviews, conducted face-to-face. The researcher was careful not to deviate from the wording when modifying what the interviewer explained. The data was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Semi-structured interviews were held at the school at the convenience of the interviewees and it was scheduled in advance at a location that was away from everyday events. A set of predetermined open-ended questions and other questions that may arise between the interviewer and interviewee was asked, to encourage the interviewee to give a detailed description of how they perceive the programme. Open-ended questions allow the interviewee to give their own opinions and possible relevant answers as to how they perceive their experiences relating to the programme (Newby, 2010). Teachers may have more experience, knowledge and insight concerning the programme

Dates and times and a place for interviews were pre- arranged with participants. According to Marrelli, (2007) a timeframe of when you will be interviewing the participants is important so that the researcher can plan the interviews. The researcher attempted to conduct the interviews as soon as possible after the Grade R intervention programme was implemented and completed for the particular year with the hope that participants could easily recall memories and experiences of the Grade R intervention programme. In this manner, the researcher gained much insight about what had worked and what had not worked, with regards to the intervention programme. Figure 3.1 illustrates the data collection process followed in the current study.

3.9 Data analysis

Creswell (2005) explains to collect data you need a system for scoring data. (Clarke & Braun, 2014) describe qualitative research as using words as data that is collected and analysed in different ways. The researcher asks questions to participants and collects data from the answers given by participants. This study used thematic analysis in analysing the study's data. Braun and Clarke (2006) states that thematic analysis is the foundational method for qualitative analysis and therefore can be used across different methods, such as discourse analysis and narrative analysis. It can provide a flexible detailed account of data that has been identified, analysed and reporting patterns (themes). Thematic analysis is an understanding of people's daily experiences of reality, in detail. It is important that the researcher familiarises him/herself with the data collected so that it can be coded and transcribed. Search for patterns that will be formed as it is read by the researcher. Verbal data such as interviews need to be transcribed.

Transcription is a way of understanding the data clearly as it gives an accurate account of what people have said. Coding the data is where the interpretative analysis of the data happens. Data can be coded by writing notes on the texts to identify collated data. Paraphrase the content of the data and identify what is interesting or not. The scope of the study focussed on the factors that influenced the implementation of the ISP programme seen through the eyes of the participants, from the decision-makers to the implementers of who were the learner support teachers.

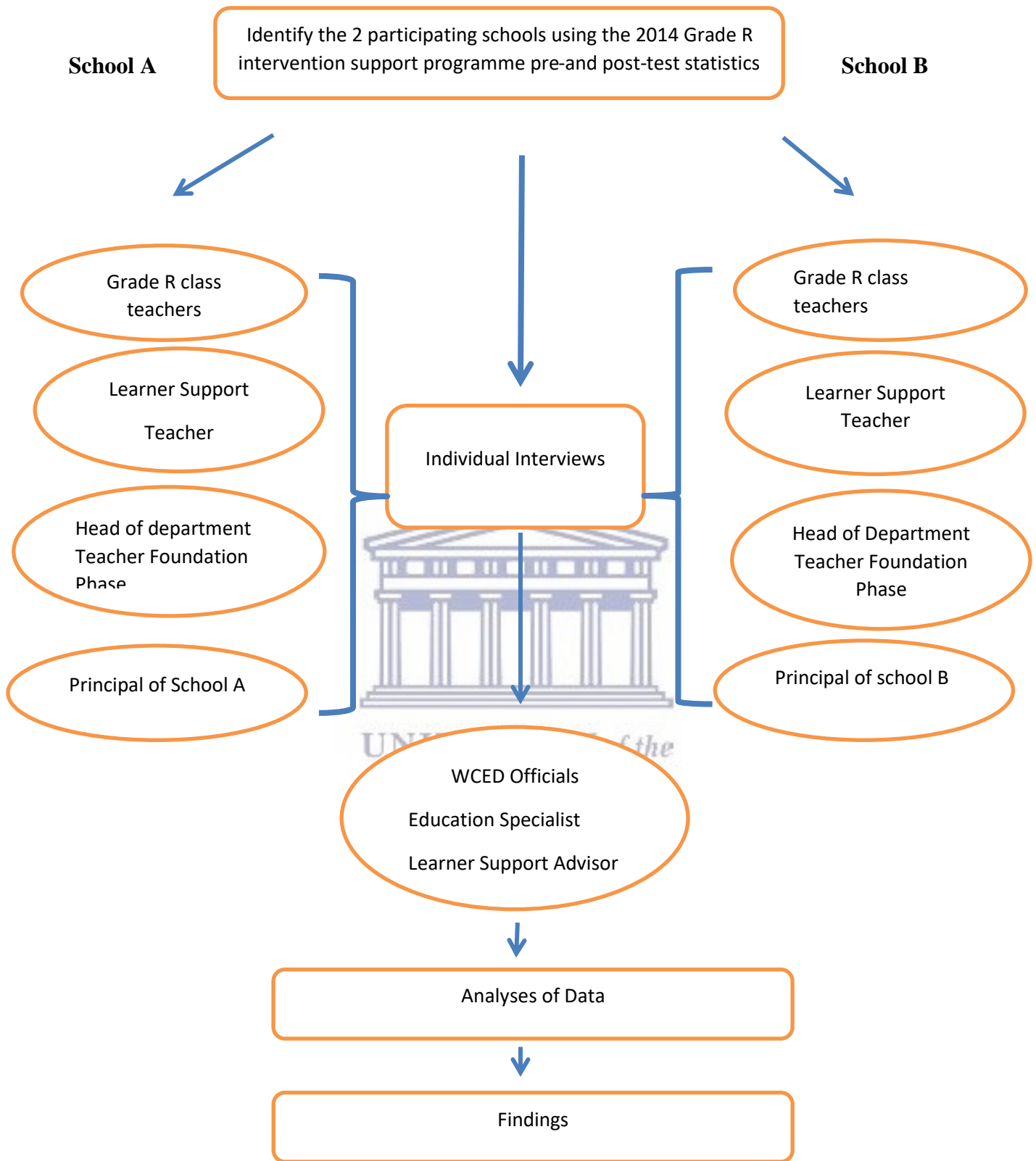


Figure 3.1: Data collection process

The analysis of the study's data commenced with the grouping of the data of all school A's grade R teachers' contributions. The same was done for the grade R teachers of school B. Next, the data was grouped according to post levels of the rest of the participants- LSTs, FP HODs, school principals and lastly the education district officials. The responses were categorised and analysed thematically in reference to the structured nature of the questions such as: participants' views, feelings about the programme, their knowledge about it, factors that hampered learning with regards to the curriculum, the statistics, personal feelings about the programme, negative and positive influences with regards to the schools.

As stated by Clarke & Braun, (2014) thematic analysis is a method used to identify and interpret patterns of meaning practiced in qualitative data. This involves a six-point process to implement the thematic analysis steps the researcher follows to explain the data:

Step 1: Acquaint yourself with the data and identify items of interest.

In this study the data analysis process started by posing the questions to the various participants with individual interviews, while recording them. To familiarise myself with the data, I listened to it a few times. The data was then transcribed into typed text to determine the themes in the research. I read the transcripts a few times to ascertain that it was recorded correctly. The next step was to group my data into themes and sub-themes.

Step 2: Generate initial codes:

The researcher read through the transcription and the questions a few times and then colour coded the data into categories and sub-categories. The respondents were grouped into separate schools A and B, and according to their experience regarding the ISP. Their responses were grouped into similarities and differences. This enabled the researcher to see the connections and relationships between questions so that the data could be organised when following this procedure.

Step 3: Search for themes:

After the researcher read through the transcripts, important phrases and words were placed into different codes. The data segments that were deemed to be important were labelled, sorted and categorised and

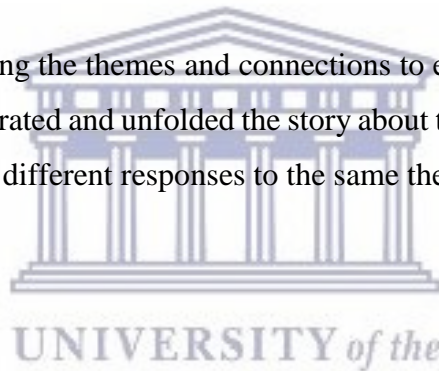
placed into folders so that it formed a cluster of information. After the data had been colour coded, relevant themes were clearly formed from the data.

Step 4: Review potential themes

The appropriate themes to the study were identified, the different meanings were noted and recorded. Similarities and differences were identified as the themes unfolded and was placed in specific categories according to the respondents' responses. Themes were checked in relation to the coded materials and the data. After reading through the themes and was sure that it would makes sense to other readers, the themes were then included into the research.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

A detailed analysis was written using the themes and connections to each other. Each theme had a story to tell to the reader and how it integrated and unfolded the story about the data. Each theme had a relevant name and it was easier to integrate different responses to the same the themes.



Step 6: Producing the report

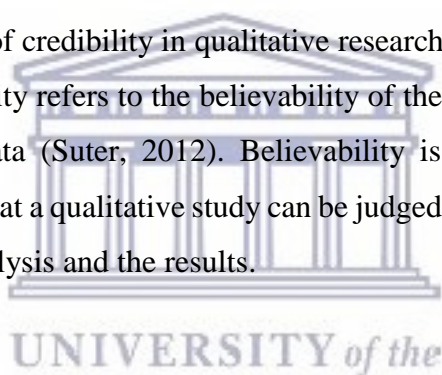
This is the last phase of the thematic analysis according to Clarke & Braun, (2014) where the themes were refined and integrated with the literature review. The themes of this study were placed in the order as it was presented. The report of the findings could tell a rich story about the data in relation to the literature review. There might be a wide variety of interpretation to the themes that arose from the data.

3.10 Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers ask precise questions regarding the research process to guarantee trustworthiness (Drew et al., 2008). Qualitative research has its own means of assessing rigour that is required in academic research, therefore, two important issues to remember concerning trustworthiness are reliability and validity. Guba and Lincoln (1989) replaced the quantitative concepts reliability and

validity with the concept of “trustworthiness”, which, in turn, consists of four components: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The researcher applied these components by asking for permission to interview the participants and promise confidentiality, anonymity and trustworthiness regarding the information enclosed by the participants. Yin (1994) describes "trustworthiness" as criteria to test the quality of a research design, while Lincoln (1989) refer to it as a goal of the research. They reiterate the necessity of a trustworthy research based on the components as mentioned above to produce a valid study. The characteristics of qualitative data have the following components: accuracy, credibility and dependability. It is important that the researcher ensures the quality and precision of the data. According to Mertler, (2014) trustworthiness can be proven when investigating the credibility, confirmability and dependability of the data. The researcher should be credible in the outcome of the context, based on the knowledge of the subject. The data should therefore not be confusing or incorrect.

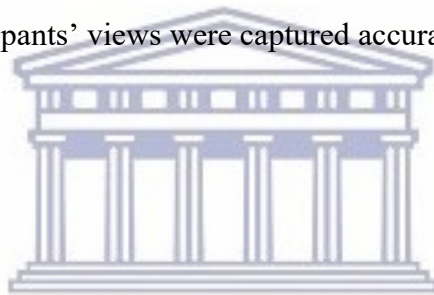
One of the most important means of credibility in qualitative research is to have an in-depth description of the data (Tracy, 2010). Credibility refers to the believability of the findings and it is proven with the evidence of clear, logic, valid data (Suter, 2012). Believability is provided by the support of the participants. Researchers believe that a qualitative study can be judged by its credibility. A credible study is based on the data quality, its analysis and the results.



Confirmability refers to the researcher being neutral and unbiased in the research process (Suter, 2012). It is a concern in qualitative studies to interpret the findings in an unbiased manner. Despite the difficulty of being unbiased, the researcher tried to stay unbiased in this study. Dependability refers to the findings that is truthful as the researcher processes the data. Transferability can be made possible when readers feel that the research coincides with their own situation and can relate to it. Validity and reliability are actively achieved, rather than made known by external reviews on the completion of the project. Qualitative research strategies include responsiveness, methodological coherence, theoretical sampling and sampling adequacy, an active analytic stance. These strategies force the researcher to correct the direction of analysis and the development of the study, ensuring validity and reliability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In spite of all the terminology with regards to trustworthiness, the standards for quality are most important and how much confidence a person can have in the research (Drew et al., 2008).

A responsible investigator will remain open, use sensitivity, creativity and insight. This person will be willing to disregard ideas that are poorly supported, regardless of the interest and the potential that it provides. The investigator's actions lead to social inquiry that leads to the best reliability and validity (Drew et al., 2008).

These components: credibility, dependability and confirmability of trustworthiness were applied with regards to the study. The researcher explained and assured the participants in detail what the procedure was with regards to permission of the study, the anonymity and confidentiality of the process. The participants could withdraw at any time they wished to. The data was collected and numbers were assigned to it to ensure confidentiality of the participants. Interview questions were comfortable and within their means to answer. The researcher remained unbiased but also knew how to prompt questions regarding the programme when "yes"- "no" answers were given. The researcher audio- recorded the interviews to ensure that the participants' views were captured accurately.



3.10.1 Reflexivity

As mentioned by Prosper (2012) reflexivity refers to how the researcher is involved in the process of research and techniques of understanding the problem without being biased. The researcher has to reflect on how the concepts might be applied differently. The researcher also has to reflect on methodological issues about how data was collected that would answer the research questions. It also looks at how sensitive the researcher was to ethical procedures to safeguard that the research did not cause harm to the research subject (Davies, cited in Prosper, 2012). According to Tracy (2010), self-reflexivity and transparency are regarded as two valuable means whereby qualitative research is being done. Self-reflexive processes allow for the researcher to examine the impact of the study and then to take other colleagues' view into consideration. Researchers can practice self-reflexivity by evaluating their own biases and encouragements (Prosper, 2012).

Finally, the study was conducted ethically i.e. participants who were informed what the study entailed. Consent letters were signed by all participants to point out their preparedness to participate in the study. Teachers and the district officials gave me permission to record what has been said during the interviews.

3.11 Ethical considerations regarding the study

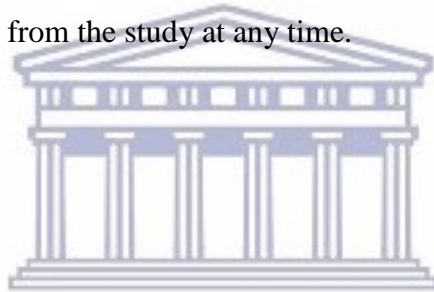
Ethical issues refer to the benefits the participants will understand when the research is completed. Piper and Simons (2005), explains the ethical act as doing no harm to research partakers. The purpose of this research was explained to all role-players the nature of the study (DiCicco-Bloom, 2006). The researcher must rely on their own personal qualities and values to handle ethical issues. In this study all attempts were made to report data accurately as possible to avoid falsification (Piper & Simons, 2005). Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to all participants including the protection of privacy and anonymity of individuals to protect the interviewees' information.

Being “ethical” according to Savin-Baden (2010) is about developing a profound, particular understanding of virtue. It is about being authentic and genuine. All participants were treated with respect and sensitivity. Before commencing with the study, the researcher applied for ethical clearance from the University of the Western Cape. Once the university gave permission, the researcher applied for written permission from the Western Cape Department of Education. Thereafter, the researcher approached the potential research sites (schools) and asked permission from the relevant school principals.

Afterwards, the researcher approached potential participants and invited them to participate in the study after giving them detailed information about the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were strictly applied and none of the raw data of individual participants were shared with any education official including the school principal or any other WCED official. This was important to assure the interviewees of their right to anonymity and, to encourage them to be as candid as possible in sharing their views without fear of being identified later. The researcher explained the nature of the study to the participants and gave enough information regarding the programme to gain trust in this way and to set the participants at ease. The scope and the importance of the study were explained. A verbal explanation

was given to the potential participants and their "gatekeepers", in this instance, the principals (Lambert, 2012). The researcher and supervisor kept the data confidentially. The participants gave their informed consent.

Data was kept under a password-protected computer. Names of participants were changed to numbers to ensure anonymity, and participants were informed that the raw data (interview transcripts) would be destroyed when no longer in need as suggested by (Lambert, 2012). Permission was asked verbally and given in written form. Interviews were held at school after making appointments to see all the interviewees at their convenience. The two schools were not named for complete confidentiality and to prevent possible later monitoring from the WCED once the thesis is made available for public consumption. The researcher respected the participants' dignity, sense of self and worth and the interviews were held in participants' language of preference English/ Afrikaans. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.



3.12 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research methodology that was used for the purpose of this study. It entailed an outline of the research paradigm and the research process. The qualitative research design, in particular a case study design was used. Semi-structured interviews were held with the participants. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and a thematic approach was used to analyse the findings. To ensure a valid production of the data, ethical considerations followed regarding trustworthiness and ethical guidelines. The study's findings will be discussed in the next chapter and presented as findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and the discussion of the findings based on the study, which explored the factors that impacted on the implementation of a grade R school readiness intervention support programme (ISP). This study was conducted at two previously disadvantaged schools in the same area in the Northern suburbs of the Cape metropole, Western Cape. The 2014 pre-and post-test performances of the schools who participated in the intervention programme were used to select the two schools for participation in the study because they were, located in the same community; yet they performed differentially in the post tests of the ISP in 2014.



4.2 Presentation of findings

People's conversations in an interview are an important source of data that qualitative educational researchers use (Newby, 2010). A qualitative research method was followed to give an in- depth representation of the different roles the participants played with regards to the intervention support programme (ISP). The different role players' experienced with this ISP were grouped and analysed as school A and School B's findings.

According to Creswell (2008) with qualitative studies, data can be coded into themes or categories as this adds depth to the understanding of different experiences of the participants. Qualitative researchers base the study on accuracy and the practicality of the study.

After the data collection process, I firstly grouped the data according to the post (job) descriptions of the participants before analyses. I also initially analysed the data from school A's grade R teachers separately from school B's grade R teachers before making comparisons later. I grouped the two LST's of school

A and B, the HOD's of school A and B, the two principals of school A and B and the two district officials. I then compared the findings.

4.2.1 Findings related to school A's Grade R teachers

The following themes were identified when analysing the data of school A, grade R teacher participants:

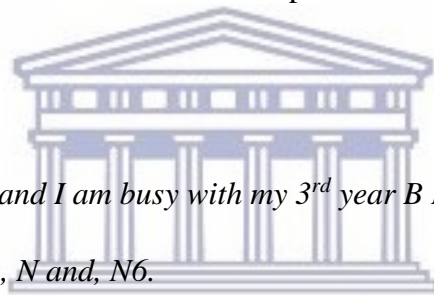
4.2.1.1 Qualifications and teaching experience of the school A Grade R teacher participants

All the grade R teachers at the time had an Early Childhood Development (ECD) teaching qualification, with one teacher busy studying towards an Honours degree in Education. All of them had more than four years of teaching experience. Here are some of their responses with regard to their qualifications and teaching experience.

It's my fourth year. I have N6.

...9 years teaching experience. N6 and I am busy with my 3rd year B Ed Hons.

It's my 4th year. I have Educare N4, N and, N6.



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4.2.1.2 The attitudes of grade R teachers towards teaching in grade R.

All three school A Grade R teachers stated that they were passionate about grade R learners and about teaching grade R learners. They expressed commitment to their work. They knew what to expect when the learners came to school for the first time and showed much compassion when learners became emotional. Here are their responses:

They [learners] are ok, they cry at the beginning.

Grade R is my passion. I love to work with my best group. I believe that I have a calling.

4.2.1.3 School A Grade R teachers' involvement in the input and the design of the ISP

The grade R teachers were not involved in the input and the design, of the ISP. Two teachers mentioned that they would have wanted to have given input into the design of the ISP, but were not considered. The

first teacher was under the impression that she was part of the programme as the LST had given her a copy of the ISP, but she would have wanted to be part of the team who designed the programme. The third teacher mentioned that she was under the impression that an education- district official had designed the ISP. Here are a few of their responses in relation to the input and design of the ISP:

Yes, I was part of it. Mrs X [LST] gave us a copy of the programme. I would want to be part of the team, but I don't think I would change the programme.

No, although I would have wanted to be part of the drawing up of a Grade R programme.

No, I thought it was Ms Z [district official].

4.2.1.4 School A Grade R teachers' views about the ISP

According to the grade R teachers, they were positive and praised the ISP, and stated that it met their requirements. Two teachers thought it was complete and helpful and the other teacher echoed that the ISP really supported the grade R learners. This meant that the teacher agreed with the format of the programme and that according to them, learners were supported academically. They knew what lessons were taught and were at liberty to revise the programme when they observed that learners struggled to understand when the LST taught the lesson to the whole class. The third grade R teacher thought the ISP helped the learners; but was concerned with the unsatisfactory progress of some learners who, despite their participation in the ISP, were still not academically ready for grade one. The same teacher reported that a few learners were not ready for grade one and that the teachers struggled with a few learners, but learners could not repeat grade R because of the age policy. It is also not easy to retain learners in grade R especially those who are going to turn seven in a particular year, which is the year of compulsory school attendance in grade one, according to South African school policy (ACT NO. 84 of 1996). Prior to the introduction of the compulsory school going age policy, it was easier to retain learners when teachers were of the view that learners were not ready to proceed to the following grade, in this instance one. Here are a few of their responses:

... I think it is to develop a better child. It really does help the children.

... but I don't think I would want to change the programme... It is complete.

It is very helpful... It is enough. For me it is complete. We struggle with some of the learners and we can't keep them in grade R because of their age. We have kept learners previously, but not anymore.

4.2.1.5 The role of the LST in the grade R classes

For the reader to understand the job description of the Learner Support Teacher (LST), the following points are for clarity. The LST does (1) direct intervention through whole class teaching with grade R learners, teaching the ISP, called collaborative teaching, (2) the LST works with identified learners at academic risk and, (3) mentoring and supporting grade R teachers via meetings and the parents. These were the views of the grade R teachers. The grade R teachers were aware that the Learner Support Teacher came into their classes for half an hour to do collaborative teaching and withdrew the thirty identified learners who were academically “at risk” to work with them in groups of up to eight learners in her LST class. The grade R teachers observe the lessons of the ISP while the LST teaches these lessons so that the grade R teachers can repeat certain aspects of the lessons e.g. auditory perceptual skills and consolidate the lessons in class.

At this school, the groups of learners for withdrawal would have been two groups of seven learners each as well as two groups of eight learners each, giving a total of 30 ISP participants altogether. The LST did not work with more than eight learners in a group. The first teacher stated that the LST came to her class three times and sometimes twice a week, two lessons for the whole class and one lesson to work with the chosen group of learners in her own class. The second teacher mentioned that LST came three times at the beginning of the quarter (the group of ISP learners were not identified yet) and withdrew learners later. Initially there was more collaborative teaching in the grade R classes at the beginning of the year. The third teacher stated that the LST came twice to her class: once to teach a lesson for the whole class and one lesson for the learners of the ISP that she withdrew to work in her class. The same teacher also reported that the LST would discuss the learners’ challenges (e.g. not being able to know the names of different colours) with- the grade R teachers individually and in meetings. The LST would observe these challenges while working with the learners in her class, and inform the teacher to address the same challenges she had observed. Here are the teachers’ responses:

Mrs X [LST] gave us a copy of the programme. The lessons are done to the whole class. The teacher comes in three times a week, sometimes twice a week then she takes the learners who were identified earlier.

She came three times to the learners. At the beginning of the quarter she came more frequently and later she withdrew the eight learners. She has regular meetings with us formal and informal.

She will come to us individually and tell us in what areas our learners are weak at. She will ask for a meeting with us. She came twice to our class, then she would teach the lesson to the whole class and the next day she will take the intervention children with her.

4.2.1.6 Learner selection for participation in the ISP

The grade R teachers selected the ISP learners with the assistance of the LSTs. There were two tools used to identify the ISP learners. These were the baseline assessment and by observing the learners while they played on the playground or interacted in class (e.g. their use of language and social skills). The National Curriculum Statement, Assessment guidelines for Foundation Phase Grade R to three, (1996) states that the purpose of assessment should be to enhance individual growth and development and to monitor the progress of learners. The baseline assessment is used at the beginning of a phase or grade to establish what the learners know, what they are able to do and what they value. The baseline assessment is a compulsory tool used by grade R teachers at the beginning of a school year to enable them to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the learners and to identify learners who are academically at risk. LSTs observed and noted how the learners presented themselves when the LSTs presented lessons in grade R classes. All the grade R teachers were of the view that too little time was allocated to identify learners for participation in the ISP. They needed more time to observe learners and make a decision about who would benefit most from being included in the ISP. The teachers felt that sometimes learners do well in the baseline assessment, but later in the year, they seem to fall behind academically. The identified ISP learners were subjected to a pre-test in March prior to the implementation of the ISP. The grade R teachers would have preferred to hand in the names of these learners at risk at the beginning of the second quarter. They only had two months [January and February] to make the decision.

There were also concerns raised about not being able to later swap learners once learners were identified and confirmed for ISP participation by forwarding their names to the education district office. One

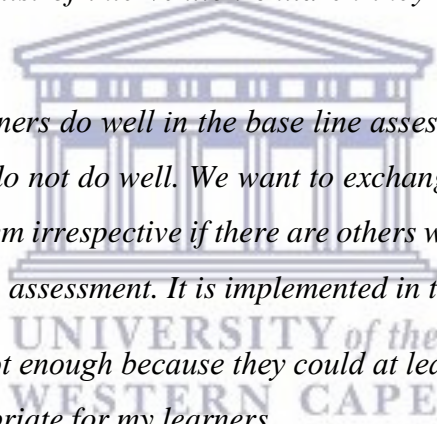
teacher reported that sometimes learners did well in the baseline assessment, but later in the year [*after May*] these same learners' academic progress was worse than that of some of the identified ISP learners. The teacher would have wanted to have the choice of swapping learners for participation in the ISP, based on her evaluation of the academic needs of her learners.

However, swapping learners on the ISP was not allowed by the ISP because the names of the identified learners for inclusion in the ISP was forwarded to the education district office for the purpose of tracking this group of learners until they reached matric and for research purposes as well. Thus, the inflexibility in terms of learner participation in the ISP was a concern to the grade R teachers. Here are their responses about flexibility of the names and the time allocated in choosing the names:

... Actually it does not feel like it's working for me to identify learners at the beginning of the year. It is too quick. I feel strongly that the list of intervention children they want in January and February is definitely too quick.

... Sometimes we find that the learners do well in the base line assessment and later after May we find that there are some learners who do not do well. We want to exchange learners, but Mrs X [LST] does not allow it. She works just with them irrespective if there are others who need help more than the names we have given. We use the baseline assessment. It is implemented in the first two weeks of school.

... the time they have given us is not enough because they could at least wait till after the first quarter, I feel. The first quarter is not appropriate for my learners.

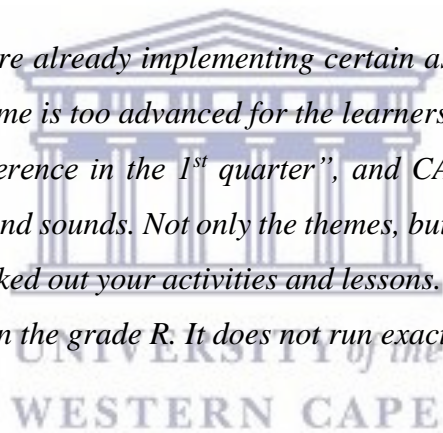


4.2.1.7 Alignment of the CAPS with the ISP

When comparing CAPS with the ISP, the teachers highlighted the following challenges: (i) the structure of the ISP was not aligned with CAPS and concerns were expressed about the complexity of some ISP components such as the language component. (ii) It was too early in the year for learners at risk to learn certain language structures such as identifying similarities and differences between objects. CAPS has these components in the second term of the school year, the teacher explained. (iii) She focused on teaching routine activities such as designated toilet times and to improve the language use of the learners during the first quarter because most learners had to adapt to a routine of doing things.

The complexity of the language component of ISP will be discussed when grade R teachers' views about the four ISP components are discussed. The grade R teachers at school A had different views about topics covered by the ISP in relation to the themes of the CAPS. One grade R teacher mentioned that the structure of the programme in terms of its scheduling was problematic because some aspects were introduced too early in the year and were therefore, too advanced for many ISP learners at that stage of the year. Children needed more time to understand the content. This may have meant that the teacher felt that the learners would have understood the ISP more clearly, if the ISP learners experienced more time with the CAPS. The same teacher felt that the ISP structure was not satisfactorily aligned with that of the structure of CAPS. The third teacher however mentioned that the ISP ran concurrent with the CAPS programme. The following excerpts reflect the teachers' views about ISP in relation to CAPS:

We must still get there then they are already implementing certain aspects of what we still have to do. The things that are in the programme is too advanced for the learners especially at the beginning of the year. They do “the same and difference in the 1st quarter”, and CAPS do it in the 2nd quarter. The programme expects them to know end sounds. Not only the themes, but the songs too. You have your own curriculum to follow and have worked out your activities and lessons. There is no time for extra lessons. There are too many expectations on the grade R. It does not run exactly parallel with the topics



4.2.1.8 Time constraints concerning the curriculum and the ISP delivery

The grade R teachers had similar views about the ISP in relation to the time the LSTs spent in their classes. The first grade R teacher agreed that the ISP was a good programme and that it helped the learners, but took too much of the teaching time. The second teacher commented that the ISP affected their teaching time negatively when busy in their classes. The third teacher mentioned it happened when they were busy with assessments. What they meant was that they found it frustrating sometimes to be “interrupted” by the LST, because they had planned their lessons or they were busy with assessments and would not have wanted to be disturbed. The lessons were interrupted by the LST who came into the class either to give a lesson to the whole class or to withdraw learners for ISP lessons in her own class. The following excerpts demonstrate the participants' viewpoints:

It is very helpful, but sometimes takes too much of our time

Time is a factor and the themes.

To be honest, sometimes it is very frustrating when I start to do work and Mrs X [LST] comes to class. It impacts negatively on our time in our planning, especially when we are busy with assessments.

4.2.1.9 Grade R teachers' views with regard to the four components of the ISP.

Generally, all the teachers agreed that they were positive about the ISP. However, they had different views when commenting about the four components. The first teacher thought that it was complete and she could not think of anything to add to the programme. The second teacher reported that more emphasis could be placed on gross and fine motor skills and listening activities. The teacher felt that the songs, and themes of the programme and some parts of the programme (e.g. language component: phonics) were too advanced for the grade R learners, especially at the beginning of the year.

The grade R teachers opined that the education district expected too much of a grade R learner especially given the socio-economic backgrounds of the learners. This could be interpreted that the education district officials expected good results concerning the learners' academic progress without considering the possible learning barriers experienced by learners due to their home and community environments. The school was located in a residential area that was known for gangsterism. It was dangerous. The second teacher reported that one of the challenges was doing the gross motor skills activities with the ISP learners outside on the school grounds. This was because learners playing outside the classroom were at risk of physical danger given the high frequency of violent activity such as shootings in the neighborhood where the school was located. Consequently, learners could not go outside regularly to practice their gross motor skills. It was unsafe to go outside. The third teacher reported that the ISP really did help the children. Here are a few responses concerning the two teachers:

It is very helpful. It does not run parallel with the topics.

The programme is complete, but they can reiterate the importance of the gross motor and fine motor skills because that is why grade R here. The programme expects them to know end sounds. Not only the themes, but the songs too. They expect too much of our learners, especially in our area. So I will say because of the time and violence, we did not do well [gross motor skills]. It was one our challenges...

No, I don't think there is something to add to the programme. It really does help the children.

No, I don't think there is something to add to the programme... Put more listening activities, gross motor and fine motor activities. The build- up of the language is advanced in some instances for the grade R learner.

4.2.1.10 Grade R teachers' perceptions of the school principal and Foundation Phase HOD's involvement with regard to the ISP at school A

All the grade R teachers agreed that they did not get support from their principal. Their body language suggested that they were frustrated by the principal's non- involvement with regards to the ISP. The first teacher commented that the principal did not show interest in the grade R curriculum or them as grade R teachers. The second teacher reported that they had the support of the HOD, however the principal did not have insight in what they, and the grade R teachers were doing. The teacher did not elaborate on the type of support provided by the FP H.O.D. Both the HOD and principal had no practical involvement in the ISP. The HOD and the principal were both aware of the ISP, however only the HOD was involved by discussing the ISP with the grade R teachers that reported to her. Here are the two their responses:

The principal is not involved with our grade R curriculum. Principal should show more interest in us.

Yes, we do, the HOD. ...our principal... he does not have insight in what we the grade R's do.

4.2.1.11 Support and involvement by the Education district- based officials with regard to the ISP

There were mixed reactions concerning the support received from the district-based officials. The first teacher commented that they had attended many workshops hosted by the district officials. The second teacher commented that they [education district officials] did support, but not the way the teacher wanted support. The teacher did not elaborate on the type of support she needed. The teacher suggested more

monitoring and practical workshops. This may have meant more visits from the district officials by encouraging them and practical strategies to address the learning barriers that learners experience e.g. (how to enrich the fine motor skills of grade R learners). Here are two teachers' responses:

Yes, but not the way we want it. They should come more frequent, monitor to see if we are on the right track. They should give more practical workshops.

We get many workshops, every quarter.

4.2.1.12 Grade R teachers' perceptions of parents and the community involvement in learners' education.

All grade R teachers reported that parents had a non-committal attitude towards their children. The first teacher commented that parents were not interested in their children. They suggested that the parents did not take their role seriously. Crime also prevented parents from attending school meetings. The same teacher did not want to jeopardise the safety of the parents by coming to meetings, therefore she did not have parent meetings. The teacher commented that some of the parents were young and did not have a sense of responsibility. The same teacher mentioned that parents, whose children were experiencing difficulty, did not come to meetings. The third teacher mentioned that parents did not show interest in their children. When meetings were scheduled to inform them of their children, they were reluctant to play a pivotal role in the education of their children. The teachers justified such claims because they had reported to parents the learning barriers their children were faced with and provided support strategies for parents to do at home, however, the parents did not implement these strategies. The findings highlight the environmental/community factors that may have negatively influenced the implementation and success of the ISP. The following excerpts reflect teachers' views about parent and community involvement:

No parents are not interested in their children...but because of the crime the community finds it difficult to come to school. We don't want to put their lives in jeopardy.

The parents are young. They don't have a sense of responsibility. They show no interest in their child. They play a weak role in the lives of their children... the parent whose child is a problem, does not come to the meetings.

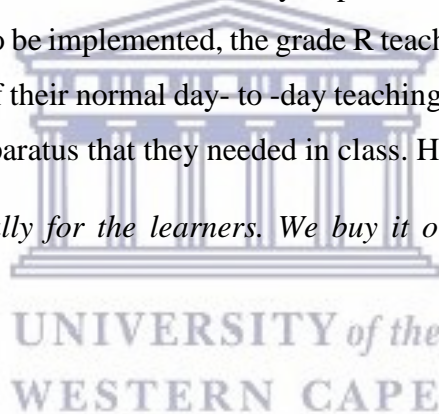
Parents do not care. Parents don't look after their children. Yes, they come to school hungry. Parents do not come to meetings. We have a problem when meetings are held with parents to get them on board with regards to their children's education.

4.2.1.13 Resources needed for ISP implementation

The grade R teachers commented that they needed apparatus for the learners, but were speaking in general. The first teacher commented that she received money from the school, given by the WCED allocated to grade R for purchasing apparatus to use during lessons. The teacher referred to apparatus used generally for the grade R learner and the money allocated to schools for grade R. The second teacher mentioned that she bought her own apparatus with her money. It was surprising that they mentioned they needed apparatus for the ISP because the ISP was mainly implemented by the LST. When asked about the resources required for the ISP to be implemented, the grade R teachers seemed to have misunderstood the question and spoke generally of their normal day- to -day teaching of the curriculum. They may have been speaking in general about apparatus that they needed in class. Here are their responses:

We need much apparatus especially for the learners. We buy it ourselves. We get money from the government to buy toys.

I have to buy from my pocket.



4.2.2 Findings related to school B's Grade R teachers: Description of school B

. The school comprises of two grade R classes and both teachers participated in the study. The following themes were identified after analysis of the interview transcript of school B grade R teachers:

4.2.2.1 Qualifications and teaching experience of the grade R teacher participants

Both grade R teachers had an Early Childhood Development Teaching qualification with more than three years teaching experience. The first teacher also completed a few workshops related to her job description for example, (Abuse No More Policy). They both enjoyed their teaching career and found the grade R learners interesting. This meant that they loved to work with grade R learners. Here are their responses:

12 years. I have level 5. I've done many short courses like child abuse.

3 years, level 5 ECD educational course.

4.2.2.2 The views and attitudes of the grade R teachers with regard to the ISP

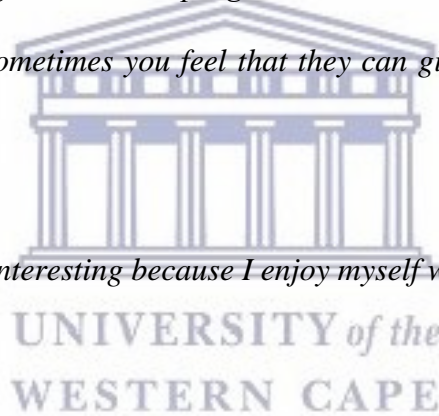
Both grade R teachers were positive and praised the ISP. One teacher mentioned that she did not want to add to the programme. This can be interpreted that the teacher was satisfied with the way the programme was designed. However, the same teacher felt that more time could be allocated to a child who came from home to grade R and had not previously attended any crèche. What this meant was that the learner who came to grade R without attending any formal crèche structure had much to learn (e.g. social skills and routine), than learners who had attended crèche previously. Both teachers enjoyed their work and the learners. They were positive about their jobs. They expressed commitment and enjoyment. Here are their responses:

No, I don't think there is something to add to the programme.

It really does help the children. Sometimes you feel that they can give more time especially if a child comes from home.

Very much

For me a grade R child is always interesting because I enjoy myself with them.



4.2.2.3 Grade R teacher involvement in the input and design of the grade R ISP

The grade R teachers had mixed reactions concerning their input in the design of the programme or insight with regards to the design of the programme. The first teacher was under the impression that the programme came from the learner support advisor at the education district who enlightened her about the programme. The second teacher was under the impression that she was involved as she had a copy of the ISP. What this meant was that she felt she was using the programme and therefore had insight in the programme, thus knowledgeable in that way, but did not seem to be interested in wanting to have contributed to the input and the designing of the ISP. Here are their responses:

If I'm right it comes from them (meaning the district's officials). The LST usually told us about the programme.

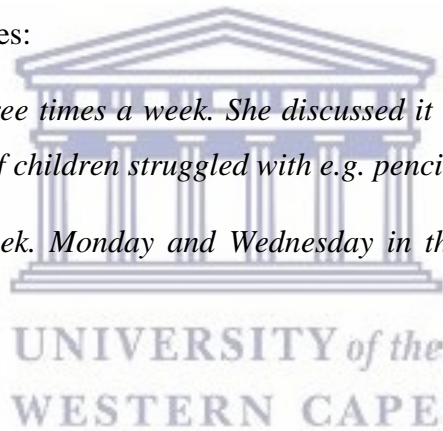
Mrs Y[LST] explained to us. Yes, we were involved, we had a copy.

4.2.2.4 The role of the LST in the grade R class

One teacher of school B was of the opinion that the learner support teacher (LST) took the learners twice a week to do collaborative teaching, even three times a week. This meant that the LST worked with the whole class doing collaborative teaching and withdrew the 30 ISP learners. At this school, it meant that the LST would have withdrawn fifteen learners of each of the two grade R classes and divided them into groups ($7+7+8+8=30$) and worked with each group of learners once per week. The LST also gave advice to the grade R teachers about how to help learners who needed support and reported to the teachers regularly. The other teacher mentioned that the LST took the whole class for collaborative teaching and withdrew the 30 learners on a Friday. This meant that they knew what the programme was all about due to the LST teaching in both their classes twice per week and withdrawing the ISP learners once per week on a Friday. Here are their responses:

Mrs Y [LST] took them two or three times a week. She discussed it with us on a Friday and then she would also have ideas what to do if children struggled with e.g. pencil grip.

She [LST] takes them twice a week. Monday and Wednesday in the class and Friday she takes 30 children. Two days.



4.2.2.5 Learner selection for the participation in the ISP

Both teachers thought that the baseline assessment was not compulsory as it supported the teacher in identifying the learners' abilities. They focused mainly on the baseline assessment for guidance concerning the selection of learners who were identified for participation in the ISP. One teacher also mentioned that a grade R Teacher should have a lap book so that every observation of the children could be noted. The other teacher mentioned that the baseline assessment allowed her to see what her learners were capable of. The teachers of school B did not seem to have a problem with the scheduled commencement of the programme. They focused on whether the baseline assessment should be made compulsory as they were under the impression it was not. Here are their responses:

For me baseline should be compulsory to know learners better... grade R teacher is constantly with a lap-book when we play outside, when we are busy on the mat. Everything must be noted.

We saw when we did the baseline assessment; they cannot do this or that. I think baseline should be compulsory so that you can know what the child knows and don't know

4.2.2.6 Alignment of the CAPS with the ISP

The following discussions were made with regards to the different topics of the ISP and the (South African National curriculum). Both teachers mentioned that CAPS involved much more administration work than, the ISP. The ISP had no administrative activities other than observing the learners, and repeating lessons when learners showed that they did not understand. The ISP is a pre-planned programme which include pictures and easier to implement than the CAPS. One teacher however felt that the ISP was in line with the themes of the CAPSs. The one teacher mentioned that the scheduling of content of the ISP ran parallel with the CAPS. Here are their responses:

Admin is too much. Yes, it was in line with the topics.

I think CAPS have much admin work, whereas the programme is already worked out and I don't know if the programme comes out the way we got it, but it has pictures and everything we need for the lessons.

4.2.2.7 Grade R teachers' view with regard to the four components of the ISP

School B's grade R teachers had different opinions about learners' performances in the ISP in the previous year. The first teacher thought that the learners had performed well in the post-test according to the results despite most of the learners having previously not attended any formal crèche or institution where routine and social skills were practiced. What this meant was that the teacher had insight into the results and the children did well according to the statistics, despite the many learners having no prior formal learning. The teacher also felt that learners struggled with the words and the writing of their names. The teacher expected learners to write their names, however it was not compulsory for the learners in grade R. The same teacher commented that the learners did well in Language development, component of the ISP. The other teacher felt that the ISP was appropriate enough and that she would not want to add or change anything. Here are their responses:

I would say in Language. There are many of them who struggle with the words and the writing of their names. I think we did well because last year's majority of learners come from home. The results at the end of the year were good.

The programme is so cute that you don't want to add or change anything about it 4.2.2.8 School B grade R teachers' views about the involvement of the school principal and Foundation Phase HOD's in the ISP

Both grade R teachers felt that they were not supported by the principal or the Foundation Phase HOD. There was animosity from the staff towards them and no support. The grade R teachers had experienced some relationship challenges with other staff members. Here are their responses:

There was no support from the office for grade R from the office side.

There was not such a good vibe. In the last time we had some troubled waters. We and the personnel. Backstabbing and two faced.

4.2.2.8 The support and involvement by the Education district-based officials for the ISP

Only one teacher commented that the teacher wanted more workshops from the district to gain more knowledge and in return build her confidence. Here is her response:

They could have more workshops to give more knowledge so that you can have more confidence.

4.2.2.9 Grade R teachers' perceptions of parent and the community involvement in learners' education

One teacher mentioned that the majority of the parents did what was expected of them, however there were parents who showed a non-committal attitude and this was demonstrated by high absenteeism because learners were absent unnecessarily. The same teacher mentioned that children were raised by their grandparents who acted as primary caregivers to the children because the parents were drug addicts, abusing tik (an illegal drug) and kept the children at home unnecessarily which led to them falling behind in their school work. There was also shooting in the area which led to parents not attending parent meetings. However, the other teacher mentioned that she did not have a problem with her parents. She had meetings with the parents in the afternoon when the parents fetched their children. Here are their responses:

We also have children raised by grandparents because their parents abuse tik. Parents keep them at home unnecessary. They lose much work... but I can say the majority do what is expected of them. At night they began to shoot. Then the parents did not come.

We had meetings in the classes after school when parents fetched their children. I can't complain about my parents.

4.2.2.10 The availability of resources for ISP

Both teachers were supported by their family members with regards to apparatus for grade R learners. One teacher phoned her husband who passed apparatus on over the school fence and the other teacher received apparatus from her mother who also had a crèche. They did not seem to have the support of the principal or HOD with regards to apparatus, however they did not need any apparatus for the ISP as the programme included pictures which were made available by the LST. Here are their responses:

It was a problem. I phoned my husband and then he would pass the things over the fence to us.

When I had a shortage of apparatus, I asked my mother for apparatus because she also had a crèche.

4.2.3 Learner support teachers' (LST) views with regard to the ISP findings

4.2.3.1 Background knowledge, dedication and commitment regarding the experience of learner support teachers.

School A's LST had twelve years and the other LST (school B) had three years of experience in learning support and each one of them had experience in foundation phase teaching for more than twenty years. Both of them loved their work because they felt the learners they taught were eager to learn (like sponges, absorbing information). Both LSTs commented that the learners kept them committed. The LST of school A could see they were progressing which encouraged her to continue teaching. The progress of the learners brought great satisfaction to the school B LST. Here are their responses:

It is for me very exciting because they are open to learning and yes, they were more eager than the other grades, ... they are open to learning, (school B).

I find it stimulating. I enjoy working with grade R's, school A.

Seeing the progress and seeing positive of that programme makes you want to continue to see what's happening. The learners keep me committed, (school A)

4.2.3.2 Input and the designing of the ISP

Both LSTs had no insight in the input or designing of the ISP. It was given to them by the learner support advisors. The LST of school B commented that she had nothing negative to say about the programme. This teacher was under the impression that the learner support advisors (education district-based officials) worked with the programme, meaning it was them who designed the programme.

It was just given to us, we had no insight in the programme. (school A)

The LSA and her team worked with the programme. (school B)

4.2.3.3 The aim of implementing the ISP

Both learner support teachers were not told what the aim of the ISP was but, soon understood that it was to improve grade R learners' language and other areas of concern. The LST (school B) also commented that the ISP learners were more confident when going to grade one. Here are their responses:

We were not told what the aim was, but as I went along I could see it was what it was all about like for language and that questions that were asked were applicable for so that they can understand in grade one. It is more about the learner, so they can have a better learner in grade one, (LST school B).

4.2.3.4 The learner selection for participation in ISP

The two learner support teachers commented that the grade R class teachers chose the academically weak learners for support. The class teachers used the baseline assessment to identify the learners for ISP inclusion. The learner support teacher of school B felt she could not withdraw all eighty learners, meaning all the learners in grade R, but could work with groups of eight learners per session. The LST worked with eight learners per session irrespective of the number of grade R classes. The LSTs observed the learners while teaching collaboratively in the grade R classes. In this manner they could identify learners who needed more learning support. The LST and class teacher could then support each other in identifying learners to be included the list of thirty learners for ISP selection. Both LSTs were able to assist the teachers to identify learners for inclusion in for ISP. Here are their responses:

... because I couldn't withdraw all eighty of them, I would take eight at a time. It was the baseline that played a role, but I also went into the classes and especially because I knew which ones were weak, (school B).

They were assessed by their teachers and those who were weak are the learners. Baseline and they have observed them at the beginning, (school A).

4.2.3.5 The role and implementation of the ISP by the LSTs

Both LSTs reported that they taught the ISP to all the grade R learners (collaborative lessons) in their classes, twice per week and then withdrew the ISP learners in groups for half hour sessions to give more support to these learners (once a week). Both LSTs reported that they gave feedback to grade R teachers and parents with regard to the ISP learners' progress. The LSTs had regular meetings with the grade R class teachers to report what they [LSTs] have observed, while delivering collaborative teaching. The LST of school A also mentioned that the parents received referral forms and parent consent letters for learners to be included. Here are the LSTs responses:

I go into the classes and teach once or twice in the class and present lessons in grade R. I also do collaborative teaching and the other lessons I withdraw them with me. The learners I withdraw are the learners who were at risk 3 times per week, (school A).

Twice a week I go into the classes and once a week I withdraw, 30 minutes. Collaborative teaching, (school B).

I have meetings with teachers. I tell them what I have observed, (school B).

I report to them. Yes, they do get referral forms and parent consent letters for learners to be withdrawn, (school A).

4.2.3.6 The relationship of the LSTs with the grade R teachers

Both LSTs had a good relationship with the class teachers of grade R in their role of providing support to learners and class teachers. This meant that the grade R teachers could talk about a learner and ask for

advice without feeling intimidated by the LST. There was trust among these colleagues and the teachers were open to any suggestions concerning the learners. Here is one comment:

I have a very good relationship with them [referring to grade R teachers].

4.2.3.7 Adapting the ISP

The LST of school A commented that she deviated from the ISP and made adaptations. The teacher adapted aspects of the ISP to make it more appropriate for the school's context for example adapting activities for gross motor development. This flexibility regarding the programme was accepted by the Education Learning Support Advisors (LSA district officials) as they encouraged adapting the ISP to suite the learners in their particular education contexts when the LSTs found they needed to do so. Only the LST of school A commented about the adapting the ISP. Here is the response:

Yes, I do add things to the programme. I don't follow it religiously.

4.2.3.8 LSTs' views about ISP effectiveness in the previous year

The LSTs had access to the ISP pre- and post- test results of the previous year (2014) that were given to them at the beginning of 2015. The results indicated the performance of the four components of the ISP. The LSTs did not clearly recall what their schools scored and answered in general. The LSTs reported varied performance by ISP learners when looking at the statistics of the previous year. Both the LSTs thought that there was an improvement in the learners who were at risk academically, because that was what the statistics showed in the post-test results. The LST of school A mentioned that her school's performance showed improvement in the following aspects: in language, gross motor skills and auditory skills. However, the learners were weak in visual and auditory skills. The learners did not know their colours and shapes. According to the LST of school A, learners' language was not stimulated at home. What this meant was that learners had a weak vocabulary and could not express themselves well. The LST of school B commented that her school's auditory perceptual skills had improved. Here are their responses:

They did well in language development. There was a big improvement. They were very good in gross motor skills, but visual perception they were very weak, auditory skills also weak. The language is not stimulated at home. They don't know their colours or shapes. They don't get stimulated at home, (school A).

I think they did well. I think was it auditory that they did well. In everything they excelled, (school B).

4.2.3.9 LSTs' views about the school principal and the FP H.O.D involvement in ISP

The LSTs had different comments regarding the involvement of the principal and FP HOD, but mentioned the teachers also. The LST of school A mentioned that she drew up a report for the principal concerning the grade R ISP to peruse. The grade R teachers and the LSTs discussed the ISP and the learners. The LST of school B mentioned that she had the support of the teachers in general and the principal concerning the grade R programme to peruse. Both LSTs reported that there was some support from the FP HOD, whereas with regard to the principal, it seemed that it was more a reporting procedure and hardly any involvement and interest. Here are their responses:

I draw up a report and give it to the principal, school A.

Yes, I do have the support of the teachers and the principal, ... we discuss the children and the programme. School B

4.2.3.10 The alignment of the ISP with regards to the CAPS

The LST of school A mentioned that the education district officials informed her midway in 2014 to align the ISP with CAPS. However, she did not comply for the following reasons: (1) It would have not made sense to make changes to the ISP at that stage of the year, (2) the ISP had its own topics that did not coincide with the CAPS's themes, (3) the CAPS content was too much to cover in a given year. Learners struggled through the year with CAPS. The LST of school B commented that the children loved the ISP and enjoyed the different activities. The same LST also mentioned that grade R had a full curriculum; however, it was expected of them to do grade one's work. This meant that grade R teachers were expected to follow the grade R curriculum and also introduce grade one work, such as phonics. Here are their responses:

It's just too much for them. It really is too much and too advanced for a grade R child. The lessons are supposed to be adapted according to CAPS topics, but I did not do that. It is not CAPS related, school A.

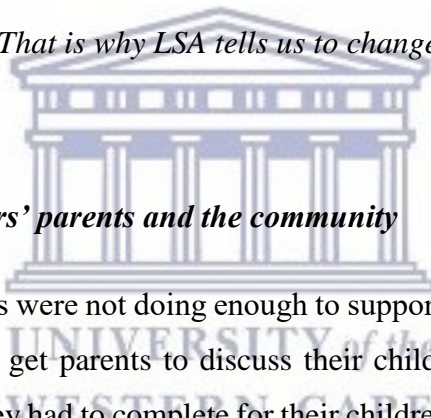
What was good was the children loved Gershwin [a character's name in the programme] and their different stories. The grade Rs has a full curriculum. Ok that is grade R work, but I mean they must do grade one's work also. It [the curriculum] is very full, school B.

4.2.3.11 The involvement of the Education district in the grade R ISP

Both LSTs' mentioned that there was support from the education district. The LSA was the liaising person at the district. The LSTs mentioned that the LSA, supported her and she [LSA] could clarify any queries with LSA. Here are their responses about the involvement of the LSA:

Yes, the district my supervisor. If there was a query then she would clear it, she is the go between to them, school B.

We got the programme from them. That is why LSA tells us to change the programme if need be, school A.



4.2.3.12 The support of the learners' parents and the community

Both LSTs' commented that parents were not doing enough to support their children. The LST of school A mentioned that she struggled to get parents to discuss their children. Some parents had the wrong perception of the documentation they had to complete for their children to get the extra academic support (ISP). They had the wrong idea of what the role of a LST was. The LST reported that parents assumed that there was something drastically wrong with their children and were therefore reluctant to complete the documentation to give consent for their children to participate in the ISP. The other LST (school B) commented that most parents were not interested in their children's academic progress. They did not worry about the children. They informed the parents of their children's progress and had meetings with them individually. Here are responses:

... sometimes you get no support and interest from the parents. I struggle to get parents here to discuss their children. I have meetings with parents. When they get the forms, they have a wrong perception of what my role is and what I do, school A.

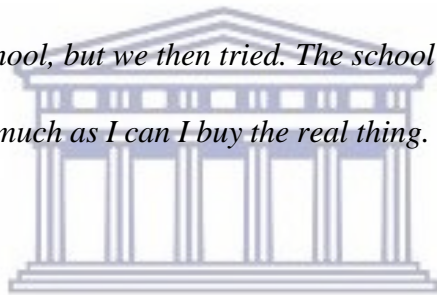
Most of the parents are not really interested in their children. As long as the child is at school. They don't worry about their child. We informed the parents and have a one- on –one with the parents, school B.

4.2.3.13 Resources for LSTs

The LST of school A preferred to use apparatus that learners could identify as the real objects and not pictures included in the ISP. The LST used concrete apparatus that she bought, for example fruit; she had the real fruit and not plastic or pictures. This could be interpreted as her personal choice and it showed much commitment towards the learners and pride in her work. She had enough resources. The LST of school B mentioned that there were many burglaries at school and apparatus was stolen, however the school bought new apparatus. This impacted negatively on the ISP as grade R teachers and learners were without apparatus for some time. Here are their responses:

There were a lot of break-ins at school, but we then tried. The school bought things, school B.

My apparatus is very concrete. As much as I can I buy the real thing. We have enough resources, school A.



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4.2.4 Foundation Phase (FP) Heads of Department (HODs') views related to the ISP

4.2.4.1 The Foundation Phase HODs' awareness of the grade R ISP

The FP HODs of both schools were aware of the ISP in grade R. They knew it was an intervention support programme for learners who were at risk academically. However, they did not know the details of the programme. The HOD of school A commented that they had a new person [curriculum advisor] and that the grade R teachers attended workshops arranged by the education district officials. School A Foundation Phase HOD reported that she had insight about the programme because the LST reported to her. The same HOD also mentioned that learners' skills such as gross motor skills had improved. The ISP learners' language improved even those who could not previously express themselves verbally. The learners expressed themselves better in their own language and were able to answer higher order questions when given a picture to describe. This meant that learners could not only answer "yes" and "no" questions, but could describe and formulate their own opinions.

The HOD of school B mentioned that she would have loved to have observed the ISP being implemented, when it was taught in the grade R class. However, she was also teaching and had no time to observe the ISP lessons. This prevented her from having an opinion concerning the programme. The same HOD teacher felt that workshops presented by the district officials did not always help. She referred to the complaint expressed by one of her grade one teachers that she (the grade one teacher) struggled with her learners. The grade one teacher mentioned to the school B FP H.O.D that she was a former grade R teacher and had the knowledge of what a grade R learner was supposed to know. Formal or informal feedback regarding the ISP was discussed in School Based Support Team (SBST) meetings. This also meant that the learners' needs were discussed by the LSTs and grade R teachers individually as the need arose and in grade meetings as well as SBST meetings. This was done so that information was highlighted for everyone to have insight and to raise awareness of the ISP to all teachers in foundation phase. Here are their responses:

We have a new person [curriculum advisor]. We have workshops [school A].

Yes. Yes, Mrs X [LST] and I always talk about the programme and she and the grade R teachers will keep me updated [school A].

Learners who do not talk and learners who have a weak language use are now talking. They talk more. You can give them a picture and they will be able to answer the higher order questions. Their vocabulary increases tremendously, there is a difference in their vocabulary [school A].

Yes, I know. It's for the learners who are at risk. The learners with barriers. Yes, I have seen it. Not in detail because they implement it when I should be in my class. I am the HOD and I feel that workshops do not help always, but I feel I would have wanted to sit in and see what the intervention programme is all about [B]

I cannot give insight about the programme because I don't know what the programme entails. No, it was informal, but she also mentioned it at the SBST meeting. [School B].

Yes, the previous LST told me about the test and she talked about it. One grade one teacher complained a lot. She has to struggle with the learners because she was a grade R teacher. She knows what they are supposed to know [school B].

4.2.4.2 Foundation Phase HODs' views about factors preventing learners from being successful

Both HODs had many reasons why learners were not successful. Some of the challenges highlighted by the HOD's were the following: poor language skills and physical danger due to the threat of being harmed (school location). The HOD of school A mentioned that some learners did not know their colours, did not do fine motor activities, or did not scribble at home, (meaning drawing lines and handling a writing instrument such as a pencil). The same teacher said she had thirty years of teaching experience and she saw the difference in the learners. Children were not exercising by playing outside so their gross motor skills were under developed because they watched television all the time. The same HOD commented on curriculum issues; she would want them (the LSTs) to add the writing of sentences in grade R and much perceptual development. Children did not play games the way she played when she was a child. What she meant was that when she was a child, she played games in the street that promoted fine and gross motor skills. Nowadays children are prevented from playing freely because of safety considerations. All these aspects could impact negatively on the ISP as this would mean much repetition of the same lessons.

However, the HOD of school A mentioned that because of the ISP, learners were well- trained and she could focus on the learners who needed more practice. What this meant was the teacher regarded the learners who participated in the ISP as ready for grade one learning and she could now give more attention to the learners who had not attended a grade R class or the learners who needed more time to understand formal teaching and learning in grade one. The same HOD highlighted the importance of the ISP because many learners came to grade R with different barriers to learning due to their social context (community from where they came).

The HOD of school A also mentioned that at the beginning of the grade R academic year, the learners did not have a good command of their mother tongue, for example, they lacked the ability and the necessary vocabulary to express themselves verbally. However, they found it easy to express themselves using a mixture of English and Afrikaans or they used the dialect "street language" used by the community in which they reside. This meant that the teacher's job was difficult, because a learner without an understanding of their home language had to be taught the basic vocabulary so that the learner could

build on to their existing language concepts, for example to interpret and follow instructions. The learners' vocabulary has increased because of the ISP.

The HOD of school B mentioned that their school building burnt down in 2014 and that they had to evacuate the school because of the danger of the asbestos roofs which are toxic when damaged. This influenced negatively on teaching and learning as the grade R teachers were directly affected. The HOD also mentioned that learners were passive and were not playing outside due to their safety concerns in the neighbourhood. The same HOD commented that much time was spent on fixing the grade R play area. The principal also commented on this issue.

The same HOD commented that one grade one teacher had noticed some of the learners were not ready for grade one. This could be interpreted that the grade one teacher meant the learners still lacked the skills to grasp grade one work, irrespective of them experiencing the ISP. They however were both positive about the learners who experienced the ISP and praised the programme. The learners who came from home who did not experience grade R, struggled to come to the same level as the others who have experienced the ISP in grade R. The ISP really supported the grade R learner who according to the grade one teacher was ready for their grade one work. Here are their responses:

... they should do fine motor activities and for me, the parents at home does not allow the child to scribble, put a pen and paper in their hands or they did not have books in their hands. I have thirty years of experience and I can see the difference [school A].

They [the learners] talk more. Their vocabulary increases tremendously [school A].

Those children sit in front of the television the whole day. They are not exposed to gross motor. I would want to add writing for grade one... if they could just write five sentences about it. I would give much attention to perceptual development [school A.]

Another reason can be the school. The apparatus is here, but sometimes too much time is spent on that fixing a specific area. I think children are not well developed. In 2014 two classes burnt down. The whole building had to be evacuated because of the danger of the asbestos roofs. They had smaller classes last year [school B].

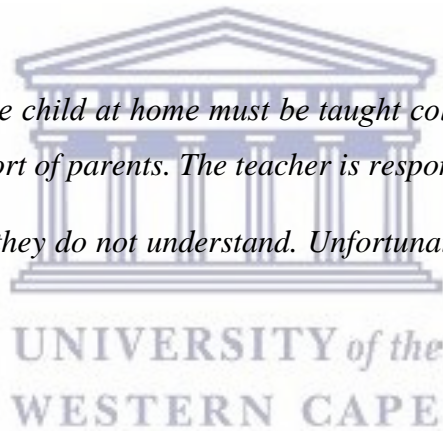
No, I don't know about it. No. Some of the learners are not school ready. That's all I know. The other learners struggled to come be on the same level where the others were because they come from home. They took longer to be where the others were [school B].

4.2.4.3 Parent involvement

The HOD of school A commented that parental support could contribute much to the learners' learning. However, parents did not help their children. However, there were parents who asked for guidance from the grade R class teacher or LST when they did not understand how to support their own children. The HOD of school A mentioned that teachers were responsible for teaching learners most of the things they were supposed to know, for example identifying colours. School B PF HOD commented that one of the biggest challenges was the non- support of parents towards their children's academic progress. The children were not well developed, meaning they struggled with the academics tasks overall. Here is the HODs response:

What's important for me is that the child at home must be taught colours ... One of the biggest things that influence learning is the support of parents. The teacher is responsible for everything [school A].

There are parents who will ask if they do not understand. Unfortunately, there are parents who do not help learners [school B].



4.2.4.4 Resources for grade R teachers

The HOD of school A mentioned that they had a shortage of apparatus in 2014 and teachers bought their own apparatus. The HOD of school B commented that she told the grade R teachers to order apparatus and that they could make their own apparatus. Here are their responses:

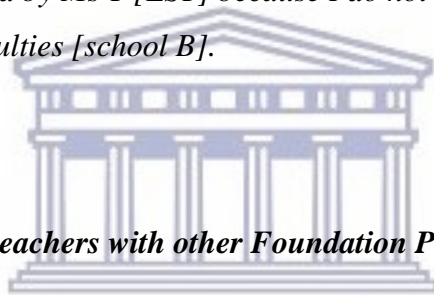
We had a shortage of apparatus last year. Grade R teacher bought of her own money apparatus for children.

I have told them they must order for them. We make our own apparatus also.

4.2.4.5 LSTs and grade R teacher relations

The HOD of school B mentioned that the grade R teachers experienced a difficult year in 2014, for example; there was a fire and a grade R class burnt, but the ISP lifted the grade R teachers' spirits and the LST managed to inspire them to do their best irrespective of difficulties they had experienced. It seemed as if the grade R teachers only had a good relationship with the LST at the school and the LST inspired them to do their best irrespective of them not having a good relationship with the other staff. It was explained previously that the grade R teachers of school B did not have a good relationship with the staff members and principal in 2014. Both grade R teachers of 2014 had since accepted teaching posts at another school. The HOD of school A did not comment. Here is the comment of the PF HOD of school B:

Last year it was a difficult time for both of the grade R teachers, but when they presented the intervention programme, then they were inspired by Ms Y [LST] because I do not think they were inspired to present the programme with all their difficulties [school B].



4.2.4.6 Meetings held by grade R teachers with other Foundation Phase teachers

Both HOD's commented that the other FP class teachers had regular meetings with the grade R teachers. The FP teachers discussed issues concerning factors influencing learning such as pencil grip or posture of the learners (sitting correctly at their work- tables with straight backs). The meetings highlighted the awareness of the ISP. They communicated with each other. Here are their responses:

Our meetings are held once or twice with the whole foundation phase. They also have grade meetings in other words, grade R's have their own meetings and also the other grades.

We have regular meetings where we discuss the correct posture and pencil grip. We communicate a lot with each other.

4.2.4.7 Issues of concern to be addressed in grade R from a FP HOD teacher's perspective

The FP H.O.D of school A confirmed that the grade one teachers at her school mentioned that learners were more prepared to enter grade one and to learn the CAPS. The HOD of school A commented that the teachers understood each other and nothing had to be added to the ISP. However, more perceptual activities could be included in the ISP. The HOD was not specific, in which areas the perceptual development activities could be added, but wanted grade R in general to include more perceptual activities.

The other HOD of school B commented that she did not have much insight in both grade R's CAPS or the ISP, but she would want grade R teachers to pay attention to Math counting included in the ISP. The same HOD had experience in grade one and therefore made the following suggestion concerning Math concepts for grade R to include in their daily activities. She would include toys that stimulated learning for example buying and selling of goods, which enhanced Math concepts. Here are their responses:

I don't have knowledge of their curriculum, but if I were them, I would focus on counting, Maths. They don't focus on Maths, they focus on themes. I would want to see more Maths because that is a problem when learners come to grade one in our school. If I were a grade R teacher, I would take toys that include Maths activities and for example play shop-shop [school B].

It is enough for me as it is for grade R and grade 1. I would give much attention to perceptual development [school A].

4.2.5 Findings related to principals' views of ISP

The principal of school A was not available, but the deputy principal sent an email in response to the interview questions.

4.2.5.1 The awareness and discussions of the ISP

The deputy principal of school A and the principal of school B were aware of the ISP and were informed by the education district and the schools LST's. That was their extent of being aware of the ISP as the

school performances in the ISP were not discussed at principal forums, according to the principal at school B, but at school with the foundation phase teachers.

The ISP was discussed at school level with all the role players affiliated to the ISP. The performance of ISP learners in the previous year indicate the success of the ISP. School A's deputy principal commented that teachers had intervention programmes to support learners and collaborative teaching in classes as well as homework to improve the learners' academic skills. The deputy principal referred to all intervention programmes at this school and did not specifically the grade R ISP.

The deputy principal of school A mentioned that reports were handed in regularly and weak learners were discussed in meetings. The principal of school B commented that it was policy to meet on Fridays. During these meetings, the LST reported what she had done with the grade R learners in her lessons and what she intended to do. There was consistent reporting. The principal of school B was positive about the ISP and mentioned how the writing and ball skills of learners had improved. Here are their responses:

Yes [A].

Yes, I am fully aware. I was informed by the department and LST. No, it is not discussed [B].

Yes, reports are handed in and weak learners are discussed regularly. Yes, we do have regular meeting [A]s.

Teachers worked on weaknesses and parents are called in. Extra homework was given. The LST did collaborative teaching twice week in these classes. Intensive intervention is provided for these learners [school A].

I think the LST showed me the results and there was an improvement. The report showed and the teachers also reported of the success of the programme [school B].

Yes, it is policy at our school that we meet on Fridays. On Fridays she [LST] will enlighten me what they intend doing for the week. What they have done for the week and how they have progressed. So there is constant contact. The programme helped them to write better and improve their ball skills [B].

4.2.5.2 Factors that prevent learners from being successful

The deputy principal of school A and the principal of school B had many reasons as to why learners were not academically successful. The deputy principal of school A confirmed that learners had too many curriculum assessments to complete which resulted in teachers having insufficient time for teaching. Socio-economic challenges caused many learners to come to school with learning barriers. The principal of school B commented that he blamed parents who exposed their children to shebeens and the smoking of “okka pipes”. He reported that the learners knew more about using an okka pipe and what happened at a shebeen during the day and night, than their school homework. Children could not write an essay of the beach, but they [the learners] could explain what happened at a shebeen, (referring to the older learner in the intermediate and senior phase). However, the school B principal praised the ISP that supported teachers to use their time optimally, meaning going the extra mile in supporting learners by implementing the ISP.

The principal of school B mentioned that grade R children were like babies and were playful. It took much discipline and organising skills to keep them occupied. He commented that the ISP helped grade R Teachers with preparing grade R learners for formal teaching and learning. Here are their responses:

Too many assignments, not enough time to really teach [A].

Yes, our socio economic circumstances cause our learners to come to school with a backlog. I would say the socio economic issues and our parents use of the “okka pipe”. Now these children see things and can describe it in the finest detail.... But ask him to write about a day at the beach. Then he can't describe it. Children can tell you extensively what happens at a shebeen because they stay next to it. This programme support learners however and enables teachers to use their time optimally [B].

You must remember these children are still like babies. They come from home and are playful. I see it is tough to work with small children. 30 learners in a class. It takes discipline and organisational skills to keep them busy. And the programme helps the teachers.

4.2.5.3 Principals' views about the ISP learners' performance in the previous year (2014)

The views of the deputy principal (school A) and principal of school B showed that they knew what was going on in the grade R classes and were aware of the curriculum and the ISP. The deputy principal of school A was aware of the ISP learner performance in 2014 and reported that the learners performed well in auditory and gross motor skills because they practiced on the jungle gym (apparatus for grade R learners) regularly. The ISP learners' home language had improved.

The deputy principal (school A) would wish that there were less learners in a class with smaller teacher workloads, having class assistants and more parental involvement in their children's' learning. These views were expressed in general with reference to the foundation phase. The deputy principal made a positive comment that the grade R teachers showed excellent teamwork and everyone had a copy and compact disc of the ISP. He expressed his views about the CAPS that was too advanced for the grade R learner and that the department expected too much of grade R teachers.

The principal of school B also mentioned that there was an improvement in some areas and learners had progressed to grade one. He did not elaborate in which areas of the ISP had learners improved. Learners however still struggled with letter reversals, which was an area of concern. Letter reversals refer to the writing of letters written backwards or upside down. The teachers however worked consistently to improve the learners' handwriting. Children could improve in Maths, especially counting. They showed improvement, but still needed intervention in grade one. The same principal also mentioned that the work speed of the learners was slow. This meant that the learners took long to complete a writing activity. Their cutting skills were also weak, but the ISP improved their ball skills. Ball skill activities are not part of the ISP, however; the LST adapted the ISP and added more ball skills.

The principal of school B commented that he received a copy of the 2014 ISP statistics and had to think back because it happened almost a year ago. He could remember the results of the ISP had improved. This could have been due to the dedication and hard work of the grade R teachers and the LST's. The same principal commented on the LST informing him of the weak gross motor skills of the learners, but their skills had improved after their participation in the ISP. The same principal spoke in general when

he mentioned that he would want a happy learner because happy learners are able to learn. He would want to make his school child- friendly. He would also welcome any Non-Governmental Organisation that was able to render services to the school to support the learners' academic progress. He showed commitment to support learners in any way. The principal had occupational therapists at his school to develop the teachers' skills to support the learners in (2014). Here are their responses:

Learners were good in auditory perception and gross motor skills because they were exposed to practicing on the jungle gym and good exercise apparatus regularly. Home language and vocabulary have improved because learners come to school with a weak or no vocabulary [school A].

Less learners in the class, smaller workload, assistants, more parent involvement [school A]. Excellent teamwork of grade R teachers. Everyone has a copy of the programme and a cd curriculum is too advanced for grade R learner and they [department] expect too much of them [school A].

Yes, I do get a copy. What I have observed is that our results have improved. If I think back quickly because we are speaking of almost a year ago. There was an improvement especially in some areas, but learners who did well progressed to grade one. They still struggle with reversals and that was a big problem, but we worked on it right through the year. Their work speed is also very slow. Maths especially the counting can also improve. There are many learners who come straight from home and have not attended a crèche which makes the teacher's job difficult and it is hard work to get them ready to learn. Although they showed improvement in their work, they still needed intervention in grade one [school B].

I can remember what the LST told me at that time our learners especially the gross motor skills are usually weak, but after the programme it helps a lot. The children always struggle with the cutting. The programme improved their ball skills. Less learners in the class, smaller workload, assistants, more parent involvement. When they play they are happy and when they are happy they will learn while they play. I would like to welcome such resources at the school. I would like to make it child friendly. I told them when the school burnt down this school is our school. Come let's fix it properly. It teaches pride to the learners [school B].

4.2.5.4 Principals awareness concerning ISP feedback from the education district

The deputy principal of school A was skeptical about the contribution made by the education district office and he mentioned that the district arranged workshops, but he was unsure what their contributions

were concerning support to learners. The principal of school B did not comment on this question. Here is the response of the school A deputy principal:

The district avails enough workshops, but what are they really contributing to help our children.

4.2.5.5 Principals' views about support from the community with regard to the ISP

The deputy principal of school A and the principal of school B had negative responses concerning parents and the community. They reiterated the grade R teachers, LST's and HODs' views concerning parents and the community. The deputy principal of school A commented that he had little or no cooperation from the parents. Some of the parents lived in appalling circumstances and were hungry and dirty. Most of the learners were raised by their grandparents. Gangsterism, violence and joblessness had a big impact on the lives of his learners. Learners were also not stimulated at home because there was no money for things like crayons and reading material.

The principal of school B had a problem with parents who were not willing to support the school and if they did, they then expected remuneration for it. They were not helpful. The school was a dumping ground for their children. The school had to telephonically contact parents at times to fetch their children after school. Children were desensitised by gunshots and violence. Consequently, learners did not become anxious when they heard gun shots because they had become used to violence. The principal was of the opinion that parents were in denial of their children being part of the gangs. These factors hampered teaching, learning, and the commitment of their children to succeed. Here are their responses:

No or little cooperation of the parents. Some of them live in appalling circumstances and is hungry and dirty etc. Most of the learners are raised by their grandparents. Gangster, violence and joblessness have a big impact on the progress of our learners. Learners are not stimulated at home because there is no money to buy necessary things like crayons and reading material [school A].

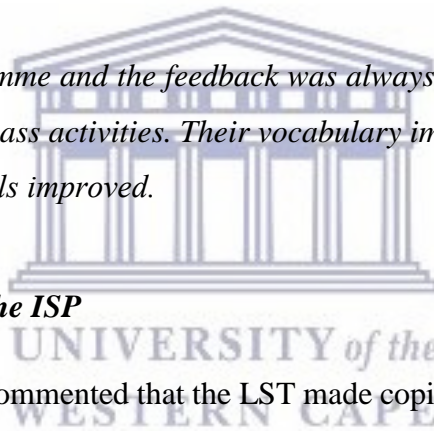
I have a problem with them... I have jungle gym here. So I erected it here, but now I want to paint it. I've received paint from a company. Now I'm asking parents to paint the park yellow and green. I don't get anybody and those parents who wants to be paid. So parents' children are not helpful. Our schools are a dumping ground for parents. They are not really interested in their children. We have to phone them

to come fetch their children. I don't know if they are afraid if someone shoots next to them, it is as if it is the norm. We jump and want to run away, while they stand. They are being hit by bullets and are targeted and then parents say their children are innocent [school B].

4.2.5.6 The principal as the link between teachers and the SMT

School A's deputy principal did not comment on the question. The principal of school B mentioned that the grade R teachers were excited about the ISP and the feedback was positive because the quiet learner joined in and became part of the class activities, their vocabulary improved and they were excited about the lessons. Learners' thinking skills had also improved. The different role players in the ISP worked well together at his school and therefore it was not necessary for him as principal to intervene. Here is his response:

They are excited about the programme and the feedback was always positive because the quiet learner joined in and became part of the class activities. Their vocabulary improved and they are excited about the lessons. Learners' thinking skills improved.



4.2.5.7 Resources with regard to the ISP

The deputy principal of school A commented that the LST made copies of the ISP material for the grade R teachers and that she [the LST] also bought the necessary apparatus. The principal of school B mentioned that the school used the money - allocated for the ISP by the WCED to buy apparatus. The money was also supplemented by fund-raising functions. These statements were consistent with what grade R teachers, LSTs and FP HODs had reported. Here are their comments.

Lessons are made available by LST and she buys the necessary apparatus.

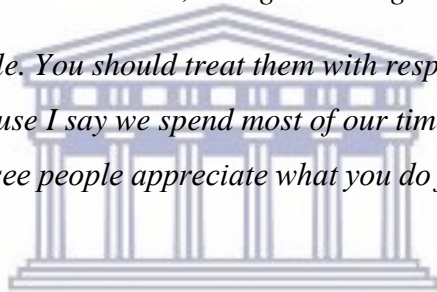
There is enough apparatus available so learners can practice regularly. We use the money that we receive for them. And if we are not at the means to help them then we organize a function for the money.

4.2.5.8 Motivating teachers to be committed to the ISP

The deputy principal of school A commented that he made sure teachers knew the curriculum and had enough learning material. He looked at staff development. It seemed as if the deputy principal of school A focused on the delivery of the CAPS rather than speaking specifically about the ISP. The principal of school B mentioned that as a principal he appreciated people and treated them with respect. The same principal gave the teachers recognition by rewarding them with a braai on a Friday to build team spirit because teachers spent most of their time at their jobs, he commented; so the teachers should be happy. He treated everyone equally. This meant that the principal valued the staff members and treated the teachers with respect and in so doing; he received respect in return. The principal showed support of programmes to enhance learning at school and he also showed commitment towards teachers and learners. Here are their responses:

I make sure that the teachers know the curriculum, enough learning material. I look at staff development.

I believe you must appreciate people. You should treat them with respect. Give recognition to them. I try to make it as easy as possible because I say we spend most of our time at our jobs. We should be happy. Treat everyone the same. You can see people appreciate what you do for them... In such a way you steal their hearts. They give their best.



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4.2.6 The district –based officials’ views about ISP

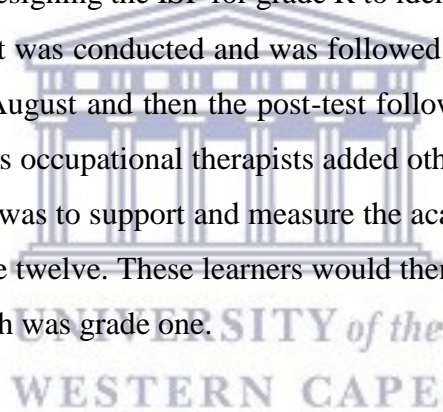
4.2.6.1 Introduction

The two district –based officials that participated in the study were one learner support advisor (LSA) and one deputy chief education specialist of one education district. Both of them had more than twenty years of experience in education. Before working as a deputy chief education specialist (DCES) this district official was a high school teacher and then practiced as an educational psychologist. The LSA taught as a remedial teacher specialising as an auditory skills and language teacher. The LSA served four schools, later two schools giving demonstration lessons and workshops, working as a district-based official.

4.2.6.2 District-based officials' views regarding the origin, rationale and aim of the ISP

The DCES explained that there was a need to improve the pass rate of the grade one learners in the year 2012 (and before), the year when the ISP was piloted with regards to primary schools in the district where there was a high failure rate among grade one learners. These focus schools were then supported by the education district with programmes starting in grade R as a means of improving the academic performance of these Grade R learners so that they had a better chance of making satisfactory progress when they entered grade one. The ISP was thus aimed at Grade R learners as a means of reducing the failure rate in Grade 1 which was shown to be high. The ISP as a turn-around initiative was established to address the failure rate in grade one by providing intervention in grade R with the hope of better preparing learners for grade one.

In the year 2012 the LSAs began designing the ISP for grade R to identify the learners who needed academic support. The ISP pre-test was conducted and was followed by the intervention component of the ISP that lasted from April to August and then the post-test followed in October that year. Later in 2013 and 2014 other people such as occupational therapists added other programmes for LSTs to use to support grade R learners. The aim was to support and measure the academic progress of learners at risk and track their progress up to grade twelve. These learners would then be supported by the LST in their first year of formal schooling which was grade one.



The deputy chief educational specialist also mentioned that it was the focus of the then Head of Education in the WCED, Mrs P Vinjivoldt, who expected from the districts to have a grade R turn-around programme (ISP) in the year 2012. It was not pressure, but a guide to where the education district's focus should be for the year and it was included in the district's improvement plan, just as schools have improvement plans.

The LSA had a different view concerning the ISP and commented that the ISP originated with a few LSTs and a speech therapist who thought of writing an ISP for grade R learners at risk. Despite the programme being reviewed, the changes that were made to the programme, it is still relevant today in schools. The LSA explained that fifteen years ago they [then as LSTs] worked in different schools in

urban and a rural parts of a town outside the Cape Metropole where they found that learners had listening and language barriers as well as poor vocabulary. They saw the need and acted to make a difference when they went to the schools twice a week. They developed a programme to address the identified barriers and that programme was adapted to form the ISP. This was reiterated by the education specialist who commented that the programme was designed and initiated by the head of learning support (education specialist) and a team of learning support advisors who supported the development of this assessment tool and programmes which were then piloted at certain schools by LSTs. The LSA reported that they [then LST's] would do a demonstration lesson followed by a scheduled pre-planned lessons for the teacher to follow for the four remaining school days of the week. The LSA's attended schools once per week and some schools twice per week. The LSAs could immediately gauge if the programme had been implemented by the LSTs with the learners when they visited the schools the following week or if the programme had been consolidated by the class teacher because they would pose questions to the learners to check if the learners were aware of the ISP concepts that would have been covered by the LSTs and the grade R teachers. So it was the initiation of the then LST's and a qualified speech therapist who started the ISP. The LSA gave a brief description of how the programme was initiated.

The education specialist added that the learning support teachers needed to teach and train the grade R teachers how to teach for example auditory perception as it was part of their job description. The LST's and grade R teachers were the custodians of the programme. The LSA had an input in the creative side of the programme, found suitable pictures for the stories and added some humour into the story because it was too short. The DCES reiterated this comment as she implied that it was designed by the Education District who also initiated this programme with the support of the head of learning support, herself and the LSAs. Here are their responses:

Our criteria to determine them [grade one repeaters] would be the schools with the highest grade one failures learners. Those focus schools were then targeted and our aim was to improve the early performance of children's level of grade one. So we started off with grade R's and we first designed an instrument to be able to identify which learners in the schools are at risk.... You see, we have High School Intervention Programme project, which is the grade twelve project in our district where we do research of our high schools that are under performing... Now that project of improving the pass rate of grade twelve is directly linked to the grade R project. [DCES]

... because it is the foci of our SG, Mrs P. Vinjivoldt, she expects from the district to have a grade R and one Turn-around programme. It's not pressure, but I think it guides us to what our foci should be for the year and that very much made it part of our plans for the district, improvement plan as schools have improvement plans. [DCES]

It was a LST that time were all LST's. And she also was a speech therapist qualified and she said. It was her idea. Let's get together and start a programme. We were 1,2,3,4 LST's. ...about fifteen years ago we started working more than just our two school in Paarl. We worked in different schools on town in rural areas everywhere. What we found was that all the learners had a listening problem, listening skills problem as well as language problems especially vocabulary.... We also knew that we need to consolidate the auditory skills, listening skills, otherwise you won't make a difference. Twice a week is a little bit not enough. That's exactly how it started [LSA]]

Turn-around project was a priority project for the district and therefore we started off by identifying the poor performing schools. Our criteria to determine them would be schools with the highest grade one failures. [DCES]

We will do the first demo lessons and then we will work out for the teacher exactly what she must do for the next four days. And so we would come, but some schools we could go once or twice. So the teacher also had her homework to do. So that throughout the week consolidation would take place that time already. It was a (LST) that time we were all LST's. And she also was a speech therapist qualified and she said. It was her idea, let's get together and start a programme. What happened in 2012 was just a trial and error. We really started in 2013 after June I think [LSA].

The LSA's would go back and monitor that implementation has happened. At my level I coordinate and manage the whole component. I made sure that the LSA's did their task of monitoring [deputy head education specialist. [DCES]

We were all part of giving ideas brainstorming ideas ... finding pictures for the story, trying to put more humour. I was part of thinking out ideas... it was designed by the district North, I initiated it and the head of learning support and I have a team of learning support advisors who all contribute to the development of these tools as well as the programme and our LSE's, they were the instruments to take it to the classrooms. [LSA]

4.2.6.3 The support for learners who were at risk academically

The DCES reported that identified ISP learners participated in the ISP as a means of getting extra learning support from the LST. They were withdrawn and such support was provided in the LSTs class. The LST also supported the entire grade R classes through collaborative (whole class) teaching. Those ISP learners who did not improve, irrespective of their participation in the ISP, would then be tracked and supported by the LST the following year when they were in grade one. The LSA did not comment on this question. Here is the DCES's response:

... the post-test assessment which was to gauge if learners did not improve and those who did not improve, we would like to do tracking with them to see which of the learners in grade one will be at risk. Those learners would then be supported in their first year at school by our learning support teachers at those schools who have their names from day one. [DCES]

4.2.6.4 The design and lay-out of the ISP

The LSA reported the following. The ISP consisted of a short story based on a grade R boy and his friend, an ant. The ISP consisted of a song, progressive auditory perceptual concepts, progressive counting, language concepts built into the story and also gross motor activities. The following issues related to the ISP were addressed according to the LSA: themes guided the grade R ISP according to the CAPS, and this theme-based ISP gradually progressed not only focussing on the language aspects, but also in auditory, visual, and gross and fine motor concepts. The ISP was based on concepts of the CAPS. Progression was built into the auditory skills according to the themes of the week. The programme began with a story that was short, about five minutes long. The lesson ought not to be longer than fifteen minutes to prevent it from becoming too time-consuming. Contact time (teaching time) was also taken into consideration. This meant that the ISP could not take much of the grade R learners' time, as there was a curriculum to complete. The attention span and focusing of the learners were also taken into consideration in the delivery of the ISP lessons. According to the LSA, the design of the ISP took two school terms to complete. They (LSAs) had to produce a compact disc of songs for the programme and they brainstormed ideas as to how they could make this programme more child friendly and also maintaining the attention of the grade R learners. The DCES did not comment on the aspects of the ISP. Here is the LSA's responses:

... all the themes guided the programme of grade R to go according to the curriculum because we wanted to help the learners to have the vocabulary... to work in the classroom, so that was our point of departure and also progression. We took the auditory skills, progression like hierarchy lessons according to the theme of the week. We started a story because we thought we believed at starting with a concept most of the lessons and we kept it very, very short because we didn't want it to be time consuming, fifteen minutes. So that it didn't take too much during contact time of the teacher with the kids. We also took the focus and the attention span of the learners into consideration. [LSA]

It was long. Then one of the ladies had to do the cd part. That also must have taken time, two terms. [LSA]

4.2.6.5 Inclusion of other role players with regards to the ISP

The LSA remarked that because the LSTs used the ISP often, they were allowed to adapt the programme as the need arose. The district had not given the LSAs sufficient time to familiarise themselves with the programme since it was important for the ISP to be launched as soon as possible after it was designed. The LSA regarded this decision as impacting negatively on the ISP. This could be interpreted as not being satisfied with the amount of time to either add more activities or revise the standard programme to suit the needs of the learners who were at risk and needing more time with the ISP to do this. Here is the response of the LSA. The DCES did not answer this question.

Because the LST uses it more, the advice is to change it where needed. Grade R curriculum advisors definitely. They [district] didn't give us time. We just had to jump in and do something. So that's definitely a negative. ... the positive again is that the teacher herself can adapt. ... no programme can be implemented just as it is. You have to adapt according to the learners' needs. [LSA]

4.2.6.6 The constant review of the ISP

According to the DCES it was important that the ISP be reviewed at the end of each year to rate the success or failure of the programme. Also to identify reasons for the ISP being successful or not, and to standardise the programme for a more valid evaluation of the performance across schools. This was done

with statistics of the pre- and post- test results because the statistics gave a clear indication of how the ISP learners had progressed and where they could improve. Meetings were held with all LSAs and LSTs to discuss what worked and where to improve the ISP. The LSAs monitored the success of the ISP by considering different factors that may have contributed to the performance of learners at the different schools. These factors included: (1) The competence of the particular grade R teacher and (2) Some grade R teachers may have repeated the same ISP lessons with learners that the LSTs taught which allowed learners more opportunities to improve their skills. The LSAs came to visit the LSTs regularly to discuss the ISP with the grade R teachers to hear what they thought of the programme and if learners were gaining knowledge. When the LSA used this programme as a LST previously, she noticed that the learners had presented with the same challenges through the years especially in the areas of auditory and languages skills. However, despite the ISP being reviewed learners still presented with these problems. According to the LSA, the LST could administer the programme to suit the needs of the learners. It depended on the needs of the school. The LSA added that one does not implement a programme just as it is, but had to adjust it to suit the identified needs of the learners.

The existing components of the ISP were altered to meet the needs of the learners at risk. For example, all the LSTs received the same puzzle used at the pre- and post- test. Extra lessons (another programme) was also designed concerning fine motor skills and new cutting and writing skills by a skillful LST, with experience in pre- grade R teaching. These were extra activities that the LSTs could use in the grade R classes together with the ISP. This programme (extra lessons) was CAPS- curriculum related and included in the Grade R lessons that the LSTs delivered to enhance the grade R learners' learning.

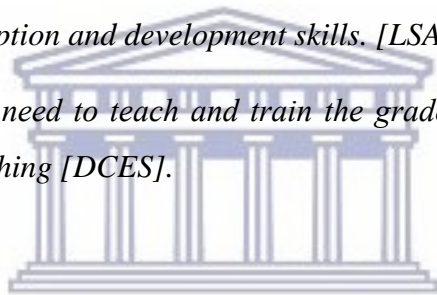
The DCES commented that all LSTs used the same ISP covering auditory perception, gross and fine motor skills, visual perception and language development skills. The LSAs guided and supported the LST's who implemented the programme correctly. The occupational therapists also initiated and supported another intervention programme with fine and gross motor skills, posture and visual perception activities called the Stimulation programme to be used with the ISP. There were other extra programmes that were well developed and used by the grade R teachers and the LSTs. The DCES commented that she monitored the ISP by meeting with the LSAs who reported to her directly concerning the implementation of the ISP. Here are their responses:

Yes, absolutely, each year at the end of the year, it's very important to analyse the results, to see whether the programmes have improved or not and to find the reasons why children have not improved. ... why the support programmes were not successful. To have a look what happened in the classrooms. To evaluate the ability of the teachers of their knowledge skills and training. So all of that is taken into account and then we take from that to guide our future interventions at our schools. [DCES]

... again the pre- test identified the same problem as many years ago....so definitely auditory and language.... Extra that came with the motor and fine skills programme from the OT. The writing and cutting skills like our LST who worked with learners from pre- grade also Because that's not written in the curriculum, so now we have a holistic approach... you can't implement any programme as it is. You have to adapt the programme, the needs identified. [LSA]

I think the success of the programme was the fact that everyone who rendered support received the same programme. I'm talking about the LSE's we handed them for instance a support programme. We handed the programmes on auditory perception and development skills. [LSA]

Yes, the learning support teacher need to teach and train the grade R teacher as well. It's their job description to do training and teaching [DCES].



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4.2.6.7 The ISP in relation to the CAPS

The LSA mentioned that it was important that they (LSAs) developed topics in the ISP to coincide with the themes of CAPS. The choice of topics was therefore guided by CAPS. However, the LSTs were allowed to adapt and compile their own topics that coincided with the week's lessons and address the needs of the learners of what the grade R teacher spoke about. This meant they could change the ISP as the need arose.

The DCES differed in her opinion and gave her reasons concerning the CAPS. The deputy chief education specialist mentioned that there was nothing wrong with the curriculum, it was how the teacher interpreted it and how it was implemented. The stress of meetings targets, and rushing through the assessments, may have caused the grade R teachers not to effectively cater for the needs of all learners all the time. In this process, learning was jeopardised. It was the teacher's responsibility to focus on consolidating the work before moving on. The DCES could have misunderstood the question thinking,

according to teachers; CAPS was to blame for the poor performance of learners in grade R. Here is the response of the LSA and DCES:

... and off course that time we took the topic, the themes of the grade R and we worked round the themes at that time. Ok, we just didn't take it. We went according the curriculum. Ja, it was curriculum related. They did their own stories according to the topic of the week. And whatever needs the teacher spoke to them about. [LSA]

There is nothing wrong with the curriculum. It's how it is interpreted and how it is applied. If you hunt down targets only and rush through the curriculum just to complete all those many, many assessments tasks, you losing the child. You have to focus on the child, consolidating the work before moving on and rushing. So the curriculum is fine it's the way it's implemented. [DCES]

4.2.6.8 Reasons for difference in school performance with regards to the ISP

The LSA had conducted her own research and commented in general pertaining to the performance of learners in the ISP and came to the conclusion that there were different factors that influenced the ISP results. These were: (1) learners from English-speaking parents did better than those of Afrikaans-speaking parents. The LSA came to the conclusion that in the same community, English-speaking parents were more caring with regards to the education of their children. The performance in the programme of these children mentioned above, was better even though English was not actually their first language, especially with regards to the auditory and language skills of the English learners. According to the LSA, the interest shown by English-speaking parents in the children's academic progress, probably was one of the reasons for these learners performing well in the post-test. (2) The LSA mentioned that the success of the ISP could also have been influenced by particular grade R teachers who repeated the same ISP lessons taught by the LST to grade R, so this repetition of the lessons provided learners more opportunity for developing their skills and knowledge. Or (3) being an effective grade R teacher; resulting in academically good grade R learners. This could have had a huge impact on the results of the programme. (4) Another reason for differences in the results of the schools with regard to the ISP could be the manner in which each of the two LSTs respectively planned and administered the post-test. One LST may have been more lenient or strict than the other when conducting the post-test in the degree of latitude that was allowed when evaluating learners' responses for correctness. The

differences in performances between the two schools could also have been influenced by the difference in how each of the LSTs had structured the post-test. Thus, as is usually the case with assessment, there was an element of subjectivity in the planning, administration and scoring of the ISP post-test which influenced learner performances when comparing the scores of the two schools under focus.

The DCES commented to add validity to the ISP the same pre- and post-test was used. The tools of the assessment were the same. All the LSAs used the same assessment tool. The puzzles were also the same compared to previously, when different puzzles were used which may have impacted negatively on the validity of the programme previously. Absenteeism of learners during the post assessment was also regarded as a weakness in the project, but was dealt with. To address the issue of learner absenteeism, the LSTs had to encourage Grade R teachers to remind learners constantly not to stay absent during the post-test. According to the DCES, a learner who was absent in the post-test resulted in an incomplete statistic. Grade R teachers were requested to ensure that learners were present for the post-test and were encouraged to phone the parents to ensure that their children attended school for the post test. The LSA commented that the LSAs in the education district also had informal discussions about how to improve the validity of the ISP should it be necessary. For example, they discussed how every LST interpreted and used the ISP in their respective classes. The LSA did not elaborate on validity concerns. Here are their comments:

..we have the same pre-and post-test assessment. ... the support tools used in the assessment are the same. ... everyone has the same puzzles for the pre- and post-test assessment. ... many children were absent. ... that was actually a weakness. It was taken back to the educators. So we call it recovery strategies. [DCES.]

... we sit down and discuss informally how we can collaborate and improve what our challenges are that we are experiencing. [LSA]

4.2.6.9 Comparison of learner performance in schools who had used the ISP vs. those who had not

The LSA had no conclusive evidence about the performance of Grade R learners at schools that did not follow the programme. Two of the twelve schools being supervised by the LSA did not follow the ISP.

The LSTs all had training pertaining to the implementation of the ISP and the stimulation programme (a separate OT programme). They incorporated the skills learned at workshops of the programme and how to use the language and auditory programme. The LSA also mentioned that if the grade R teacher was smart, the ISP results improved. Thus there were no conclusive evidence that schools who did not follow the ISP, had better or weaker results than those who had used the ISP. Here is the response: The DCES did not comment.

So I don't know if you want to add that of my twelve schools, two did not follow the programme. ... they had training about the programme, the skills, they could implement the same activities that are in intervention programme because they also did the stimulation programme. They also did the language and auditory training workshops. So they incorporated all of that in their own way. When you have an excellent grade R teacher the results will also improve anyway. [LSA]

4.2.6.10 Parental involvement in the ISP programme

The LSA remarked that parents were included in a programme the previous year (2014). This may have meant that the LSA referred to another parent programme. The LSA echoed that parent involvement was of the utmost importance. The ISP commenced late the previous year and it did not include homework for parents. The LSA thought that it would be more significant if learners could get homework pages with parents supporting them. It would help tremendously, because learners tended to forget what they have learned in the December school holidays. In this way, learners would remember what have been taught in class, in the previous year, especially the auditory skills, reasoning, the vocabulary and the motor skills. A homework programme as a continuation of the programme would be ideal.

The DCES spoke in general and commented that there were different support capacity-building programmes offered by the education district officials to parents. The psychologists, social workers, LSAs and the curriculum component; the Institutional Manager and Governance (IMG), all of presented different workshops for parents. These programmes were presented collaboratively by the different officials. There was an Emergent Literacy and Numeracy parental programme that supported and trained parents, even fathers; in making and designing their own learner support materials at home. There was a mommy reading programme project where mothers came to school to read to learners to develop the

learners' language skills. The mothers also supported teachers in class by reading to a group of learners while the teacher was busy with other learners in the class. The social workers had a programme where community workers (mothers) taught other mothers how to cook nutritional meals, talked about the dangers of consuming alcohol during pregnancy, as well as implementing discipline at home and nurturing the emotional well-being of children. Here are their responses:

Parental involvement started only last year as you know. Parental involvement is so important. We started early, but I must say this programme does not have specific parental homework.... If you give the end of grade R a little fun way to the parents to do with the kids in the holiday, to help carry on with the auditory skills and the reasoning and the vocabulary and the motor if one can work out. ... they seem to forget everything they have learned. [LSA]

Yes, we have many parental programmes. We provide support material and also training for parents. How to best support children at home in emergent literacy and numeracy by making and designing their own support material. We train them. Even fathers come along. We've got a very robust programme running. The social workers as well as the LSA's support, even the curriculum component, the IMG, the institutional management component. We even have a mommy reading project. They are reading mummies who come to support the teacher in classrooms. We teach them how to make soup. How to avoid colourants in food. ... the social workers talk about emotional well-being of a child, it's a huge programme. [DCES]



4.2.6.11 Districts-based officials' views about the performance in the ISP by the two schools under focus in 2014

The LSA was unsure about how the two schools under focus had performed in the ISP in the previous year; but was of the view that both schools could have performed well, irrespective of where they were located. She knew that much was done in the grade R classes. She mentioned that children of school A may have been more traumatised by the violence in the area than school B, although the schools were in the same area. Theft has been a major concern recently in school A. School B was more peaceful, steady and stable with regards to break-ins however, many break-ins had been reported and more trauma at school recently (after 2014). The DCES did not elaborate further in relation to the ISP results of the two schools. Here is the response:

...I know there is much they do with grade R children. Although it's in the same area, maybe the children are more traumatized, they are not in the same area close, only now this year has there been more theft and things like that. School B was more stable and all of a sudden this year it has changed. Break-ins. There's more trauma. [LSA]

4.2.6.12 Factors that militated against the success of the ISP

The DCES observed that there were many interrelated factors that militated against the success of the ISP. These factors include the learners and parents' life styles, diet and parental skills. Children also did not play as often as they ought to have played; instead they spent too much time viewing television. They sat in front of the television. Children were kept indoors for various reasons that hampered the development of a child. Their health and their diet negatively affected the learners' academic progress. Parents did not commit to the education of their children. Parents thought it was the school's responsibility to educate their children. Children were not stimulated to read books. Poverty, violence, different forms of abuse and trauma had a huge influence on children. Teachers who were not committed in teaching to the best of their ability, and were often absent; also contributed to unsatisfactory learner progress. The DCES remarked that research identified many reasons for learners not performing well academically and that they were all interwoven into one another. A few of these reasons were: teachers not properly trained how to teach effectively, poverty, violence, abuse, absenteeism of teachers and many more reasons. Here is the DCES's response.

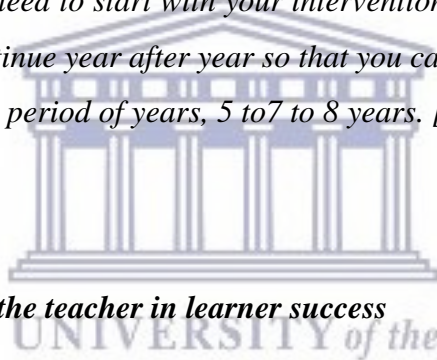
There are a multitude of reasons. They are all interwoven into one another. It's all of them contributing together. . . children do not play Often it's a case of not being safe, they keep their children indoors which is not right developmentally. ... health of children, their diet, rubbish food. ... parents who not committed in education of their children. Children do not have books. Parents can't read, ... great poverty ..., violence, ... abuse, ... poor teachers, not committed, under teach, often absent, late coming. ... teachers that are not properly trained. [DCES]

4.2.6.13 *The compulsory use of the ISP in all grade R classes*

The DCES commented that the ISP would definitely be used to further research purposes, to track learners' progress and that the ISP would run for five to seven more years. The DCES was of the view that the ISP would be made compulsory for implementation in the Western Cape schools. Here is the response:

... a similar programme to this programme... but the fact that it already is there is such an advantage because it has been tested and tried already. Western Cape should have a pre –and post-test assessment over all the districts in all the schools we applied. But I believe it is coming. So we'll be happy to follow what is implemented [LSA].

Compulsory, absolutely yes, if you want to influence. That's what we do in our district. If you give schools a choice, then you can't do research. You got to have a group of schools that were identified as a foci schools for the year and then you need to start with your interventions, pre- and- post assessments and once you have that you should continue year after year so that you can do learner tracking. You need to take your intervention plans over a period of years, 5 to 7 to 8 years. [DCES]



4.2.6.14 *The central role of the teacher in learner success*

Both district officials mentioned that commitment to work lies with the class teacher. The DCES commented on good leaders who were committed and who acted as role models and who showed a positive attitude. To her, a committed teacher is a well- trained teacher, who has a passion for her work who wanted to see learners succeed. Irrespective of the poor disadvantaged child, success lies in the hands of the teacher. The DCES also mentioned that teachers should be excited and remain positive in their teaching. The LSA felt strongly that if a teacher was not committed, not caring if learners could not read or write, the teacher would not have the potential to nurture success in the learner. Here are their responses:

I think and believe the leader has to be committed. She needs to be a role model. To be excited to remain positive. To believe we can make a difference. It's an attitude thing, but it's the leaders who need to be taking the torch and say we cannot give and throw that sea star back into the sea. ... the biggest factor lies within the class. If you have a committed teacher whose well trained, who knows what to do, who

has a passion for her work who loves their children who wants to see them succeed who works very hard.
[DCES]

The key is the teacher. If there's a very poor teacher not working, not committed, not caring for the children at all. It is the capacity of the teacher to unlock the potential of a child. That's the golden key.
[LSA]

4.2.6.15 Resources for the ISP

The DCES commented that money was spent on apparatus for the educators and workshops to empower them, rather than food at workshops. The DCES claimed that she knew what teachers needed. The LSA mentioned a positive aspect concerning this programme that LSTs did not need much apparatus; the only instrument that was costly was the compact disc player for the songs if the LST was not able to sing the songs. Here are their responses:

... we know exactly what teachers need. Use my money on something to supply the teachers with eats then they tummies are full. They have nothing to take to their classes. ... Support you with material and train you how to use that material. [DCES]

This is the positive of this programme. You don't need much to be resourceful and if you don't have a cd player, I think that's the only instrument that could cost money and if you are not able to sing because the tunes we chose are songs are brilliant. I think are songs that most teachers know, old songs. That is also a positive. [LSA]

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the study and thematised the data collected from the different groups of participants who played different roles in the design and implementation of the ISP. The participants also represented different post levels within the hierarchical framework of the Metro North Education District. The findings highlighted factors that facilitated the successful implementation of the ISP as well as those that militated against its design and implementation. The next chapter further synthesises the findings and discusses the findings in relation to the study's theoretical framework and relevant literature.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings of the current study. This chapter discusses the findings by answering the study's two research questions in relation to previous studies. It seeks to explore the factors that contributed to the success and the factors that militated against the implementation of an ISP in two schools in the same socio economic area with different results as indicated by the post-test statistics.

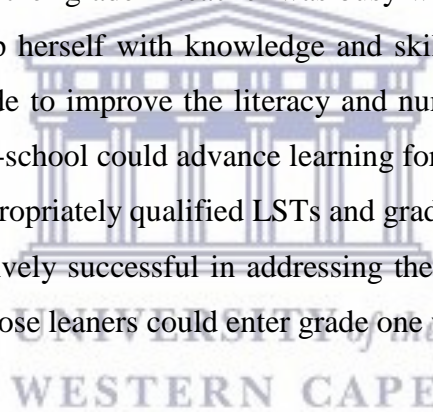
5.2 Discussion of the findings under each of the research questions

5.2.1 Research question one: What were the factors that facilitated the implementation of the Grade R ISP at two primary schools?

A number of factors were identified that supported the implementation of the ISP at two primary schools under focus. These comments were supportive of Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) where it states that it is important that every child be school-ready for further development to minimise the gap and for every child to reach their full potential (see Chapter 2, section 2.1 of this document). The ISP seemed to achieve this Education White Paper 6 aim in terms of the following factors which was identified as facilitating the implementation of the Grade R ISP at the two schools under focus, namely: the qualification and work experience of the Grade R teachers and LSTs as implementers of ISP, the grade R teachers' attitude and commitment towards teaching grade R learners, designers and implementers' overall views about the ISP, the crucial role played by the LSTs in the implementation of the ISP, the involvement of the HODs as well as the community and parents regarding the ISP, the support received by the district-based officials regarding the implementation of the ISP, the annual review of the ISP and adapting the ISP to suit local learning and teaching contexts of the schools under focus. Each factor will be discussed next.

5.2.1.1 Qualifications and work experience of the grade R teachers and LSTs as implementers of the ISP

All the grade R teachers had the necessary qualifications and experience. This was a positive factor with regard to ISP implementation because it is important that pre-school teachers be supported with ongoing guidance so that they develop their ability to apply and integrate knowledge in practice. An imperative component is the support of mentors who have demonstrated success in teaching and reading (Snow, Burns and Griffins, 1998). All the grade R teachers had a qualification in early child development and teaching experience in grade R of more than four years. The importance of appropriate qualifications is emphasized by van der Berg (2012) who mentions that grade R teachers should have the necessary qualification to work effectively. The LSTs had more than twenty years' experience in the foundation phase and more than two years as LSTs. They were all eager to gain more knowledge concerning their workload; one grade R teacher even suggested the district officials empower them with knowledge to be more skillful in their roles and another grade R teacher was busy with further studies in a Bachelor of Education Honours to better equip herself with knowledge and skill-set. According to van der Berg (2011) every effort should be made to improve the literacy and numeracy inequality starting in early childhood. One year of quality pre-school could advance learning for poorer children who start primary school at a disadvantage. With appropriately qualified LSTs and grade R teachers supporting each other with the ISP tool, they were relatively successful in addressing the literacy and numeracy challenges faced by the ISP learners so that those learners could enter grade one with more confidence.



5.2.1.2 The grade R teachers and LSTs attitude and commitment towards teaching in grade R

All the grade R teachers and LSTs were passionate about their work and expressed commitment. Although commitment cannot be measured directly as suggested by Stofile (2008); it adds success to implementing a programme, as experienced with the ISP where both groups of implementers (grade R teachers and LSTs) were motivated and could critically reflect on content knowledge from an experienced point of view. According to Avramidas, Bayliss and Burden (2000) teachers show commitment towards the end of a programme as they gain more knowledge concerning their work, after they have gained mastery of the programme. According to Avramidis and Norwich (2002), the key element in the successful implementation of a programme is the views of the teachers who implement it. Their beliefs and attitudes are critical in confirming the success of inclusive practices and it affects their

commitment to implement it. The same authors have also come to the conclusion that teachers who cater for special needs learners have a more positive attitude towards learners.

5.2.1.3 Designers and implementers' overall views about the ISP

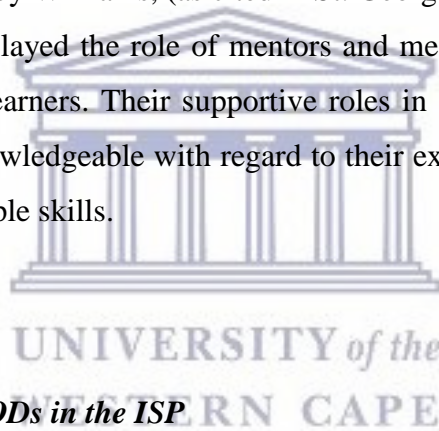
Generally, all school- based as well as district -based officials that participated in the study were in favour of the ISP and were of the view that it made a positive difference in the academic progress of the grade R learners despite different concerns raised by some of the participants. The HODs justified their positive views of the ISP because they were grade one teachers and observed the difference between children who had experience of the ISP and those who did not with regard to academic readiness and progress in grade one. The grade R teachers supported and praised the ISP because they knew it was filling the gaps with strategies to support the curriculum CAPS. The LSA, district official was positive about the ISP, because the feedback from the LSTs and grade R teachers were positive. These findings align with the statement made by (Guralnick, 1998) that there is an urgent advocacy movement on behalf of vulnerable children suggesting that they be supported early during the first few years of life, especially those children who are at risk. The National Association for the education of young children, (2005) recommends a programme with a set of assumptions, values, and beliefs that would be most effective to support young children with various opportunities to learn and develop.

5.2.1.4 The crucial role played by the LSTs in the implementation of the ISP

The role played by the LSTs was reported to be positive in different ways. These ways included, positive collaboration between the LSTs and the Grade R teachers both in terms of Grade R teachers observing LSTs teaching ISP lessons as well as the LSTs having regular meetings with grade R teachers about the academic challenges experienced by learners. In this manner, there was a team effort in implementing the ISP with the LST playing a mentoring, supportive and also a liaising role to Grade R teachers, HODs and principals. The grade R teachers were seemingly not intimidated by the LSTs and had excellent work ethic. Both groups had experience in learning support which brought about a passion for what they were doing. Good mentorship and good collaboration by the LSTs, applied to both schools. There is value in promoting a collaborative model of teacher's work, creating occasions for teacher growth and

development state (Mills & Gale, 2010). Peer observation of practice is regarded as different types of collaborative learning activities, according to (Caena, 2011). Teachers' learning can be enhanced when there is combined involvement and communication between teachers. Teachers have a powerful understanding of subjects they teach when there are opportunities for shared observation, co-planning and co-teaching as well as presenting, (Caena, 2011). It gives them a sense of empowerment as decision-makers.

As Williams (2016) mentions that a mentor affects our lives and is mostly family members and teachers. Mentors serve as guides and advisors. Being in a class for many years in education, a teacher is able to have wisdom and knowledge. This is a mentor's foundation. The process of mentoring supports a teacher's growth as a professional in the classroom and as a person through the auspices of an experienced teacher as mentioned by Williams, (as cited in St. George & Robinson, 2011). Similarly, in the current study, the LSTs also played the role of mentors and mediators between teachers (HODs), principals, district officials, and learners. Their supportive roles in grade R had much to do with the success of the ISP. They were knowledgeable with regard to their experience of the Foundation phase, the ISP and also had excellent people skills.

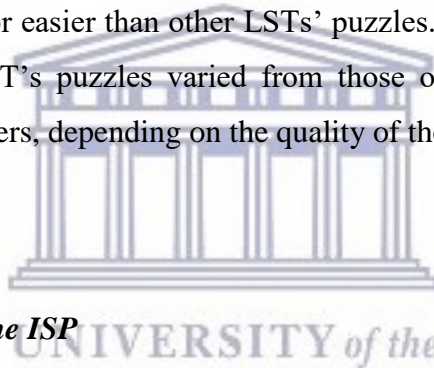


5.2.1.5 The involvement of the HODs in the ISP

The HODs supported the grade R teachers; however, they were not directly involved in the implementation of the ISP. They morally supported the grade R teachers, but did not have any insight in the ISP as such. The HODs praised the ISP because they could see the positive effect it had on learners who had progressed to grade one. Consequently, according to the HODs, because of the effective preparation of learners for grade one due to the ISP; this meant that the grade one teachers had more time to focus on those learners in grade one who had previously not attended grade R and therefore needed much support.

5.2.1.6 Support received by the district- based officials regarding the implementation of the ISP

According to Yanez as cited in Marope and Kago (2015), it is important to explain standards and monitor current programmes. The district-based LSA had a monitoring role to fulfil and regularly met with the LSTs, grade R teachers and also spoke to the principals to address any concerns regarding the ISP. To support measures of quality with programme goals, it is important to convey guidelines to confirm quality. Valuation tools must be age fitting for the age range of children studied and the type of childhood programme (Zaslow et al. as cited in Marope &Kago, 2015). The LSA reported to her immediate superior, the Deputy Chief in Education Specialist (DCES) regarding any issues related to the ISP such as ensuring uniform implementation across schools. For example, the same puzzles were given to all LSTs so that all the learners build the same puzzle to eliminate any ambiguity. This ensured that there was uniform implementation and quality control across the programme. Previously the LSTs used their own puzzles for learners, which did not give a true reflection of the learners' capabilities as some puzzles may have been more challenging or easier than other LSTs' puzzles. Prior to the standardization of the intervention programme, each LST's puzzles varied from those of the others; either marginalising learners or promoting certain learners, depending on the quality of the different puzzles.



5.2.1.7 Annual formal review of the ISP

At school level the ISP was constantly reviewed and modified to suite the specific learning contexts. This was done through interaction by the grade R teachers and LSTs. There were also annual formal reviews that took place at the end of each year with the district-based officials and LSTs. The LSTs provided feedback from the schools to the LSAs'. The revisions to the ISP were implemented in the following year. The ISP was reviewed annually to make it more valid to use. This insured that there was uniform implementation, uniformity and quality control across the programme. The DCES was the LSA's manager. After the LSTs reported any matters of concern regarding the ISP, to the LSAs, the LSAs met with the DCES and discussed how the ISP could be improved. For example, the review resulted in the use of the same puzzles at all schools implementing the ISP to ensure the same cognitive challenge was posed by the puzzle to ISP learners for the purposes of ensuring similar standards of implementation. The following persons Nation, Crusto, Wandersman, Kumpfer, Seybolt, Kane and Davino, (2003) have researched the reviews of prevention programmes. They came to the conclusion that when implementing prevention programmes, the reviewing of such programmes was associated with

effective prevention of problems that children face. This comment links to the ISP above where it was necessary to review it annually.

5.2.1.8 Adapting the ISP to suit local learning and teaching contexts of the schools

There was a chain of reporting. School-based officials, especially LSTs and grade R teachers identified challenges with regard to the ISP content and reported to the LSA. The LSA reported to her superior, the (DCES). LSTs were at liberty to change the ISP to suit the needs of the grade R learners as was advised by the LSA. The LSTs could adapt the ISP. The grade R teachers were at liberty to revise the ISP when observing that learners needed more consolidation. For example, when learners did not grasp certain concepts such as listening to different sounds and recognising it, the teacher repeated the lesson to consolidate the listening concept. Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009) researched a similar research project where a group of teachers did their own research with regard to subject-based programmes to enhance the curriculum from the internet. This led to an improvement in their teaching and resource base. In the current study, the adaptation of teaching to suit the learning context was also prevalent since the grade R teachers adapted the ISP to suit the learners' needs. The factors that militated against or constrained the implementation of the ISP are discussed next.



5.2.2 The factors that militated against or constrained the implementation of the ISP

A number of factors were identified that militated against the implementation of the ISP at the two primary schools under focus.

They were: the non-involvement of the ISP implementers in the input and design of the ISP, the non-alignment of the CAPS with the ISP, learner selection for participation in the ISP, time constraints concerning the delivery of both the CAPS as well as the ISP, the unrealistic expectations of the district-based officials in the ISP, the non-involvement of the community and parents and the extent of the school principals' involvement in the implementation of the ISP.

Each factor will be discussed next.

5.2.2.1 The non-involvement of the ISP implementers in the input and design of the ISP

All the grade R teachers and LSTs, as ISP implementers had no insight regarding the design or input into the development of the ISP. Some of the grade R teachers were under the impression that the ISP were designed by the LST. They would have wanted to be part of the designing of the ISP as they were knowledgeable concerning the grade R CAPS and also the academic and other challenges Grade R learners face. Datnow and Stringfield (2000) who conducted research with regard to the effectiveness of teachers who share the goals of their school, and made the following findings: they see teachers as an asset and as collaborators, rather than just implementers of a programme. Successful implementers need understanding and flexibility which did not transpire with the grade R teachers who felt they had much insight in the curriculum and could contribute to the ISP, however they were not included in the design of the ISP.

The non-involvement of the ISP implementers in the design of the ISP suggests a top-down approach in a programme design. As Karmel, cited in Mills and Gale (2010) suggests, there is a need for more teacher and school level professionals to be part of the decision- making at schools and in communities. Their non-involvement possibly contributed to some of the factors that militated against the implementation of the ISP such as the non-identification of learners for inclusion in the ISP in the middle of the year who showed more need for inclusion in the ISP than some of the learners who were chosen for ISP inclusion at the beginning of the year. Therefore, the perceived lack of organic experience on the part of the ISP designers of the Grade R classroom contexts, resulted in them not fully taking into account some of the factors at school level that impacted the implementation of the ISP.

The non- involvement of the implementers in the input and design of the ISP is reflected in the disadvantages highlighted when the top-down approach is used in the design of intervention programmes. When using the top-down approach, Matland (1995) describes a top-down model of making decisions at the beginning of a programme and then failure of the programme by not paying attention to other stages of the implementation process. In the current study the decision-makers did not take into consideration that the grade R teachers also had first- hand experience and knowledge concerning grade R learners. In the case of the ISP, decision-makers took action during implementation by discussing and reviewing the programme with the LSTs, however they did not make them part of the decision making during the

design of the ISP as suggested by Matland (1995). Bowe, Bali and Gold (1992) argue that the top-down model is not the best start for research into the practical effects of policy. The policy process is not just about implementing a programme, following a text and putting the policy into practice. Mills and Gale (2010) state while leadership is important, there is no evidence to suggest that the principal or head is the best source at decision-making; however, many teachers have been conditioned to accept reliant roles and the culture of schools underpin this tendency. Being part of decision-making affecting their profession, their classroom and their learners challenges the top-down structure. This seemed to be the case in the current study with the key implementers of the ISP, namely the grade R teachers and LSTs, not being part of the decision-making in the design of the ISP. This was a disadvantage that was reflected and highlighted the use of the top-down approach in the conceptualisation and design of the ISP.

Chen (2010), advocates the bottom-up approach as useful for evaluating public improvement programmes. He suggests using motivated participants, and a highly trained enthusiastic team that could add to appropriate outcomes. Grade R teachers and LSTs had valuable contributions to make in the current study. It is therefore unfortunate that they were not included in the design of the ISP which would have probably enhanced its success. Hanf, Hjern and Porter, cited in Stofile (2008) advocate the bottom-up approach and mention that the actors who implement the programme, be asked about their goals, strategies, activities and contact persons. Sabotier (2005) argues that a vehicle be provided for moving from actors at the bottom to the policymakers at the top. This however did not materialise for the grade R teachers and LSTs in the current study.

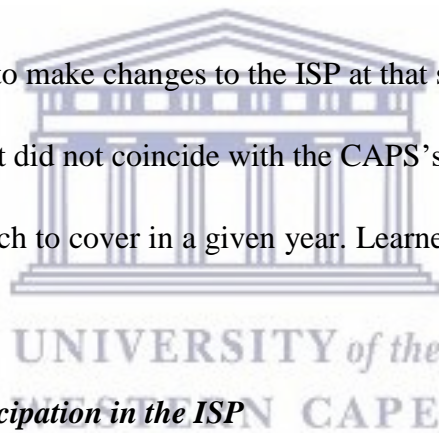
5.2.2.2 The non-alignment of CAPS with the ISP

Swain, Friehe and Harrington (2004) used listening strategies in their intervention programme to enhance the curriculum. It was suggested that they incorporate the listening strategies within the existing curriculum as it complemented each other. They argued that strategies can complement the curriculum and learners will show more improvement academically. However, in the current study, there seemed to be no intentional efforts to link the ISP to the official CAPS since the Grade R teacher participants reported that the ISP was not aligned to CAPS. Two of the 3 Grade R teachers commented on the misalignment of the ISP with CAPS in terms of the complexity as well as the scheduling of content. The

ISP introduced some concepts (e.g. the language component: phonics) too early in the year when compared to CAPS and learners needed more time to understand these concepts. Consequently, ISP learners struggled with the difficult aspects of the ISP content. One grade R teacher regarded the programme as too advanced for a learner who just came to the grade R class. According to Bagnato (2006), schools should prepare for all learners and contribute towards system integration among schools and early childhood programmes, aligned with curricula with realistic expectations, which is not what happened to the ISP. The best beneficiaries of alignment mean that learners have an extraordinary quality education, (Sakimura & Riley, 2018). The ISP was not aligned to CAPS.

One LST reported that she was requested by the district-based education official to change the ISP to run concurrently with CAPS midway in the implementation of the ISP. However, she did not comply for the following reasons:

- (1) It would have not made sense to make changes to the ISP at that stage of the year,
- (2) The ISP had its own topics that did not coincide with the CAPS's themes,
- (3) The CAPS content was too much to cover in a given year. Learners struggled through the year with the CAPS.

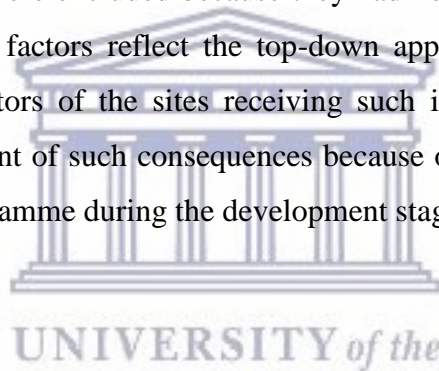


5.2.2.3 Learner selection for participation in the ISP

Linan-Thompson, Vaughn, Prater and Cirino (2006) did a study to determine how many and which “at risk” students would respond to a comprehensive intervention language programme and who would not. They could determine how many students benefited from the programme, but were not able to identify who of the students benefited from the programme based on pre-test scores. All of them received the same level of instruction in terms of intensity and duration. This links to the current study where learners at risk were also chosen based on the pre-test and observation done by the grade R teachers and LSTs, however the grade R teachers wanted to change the list of names later in the year, but were not at liberty to do so. This limited the grade R teachers and LSTs. Learner selection for participation in the ISP had two major limitations. The first was the little time (the first two months of the year) was allocated to identify ISP learners which resulted in the incorrect identification of some learners for ISP inclusion,

because young learners needed more time to settle down in Grade R before informed decisions could be made about their academic progress.

The second limitation with regard to learner selection for inclusion in ISP was the rule that the identified list of learners could not be changed once the learners were identified. This rule served the education district office's need to track individual learner progress and also for the purposes of research. It did not however, take into account the dynamic nature of learners' academic progress which may be linked to differing rates of maturity among learners. This rule was therefore inflexible and disallowed the inclusion of learners later in the year for targeted ISP intervention who may have benefited more from ISP intervention compared to some of the learners already in the programme. This rule also supported an inefficient use of school-based learner support resources because there were instances when the learners at most need of ISP intervention were excluded because they had not been initially identified for such intervention. Consequently, these factors reflect the top-down approach of programme intervention where the organic contextual factors of the sites receiving such interventions were ignored or the programme managers were ignorant of such consequences because of their non-consultative approach with the implementers of the programme during the development stage.



5.2.2.4 Time constraints regarding the delivery of the CAPS as well as the ISP

As mentioned by Garvin (2012) a learning organization is skilled to creating, gaining and transmitting knowledge and is open to reflect new knowledge and insights. New ideas can be transferred by knowledgeable insiders. Bearing this statement in mind, in the current study, had the grade R teachers as knowledgeable insiders (who had experience of the CAPS); being part of decision-making, such inclusion would potentially have brought valuable information concerning the ISP, thereby, enhancing the curriculum. The grade R teachers would not have been reluctant to share their time with the ISP, however they felt that the ISP interrupted the delivery of the CAPS. The inference made from the results was that Grade R teacher participants considered that ISP as an add-on, rather than considering the ISP as enhancing learners' academic skills to make better progress in learning the CAPS. These views suggest that prior to the introduction of the ISP in targeted schools, the Grade R teachers were not prepared well enough in seeing the value of ISP in relation to the official curriculum. These views may

also suggest that the ISP developers did not take the issue of time constraints into account, in an attempt to aid the curriculum, (UNICEF, 2011)

5.2.2.5 The unrealistic expectations by the education district- officials with regard to the ISP

Teacher participants' comments regarding the support and involvement of the district officials identified two negative aspects. The first was that the expectations of district officials were unrealistic with regard to learner progress because they did not take into consideration the socio-economic challenges faced by the learners and the school such as the danger of doing P.E. on the school grounds due to shootings by gangs. Grade R teachers also wanted workshops to empower them in class so that they could be confident in their teaching roles. Van der Berg (2012) recommends that grade R teachers use evidence-based learning programmes that prove that they work effectively. Grade R teachers also make use of early interventions designed for local contexts that children can relate to. Van der Berg (2012) advocates these programmes appropriate for children from poor backgrounds and also to improve the quality of grade R delivery providing teachers with practical strategies for supporting early learning, training and support and an understanding of the curriculum. These issues suggested above would have been in line what grade R teachers needed.

The second negative factor that one teacher mentioned was that the support provided by the education district officials was not in line with what the teachers needed or wanted.

5.2.2.6 Parent and community under or non- involvement in their children's schooling

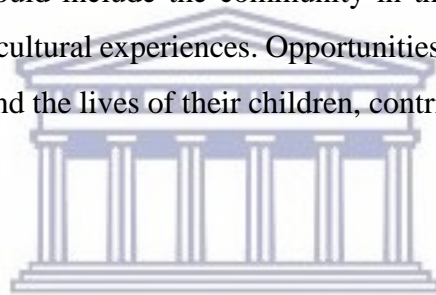
Both parental as well as community involvement in the education of learners were considered to be negative factors that militated against the implementations of the ISP. Participants' views regarding parental and community involvement did not pertain to learners involved in the ISP per se. These comments were general views about parental and community involvement at schools under focus. The non -involvement of parents were echoed by all participants: the grade R teachers, the LSTs, HODs, principals and district officials. They all mentioned that most parents were not supporting their children and left the academic progress of learners to the sole responsibility of the teachers. Most parents did not

attend parent-teacher meetings, even when meeting times were changed to accommodate them. The learners were also not stimulated at home such as parents buying books for reading material or crayons to scribble. Parents also wanted to be remunerated by the school when requested to do some work at school. There was therefore hardly any culture of volunteering at school.

The majority of comments were negative and that parents were unsupportive, however there were a few parents who played the supportive role in their children's lives and this was echoed by the LSA. She was of the view that the English-speaking parents were more supportive of their children's learning in comparison to their Afrikaans-speaking counterparts. Consequently, English-speaking learners generally fared better in school than Afrikaans learners. Bagnato (2006) highlights the importance of parental involvement in their children's schooling and states that early childhood programmes should be family-centred and form partnerships with parents. A community-based service that will empower children and families in early care. However, involving parents in schools has become a major challenge. Parents and teachers have limited skills to interact effectively. Parents are not able to support their children in education due to their own lack of education (Wolhuter, Lemmer & de Wet, 2007).

There were many community factors that impacted negatively on the scholastic progress of learners at the school under focus. For example, gangsterism and joblessness had a huge impact on teaching and learning. According to Wolhuter, et al., (2007) the presence of gangsters at schools escalates the incidence of victimisation of learners and teachers. According to the school principal participant in this study; children were desensitized to shootings in their area by the way they reacted nonchalantly to the shootings in the area. At one of the schools under focus, the threat of physical danger, discouraged teachers conducting physical education lessons on the school ground. Consequently, the negative community environment had a negative impact on the development of learners, since physical education provides an opportunity to learners and develop in many domains. The threat of violence at school negatively affects learners, teachers and the educational process (Wolhuter, et al., 2007). It is difficult for learners to focus on academic school subjects. It can also relate to emotional and behavioural problems. The lives of children living in disadvantaged communities may be subject to violence, anxiety and instability (Wolhuter et al., 2007).

The principals in the current study blamed parents for exposing learners to undesirable socio elements such as shebeens and okka pipes where children have extensive knowledge, however it is not included in the curriculum. The principals also mentioned the parents lived in appalling circumstances. In addition, the traditional nuclear family structure was mostly absent in the communities that the schools served. Most learners were raised by their grandparents instead of their biological parents because many parents had succumbed to drug abuse or shifted the responsibility of parenthood to their own parents. Mills and Gale (2010) mention that working class parents do not share an understanding of shared responsibility between parents and teachers with regard to their children's schooling. They state that it is difficult to facilitate community participation in disadvantaged communities in schools. Bourdieu cited in Mills and Gale, (2010) argues that the inequalities of opportunity for parent participation in school work can be decreased by educating parents in the skills of participation. Teachers need to implement resources to complement the roles of teachers and parents, bringing schools and communities closer together. Bourdieu also said that schools could include the community in the development of the curriculum, encouraging them to draw on their cultural experiences. Opportunities to involve parents in collaborative decisions, could affect schooling and the lives of their children, contributing value to all members of the school's community.



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5.2.2.7 The involvement of the principals and the ISP

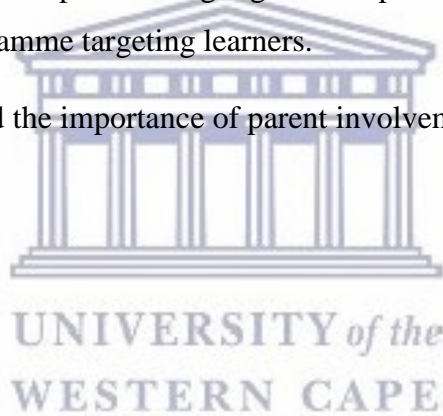
Leadership mentoring is to be able to foster mutual learning and develop collegial relationships between principals and staff members (Searby and Browne-Ferrigno, 2017). This underpins the fact that teachers learn from principals and vice versa. They learn to know each other better with regard to weak and strong points and to build good relations that can benefit any institution or company tremendously. However, in the current study, it seemed as if principals of the schools under focus, had a different leadership role and were not open to sharing knowledge or building a good working relationship with the grade R teachers. This claim is based on grade R teacher reports that they did not feel the support of the principal and that the principal showed no interest in them. As suggested by Mukherjee (2013), principals are good managers when they are able to drive the success of the school. In my view school success is ultimately evaluated by the quality of education learners receive and how well they progress academically. Therefore, principals should play active roles in monitoring curriculum delivery from a quality assurance perspective and not only from an administrative perspective. While the HODs showed

some interest; both SMT members were not involved with the implementation of the ISP in a practical sense. Principals did not discuss the ISP results in principals' meetings, thus there was no focus on the ISP in principal meetings, which suggests a lack of interest in the ISP by the principals at the two schools under focus.

5.3 Conclusion

The study highlighted the factors that facilitated as well as those that militated against the effective implementation of an intervention support programme at two previously disadvantaged schools in the same low socio-economic area. The discussion of the findings suggest that the ISP was effective in improving learners' academic skills in grade R as preparation for grade one. This assertion was supported by the grade one teachers' (HODs') observations of learners in their respective classrooms who had been part of the ISP in their grade R. The chapter also highlight the importance of including all role players in the design of an intervention programme targeting learners.

In addition, the chapter highlighted the importance of parent involvement and the pivotal role they play in their children's education.



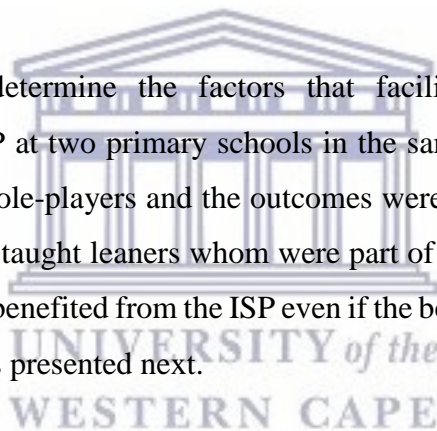
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The low literacy and numeracy scores attained during the Systemic Assessment of 2011 by grade 3 learners in South Africa, could partly be a consequence of many learners entering formal schooling with inadequate skills to make satisfactory progress. They lacked school readiness, when they entered formal education in grade one (Erasmus, van Rensburg, Pienaar & Ellis, 2016). The implementation of an ISP contributed to a change for the better, especially for those learners who were ill-prepared and who came from disadvantaged circumstances.

This study was conducted to determine the factors that facilitated and militated against the implementation of the grade R ISP at two primary schools in the same socio economic area. I believe that the ISP was praised by most role-players and the outcomes were achieved based on the comments of the grade one teachers who had taught learners whom were part of the ISP in their grade R year. The statistics indicated that all learners benefited from the ISP even if the benefit was minute in some learners. A summary of the study findings is presented next.



6.2 Summary of findings

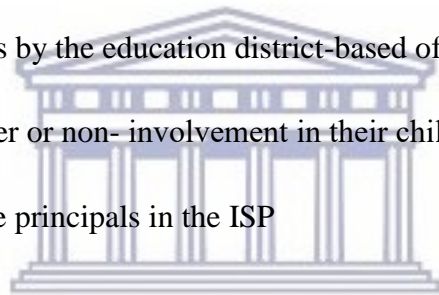
6.2.1 Factors that facilitated the implementation of the ISP

- The appropriate qualifications and work experience of the grade R teachers and LSTs as implementers of ISP
- The grade R teachers and LSTs' positive attitudes and commitment towards teaching in grade R
- Designers and implementers' generally positive views about the ISP
- The crucial role played by the LSTs in the implementation of the ISP
- The involvement of the HODs in the ISP

- Support received by the district- based officials regarding the implementation of the ISP
- Annual formal reviews of the ISP were beneficial to the improvement of the programme
- Adapting the ISP to suit local learning and teaching context of the school

6.2.2 Factors that militated against the implementation of the ISP

- The non- involvement of the ISP implementers in the input and design of the ISP
- The non-alignment of CAPS with the ISP
- Learner selection for participation in the ISP
- Time constraints regarding the delivery of the CAPS as well as the ISP
- The unrealistic expectations by the education district-based officials with regard to the ISP
- Parent and community under or non- involvement in their children's schooling
- The non-involvement of the principals in the ISP



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6.3 Significance of the study

This study is significant because it focussed on the implementation of an intervention support programme by engaging the different role players at different levels of authority, playing different roles. It highlighted the complex nature of intervention programmes at schools and the need to adopt an inclusive approach that ensures that all role players are involved from the design to the implementation of intervention programmes. The study also focussed on a grade R intervention programme, which in itself is significant given the recent emphasis on early childhood education (ECD) in South Africa (Biersteker & Picken, 2013).

6.4 The study's limitations

It is a qualitative study therefore the researcher cannot generalise the information; however, the aim of qualitative research is not to generalise information but to study a problem in detail in its unique context with the aim of getting rich information about the study focus within the particular unique context (Schurink, 2009).

Another possible limitation is the possible bias by myself as the researcher given that I am a learning support teacher. To counter this possible limitation, I attempted to be reflexive during the course of this study. According to Berger (2015), the researcher must remain vigilant to avoid projecting his or her own experience using it as the lens to view and understand the participants' knowledge. Researchers need to pay attention to self-knowledge, sympathy, carefully self-monitor the effect of their biases, beliefs, and experiences on their research. As the researcher I had to be reflexive in conducting the study as I was an LST at that time.

Still another possible limitation was social desirability on behalf of the participants. This means that during data collection participants may want to express views that they think the interviewer would also share. This is done by applying self-reflexive processes when the researcher examines the impact of the study while taking other colleagues into consideration (Papier, 2012). Researchers can practice self-reflexivity by evaluating their own biases and encouragements. However, I ensured informed consent, the promise of anonymity and confidentiality to counter social desirability.

6.5 Recommendations for improving the design and implementation of the ISP or similar interventions in the future

Policy makers, according to Hyde and Karibu (2003) should advocate an increased amount of ECD programmes, particularly among rural, poor and disadvantaged populations, ensuring access to ECD services for children who are at risk. When planning programmes, to be mindful of how they identify learner needs. Accurate and sensitive identification of the individual needs of learners is important to this process. Early identification of barriers to learning ought to be part of the whole school vision. Put

children at the Centre of the learning process and build their self-esteem to improve their attitude to learning. A whole school approach to closing the gaps for all learners should be the vision and driven by all leadership levels. Involvement of all role players including parents can be effective to learning gaps.

According to Bruwer, (2014) school readiness has a long term effect on the development of a learner. Stimulation of learning starts before pre-school years. Children from a disadvantaged background are less ready for formal learning. The school can play a vital role by enhancing the learners' learning in grade R. However no programme is perfect and should be revised and adapted to suite the learners needs. There are internal and external factors that create a range of barriers regarding an ISP. The following recommendations are made with regard to improving the ISP:

Recommendation 1: Involve all role players in the ISP. The ISP should be constantly revised by all role players which include the decision makers (district officials) the participants that implement the programme such as the grade R teachers, grade one teachers and LSTs. Grade one teachers work with grade one learners and have insight in their strengths and weaknesses, so they can also contribute productively towards an excellent school readiness programme.

Recommendation 2: Alignment of the CAPS with the ISP should be revisited by the district-based officials and LSTs the custodians of the ISP, to eliminate any misalignment of the curriculum and the ISP. It should be constantly revised so that it is in line with CAPS and other programmes to enhance learning in a grade R class.

Recommendation 3: The grade R teacher should be given more time to decide who will be the learners to attend extra lessons for the rest of the year. The grade R teachers should be at liberty to change names of learners especially after they have observed and worked with learners in the first school quarter and discussed the learners' progress with colleagues and the FP HOD. This ought to improve the chances of appropriately selecting learners for participation in the ISP.

Recommendation 4: It was a major concern for grade R teachers not to be pressurised for a fixed time concerning the ISP delivery in curriculum contact time. The LSTs should be accommodative of the curriculum for example when grade R teachers are under pressure to complete the assessments of grade R especially near the end of each term. The grade R teachers want the LSTs to understand that the

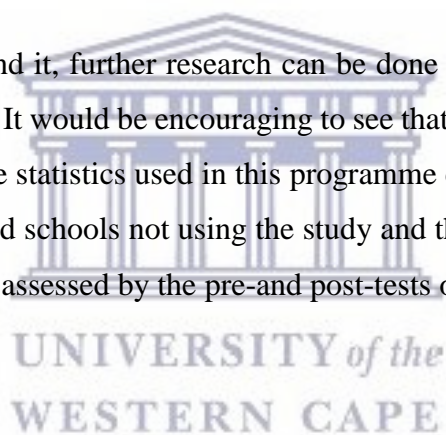
completion of the assessments at certain times of the year take preference to any intervention such as the ISP.

Recommendation 5: The compact disc can be improved with regards to the songs that are sung as they are not very appealing to the children.

Recommendation 6: The ISP can be used at schools where there is an influx of immigrants because the programme would benefit them tremendously with regard to the language and listening skills activities in the ISP. This ISP can also benefit children at crèches at home or where facilitators are not qualified, to use this ISP. Children and facilitators would both be empowered.

6.6 Recommendations for further study

Relating to this study and to expand it, further research can be done in tracking the ISP learners up to matric and even tertiary education. It would be encouraging to see that they complete matric and not add to the school drop-out statistic. The statistics used in this programme could be used for further study by looking at previously disadvantaged schools not using the study and those who use it, to see if there are significant differences in the skills assessed by the pre-and post-tests of the ISP.



6.7 Conclusion

The study highlighted the good working relations when teachers have one common goal which is to improve teaching so that learners can flourish academically especially in the beginning stages of the learners' school years. It indicated that the ISP was an effective intervention programme that could be improved if the identified militating factors are considered if and when similar interventions are implemented. What the study also highlighted was the non-involvement of parents and to eliminate this issue is to include the parents in this programme, enhancing the ISP further because they are key role players to this programme. They can be made part of the programme in a non-judgemental way strengthening relations between the school and the community. The education decision-makers such as the district officials can be made aware of further capacity building with regards to grade R teachers.

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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APPENDIX: 1

Letter to the Department of Education requesting permission to conduct research.

THE HEAD: EDUCATION

(FOR ATTENTION: DIRECTOR: EDUCATION RESEARCH)

WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

PRIVATE BAG X9114

CAPE TOWN

8 000

Date: 15 April 2015

Dear Sir or Madam:

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT A DEPARTMENTAL INSTITUTION

I, Mariotte Jacobs, a Masters student registered in the Educational Psychology Department, within the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape, hereby request permission to conduct research at the following schools within the Western Cape Education Department.

NAME OF SCHOOLS: XXXX and XXXXX

The schools are located in the XXX Education District, which forms part of Circuit X.

Research Title:

The research aims to provide information about the effectiveness of a school readiness intervention support programme for grade R. The study aims to provide insight as to why a school progressed well and why another school did not, bearing in mind that both schools are in the same socio economic area.

The research approach will be qualitative in nature. The participants will be a sample of grade R teachers, learning support teachers, Foundation phase; head of department teachers and the principals of the two schools. Other role players involved with the programme who are also invited to the study are the education specialist, the learner support advisor and the occupational therapist at Metro North Education District. Information gathered from participants will shed light on the success or challenges of the grade R intervention support programme.

Special attention will be given to ethical and legal prescriptions with regard to obtaining permission from all parties concerned, time frames of institutions and sensitivity of data collected. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further enquiries.

Please note that I have already been granted ethical approval by the University of the Western Cape to proceed with the study subject to all other ethical protocols that I need to follow. I therefore need your approval prior to approaching the school for permission to conduct my study there.

Yours faithfully

M. Jacobs (M.ED. student at UWC)

CONTACT NUMBER:

Supervisor:

signature

Dr. Trevor Moodley

Lecturer: Department of Educational Psychology

Faculty of Education

University of the Western Cape

E-mail: tmoodley@uwc.ca.za



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

APPENDIX 2: Letters to the school in the Metro North Education District requesting permission to conduct research.

THE PRINCIPAL: XXX

XXX Primary School

(ADDRESS OF SCHOOL):

Date: 15 April 2015

Dear Sir or Madam:

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT A DEPARTMENTAL INSTITUTION

I, Mariotte Jacobs, a master's student registered in the Educational Psychology Department, within the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape, hereby request permission to conduct research at your school.

Research Title:

The research aims to provide information about factors influencing the implementation of a school readiness intervention support programme for grade R. The study aims to provide insight as to why a school progressed well and why another school did not, bearing in mind that both schools are in the same socio economic area.

The research approach will be qualitative in nature. The participants will be a sample of grade R teachers, learning support teacher, Foundation phase; head of department teacher and the principal of the school. Other role players involved with the programme who are also invited to the study are the education specialist, the learner support advisor and the occupational therapist at Metro North Education District. Information gathered from participants will shed light on the success or challenges of the grade R intervention support programme.

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

If approval is granted, the research will be conducted in the second term of 2015 at the school over a 4 week period. Participants will be required to engage in a face to face interview with the researcher and the venue would most likely be on the school premises. A convenient time will be negotiated between the school management team and the researcher.

If approval is granted, the research will be conducted in the second term of 2015 at the school.

Please note that I have already been granted permission to conduct the study by both the University of the Western Cape as well as the Western Cape Education Department. However, I will only proceed with the invitation of potential participants from within your school's teachers once you are satisfied with the study aims and you have given me written consent.

Special attention will be given to ethical and legal prescriptions with regard to obtaining permission from all parties concerned, time frames of institutions and sensitivity of data collected. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further enquiries.

Yours faithfully

M. Jacobs (M.ED. student at UWC)

CONTACT NUMBER:

Supervisor:

signature

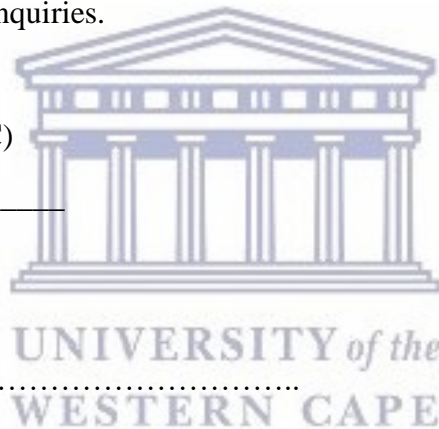
Dr. Trevor Moodley

Lecturer: Department of Educational Psychology

Faculty of Education

University of the Western Cape

E-mail: tmoodley@uwc.ca.za



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SEPTEMBER 2015

Grade R Teachers

Mrs, thank you for your time to do this interview. I just want to go over some clarifications and to explain to you that I received permission from the university, the department and your principal and now from you. Remember this is confidential, your name will not be mentioned, nor the school's name will be mentioned. As you know it's for the purposes of my master's degree and a possible publication in an academic journal. Be relaxed and calm. I'm going to record our conversation for ensuring that I capture the conversation correctly. I will also, transcribe the audio recording and you can look at the transcriptions at a later date, and see if you are satisfied with what is captured in the transcriptions before I use the data for my study.

You know the school has been implementing the Grade R intervention programme since 2012, and that the MNED district office initiated the programme. We are looking specifically at the way the program was implemented last year. We are only looking at 2014's programme and not 2013 or 2015 this year.

1. How long have you been a grade R teacher?
2. What teaching qualification do you have?
3. How do you find teaching grade R children?

Let's now speak about the Grade R intervention programme.

4. When the programme was designed, did you have any input in the design?
5. Did you implement the programme in your class? **Reflect.**
6. Are you aware who was involved in the design of this programme?
7. Before this programme was implemented, were you given an introduction to this programme: its aims, interventions? How is it going to be done? **Reflect.**



Let's talk about last year's programme, remember we are speaking about 2014.

How were you involved in the implementation of the programme in your class in 2014? Reflect

How was the programme implemented in your class last year? Speak about all the parties that were involved

8. Explain how learners in 2014 were chosen to be part of the intervention programme? Reflect
9. Do you think the baseline and pre-test is compulsory or optional? Formal or informal?
10. Is the baseline not enough? **Reflect.**
11. What happens after the pre-test with regards to the LSE, how often and when does she address her teaching these learners at risk? **Reflect.**
12. Whatever she does with the learners, are you aware of what she does as class teacher?
13. Does she report to you and how often does this happen, formally in meetings or informally? How does it happen? **Reflect.**
14. Do you give her any input regarding the programme?
15. The programme, is some of it what she does what you have informed her? **Reflect.**
16. Do you have any say in what she does with regards to the programme?
17. Are you at liberty to tell the LSE that there are specific issues the child is facing, can she help with it?
18. How do you cope with this programme in relation to CAPS? **Reflect.**
19. In terms of CAPS, does this programme help or hinder the pace at which the curriculum implemented? **Reflect.**
20. How do you experience the programme in terms of the four sections: Language development, auditory perception, visual perception, gross and fine motor skills? **Reflect**
21. With regards to last year's statistics, how did you as a school fare in the 4 areas of support covered by the programme. Name the areas where you performed well and where you did not do as well and provide reasons for this varied performance. **Reflect.**
22. What do you think are the reasons for you not doing well? **Reflect.**
23. What would you do differently? **Reflect.**
24. What other areas did you not do well?
25. If you look at last year, what factors influenced the implementation of the programme (personal own feelings about programme, workload, other), school (staff relations, SMT, resources), parents,

community, district office, curriculum, other factors? Please speak about both negative and positive influences. **Reflect**

26. Do you know of meetings held with parents to get them on board with regards to their childrens' education? **Reflect.**

27. Lifestyles and support of parents. How does it influence the programme?

28. If you could help change the programme, how will you change it? **Reflect.**

29. How do you personally feel about your role in the programme? **Reflect.**

Thank you for your time. I value your input.



UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

Learner Support teachers: questions

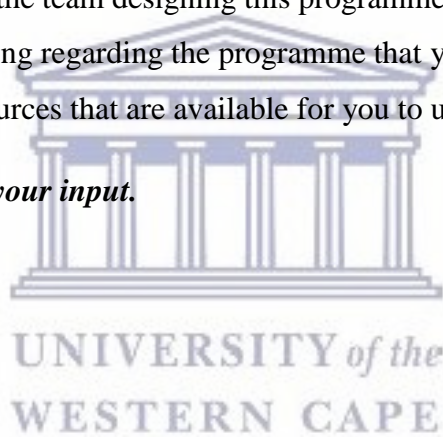
Mrs, thank you for your time to do this interview. I just want to go over some clarifications and to explain to you that I received permission from the university, the department and your principal and from you. Remember this is confidential, your name will not be mentioned, nor the school's name will be mentioned. As you know it's for the purposes of my master's degree. Be relaxed and calm. I'm going to record you, to transcribe it, but will play it back to you. You can have a look at it and see if you are satisfied with what you've read.

You know the school has been implementing the intervention programme since 2012, that the district office initiated for grade R. We are looking specifically at the way the program was implemented last year. We are only looking at 2014's programme and not 2013 or 2015 this year.

1. How do you find teaching in a grade R class? Reflect.
2. Let's talk about last year; did you have any input regarding the programme?
3. Do you know who was involved in the design of the programme?
4. Were you briefed about the aims and intentions of this programme? Reflect.
5. The programme; how do you choose the names of the learners? Explain what your role is in identifying them.
6. What is the criteria with regards to the pre-test. How do you go about doing it?
7. What happens after you have done the pre-test?
8. How do you address their short comings that was highlighted after the pre-test? How often do you work with them? reflect
9. How do you report to the class teacher when you work with the learners. Do you have formal meetings? Reflect
10. How do you inform the parents of these children who are "at risk"? Do they sign any documents?
11. Are you at liberty to discuss any parts of the programme with your LSA? Reflect
12. With regards to the curriculum; does the programme help CAPS and is it theme or topic related? Reflect.
13. The relationship between you and the grade R teachers; do they feel threatened by you coming in the class?
14. Last year, why do you think this school did well in language development and auditory perception? Is there anything that you do differently, or do you keep to the programme religiously? Reflect
15. Why do you think they did not do well in visual perception?

16. What can you do to improve this? Reflect
17. Are the parents on board with helping their children?
18. Does the lifestyle of the parents support the programme? Reflect
19. What other school factors do you think hamper the progress of this programme?
20. Do you have the support of all the teachers, principal and parents? Reflect
21. Do you report to the parents and principal so that they are aware of what you do and if the learners are succeeding or not?
22. Is the support from the district's side ample, and do you meet to discuss the pros and cons of the programme? Reflect
23. How do you keep committed to the programme and does your LSA support you and contribute to your committal to the programme?
24. Do you feel that this programme is enough to help learners at risk? Reflect
25. Would you want to be part of the team designing this programme? What would you change or add?
26. Would you want to add anything regarding the programme that you feel I should know?
27. What do you think of the resources that are available for you to use, are they enough?

Thank you for your time. I value your input.



Head of Department: Foundation Phase teachers

Mrs, thank you for your time to do this interview. I just want to go over some clarifications and to explain to you that I received permission from the university, the department and your principal and from you. Remember this is confidential, your name will not be mentioned, nor the school's name will be mentioned. As you know it's for the purposes of my master's degree. Be relaxed and calm. I'm going to record you, to transcribe it, but will play it back to you. You can have a look at it and see if you are satisfied with what you've read.

You know the school has been implementing the intervention programme since 2012 that the district office initiated for grade R. We are looking specifically at the way the program was implemented last year. We are only looking at 2014's programme and not 2013 or 2015 this year.

1. You are aware of the LSE going into the classes with a programme to help the learners at risk, what do you think does it help? Reflect.
2. Do you have evidence to substantiate this?
3. It's difficult to work with learners who come with a back log, what would you want them to have a thorough knowledge of?
4. Are there other factors that prevent learners from being successful with CAPS and the assessments?
5. Do you get any feedback with regards to the programming of the grade R from the LSE or grade R teachers?
6. What are the differences between a child who knows about the programme and one who does not? Reflect.
7. You are the go between the office and the teachers, how is the relationship with regards to the principal supporting the grade R teachers with resources and support?
8. How do you keep them committed?
9. Are they included in your meetings you have with the foundation phase teachers? Reflect.
10. If you can be part of the panel designing this programme, what would you include?
11. Is there anything else you want me to know with regards to the programme?
12. If you were the grade R teacher, what areas would you focus on?

Thank you for your time. I value your input.

Learner Support Advisor

Mrs, thank you for your time to do this interview. I just want to go over some clarifications and to explain to you that I received permission from the university, the department and your principal and from you. Remember this is confidential, your name will not be mentioned, nor the school's name will be mentioned. As you know it's for the purposes of my master's degree. Be relaxed and calm. I'm going to record you, to transcribe it, but will play it back to you. You can have a look at it and see if you are satisfied with what you've read.

You know the school has been implementing the intervention programme since 2012, that the district office initiated for grade R. We are looking specifically at the way the program was implemented last year. We are only looking at 2014's programme and not 2013 or 2015 this year.

1. Can you explain what your role is with regards to the programme? Reflect.
2. Who was involved with the drawing up of the programme?
3. What was your aim with this programme and how long do you intend using it?
4. Last year some schools did fairly well in the four areas such as language development, what do you think were the reasons?
5. What are the reasons in your opinion that hamper the success of the programme?
6. Do you include the advisor of the grade R and a LSE when making decisions regarding the programme used in their classes? If so what are their contributions with regards to the programme.
7. Some people are not open to change, was there any conflict regarding the implementation of the programme in the grade R classes?
8. Does the programme include the parents as you know they have an important role to play and can contribute to the success or failure of the programme. Reflect
9. You are the inter-link between the school and the district, do you have the support of the principals?
10. How do you support the LSE with regards to the implementation of the programme, is it compulsory to use it?
11. How do you keep the LSE's committed to their work?
12. In terms of the curriculum, have you drawn it up to be in line with CAPS? Is it theme related?
13. Im sure there are other programmes, how do you rate the success of the different programmes? Why is this one popular?
14. According to the stats some schools do good in certain areas, are there other factors that hamper the success of the programme? Reflect.

15. Do you have extra support when you see the results of the stats where schools did not do well?
16. Do you keep the LSE's informed of any changes in the programme and how often do you meet?
17. Do you feel that the LSE have enough resources? If not, how do you help?
18. If you were a grade R teacher, what would you focus on? Reflect
19. Do you liase with other districts to find out which programmes they use with success? reflect
20. Is there much pressure from the top for the grade R learners to perform and do well, not many repeaters? Reflect.
21. What other contextual factors hamper the success of the programme in your opinion?
22. Is there anything else you would want me to know regarding the programme? Reflect

Thank you for your time. I value your input.



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Principals

Mr, thank you for your time to do this interview. I just want to go over some clarifications and to explain to you that I received permission from the university, the department and your principal and from you. Remember this is confidential, your name will not be mentioned, nor the school's name will be mentioned. As you know it's for the purposes of my master's degree. Be relaxed and calm. I'm going to record you, to transcribe it, but will play it back to you. You can have a look at it and see if you are satisfied with what you've read.

You know the school has been implementing the intervention programme since 2012, that the district office initiated for grade R. We are looking specifically at the way the program was implemented last year. We are only looking at 2014's programme and not 2013 or 2015 this year.

1. Are you aware of the programme the LSE's teach in the grade R classes? reflect
2. Since you are the go between the district and the teachers, how do you feel about the way it was implemented? reflect
3. Last year you did well in certain of the four areas, such as language development, what do you think helped with the success? Reflect
4. Why do you think you did not do well with regards to the programme? What do you think were the reasons? Does it lack managerial, class teacher or LSE support? reflect
5. Are there other factors that prevent the learners from improving their academics? Reflect
6. Do you discuss the results of the stats with the staff or grade R teachers?
7. How do you support the programme, with regards to resources?
8. Do you support the teachers with drawing the parents into the programme? Reflect
9. What would you want to change at your school to see more successful learners?
10. How do you keep the teachers motivated to do their best irrespective of the challenges?

Thank you for your time. I value your input.

Education Specialist:

Mrs, thank you for your time to do this interview. I just want to go over some clarifications and to explain to you that I received permission from the university, the department and your principal and from you. Remember this is confidential, your name will not be mentioned, nor the school's name will be mentioned. As you know it's for the purposes of my master's degree. Be relaxed and calm. I'm going to record you, to transcribe it, but will play it back to you. You can have a look at it and see if you are satisfied with what you've read.

You know the school has been implementing the intervention programme since 2012, that the district office initiated for grade R. We are looking specifically at the way the program was implemented last year. We are only looking at 2014's programme and not 2013 or 2015 this year.

1. Can you explain what your role is with regards to the grade R programme? Reflect
2. What was your aim with this programme and how long do you intend using it?
3. Is there much success with this programme and do you have evidence? reflect
4. Who are the role players who helped with the design of this programme?
5. Is there constant change in the programme and do you use the results of the stats to change the programme? Reflect
6. Do you meet regularly to discuss any changes with all the role players? Reflect
7. Was there much pressure from the top to increase the pass rate especially in grade one?
8. Did you liaise with other districts to hear what they use successfully? reflect
9. Is it compulsory for LS teachers to use the programme?
10. Do you have more than one programme that they can choose from? reflect
11. How do you keep the role players committed to this programme?
12. What other factors do you think hamper the academic success of children in grade R? reflect
13. Do all the social departments meet to discuss how vulnerable children are going to be supported with regards to health issues, poverty, emotional negligence etc. because these are the issues that influence children negatively in academics? Reflect
14. Are there ample resources for LSE to use, thinking of 2014? reflect
15. How can parents be drawn into this programme so that they can help their own children?
16. Is there a time limit with regards to the use of this programme? Reflect
17. Are there teachers who feel intimidated with the programme with regards to the stats? How do you measure the validity of the pre- and post- test done by the LSE's? reflect

18. Would you want this programme to be compulsory in grade R as an additional school readiness programme? reflect
19. Would you want it to be policy in the future? reflect
20. How do you contribute to the upliftment of grade R teachers, who is not included as part of the foundation phase officially yet? reflect

I thank you for your time and honesty.



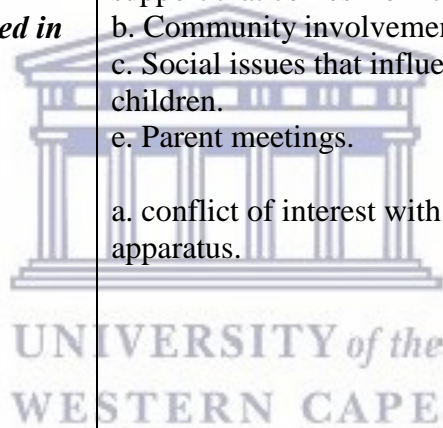
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Table 4.1 Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data

THEME	SUB THEMES
<p>1. Background knowledge of grade R Teachers</p> <p><i>“Grade R is my passion. I am proud of my learners at the end of the year because I can see what they have learned during the year.”</i></p> <p>2. Input, design and implementation of the intervention support programme</p> <p><i>“ The LST gave us a copy of the programme”</i></p> <p><i>“ ... but for me the programme at the beginning of the year is too advanced.”</i></p> <p><i>“The LST comes in three times a week.”</i></p> <p>3. Learner selection: Baseline and pre-test.</p> <p><i>“So I say the time that they have given us is not enough because they could at least wait till after the first quarter, you have better insight of the child..”</i></p> <p><i>“It is too quick. In June you discover that there are quite a few other learners who are weak and then you can’t send them.”</i></p>	<p>a. Teaching experience in grade R. b. Passionate about their work, but can also be challenging at times.</p> <p>a. Design of the programme b. The aim and implementation of this programme c. Feedback of the programme and its impact the following year in grade one. d. Time: constraints regarding the implementation of the programme. e. Period required for the programme is too short.</p> <p>a. Issue of inflexibility with regards to commencement of the programme. b. Flexible intervention list of names c. Baseline not enough to decide whose name is on the intervention list.</p>

<p>4. Time and misalignment of the programme and the curriculum</p> <p><i>“There are too many expectations on the grade R. It’s a good programme, but there is no time for the programme.</i> <i>“ ... you have your own curriculum to follow and have worked out your activities and lessons.”</i></p>	<p>a. Time constraints when implementing the programme b. The curriculum should take preference with managing the time.</p>
<p>5. Misalignment of the curriculum.</p> <p><i>“They expect learners to write their names. It does not run concurrent with CAPS. Time is a factor and the themes.”</i> <i>“The district insists that learners be sent to grade one.”</i></p>	<p>a. Misalignment of CAPS: Time factor and themes. b. The intervention learners c. Sending a prepared learner to grade one.</p>
<p>6. Reasons why learners do not fare well irrespective of the programme.</p> <p><i>“They come from home and some of them were not in a day care centre. They don’t know about routine.”</i></p>	<p>a. Not used to routine b. Day care centres c. Parental support d. Emotional and physical well- being of learners.</p>
<p>7. The four areas of the programme:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Auditory perception, 2. Visual perception, 3. Language development and 4. Gross and fine motor skills. 	<p>a. Efficiency of programme. b. Adding to the programme or omitting some parts.</p>
<p>8.Outcomes of statistics</p> <p><i>“Because of the violence in our area we cannot because we do not know when they will start shooting.”</i> <i>“She will give us a page and then we can go through the points.”</i></p>	<p>a. Outcome of statistics b. interest in statistics c. factors that affect implementation of the programme that affects outcomes of statistics. d. Build-up of the language.</p>

<p>9. The involvement and encouragement of SMT and Principal</p> <p><i>“No, he does not know what is going on here. But our principal says we are playing.”</i></p>	<p>a. Interest of principal with regards to involvement and supporting the grade R initiative. b. Interest of HOD in the programme.</p>
<p>10. District involvement</p> <p><i>“We get many workshops.” They should come more frequent, monitor to see if we are on the right track.”</i></p>	<p>a. Regular workshops b. Monitoring of the grade R and regular visits.</p>
<p>11. Parents and the community</p> <p><i>“No, our parents are not interested in their children.”</i></p>	<p>a. Demotivation of teachers because of the lack of support that comes from the home. b. Community involvement c. Social issues that influence the lack of support for their children. e. Parent meetings.</p>
<p>12. Resources</p> <p><i>“I feel we don’t get enough apparatus.”</i></p>	<p>a. conflict of interest with regards to the purchasing of apparatus.</p>
<p>13. Commitment</p>	<p>a. Teachers’ passion regarding their jobs.</p>



The following codes were used for referencing in the presentation of the research findings:

Table 4.2 Coding of participants

School A (6)	Participant 1	A1 Grade R Teacher
	Participant 2	A2 Grade R Teacher
	Participant 3	A3 Grade R Teacher
	Participant 4	A4 Learner Support Teacher (LST)
	Participant 5	A5 Head of Department Teacher (HOD)
	Participant 6	A6 Principal
School B (5)	Participant 1	B1 Grade R Teacher
	Participant 2	B2 Grade R Teacher
	Participant 3	B3 Learner Support Teacher (LST)
	Participant 4	B4 Head of department Teacher (HOD)
	Participant 5	B5 Principal
District officials (2)	Participant 1	C1 Learner Support Advisor (LSA)
	Participant 2	C2 Education Specialist



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Sample transcript excerpt: Grade R Teacher: voice A 1

Mrs, thank you for your time to do this interview. I just want to go over some clarifications and to explain to you that I received permission from the university, the department and your principal and now from you. Remember this is confidential, your name will not be mentioned, nor the school's name will be mentioned. As you know it's for the purposes of my master's degree and a possible publication in an academic journal. Be relaxed and calm. I'm going to record our conversation for ensuring that I capture the conversation correctly. I will also, transcribe the audio recording and you can look at the transcriptions at a later date, and see if you are satisfied with what is captured in the transcriptions before I use the data for my study. You know the school has been implementing the Grade R intervention programme since 2012, and that the MNED district office initiated the programme. We are looking specifically at the way the program was implemented last year. We are only looking at 2014's programme and not 2013 or 2015 this year.

1. Interviewer: How long have you been a Grade R teacher?

Interviewee: It's my fourth year.

2. Interviewer: What teaching qualification do you have?

Interviewee: Yes, I have N6

3. Interviewer: How do you find teaching Grade R children?

Interviewee: They are ok, they cry at the beginning. When they come from their homes they know nothing. They speak mostly English because the day care centres that they attend speak mostly English.

4. Interviewer: Do you feel that they are confused with day care speaking English and they speak Afrikaans? Do you feel that they have a language barrier when they come to school? They mix their languages?

Interviewee: Yes as soon as the year starts they confuse their languages, but as the year progresses their language improves.

5. Interviewer: Let's now speak about the Grade R intervention programme. When the programme was designed, did you have any input in the design?

Interviewee: No, no

6. Interviewer: Are you aware who was involved in the design of this programme?

Interviewee: No

7. Interviewer: Before this programme was implemented, were you given an introduction to this programme: its aims, interventions? How it is going to be done?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Let's talk about last year's programme, remember we are speaking about 2014. How were you involved in the implementation of the programme in your class in 2014?

Interviewee: Yes, I was part of it. Mrs X gave us a copy of the programme. As soon as she has given the lesson, we will repeat the lesson when the learners struggle with certain areas.

Interviewer: So you used part of the programme when she is not in your class.

8. Interviewer: How was the programme implemented in your class last year? Speak about all the parties that were involved?

Interviewee: The lessons are done with the whole class. The teacher comes in three times a week. Sometimes twice a week then she takes the learners who were identified earlier.

9. Interviewer: Explain how learners in 2014 were chosen to be part of the intervention programme?

Interviewee: We use the base line assessment. It is implemented in the first two weeks of school. We will look at learners who are strong and who is not strong. So it was mostly their shapes, colours, puzzles, and if they know their names and age, can they count that we tested. We also looked at their gross and fine motor skills.

10. Interviewer: Do you think the baseline and pre-test is compulsory or optional? Formal or informal?

Interviewee: Yes, and it is a good time to do it in the first two weeks of school.

11. Interviewer: Is the baseline not enough?

Interviewee: Not always, they should have more time.

Interviewer: So what do you think is an appropriate time to do the base line test? Within the first two weeks?

Interviewee: Yes, it's fine.

12. Interviewer: What happens after the pre-test with regards to the LSE, how often and when does she address her teaching these learners at risk? Do you have a good opinion of the learner?

Interviewee: Sometimes we find that learners do well in the assessment and later after May, we find that there are some learners who do not do well. We want to exchange the learners who are with Mrs X, but she does not allow it. She works just with them irrespective if there are others who need help more than the names we have given.

13. Interviewer: Whatever she does with the learners, are you aware of what she does as class teacher?

Interviewee: No we don't know what she does with the learners, but we know what she does in the class with all the learners.

14. Interviewer: Does she report to you and how often does this happen, formally in meetings or informally? How does it happen? E.g Reflect.

Interviewee: We have meetings and she will tell us what her findings were in a meeting. She will tell us what activities she has done and where we can improve.

15. Interviewer: Are you at liberty to tell the LSE that there are specific issues the child is facing, can she help with it?

Interviewee: We will bring it under her attention, and she will tell us what to do even if we have already done it. When we tell her she will tell us to do it so or so. She will do collaborative teaching

and start with midline crossing, and then she asks us to help with the teaching of the songs and to help with the lesson where learners did not grasp it the first time.

Interviewer: If she sees learners are unable to do certain things, are you at liberty to tell her to work on certain aspects?

Interviewee: Yes we are.

16. Interviewer: In terms of CAPS, does this programme help or hinder the pace at which the curriculum implemented?

Interviewee: It is very helpful for the learners but sometimes it takes much of our time because sometimes the teacher comes early and then it is time for our morning ring. It is our maths lesson that we should with our learners.

17. Interviewer: So you feel that it is time wasted and difficult to do again?

Interviewee: We have to go on with our work. We work according to a time table. We keep to our planning.

18. Interviewer: So you feel you want more time for the programme, maybe later during the day?

Interviewee: Yes because it helps the learners.

19. Interviewer: Do you think the programme runs parallel with CAPS?

Interviewee: Yes it was in relation with CAPS. It does run parallel with the topics, but sometimes it will be a week later or earlier so it was not exactly parallel with the topics.

20. Interviewer: How did you experience the programme in terms of the four sections: Language development, auditory perception, visual perception, gross and fine motor skills? Reflect

Interviewee: It is enough. For me it is complete.

21. Interviewer: With regards to last year's statistics, your school did well in language and auditory perception, but not well in gross and fine motor skills. What do you think are the reasons for you not doing well?

If you look at last year, what factors influenced the implementation of the programme. Please speak about both negative and positive influences (personal own feelings about programme, workload, other) school

Interviewee: The principal is not involved with our grade R curriculum. He should show more interest in us. When he comes around he gives more criticism than what we do with the learners. He just breaks us down. He can be more uplifting and show more interest when he comes to look what is happening in the class.

22. Interviewer: The parents and community?

Interviewee: No our parents are not interested in their children. They don't give any help and some houses find it difficult because of the drug abuse. Many of our children's parents are involved with drugs and alcohol and sometimes the parents smell like alcohol when they come to us and they are not interested. Some learners come to school being dirty.

23. Interviewer: Do you think it is the majority of learners who are neglected?

Interviewee: They are in the majority.

24. Interviewer: Resources, do you have enough apparatus?

Interviewee: We need much apparatus especially for the learners to use outside so that we can allow learners to work their gross motor skills.

25. Interviewer: So do you buy your own or how does it work?

Interviewee: We buy it ourselves. We get money from the government to buy toys. We are placing our orders now for next year.

26. Interviewer: So there is money for resources?

Interviewee: Yes there is.

27. Interviewer: The district office, do they help you with grade R?

Interviewee: We get many workshops, every quarter.

28. Interviewer: Can you implement it, do you enjoy it?

Interviewee: Yes

29. Interviewer: Does the curriculum allow you to send a prepared learner to school for grade one?

Interviewee: Some learners are ready for grade one. The curriculum is very advanced for our learners. We struggle with some of our learners and we can't keep them in grade R because of their age.

30. Interviewer: So is it compulsory to send a child to grade one?

Interviewee: We send them. We have kept learners previously, but not anymore. In 2013 we kept them, but not 2014.

31. Interviewer: What are the reasons for not keeping learners anymore?

Interviewee: Too much paper work and administration. The district insists that learners be sent to grade one.

32. Interviewer: The grant that the department gives to every grade R learner, does he/she forfeit their grant or do they get it again when they repeat?

Interviewee: I don't think so. I don't know. We kept learners back because of their age, not because they did not meet the criteria.

33. Interviewer: Do you know of meetings held with parents to get them on board with regards to their children's education?

Interviewee: We call them in, but because of the crime the community finds it difficult to come to the school. We don't want to put our lives and theirs in jeopardy.

34. Interviewer: What do you do when crime escalates? violence?

Interviewee: They shoot a lot here. Last year I stood at the window while my learners were busy I dusted and I saw how a man was shot behind the school. I witnessed it. It was very tragic and I was traumatised. The police did not ask any questions. There were many people in the road who saw it happening.

35. Interviewer: Did you receive counselling?

Yes, for the whole school.

36. Interviewer: If you could help change the programme, how will you change it?

Interviewee: I would want to be part of the team, but I don't think I would want to change anything. The programme is complete, enough.

Thank you for your time. I value your input.



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