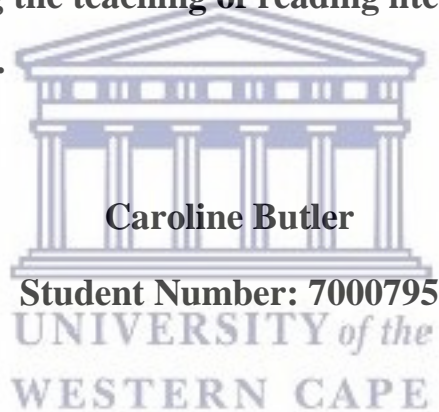




UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

**Making the transition from learning to read to reading to learn in
Grade 4: Investigating the teaching of reading literacy in two
Western Cape schools.**



**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Education in the Language Education Department of the Faculty of Education of
the University of the Western Cape.**

August 2017

SUPERVISOR:

Dr. M. Probyn

DECLARATION

I declare that *Making the transition from learning to read to reading to learn in Grade 4: Investigating the teaching of reading literacy in Two Western Cape schools*, is my own work, that it has not been submitted before, for any other degree or examination in any other university and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged, as complete references.

Caroline May Butler



August 2017

Caroline May Butler

Signed:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

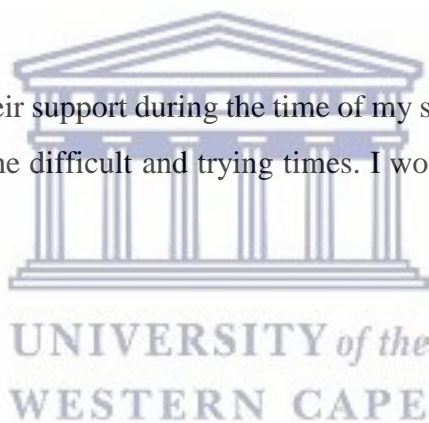
This study would not have been accomplished without the support, guidance and encouragement of many people and institutions. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who assisted me in any way that helped me complete this study:

Firstly, the WCED who allowed me to work in the two schools where the study was conducted.

Secondly, the school principals, teachers and learners, as well as the parents of the two schools in which I conducted this study for giving me access to their schools and classrooms. Without their cooperation, it would not have been possible.

Thirdly, my supervisor, Dr. Margie Probyn, for her time and patience, while leading me through the research journey. I am appreciative of her individual support and encouragement during challenging times.

Finally, to my family for their support during the time of my study and their encouragement and understanding during the difficult and trying times. I would like to thank and dedicate this degree to them.



Title:

Making the transition from learning to read to reading to learn in Grade Four: Investigating the teaching of reading literacy in two Western Cape schools.

Abstract

Drawing on the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study - PIRLS (Howie, et al., 2008), which highlights the reading literacy crisis in South African schools, this study investigated the literacy crisis in relation to reading literacy in Grade Four of the Intermediate Phase. The purpose of the study is to contribute to the debate about challenges around the reading literacy acquisition of South African school children by investigating the current teaching and assessing of reading comprehension practices of language teachers in multilingual Grade Four classes in disadvantaged contexts, focusing on reading comprehension in English and Afrikaans Home language.

This study uses a qualitative research approach. Data was collected in Grade Four Afrikaans and English Home Language classes at two schools in the Western Cape, using observation, interviews and document analysis. To analyze the data, the study aligns itself with a learner-centered model (Wilhelm 2004). This learner-centered model draws on Vygotsky's socio-cultural and constructivist teaching and learning approaches and will be the foundation to analyze current teaching and assessing of reading comprehension practices of language teachers in the Grade Four Afrikaans and English Home Language classes at two multilingual schools focusing on teachers' questioning skills.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to an understanding of the current reading literacy crisis experienced in South African schools and inform more effective teacher training.

Keywords:

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS); reading literacy; teaching reading comprehension; teachers' questioning skills.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANAs	Annual National Assessments
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
FAL	First Additional Language
FET	Further Education and Training
FP	Foundation Phase
HL	Home Language
HOD	Head of Department
IP	Intermediate Phase
L2	Second Language or First Additional Language
LITNUM	Literacy and Numeracy strategy
LNI	LITNUM Intervention programme
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MT	Mother Tongue
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress- US
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation & Development Unit
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
PEI	President's Education Initiative
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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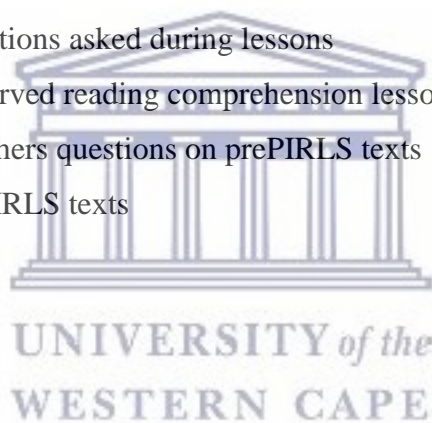
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1. Introduction

Reading is identified by many researchers as the key to unlocking further knowledge and skills. Several educational researchers also support the opinion that reading literacy forms the basis for most other learning activities in schooling and is essential to equip learners to meet the challenges of schooling to become independent learners, as well as for individual and national development (Centre for Policy development (CEPD), Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA), Human Sciences Research Council (HRSC), & South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE), 2005; Pretorius, 2000; Prinsloo, 2008; Rose, 2006 as cited in Matier Moore & Hart, 2007). The more exposed a learner is to reading and proficient reading strategies, the better their language development will be. According to Howie, Venter and Van Staden, (2008), attention to reading leads to the improvement of reading skills, which in turn results in the improvement of language proficiency, positively influencing academic performance (p. 553).

The basis for the development of children's reading literacy skills is laid in the Foundation Phase (FP) and Intermediate Phase (IP); therefore, the effective teaching and assessing of reading in our current context in the Foundation Phase and especially the Intermediate Phase, is crucial for the academic success of all learners. This is even more so for learners learning through a second language in multilingual contexts, as it is in the Intermediate Phase that it is expected of learners to be able to use their reading skills to learn across the curriculum.

Although numerous research studies have previously revealed the reading crisis in the South African education system (Govender, 2010; Howie, et al., 2008; Janks, 2011; Pretorius, 2002; Pretorius, 2014; Spaul, 2014), my research journey on this issue became a concern for more investigation during my involvement with part-time Foundation Phase, Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers upgrading their qualifications through the National Professional Diploma in Education Programme (NPDE) from 2006 to 2011. My attention was brought to the reality of the "reading crisis" in South African schools, as during the classroom discussions teachers often raised their concerns about their students' reading ability as well as low reading performance. These concerns were highlighted with the release

of the PIRLS 2006 report in 2008, which found that most South African Grade Four and Five learners have not attained “basic reading skills and strategies” (Howie et al., 2008) and thereby confirming the concerns raised by the teachers in the NPDE programme.

Realizing the low levels of Literacy and Numeracy of learners, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) introduced the Literacy and Numeracy (LITNUM) strategy (2006-2016) in 2006 with the purpose to strengthen and co-ordinate new strategies to address the literacy and numeracy challenges experienced by learners with the intention to effectively develop those skills by 2016. One of the main aspects of the LITNUM Strategy’s vision for change is to improve teachers’ competency to efficiently manage their classroom practices in language literacy development (WCED, 2006).

As a language teacher trainer at a higher institution, while supervising student teachers during practice teaching, and observing learners’ reading performance, although on a small scale, I realized the extent of the reading literacy crisis of South African learners. Most of the learners observed were high school learners, and their reading ability seemed to be on a level way below the average for their age group. I was drawn to this topic because I realized that to be able to prepare language teachers effectively, in the challenging contexts of the South African educational landscape that persistently highlights the low reading literacy performance of learners, I needed awareness into the teaching and assessing of reading literacy in the vital transition grade in Grade Four, from ‘learning to read’ to ‘reading to learn’.

According to Chall’s (1976) scheme of reading stages, the ‘learning to read’ stage (stages 1 and 2) takes place during Grades 1, 2 and 3 during the ages 6-7 years (stage 1) and 7-8 years (stage 2) (p. 23). Chall suggests that it is in the first two stages, that children are exposed to decoding, fluency and confirmation of initial reading. Stage 3 according to Chall (1976) is the ‘reading to learn stage’ (p.25), which is roughly between grades 4-6 (ages 9-12). It is in this stage Chall (2003) proposes that students “use reading as a tool for learning, as texts begin to contain new words and ideas beyond their own language and their knowledge of the world” (Chall & Jacobs, 2003: 1).

Understanding this vital shift between the ‘learning to read’ and ‘reading to learn’ stages, would enable me to provide better support to language student teachers with regards to the teaching and assessing of reading literacy, focusing on reading comprehension, specifically questioning, which is a critical component of reading literacy development.

1.2. Context of the Study

Reading and Viewing is Learning outcome 3 in the previous curriculum policy document, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) (Department of Education (DoE), 2002), for languages for Grade Four learners. This learning outcome states that learners should be able to read and view for information and enjoyment as well as respond critically to different values in texts (DoE, 2002). The RNCS and National Curriculum Statement (NCS) policy documents recognized reading in the Intermediate Phase (starting at Grade Four) as a fundamental skill for language development, as well as for further learning and enjoyment (DoE, 2002; DoE, 2005). The more recent Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011) also emphasizes “well-developed reading skills” as crucial to learning successfully across the curriculum, as well as a necessary skill for learners to develop as full participants in society. The above view is supported by Macdonald (2002) who emphasizes that the development from ‘learning to read’ to ‘reading to learn’ is fundamental to basic education.

Proficient reading literacy development is of crucial importance for general learning at school as reading together with writing develop children to participate fully in the wider society. However, for many South African learners the reality is that they never learn to read properly, which affects their academic achievement to the extent that they struggle until matric and further in their academic career, sometimes leading to early drop out, before completing the matric examination (Govender, 2010; Matier Moore & Hart, 2007; Pretorius, 2010; Pretorius, 2014; Pretorius & Machet, 2004; Spaul, 2014; Van der Berg, 2016).

The 2015 National Senior Certificate Examination Diagnostic Technical Report by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2016) identified the poor language skills of many learners as one of the major reasons for underachievement. The report revealed a strong correlation between the reading skills of the students and their “inability to decode the requirements of a question.” This adversely affects the ability of those candidates to interpret questions accurately and to give appropriate responses to the questions thereby affecting their academic performance. Furthermore, the report states that it is probable that this problem is caused by shortcomings in the teaching strategies applied by teachers, or the lack of strategies. Also, noted in the report was that a number of candidates struggled with questions that required more independent or creative thought (DBE, 2016).

Furthermore, recent findings in a research report by Van der Berg (2016) revealed that most learners in poorer schools already have an additional disadvantage into achieving a good pass in matric by the end of Grade Three because of the unequal education system that fails them. These findings were based on the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results of 2012 and 2013 (Van der Berg, 2016). This evidence concurs with the view of Pretorius (2014) and Spaul (2014) that by the end of the Foundation Phase (Grade Three) learners should be able to read properly. If reading literacy as a fundamental skill is not achieved by Grade Four, it will be difficult to catch up with the backlog for the rest of their academic careers.

Already in 1999, the President's Education Initiative (PEI) research project report by Taylor and Vinjevoold (1999), painted a distressing picture of the teaching and learning of reading in South African classrooms, especially in second language, disadvantaged contexts. According to the findings, limited time was spent on reading, and the shortage of suitable reading material for pupils, made assessment of reading competence difficult. The teaching of reading was found to be incidental and not a focused activity in the Grades Four to Six classes where the research was conducted (Taylor & Vinjevoold, 1999).

The apt subtitle of Brahm Fleisch's (2008) book, 'Why do South African schoolchildren underachieve in reading and mathematics?' highlights the literacy crisis South African school children are currently experiencing. Fleisch draws on existing research evidence to explain the low reading literacy levels of South African schoolchildren, who are among the weakest readers in the world, as well as in Africa. He acknowledges that there is more than one reason for the literacy crises in South African Primary schools, including health, welfare, language of instruction, family literacy practices, access to books, etc. Nevertheless, he stresses the importance of classroom practices in reading instruction, as according to him reading achievement and performance depends on what teachers and learners do in the classroom (Fleisch, 2008).

Despite a progressive Language-in-Education Policy (DoE, 1997) on paper, and many DoE initiatives and interventions since 2006 e.g. the Drop All and Read Campaign, provision of literacy resources to schools, the Foundations for Learning Campaign (2008), Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2006-2016), the National Reading Strategy document (2008), etc., it appears as if the impact of these initiatives is not noticeable as indicated by the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006 and 2011 results (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012), as well as the

above-mentioned findings reported by Spaul (2014) and Van der Berg (2016) and the National Senior Certificate Examination Diagnostic Technical Report (2016).

The 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), a rigorous comparative study on reading literacy, was conducted in 45 education systems across 40 countries. In this study, South African Grade Four and Five learners tested lowest out of 40 countries. This confirmed the reading crisis highlighted by the above researchers and showed that the majority of our South African learners could not even retrieve literal information from texts (Howie et al., 2008).

The PIRLS 2006 conceptual framework for reading literacy is based on the following definition by Mullis, Kennedy, Martin and Sainsbury (2006, p.3): It is “the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/ or valued by the individual. Young readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment”.

The written assessment framework for reading literacy in the PIRLS focused firstly on the *purposes for reading* and secondly the *processes of comprehension* (Howie, et al., 2008:11-12). Two purposes for reading were identified i.e.: reading for literary experience and reading for the use and acquisition of information. Mullis et al. (2006) identified four processes of comprehension within the above-mentioned two purposes. These required learners to be able to:

- Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information
- Make straightforward inferences
- Interpret and integrate ideas and information and
- Examine and evaluate content, language and textual elements (pp. 11-12).

The results of this study indicated that the average Grade Four and Grade Five learners in South Africa lagged behind learners internationally (Howie et al., 2008): Grade Four and Five learners tested lowest out of 40 countries and 45 education systems and almost 50% of Afrikaans and English and more than 80% African speaking learners did not achieve the basic reading skills and strategies as compared to only 6% internationally (Howie et al., 2008:27).

Grade Four learners' mean score in reading was 253 points and for Grade Five the mean score was 302 points. This is way below the fixed international mean of 500 (Howie et al., 2008). Howie et al. (2008) argued that the low reading literacy levels have implications for high school dropout rates, as well as for the further education and the economic development and the contribution of these pupils to the country, and therefore require immediate intervention.

In 2011, South African Grade Four learners participated in the prePIRLS, a new, but much easier study, developed for those countries whose performance was low in the previous study. Learners were tested at a different level from those countries participating in the PIRLS 2006 (Howie et al., 2012).

For the 2011 prePIRLS, a new baseline was created and it focused on Grade Four learners in all South African languages, whereas the PIRLS was limited to Grade Five Afrikaans and English groups. PrePIRLS objectives also differed as it focused on national performance and international comparisons e.g. in the reading achievement of Grade Four learners in South Africa and learner competencies in relation to goals and standards for reading education. The research objectives for PIRLS 2011 focused on describing trends for and international comparison with regards to e.g. the reading achievement of Grade Five learners and the benchmarking thereof in English or Afrikaans; Grade Five learners' competencies in relation to goals and standards for reading education (Howie et al, 2012).

As outlined in the PIRLS Assessment Framework (2011) the prePIRLS 2011 assessment was based on the same reading principles as for PIRLS 2011 but was easier and designed to test basic reading skills, with shorter passages and the level of vocabulary easier. 50% of the questions in the prePIRLS (2011) concentrated on the basic skill of measuring the ability to focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information in comparison with 20% in the PIRLS (2011). 25% of questions in the prePIRLS was devoted to the comprehension processes of making straightforward inference, and 25% combined to processes of interpreting and integrating ideas and information as well as examining and evaluating content, language and textual elements.

The PIRLS 2011 Assessment Framework regarding the comprehension processes assigned a larger percentage comprehension questions to all four comprehension processes: 20% for the process to Focus on and Retrieve Explicitly Stated Information; Making Straightforward

Inferences, 30%; Interpreting and Integrating Ideas and Information -30%; Examine and Evaluate Content, Language, and Textual Elements-20% (Mullis et al, 2012).

Despite the easier assessment, the prePIRLS results revealed that 51% of South African learners in 172 schools (out of a cohort of 341 primary schools) could not read at the most basic level as they could not locate and retrieve explicitly stated information in a text even in their languages of teaching and learning (Howie et al., 2012). I support Anderson's (2005) argument that urgent interventions are necessary if our economy is to gain the necessary academic and social skills, which can only be attained through acceptable literacy levels.

Why then the focus on Grade Four? Already in 2002, Macdonald noted that most learners, in Grade Four experience a “register shock” in their transition from ‘learning to read’ to ‘reading to learn’. This is even more severe for learners where the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) is not their home language (Macdonald 2002: 127). It is in this transitional grade, according to Macdonald, that literacy demands at school change and learners are exposed to information texts, like textbooks. This is even more difficult for learners in contexts where the LOLT is not their home or main language (Macdonald 2002: 127). Worldwide research has indicated that by end of Grade Three, the ‘learning to read’ phase, children’s decoding skills should have been developed to make sense of what they read (Pretorius, 2010; Spaul, 2014). Grade Four as the transitional phase therefore is a particular challenging grade as it is in this transitional phase that learners’ reading to learn’ skills should be used to acquire new knowledge and use their decoding skills to read for meaning. If children cannot read properly by Grade Four they are severely disadvantaged because they cannot read fluently or read for meaning and therefore don’t benefit much from higher grades and this will negatively influence the possibility of achieving a good matric outcome and further studies (Pretorius, 2014; Spaul, 2014; Van der Berg, 2016).

According to a study done by Chall and Jacobs (1983) it is during Grade Four, the transitional stage, that children’s scores in reading drop. In her research Chall found that children from especially low-income backgrounds scored at the national average in reading tests in Grades Two and Three, but at fourth grade the reading scores dropped, and it dropped even further as they move to the higher grades. Chall used the term “fourth-grade slump” to describe the apparent deceleration of reading scores between Grades Three and Four of especially low-income students, which influences their literacy development (Chall & Jacobs, 1983).

Chall and Jacobs' (1983) study showed that the drop in the scores on word meaning that begins in Grade Four affects reading comprehension. This aspect is supported by Sedita's (2005) notion that "word knowledge is crucial to reading comprehension and determines how well students will be able to comprehend the texts they read in middle and high school (p.1). According Sedita (2005) there are extensive differences in the vocabulary knowledge students bring to school, because their socio-economic backgrounds and language use in their homes and the communities where they come from can have a significant influence on their vocabularies which affects the development of their vocabularies (Sedita, 2005).

In Grade Four, indicated as the start of the Intermediate Phase (IP) phase, there is also a language transition for many learners with the expectation to learn in a language that is not their Mother Tongue. In the Western Cape, the language switch from isiXhosa and Afrikaans also seems to contribute further to drop in reading scores when they are assessed in English in Grade Four. This factor together with their lack of reading proficiency in the Home Language (HL) is problematic and results into what researchers (Chall & Jacobs 1983) view as a 'fourth-grade slump'.

The basis for the development of children's reading literacy skills is laid in the Foundation Phase (FP) and Intermediate Phase (IP); therefore, the effective teaching of reading comprehension in our current context in the FP and especially the IP- which starts at Grade Four, is crucial for the academic success of all learners. This is even more so for learners learning through a second language in multilingual contexts, and in poor, disadvantaged contexts as it is in the Intermediate Phase that it is expected of learners to be able to use their reading skills to learn across the curriculum.

Despite a progressive Language-in-Education Policy (DoE, 1997) on paper, and many DoE initiatives and interventions since 2006 e.g. the Drop All and Read Campaign, provision of literacy resources to schools, the Foundations for Learning Campaign (2008) and Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2006-2016), the National Reading Strategy document (2008), etc., it appears as if the impact of these initiatives is not noticeable as indicated by the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006 and 2011 results (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012). The above-mentioned findings were also reported by Spaul (2014) and Van der Berg (2016) and the National Senior Certificate Examination Diagnostic Technical Report (2016).

By investigating the current reading literacy instruction practices of 4 Grade Four language teachers at two under-resourced schools in the Western Cape, this study aims to shed light on the low level of reading achievement of South African primary school learners as highlighted by the 2006 and 2011 PIRLS projects as well as the national evaluations and investigations such as the Annual National Assessments (ANA) and Systemic Evaluations (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012; DBE, 2012).

1. 3. Purpose of the study

Because of the significant role of teachers in the education system the purpose of this study is to investigate the reading literacy instruction practices of Grade Four language teachers in two under-resourced primary schools in a multilingual context, in an attempt to understand some of the factors contributing to the low reading literacy achievement of the South African learners compared to international reading literacy standards. The focus is on the reading comprehension instruction of Grade Four Home Language teachers, the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies and comprehension skills as reading comprehension is the foundation on which all education builds, and getting it right is crucial for learning across the curriculum.

As a language teacher trainer at a higher education institution I wanted to investigate how Grade Four (IP) Home Language teachers teach reading and especially reading comprehension at school and in particular their use of questioning to develop learners' cognitive skills in reading. Research has shown that the foundation for 'learning to read' that was laid in the Early Childhood Development stage as well as FP, is consolidated in this important schooling phase (Howie et.al., 2008; Macdonald, 2002; Pretorius, 2000; Zimmerman, 2010).

A key component of this study will be to identify the extent to which Grade Four learners are taught the reading literacy skills that studies such as PIRLS are testing. This research hopes to inform more effective training of pre-service language teachers, especially to equip them with strategies to develop learners' reading literacy competency effectively through reading comprehension questioning.

1.4. Description of the Study

Given the circumstances highlighted above it is clear that the reading literacy crisis as highlighted PIRLS (Howie et al., 2008, Howie et al., 2012) in Grade Four in the reading achievement, especially for learners in disadvantaged, low-income contexts are disturbing, as reading is a vital skill for the further academic development of learners.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the current reading comprehension instruction practices of Intermediate (Grade Four) Home Language teachers at two primary schools, focusing on their questioning skills. The main question this study asks is:

How reading comprehension is taught and assessed in Grade Four English and Afrikaans Home Language classes in two Western Cape primary schools in multilingual, disadvantaged contexts?

This overall research question is guided by the following sub-questions:

- How do teachers in multilingual, disadvantaged contexts teach and assess reading comprehension?
- To what types of reading comprehension questions are learners exposed?
- What is the knowledge base in the teaching and assessing of reading comprehension amongst the participating teachers?
- What are some of the challenges that contribute to low reading literacy levels faced by Grade Four Home Language teachers in disadvantaged multilingual contexts?

1.5. Research Site

My research was conducted at two public primary schools in a township area in the northern area of the Cape Flats. The results of the 2012 Annual National Assessments (ANA) (DBE, 2012) were used to choose the research sites. WCED's grade average for Grade Four Home Language was 54%. School A's results were below average (40, 8%) and School B's results were above average (56, 8%). Although School B's results were not exceptionally high, the difference prompted my choice to investigate as both schools are situated in the same township, with similar disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances.

By choosing two schools with similar socio-economic circumstances but with different performance levels in the ANA results, I also wanted to see if there were any differences in the teaching approaches by the Grade Four teachers at the two schools. The surrounding area of both schools is indicative of the socio-economic conditions of the community. Both

schools are part of a feeding scheme providing breakfast and lunch for most of the learners on a daily basis.

Both schools fall into the quintile 1 to 3 category where learners do not pay school fees and the state accordingly provides an allowance per learner (WCED, 2013). According to the WCED, poverty rankings are determined nationally by the National Department of Basic Education, according to the poverty of the community surrounding the school as well as certain infrastructural factors. This determines the quintile rankings where quintile 1 is the poorest quintile, while quintile 5 is the least poor (WCED, 2013).

School A is a no fee public primary school of \pm 1,200 learner, including about 179 Grade Four learners. The school consists of Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa-speaking learners. The school is a parallel-medium school where the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is Afrikaans, English or isiXhosa, depending on the preference of the learners as requested by the parents. According to the Language Policy of the school, learners start their tuition in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3) in their mother tongue or HL, which could be Afrikaans, English or isiXhosa. In Grade Four, on request of the parents, many learners can change to another language stream, e.g. isiXhosa learners can choose to go to the English HL stream to receive tuition in English. According to the teachers, it is mostly isiXhosa and Afrikaans learners that change to English HL, where they are taught in English and have Afrikaans as FAL. The isiXhosa HL stream have English as FAL.

School B is also a no fee public primary school within 2,5 km of School A with about 1,200 registered learners including about 196 Grade Four learners who are mainly Afrikaans and English speaking. The school is also a parallel-medium school, where the LOLT is English or Afrikaans, depending on the preference of the learner as requested by the parents. At school B, according to the teachers, especially the Afrikaans – speaking parents choose to put their children in the English classes from Grade One onwards. In the English HL classes, Afrikaans is the FAL and in the Afrikaans HL classes, English is the FAL.

Both schools do not have library facilities, and very few print-resources were observed in the classrooms. Only two of the classrooms had a reading corner/table.

The participants were initially four Grade Four English and Afrikaans Home Language teachers, two English, and two Afrikaans. However, five teachers eventually participated in

the study, due to a request from the principal at School B to include an additional Grade Four teacher who was a Head of Department (HOD) and an Afrikaans HL teacher.

1.6. Significance of the Study

Based on national and international literacy assessment studies such as the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) (DBE, 2012) and PIRLS (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012), it appears as if the current approaches to reading literacy development including reading comprehension do not effectively develop South African learners' ability to read to learn in the Intermediate Phase, especially in disadvantaged contexts.

Klapwijk (2012) argues that teachers are the main agents that can bring about the change needed in the classroom in South African schooling context and so this study aimed to investigate teachers' current practices of teaching reading comprehension in Grade Four home language classes in under-resourced schools, focusing on teachers' questioning skills and strategies for teaching reading literacy.

As a language teacher trainer at a higher institution I hoped that firstly this investigation would give me a deeper understanding of the challenging contexts of the South African educational landscape that has persistently highlighted the low reading literacy performance of learners such as in the PIRLS 2006 and 2011 reports (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012).

Secondly, I hoped that it would provide me with valuable insight in understanding the teaching and assessing of reading literacy in the important transitional grade, which is Grade Four, especially the teaching and assessing of reading comprehension, which is a crucial skill for further academic learning.

Thirdly, it is hoped that by understanding the current reading literacy crisis experienced in South African schools this study will inform and contribute to more effective language teacher training and development.

This will enable me to provide better support to language student teachers concerning the teaching and assessing of reading literacy focusing on reading comprehension and developing their questioning skills, which is an essential component of reading literacy development to develop learners' higher cognitive-level skills. Thereby this study hopes to contribute to informing and strengthening the preparation of pre-service language student

teachers more specifically on questioning strategies during reading comprehension instruction.

1.7. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on Grade Four English and Afrikaans HL teachers' skills and ability to develop learners reading literacy during reading comprehension instruction in the Intermediate Phase. The motivation for focusing on reading literacy is because it is the foundational skill that is crucial for further learning.

This is a small-scale qualitative study involving five Grade Four Home Language teachers in two primary schools from similar low-economic backgrounds.

A particular type of primary school was chosen as research has also indicated that it is in the disadvantaged contexts that the Grade Four 'slump' in literacy inequity becomes most evident (Chall & Jacobs, 1983; Hirsch, 2003; Pretorius, 2014; Spaull, 2012; Van der Berg, 2016).

Therefore, this study intends to emphasize Grade Four home language teachers' current classroom practices of teaching reading comprehension and thereby investigate their questioning skills. I hope that this might contribute to identifying problem areas as well as good classroom practices to inform and strengthen pre-and in-service teacher preparation and development in language teaching.

1.8. Chapter delineation of the study

The thesis consists of five chapters.

Chapter One outlined the context of the research and aims to provide an overview of the reasons this study has been undertaken. It presented the context, rationale, aim and potential contribution of the study, as well as the research questions that the study tries to answer.

Chapter Two reviews the literature to provide a theoretical framework and overview of existing research for the study. It gives an overview of the literature that covers:

- Reading theories;
- Current approaches to teaching reading;

- Teaching and assessing reading comprehension in South African Primary schools focusing on questioning;
- Teachers' knowledge base; and
- Some of the challenges faced by the majority of teachers in South African primary school classrooms.

Chapter Three focuses on the research paradigm and the methodology underpinning this study. It outlines the qualitative approach and provides theory to substantiate the choice for the methodology and design of the study. It gives details of the methods of sampling, data collection, and analysis to answer the research questions.

In Chapter Four I present the data gathered from the classroom observations, interviews and documents prepared by the participant teachers at the two schools and discuss the main findings in relation to the literature.

Chapter Five presents a summary of the study and main findings. It draws conclusions for the study and offers possible future or additional research in reading literacy development.

1.9. Conclusion

This chapter introduced the study highlighting its context, purpose, research questions, potential significance and scope. In the following chapter, I review the literature related to the topic under investigation with the focus on questioning strategies of Intermediate teachers when teaching reading comprehension in Grade Four Home Language classrooms.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

As described in the previous chapter the purpose of this study is to investigate the reading literacy instruction practices of Grade Four Home Language teachers in two under-resourced primary schools in a multilingual context, focusing on reading comprehension, especially questioning as a strategy. This chapter will discuss some of the factors contributing to the low reading literacy achievement of South African learners compared to international reading literacy standards such as highlighted by the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012).

Building on the discussion in chapter one, this chapter draws on the literature on reading theories with the emphasis on theories of reading literacy development and focusing on teaching and assessing of reading comprehension.

The ability to read as emphasized in the 2012 report of NEEDU (National Education Evaluation & Development Unit) is “crucial for general learning at school as reading together with writing equip children to participate fully in the wider society” (Taylor, Draper, Muller & Sithole, 2012:40). According to the NEEDU-report reading is the process through which learners learn to engage meaningfully with what they learn, and it is considered as the most important skill, for further academic performance (Taylor et al., 2012). The PIRLS 2011 report states clearly, “reading is the quintessential skill required. Without well-developed reading skills, learners are doomed to struggle through school and drop out when they are unable to master it adequately” (Howie et al, 2012:1).

This view is supported by Pretorius’s argument that, learners need to be good readers to be able to ‘read to learn’. Therefore, urgent attention should be given to improving the reading ability of learners because, according to her, “reading is not an additional ‘tool’ that learners need, but is the very process whereby learning occurs” (Pretorius, 2001: 14).

The expectation in the South African multilingual contexts for the majority of Grade Four Intermediate Phase learners is that they should be able to use their First Additional Language (FAL) or Second Language (L2) to learn across the curriculum. An important question for me is: Are we then not setting our learners up for failure with the expectation of being able

to read to learn across the curriculum in Grade Four, if their reading literacy levels are as low as indicated by the PIRLS 2006 and PIRLS 2011 reports (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012), as well as the 2012 ANA results (DBE, 2013)?

Therefore, the emphasis of this study is on the key role that Intermediate Phase teachers should play in the development of reading literacy of learners in the transition from the 'learning to read' phase to the 'reading to learn' phase. Focusing on teachers' use of questions during reading comprehension instruction to develop learners' reading literacy, I wanted to explore if teachers have the necessary skills and strategies to develop learners' higher-order thinking skills through more cognitively demanding questions in the transitional phase for them to move from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn', as is expected from them to use those skills to learn across the curriculum in that phase.

This chapter will therefore discuss theories around learning to read, theories about teaching reading and the research findings about learners' reading ability in the South African educational context.

2.2. Reading theories

From a broad perspective, this study aligns itself with a learner-centered model (Wilhelm, 2004). This learner-centered model draws on Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural and constructivist teaching and learning approaches and will be the foundation to analyze current teaching and assessing of reading comprehension (literacy) practices of language teachers in Grade Four multilingual classes.

Vygotsky (1978) also regarded tools as mediators and emphasized language as a crucial tool in children's development and learning. This notion is highlighted in the Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) Literacy and Numeracy (LITNUM) Strategy that language and learning are interlinked, and that optimal learning is dependent on critical language practices (WCED LITNUM strategy, 2006).

Another important aspect stressed by Vygotsky (1978) is the social use of language through communication. Underlying this aspect is that knowledge is acquired through social relationships and that learning takes place on a social level and in a cultural context (Vygotsky, 1978 cited in Dixon-Krause, 1996). This theory acknowledges that there is an active interaction between teachers, learners and tasks and provides a view that learning

takes place through interactions with others (Turuk, 2008). According to Donato (2000), teachers and learners are given opportunities to mediate and assist each other in the creation of zones of proximal development in which each party learns and develops. Language, as a crucial tool, helps learners move into and through their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and that is of great significance to sociocultural theory.

So, what is ZPD? Vygotsky defines ZPD as “the distance between a child’s actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving, and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Wertsch, (1985: 60). According to him, ZPD helps in shaping a child’s intellectual functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that are currently in a developing state, but will mature in future (Turuk, 2008).

This theory emphasizes that during instruction, awareness of the structure and function of language is developed by using it socially. According to Donato (2002), this theory adds greater clarity to the issue of adapted interaction and the negotiation of meanings in classroom settings. Teachers and learners are given opportunities to mediate and assist each other in the creation of zones of proximal development in which each party learns and develops (Donato 2000). This aspect has implications for the teacher’s role in reading literacy instruction in the classroom, especially the quality of language used during classroom interaction as a social but also a formal learning context.

2.2.1. Interactive teaching

Active learner participation in the construction of meaning during the reading process, is identified by Dixon – Krause (1996) as a main focus of the social constructivist approach to develop reading skills and knowledge in the Vygotskian classroom set-up. This approach is also, one of the underpinning theories of WCED’s LITNUM Strategy (WCED LITNUM Strategy, 2006:12). It sees the teacher’s role as actively guiding, supporting, and engaging with learners in the reading process to become independent readers. Learning is perceived as a collective, shared activity and the teacher as having the role of mediator, sharing their knowledge and developing learners’ knowledge through “scaffolding the reading activity to help guide the child’s participation” (Dixon-Krause, 1996:19).

It emphasizes that learners should also be active therefore, they should be given opportunities to ask questions, argue, and give their own opinion on the topic that they are studying. These opportunities are crucial in developing learners to function on a higher cognitive level (WCED LITNUM Strategy, 2006). Social interaction helps learners' function in their ZPD through the mediation of a 'more knowledgeable other' (MKO), such as the teacher or a more capable peer.

A recommendation agreed upon by many researchers is that teachers should encourage learners to be actively involved during reading literacy instruction through questions that will promote lively discussions among students. This means less teacher talk and more student talk. Learners should be encouraged to talk about their reading, thereby ensuring that learners assume more responsibility for their own learning. By actively engaging learners and allowing them participation in the reading process could improve their thinking and reasoning skills thereby improving their comprehension levels as well as assist in further developing their competency to read to learn. Teachers should therefore plan their reading comprehension instruction programmes to include a variety of approaches to provide explicit instruction as well as give students the opportunity to practice their skills through interactive reading strategy exposure (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Day & Park, 2005; Martin & Blanc, 1984; Mikulecky, 2008; Takala, 2006; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson and Rodriguez, 2003; WCED LITNUM Strategy, 2006; Wilen, 1991; Williams, 2005).

2.2.2. Approaches to teaching reading

In the traditional approach to teaching reading, two methods have been identified by researchers: Firstly, the 'bottom-up' approach which is often referred to as a phonics approach, where the argument is that learners learn to read by learning the relationship between sounds and letters (phonemic awareness) and then building up words and sentences. Decoding skills are emphasized by teachers and no or very little recognition is given to what the reader brings to the text.

Secondly, the 'top-down' approach, also known as the whole language approach, where it is argued that learners learn to read by using their existing knowledge of the content and the genre of a text to make sense of it. It focuses on what the reader brings to the text and how they interact with the text (Gibbons, 2002).

However, both approaches have limitations and educationists agree that learners need to use both ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top down’ approaches as part of the reading process. This approach focuses on both what is written in the text and what the reader brings to it by using both ‘bottom up’ and ‘top down’ skills. Alderson (2000) as well as Gibbons (2002), suggest that the emphasis should be on balancing the two approaches in an interactive approach (Alderson, 2000; Gibbons, 2002).

In the Foundations for Learning Campaign (2008-2011), the National Department of Education embarked on an explicit teaching of reading methodologies programme, called the Balanced Language Programme, which aims to support teachers through the introduction of learner-centered and effective methodologies. The Balanced Language programme consists of the following methodologies: shared reading and writing, word and sentence level work, group reading, guided reading, independent reading and writing, reading aloud and reading for enjoyment; sustained silent reading (DBE, 2008:4). This programme is based on the Interactive Model of reading which consists of both the Phonics and Whole Language approaches (DoE, 2008: 28), and was also recommended by Alderson (2000).

However, in a study done in Australia, using a “balanced approach” is only seen as a partial explanation for reading literacy development, as it was found that there were other literacy teaching activities identified in the research study that contributed to effective teaching of reading, e.g. participation, knowledge, orchestration, learner support, differentiation, respect (Cowen, 2003 as cited in Loudon et al., 2005: 244). This confirms the view of Grabe (2004) about the complex nature of the reading process.

Although there are many effective models of teaching reading, the complexity of the reading process has influenced the possibility to arrive at a model of reading instruction that includes all the elements involved. Moats (1999) (as cited in Howie et al., 2008) acknowledges that the “Teaching of reading requires considerable knowledge and skill, acquired over several years through focused study and supervised practice.” Grabe (2004) also recognizes that there is still much research to be done, especially in L2 contexts “on the effectiveness of instructional practices and direct effects of specific abilities on reading comprehension development” (p. 60).

For Luke and Freebody (1990) successful reading literacy development is not about one appropriate method or programme but comprises of an interaction of skills and resources embedded in different programmes. They suggest that for learners to be successful readers

they need the following skills also referred to as four roles for successful readers: As code-breaker, text participant or meaning maker, text user and text analyzer (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Gibbons, 2002; Luke & Freebody, 1990 as cited in Janks, 2011).

A reader as code- breaker should be able to know letters, letter-sound relationships, read words, read sentences and read connected texts. However, this is a basic skill in the reading development and focuses mainly on lower-order cognitive skills.

The second role is the reader as text participant or meaning maker where the expectation is that readers should be able to search for meaning, as well as know and apply different comprehension strategies. The expectation is that readers should read actively by interacting with texts and responding in diverse ways and bringing their own experience to texts.

Thirdly, readers as text users should be able to know and use a variety of text forms for a variety of purposes to assist comprehension. A text user should be able to adjust reading strategies according to the text structure and the purpose.

The role as text analyst requires that the readers apply higher-order thinking skills for deeper understanding of the text. Readers that are text analysts should be able to recognize that texts are not neutral but inform and influence readers, that they represent particular views and perspectives, also that other views and perspectives may be missing. Text analysts also have the ability recognize to writer's point of view, and that the design and messages of texts can be critiqued, and alternatives considered (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Gibbons, 2002; Janks, 2011).

It is important to recognize that one role is not more important than the others are. All students, especially developing readers need exposure to all four roles to develop their higher-order thinking skills to become successful readers. Gibbons as well as Aubut & Taylor suggest that each of the four roles has a specific function and should be integrated simultaneously (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Gibbons, 2002) in a “well-balanced literacy program for the coherent development of each of them” (Aubut & Taylor, 2004: 8).

2.2.3. Importance of explicit teaching of reading and use of reading strategies

Pretorius (2014) and others have highlighted the fact that reading does not happen automatically but should be systematically and explicitly taught. Despite their language

orientation, all children must be explicitly taught to read because children develop their reading comprehension skills through effective instruction and involvement in extensive reading. Many researchers have also emphasized the importance of explicit quality classroom instruction practices, supporting and immersing learners in reading activities and strategies to develop learners reading literacy skills effectively (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Govender, 2010; Hart, n.d.; Klapwijk, 2012; Klapwijk, 2015; Matier Moore & Hart, 2007; Mikulecky, 2008; Pretorius, 2014; Pretorius, 2012; Pretorius & Currin, 2010; Pretorius & Lephala, 2011; Taylor et al., 2003; Taylor, Draper, Muller & Sithole, 2013; Williams, 2005; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014). This factor has also been highlighted by the PIRLS results that South African learners do not receive enough exposure to explicit teaching of reading to develop their abilities to construct meaning and know and use reading strategies effectively as required by the PIRLS assessment framework (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012; Van Staden & Howie, 2008).

An observation made by some international researchers is that most teachers control the classroom interaction during reading comprehension instruction by doing all the speaking while learners listen passively and only answer teacher-generated questions. Learners therefore get little opportunity to use their language to think and express their ideas by talking about their reading (Day & Park, 2003; Martin & Blanc, 1984; Wilen, 1991).

The explicit teaching of reading comprehension is currently associated with a reading instructional approach that emphasizes the use of reading strategies. Harris and Hodges (1995) defined strategy as “a systematic plan, consciously adapted and monitored to improve one’s performance in learning” (as cited in Barry, 2002: 132).

One of the components identified by The Ontario Literacy Report (2004) for the effective development of students’ comprehension skills is “teacher-directed instruction in reading comprehension strategies” (Aubut & Taylor, 2004: 66). The following reading strategies have been identified in the report as important for the development of critical reading comprehension skills: Activation of prior knowledge, prediction, visualization, questioning, drawing inferences, finding important ideas, summarizing, synthesizing, monitoring and repairing comprehension, evaluating.” (Aubut & Taylor, 2004: 68). These are in line with reading strategies identified by Fordham (2006) as effective instructional practices to develop reading comprehension.

The PIRLS report (2008) also emphasized the development of comprehension skills and strategies as crucial for successful reading literacy development. The following twelve reading comprehension skills and strategies were identified by PIRLS 2006 as essential activities to be considered to develop learners' reading literacy competency: 1. Knowing letters; 2. Knowing letter-sound relationships; 3. Reading words; 4. Reading isolated sentences; 5. Reading connected text; 6. Identifying the main idea of text; 7. Explaining or supporting understanding of text; 8. Comparing text with personal experience; 9. Comparing different texts; 10. Making predictions about what will happen next; 11. Making generalizations and inferences; 12. Describing the style and structure of the text (Howie et al., 2008: 42).

By observing, the teacher modeling the reading strategies and applying them to engage with the texts, learners learn to use the strategies independently to understand the text better. The teacher therefore scaffolds and supports the learner in the development of their higher-order thinking skills with activities in the before, during and after reading phases to further develop their reading comprehension skills (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Cumming-Potvin et al. (2003); DBE, 2010; Gibbons, 2002; Grabe, 2004).

For effective reading comprehension development, learners need explicit instruction in each reading strategy as research has highlighted that explicit teaching of reading strategies improves their reading comprehension skills. Pretorius and Lephala (2011) recommend that learners are encouraged to name the strategies to familiarize them and use them extensively. Klapwijk (2015) proposed a reading strategy framework to develop and support teachers' comprehension skills when teaching reading comprehension (Klapwijk, 2015).

Despite consensus by many researchers that the use of reading strategies in reading comprehension instruction benefits learners reading literacy development, most South African learners do not get enough, or any, teaching exposure to the necessary reading strategies to effectively develop their reading comprehension skills, especially their higher-order thinking skills (Hart, n.d.; Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012; Janks, 2011; Klapwijk, 2012; Klapwijk, 2015; Matier Moore & Hart, 2007; Pretorius, 2014; Pretorius & Currin, 2010; Pretorius & Lephala, 2011; Taylor et al., 2013; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

A study by Janks (2011) found little evidence of South African Grade Four learners' ability to use the reading strategies considered by PIRLS as requirement for reading literacy development. By linking the strategies to the four roles of successful readers (Luke &

Freebody, 1990), she concluded that little evidence was found of learners in South African Grade Four classrooms as text users and text participants and no evidence of their ability as text analysts. This finding is the reason for the poor performance of South African children in the PIRLS, as they do not get exposure to the more cognitively demanding questions as required by the PIRLS assessment (Janks, 2011).

Readers should not be limited to low-level questions and activities that focus only on code-breaking and literal comprehension. Learners need to be taught to become active strategic readers, thereby developing their higher-order thinking skills and become independent readers. Special attention should therefore be paid to the explicit teaching of reading comprehension with emphasis on the development of reading strategies (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Grabe, 2004) such as inferring, interpreting and integrating information and evaluating content, language and textual elements. Furthermore, research in the South African schooling context has revealed that learners' basic reading comprehension skills are developed through explicit teaching thereof (Klapwijk, 2012; Pretorius & Currin, 2010; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

Therefore, the importance of effective teacher questioning through posing challenging questions in scaffolding learners' reading comprehension skills development is the focus in the following section.

2.3. Reading Comprehension

Several researchers pointed out the complex nature of the teaching of reading. According to them part of the answer may lie in the fact that satisfactory reading does not just depend on different texts available, but also on the readers, contexts and communities (Bearne & Hodges, as cited in Grainger, 2004; Grabe, 2004). To be able to understand a written text involves capable drawing out of the essential information to show meaningful interaction between the reader and the text.

Many teachers see reading comprehension as the most important learning activity for teaching and assessing of reading. Reading comprehension activities are created to teach children reading comprehension skills as well as evaluate them so learners could discuss questions at different levels of comprehension prior to formally answering them. Therefore, teacher directed questions are central to guiding the learning process in reading comprehension.

2.3.1. Definitions of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension according to the Aubut & Taylor (2004) “involves uncovering the layers of meaning that may reside in the minds of both the reader and the author to ‘create’ meaning from and reach a deeper level of understanding of texts” (p.65). Comprehension is a “higher-order thinking activity in which readers use several mental processes and strategies to consider the big ideas in a text and to fulfill the many purposes of reading” (Aubut & Taylor, 2004: 65). The National Assessment of Educational Progress- US (NAEP) (2013) defines Reading Comprehension as follows: “It is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. It consists of three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity or purpose for reading” (p. 5).

The following definition of reading literacy was used as the basis for PIRLS 2006 and 2011: “...reading literacy is defined as the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and /or valued by the individual. Young readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment” (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, Trong & Sainsbury, 2009 as cited in Howie et al., 2012:19). One of the aspects comprising the above definition of reading literacy as outlined in the PIRLS Assessment Framework (2001) is the four processes of reading comprehension which test readers’ ability to create meaning by focusing on and retrieving specific ideas, making inferences, interpreting and integrating information and ideas and examining or evaluating the text (Mullis, Martin, Gonzalez, & Kennedy, 2001).

Pretorius (2012) noted that comprehension is the ability to construct meaning from a text using reading strategies effectively. For McGuiness (2004) “it is the ability to locate relevant information in a text and use it to interpret meaning” (McGuiness, 2004 as cited in Pretorius, 2012). To read with comprehension, learners need to be able to use their prior knowledge, knowledge of the text structure as well as their inferencing skills and ability to integrate information to construct meaning. Comprehension is the outcome of reading, and forms the basis of academic literacy and involves a number of skills to understand a text (Che Lah & Hashim, 2013; Pretorius, 2000; Pretorius, 2012; Pretorius & Ribbens, 2005).

The above definitions emphasize the significant role of reading in the cognitive development of learners’ ability to create meaning and have knowledge of reading strategies to function

optimally academically. In support of the above notion, Rose (2005) argues, “the ability to read with comprehension, and to learn from reading, is the basis for most other activities in schooling” (Rose, 2005 as cited in Matier Moore & Hart, 2007: 18).

2.3.2. Teaching reading comprehension

For effective reading comprehension instruction Grabe (2004) identified the following learner abilities or skills that need to be developed: “word recognition, fluency, vocabulary learning and the creation of a vocabulary-rich environment, appropriate activation of background knowledge, effective language knowledge and comprehension skills, teaching of text structures and discourse organization, promoting strategic reader qualities, building reading fluency, promoting extensive reading, and developing intrinsic motivation for reading” (p. 46).

Pretorius and Lephala (2011) identified four components of reading based on the cognitive-linguistic aspect, which are decoding, comprehension, response and meta-linguistic knowledge, of which decoding, and comprehension are the two main components (Pretorius & Lephala, 2011).

Decoding is a basic skill, which entails the ability to know letters and sounds and understand how they form words, to read straightforward sentences, to assist learners to read fluently. This skill is what Luke and Freebody (1990) refers to as the ability to crack the code, which is a basic lower order cognitive skill. Decoding normally takes place at the start of the reading process when learners are learning to read (Luke & Freebody, 1990 as cited in Janks, 2011; Pretorius, 2012; Pretorius, 2014). Researchers emphasize that decoding is a necessary and critical skill and needs to be strongly developed because it enables reading comprehension, but, it does not comprise reading because reading proficiency is the outcome of both decoding and comprehension (Caine & Oakhill, 1999; Che Lah & Hashim, 2014; Pretorius, 2000; Pretorius, 2012; Pretorius & Lephala, 2011). Pretorius appropriately noted, “We should understand what we are reading. Through decoding we ‘learn to read’, while comprehension enables us to ‘read to learn” (Pretorius, 2000:34).

A number of researchers in South Africa indicated that most teachers in South African classrooms put too much emphasis on the teaching of decoding skills assuming if learners can decode they can comprehend. There seems to be an “over-focus” on decoding in addition to fluent oral reading at the cost of comprehension. Therefore, not much effort

goes into assisting learners to make the transition from decoding to comprehension and the assumption can be made that the problem seems to be mainly in comprehension and not decoding (Fang, 2008; Matier Moore & Hart, 2007; Pretorius, 2014; Pretorius & Currin, 2010; Pretorius & Ribbens, 2005; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

The indication is thus that reading, as a tool for learning is not properly developed. South African Grade Four learners' poor performance in PIRLS clearly indicate that attention needs to be paid to teaching reading comprehension skills as PIRLS tests higher-order reading skills as well as the ability to simply decode information (Howie et al., 2012).

This notion is corresponding with Janks's (2011) argument that reading is more than just the ability to decode, as the questions asked by the PIRLS assessment of reading comprehension also requires higher-order thinking skills (Janks, 2011). Learners need to be able to understand what they are reading, before they can infer, analyze and evaluate what they are reading to be able to answer the questions asked by PIRLS effectively (Janks 2011).

The underlying factor that is highlighted in a body of research of South African classrooms is that very little attention is paid to reading comprehension instruction, which also include questioning strategies. It seems as if little, if any, formal comprehension instruction takes place in schools. The poor performance of South African Grade Four and Five learners in PIRLS 2006 and 2011 is a clear indication that reading comprehension instruction needs urgent attention (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012; Klapwijk, 2012; Klapwijk, 2015; Pretorius, 2011; Pretorius & Lephala, 2011; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

The above finding that reading comprehension needs urgent attention, which is quite recent, concurs with Bormuth's earlier international research finding in 1979, that comprehension is both one of the most important and one of the weakest areas of instruction (Bormuth as cited in Durkin, 1979: 486). Given the time lapse since 1979, this indicates that despite national as well as international research efforts not much improvement regarding implementation has taken place.

2.4. Questioning as an important teaching strategy to develop reading literacy

One of the sub-questions this study seeks to answer in relation to the main research question is, to what types of reading comprehension questions are learners exposed? Are learners exposed to a range of question types that include the four processes of reading

comprehension as required by the PIRLS Assessment Framework? According to Mullis et al. (2009), readers use different cognitive processes to construct meaning to be able to understand different kinds of written texts. These cognitive processes play an important part in reading comprehension and refer to the mental process or kinds of thinking when readers answer comprehension questions (Driscoll et al., 2012; Mullis et al., 2009).

The four types of comprehension processes used by PIRLS assessment Framework (2001) to develop the comprehension questions used in the PIRLS 2006 and 2011 projects included questions that:

- Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information
- Make straightforward inferences
- Interpret and integrate ideas and information
- Examine and evaluate content, language and textual elements (Mullis et al., 2001: 4).

According to the PIRLS Assessment Framework (2011), the first process is focus on, retrieve explicitly stated information, and requires readers to find information that is explicitly stated in the text. The meaning is evident and specified and the reader should have a clear sense of what information is wanted to answer the question. Examples of reading tasks or questions that focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information include e.g. looking for specific ideas that is in a specific sentence, definitions, facts or identifying the setting of a story (e.g. time, place), etc. (Mullis et al., 2009).

Secondly, making inferences requires the reader to move beyond the surface of texts and draw on their own knowledge and understanding to make meaning of the text (Day & Park, 2005). To make meaning, readers have to go beyond the information that is explicitly stated in the text to connect different meanings that is not explicitly stated in the text. (Mullis et al, 2009) According to the PIRLS Assessment Framework (2011), some of these inferences are straightforward in that they are based mostly on information that is contained in the text and the text leads the readers to the obvious or straightforward inference.

Examples of reading tasks and questions that assess the making of straightforward inferences may include e. g:

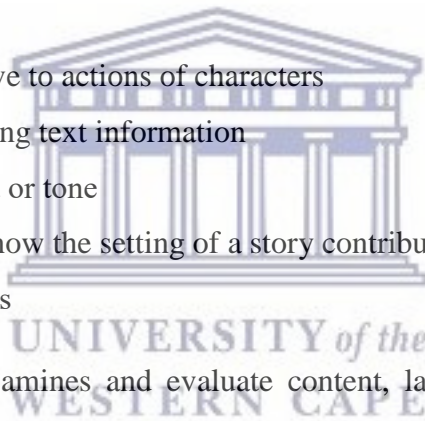
- Identifying generalizations made in the text
- Describing the relationship between two characters.
- Compare or connect ideas, problems, or situations.

- Summarize main ideas. (Mullis et al, 2009; Driscoll et al, 2012)

Thirdly, what do readers do when they *integrate* new information into their initial sense of what a passage in a text says and, *interpret* what they read? When they interpret and integrate text information and ideas, readers may need to draw on their background knowledge and experiences and their understanding of the world more than they do for straightforward inferences. This process requires readers to make connections that are not only implicit, but that may be open to some interpretation based on their own view (Mullis et al (2009). According to Driscoll et al. (2012), Integrating and interpreting involve readers to make comparisons and contrasts of information or actions of characters, examine relations or consider alternatives in what the text presents. They argue that this aspect is critical to comprehension.

Examples of reading tasks and questions that assess the making of straightforward inferences may include e.g.:

- considering an alternative to actions of characters
- comparing and contrasting text information
- inferring a story's mood or tone
- make statements about how the setting of a story contributes to the creation of theme.
- a character's motivations



Lastly, the process that examines and evaluate content, language and textual elements requires the reader to draw on knowledge about the world and previous reading experience and use that knowledge to view the text objectively. The focus is on how text structure and language use bring meaning to the text. Readers should be able to use their knowledge on text genres and structure, as well as language conventions to examine, evaluate, and make a judgement on one or other aspect in the text.

Prior reading experience and knowledge of language plays an important part in this process (Mullis et al., 2009; Driscoll et al., 2012).

Examples of reading tasks and questions that assess examining and evaluating content, language and textual elements may include e. g:

- evaluating the possibility that the events described could really happen
- arbitrating the completeness or clarity of information in the text
- items may ask students to evaluate the quality of the text as a whole, to determine what is most significant in a passage

- Items can ask students to focus at the level of language choices, etc. (Mullis et al., 2009; Driscoll et al., 2012).

Given South African Grade Four learners' poor performance in PIRLS, and using the above PIRLS comprehension processes, I wanted to establish if teachers have the necessary skills and strategies to develop learners' higher-order thinking skills through questions to prepare learners for the transition from learning to read to reading to learn.

For many teachers reading comprehension instruction is the questions and answers they use to advance children's comprehension abilities. Consequently, direct teacher questioning seems to be the dominant teaching strategy used by teachers to determine and increase learners' reading comprehension levels. The use of questions forms a crucial part of activities during reading comprehension development. Therefore, teachers' questions and questioning strategies play a significant role in developing reading literacy competency as well as assessing reading comprehension (Brualdi Timmins, 1998; Cotton, 1988; Day & Park, 2005; Durkin 1979; Fordham, 2006; Gall, 1970; Parker & Hurry, 2007; Wilen, 1991).

The above notion is emphasized by Grellet (1981) and Hirschman et al. (2008) suggesting that question types and question functions are connected as certain questions develop certain reading skills in developing learners to become independent and efficient readers.

In an international study done by Wilen (1991) on *Questioning skills for teachers*, Ross (1988) as cited in Wilen, identified 2 basic purposes for teacher questioning: Firstly: to find out if students remember and understand what they have learned and secondly: if students can apply the knowledge. In addition, teachers' questioning during reading also increases student's comprehension levels to move the reading process forward. Many researchers agree that well-designed questions are crucial in promoting learners understanding of the texts to create meaning, as well as developing their critical thinking skills. Effective use of questions, including oral questioning can promote student learning and help learners construct meaning to move beyond the literal understanding of the text (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Brualdi Timmins, 1998; Day & Park, 2005; Fordham, 2006; Ralph, 2000).

Fordham's finding (2006) also concurs with that notion that the questions that teachers ask are intended to determine and develop student's comprehension levels. For him the importance of the effective use of teachers' questions is that it plays a guiding role in the thought processes of students (Fordham, 2006).

I agree with Brualdi Timmins (1998) and Cotton's (1988) notion that questioning is one of the most popular methods of teaching, and it is important that types of questions and questioning behaviour assist the process of learning.

Because questions play such an important part in language development, I also support Day and Park's (2005) opinion that well-developed reading comprehension questions assist students in their interaction with texts to create meaning as well as developing their critical thinking skills.

To extend those comprehension skills requires from teachers the necessary expertise to effectively develop and ask different question types to develop learners reading skills to become strategic readers and be able to learn across the curriculum. Therefore, teachers need the necessary knowledge about questioning and the competence to teach and assess reading through reading comprehension of which questioning forms the basis.

A reader's (in this case a learner) accomplishment, besides understanding the text, is measured in their ability to understand and answer questions on the text they are reading. The success of the reader in interpreting and answering the questions is according to Gerot (2000) dependent on the reader's ability to interpret meaning from and to the text (Gerot, 2000 as cited in Unsworth, 2002:209).

Answering reading comprehension questions therefore requires the reader to execute different types of tasks, depending on the information that should be retrieved to answer the question. In that regard, therefore teachers' questions and questioning strategies is of utmost importance when assessing reading comprehension as well as developing reading literacy.

Learners thus need guidance to use their own knowledge to construct meaning to move beyond the literal understanding of the text. Therefore, different types of questions are needed to stimulate their thinking as reading comprehension development requires addressing a variety of thinking levels for effective cognitive development on a higher level. The emphasis on thinking while reading is an important aspect of successful reading comprehension, as different phases of reading as well as different texts require different types of reading and many researchers point out that teachers tend to use questions that ignore the cognitive components of reading comprehension (Brualdi Timmins, 1998; Day & Park, 2005; Fordham, 2006; Gall; 1970; Grellet, 2004; Parker & Hurry, 2007; Taylor et al., 2003).

One of the outcomes of the PIRLS 2006, results is that it shows that South African learners struggle to make sense of the texts that they read, and that shortcoming influences their reading comprehension achievement (Pretorius & Lephala, 2011). The results of the 2011 PIRLS and prePIRLS once again showed that South African Learners struggled to reach the lowest international benchmark for adequate reading skills (Howie et al., 2012).

The 2011 PIRLS report describes the prePIRLS 2011 and PIRLS 2011 assessment measure of learner reading achievement with questions targeting the selected processes of comprehension that measure reading proficiency according to the four comprehension processes, which include higher order comprehension measuring. For this purpose, international benchmarks were developed to measure learner's reading performance on a scale in relation to the comprehension questions asked (Howie et al., 2012).

The four international benchmarks cover Advanced (625 points), High (550 points), Intermediate (475 points) and the Low (400) points. Attached to each benchmark are questions that focus on each of the four processes of comprehension. E.g., questions targeting the Advanced International benchmark of 625 points would require skills that distinguish and interpret complex information from different parts of text and provide full text-based support when reading information texts. For the Intermediate International benchmark of 475 points, comprehension questions would require learners' ability to make straightforward inferences about the attributes, feelings and motivations of main characters when reading literary texts (Howie et al., 2012: 46).

Despite the easier assessment of the prePIRLS, the South African Grade Four learners' reading achievements were well below the international average score of 500. Only 29% of South African learners reached the Low International benchmark while a mere 6% reached the Advanced International benchmark. Similarly, the Grade Five learners who took part in the 2011 PIRLS assessment were part of the lowest cohort of international participants with a reading performance of 421. Important to note is that there was no substantial change between the 2006 and 2011 reading achievement of the Grade Five Afrikaans and English learners. Both prePIRLS and PIRLS 2011 results point to poor reading performance that is consistently below the International Centre point score of 500 (Howie et al., 2012).

A key finding of the PIRLS 2011 report is that participant teachers spent most of their instructional time focusing on basic reading skills and strategies, e.g. decoding and very little time on developing learners' inferential skills that include higher cognitive level

thinking. The poor performance of South African learners in both the prePIRLS and PIRLS of 2011 emphasize the need for reading instruction practices that focus on the challenges in development of language and reading skill in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases (Howie et al., 2012).

In this regard, a key reading comprehension instruction practice – and one that is central to this study - is that of questioning. An important “difference between more and less effective teachers” (Cotton, 1988) is the use of questioning, including oral questioning, which has the benefit of engaging students in reading.

Oral Questioning

Oral questioning seems to be the dominant strategy used by teachers during reading comprehension instruction. This notion is confirmed by Parker and Hurry (2007) who identified direct oral questioning as a dominant strategy for teaching and assessing reading comprehension. This form of classroom interaction, recitation, is teacher-centered, where teachers ask the questions and learners passively respond with answers, reciting their knowledge by answering teachers’ questions. Recitation allows little opportunity for learners to use language to think and express ideas. In the South African context, Zimmerman and Smit (2014), as well as Pretorius (2014) pointed out that too much focus is placed on oral comprehension where teachers dominate, to the detriment of written comprehension activities (Dillon, 1990; Fordham, 2005; Parker & Hurry, 2007; Pretorius, 2014; Wilen, 1991, Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

Many researchers propose that using discussion by involving and encouraging learners’ active participation in the reading process will improve their comprehension. Discussion as a questioning strategy during reading comprehension instruction describes the process where teacher and learners discuss the questions and answers through interactive conversation. The pattern of discussion is more interaction between learners and involves less teacher talk, but more learner talk. Questions for discussion are more open-ended on higher cognitive levels. Researchers agree that literacy discussion cultivates shared engagement and higher-level thinking (Dillon, 1990; Gall & Gall and Dillon as cited in Wilen 1991). Guiding and supporting learners through texts and helping them create their own questions is more effective than telling them what the text means or what to look for in

texts according to the Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy in Grades 4 to 6 in Ontario (Aubut & Taylor, 2004).

One of the findings by a group of researchers nationally and internationally is that recitation as a questioning strategy is prevalent in most primary and secondary classrooms where the teacher controls the interaction and not much learner initiative or questions are displayed. (Day & Park, 2005; Dillon, 1990; Pretorius, 2014; Taylor et al., 2003; Wilen, 1991). The above finding concurs with the conclusion of a body of research that teachers do not use discussion frequently and emphasizing that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge about questioning techniques to conduct discussions effectively for comprehension development. To use discussion successfully, teachers need to encourage active learner involvement for them to assume more responsibility for their own learning (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Brualdi Timmins, 1998; Day & Park, 2005; Dillon, 1990; Louden et al., 2005; Martin & Blanc, 1984; Parker & Hurrly, 2007; Pretorius, 2014; Taylor et al., 2003; Wilen, 1991). South African teachers according to Zimmerman & Smit (2014) should provide more opportunities for learners to engage in written as well as verbal question answering which requires reflection and discussion and answering of higher-order questions.

Teachers' questions are intended to determine and develop learners' comprehension levels. However, research has indicated that most questions are not cognitively challenging. One of the main findings from a body of research internationally as well as nationally is that at all school levels teachers continuously use low-cognitive level questions that do not require much thinking depth from students (Fordham, 2006; Gall, 1970; Parker & Hurry, 2007). Most of the questions asked are literal low-level questions that require information recall supplying the correct answer. Therefore, the emphasis is mostly on literal comprehension, orally as well as in written comprehension tasks. Theory suggests teachers should ask higher-order questions, but practice confirms teachers mostly ask lower level questions. Thus, higher-order thinking, and reasoning are not elicited through teachers questioning strategies (Gall, 1970; Gerot, 2000; Janks, 2011).

Learners need to be prepared to ask and answer middle- and higher-order questions. According to Bloom's revised taxonomy, middle-order questions are those that test application and analysis, while higher-order questions gauge learners' evaluation and creativity (Krathwohl, 2002). Using the comprehension processes of the PIRLS 2011 Assessment Framework, middle-order questions would be questions that assess the ability

to make straightforward inferences and higher-order questions would assess the skills to interpret and integrate as well as examine and evaluate content, language and textual elements.

Therefore emphasis should be placed on developing critical thinking skills through higher-cognitive levels rather than recalling of facts in order to develop effective reading comprehension (Cotton, 1988; Fordham, 2006; Gall, 1970; Gerot, 2000; Janks, 2011; Parker & Hurry, 2007; Pretorius, 2014; Taylor et al., 2003; Wilen, 1991; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

Evidence also exists that higher-cognitive level questioning promotes reading comprehension growth (Day & Park, 2005; Taylor et al., 2003; Buggey et.al., n.d. as cited in Wilen, 1991). These findings indicated that higher-cognitive level questioning matters, because reading growth was observed when learners were challenged with higher cognitive level questions which involved active learner involvement. The premise that “reading is thinking” is emphasized by the above and supported by Wilen’s conclusion that higher-cognitive level questioning develops learners’ critical thinking skills (Wilen, 1991).

In the South African context researchers also found that teachers do not elicit learners’ higher order thinking and reasoning skills through their questioning strategies. South Africa’s poor results in the PIRLS 2006 and 2011 projects is evidence of Grade Four learners’ inability to answer middle- and higher-order questions as the PIRLS require learners to be able to answer more cognitively demanding questions than lower cognitive level questions (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012; Janks, 2011; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

However, there are conflicting findings regarding the use of higher-cognitive level questions against lower cognitive questions for higher achievement of students. Many researchers are in favor of high-cognitive level questions to improve learner achievement (Brualdi Timmins, 1998; Day & Park, 2005; Taylor et al., 2003; Redfield & Rousseau, Buggey, Kniep, Ryan & Dunkin, Kleinman as cited in Wilen, 1991), while others reveal positive effects of low cognitive level questions (Gall, 1984 as cited in Brualdi Timmins 1999; Samson, Rosenshine as cited in Wilken, 1991).

Cotton’s findings indicated that in certain contexts lower level questions were more effective while only asking higher-cognitive questions did not necessarily lead to higher cognitive

responses but concluded that subject matter determines the cognitive level response. More frequent use of low-cognitive level questions is also encouraged as more effective with young primary level children, especially disadvantaged, in low, socio-economic circumstances (Cotton, 1988; Rosenshine, Samson, Winne, Buggy & Clegg, n. d. as cited in Wile, 1991).

However, many researchers agreed that struggling readers should not be limited to low-level activities that focus only on code-breaking and literal comprehension but should get exposure to both lower-and higher-cognitive questions – lower level to review basic facts and skills and higher level to develop critical thinking ability. This concurs with Brualdi Timmin's conclusion that the needs of learners should be established to know the balance between the two types of questions to encourage learner understanding and achievement (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Brualdi Timmins, 1998; Cotton, 1988; Gall, 1970; Wilen, 1991).

Interestingly as early, as 1970 Gall has argued that the emphasis should be on developing critical thinking skills rather than recalling of facts. However current research highlighted that more than half of questions asked during reading comprehension instruction, test recall of facts, concluding that not much change has taken place in teachers questioning practices during reading comprehension instruction regarding the focus on lower-cognitive level questions (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Cotton, 1988; Fordham, 2006; Gall, 1970; Janks, 2011; Parker & Hurry, 2007; Pretorius, 2014; Taylor et al., 2003; Wilen, 1998).

2.5. Teachers' Knowledge Base

Because teachers have a key role to play in the development of reading literacy of Intermediate Phase learners, they need to be adequately prepared and trained to teach and develop reading literacy skills which are crucial for learners to use when 'reading to learn' across the curriculum in Grade Four as the transitional year of the Intermediate Phase. This requires that they should firstly be knowledgeable about the current literacy theories practices, secondly understand the character and development stage of the learners, in this case Intermediate Phase Grade Four learners and thirdly, have effective teaching and classroom management skills.

By 'knowledge' Loudon et al. (2005) referred to the literacy teaching practices used by teachers that are related to their deep understanding and knowledge about the developments of learning literacy and their ability and skill to use this knowledge to mediate children's

literacy learning effectively. Knowledgeable teachers according to them know what children need to be taught and can plan and implement effective learning practices (Louden et al., 2005).

One of the key components identified by Pretorius (2014) for successful literacy development is knowledgeable teachers that are able to show understanding of the different components of reading and the development thereof as well as how to assess decoding and comprehension, to be able to identify problems and plan appropriate intervention strategies.

Researchers have shown that effective teachers must be able to exercise teaching practices that underlie a deep pedagogical content knowledge of the literacy learning processes as well as the skill to use the knowledge in the literacy development of their learners. Through teacher modeling, teacher scaffolding and teacher support, students learn to engage with texts strategically, and gradually develop the skill to use reading strategies independently for better understanding of texts. This involves the questioning skills displayed by the teachers through the types of questions asked during classroom practice in reading comprehension instruction (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Grabe, 2004; Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012; Klapwijk, 2012; Loudon et al., 2005; Pretorius, 2014; Taylor et al., 2013).

In a study done on the State of Literacy Teaching and Learning in the Foundation Phase by the National Education Evaluation & Development Unit (NEEDU) in South Africa in 2012, a reference to teachers' knowledge base stated that teachers "cannot teach what they themselves don't know, so a key question for school reformers is: how robust (strong) is teachers' knowledge?" (Taylor et al., 2012: 25). Three types of knowledge were identified by the study as crucial for effective teaching and learning: subject content knowledge, curriculum knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. Pedagogical Content Knowledge refers to knowledge that relates to what teachers know about the teaching of their subject matter knowledge. Pedagogical content knowledge was a term introduced by Shulman (1986) as he argued that the two knowledge fields (content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge) should be combined to understand the organization and adaptation of topics, problems or issues for presentation during instruction to students (Shulman, 1986).

A teacher that has strong subject content knowledge in language literacy will be able show competency in understanding and using their skills in developing students reading, writing

and comprehension skills, engaging students on all cognitive levels with activities on texts and other learning materials.

Secondly, teachers must have curriculum knowledge. The current curriculum, CAPS (Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement), was instituted nationally in 2012, replacing the National Curriculum Statement of 2002. Basic to CAPS is that it provides specific sets of strategies to sequence and pace the knowledge in each subject at each grade level (Taylor *et al.*, 2013: 26). It provides teachers with instructional plans in two-week cycles. CAPS place the responsibility on the teachers to differentiate reading levels and select and provide materials accordingly. Specific guidelines are provided for reading lesson development. Reading and Viewing according to CAPS propose three stages: pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading with specific activities in each stage, e.g. in pre-reading activation of prior knowledge and prediction is two of the activities recommended, whereas in the during-reading and post-reading stages different activities are proposed, e.g. visualizing, discussing meaning of words (reading), conclusions, summarizing, evaluating (post-reading) (DBE, 2011: 10-11).

CAPS reading policy from 2011 envisages teachers who can develop learner's language capability to "recognize genre and reflect on the purpose, audience and context of texts" (Taylor *et al.*, 2013:15). The goal is to develop learners to become critical and creative readers through classroom and independent reading as well as developing Reading and Viewing skills, which are central to successful learning across the curriculum. Therefore, learners should develop proficiency in Reading and Viewing a wide range of literary and non-literary texts, including visual texts (DBE, 2011: 10). The onus of interpreting the curriculum is on the teacher, but for some teachers to be able to interpret and apply the curriculum effectively they would need assistance and support.

Thirdly, pedagogical content knowledge is the knowledge that is required to know and apply the strategies that are needed to effectively teach learners the subject content during classroom practices. Teachers need the knowledge to distinguish between materials that are easy or difficult for learners to absorb. Furthermore, teachers' pedagogical content knowledge requires importantly the ability to develop learners' reading and comprehension skills by selecting and providing and using a variety of appropriate reading materials to further the reading goals as envisioned by the curriculum (Howie *et al.*, 2012; Pretorius & Ribbens, 2011; Taylor *et al.*, 2013). This strong knowledge base, which includes the three

types of knowledge, also affects teachers' competence in teaching and assessing reading comprehension of which questioning forms the basis. Teachers should be able to make the link between comprehension strategies and the instructional questions through explicit modeling and practices. This is also emphasized by PIRLS through the Assessment Framework (2001) especially regarding the four processes of comprehension used to develop comprehension questions on the texts for testing the students. One of the important requirements of teachers' understanding of the reading process, reading development and reading assessment, is their capability to develop learners' higher order thinking and reading skills through questions. Taylor et al. (2013) also alluded to the ability of teachers to set tasks and use materials to develop learners' higher-order comprehension and problem-solving skills through suitable activities. This requires that teachers have the knowledge of and use the reading strategies to scaffold learners reading literacy in the explicit teaching of reading, including reading comprehension (Fordham, 2005; Matier Moore & Hart, 2007; Mullis et al. 2001; Pretorius & Lephala, 2011; Pretorius & Ribbens, 2005; Taylor et al., 2013).

Referring to Taylor et al's (2013) question of how strong teacher's knowledge is, research has indicated that teachers lack the necessary knowledge and understanding to effectively develop reading literacy, thereby suggesting that teachers are not adequately prepared to teach and assess reading literacy (Taylor et al., 2013). In 1999, already Taylor & Vinjevoold noted teachers low conceptual and subject knowledge and suggested that improved teacher knowledge would lead to better student achievement (Taylor & Vinjevoold, 1999). Key to quality preparation for reading instruction according to the International Reading Association (IRA) is "putting a quality teacher in every classroom to address the challenges of reading achievement in schools. Knowledgeable, strategic, adaptive, and reflective teachers make a difference in student learning" (IRA, 2007 as cited in Van Staden & Howie, 2010: 57).

Researchers (Pretorius, 2014; Taylor et al., 2013; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014) have indicated that many South African teachers lack explicit knowledge as well as understanding of highly scaffolded comprehension strategies and skills that are needed for developing learners' higher order thinking and reasoning through questions. Children need to be explicitly taught to read, providing them explicit support with reading strategies during the reading instruction.

It is evident from many researchers in the South African context that reading strategies are seldom taught explicitly during reading comprehension instruction (Hart, n. d.; Klapwijk, 2012; Pretorius, 2014; Taylor et al., 2013; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014). Klapwijk (2012) ascribes this to the lack of teachers' knowledge of language and texts. The NEEDU report (2013) also highlighted that teachers lacked knowledge about teaching reading skills, phonics, policy interpretation, and lesson planning (Taylor et al., 2012).

The current curriculum CAPS (DBE, 2011) emphasize phonics as well as comprehension strategies, therefore it is important that teachers should be knowledgeable to effectively develop those skills during reading literacy instruction. CAPS specifically refer to higher-order comprehension task development and reading strategy instruction. The policy recommends a variety of strategies and skills to be applied during the reading and viewing process including comprehension e.g. summarizing, skimming, scanning, critical language awareness, inferring (DBE, 2011: 17). CAPS also propose that formal assessment should include a variety of question types that should cater for different cognitive levels, e.g. literal, reorganization, inference, evaluation, appreciation (DBE, 2011: 91-92).

It is therefore essential that teachers have the necessary knowledge about questioning and the competence to teach and assess reading through reading comprehension of which questioning forms the basis.

Research reveals that teachers' lack of knowledge has a direct implication on their instructional practices especially regarding their questioning skills which has implications for reading achievement as reported in the PIRLS results (Barry, 2002; DBE, 2011; Hart, n.d.; Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012; Klapwijk, 2012; Matier Moore & Hart, 2007; Parker & Hurry, 2007; Pretorius, 2014; Taylor et al., 2013; Van Staden & Howie, 2010; Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

To improve reading instruction practices research recommends that the knowledge and skills of teachers be observed and developed. Researchers also alluded to the appropriate qualifications and insufficient engagement of teachers in language and literacy development of learners. Teachers are not adequately prepared to teach reading literacy as indicated by the PIRLS (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2011). Little focus is placed on training teachers on how to teach reading explicitly including reading comprehension.

Many international researchers (Cotton, 1988; Block et al., 2002; Takala, 2006) believe teachers can be trained to improve questioning practices to raise cognitive levels of questions and use different techniques when teaching reading comprehension. This also requires that in-service teachers refresh their questioning techniques to effectively support learners' reading literacy development. Already in 1988 Cotton recommended better pre-service training in the art of posing questions, together with in-service training to sharpen teacher's questioning skills because it has the potential for increasing students' participation and achievement (Cotton, 1988). In 2014, Zimmerman and Smit made a similar recommendation regarding the training of pre-service and in-service training of South African teachers to be able to develop the higher order thinking and reasoning skills of learners through "constructivist teaching principles" (p.7). Teachers need the necessary knowledge to able to teach comprehension strategies to develop learners' higher-order thinking and reasoning (Cotton, 1988; Govender, 2010; Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2011; Klapwijk, 2012; Block et al., 2002; Prinsloo, 2009; Pretorius & Lephahala, 2011; Takala, 2006; Taylor et al., 2013; Van Staden & Howie, 2010; WCED, 2006; Wilen, 1991; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

In the South African educational context, it has been realized that building the knowledge base of teachers is essential to bring about change. Improving teachers' competency by focusing on training and development and support of teachers' language skills is important, therefore it formed the basis of WCED LITNUM strategy program taking the multilingual context into consideration (WCED, 2006). However, reportedly the implementation of the program was not successful. One of the weaknesses was an ineffective monitoring and support system as teachers needed support from Curriculum Advisors and circuit managers who according to the NEEDU report were themselves not fully equipped to provide appropriate support (Taylor et al., 2013).

Consequently, the LITNUM Intervention program (LNI) was established for school and classroom-based support as well as training of curriculum advisors. A key component of the LNI was the provision of resources for teaching language and mathematics. Although data has indicated that literacy achievement did not show much improvement between 2011 and 2012, a positive outcome was that participants in the programme – WCED project managers, service providers and participating teachers- agreed that the LNI had a positive effect on teachers' understanding of teaching literacy and numeracy and on their classroom practices (Taylor et al., 2013).

2.6. Some challenges relating to teaching and assessing of reading literacy in South African Grade 4 classrooms

In the South African educational landscape, there are contributing challenging factors facing most Grade Four teachers that have implications for the effective development of reading literacy in their schooling contexts. The following sub-section will discuss some of the challenging factors that face teachers in their specific contexts in the South African educational landscape.

2.6.1. Legacy of Apartheid education

Numerous historical socio-political factors rooted in apartheid contributed to this national crisis of widespread academic underperformance. The legacy of the apartheid education policies created an extremely negative environment for literacy development in the South African schooling system. The Bantu Education system (1953) was designed to school black Africans for political subordination and economic exploitation, using an inferior curriculum and discriminatory provisioning (NEPI, 1992). Central to the unequal access to literacy resources was the fact that the different languages were resourced and taught differently (Murray, 2009). This legacy has continued into the post-apartheid era. The main outcome thereof is that South Africa still has two separate unequal education systems operating in one country. Spaul (2012) describes the South African schooling system as “a tale of two schools: one which is functional, wealthy and able to educate students; with the other being poor, dysfunctional, and unable to equip students with the necessary numeracy and literacy skills they should be acquiring in primary school” (Spaul, 2012: 9).

2.6.2. National Language-in-Education Policy

The main goal of the National Language-in-Education Policy (DOE, 1997) is equal status to all 11 official languages. The underlying principle of the policy is to keep the use of home language as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) while providing access to an additional language(s). It stipulates that South African children should receive instruction in their home language or Mother Tongue until at least Grade Three. Therefore, their main language has a special role to play as the language that is the vehicle that enables learning, especially literacy development and should be well developed to progress from learning to read to reading to learn in Grade Four. However, in many South African primary schools the LOLT changes in Grade Four and learners receive instruction in a language that is

different from their home language, usually mainly English, resulting in inadequate communication between learners and teachers in the LOLT. This, despite research evidence pointing to the problems for classroom teaching and learning of literacy that are caused by the switch as Grade Four learners are not ready for English as LOLT (Janks, 2011; Howie et al., 2008, Howie et al., 2012). Literacy acquisition seems to be problematic in the multilingual educational set-up in South Africa as the LOLT should be understandable to learners to enable successful reading literacy development. Therefore, a major challenge in the South African education system is the provision of quality education to a multicultural learner population speaking 11 different languages. (Govender; 2010; Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012; Macdonald, 2002; Perry, 2008; Prinsloo, 2005; Probyn, 2001).

2.6.3. Curriculum

Currently the South African Education System is guided by the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011) that was implemented in 2012, which is the third consecutive curriculum policy since the new political dispensation in 1994. The first new curriculum (C2005- OBE) implemented in 1998, was followed by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) in 2002, which then became the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (DoE, 2005).

In comparison with the previous policies, the current CAPS curriculum has a clear reading policy providing teachers with more structured guidelines on activities, timelines and indications of time spent on specific reading activities to be covered within two-week blocks. The main goal is to develop learners reading literacy to become critical and creative thinkers through classroom and independent reading (DBE, 2011).

The reading policy as set out in CAPS document also acknowledges the importance of well-developed reading skills for effective learning across the curriculum. To become proficient readers learners should be exposed to a variety of fictional and non-fictional, as well as visual texts, and be able to identify the purpose, context and for who the text is written (DBE, 2011).

Although the aims of the previous curricula (C2005, RNCS, NCS) were progressive reforms to try and level the educational gap created by the previous political dispensation, research indicated that the curricula changes contributed to furthering the reading crisis, by widening the inequality across the different South African school contexts (Matier Moore & Hart,

2007). Early literacy was not effectively taught as the explicit teaching of reading and writing was reportedly not taking place. According to Macdonald (2002) the one of the key findings of the Threshold Project (1990) was that learners were not taught to create meaning. One of the main aims of the Threshold-Project was to study the school-based experiences of learners in the lower primary grades in South African schools, especially in relation to the change to English as the LOLT (Macdonald, 1990). Another shortcoming was that teachers were not trained to implement new ideas. A further difficulty regarding the curriculum was the ineffective implementation of the policies which contributed further to the unequal education system we have currently (Hart, n.d.; Howie et al., 2012; Matier Moore & Hart, 2007; Macdonald, 2002; Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999).

2.6.4. Socio-Economic Background

PIRLS (2008) has identified three major contextual factors that influence reading performance which are the home, the school and the pupils themselves. The impact of poverty on literacy achievement is devastating. Literature has indicated that most learners at risk are from poor, disadvantaged backgrounds, coming from illiterate or semi-illiterate homes where parents themselves have lower levels of literacy and may have lower expectations about the levels of literacy from their children. Poor literacy achievement and poverty go hand in hand and therefore it is not easy to educate poor children. This challenge is confirmed by a recent report by Van der Berg (2016) substantiating the negative influence of poverty on achievement (Pretorius & Mchet, 2004; Van Der Berg, 2016). Children from low socio-economic backgrounds seldom have exposure to books or storybook reading which evidently has a positive influence on early literacy development. A well- resourced home environment in which parents regularly read storybooks to young children, and act as literacy role models is one of the factors associated with successful development of reading competence (Matier Moore & Hart, 2007; Pretorius, 2014; Pretorius & Mchet, 2004; Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007; Pretorius & Ribbens, 2005; Prinsloo, 2008). This notion is also emphasized by PIRLS that highlighted the relationship between reading achievement and the extent of the resources at home (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012).

2.6.5. Schools

Many researchers agree that most South African learners from poor backgrounds also attend poorly resourced schools with inadequate infrastructures. Besides the shabby buildings very few of the classrooms in disadvantaged contexts are reportedly print-rich, are overcrowded with inadequate supplies of learning material and books. According to research the majority of schools' lack school libraries or do not have access to libraries. More than half of the learners in the Grade Four PIRLS sample came from schools with no school libraries or classroom library or reading corner (Howie et al., 2008).

In many instances, large classes are not effectively managed, often due to under-qualified teachers; and the teaching of reading received little attention (Van Staden and Venter, 2010). Overcrowded classrooms according to Van Staden and Venter (2010) affected reading achievement in the South African Schooling context. The reading performance in different class sizes was highlighted by PIRLS 2006 (Howie et al., 2008) through reporting that achievement dropped noticeably in classes with more than 40 per class. This factor clearly has an impact on teachers' classroom practices during reading comprehension teaching as shown by the PIRLS 2006 study (Howie et al., 2008).

The key role of schools in compensating for the disadvantaged home environments of learners from low socio-economic backgrounds is also highlighted in the PIRLS studies (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012) however; schools can only fulfill that role if they are adequately well resourced and well managed. This place an added responsibility on schools to provide learners with well managed classrooms with knowledgeable and experienced teachers that can supply sound instructional reading practices as well as access to books and quality learning material for academic success (Hart, n. d.; Howie et al., 2012; Matier Moore & Hart, 2007; Pretorius, 2014; Pretorius & Currin, 2010; Pretorius & Lephalala, 2011; Pretorius & Machet, 2004; Pretorius & Ribbens, 2005; Van Staden & Venter, 2010).

2.6.6. Learner motivation

What has been discussed above is the reality of the contexts of the majority of learners in South African primary schools. The third contributing factor to reading achievement is the learners themselves. I would like to adapt an interesting question asked by Durkin (1979): "How did good readers acquire the ability if teachers are not teaching comprehension

skills?” By asking: What are the contributing factors in the South African schooling situation that influence successful readers reading performance?

Howie et al. (2008) identified successful readers as having good or above average language skills, who had frequent exposure to print as well as to adults that involved them in literacy activities during early childhood. These early literacy informal experiences serve as a foundation for the more formal literacy development. Successful readers are likely to attend schools that involve them frequently in reading and writing opportunities. They are confident readers that are motivated to read and enjoy reading, which positively influence their reading performance. PIRLS (2011) also highlights the relationship between reading achievement and learners that considered themselves engaged in class during reading lessons reporting that learners engaged in reading achieved better results. Children of parents who liked reading achieved on average higher scores than those whose parents did not (Durkin, 1979; Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012; Pečjak & Košir, 2008).

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of some reading theories and current approaches to teaching and assessing of reading literacy. It also focused on the teaching and assessing of reading comprehension in South African Grade Four English and Afrikaans HL classes. Teachers as the key aspect in the South African education system need to know how to effectively apply their knowledge to teach reading comprehension considering their classroom contexts to choose the most suitable method. Therefore, focus was placed on teachers' knowledge base, highlighting some of the challenging factors experienced by teachers in the South African schooling system. The next chapter describes the research design and the methodology that was used to address the research questions posed for this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand the reading literacy instruction practices, especially reading comprehension-questioning skills of Grade Four English and Afrikaans Home language teachers at two multilingual primary schools in disadvantaged contexts. I tried to seek answers to my research questions regarding teachers' classroom practices, their experiences and their understanding of the teaching and assessing of reading comprehension in Grade Four English and Afrikaans Home Language classrooms in order to understand the low achievement of South African Grade Four learners in the PIRLS 2006 and 2011 studies (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012).

This chapter gives an overview of the research methods and tools used in the research study. Firstly, this chapter focuses on the research orientation and methods of data collection. Secondly, I describe the sites in which the study is located. Finally, the third section reports on the methods of data analysis, the validity and ethical issues regarding the study.

3.2. Research Approach

To recap, the overall research question is: How is reading literacy (reading comprehension) taught in Grade Four Home Language classrooms in multilingual disadvantaged contexts, where the expectation is that learners should be able to use their reading skills to learn across the curriculum?

Answering the overall research question requires integration of the findings from the following sub-questions for the study:

- How do teachers in multilingual, disadvantaged contexts teach and assess reading comprehension?
- To what types of reading comprehension questions are learners exposed?
Are learners exposed to a range of questions types that include the four processes of reading comprehension as required by the PIRLS Assessment Framework?

- What is the knowledge base in the teaching and assessing of reading comprehension amongst the participating teachers?
- What are some of the challenges facing Grade Four language teachers in disadvantaged multilingual contexts that contribute to low reading literacy levels?

To answer the above questions a qualitative approach was adopted as follows:

3.2.1. Qualitative Research Approach

The qualitative method of research was selected, as this is best suited for studies regarding teachers' understandings and practices to education inquiries, understandings and practices (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research is furthermore concerned with how things happen, focusing on people's interaction in their contexts, with the researcher interpreting the behavioral patterns to provide rich descriptions as accurately as possible from the participant's perspective (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

For Denzin and Lincoln (2005) qualitative researchers "study the things in their natural setting, to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them" (p.3). This view is supported by McMillan and Schumacher's emphasis that qualitative studies "gather data on naturally occurring phenomena" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:26). Likewise, Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) characterize qualitative research as "the natural setting being the direct source of data and the researcher the key instrument in the research" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008: 422).

By interviewing the participants and observing the reading comprehension instruction practices of Grade Four English and Afrikaans Home Language teachers in their classroom setting, I wanted to understand the process as it occurs in its "natural setting" in an attempt to explain the reading literacy crisis of South African Grade Four Home Language learners in specific contexts, and as such the study is embedded in a qualitative research paradigm.

The researcher as "key instrument" in the research process is further highlighted by Merriam (1998) stating that "the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 1998:7) therefore, the process should involve fieldwork by the researcher physically interacting with the participants in their natural setting to observe behavioral patterns to be able to give rich descriptions of the participants practices in their specific contexts. For Fraenkel and Wallen, the "researcher's personal experiences and insights as an important part of the inquiry and critical to understanding the phenomenon", make it

impossible for the researcher not to be part of the experience of individuals under investigation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008: 424). This means that it is essential for the researcher to be present at the research site and to interact with the participants.

As primary researcher, I was responsible for collection of the data on site, in the classrooms of the participant teachers at the chosen schools, using interviews, classroom observations and analysis of the documents produced by the participants.

According to O'Leary, the power of qualitative research is the use of actual words and images (O'Leary, 2005: 261). Merriam (1998) supports this opinion as well as Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) who emphasize that a qualitative researcher's concern is with the process as well as the product of their research. Therefore, the qualitative researcher's use of descriptions to interpret the findings on the phenomenon is essential.

In support of the above, the findings include evidence that was drawn from transcriptions of interviews, observed lessons and analysis of a unit of work designed by the participant teachers.

In summary, a qualitative study is generally characterized by the researcher as the key instrument in collecting data physically through fieldwork, giving meaning by analyzing the data inductively, using rich descriptions to give meaning to their findings (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008), and this provided the best fit for the research I was undertaking.

3.3. Research Design

3.3.1. Case Study

Qualitative research covers a broad range of possible research methods and the one selected for this study was that of a collective case study. For Stake, a 'case study' draws attention to what specifically can be learned about a single case (Stake, 1994, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This requires that case study researchers properly describe the cases that they have studied (Gomm, Hammersley & Foster, 2000).

Merriam (1998) describes case studies firstly, as "particularistic" because of what the case discloses about the phenomenon and what it represents making it suitable for practical problems arising from everyday practice. This also entails that a case study examines a specific case but sheds light on a general problem.

Secondly, a case study is descriptive which means that its end product is a “thick description” of the phenomenon. Information is obtained from a variety of sources and presented from different viewpoints and in different ways.

Lastly, a case study is “heuristic” which means it sheds light on the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon that is investigated, giving new meaning to it or confirms the current knowledge about it. This is done by explanation, discussion, summarizing and conclusion. This, according to Merriam (1998), makes case study knowledge more concrete, more contextual, more interpretable by readers by broadening their own experience and knowledge to be able to understand and apply in other similar situations.

Because this research was undertaken in five Grade Four classrooms at two primary schools, to investigate the reading comprehension instruction practices of the Grade Four Afrikaans and English Home Language teachers, it falls under what Stake calls a collective case-study. Stake (1994) argues that a collective case study can be extended to more than one case, because a bigger collection of cases is believed to give a better understanding of a problem (Stake, 1994, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Choosing more than one case, according to Merriam (1998), could also enhance the validity or generalizability of the findings of a study. The choice of two primary schools as schools used in the study therefore was aimed at building a stronger understanding of the research problem to provide a deeper perspective on the classroom practices, knowledge about teaching reading literacy and questioning skills of the Grade Four Home Language teachers in those contexts.

Punch (2009) identified the following factors as features of case study research: Firstly, each case has to have specific and clear boundaries; secondly the unit of analysis needs to be clearly identified; a third requirement is that a specific focus is required for each case, which is defined by the research questions and lastly the use of more than one source of data in a natural setting is typical of case study research (Punch, 2009).

The units of analysis initially were four Grade Four Afrikaans and English Home Language teachers at two primary schools, focusing on their questioning skills during reading comprehension instruction, using semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and documents produced by the participating teachers. As this case study, research was undertaken in a Language Education context and focusing on questioning skills of Grade Four Afrikaans and English Home Language teachers in certain social contexts, it could be situated in an interpretive case study paradigm, where the case itself is the focus.

According to Faltis (1997) interpretive case studies firstly support or challenge existing theories about teaching and learning. Secondly it involves attention to description and interpretation of meaning. Thirdly it can be used to illustrate the connection between social factors and language in schools. Lastly, interpretive case study research has led to significant findings about literacy development of young children.

Case study methods could provide evidence for readers to make their own generalizations based on the facts of the case and transfer that knowledge to similar settings (Faltis, 1997). Therefore, the choice of the case-study method for my investigation, focusing on a specific grade at two primary schools and a specific number of participants, assisted me to develop a rich description of home language teachers questioning skills and ability when teaching and assessing reading comprehension.

3.3.2. Sampling

According to Maxwell (2005:26) sampling entails “the decision where to conduct the research and whom to involve,” and it generally includes people and settings as part of the research process.

For the purpose of my study, I used purposeful sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (1997) describe purposeful sampling as “a strategy to choose individuals likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon of interest” (p.434).

Selection of research participants is discussed under 3.3.2.2.

3.3.2.1. Research Sites

For McMillan and Schumacher (2006) an important aspect of Qualitative Research is ‘field research’ (p. 316), where data can be collected over a period of time at an appropriately selected site, as a suitable setting to study the phenomenon that is needed to understand the research question.

The data for this study was collected at two primary schools in a township area as described in chapter one. For the purpose of anonymity, the schools are called School A and School B. The schools are situated about 2, 5 kilometers from each other in a poverty-stricken township area in the northern part of the Cape Flats.

The language policy of two case study schools differed. School A had three languages of Learning and Teaching (LOLT): Afrikaans, English and Xhosa and school B had two, Afrikaans and English. At School A classes from Grades 1 to 7 were divided according to the language in which they received their tuition, e.g. The Xhosa Home Language classes received tuition in all their subjects, Mathematics, Life Orientation, etc. in Xhosa and English was their First Additional Language (FAL). The FAL for the English Home Language class was Afrikaans, and all other subjects were taught in English. The same principle was used for the Afrikaans Home Language class. However, in School A some Afrikaans and Xhosa-speaking parents chose to put their children in the English Home Language class, despite the fact that there were Afrikaans and Xhosa Home Language classes. Therefore, not all the FP Xhosa-speaking learners who received their instruction in Xhosa go into the English HL class in Grade 4, only those learners whose parents indicate that they should receive their instruction in English Home Language.

School B had a similar set up, but it had only two home languages, English and Afrikaans. The First Additional Language for the English Home Language classes was Afrikaans. English was the First Additional Language for the Afrikaans Home Language classes.

At both schools, the class teacher was responsible to teach both languages, e.g. the Afrikaans Home Language teacher was also responsible to teach English First Additional language, and the English Home Language teachers had to teach Afrikaans First Additional language to their respective classes. At School A, an exception was made because the English Home Language teacher was a Xhosa Mother tongue-speaker therefore her class had another teacher responsible for Afrikaans FAL.

Because the focus of the study was on Home Language (HL) teaching, some classes were observed in Afrikaans HL classes and some in English HL classes. One Afrikaans HL teacher and one English HL teacher was observed in School A. In School B, two Afrikaans HL teachers and one English HL teacher was observed. To be noted is that the English Home Language teacher at School A was an isi-Xhosa Mother Tongue speaker. The data was translated into English by the researcher.

Both schools are part of the WCED's school feeding schemes, which is an indication of the poor socio-economic backgrounds of the learners. Neither of the two schools had a library. Class sizes at the two schools differed, where School A's class sizes were almost 50 learners

per class (A1 had 49 and A2 also 49 learners) and School B had approximately 36 learners in each of the three classes observed.

As indicated in chapter 1 the 2012 ANA-results were used to choose two poorly resourced primary schools in a township to use as case studies. My intention was to include a better performing school and a below average performing school from similar socio-economic backgrounds to see if there were marked differences in teacher's practices when teaching reading comprehension. At School A, the grade average of the 136 Grade Four Home Language learners that wrote the tests, was 40% and 41, 2 % of the learners scored above 50%. School B's results showed a grade average of 56, 8% where 68.4% of the 194 Grade Four Home Language learners scored above 50%. Therefore, the average ANA results for Grade Four learners in School B were 17% higher than the average results for Grade Four learners in School A.

Including two schools in my study allowed me to gain an understanding of more than one perspective as well as compare differences and similarities, if any, in the classroom practices of the Grade Four English and Afrikaans Home Language teachers at the two case study schools given the difference in the reading performance in the literacy ANA results, as both schools are situated in similar disadvantaged contexts.

3.3.2.2. Research Participants

I chose four Grade Four English and Afrikaans Home Language teachers from the two primary schools selected as research sites as described in the previous section. The purpose for selecting Grade Four Home language teachers was prompted by the PIRLS reports of 2008 and 2012, where the reading literacy crisis in South African schools in Grade Four classrooms was highlighted (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012). Another contributing factor for choosing Grade Four, was the "fourth-grade slump" as termed by Chall (1983) where she referred to the drop in the scores on word meaning that begins in Grade Four that affects reading comprehension (Chall & Jacobs, 1983).

I will refer to the teachers as A1 -the Afrikaans Home Language teacher at school A- and A2- the English Home Language teacher at school A. The three teachers at School B is referred to as B1, the English HL teacher, B2 and B3 are two Afrikaans HL teachers at School B.

Initially four participants were chosen. However, after I had started with the research, at School B, and was already busy with Teacher B2 during the second week, the principal indicated that the HOD should also be part of the research as she had more teaching experience. Therefore, week two at School B had to be divided between two Grade Four Afrikaans Home Language teachers. So instead of the intended original four, five teachers were observed and interviewed as research participants.

To be noted is that all five were female teachers, as the majority of teachers teaching Grade Four are female, therefore no male teachers could be identified.

3.3.3. Data Collection

3.3.3.1. Introduction

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) noted that research methodology includes the selection of data collection strategies employed to investigate a specific research problem (p. 9). Given South African learners low achievement in the 2006 and 2011 PIRLS as well as the 2011 prePIRLS (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012), I wanted to investigate how the teaching and assessing of reading, especially reading comprehension took place in five Grade Four language classrooms, focusing on the teachers' questioning skills. For this purpose, I used the following tools to collect data: classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and analyzing a document produced by the participant teachers, which was a unit of work consisting of comprehension questions and answers set by the teachers on texts provided by me. Included was also a questionnaire given to learners requiring information on their language backgrounds given the diversity of the community. These tools were selected, as they seemed to be the most appropriate methods to collect data necessary to answer my research questions.

Firstly, to answer the sub-question: How do teachers in those contexts teach and assess reading comprehension? I planned to obtain data by interviewing and observing classroom practices of five selected teacher participants of Grade Four Home language classes at two purposively selected primary schools.

To answer the second question if learners are exposed to a range of questions types that include the four processes of reading comprehension as required by the PIRLS Assessment Framework - data would be obtained through observations, interviews of the teachers as well

as a unit of work consisting of questions set by participant teachers on a selection of released prePIRLS texts.

For the question on what teacher's knowledge base is in teaching and assessing of reading comprehension, data from interviews and observations would be used to answer this question.

Lastly, for the question on the challenges facing Grade Four language teachers in disadvantaged multilingual contexts that contribute to low reading literacy levels, interview data would be used to answer this question.

3.3.3.2. Classroom Observation

Classroom observation was chosen as one of my data-collection tools, as this would assist me first-hand to gain a deeper understanding of the cases and an opportunity to investigate teachers' reading comprehension instruction practices as they happened in the classroom.

Merriam (1998) noted that observations take place in the natural field setting giving a direct encounter of the phenomenon under investigation (p.94).

The purpose of using observation as a research tool is to gain knowledge of the context, by seeing first-hand, recording activities and behavior as they happen and interpreting what is observed (Merriam, 1998). Schumacher and McMillan (2001) also noted that observation relies on the researcher being present in the setting, seeing and hearing responses and recording the happenings in the classroom situation. O' Leary (2005) also supports the notion by emphasizing that the researcher goes to the "real world" where the research problem exists to see for themselves that people actually do what they say they do.

I wanted to discover for myself how teachers and learners interact in their natural setting, the classroom, on a daily basis when teachers use questioning techniques and strategies during reading comprehension instruction.

I planned to take the position as non-participant observer where the observer is physically present but attempts to be as unobtrusive as possible (O'Leary, 2005: 121). According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2008), non-participant observers do not participate in the activity but "sit on the side lines" and watch (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). That means that as an observer I would be present in the participant teachers' classrooms and the teachers and learners would know my role as researcher, but I would not actively participate in the classroom

activities of teaching and learning. My focus was on the questioning skills and the types of questions teachers ask when teaching reading comprehension.

After consultation with the participant teachers, I decided to observe the formal language lessons at both schools, as well as the informal reading sessions of the 2 participant teachers at School A. I observed a total of 29 language lessons of which 9 were reading comprehension lessons. Seven lessons were observed in A1's class of which two were reading comprehension lessons, nine lessons in A2's class with two reading comprehension sessions. At School B, observation took place as follow: seven lessons with B1 with two comprehension sessions, three in B2's class, one a reading comprehension lesson and three-lesson observations in B3's class including two reading comprehension sessions. The research was done in the third term as WCED policy indicated that no research could take place in the fourth term due to the systemic assessments and examination.

Permission had to be obtained from participant teachers to use a digital voice recorder to audio tape all the lessons during the observation sessions. Field-notes were also part of the planning to cross-check information, as my focus was the questioning skills and the types of questions teachers ask during reading comprehension instruction.

Although my focus was the questioning skills of teachers during reading comprehension instruction, observation was done in all the language classes of the participant teachers. I observed a total of 29 Home Language lessons between five teachers at the two primary schools. However, not all the lessons observed were reading comprehension lessons.

During observations, I focused broadly on if and how the participating teachers understood the reading curriculum as proposed by CAPS when they taught reading comprehension and their use of reading strategies in the different phases, i.e. pre-, during and post-reading. This allowed me to focus more specifically on the teachers' oral questioning strategies during each stage, especially the types of questions they asked, as well as the strategies they used when teaching and assessing reading comprehension, to develop learners' higher-order comprehension skills.

3.3.3.3. Interviews

For Fraenkel and Warren (2008) interviewing is an important way to check the accuracy of the impressions that has been gained through observation. Fetterman (1988) describes

interviewing, as the most important data collection technique a qualitative researcher possesses (Fetterman, 1988, as cited in Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). McMillan and Schumacher (2006) view interviews as “open response questions to obtain data of participant meanings - how individuals conceive of their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives” (p. 350).

Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) proposed that structured and semi-structured interviews are verbal questionnaires that consist of a list of questions intended to elicit specific answers from respondents.

According to Richards (2003), interviews are concerned with encouraging the speaker, not putting our own point across. Interview skills should be focused on drawing from the speaker the richest and fullest description possible (Richards, 2003: 50). Thereby the participants’ own words were recorded giving the researcher the opportunity to ascertain how the participants interpret and give meaning to their interactions in the classroom.

Semi- Structured Interviews

For this study, semi-structured interviews were chosen as it seemed to be more “flexible” and questions were formulated to acquire specific information from the participants. Semi-structured interviews included a list of pre-prepared questions that were used by the researcher as a guide but allowed for probing and prompting.

Although questioning was guided by a list of questions (see Appendix 2) to address issues under investigation, some of the questions were modified to allow for probing as well as assist with the flow in the discussion (Merriam, 1998; O’Leary, 2005).

I was primarily interested in understanding the participants’ perspective and allowing him /her to give their point of view. With the questions focusing on teachers’ descriptions of their experiences and opinions, I wanted to gain an understanding of the Grade Four Home Language teachers’ explicit knowledge of how to teach reading comprehension and their skills in the use of questions and questioning strategies required to develop learners’ reading comprehension skills.

I planned to interview four teachers, two at school A and two at school B. A fifth teacher was included on request of the principal of the school, as she was a senior teacher with more experience than the other two participants at School B. Interviews were to be done verbally

and digitally recorded with the permission of the participant teachers. In addition to digitally recording the interviews, field notes were also to be taken to refer back to the information.

Patton (2008) states that the importance in taking additional notes lies in the fact that it gives the interviewer opportunity to formulate additional questions during the interview process, as well as assisting analysis later (Patten, 2008, as cited in Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). The expectation was that the interviews would validate or disprove the other data collected during the investigation.

Because two of the participant teachers were Afrikaans Home Language, teachers the interview questions were prepared in Afrikaans as well as in English. The interviews were to be conducted in Afrikaans with the Afrikaans participants and later translated to English by the researcher in the transcriptions.

Challenges when doing interviews might include the researcher leading the participants, problems experienced with the digital recorder, especially background noise, having to do more than one thing while doing the interview, i.e. questioning, listen actively and managing the process (O'Leary, 2005).

According to Folkestad (2008), the quality of data is influenced by the interview situation and factors like where the interview is conducted might affect the data response. If the interview is conducted in a setting with background noise, it might pose a challenge to the researcher and therefore precautions need to be considered to validate the quality of the data from the interview. For this purpose, digital recording with participant's permission, as well as field notes were planned as suitable options to ensure that responses are captured correctly and to validate the data.

I interviewed the five teachers, two at school A and three at school B. Interviews were done verbally and digitally recorded with the permission of the participant teachers. In addition to digitally recording the interviews field notes were also taken to refer back to the information.

The challenge of interview setting during the interview process with background noise at times were pertinent. This was due to certain participant teachers' lack of free time and full schedules, therefore interviews with Teachers A2 and B3 had to be conducted during intervals as well as in the classroom. Field notes were also taken during the interview

sessions, firstly to substantiate that the responses captured on the digital recording especially during the classroom interview sessions were correct and secondly to validate the data.

3.3.3.4. Learner Questionnaire

Because of the multi-lingual environment and diverse backgrounds of learners, a questionnaire was given to the learners to establish their language background. Learners were requested to indicate their Language of Communication at home according to the following categories:

	isiXhosa	English	Afrikaans	
At home, my parents speak				with me
At home, my parents speak				with each other
At home, my parents speak				My other family members
At school, I'm in the				class

These questionnaires were used to establish the diversity of the learners and their language backgrounds. The above information was not part of my analysis but provided important contextual information on the learners' language backgrounds.

3.3.3.5. Teachers' reading comprehension question generation of released prePirls passages

a) Introduction

South African Learners low achievement in the PIRLS 2006 and 2011 studies, the PIRLS Assessment Framework (2001 and 2011) was the basis to review the questions set by teachers prompted this study. The PIRLS Reading Assessment is based on the PIRLS processes of reading comprehension as follows:

- Focus on and Retrieve Explicitly Stated Information
- Make Straightforward Inferences
- Interpret and Integrate Ideas and Information
- Examine and Evaluate Content, Language, and Textual Elements (Mullis et al., 2001).

Internationally it is expected that Grade Four learners should be able to have the above skills when answering reading comprehensions.

As this research was done in a literacy context in language education, and it sought to understand the questioning skills and strategies of Grade Four Home Language teachers, it seemed imperative to obtain evidence of teachers' ability to use their questioning skills and practice of questioning strategies when teaching reading comprehension. In order to do this, the participant teachers were asked to prepare comprehension questions based on certain released prePIRLS texts to ascertain the kinds of questions that these teachers set and if they are able to formulate suitable questions on texts to assess different levels of reading comprehension, which include the four types of, comprehension processes that PIRLS assessment test. I wanted to find out if learners in these classes were exposed to the questions that guided the PIRLS processes of reading comprehension as indicated above and whether they had the opportunity to learn how to answer such questions. The comprehension questions were analyzed for evidence of the kinds of questions that formed the basis for the PIRLS tests.

b) Choice of Texts

For the exercise, I gave the participant teachers the choice of four of the texts from the pre-PIRLS 2011 released items and requested them to use one of the texts to design a reading comprehension consisting of ten questions and answers. My choice of texts from prePIRLS was to compare the level of questions set by the participant teachers with the level of the reading comprehension questions used in the PIRLS texts. The two basic text types used by the PIRLS 2011 assessment framework were narrative texts and informational texts. Different texts, according to Williams (2005) are structured differently. For the assessment of literary experiences narrative texts were used and to acquire and use information, informational or expository texts (Howie et al., 2011: 7). The texts were available in all the official languages of South Africa, including the English and Afrikaans versions that were used for the research.

For the purpose of this research study the two narrative texts used for the setting of questions, were from the 2011 prePIRLS project:

Brave Charlotte/ Dapper Betty - Anu Stohner

The Lonely Giraffe / Die Eensame Kameelperd - Peter Blight

The two expository/ informational texts used were:

Caterpillar to Butterfly / Van Ruspe tot Skoenlapper- Deborah Heiligman

Although the prePIRLS texts have pre-set questions, the texts were given to the participants without the questions with the intention, as previously mentioned, to establish teachers' ability to formulate questions that include the four processes of reading comprehension as outlined in the PIRLS Assessment Framework.

The teachers were requested to teach the comprehension in their language period and learners had to answer the questions set by the participating teachers. Due to time constraints, the researcher was not present during the teaching of the comprehension lessons. The comprehensions were marked by the researcher to get a sense of the learners' ability to answer comprehension questions set by the teachers.

3.4. Data Analysis

3.4.1. Introduction

Meaning is central to qualitative research therefore the aim of this stage according to Punch (2009) is to integrate what has been done into a meaningful and coherent picture of the data. For Merriam (1998) data analysis is the process of making sense of the data, which means interpreting what has been observed and said during the data collection process to give meaning to the information. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that data analysis “involves taking constructions gathered from the context and reconstructing them into meaningful wholes” (p.5). This entails that the raw data needed to be reduced to give meaning (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Folkestad, 2008). Likewise, Kawulich (2005) describes analyzing qualitative data as a process of familiarizing oneself with the data, looking for patterns and themes, searching for connections between the data to assist understanding, presenting it and reporting the findings. In this regard, I set out to read and re-read the data, which were the schedules of the classroom observations and the interview transcriptions as well as the questions and memoranda produced by the participant teachers.

Therefore, reading and re-reading of data which Srivastava (2009) calls “reflective iteration” is a key to the analyzing process to move in and out of the data to be able to bring forward insights which could lead to focused and deeper understanding. De Wet and Erasmus (2007) reiterate this recommendation. To read the data more than once was a necessary step to be able to gain a deeper understanding to be able to make the findings. Moving in and out of

the data, I started looking for similarities, differences to be able to make comparisons. This was done to identify patterns and themes. To read the data more than once was a necessary step to be able to gain a deeper understanding to be able to make the findings.

3.4.2. Classroom Observations

In analyzing and interpreting the classroom observation, I looked at how teachers taught reading comprehension and focused on how they practiced their questioning skills and reading strategies. By observing, I tried to establish the patterns in the teacher's classroom reading comprehension instruction practices. This allowed me to gain an understanding of how the participant teachers use their questioning skills and strategies during reading comprehension instruction to develop learners higher-order thinking skills (Howie, et al., 2008; Howie, et al., 2012).

The expectation is that when teaching reading comprehension, teachers give learners the opportunity to prepare for individual written work pertaining to the text. Oral discussion on the text and feedback on different questions and reading strategy activities are useful in the pre-, during- and post-reading stages to scaffold learners to be able to interpret the information on the texts meaningful. Examples of questioning activities and strategies to prepare learners recommended by Gibbons include e.g. focus on pictures, questions on the characters, lists of words, etc. (Gibbons, 2002: 96-97).

3.4.3. Interviews

One of the focuses of the interviews was establishing teachers' explicit knowledge of the different question types and their ability to teach reading comprehension through those questioning skills and abilities.

The interviews were analyzed by reading and re-reading the transcripts of the interviews as suggested by Srivastava (2009). By reading and re-reading the data, I could also verify if all the participants answered all the questions. I could also identify differences and similarities in the responses of the participant teachers. Interview questions were organized according to a schedule to focus on the aspects to answer sub-questions and the main the research question. The responses of the teachers were grouped under patterns, under the main themes, which included the educational history of the participant teachers, the learners and the

teaching and assessing of reading comprehension and whether teachers are exposing learners to the different levels of questions during reading comprehension instruction.

3.4.4. Teachers' reading comprehension questions and memoranda

To analyze the unit of work produced by the teachers I used the PIRLS Assessment Framework (2001) as the main goal of this exercise was to establish if participant teachers have the skills to set questions as expected by the PIRLS Assessment Framework. The PIRLS Reading Assessment is based on the PIRLS written Assessment of reading comprehension and includes the four processes of comprehension as described above in section 3.3.3.5.

To be able to make sense of the data obtained using the above instruments the following three questions according to Srivastava's framework for data analysis provided some guidelines for focus:

- What are the data telling me?
- What is it I want to know?
- What is the dialectical relationship between what the data are telling me and what I want to know (Srivastava, 2009: 78)?

Using the above questions to focus on the different instruments helped me in a simple way to make sense of the complexity in processing data meaningfully.

In the following sections, the questions of the Grade Four teachers at the two schools are analyzed according to the processes of comprehension as identified by Mullis in the PIRLS summary report (Howie et al., 2008). The four processes as outlined in chapter two under section 2.4. formed the basis of my analysis of the questions set by the teachers on the prePIRLS texts.

3.4.4.1. Focusing on and retrieving stated information

According to the Assessment Framework reading tasks focusing on the above process will include questions that focus on understanding the content and meaning of the text by retrieving information that is stated explicitly in the text to answer relevant questions (PIRLS 2011 Assessment Framework, Mullis, et al., 2011: 24). Questions can be answered directly and explicitly from the text focusing on the straightforward meaning of the text.

An example of an Information retrieval question on the prePIRLS narrative text *Brave Charlotte*, e.g. is: **Who is Jack?** The expected response should indicate the following examples: *old sheep dog, sheep dog, dog, shepherd's dog* (PIRLS user guide-Released passages and Items, 2011: 23).

3.4.4.2. Make straightforward inferences

When readers have to infer and make meaning of information that is not explicit in the text, they go beyond what is explicitly stated in the text and have to connect different meanings. According to Day and Park (2005), inference requires that readers use their understanding of the text as well as own knowledge and perception. Reading tasks that focus on the above process includes questions that for example infer that one event causes another, without stating it explicitly in the text (Mullis et al., 2011: 26).

The following question is an example of a straightforward inference question:

Why didn't Jack notice Charlotte when Charlotte went out at night?

The correct responses should indicate that Jack did not notice Charlotte because he could not hear very well. E.g., *He didn't have very good hearing. / His ears were bad. / He didn't hear her* (PIRLS User Guide- pre PIRLS Released Passages and Items, 2011: 25).

3.4.4.3. Interpret and integrate ideas and information

When engaging in this process, focus is placed on readers drawing from their own understanding and experience that they bring to the text to construct a “more specific” meaning. Questions based on the above may include e.g. comparing and contrasting as well as ability to use information from different parts of the text to answer the question (Mullis et al., 2011: 27).

An example of an interpretation and integration question on the pre-PIRLS narrative text *Brave Charlotte*, e.g. is: *Give two ways that Charlotte was different from the other sheep?*

The expected response should indicate the following examples:

Ways Charlotte was different from other sheep:

She was brave, /She was not shy.

She was leaping around. /She did not stand by her mother.

She was ready for adventure. /She jumped over a riverbank and went swimming. / She secretly roamed around at night. /She slipped away to her special place. /She went to save the shepherd (Foy & Drucker, 2011:25).

3.4.4.4. Examine and evaluate content, language and textual elements

Focus in this process is on text structure and use of language in presenting the meaning of the text. This type of comprehension requires learners to evaluate and make a judgement about some aspect of the text. Reading tasks may include “judging clarity of information as described in the text”, as well as personal response from the reader, which might be positive or negative (Foy & Drucker, 2011:29). To be able answer this type of comprehension question students must be able to use their factual understanding of the text, as well as their own background knowledge.

A question example of an Examination and Evaluation of Content Language and Contextual elements on the prePIRLS narrative text, *The Lonely Giraffe*, is e.g.: *Look back at this picture (where the picture shows the monkey sitting on the giraffe’s back speaking to the other animals).*

What is the monkey doing sitting on the giraffe’s back?

The correct responses should indicate that the monkey was on the giraffe’s neck to call to the other animals. e.g.

He was calling the other animals /He was helping the other animals leading them, / showing them what to do (Foy & Drucker, 2011: 46).

The oral and written reading comprehension questions set by the Grade Four HL teachers were coded and analyzed according to the four question types as outlined in the PIRLS. An overview of Appendix 7 indicates that most of the teachers’ questions focused on the retrieving of explicitly stated information in the text. This shows that learners had more (52%) exposure to that specific category of questions.

3.5. Validity

Babbie & Mouton (2001) describe reliability as the possibility that a specified method of measurement will give the same description of a specific trend, if that measurement is repeated. For Denscombe (2002) “it entails an evaluation of the methods and techniques used to collect data” (p. 100).

As stated by Babbie and Mouton (2001), validity refers to the extent to which a specific measurement provides data that relates to generally accepted meanings of a particular

concept (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:125). Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) noted that validity refers to data that is appropriate, meaningful, correct and useful.

Merriam and others differentiate between internal and external validity where internal validity ask the questions: Do the research findings equals the real situation, which is under investigation? In other words, do the findings capture what is there? Are the findings accurate and truthful? (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Merriam, 1998).

External validity is seen as the extent to which the results or conclusions can be applied to other settings or situations (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Richards, 2003). This has consequences for generalizability, which means according to O’Leary (2003) whether findings and conclusions from a sample / setting are directly applicable to a larger population, a different setting or to another group. The question arises if it is possible to generalize from one or two cases and apply it to other situations.

Although there are many arguments for and against the possibility of generalization in qualitative research, according to Richards “any research should have relevance to others outside the setting(s) with which it is concerned” (Richards, 2003: 288). Regarding the above he therefore suggests the following rules to be taken into consideration before generalizing: Researchers should think firstly about the sample and if it is a typical situation or not. Secondly, decide if the description is sufficient regarding detail to allow readers to act in response to their own experience, determine if the findings can be transferred, and lastly look for connections with other research, situations, and cases that can be usefully referred to (Richards, 2003: 289). Merriam (1998) supports these strategies regarding external validity.

Therefore, I would argue that despite this study being a small sample containing five HL Grade Four teachers in two primary schools in many respects it is relatively representative of classroom teaching in disadvantaged, multilingual contexts and the findings and conclusions could be applied and connected to many Grade Four classroom situations in the South African educational landscape. The lessons learned from this research, could thus be relevant to similar classroom contexts.

One of the threats to validity is what McMillan and Schumacher (2006) call the Hawthorne effect where people are inclined to “act differently” than in their normal situation, because they realize that they are being observed. Therefore, to minimize this effect I made a concerted effort at all times to make teachers and learners feel at ease during my lesson observations.

Checking the reliability and validity of the data is important for the credibility of any research; therefore, a precautionary effort was made to ensure trustworthiness of the qualitative data according to the criteria of credibility, dependability and confirmability, as proposed by Denzin and Lincoln (2006).

Triangulation or crystallization is generally considered one of the best ways to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative research according to Babbie and Mouton (2001). For Malterud (2001) the aim of triangulation is to shed more light on the phenomenon that is investigated, therefore using different sources of data confirms the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Classroom observation, in combination with interviews and documental evidence produced by participant teachers, were used to shed light on the different aspects, to be able to substantiate the emerging findings (Merriam, 1998; Richards, 2003).

By using more than one source of evidence (data triangulation), this study attempted to address the potential problem of validity and reliability. Multiple sources of evidence (triangulation) increase validity in conclusions as was done with observational field notes along with transcribing audio and documents authored by participant teachers in the form of questions.

3.6. Ethical considerations

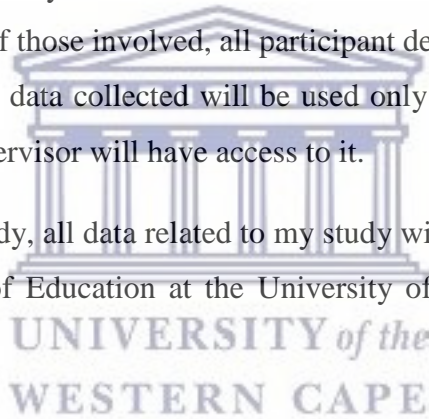
The research setting was approached mindfully with the necessary care and engagement with the participants, as Kelly (2006) advises “in an open and empathic way”. Ethical concerns need to be at the forefront of any research project, therefore this research study made an effort to comply with the guidelines as specified by the Senate Research Committee of the University of the Western Cape. The principles in the 2006 ESRC (Economic and Social Research) framework served as guideline to know what procedures to follow while collecting the data for the research study (Dowling & Brown, 2010).

As this study was conducted in two primary schools in the Western Cape, permission was obtained as previously described from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) to access the institutions under the department.

Informed consent, one of the principles of the ESRC framework (Dowling & Brown, 2010) is an ethical requirement for all research studies, especially when children are involved, therefore before the study commenced the researcher negotiated consent from the principal, as well as the school management, teachers and the parent body of the specific schools (Appendix 1c). Participants were informed through a letter explaining the focus and aims of the research, what their participation in the research entailed, and also stating that participation was voluntary, that they had the right to refuse, as well as requesting consent to conduct the research.

Confidentiality needs to be respected by researchers. A conscious effort was made to protect the integrity, autonomy, privacy of the above-mentioned research participants. To protect the identities and interests of those involved, all participant details, including the sites, were given fictitious names. The data collected will be used only for the research purpose and only the researcher and supervisor will have access to it.

Upon completion of the study, all data related to my study will be stored for a minimum of five years in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape and then destroyed.



3.7. Research Process

Access to data sources is essential for successful qualitative research, and access according to Denscombe (2003) requires “getting permission” from key people identified as ‘gatekeepers’. This notion of ‘gatekeepers’ refers to those in authoritative positions ‘who can grant permission and allow access to a research site (Denscombe, 2003:71). It could be the principal of a school, a teacher or an education authority as in the case of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED).

I obtained permission from the Director of Research at WCED (Appendix 1b), who provided me with a list of the ANA results of the previous year, for me to make a choice of schools.

Informed consent, one of the principles of the ESRC framework (Dowling & Brown, 2010) is an ethical requirement for all research studies therefore, before the study commenced; I

negotiated consent from both principals, explaining the nature of my study. It was made clear to them that participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the study if they should wish to do so (Appendix 1c). Furthermore, I also explained that their identities will be protected and would remain anonymous. A letter of consent was drawn up for the principal, participating teachers as well as for the learners (Appendix 1c). The parents were also informed of the nature of the research, through an information letter, should they want to exercise their right to refuse permission for their child's participation in the study, assuring them that the child's identity will be protected and that the research will not interfere in any academic activity. The letter was also translated into Afrikaans and included as an appendix (1c).

I visited both schools for two weeks per school. School A from 5th August 2013 till 16th August and school B from the 18th of August till 2 Sept. Five teachers were observed and interviewed, two at School A and three at school B. I spent one week in each Grade Four Home Language class, observing the home language lessons. As explained in the research participant section, the last week had to be divided between two Grade Four Afrikaans Home Language teachers at School B, as requested by the principal to include a more experienced teacher, as the other two participants only had two years teaching experience.

I hoped to gain an understanding of the reading literacy crisis in South African Grade Four classes as reported by the PIRLS 2006 and 2011 studies by investigating the questioning skills and strategies used by Grade Four Home Language teachers in schools that are situated in similar disadvantaged contexts.

3.8. Methodological Norms

3.8.1. Objectivity

An important consideration, according to Denscombe (2002) is, if the research will be approached with the necessary open mind by the researcher and whether the research will provide a fair and balanced picture. The human touch during investigation cannot be denied and researchers enter the field with preconceptions and opinions of how things are, what is to be investigated and what it might be. According to Malterud (2001), researchers will approach the same situation differently depending on their background, positions and perspectives, but these are just as valid. This might increase the understanding of the phenomenon as such.

Therefore, a completely objective position is not possible as Denscombe (2002) argues that “researchers are part of the world they study,” but this requires that research should continuously try to be objective as far as possible under circumstances (p. 167).

As a language teacher trainer, I constantly had to remind myself to stand back from my personal experience and viewpoint and attempted to observe the settings and responses through a different lens as an outsider.

3.8.2. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is essential for researchers doing qualitative research, as it, “involves reflecting on the way in which research is carried out and understanding how the process of doing research shapes its outcomes” (Kerfoot, 2012). Mauthner and Doucet (2003) remind researchers to “reflect on and record their interpretations, and also remind them that the validity of their interpretations is dependent on being able to demonstrate how they were reached” (p. 418). They also emphasize the importance of being reflexive when analysing and interpreting data to give meaning. They maintain that the researcher, method and data are “interdependent and interconnected” (Mauthner & Doucette, 2003: 414). Reflexivity in qualitative research acknowledges that interpersonal and institutional context can influence the research process, as an important element of reflexivity is placing us socially and emotionally in relation to the respondents (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). Therefore, when analysing data, it is important to recognize the role of the “I” in the approach and researchers should have self-awareness of how their own position and interest might impose on the research process (Herz, 1996; Shrivastava & Hopwood, 2009).

Coming from a teacher training background, and during the research process as a novice researcher I had to be careful to restrain the inner voice when interpreting the respondents’ actions and views when reporting. This was especially relevant during the interview process, as special care had to be taken not to lead the participants with questions through careful phrasing.

Mauthner et al. (2003) also encourage researchers to be more aware of the circumstances and limitations that are prevalent when doing and producing our research accounts. It is therefore important that researchers should be encouraged to be more reflective and accountable. Herz (1996) too cautions researchers to be fully aware of their own position as well as of those we study as well as for whom this study is meant.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the research design, methodology, and data collection tools used in this study. The research questions directed the investigation within the qualitative paradigm and data collecting methods included classroom observations, interviews and analysis of reading comprehension questions generated by the participants and a learner questionnaire to establish their language background.

Problems, issues and risks when using the chosen research tools were explored as well as the issues of sampling, ethics, trustworthiness, credibility and limitations. The next chapter will present and analyze the data that was collected.



CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I firstly present data and findings obtained through questions during semi-structured interviews with the five participant teachers to be able to establish their pedagogical content knowledge base to teach and assess reading literacy through reading comprehension. The purpose of the interviews was to investigate their educational histories as well as their beliefs to try to understand their classroom practices when teaching reading comprehension in their contexts. The focus was on the teachers' questioning skills and strategies according to the four processes as set out in the PIRLS 2006 and prePIRLS 2011 used to develop reading comprehension questions (see Appendix 2 for the full transcript of teacher interviews).

Secondly, I present data and findings from the observations of classroom practices of the five participating Grade Four teachers during the teaching and assessing of reading literacy through comprehension. Thereafter I discuss the emerging patterns during the analysis of this data to show how reading comprehension is taught in relation to the types of questions teachers ask during the teaching of reading comprehension (see Appendix 6 for the summaries of observed lessons and Appendix 5 for teacher's oral questions).

Finally, I present an analysis of the participant teachers' questions on the prePIRLS texts according to the processes of comprehension as identified by Mullis et al. (2001) in the PIRLS 2008 summary report, to establish if the teachers are able to formulate suitable questions on the texts to assess different levels of reading comprehension which include the four types of comprehension processes that PIRLS used to develop reading comprehension questions, i.e. retrieval of information, straightforward inference, interpret and integrate and evaluate and examine (see Appendix 7 for teachers' questions on prePIRLS texts).

These three sets of data are used in triangulation to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. The findings in each of the three sets of data are followed by an analysis in each section, which identifies and discusses the key issues that emerged.

4.2. Teachers beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge

The focus of this section is to gain an understanding of teachers' knowledge base, their beliefs and the challenges they face when they teach and assess reading literacy, specifically reading comprehension.

As explained in the previous chapter five teachers were observed and interviewed, two at School A and three at School B. The interview findings are categorized according to the following framework, which is in response to the following questions: (See Appendix 2 for interview framework and full interview transcripts.)

1. To gain information concerning the personal and the educational history of the teachers involved.
2. Focusing on the learners in the class, their socio-economic and language background and reading ability.
3. To acquire information on teachers' knowledge regarding the teaching and assessing of reading comprehension.

The interviews for the three Afrikaans Home Language Grade Four teachers were conducted in Afrikaans and translated to English for the reporting.

4.2.1. Teacher's educational history

The following table summarizes the educational history of the five participant teachers:

Table 1
Educational history of participant teachers

Teacher	Gender F=female M= male	Age	Total Teaching experience	Intermediate Phase –Gr.4 experience	Teacher training focus	Mother Tongue (MT)	Class (LoLT)	Highest Qualification
A1	F	50	27 yrs.	7 yrs.	Foundation Phase (FP)	Afrikaans MT	Afr.	BA (Part-time)
A2	F	44	13 yrs.	3 yrs.	FP	Xhosa MT	Eng.	BA (Part-time)
B1	F	26	1½years	1 yr.	BA (FET) Grades 8-12 English /LO	Eng. MT	Eng.	BA PGCE
B2	F	24	1 yr.	1 yr.	Senior Phase Business Studies	Afr. MT	Afr.	B. Ed
B3	F	51	26 yrs.	8 yrs.	Senior Phase Mathematics /Needlework	Afr. MT	Afr.	ACE

Regarding the educational history and background of the teachers it is important to note all five Grade Four home language teachers were female between the ages of 24, 26 and 51 yrs. None of the teachers was trained as Intermediate Phase teachers and all five had less than 10 years' experience as Grade Four Home Language teachers. Two of the teachers were trained as Foundation Phase teachers at a teacher training college (Teachers A1 and A2), two as Senior Primary teachers in other subject areas: Business Studies-Teacher B2 (CPUT) and Mathematics and Needlework- Teacher B3 at a teacher training college and one was trained as a FET (Grades 10 to 12) teacher (B1) at a university.

Although three of the teachers had furthered their qualifications part-time, with BA degrees (Teachers A1 and A2) and an ACE (Teacher B3), the teachers reported that the qualifications obtained were not specifically focused on language teaching.

All five teachers had primary school teaching experience, but they had less than 10 years' experience in teaching Grade Four. Four of the teachers were mother-tongue speakers of the specific language that they taught, while one of the English Home Language teachers was a Xhosa mother-tongue speaker (Teacher A2).

Only one teacher, A1, had some knowledge of the Departmental Programme for Literacy and Numeracy called Foundations for Learning (DOE, 2008). All the participant teachers had Curriculum and Assessment Policy Assessment (CAPS) training. Three of the teachers (A1, A2 & B3) attended Departmental workshops at the Cape Teachers Leadership Institute (CTLI). However, none of the workshop training was focused specifically on the teaching of reading.

4.2.2. Discussion

The findings concerning the educational history shows that the participant teachers in relation to their qualifications and professional development and Grade Four teaching experience, were not adequately prepared to teach and develop reading literacy as expected of Intermediate Phase teachers. The fact that none of the five participant teachers was trained as Intermediate Phase teachers is an important contributing factor relating to effective teaching and development of reading comprehension. Because of the teachers' critical role in reading literacy instruction in the classroom, they need to be adequately prepared and trained to teach and develop reading literacy skills in Grade Four as the transitional start of

the Intermediate Phase, which is crucial for learners when “reading to learn” across the curriculum.

Although participant teachers reported attendance of departmental workshops, it seems that the continuous professional development of teachers by the department lacks specific focus on preparing teachers to develop reading literacy of learners effectively. In addition to the above factor, the implementation of literacy support programmes, e.g. The Foundations for Learning were not successfully implemented at the case study schools, as teachers reported very little knowledge of the programme.

All five participant teachers underwent CAPS training but showed a lack of clear understanding of the specific reading goals as set out by the CAPS document, which expects learners to develop their reading and viewing proficiency to learn successfully across the curriculum. When asked about her understanding of CAPS, Teacher A2 answered: *“The CAPS don’t say much of reading as such. It is still early days. For Grade Four it did not change, like pictures and words discuss.”*

Teacher B2’s response was as follows: *“I have not had any in-service training, we had CAPS training, but they do not do in-depth training.”*

Another factor highlighted in the finding is the language of instruction, where one of the English Home Language Teacher’s Mother Tongue (MT), differed from the classroom Language of Teaching and Learning (LOLT), which was English. Teaching in a language other than their mother-tongue, presents a further challenge to teachers, especially when teaching and developing learners’ reading literacy skills.

4.3. Learners’ challenges during reading instruction

The second category of interview questions focused on the learners. The purpose was to gain an understanding of the teacher’s perceptions and the challenges they face when teaching reading literacy to Grade Four learners in disadvantaged contexts.

Although the ANA results of the two case study schools differed, (School A below average and School B above average) all five teachers at both schools seemed to have the perception that most learners in their classes demonstrated poor reading skills when reading and answering reading comprehension questions. This they ascribed to the following factors:

learners' diverse language backgrounds; discipline; socio-economic circumstances; parent involvement; departmental progression policy and large classes.

4.3.1. Poor reading proficiency

Firstly, the reading inability and the poor reading skills of most learners at Grade Four level was one of the major challenges and concerns raised by all the participant teachers. Four of the participant teachers (A1, A2, B2 & B3) believed that because learners struggle to read and do not understand what they read, this influences their learning in other subjects. Challenges regarding low reading achievement of learners mentioned by the teachers are as follows: Teacher B2 noted: *“A child sometimes cannot even read their own names and that is so sad.”* Struggling with reading has an influence on other learning areas, e.g. Mathematics as Teacher A1 noted. *“If they cannot read, they cannot learn and that has an influence on their ability to do Mathematics for example.”*

Teacher A2 also reported: *“They struggle with reading. They struggle a lot. If the parents can do extra like help the child, like sit down with a child, I think it can be better.”*

4.3.2. Diverse language backgrounds

Another challenge indicated by two of the teachers seemed to be the diverse language backgrounds of the learners.

Teacher A2 ascribed learners' low reading achievement to the LOLT, especially in the English Home Language class where English was not the home language for most of the learners. This factor also relates to the question on the diversity of the learners and to be noted is that this teacher also had a further challenge of being a Xhosa Mother-Tongue speaker who had to use English as LOLT. Her frustration therefore was that most learners in her class were not English Mother Tongue speakers but their LOLT was English, and in most cases, their parents could not support them at home. *“I think the barriers are the parents. They must be informed that if a child is Afrikaans or Xhosa speaking, it is not wise to send your child to an English class. They struggle with reading.”*

However, Teacher B1, the English LOLT teacher, did not seem to have the same problem despite many of learners in her class coming from Afrikaans speaking backgrounds. The questionnaire indicated that out of 33 learners that completed the questionnaire about 30

came from Afrikaans-speaking background, although their parents communicated in English with them and they were in the English Home Language class with English as LOLT.

As indicated in Chapter 3 a questionnaire was given to learners in all the Grade Four classes at both schools to establish their language backgrounds. School A had three language streams: Afrikaans, English and Xhosa.

The following table indicates the language backgrounds of the Grade Four classes in the study.

Table 2
Language background of learners

Teacher	Language of Learning and Teaching	Class size	No of questionnaires completed	Language background of learners			
				Afrikaans	English	Xhosa	other
A 1	Afrikaans	49	43	43			
A2	English	49	32	21		11	
B1	English	36	33	27	5	1	
B2	Afrikaans	36	32	32			
B3	Afrikaans	33	33	33			

To be noted is the class sizes at the two schools, where School A's classes were bigger than School B's classes. In addition, School A has 3 language streams and School B has 2. At School A, the English HL class consisted of Afrikaans, English and Xhosa learners, with mostly Afrikaans- background learners and a substantive number of learners from Xhosa-speaking background and a Xhosa MT speaker as a class teacher. At School B, the class teachers were MT speakers of English and Afrikaans.

Noted is that teachers B2 and B3 were Afrikaans Home Language teachers and all the learners indicated on the questionnaire being Afrikaans speaking.

Regarding the diversity of the learners, it was found that the Grade Four learners in the Afrikaans Home Language classes at both schools were almost all from Afrikaans-speaking backgrounds, whereas in the Grade Four English Home language classes at the two schools most learners came from Afrikaans and Xhosa backgrounds. In School A, the English LOLT

class consisted mostly of Afrikaans and Xhosa-speaking learners. For Teacher A2 this seems to be problematic, and she expressed her frustration as follows: *“The parents want them in the English class, but they do not speak English at home. I also have learners from the Congo and Kenya, which is a problem as even their parents cannot support and help them.”* According to her, the parents were contributing to the problem because they chose to put their children in the English class. She said that parents needed to be advised not to put their child in the English class if it was not their mother tongue.

4.3.3. Discipline

Discipline was also indicated as a challenge. When asked to comment on the learners in their classes, four teachers (A1, A2, B2, and B3) reported experiencing discipline problems with learners. Three of the teachers expressed negative feelings about teaching learners, whose behaviour was not conducive to learning.

Teacher A1, a senior teacher with 27 years teaching experience said the following: *“Especially the past four years, I felt a lot of negativity, as if I am going to lose myself with some of the children or my work. You can so easily lose yourself. The learners are very defiant.”*

For Teacher A2 her discipline problems originated from the fact that most learners in her class were not English Mother Tongue speakers: *“Most of them come from Afrikaans and Xhosa –speaking families. The parents want them in the English class...”* Those were the learners, according to her, that were the cause of discipline problems in the class. During the classroom observation, it was obvious that Teacher A2, who did not share a mother tongue with half of the learners in her class, struggled to discipline learners and valuable class time was spent on non-instruction activities such as chastisement. Teacher B2 with one year’s experience said: *“Out of the 36 learners, almost everyone has a history. Behavior is very, very bad generally. It was a big shock for me to realize what teaching is really about. It is so bad that I feel really negative that I won’t advise anybody to study teaching.”*

However, Teacher B1, the English Home Language teacher, with 1½ years teaching experience, was more positive about her teaching experience at the same school as Teacher B2. Teacher B1, expressed herself as follows: *“I have good times with them and then I have not so good times with them, but in general I don’t have a problem with my learners.”*

Although at a previous school, also in the same area, her experience with Grade Four learners was not so positive where discipline was concerned.

Teacher B3 said the following about her learners: *“Half of my class cannot read very well. I have a lot of failures. Learners are frustrated, and it causes discipline problems.”*

4.3.4. Socio-economic circumstances

All five teachers believed learners’ backgrounds have a major influence on reading ability, as well as their learning at school as most learners come from difficult social and economic circumstances. The reasons given included issues like absent parents, broken homes, social problems, poverty, illiterate parents, inability of parents to assist learners, no reading culture at home, lack of attention at home, lack of resources at home, etc.

Teacher A1 reported: *“I have a learner, who is weak whom I allow to sit one side, but he is still between the other learners. His Mummy does not work, but she is never at home. I basically found out that the parents are not working and mother walks around and is never at home.”*

According to Teacher A2: *“It does have. (Background) Even the parents cannot read. Because the parents do not speak the language. As I have said their background definitely has an influence. Their parents cannot help them.”*

Teacher B1 said: *“There is no culture of reading. I ask them do you have newspapers or magazines at home then they would say, no my mummy don’t buy.”*

Teacher B2 also reported: *“There is no guidance or help at home. There is no support at home in most cases.”*

Teacher B3 said: *“Definitely! Parents often have social problems. I have learners that have been socially referred and should be taken out.”*

Secondly, all five teachers emphasized the home factor as an important influence on reading development. According to the teachers the socio-economic circumstances of most of the learners contributed to the lack of reading material and also the lack of parent support relates to no culture of reading at home as there are no resources, e.g. books and magazines and so not enough reading was done and that has an influence on their reading performance and development which influences their learning. This factor relates to the background aspect

where teachers highlighted the socio-economic factors at play in the low reading performance of learners.

4.3.5. Parental involvement

All five teachers ascribed parental involvement as an important aspect regarding learners above average achievement at school. According to the teachers, parents that take interest in their children's schoolwork are a motivating factor. Teacher A2's opinion is: "*The learners' background and the parent's involvement helps*". Teacher B3 further confirmed this: "*There are about 2 to 3 learners out of the 36 learners in the class that can read well. Parent involvement....*" This highlights the important role of home influence in reading literacy development.

4.3.6. Learner motivation

Another factor was individual learner's own inner motivation that plays a role in higher achievement at school. Teacher A1 said: "*Some learners want to learn also and need encouragement to build their self-confidence*"

This view was confirmed by B2: "*The child themselves. The child takes a decision and decides, we are busy with reading, so I am going to sit and read with the teacher.*"

One of the challenging factors mentioned by teachers were also: Learners that are afraid to read (B3), referring to the fact that learners were afraid of being ridiculed especially when reading aloud.

4.3.7. Departmental progression policy

Another factor according to Teachers A1 and B2 was the progression policy of the Department of Education, which states that if learners have failed once in a phase, they cannot fail a second time, therefore they are sent to the next grade.

Teacher A1 commented as follows: "*The system allows the learner to go to the next grade. It's unfair towards the child; they must rather repeat the grade.*" This hampered the progress of those learners, as they were not ready for the next grade.

4.3.8. Large classes

Large classes were also mentioned as a factor that was hampering reading literacy development, as teachers found it difficult to give individual attention to struggling readers (Teachers' A1 and A2).

4.3.9. Discussion

Learners' general poor reading skills, was one of the major concerns raised by the participating teachers. Background influence and parent involvement, large classes (especially School A), departmental policy of learners not failing more than once in a phase, a language barrier especially in English classes were some of the factors that the participant teachers perceived as major contributing factors influencing in Grade Four learners' poor reading performance.

According to the teachers, learners' difficult socio-economic circumstances, e.g. poverty, broken homes, lack of resources at home, no parent involvement as well as no reading culture at home, were some of the barriers influencing reading achievement as well as learning ability. This finding concurs with previous research that those adverse home circumstances, impacts negatively on a learner's achievement (Howie et al., 2008; Pretorius, 2014; Pretorius & Ribbens, 2005; Van Staden & Venter, 2010).

Learners who achieved above average scores in reading, all had parents who were involved and showed interest in their schooling, according to the participant teachers. Howie et al. (2008) who argued that the home is one of the major influences in reading performance support this view. Reading motivation according to Pečjac and Košir (2008) also include factors e.g. reading interest, frequent reading, teacher and parents' reading modelling, which enable reading efficiency that enhances learners' academic achievement.

So, for most learners in the English Home Language classes, in under-resourced, disadvantaged contexts, reading and learning in a second language is a reality and they are facing major educational challenges, which according to different researchers have implications for academic performance (Howie et al., 2008; Perry, 2008; Probyn, 2001). This concurs with Janks's conclusion that the PIRLS reading comprehension assessment is "taken by many children in their additional language" (Janks, 2011: 29).

However, an anomaly regarding this factor is at School B where Teacher B1, in the English Home Language class reported not having a problem regarding the above factor. Noted is the fact that the ANA 2012 results of the School B showed that the Grade Four Home Language performances was above average.

Despite the Afrikaans Home Language classes having mostly Afrikaans MT speakers, the reading performance was not significantly higher than the English Home Language class's performance, where most learners' LOLT is actually not their Mother Tongue or Home Language, but an additional language. This finding concurs with PIRLS 2008 report on performances between the different language groups (Howie et al., 2008).

Another factor concerning the learners' achievement was the reporting of behavioral problems, which, according to four of the teachers, negatively affected classroom teaching and learning thus affecting the morale and motivation of the teachers.

Teachers A1 and A2 reported large classes as a contributing factor to learners' reading performance. Howie et al. (2008) support this view in the PIRLS 2006 study, as well as Van Staden & Venter (2010) confirming that reading achievement dropped noticeably in classes consisting of more than forty learners.

4.4. Teachers' knowledge about teaching and assessing of reading comprehension

4.4.1. Teachers' instructional practices when teaching and assessing reading comprehension

In my investigation for evidence of teachers' knowledge about teaching reading comprehension and the different levels of questions and comprehension based on the PIRLS processes of comprehension, teachers were asked to explain their instructional practices when teaching and assessing reading comprehension. Guidelines according to the PIRLS comprehension development should include questions that retrieve information; form straightforward inferences; interpret and integrate ideas and information and examine and evaluate content, language and textual elements (Campbell et al., 2001).

All five teachers explained using similar strategies when teaching reading: discussion of vocabulary: some indicated that they did this before they start reading the text, others read the text first, and then learners are asked to identify difficult words and the meaning of the

words are discussed. One of the teachers (B2) mentioned that she also used flashcards with key vocabulary at the beginning of the lesson, in the pre-reading phase. The participant teachers said they read the text aloud first, then the class read the text together; also, group and individual reading aloud were used as strategies. One of teachers (B2) also mentioned letting learners retell the story in their own words. *“The learner should be able to retell the story, see the words and understand and be able to tell the story to someone else.”*

After reading the text, teachers said that informal oral questioning took place, then discussion of the reading comprehension questions in the prescribed textbook or workbook, followed by a written exercise.

All the participant teachers emphasized the importance of learners understanding what they read. For teacher B2 it was important for learners to retell the story as well give feedback and answer the questions. Teacher B3 also felt that learners should ask questions themselves: *“They should not be afraid to read and to ask questions. It is important that they should express themselves and find things out for themselves.”*

Only one teacher, A1, mentioned using skimming and listening exercises as strategies to develop learners reading comprehension skills. She also linked independent reading as a factor to better comprehension skills. Her perception of independent reading was when learners could read silently on their own.

4.4.2. Teachers’ perceptions of learners’ understanding

When asked if they think all learners understand what they read, four out of the five teachers (A1, A2, B2 and B3) indicated that not all learners in their class clearly understood. Only when they go through the answers, they realized learners’ understanding was not what they thought it would be.

Teacher B2 said: *“I do not think all the learners understand what they read. I always come back, even if the assessment is done to make sure. If they cannot tell me, then the explanation was not clear enough or they did not understand.”*

All the participant teachers reported giving reading comprehension exercises to assess learners’ reading ability, as well as using the language exercises based on the texts in the textbooks. The reading comprehension tasks were taken mainly from the textbooks, which seemed to be the main resource. One teacher mentioned that there were not reading

comprehension tasks every week, as they had to complete the curriculum and they had to do every week what the curriculum prescribed or textbook prescribed according to the curriculum. CAPS recommend the teaching of Reading Comprehension should be done once a fortnight (DBE, 2011:14).

Teacher B1 noted: *“Reading comprehension won’t feature perhaps every single week. We basically need to go through the curriculum and basically do what we need to do. I think it would be good if we can have that, reading comprehension, frequently.”* She believed more reading comprehension exercises should be done.

On the question of use of dictionaries or a personal dictionary in the classroom, teachers had varied responses. Although teachers stressed the importance of dictionaries in the classroom, four of the five teachers had no copies of dictionaries in the classroom. Only Teacher B3 had a few, which learners had to share if they needed to use them. One of the main reasons given was the shortage of dictionaries and the effort to obtain them from the school management.

4.4.3. Reading comprehension training during teacher training

On the question of how they were trained to teach reading comprehension during teacher training, none of the teachers could articulate a clear understanding of how to teach and assess reading beyond simple decoding skills. The explanations as to how they were trained to teach reading varied from demonstration lessons given by lecturers, picture discussion, reading aloud, discussing vocabulary and questioning techniques. No clear explanation of the questioning techniques was given.

Teacher A1 gave the following answer: *“Not much concentration on teaching of reading method and assessment”*, which evidently is not a description of any method to teach reading.

Teacher A2 (trained as a Foundation Phase teacher) reported: *“They used storybooks and resources/ big storybook – for Foundation Phase. First of all, you go through the pictures and discuss the pictures. Read aloud first by teacher then class read after the teacher. I try to use that method. But we don’t read enough.”*

Teacher B1 gave the following response: *“The way I can’t remember. It was similar. I forgot. I’m sure there are things that I forgot. But the basic is reading the text a few times trying to see if they understand the language, to see if they understand certain terms. And also, establishing some questions and answering the questions.”*

Teacher B2’s response was as follows: *“As I’ve explained I try to do what we have learned, starting with identifying words and then sentences. Learners use the words to build sentences.”* Noted is that this teacher was trained in Business Studies for the Senior Phase.

Teacher B3 said: *“I did not do Afrikaans as a method subject. My majors were Mathematics and Needlework – not languages.”*

The objective of the interview questions was finding evidence of teachers understanding of developing comprehension questions according to the PIRLS processes of comprehension development, which should include questions that retrieve information; form straightforward inferences; interpret and integrate ideas and information and examine and evaluate content, language and textual elements.

No sense of the different levels of reading comprehension was evident in the explanations by the participant teachers. It was clear that teacher training was not focused specifically on teaching and assessing of reading comprehension and developing teachers’ questioning skills when preparing language teachers. Alternatively, if they have received some training in questioning skills, they are not putting it into practice when teaching reading comprehension.

4.4.4. In-service training workshops

The three more senior teachers (A1, A2, B3) had all attended specialized learning departmental workshops at the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute (CTLI) for specialized learning areas, but according to one of the teachers the workshops were more general and did not focus on teaching and assessing of reading and development of reading literacy. One of the three teachers (B3) also indicated that she did not attend the Language workshops, as she was not trained as a Language Method teacher but went instead for Science and Technology training.

All five teachers went for CAPS training but expressed different opinions regarding the training. One of the teachers did not go specifically for Afrikaans Language training.

Teacher A1 expressed the following opinion about CAPS training: *“It was not structured nicely. They did not give training to all the teachers, only for certain teachers. I feel because it was something new everybody should have had it. In the end when I got the grip on it, I realized it was old information with new names. It was too much information, thick files that we had to go through. We had to do research on the new concepts and realized it was actually old concepts with new names.”*

Teacher A2 described her experience with the CAPS training as follows: *“The CAPS don’t say much of reading as such. It is still early days. For Grade Four it did not change, like pictures and words discuss.”*

Teacher B2 gave the following description of her experience of CAPS training: *“I did not have any in-service training, we had CAPS training, but they do not do in-depth training.”*

According to CAPS in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6), listening, speaking, and language usage skills should be further developed and refined but with an emphasis on reading and writing skills, which are considered central to successful learning across the curriculum (DBE, 2011). During the Intermediate Phase, learners are expected to develop their proficiency in reading and viewing by reading a wide range of literary and non-literary texts, including visual ones. The reading policy envisages learners who are able to recognize genre, and reflect on the purpose, audience and context of texts “Through classroom and independent reading, learners in this phase should learn to become critical and creative thinkers” (DBE, 2011: 10). This should enable learners to develop Reading and Viewing skills that are vital to learn successfully across the curriculum.

Even though CAPS have a reasonably clear reading policy (see Chapter 2), the teachers could not clearly articulate their understanding of the concepts to practically implement the specific goals for reading as it is set out in the CAPS document. Therefore, the assumption can be made that CAPS training did not focus specifically on the teaching of reading literacy.

Teachers were also asked about their knowledge of the Foundations for Learning program (FFL), which was a departmental program focusing on Numeracy and Literacy. Only one of the five teachers interviewed seemed to have some knowledge of the Foundation for Learning Program, which she described as confusing and loaded with too much information, but she did not give details of the program. Teacher A1 said, *“I feel the CAPS is much better.”*

It's more structured than FFL. It confused me. When I really snapped it, then CAPS came in."

When probed about her understanding of the concept of "Shared reading" Teacher A2's response was: *"You go through the pictures and the difficult words,"* which clearly indicates that the Foundation for Learning program was not successfully implemented at the specific school.

From the teachers' responses, it seemed that the in-service training did not specifically focus on teaching of reading literacy.

4.4.5. Support for struggling readers

One of the main concerns expressed by all five teachers was that quite a few learners in their classes were struggling readers. When asked how they would assist those learners with reading difficulties the following responses were noted:

Teacher A2 explained: *"I go through the work with them. They can't read. I go through the work with them. Take them aside. They need special attention. I try helping them by giving them extra reading. I try to go over the work with them. I sound. There are too many. I can't get to everybody. There are too many problems. Half of the class have language barriers. Also, the subject teaching is problematic."* Noted is that this teacher is a Xhosa MT speaker using English as LOLT.

Teacher B1 said: *"Reading texts. To go through and try to sound. I'll try my best. I don't have any training in the Foundation Phase. I don't know how to help them. I will try with what I think can help."*

Teacher B2 responded by saying: *"What I basically do now I go two grades lower for reading. I work with pictures and learners must use it to form sentences."*

Teacher B3 explained her strategy as follows: *"I take the learner individually at the table and let them read to see where they have a problem and where they go wrong. I am not capable to help them with sounding. We are busy organizing for the FP teachers to give us guidance and assistance to help the learners with reading problems."*

The above responses indicate that none of the participating teachers interviewed at the case study schools could clearly describe effective supportive intervention strategies to develop struggling readers' reading skills.

All five teachers expressed their concern regarding the remedial support needed by struggling readers in their classes. They admitted to the fact that they did not have remedial reading training and that they needed support and training to be able to do it as they had several learners that were struggling readers, but that there is a lack of assistance with reading remedial support, which seemed to be problematic. According to the teachers, for them to be more effective, they needed more support from the Department of Education, as well as training to be able to assist especially struggling readers. Teacher B3 expressed her concern by saying: *"I am disappointed in the support from the department to the teachers, especially for learners that cannot read and write."*

*Annexure A*¹ (for children that failed) and *Annexure B*² mean nothing for the children. It neglects the children. Teachers do not get the necessary training to work with children with problems and give up on the children that can't read. Schools must have remedial teachers. No attention is paid to children that can't read."

Teacher B1: *"We need support. I've been here a year and I do get support, but we need more."* We also need more professional development. I go to workshops and I am open for learning."

Only Teacher A1 reported assistance of a remedial teacher, but the school had to share the teacher with another school. Due to large classes and a full timetable, teachers do not have the necessary time to assist and support struggling readers. Teacher A1 stated: *"I need some advice to do remedial, any ideas how to help weak readers."*

Teacher A2 at the same school's request was: *"Is there anything that you can advise me to how to go about teaching reading?"*

Footnote

¹ Annexure A refers to Departmental policy that a child can only fail once in a phase- e.g. if they fail Grade Four they cannot fail in Grade 5 or 6 (DBE n.d.).

² Annexure B refers to the following: If they pass all their other subjects except language, or miss it with about 5%, they are promoted with support in the Home Language to the next grade where the teacher in the next grade should have an intervention program ready (DBE n.d.).

4.4.6. Discussion

Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to investigate teachers' beliefs and their knowledge base to understand their classroom practices when teaching reading comprehension in their contexts. As outlined in CAPS (DBE, 2011), reading comprehension is a key skill in every learner's repertoire as reading forms the basis of learning from the Intermediate Phase upwards. The focus was on the teachers' questioning skills and strategies regarding their understanding of the different comprehension levels as proposed by the PIRLS 2006 and prePIRLS 2011, that are based on four processes of developing reading comprehension questions which include questions that require learners to retrieve information; form straightforward inferences; interpret and integrate ideas and information and examine and evaluate content, language and textual elements (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012).

In analyzing the teachers' responses in the interviews regarding the teaching of reading comprehension, it seems that the main goals for the participant teachers were basic comprehension development and development of vocabulary. However, most of the activities mentioned by teachers centered on word skills approach and vocabulary type of activities.

The reading comprehension methods as described by all the participant teachers revealed that teachers do not seem to be aware of the different levels of comprehension or how to teach reading comprehension using different kinds of questioning strategies to develop learners reading literacy on a higher level as proposed by PIRLS processes of comprehension development. This finding concurs with a study done by Zimmerman and Smit (2014) where they concluded that the comprehension instructional practices of some of the teachers in their case study schools lacked depth and teachers needed to acquire knowledge "to be able to teach comprehension strategies to develop learners' higher-order thinking skills" (Zimmerman & Smit, 2014:7).

The teaching strategies for reading comprehension mentioned mostly by the teachers in the interview are the following: Mostly oral questioning by teacher, teaching of word meaning, pronunciation and spelling, reading aloud by teacher, whole class, groups and individual learners followed by written exercises. These are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Comprehension strategies described by teachers

Comprehension strategy	Teacher
Encouraging learners to ask questions	B3
Skimming	A1
Listening activities	A1
Silent Reading/ Independent reading	A1, A2
Use of flash cards	B2
Use of dictionaries	B2
Retelling of stories	B2

Not much depth was expressed by participant teachers in understanding of reading comprehension development, because the emphasis in explanation was on decoding and very little focus on other reading strategies and skills that focus on meaning making when teaching reading comprehension.

As one of the main components of reading, decoding is the ability to make sense of the letter-sound relationships and how it combines to form words, to recognize words, print knowledge, fluency, including reading aloud (Fang, 2008; Janks, 2011; Pretorius, 2012; Pretorius, 2000). Reasonable fluent oral reading according to Pretorius (2000) is usually perceived as a skill in decoding.

It is expected that children should be able to acquire decoding skills, which are lower level cognitive skills, by Grade Three when they are learning to read. As the starting point in learning to read, decoding is crucial to develop reading comprehension skills, and learners need practice in decoding skills to be able to master reading comprehension. Although an essential basic skill, decoding is not the only skill that learners need to be able to make meaning when they read (Pretorius & Machet, 2004; Pretorius, 2012; Pretorius, 2014).

The other main component of the reading process is comprehension, which refers to the overall meaning assigned to a text. McGuinness (2004) defines it “as the ability to locate information in a text and use it to interpret meaning” (McGuinness, 2004, cited in Pretorius, 2012: 77).

However, the above strategies explained by participant teachers indicated that they focused mainly on the learning-to-read mode of teaching reading comprehension in their Grade Four

classes, which focus mainly on decoding skills, whereas in Grade Four the expectation is that teachers should be able to develop learners' reading comprehension skills to 'read to learn', which goes beyond simple decoding (DBE, 2011).

This finding indicates that teachers lack the knowledge and understanding of the strategies and skills needed for developing learners higher order thinking and reasoning through questions. During the classroom observation, it would become more evident that teachers' lack of pedagogic content knowledge had a direct implication on their instructional practices especially regarding their questioning skills.

Another finding is that teachers also seemed to have little awareness and understanding of the reading goals to develop higher-order comprehension skills and reading strategy instruction as they are set out in CAPS (DBE, 2011). For example, Teacher A2 stated, "*The CAPS don't say much of reading as such*". However, the CAPS document provides clear guidelines regarding focus on different cognitive levels for question types as set out in a table on pages 91 and 92 (DBE, 2011). This includes a variety of types of questions indicating the different cognitive levels, e.g. are Literal (Level 1), Reorganization (level 2), Inference (level 3) Evaluation (level 4) and Appreciation (level 5) (DBE, 2011: 91-92). This raises the question of whether enough focus was placed on teaching of reading during CAPS training for the participant teachers.

The CAPS reading policy envisages learners who are proficient in reading different text types, can recognize genre, and reflect on the purpose, audience and context of texts. Learners in this phase should learn to become critical and creative thinkers through classroom and independent reading (DBE, 2011: 10).

The interviews also indicated that direct teacher questioning still seemed to be the most important strategy in teaching reading comprehension as only one teacher (B3) mentioned the importance of learners asking questions themselves. This finding concurs with Janks' suggestion that learners need to be prepared to also ask questions themselves as well as answer questions (Janks, 2011). Active learner participation during the reading process as part of the social constructivist approach to develop reading skills is also proposed by Dixon and Krause (1996) as well as WCED's LITNUM Strategy (WECD, 2006).

Further discussion on the levels of comprehension questioning demonstrated by teachers will be found in the sections on classroom observation as well as types of questions developed by teachers using the prePIRLS texts.

Participant teachers mentioned the textbook and workbooks as the only resource used during teaching of reading comprehension, which indicated that they strongly relied on the textbooks and workbooks as main resource for teaching reading comprehension. The textbook activities determined the instruction time spent on reading comprehension as one teacher's response was that it is required of teachers to complete the curriculum within a timeframe and they must follow the textbook according to the requirements of the CAPS curriculum or as prescribed by the textbooks. It seems that the belief is that textbooks are the main guideline for the curriculum.

In summary, the interviews revealed that the participant teachers were not able to articulate clearly their understanding of how to teach reading comprehension beyond simple decoding. This finding illustrates that teachers lacked explicit knowledge of reading comprehension strategies to be able to teach and develop learners reading literacy through reading comprehension questioning.

A major concern reported by the participant teachers is their lack of knowledge and training to support learners with reading problems effectively. They expressed their need for training and assistance from the Department of Education to assist struggling readers efficiently. However, according to them there were no special programs and assistance from the Department in place at either school to support learners experiencing reading difficulties or who are second language learners.

Van Staden and Howie (2010), in their research on South African teachers' profiles during the PIRLS 2006, also pointed out the fact that there is a lack of support for remedial training for teachers. This study found that eight years later, after another PIRLS study in 2011 a similar situation existed where the participant Grade Four teachers in the two primary schools in under-resourced disadvantaged contexts were still expressing a need for support and training to be able to assist struggling readers effectively in Grade Four.

Evidently more specific training in reading comprehension strategies is required to develop Grade Four language teachers' knowledge base of reading comprehension instruction

according to the comprehension levels as proposed by PIRLS to be able to effectively teach reading comprehension for learners to ‘read to learn’ in Grade Four.

4.5. Classroom observations

4.5.1. Teacher’s classrooms practice

The focus of this section is on how teachers teach reading in general, including the oral questioning behaviors of participant teachers, which were observed during the classroom teaching of reading comprehension.

In analyzing the classroom observation of participating teachers, especially the classroom instructional practices for reading comprehension, the focus was on the questioning strategies the teachers implemented when teaching and assessing reading comprehension in the pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading phases of the reading comprehension instruction.

Although the focus of this study is teaching and assessing of reading comprehension, all the Language classes of the Grade Four Home Language participant teachers at the two case study schools were observed. One week was spent in each participant teacher’s language class according to the school’s timetable for Grade Four Home Language. However, at School B one observation week was split between two Grade Four Afrikaans Home Language classes on the request of the principal as explained in the methodology chapter.

4.5.2. Classroom contexts

Both primary schools are situated in a low socio-economic township north of Cape Town. Although both schools are situated in the same township, serving poor, disadvantaged pupils, School B’s, buildings seemed to be sturdier, and in a well-kept condition. Both schools had feeding schemes. Despite School A, being relatively new, having started in 2007, the buildings seemed to be in disrepair due to inferior quality workmanship and the school grounds were bare and not well kept.

Both schools did not have a school library and were poorly resourced. There was little evidence of the kind of print rich environment considered necessary to support effective literacy development. Teacher B3’s was the only classroom where quite a few posters were on display, mostly English posters in an Afrikaans Home Language class. In the other four

classrooms that were observed hardly any posters or print resources were displayed on the walls.

Only two of the five classrooms observed had a reading corner or reading table. Teacher A2's reading table consisted mostly of educational magazines, e.g. Zone (which contained information and activities that can be used for classroom learning activities) and only a few books. It did not seem sufficient for a class of 49 learners. However, learners actively used the reading material during the informal morning reading sessions by Teacher A2.

Teacher B3 had quite an extensive reading corner, with a variety of Afrikaans and English readers e.g. Oliver Twist. Nevertheless, it did not seem as if extensive reading was fully integrated in the classroom activities on a regular basis.

Textbooks and workbooks were visible in the classrooms and heavily depended on as the main resource for teaching and assessing of reading comprehension by the participating Grade Four teachers. Most reading comprehension activities as well as other language questions discussed during observation lessons were from the textbooks. The textbook utilization was limited to the classroom only, as they were taken in after use. Only one teacher (B3) used an activity sheet during one of the observed lessons instead of the prescribed textbook.

The participant teachers mainly used the chalkboard. Only Teacher B1 made use of a smart board, but mostly as a chalkboard facility. No other technologies, not even pictures or flashcards were used during lesson observations despite these being reported by Teacher B2 in the interviews.

Class sizes in the two case study schools differed, where School A's class sizes were 49 learners in both classes. Both Teachers A1 and A2 reported having started the year with 52 learners. School B had 36 learners in two of the classes (B1 and B2) and 33 in one class (B3). Both classrooms at School A were overcrowded, and especially Teacher A2 had to spend some time on settling learners before lessons could start. In all the classrooms, the seating was arranged traditionally, with learners sitting in rows facing the chalkboard.

The above findings confirmed the information given by the teachers in the interviews about relying on textbooks and workbooks as their main resources when teaching reading comprehension.

4.5.3. Classroom time spent on reading comprehension

The following table indicates the time spent on classroom observation for each of the five teachers observed.

Table 4

Time spent on language teaching during observation period

School	Teacher	Language	Number of HL language lessons observed	Informal Reading Sessions observed	Formal Language teaching Sessions observed	Reading Comprehension lessons observed
A	A1	Afr. HL	7	3 x 30min	4	2
A	A2	Eng. HL	9	4 x 30min	5	2
B	B1	Eng. HL	7	0	7	2 (1Afr. FAL)
B	B2	Afr. HL	3*	0	2	1
B	B3	Afr. HL	3*	0	3	2
TOTAL lessons observed			29x30	7x30	22x30	9 x30 (1Afr FAL)
Time			14h50m	3h50m	11h	4h50m

** Observation week split between Teachers B2 and B3*

To be noted is that the length of the periods at both schools was 30 minutes. Because the participant teachers taught all the subjects, they could use more than the allotted time in some instances for learners to complete the exercises. The only exception was Teacher A2, a Xhosa MT speaker, who arranged that another teacher take her class for Afrikaans FAL.

Formal grammar language sessions, e.g. A1's lesson on prefixes and suffixes, the lessons on dialogue (B1 and B2), were normally preceded by reading and questioning of the specific text to ensure that the learners understood the content to be able to grasp the topic or language structure covered in the lesson, which meant that learners had more exposure to the reading process and answering of questions.

Lesson observations were done over a two-week period according to the teacher's Home Language timetable. Lesson were not necessarily consecutive. The pattern in Table 4 indicates that of the total number of 890 minutes (14 h50) spent on total lesson time in the language classrooms, only 270 minutes (4h50 min), or 30,3% was spent on reading comprehension instruction. It is clear from the above table (4) that not enough time is spent on reading comprehension instruction in the classroom.

The current policy that guides teacher's instructional practices is the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011), which is the most recent policy

document from the Department of Basic Education (DBE). This emphasizes the importance of “well-developed reading skills” to learn across the curriculum, as well as a necessity to develop learners to be successful participants in society (DBE, 2011: 9). One of the key features of CAPS is the document’s specificity regarding the time allocation and teaching plan. The Policy document promulgates explicit teaching in two-week cycles e.g. in the Grade Four curriculum section for Term 3, week 3 & 4 for reading and viewing specifically indicates the following activities: Read information text e.g. on social issues with pre-reading strategies e. g. Predict from title and pictures, scanning for details, skimming for general idea, locate information from different resources, etc. (DBE, 2011: 46).

Five hours in the two-week cycle are to be allocated to reading and viewing for Grade Four (DBE, 2011: 14) and it also suggests allocation of teaching times, e.g. 1 hour on a Monday for shared reading, discussions on text, group guided reading, reflecting on independent reading, etc. (DBE, 2011:14). Referring to Table 4 regarding the time spent on reading instruction, including reading comprehension, it shows that there was quite a difference in the range of time allocation for the individual teachers. E.g., Teachers A2, B1 and B3 spent more time on reading comprehension; however, Teacher B1’s time allocation included an Afrikaans reading comprehension lesson.

According to PIRLS, the international average for reading instruction is more than 6 hours a week (Howie et al., 2008.). Time allocation according to CAPS for Grade Four Home Language (HL) as well as First Additional Language (FAL) is 5 hours per two-week cycle (DBE, 2011:14). Therefore, in South Africa the time allocation in the curriculum for reading instruction is less than half of the international average.

The finding in Table 4 highlights the fact that far fewer hours of reading instruction took place in the schools observed, in comparison with the international average of 6 hours per week. Comparatively the time allocation in the CAPS document as pointed out above; (5 hours per two-week cycle) also falls short if compared with the international average as proposed by PIRLS (Howie et al., 2008).

As far back as 1999, Taylor and Vinjevold (1999) pointed out in their research study, *Getting Learning Right*, that limited time was spent on reading and teaching of reading in South African classrooms, including reading comprehension, especially in disadvantaged classrooms in L2. Despite the 2006 PIRLS report (Howie et al., 2008) that showed similar findings, no marked changes were made to time allocation for explicit reading instruction in

the current CAPS (2011) document. This finding also concurs with a report done by Van Staden and Howie (2010) on South African teachers regarding the below average time spent in South African classrooms on reading instruction.

Although a specific number of hours are not proposed, the recommendation in the 2012 National Education Evaluation & Development (NEEDU) report is that far more time needs to be allocated and spent on reading by South African learners to develop their reading comprehension skills (Taylor et al., 2013:40). Other researchers endorse this, as adequate time allocation is important for the development of competent readers (Taylor et al., 2013; Taylor & Vinjevoold, 1999; Van Staden & Howie, 2010). The more children have exposure to print, the higher their reading performance. Pretorius (2004) has identified as a necessary criterion that, for children to learn to read and use their skills effectively in the learning environment that, “they need to be given plenty opportunities to read in and outside the classrooms” (Pretorius, 2004). The more children have exposure to print the higher their reading performance.

4.5.4. Activities during reading comprehension instruction

According to the CAPS guidelines, for development of proficient reading skills, the reading process should include activities and reading strategies in the pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading stages, with specific activities and reading strategies in each stage to enhance learners’ comprehension of the specific text (DBE, 2011: 9-10). However, the PIRLS 2011 summary report has pointed out that one of the shortcomings of the curriculum is that there is not enough focus on comprehension skill and strategy instruction, which has implications for the development of learners’ higher-order thinking and reasoning abilities (Howie et al., 2011: 97).

Besides more time spent on reading literacy instruction, the quality of the teacher-learner interaction during reading literary instruction, is another factor in development of competent readers to be able to read to learn across the curriculum. The following section is an analysis of activities observed during the reading comprehension instruction of the five participating teachers according to the pre-, during- and post-reading phases of comprehension instruction.

4.5.4.1. Pre-reading

Very few reading comprehension strategies were used in the pre-reading phase e.g. informal questions to create a context regarding the topic to activate learners' prior knowledge. Pre-reading activities consisted mostly of vocabulary work and teacher explanation and teacher-led discussion. Two of the teachers (A1 and B2) started the reading comprehension by reading aloud, followed by vocabulary work.

Vocabulary work consisted of learners identifying and underlining difficult words, pronunciation, teachers discussing meaning of words, individual learners reading the sentences where words appeared, teachers assisting with spelling and pronunciation and sounding of words. In only one instance (B3), dictionaries were used to look up meaning of words. Mostly vocabulary work focused on decoding as mentioned above e.g. identifying and discussing difficult words, pronunciation and sounding out of words. According to Pretorius and Lephhalala (2011) decoding is a necessary element for comprehension, but not sufficient for reading comprehension.

Teachers A2, B2 and B3 used prediction as a strategy. In two instances, teachers (A2 & B3) used pictures in the textbooks and posed questions to activate learner's prior knowledge of the texts, e.g. *What do you see in the pictures? What do you think is happening in the picture? Who are the people in the story?* (A2)

Teacher B3 was the only teacher who used a variety of reading strategies during the reading comprehension lesson that stretched over two language sessions. Examples of prediction questions asked by B3 are e.g. *What do you think is happening in the story? If you look at the title, what is the story about? What do you know about an ant that a locust does not know?* Examples of textbook questions on the same story e.g. *Which words describe the locust. Where did the ant stay? During which time of the year did ants gather its food?* Strategies teacher B3 used, included e.g. prediction, activation of prior knowledge through questioning, picture discussion, dictionary activity, etc.

Teacher A1 also made use of silent reading and skimming and scanning exercises during reading in preparation for a formal language session, but not in the reading comprehension session.

Very little activation of prior knowledge through questioning on the topic was observed

of prior knowledge extensively as a reading strategy. Although Teachers A2 and B1 also used the strategy, only one or two questions were asked, but not enough elaboration and interactive discussion took place before the actual reading of the text started.

4.5.4.2. During-reading

The during-reading phase consisted mostly of repeated reading aloud by teachers, the whole class and groups while teachers assisted with pronunciation. In two instances, teachers (B1 and B2) clicked their fingers to pace the learners' reading speed while reading aloud. Occasionally individual learners were asked to read aloud (Teachers A1, B1 and B3), but this was not the norm. The reason given by Teacher B2 was that learners read too slowly. In two instances, direct oral questions were asked during the reading process to assist learners' understanding of content (Teachers A2 and B1). Retelling of stories by individual learners was observed in two instances (B1 and B3).

Silent reading was observed only once (A1) during the reading comprehension instruction lessons of the five participating teachers. One of the PIRLS requirements is that children must read texts on their own before answering questions; therefore, they need practice in silent reading as a strategy.

4.5.4.3. Post-reading

Similar practices of the participant teachers were observed during the post-reading phase of the reading comprehension lessons. The post-reading phase consisted mostly of teacher-led oral discussion and explanation of the textbook comprehension questions, followed by a written exercise focusing on answering the textbook questions. In most cases, there were five or six textbook questions. The questions in the textbook were e.g.

A1: 1) *How does it poison its host?* 2) *Name 3 insects that is poisonous.*

A2: 1) *Name the two main causes of global warming.* 2) *Name three problems that Global warming will cause in the future.* 3) *Write down five things that you can do to save energy.*

B1: 1) *What is the book about?* 2) *Where did her mother live?* 3) *Who works on a farm?*
4) *Who is his mother?* 5) *Why did they leave Aotcha?*

Teacher B3 when discussing the textbook questions, by reading the paragraph or giving learners an opportunity to read passages containing the answers to be able give answers in writing, provided scaffolding.

Learner responses were limited to answering the questions led by the teacher. Only two instances of probing were observed (Teachers A2 and B1). *E.g., Why do you think so? (A1). Do you understand what is happening to Bea and her mother? (B1).* No other instances of probing questions to engage learners in further interactive discussion of answers to stimulate thinking skills or to formulate their own questions were observed.

4.5.5. Oral questioning

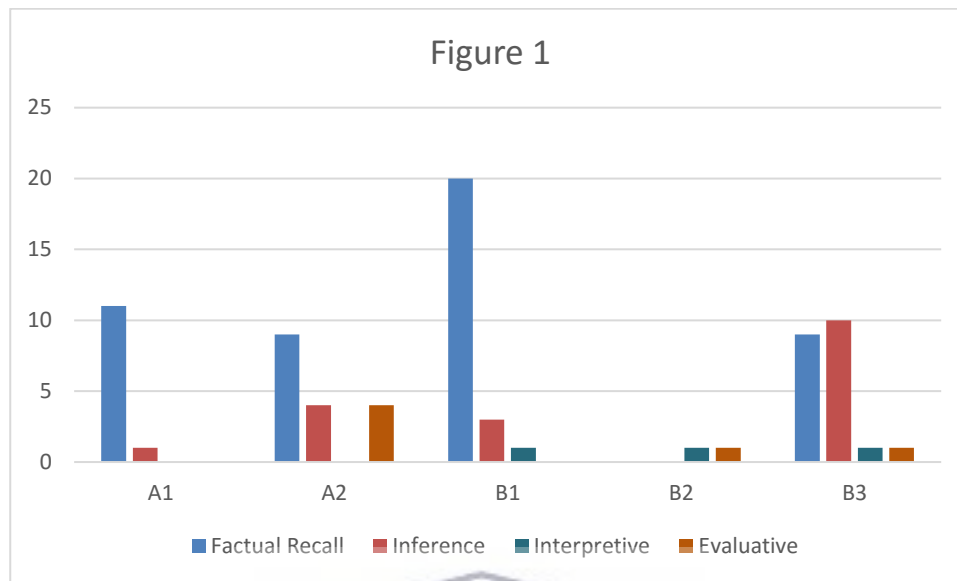
Domination of teacher-led explanations and direct oral questioning by teachers of texts was one of the main findings regarding the observed classroom activities of participant teachers.

While observing the reading comprehension lessons the focus was also on the direct oral questions asked by the participating teachers during instruction, with the purpose of getting a sense of the cognitive level of the question types in relation to the PIRLS comprehension questions of texts. PIRLS comprehension questions for texts should include questions, which require learners to focus on retrieval of explicit information, make straightforward inferences, interpret and integrate ideas and information, integrate, examine and evaluate content language and contextual elements (Mullis et al., 2001).

The following graph is a summary of direct oral question types asked in the observed reading comprehension lessons. It is based on Appendix 5. It indicates the types of questions asked according to the PIRLS processes in the observed reading comprehension lessons. What is to be noted is that most of the questions are the textbook questions for the written exercise in the post-reading phase, as the teachers were heavily reliant on the textbook as main resource.

Figure 1

Summary of types of oral questions asked by teachers in observed Reading Comprehension lessons



The pattern in the above figure indicates that more than half of the direct oral questions (64%) in the observed reading comprehension sessions were low cognitive level questions focusing on recall or retrieval of information from the text, e.g.:

- What is the name of the newspaper? (A1 – Lesson 1)*
- Name the two main causes of global warming. (A2- Lesson 3)*
- Name 3 insects that is poisonous. (A1- Lesson 4)*
- What is the grandfather's name? (B1- Lesson 6)*
- What is the title? (B3- Lesson 1)*

Noted is that mostly recall questions were asked by Teachers A1 and B1. The recall questions are closed questions that require factual information from the text as above examples indicate.

According to the prePIRLS assessment framework, this finding is acceptable as the expectation is that 50% of questions should be focusing on retrieval of explicit information in texts. 23% (18) of questions asked were inferential, whereas only 4% (3) were interpretation and integration questions and 8% (6) questions on examining and evaluation of content.

However, there were differences in the finding regarding individual teachers questioning strategies. Teachers A1, B1 and A2 for example asked mostly recall questions, whereas Teacher B3 provided more balanced questioning. In addition, to be taken into consideration

is that B2 only asked two questions overall, therefore no recall and inference question types were recorded.

This shows that teachers are inclined to focus on information retrieval questions during oral questioning in reading comprehension. Although School B's ANA results were above average, a similar pattern was observed.

This finding concurs with most previous research on teachers' oral questioning behavior, which concluded that most oral reading comprehension questions emphasize recall of information (Cotton, 1988; Gall, 1970; Guszak, 1967; Parker & Hurry, 2007; Pretorius & Ribbens, 2000; Taylor et al., 2003; Wilen, 1991; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

Inferential questions, which required learners to identify information not explicitly, stated in the text, comprised of only 28% of the direct oral questions asked during the observed sessions. e.g.

What is the story about? (A2-Lesson 1).

If you look at the title, what is the story about? (B3- Lesson 2)

Quite a few of those questions were from the textbook. Inferential questions require a deeper understanding of the text as well as higher-order thinking skills. According to Pretorius and Ribbens (2005), the skill to answer inferential questions is essential for assessing reading comprehension. This notion is supported by Cain and Oakhill (1999) who concluded that the lack of skill to draw inferences is probably a cause of comprehension failure in children and that children needed to be taught the strategy how to use knowledge to make inferences.

Questions that focus on interpretation and integration of ideas and information comprised of 4% of the questions asked by the teachers. Questions focusing on interpreting and integrating information require learners to be able understand the message of the text, compare and contrast aspects in the text, as well establish the mood of the story (Howie et al., 2012).

E.g., What is the theme of the competition? (A1)

What emotions do you experience when you read the poem? (A1- Lesson 2)

What can we learn from Helen Keller? (B2- Lesson 1)

What do you know about an ant that a locust does not know? (B3- Lesson 1)

Only 8% of oral questions asked by teachers focused on questions that examined and evaluated content, language and textual elements. Learners are required to decide and show an understanding of the author's viewpoint, show the ability to evaluate the clarity of the text content and language. (Mullis et al., as cited in Howie et al., 2012). E.g.

Do we have to kill the insects in our houses, yes or no? (A1)

What were the consequences of locust's teasing? (B3)

When you read the story, who did you have sympathy for? (B3)

How do you think Helen Keller felt when she became the first blind and deaf-and – dumb person that obtained a degree in the Arts? (B2)

However, most of the questions in those categories were from the prescribed textbooks. The scarcity of interpretive and evaluative questions in the direct oral questioning practices of the participating teachers confirms other research findings that high cognitive-level questions are not asked frequently during classroom reading comprehension instruction and remains a challenging skill for teachers to obtain and implement effectively (Brualdi Timmins, 1998; Cotton, 1988; Day & Park, 2005; Fordham, 2006; Guzsak, 1967; Taylor et al., 2003; Wilen, 1991; Zimmerman & Smit, 2104).

Another pattern that was observed was teachers' domination of the oral questioning during reading comprehension instruction. Teachers did almost all the talking, while the students were mostly passive, responding only to the questions asked by the teachers. Students are hardly encouraged to ask questions. The, "Do you understand?" question, had little response from students. This finding confirms the conclusion from a group of researchers that teacher-led recitation dominates oral interactions in classroom and confirms that teachers control classroom interaction and learners mostly parrot back the information from the text and hardly get opportunity to ask questions or encouraged to give their opinion to develop their higher-order thinking skills (Guszak, 1967; Taylor et al., 2003; Wilen, 1991).

Also observed was one of the teachers only discussing the answers to questions orally and learners did not write down the answers individually. E.g., Teacher A1 presented a formal lesson on a poem as a reading comprehension lesson with questions focusing mostly on the structure of the poem. Learners only answered the questions orally and no written activity was given on the poem.

4.5.6. Discussion

Teachers' classroom practices form a critical aspect in reading literacy development of learners because of the key role teachers play in providing effective reading comprehension instruction for them so that they can develop the reading comprehension skills necessary to be able to answer higher cognitive-level questions enabling the learners to read to learn.

Three key issues emerged from the classroom observations of reading comprehension-questioning skills of the participating teachers. These are: time spent on teaching and assessing of reading including reading comprehension, the use or non-use of reading strategies effectively during reading comprehension instruction as well as oral questioning behavior of teachers during the teaching and assessing of reading comprehension.

4.5.2.1. Time spent on teaching and assessing of reading

Firstly, the finding about time spent on reading comprehension instruction showed evidence that learners do not have enough exposure to explicit teaching and assessing of reading comprehension. This finding concurs with a study done by Pretorius and Currin in 2010, where they argued that the opportunities for reading needs to be increased, basing it on the Matthew principle described by Stanovich (1986) in relation to learning to read: “that good readers get better when reading, while weak readers get weaker when they are not exposed to enough reading opportunities” (Stanovich, 1986, as cited in Pretorius & Currin, 2010: 67). This aspect is especially important in the South African school context, where research has indicated that our education system is experiencing a “reading crisis” (Fleisch, 2007; Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012; Matier Moore & Hart, 2007; Pretorius & Currin, 2010; Pretorius & Lephala, 2011; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

As pointed out previously the new curriculum, CAPS’s (DBE, 2011) time allocation for teaching and assessing of reading (5 hours per two-week cycle) is way below the international average (more than 6 hours per week) as proposed by PIRLS (2006) and PIRLS (2011). According to Pretorius (2012), “lots of instructional time must be set aside to develop strong reading skills from an early age” (p. 91). In table 4, it was noted that out of a total of 29 language lessons comprising of approximately 890 minutes, only 9 lessons were reading comprehension lessons of 290 minutes.

One of the teachers (B1) in the interviews stressed the fact that teachers need to complete the curriculum within a specific time frame, and they must follow the textbook according to the requirements of the CAPS document or as prescribed by the textbooks. This illustrates that the textbook determines the instruction time spent on reading comprehension because the teachers are heavily reliant on the textbook as main resource for teaching reading comprehension, which might be one of the reasons why not enough time is spent on reading comprehension. Because teachers tend to focus on covering the curriculum content

according to the curriculum prescription, not enough time is spent on repeating, reflecting and supporting learners' reading comprehension development in a scaffolded way.

One of the recommendations by John Guthrie in a developmental workshop in 2013 for South African teachers is the practice to empower children to read a lot inside and outside the classroom (Guthrie, 2013). This notion was also one of the necessary criteria identified by Pretorius in the reading literacy development of children (Pretorius, 2010). Therefore, for South African Grade Four learners' reading improvement and progression, they need much more opportunities for reading inside and outside the classroom as well exposure to focused teaching of reading to develop their reading literacy skills, than they are given in the current curriculum. Reading is improved by doing more reading; therefore, large amounts of time are needed for actual reading, including extensive reading, is what is indicated by research.

4.5.2.2. Use of Reading Strategies during reading comprehension

Reading strategies and comprehension go hand in hand in developing proficient reading comprehension skills, which include the ability to perform different types of tasks and use different reading strategies to answer a variety of reading comprehension questions. Harris and Hodges (1998) define strategy as "a systematic plan, consciously adapted and monitored to improve one's performance in learning", (as cited in Barry, 2002: 132). Teachers should be skilled to plan appropriately and strategically to develop their learners' reading literacy skills that are relevant to their contexts through suitable activities. Reading strategies or reading skills to develop reading comprehension include the following: prediction, activation of prior knowledge through question and answer, pre-reading questions through brainstorming, skimming, scanning, visualizing/mental imaging, visual aids, vocabulary activities, reciprocal teaching, summarizing, drawing inferences, note-taking, student-developed questions make connections, evaluating, etc.

Findings regarding the second issue, the effective use of reading strategies during reading comprehension instruction, show that very few other reading comprehension strategies were used and taught by teachers, besides questioning. The critical role of reading strategies as part of reading comprehension instruction, and the minimal use of them by many teachers, could be seen as one of the contributing factors to the reading literacy crisis experienced in most South African classrooms.

The finding in the interviews revealed that teachers seemed to lack a deep understanding of reading comprehension strategies and applied them in a haphazard way when teaching reading comprehension. Previous studies by Klapwijk (2012), Zimmerman and Smith (2014) support this finding that teachers seldom explicitly teach reading strategies in South African schools and that comprehension instruction practices in schools do not effectively develop learners reading literacy support this finding.

According to Zimmerman and Smit (2014) most teachers lack knowledge and insight in developing reading comprehension skills, to be able to understand that comprehension is more than retrieval of literal information through oral and written questioning. This notion is congruent with a finding by international researchers, Parker and Hurry (2007) that teachers lack explicit knowledge of key reading comprehension strategies and that explicit teaching of reading strategies improve learners reading comprehension. However, for teachers to be able to implement the reading strategies in the classroom, it is necessary to have an in-depth understanding thereof.

According to the Literacy for Learning Report for Grades 4 to 6 in Ontario (2004), teachers should be able to explain and demonstrate the use of strategies, so that students can apply the strategies with guidance and support from the teacher (Aubut & Taylor, 2004: 68). The report also emphasizes that reading strategies should not be used alone, but in an integrated way with other strategies depending on the context and the situation (Duke & Pearson, 2002, as cited in Aubut & Taylor, 2004). Therefore, teachers need to have a sense of the diverse basic literacy needs of their students in their classrooms to be able to apply reading strategies effectively when teaching reading comprehension.

The first finding regarding the lack of sufficient time spent on teaching and assessing reading, correlates with Parker and Hurry's (2007) argument that too little time is spent on teaching and using reading comprehension strategies during reading comprehension instruction. To use reading strategies effectively takes time. Not having enough time therefore could be one of the barriers in implementing reading strategies. Teachers should plan and prepare, they should take time to model the strategies during classroom instruction, they have to allow time for interactive discussion, and it takes time to question, predict, etc. Implementing reading strategies during comprehension instruction in the classroom is time consuming and therefore more time should be allocated in the curriculum for reading literacy

development to enable teachers to use reading strategies effectively to develop learners' higher-order thinking skills through effective questioning.

However, the above suggestions might be difficult to apply in classroom contexts experienced by participating teachers in the case study schools as well as in the broader South African schooling set up in similar situations because of challenging factors, e.g. teachers' workloads, students that struggle with reading, overcrowding, lack of resources, etc. unless the curriculum time for reading is increased.

4.5.6.3. Questions asked during language lessons

The third aspect evident in the classroom observation findings is that oral questioning is the dominant strategy during teachers' classroom practices of reading comprehension instruction.

Using the PIRLS questions as guideline to evaluate participating teachers' oral questioning behavior, it is clear (see Figure 1) that teachers focus mostly on recall and retrieval of literal information as 64% of the questions were low cognitive level recall questions. Evident in the findings is that a considerable number (23%) of the questions were inferential, which is a higher cognitive level of questions. It is noteworthy given the fact that when interviewed teachers did not seem to be aware of the different levels of comprehension or how to teach reading comprehension using various kinds of questioning strategies to develop learners reading literacy on a higher level, as proposed by PIRLS processes of comprehension development as well as recommended by the CAPS document. What needs to be mentioned is that most of the higher-order questions were the comprehension questions from the textbooks.

Gall (1970), Durkin (1979) and Wilens's (1991) conclusion that teachers focus mainly on lower cognitive-level information retrieval questions was confirmed in recent research by South African researchers, Zimmerman and Smit (2014) regarding teachers' focus on lower-order questions. This conclusion indicates that teachers' questioning behavior had not changed much over the years. This also confirms that there is not much fundamental change in the types of questions, which teachers emphasize in the classroom, as mostly literal questions, and only a few higher-level questionings were observed.

Grade Four learners need exposure to both literal, inferential, interpretive and evaluation questions. One of the key messages of the Literacy for Learning Ontario Report for Grades 4-6 (2004) is that struggling readers should not be limited to low-level activities focused on decoding and literal comprehension, as is the case now evidenced in the findings on oral questioning behavior of participating teachers. It recommends that junior grade learners need explicit reading instruction and scaffolded support, as well as exposure to a variety of question types to develop their higher-order thinking skills (Aubut & Taylor, 2004: 61). Fordham (2006) supports the above recommendation and Brualdi Timmins's (1998) notion that questions should expand learners' knowledge and encourage them to think creatively.

Although the literal recall questions are necessary to remember facts, higher cognitive-level questions are essential to develop learners thinking and cognitive skills. Teachers should therefore have the ability and skills to purposefully plan and use higher cognitive-level questions.

Furthermore, the indication that teachers control the oral questioning during classroom instruction limits learners' opportunities to read and talk about their reading, which could further develop their thinking and communication skills. Teachers seem to have little awareness of making learners part of the comprehension process and engage them interactively. For Fielding and Pearson (1994), one of the components of effective comprehension instruction is opportunities for learners to interact "with the teacher and with one another about their responses to reading" (Fielding & Pearson, 1994, as cited in Aubut & Taylor: 66).

Active learner participation during the reading process is also emphasized by Dixon- Krause (1996) as an important aspect of developing reading skills and knowledge and is highlighted by WCED's LITNUM- Strategy (WCED, 2006). This means that learners should also be active therefore they should be given opportunities to ask questions, argue, and give their own opinion on the topic that they are studying. This means less teacher talk and more learner talk. However, because teachers were controlling the classroom talk and asking the questions, learners were passive and only answered the questions asked by the teachers.

Learners should be encouraged to talk about their reading, thereby ensuring that learners assume more responsibility for their own learning. These opportunities are crucial in developing learners to function on a higher cognitive level (WCED, 2006).

The finding about the pattern regarding learners' oral answering of questions only and not writing down the answers individually also has implications for development for learners' writing skills as reading and writing need to be developed in conjunction with each other. Reading as a vital skill for general learning is essential for literacy development but reading together with writing is crucial for learners to participate fully in the wider society.

In conclusion, the above findings, regarding time allocation for reading literacy development, teachers' reading comprehension instructional classroom practices, as well as oral questioning behavior of teachers have implications for in-service as well as pre-service teacher training programs as well as for the current curriculum. To be able to fulfil their key role as change agents in the development of reading literacy in the challenging classroom contexts experienced currently in South African schools, teachers require the necessary pedagogical content knowledge. In this regard, Klapwijk (2012) recommended the following: "intensive development and considerable change in instructional methods and approaches" for reading comprehension instruction (p.193). This could bring about the positive change in the reading literacy development of South African learners to be able to 'read to learn' effectively especially in disadvantaged contexts as experienced in the case study schools.

I agree with Pretorius' (2014) notion that "children need knowledgeable teachers" (p. 73), for reading literacy development in South African classrooms, which are experiencing a "reading crisis", as highlighted by PIRLS 2006 and 2011 (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012).

4.6. Teachers' questions in written assessment task

4.6.1. Introduction

Reading comprehension questions are used to evaluate a range of learners' reading skills on different levels. Therefore, to evaluate those comprehension skills requires from teachers the necessary ability to effectively develop and ask different question types for learning across the curriculum.

Furthermore, well-developed reading comprehension questions are essential for learner understanding and developing critical thinking skills. Because teachers spend most of their instruction time asking questions and questioning forms the basis of classroom teaching

methods, it is essential that teachers have the necessary knowledge about questioning and competence to teach and assess reading through reading comprehension of which questioning forms the basis.

The “reading crisis” in the South African schools, as illustrated by the PIRLS 2006 and 2011 results, prompted this investigation into the current teaching and assessing of reading comprehension practices of Grade Four English and Afrikaans Home Language teachers’ classrooms in disadvantaged contexts, to be able to understand the crisis and contribute to the debate and to inform teacher development regarding the enhancement of teachers’ questioning skills.

4.6.2. Reading Comprehension Questions

The interviews revealed that the participant teachers did not seem to be aware of the different levels of comprehension and lacked the pedagogical content knowledge of how to teach reading comprehension using different kinds of comprehension questioning strategies to develop learners reading literacy on a higher level as proposed by PIRLS processes of comprehension development. Furthermore, observation of the teachers’ classroom practices of reading comprehension instruction showed that teachers focused mostly on retrieval of information questions, which are lower cognitive-level questions. The pattern observed confirmed that few higher cognitive-level questions that include inference, interpretation and evaluation questions are asked orally during reading comprehension instruction.

Therefore, the following section will focus on the reading comprehension questions set by the Grade Four teachers at the two case study schools with the purpose to investigate the kinds of questions teachers ask to teach reading comprehension skills.

To recap, I wanted to establish if the participant teachers could formulate suitable questions on the texts to assess different levels of reading comprehension, which include the four types of comprehension processes that PIRLS used to develop reading comprehension questions, i.e.

- Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information
- Make straightforward inferences from information given in the text
- Interpret and integrate ideas and information across the text
- Examine and evaluate content, language and textual element (Mullis et al., 2001)

According to the PIRLS Assessment Framework, the above processes form the foundation for reading comprehension (Mullis et al., 2011:13).

4.6.3. Choice of Texts

For the exercise, each teacher was given a choice from four of the 2011 prePIRLS released texts and requested to use one of the texts to design a reading comprehension consisting of ten questions and answers.

I used the PIRLS assessment as background to my research study to establish the participating teachers' ability to formulate question types according to the PIRLS processes for reading comprehension as it provided some guide for the Grade Four learners who were the Grade that I focused on in my investigation.

My choice of texts from prePIRLS was determined by the prePIRLS 2011 released items to be able to equate what I found in the research with the findings of the PIRLS study.

The two basic text types used by the PIRLS 2011 Assessment Framework were narrative texts and informational texts. For the assessment of literary experiences narrative texts were used and to acquire and use information, informational or expository texts (CEA, 2006: 7).

Different texts are structured in different ways. Narrative texts typically consist of a story pattern with a setting, characters, actions, events, important conflicts and resolution. Expository or informational texts are organized in more than one way. Through informational texts, learners engage with real world aspects to be able to understand how things are in the world and the why of it. Informational texts are used for knowledge attainment and to assess learners' reasoning skills (CEA, 2006: 7).

For the purpose of this research study the two narrative texts used for the setting of questions, were from the 2011 prePIRLS: (Appendix 8)

Brave Charlotte/ Dapper Betty - Anu Stohner

The Lonely Giraffe / Die Eensame Kameelperd - Peter Blight

The two expository/ informational texts used were:

Caterpillar to Butterfly / Van Ruspe tot Skoenlapper- Deborah Heiligman -

Two Giant Dinosaurs/ Twee reuse Dinosaurusse (anonymous)

Although the prePIRLS texts have pre-set questions, the texts were given to the participants without the questions with the intention to establish the teachers' ability to formulate

questions that include the four processes of comprehension as outlined in the 2011 PIRLS Assessment Framework. To be noted is that the prePIRLS texts were also available in Afrikaans, therefore both English and Afrikaans versions were available.

4.6.4. PIRLS processes of comprehension

I wanted to establish if the participant teachers could formulate suitable questions on the texts to assess different levels of reading comprehension, which include the four types of comprehension processes that PIRLS used to develop reading comprehension questions as mentioned in the previous section. The above categories were used to analyze the reading comprehension questions set by the Grade Four Home Language teachers at the two case-study schools.

For the purpose of the discussion when referring to lower cognitive questions, it will apply to the first category that focuses on the retrieval of stated information.

The last three categories refer to higher cognitive-level questions which require higher-order thinking or reasoning skills with level four representing the most challenging type of question. In these categories learners not only use their factual knowledge, but according to Brualdi Timmins (1999) “they use their factual knowledge to solve problems, infer, analyze, interpret, and evaluate” (p.2).

To be noted is that the South African cohort of Grade Four learners took part in the 2011 prePIRLS project, a new study that was an easier assessment, which was initiated specifically for the low performing countries in the 2006 study, so that they could be assessed at a different level from other participants (Howie et al., 2012). The difference between the 2011 PIRLS and prePIRLS is that the 2011 prePIRLS was easier and that a bigger percentage (50%) of the comprehension questions focused on the Grade Four students’ ability to retrieve explicitly stated information as one of the reading literacy processes, whereas the PIRLS 2011 assessment included 20% of the questions for the same process (Mullis et al., 2011:14).

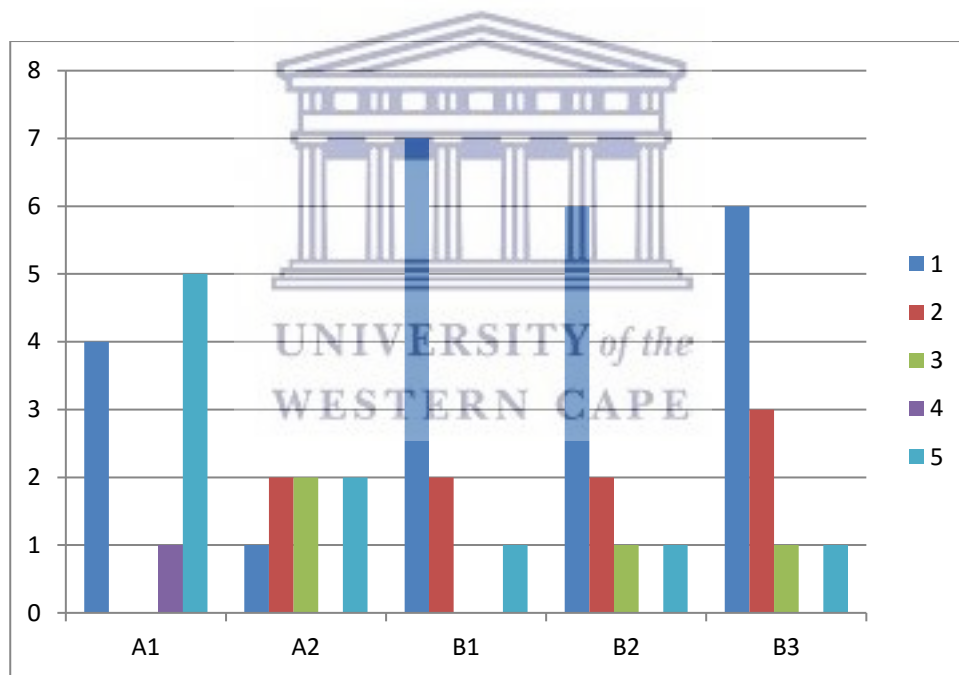
Secondly, the passages were not longer than 400 words to allow enough time for reading. Added to that, questions were spread throughout the passage to help students to answer some questions even if they do not complete the whole passage (Mullis et al., 2011: 71-72).

In Appendix 7 the questions set by the 4 Grade Four teachers at the two case study schools, are categorized according to the four processes of comprehension as used by PIRLS.

The information in the Appendix (7) indicates the number of questions according to the four processes as set out in the PIRLS.

The following figure is a summary of the number of questions asked according to the four processes as set out in the PIRLS mentioned above. These processes were used to categorize the questions set by the participant teachers. As some of the questions set by the teachers were not relevant, a 5th category was added when questions seemed to be inappropriate or not clear or off the point.

Figure 2
Types of questions set by teachers



1. *Focus on Retrieve Explicitly Stated Information*
2. *Making Straightforward Inferences*
3. *Interpret Ideas and Information*
4. *Examine and Evaluate Content, Language, and Textual elements*
5. *Inappropriate/Unclear/Off the point*

**To be noted is that the Afrikaans questions were translated to English by the researcher for reporting the data.*

The pattern in the above figure is based on appendix 7 (Teachers' questions). According to the summary of appendix 7, 21 out of the 40 questions asked were focused on retrieving explicitly stated information. That indicates that 52% of the questions on the prePIRLS texts set by the Grade Four teachers at the case study schools were straightforward literal questions, focusing on retrieving explicitly stated information in the texts. This finding illustrates that learners in the Grade Four English and Afrikaans Home Language classes at the two schools have more exposure to literal information retrieval questions.

E.g. What container did the teacher use to bring the caterpillar to school? (Waarin het die onderwyser die ruspe skool toe gebring?) (A1)

Name the animals in the story. (A2)

What is the title of the story and who wrote it? (B1)

Where does Charlotte stay? (Waar woon Betty?) (B2)

Name the two characters in the story. (Noem die twee karakters in die storie.) (B3)

This finding, highlights both Rose's (2006) and Cotton's (1988) conclusion that classroom practices show that teachers mainly ask lower level questions which require basic factual recall of knowledge to supply the correct answer.

This category of questions requires students to understand the basic meaning of the text and it requires recall of factual information to supply correct answers according to the text content and to give straightforward answers directly from the text. Information retrieval questions are categorized as lower cognitive-level questions focusing on understanding the content and meaning of the text by retrieving information that is stated explicitly in the text to answer relevant questions (Brualdi Timmins, 1998; Day et al., 2005; Gerot 2000; Guszak 1967). Students' thinking skills are not challenged, as not much thinking depth is required besides straightforward answers directly from text for students to understand basic meaning of text. (Brualdi Timmins, 1999; Gerot, 2000; Guszak, 1967; Parker & Hurry 2007; Pearson et al., 2003; Wilen, 1991).

Referring to the above Figure (2) there is also a relatively small mix of inferential questions (24%). E.g. *Throughout the text, the word "we" is used. To who does the word "we" refer to? (Daar word deur die hele leesstuk gepraat van "ons". Wie is die "ons"?) (A1)*

Why do you think the giraffe spent all day with his head in the trees eating? (A2)

Explain why we should not keep butterflies in a jar? (B1)

Name any differences between the two dinosaurs. (Noem enige verskille tussen die twee dinosaurusse.) (B3)

Only 4% of the questions are interpretive questions, which are the most challenging, e.g. *Where are the animals in this picture?* (A2) and only two language and textual question (4%), e.g. *What is the lesson in this story?* (A2).

The fact that only 15% of the questions focus on the category making straightforward inferences, 7.5% on interpretive and integration and 2.5% on evaluation and examination indicate that learners in this instance get very little exposure to inferential, interpretation and evaluation questions. Teacher A1 did not have any inferential questions in her set of questions.

Inferential questions are categorized as higher cognitive level questions. According to Gerot (2000), inferential questions require deeper thinking from students to connect their personal experience with the information that is explicitly stated in the text to draw inferences and make connections.

In a study done by Cain and Oakhill (1999) to investigate why children have difficulty to draw inferences when comprehending, it was recognized that a lack of skill is a probable cause and that evidence exist to support the conclusion that children can be trained to make inferences. This conclusion is also supported by other researchers that children need to be taught the skill to go beyond the factual understanding of a text and given opportunities to practice the skills by exposing them to a variety of reading comprehension questions (Brualdi Timmins, 1998; Cain & Oakhill, 1999; Day & Park, 2005; Wilen, 1991).

The fact that the finding in Figure 2 indicate that only 15% of the questions set by participating teachers are inferential questions, highlights the lack of learner's exposure to reading comprehension questions that require inference making skills.

For the study, another category of questions was identified and added, as some of the questions asked by teachers were either inappropriate or unclear or off the point (22, 5%). Such questions could be used perhaps to activate learners' prior knowledge or to elicit personal responses from learners. Although these questions relate to the topic, the learners could answer the questions without reading the text. Reading comprehension questions should always lead students to interact with the text, as it should develop students

understanding of the information in the text, therefore in answering the questions, students should always be able to refer to the text (Day & Park, 2005).

Teacher A1 had 5 questions that were categorized as inappropriate or unclear, which is 50% of the questions set, for example: *Would you like to be a butterfly? Why? What do we call the place where animals stay when we study Physical Science? Humans have arms and legs to use for movement, but butterflies have.....* Questions should be clear and understandable and focused as not to allow students to guess the answer. The questions therefore should relate to the content of the text and reflect the understanding of the content to be able to interpret meaning. Concerning however, is that there were more questions in this category than the higher cognitive-level questions.

In analyzing the questions (Appendix 7), grammar and spelling errors were also identified in some of the comprehension questions set by the English Home Language teacher, A2, who is not an English MT speaker. Four grammar and spelling errors were identified for example: *Why did the animals **met** every morning? What did the leopard **heard**?* This highlights the importance of Home Language teachers' proficiency and language teaching capability. A teacher needs to be fully proficient in the language she or he is teaching.

The questions set by the participant teachers were not organized systematically according to the sequencing of information in the text but were organized randomly. E.g. the information to answer Question 2 set by Teacher A1 (refer to Appendix 7) comes at the end of the text. Therefore, for the students to be able to answer the questions they had to read the whole text, which made it a bit more difficult for the learners in the study.

The above finding indicates that the teachers did not provide the necessary scaffolding, as they are not aware that questions should lead learners through the main ideas in the text in a systematic order to provide a structure to work through and understand the ideas in the text paragraph by paragraph.

This finding might also have implications for especially the children that struggle to comprehend, as research has indicated that one of the reasons why children might not be able to make inferences is because of poorer memory skills (Cain & Oakhill, 1999).

Although teachers generated their own questions on the texts, they did not seem to be aware of the importance of developing the different comprehension levels that PIRLS propose

through questioning. The comprehension questions set by the participant teachers contained mostly (54%) information retrieval questions as Figure 2 indicates which require lower-level thinking.

Important to note is that there were substantial differences between question types set by individual teachers e.g. Teacher A2's questions were a more balanced spread, whereas the other four teachers had mostly factual recall questions. Evident is the substantial number of questions that were classified as unclear/inappropriate/off the point. All five participant teachers had questions in that category. Teacher A1 had the highest number of questions in that category.

4.6.5. Learners' comprehension skills.

The following tables (5 and 6) indicates the results of the learners' answers according to the comprehension questions set by the teachers as well as the average percentage (Table 6) acquired in the different categories of questions. The comprehension exercises were done under the supervision of the participant teachers and the researcher did not attend the sessions due to time constraints.

The researcher marked the comprehension exercises, with a memorandum provided by the participant teacher. However, for three of the comprehension exercises the memorandum had to be compiled by the researcher, as the three of the participant teachers did not do it: A1, A2 and B3, which comprises 60% of the sample. To be noted is that it was the three more senior teachers who did not complete the memorandum. This finding illustrates that teachers routinely do not produce a memorandum when the resource material does not provide it.

In addition, to be noted is that learners of Teacher B3 did not complete the reading comprehension exercises, therefore the results contain only those of classes taught by the initial four Teachers: A1, A2, B1 and B2.

Table 5
Learners results in reading comprehension tests
Total of 40 questions

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
School A Teacher 1 – 45 out of 50 learners wrote.	77% (1)	71% (1)	73% (5)	82% (1)	53% (1)	51% (5)	35% (5)	60% (5)	16% (4)	62% (5)
School A Teacher 2 – 44 out of 49 learners wrote	89% (1)	61% (3)	81% (1)	75% (2)	39% (2)	84% (5)	75% (1)	79% (1)	55% (3)	55% (5)
School B Teacher 1 – 31 out of 36 learners wrote	96% (1)	90% (1)	90% (1)	96% (1)	93% (2)	84% (1)	74% (1)	77% (1)	90% (2)	77% (5)
School B Teacher 2 – 25 out of 36 learners wrote	92% (1)	76% (1)	88% (1)	80% (1)	36% (2)	68% (1)	36% (2)	88% (1)	84% (3)	76% (5)

- (1) = Focus on Retrieve Explicitly Stated Information
 (2) = Making Straightforward Inferences-
 (3) = Interpret Ideas and Information
 (4) = Examine and Evaluate Content, Language, and Textual elements
 (5) = Inappropriate/Unclear/Off the point

*Note the different colours represent different question types

Table 6
(Summary of Learners' results)
Learner results by question type and average per category

Four processes of PIRLS	Total of questions per category out of 40	Category average %
1. Focus on Retrieve Explicitly Stated Information	21	81%
2. Making Straightforward Inferences-	5	62%
3. Interpret Ideas and Information	3	67%
4. Examine and Evaluate Content, Language, and Textual elements	1	[16] %
5. Inappropriate/Unclear/Of the point	9	64%

Note the pattern of learners' performance in Table 5 and 6 regarding the literal questions that focus on the retrieval of explicit information in the texts in comparison with the other categories of questions. The pattern in Table 5 indicates that learners' performance scores were much higher in the literal information retrieval questions. Although the pattern in table

6 according to average per category seems to be high in table 2, to be noted that the percentage of questions asked in e.g. category 2 (12, 5%) and 3 (7.5%) were much less than for category 1.

The above findings indicate that teachers most frequently ask factual recall questions, and that learners answer factual recall questions the best (average score of 81%). Higher order questions (types 3 & 4), by contrast, resulted in much lower scores. The assumption therefore can be made that because learners get more exposure and practice to literal recall comprehension questions, they perform better in those types of questions. In addition, this type of question is easier to answer. Unless learners do not get practice with higher order questions, they will not learn how to answer those questions.

To achieve better results in other categories of questions, teachers should give learners more opportunities to work with diverse types of questions (Day et al., 2005). Therefore, teachers themselves need to set more of the higher cognitive-level questions that are more challenging to learners thinking and reasoning skills.

The other finding of note is that some teachers ask more higher-order questions than do other teachers.

The conclusion therefore can be made that because teachers most frequently ask basic information recall questions, learners answer factual recall questions the best because it is easier and do not require higher cognitive-level thinking skills, and because they get more exposure and opportunities to practice the answering of literal recall questions.

The conclusion of Day (2005), Rosenshine (n.d. as cited in Wilen 1991) as well as and Guszak (1967) support this finding that because learners get more exposure to factual recall questions, they get more classroom practice, therefore their achievement is better.

It is evident in Table 5 that learners' performance in the higher cognitive-level questions (category 2, 3 and 4) were much lower in comparison with the lower cognitive-level questions (category 1). The assumption would then be that because learners do not get much exposure to the other categories of questions in the PIRLS processes, a similar a conclusion can be made in the case of higher cognitive-level questions. Because learners get little exposure and opportunities to practice higher cognitive-level questions and because those questions require more challenging thinking skills, they lack the skill to be able to achieve a higher reading comprehension performance.

4.6.6. Discussion

The main purpose of this section was to investigate teachers' skill in developing reading comprehension questions that include different comprehension levels, especially comprehension levels that include all the four comprehension processes as used by PIRLS, as explained above.

In the interview section, one of the conclusions was that participant teachers were not able to articulate their understanding clearly of how to teach reading comprehension beyond simple decoding. That assumption is indicative of the fact that they do not have a sense of the different levels of reading comprehension, as set out by PIRLS. Also, that there is a need for the necessary pedagogical content knowledge base regarding the teaching and assessing of reading comprehension.

The above finding relates directly to the finding (Figure 2) in this section that most of the questions (52%) set by the participant teachers are straightforward literal questions which according to the PIRLS processes focus on retrieving explicitly stated information in the texts. This finding concurs with research findings that teachers consistently ask low-level questions and that high cognitive-level questions are not frequently asked (Cotton, 1988; Guszak, 1967; Janks, 2011; Parker & Hurry, 2007; Pretorius, 2014; Wilen, 1991; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

The pattern in Figure 2 that shows that 52% of lower level questions focus on the comprehension process for retrieving explicitly stated information from texts. This concurs with PIRLS finding that teachers spent most of their instructional time on basic reading skills and strategies and less time on more inferential and more complex types of reading skills (Howie et al., 2012:114).

The pattern in the learners' results in Table 5 and 6 against the teachers' questions in Figure 2 also indicates a congruency connection between teachers' questions and learners' responses. A possible conclusion could therefore be drawn that because teachers use low cognitive-level comprehension questions frequently, learners get more classroom practice and therefore their performance is higher.

To be noted is the spread in the different types of questions set by the individual participant teachers as indicated by Figure 2 e.g. A2 had fewer information recall questions and a more

balanced spread, whereas A1's questions consists of 50% category 5 questions classified as inappropriate/unclear questions. B1, B2 and B3 had mostly factual recall questions.

Figure 2 overall indicates a marked difference in the number of higher-cognitive level questions (24%, 4 % and 4%) and the pre-PIRLS target of 25% for categories 2, 3, & 4 as coded in table 5. This finding is also supported by research that higher cognitive-level questions are not asked frequently and that most questions asked are not cognitively challenging enough (Brualdi Timmins, 1998; Cotton, 1988; Janks, 2011; Pretorius, 2014; Wilen, 1991; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

Evidence also exists that higher cognitive-level questioning promotes reading comprehension growth (Taylor et al., 2003; Buggey, Kniep, Kleinman, Ryan and Dunkin, Gall, Samson, n.d. as cited in Wilen, 1991). These findings stress that higher cognitive- level questioning matters, because by challenging students thinking skills it develops students' thinking skills and advances reading growth. The premise that "reading is thinking" is emphasized by the above and supported by Wilen's conclusion that higher cognitive level questioning develops learners' critical thinking skills (Wilen, 1991).

The finding that participant teachers in the research study mostly focused on literal, information recall reading comprehension questions, and very little or no emphasis on higher cognitive-level questions and comparing it to previous research studies done, the conclusion can be made that not much change has taken place in the classrooms regarding the types of questions teachers put emphasis on. This recent finding is congruent with previous research (Brualdi Timmins, 1998; Gall, 1970; Guszak 1967; Wilen, 1991; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

Both participating schools are primary schools situated in township, disadvantaged contexts with low socio-economic status. Most learners in the Grade Four classes as reported by the teachers in the interviews come from disadvantaged backgrounds with difficult socio-economic circumstances. An interesting finding by Cotton (1988) and others regarding the above factors, is that low cognitive questions could be more effective in certain contexts than higher-level questions particularly with young primary level children, especially disadvantaged, in low socio-economic circumstances. This factor however depended on the subject matter (Cotton, 1988; Rosenshine, Samson, Winne, Buggy, Clegg, n. d. as cited in Wilen, 1991).

However, focusing mostly on lower cognitive-level questions with learners from difficult socio- economic backgrounds raises the question of low expectations from learners in disadvantaged contexts.

Participant teachers also reported in the interviews that most of the learners in their classes are below average readers. The recommendation made by Cotton (2005), that more, lower cognitive-level questions should be asked but in a structured way when instructing young children with low ability, is particularly relevant for this study and application thereof could be more effective in the contexts of the participating schools. This recommendation is supported by Wilson's conclusion that below average readers perform better in factual questions (Wilson, n.d. as cited in Wilen, 1991).

However, for me Brualdi Timmins's argument that students also need more exposure to higher cognitive-level questions is very important. She proposes that a combination of lower and higher-cognitive level questions should be asked. Gail and Rhody's (n. d. as cited in Wilen, 1991) conclusion that teachers should use both higher and lower cognitive-level questions support this recommendation: lower level questions to review basic facts and skills and higher level to develop critical thinking ability. Wilen (1991) and Cotton (1988) made similar findings that a combination of higher and lower- cognitive questions is more effective than exclusive use of one only. Therefore, Brualdi Timmins's (1998) conclusion that supports the above recommendation is significant; however, she adds that teachers should first establish the needs of their students to find the balance between the two types of questions to develop better student understanding and achievement.

In analyzing the findings concerning the questioning skills of the Grade Four Home language teachers when teaching and assessing reading comprehension, the conclusion in this regard is that teachers lack skill in effective questioning techniques and strategies, especially regarding the different comprehension levels that promote critical thinking skills.

The above conclusion highlights the fact that there is a need to develop the required pedagogical content knowledge base of Grade Four Home Language teachers, concerning the teaching and assessing of reading comprehension. This also relates to one of the findings in the interviews with the Grade Four Home Language teachers, that teachers lack explicit knowledge of reading comprehension strategies, which have a direct effect on their questioning skills, and strategies to develop comprehension questions according to the different comprehension levels that include the PIRLS processes for comprehension.

This finding concurs with research that concludes that teachers need assistance in developing and improving their questioning skills through in-service as well as pre-service training programs (Cotton, 2005; Cain & Oakhill, 1999; Takala, 2006; Wilen, 1991). Teachers should be trained in effective questioning strategies to improve their questioning practices.

The above finding has implications for effective teacher training programs on questioning strategies. Teacher training should be specific and focused. Gall (1970) has argued that for teacher training in questioning methods to be effective, programs should focus on specific types of questions rather than general. When training teachers in questioning strategies she recommends that the curriculum and the specific situation be taken into consideration.

The above implies that for teachers to be trained effectively in questioning strategies, the training program needs to take into consideration the specific situations of teachers in their specific contexts.

The other factor pertaining to teacher training is the curriculum; in this case the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011), the current curriculum that was introduced in 2013 in the Intermediate phase. Although the CAPS document as part of the formal assessment has guidelines in the form of a cognitive level table (DBE, 2011: 91-92), when interviewed on CAPS training, teachers could not clearly articulate their understanding of the specific goals for reading as set out in the CAPS document. The finding regarding the comprehension questions (Figure 2) set by the participating teachers' highlights the need for specific and purposeful training of teachers in reading comprehension-questioning strategies to develop their questioning skills and reading instruction practices. But also, that when undertaking curriculum training for teachers (e.g. CAPS), the Education Department should ensure that the training is not just superficial and general, but focused on the development of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, as well as curriculum knowledge to improve their teaching skills to be able to implement the curriculum in practice.

I agree with Wilen (1991) that despite ongoing research and recommendations, there is “no perfect questioning technique or strategy”, but through ongoing training and practice teachers can develop their questioning skills. The responsible teacher training institutions as well as the Education Department should provide focused training programs to adequately prepare and develop language teachers in this very important skill that forms the basis of all methods of classroom teaching. This should be made priority especially in the South African school context as according to Pretorius & Lephala (2011) we are experiencing a “reading

crisis” as illustrated by the results of PIRLS 2006 and 2011 (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012).

Of concern is the high number of questions set by teachers (appendix 7) that are unclear, off the point or inappropriate. Research has shown that effective teachers must be able to exercise teaching practices that underlie a deep pedagogical content knowledge of the literacy learning processes as well as the skill to use the knowledge in the literacy development of their learners. Knowledgeable teachers according to them know what children need to be taught and can plan and implement effective learning practices. This involves the questioning skills displayed by the teachers through the types of questions asked during classroom practice during reading comprehension instruction (Aubut & Taylor, 2004; Grabe, 2004; Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012; Klapwijk, 2012; Loudon et al., 2005; Pretorius, 2014; Taylor et al., 2013).

It is therefore clear that the participant teachers lack adequate pedagogical content knowledge to effectively teach and assess reading skills of learners through questioning.

4.7 Concluding Comments

This chapter has dealt with the presentation of the data collected to answer the sub-questions for the study partly. Teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge, reading comprehension instruction practices and questioning skills of participating teachers at the two case study schools were analyzed using the PIRLS Assessment Framework. The findings suggest that teachers need a sound pedagogical content knowledge base as well as curriculum knowledge and that explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies is needed to extensively advance reading comprehension skills of Grade Four learners to a higher cognitive-level to be able to “read to learn” across the curriculum.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I present an overview and reflections drawn from the findings of the study. The main objective of the study was to investigate reading literacy practices of Grade Four (Intermediate Phase) language teachers at two multilingual primary schools in disadvantaged contexts, concentrating on teaching and assessing of reading comprehension by focusing especially on the questioning skills of teachers in those contexts. Using the PIRLS Assessment Frameworks (Campbell et.al.,2001; Mullis et al., 2011) for questions, I attempted to explore five (initially four) Grade Four English and Afrikaans Home Language teachers' proficiency to develop learners' comprehension skills focusing on the question types when teaching reading comprehension. Reading as a primary skill, forms the basis of success in schooling, as well as preparing learners for functional citizenship in the wider society (Howie et al., 2012). Therefore, the teaching and assessing of reading comprehension through questioning is integral to the development of learners reading literacy skills and essential for learning across the curriculum.

My findings on this topic is only a small contribution towards the vast body of knowledge of existing research, but through the research process my own knowledge base regarding the teachers' crucial role in reading literacy development of learners, was expanded through other researchers' contributions. This provided me with valuable insight enhancing my understanding of the vital role of Grade Four language teachers in the development of learners' critical thinking skills through reading comprehension questions.

5.2. The Research Journey: A reflection

On this research journey, I was confronted through the literature as well as on site observation, with the realities of Intermediate Phase Home Language teachers' everyday classroom experiences in disadvantaged contexts when teaching and assessing reading literacy.

As a novice researcher, it was a daunting experience finding my own voice through an overwhelming sea of information especially in a language that is not my mother tongue.

Therefore, I could relate to one of the challenges that teachers in those contexts face having to teach in a language not their mother tongue as well as learners having to learn in a LOLT other than their mother tongue.

Valuable lessons were also learnt regarding the expectations the system have for teachers to deliver the curriculum under challenging circumstances. My own practice as a language teacher trainer at a higher institution to guide and support student teachers when developing their reading literacy practices was informed by developing a deeper understanding of the literacy practices of the participant teachers in their contexts.

Limitations of the Study

I support Denscombe's (2002) notion that no research is perfect, and researchers are always confronted by challenges that might affect negatively on the research process.

Firstly, this research study represents only a small sample of the phenomenon under investigation. The sample selected consisted of two primary schools with five participant teachers of Grade Four Home Language. Because this is considered a small-scale study, the question could be asked if the sample was sufficient to allow generalizations from the findings of the study. However, given the Case Study method, I would argue that the findings could illuminate similar cases in the South African educational schooling setting on a larger scale.

Another challenge experienced was the time factor. A tight deadline was experienced as the research was conducted in the third term with only one month to collect data at the two case study schools, which gave me one week per teacher. As a rule, the WCED does not allow research to be conducted in the fourth term because of the systemic tests that are to be administered as well as the final examinations. Therefore, given the time factor the decision was made to spend one week in each participant teacher's class. Although at School B, the last week had to be split because of the principal's request to include the HOD. However, despite the limited time, I managed to observe and interview five Grade Four Home Language teachers. The intention was to administer the comprehension set by the teachers myself, but given the time factor, I could not administer the comprehension questions set by the teachers. The teachers conducted the comprehension exercise during class time and the completed scripts were collected afterwards by the researcher to be marked and analyzed.

Although Teacher B3 set the questions, the class did not complete the comprehension due to her timetable.

Furthermore, because research on reading and the teaching and assessing of reading has such a broad scope and given the time factor, I had to set firm boundaries to deal with the complexities of the situation to be able to stay focused.

5.3. Main Conclusions

Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and an alternative assessment, a unit of work consisting of questions and answers set by the participant teachers, were used as tools to obtain key findings from which the following main conclusions were drawn.

5.3.1. Teachers lack pedagogical content knowledge to develop learners' higher-order thinking comprehension skills through questioning.

Firstly, teachers could not clearly articulate their understanding of the different levels of reading comprehension when discussing their classroom approaches, which indicated that their teacher training and professional development were not focused on developing their skills in reading comprehension instruction which also require effective questioning strategies.

Secondly, none of the five participant teachers was trained as an Intermediate Phase teacher, which seemed to be an important contributing factor relating to effective teaching and development of reading comprehension skills of learners to enhance their higher cognitive skills as expected from the PIRLS Assessment Framework (Mullis et al., 2011).

Furthermore, the findings suggest that teachers lack a clear understanding of the CAPS policy regarding the reading instruction process to implement the specific goals for reading practically as it is set out in the CAPS document (DBE, 2011).

Teaching of reading literacy is guided by the Curriculum Assessment Policy Document CAPS (2011), which is the official curriculum, guiding teachers in the execution of the reading literacy guidelines in the curriculum. The CAPS document is explicit regarding the reading process and the implementation thereof, giving clear guidelines to develop proficient reading skills that should include activities and reading strategies in the pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading stages, with specific activities and reading

strategies in each stage to enhance learners' comprehension of the specific text (DBE, 2011:9-10).

Because it is the official plan for teaching and assessing of reading literacy, the assumption is that teachers have a basic understanding of the policy and implementation of CAPS, as CAPS training was reported by the participating teachers. However, it is evident in the findings that it is not the case. This indicated a need for guided assistance in the implementation of the new curriculum.

Finally, all the participant teachers acknowledged their lack of specific knowledge and training to support learners with reading problems and difficulties. It is evident that in-service support and training from department for intervention purposes are lacking with specific focus on effective teaching of learners with reading problems as well as second language learners.

Implications

The lack of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, as well as a clear understanding of the curriculum for effective implementation thereof, compromised the quality of teachers' classroom practices and may have influenced their questioning skills and strategies to develop comprehension questions according to the different comprehension levels that include the PIRLS processes for comprehension.

This was highlighted in the finding about the fact that teachers lacked awareness of the different comprehension levels of the PIRLS, as they did not seem to be mindful of the different levels of comprehension or how to teach reading comprehension using different kinds of questioning strategies to develop learners reading literacy on a higher level as proposed by PIRLS processes of comprehension development. Although CAPS recommend that formal assessment should include a variety of question types that should provide for different cognitive levels, e.g. literal, reorganization, inference, evaluation, appreciation, the findings indicated that the participant teachers lacked awareness of the different comprehension levels when teaching reading comprehension through questioning (Taylor et al., 2013; DBE, 2011: 91-92). A sound pedagogical knowledge of the reading theories could inform Intermediate Phase teachers' classroom practices in their approaches in the development of learners' higher order cognitive skills when using questions in reading comprehension instruction.

5.3.2. Teachers’ reading comprehension instruction practices do not include sufficient reading comprehension strategies to develop learners’ higher cognitive-level comprehension skills effectively through questioning.

Learners can only develop reading comprehension skills and answer higher cognitive-level questions as required from PIRLS Assessment Framework if they get the opportunities on a regular basis to develop their reading comprehension skills through reading strategies as required from the PIRLS Framework. It is evident from the findings that not enough opportunities in cognitively demanding activities are given to learners to develop skills as required from the PIRLS Assessment Framework; therefore, they lack the skill to answer questions that demand those cognitive skills as required by PIRLS.

More opportunities for higher cognitive development require that more time needs to be spent on reading comprehension activities during classroom instruction. Not enough quality time is spent on reading comprehension activities during classroom practice, which affects the level of reading performance. Whereas the international average for reading instruction according to PIRLS is more than 6 hours per week, the time allocation according to CAPS for Grade Four HL as well as FAL is 5 hours per two-week cycle. This finding about the lack of time spent on reading comprehension instruction, especially in disadvantaged classrooms confirms what previous South African research found (Taylor et al., 2013; Van Staden & Howie, 2010; Vinjevoll & Taylor, 1999).

This finding points to the need for more time allocation in the curriculum (CAPS). However, teachers need to be able to use time effectively when developing learners’ reading comprehension in a scaffolded way for repetition, reflection and questioning on a deeper level.

Secondly, besides questioning, the participant teachers used and taught very few other reading comprehension strategies effectively, which indicates that reading strategies were not taught explicitly in the Grade Four Home Language classes at the participating schools to develop learners’ higher-order comprehension skills effectively. For teachers to be able to implement the reading strategies in the classroom, they need to have a basic knowledge and in-depth understanding thereof. Evidently, teachers lacked explicit knowledge of reading comprehension strategies, which influenced their classroom practice for reading

comprehension, which inevitably affected their questioning skills. This aspect concurs with findings in studies done by Klapwijk (2012, 2015), Pretorius (2014) and Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016).

The PIRLS studies proposes specific skills and strategies to develop learners' comprehension, e.g. making predictions, drawing inferences, summarizing and connecting main ideas, etc. Regular exposure to these strategies are crucial for the development of learners' higher-order thinking skills to be able to answer questions as expected from the PIRLS Assessment Framework which require learners to retrieve stated information; make straightforward inferences; interpret and integrate ideas and information; and examine and evaluate content, language and textual elements (Howie et al., 2008; Mullis et al., 2001).

Oral questioning controlled by teachers, was the dominant strategy during participant teachers' classroom practice of reading comprehension instruction. Learners were mostly passive, as teachers did not engage them interactively to be part of the comprehension process besides answering questions asked by teachers. Limited opportunities were given for learners to read and talk about their reading which could assist in further development of their thinking and reasoning skills advancing their higher cognitive-level skills.

Teachers demonstrated no awareness of different levels of reading comprehension as proposed by PIRLS, because they focused mostly on lower cognitive-level questions during reading comprehension instruction, which requires retrieval of information. Very little higher-order questioning was observed during oral questioning. A significant contribution to this conclusion is the emphasis highlighted in the 2004 Ontario Literacy for Learning Report, that junior grade students needed explicit reading instruction and scaffolded support, as well as exposure to a variety of reading strategies and question types to develop their higher-order thinking skills (Aubut & Taylor et al., 2004: 61).

5.3.3. Teachers lacked the skill to develop reading comprehension questions according to different comprehension levels that include the four processes of the PIRLS assessment framework.

Teachers lacked skill in effective questioning techniques and strategies, especially regarding the different comprehension levels that promote critical thinking skills of learners to answer higher-order questions as required by PIRLS. The teachers in the study clearly did not understand how to develop learners' comprehension on the different levels and lacked the

knowledge as well as the skill to develop learners' higher order thinking through reading comprehension questions. This was illustrated in their focus mainly on lower cognitive-level questions during reading comprehension instruction, which requires retrieval of information.

Very little higher-order questioning was observed during oral questioning. A significant contribution to this conclusion is the emphasis highlighted in the 2004 Literacy for Learning Report, that junior grade students need explicit reading instruction and scaffolded support, as well as exposure to a variety of question types to develop their higher-order thinking skills (Aubut & Taylor et al., 2004: 61).

The teacher-generated questions on the prePIRLS texts were mainly straightforward literal questions (54%) which according to the PIRLS processes focus mainly on retrieving explicitly stated information in the texts. They did not seem to be aware of the importance of developing the different comprehension levels that PIRLS (Howie et al., 2008, Howie et al., 2012) as well as CAPS (DBE, 2011) propose through questioning. This concurs with other research that also concludes that teachers consistently ask low cognitive-level questions and that high cognitive-level questions are not frequently asked (Fordham, 2006; Janks, 2011; Parker and Hurry, 2007; Pretorius, 2014; Zimmerman & Smit, 2014).

Teachers spend most of their instruction time asking questions and questioning forms the basis of classroom teaching methods, therefore it is crucial that teachers have the necessary knowledge about questioning strategies and competence to teach and assess reading comprehension of which questioning forms the basis.

Researchers agree that learners need to be taught the skill to go beyond the factual understanding of a text and given opportunities to practice the skills by exposing them to a variety of reading comprehension questions. Learners' thinking skills should be challenged, as not much thinking depth is required from information retrieval questions besides straightforward answers directly from text for students to understand basic meaning of text (Day & Park, 2005; Fordham, 2006; Janks, 2011; Klapwijk, 2012).

Therefore, to develop those comprehension skills requires from teachers the necessary skill to effectively develop and ask different question types to develop learners' reading skills to become strategic readers and be able to learn across the curriculum. It seems as if learners do not get enough exercise opportunities through activities to be able to develop their higher cognitive skills effectively; therefore, they lack the ability to answer questions that demand

those cognitive skills as required by the PIRLS. This could one of the important contributing factors to South African Grade Four learners' low achievement in the PIRLS – 2006 as well as 2011 studies.

Teachers should use both higher and lower cognitive level questions: lower level questions to review basic facts and skills and higher level to develop critical thinking ability.

5.3.4. Teachers in disadvantaged contexts are facing major educational challenging factors that affect their classroom practices.

Teachers

Firstly, because none of the five Grade Four Home Language teachers in the two case study schools was trained as Intermediate Phase teachers, the assumption can be made that they were not sufficiently prepared to teach and develop reading literacy as expected from Intermediate Phase teachers in the PIRLS study. Contributing to that is the fact that they also had less than 10 years Grade Four language teaching experience in the Intermediate Phase.

Teachers play a critical role in reading literacy instruction in the classroom, therefore they need to be adequately prepared and trained to effectively teach and develop reading literacy through questioning as Grade Four is the transitional start of the Intermediate Phase, which is crucial for learners to use when 'reading to learn' across the curriculum. This finding confirms the finding in the PIRLS 2006 as well as the 2011 summary reports about the qualifications of South African Intermediate Phase teachers in comparison with their international counterparts. According to PIRLS most Grade Four teachers were trained formally in Education with post-secondary college or university degrees. It was also highlighted by PIRLS (2011) that learners taught by teachers with a university degree achieved higher reading scores (Howie et al., 2012)

Secondly, teaching in a language other than the learners' mother tongue, presents a further challenge to a teacher, especially when teaching and developing learners' reading literacy skills, as was the case of the English Home Language teacher at School A. The teacher was a Xhosa MT-speaker, but the classroom instructional language was English. Although the experience of five teachers is reported in this small-scale study, this seems to be the experience of many other South African teachers in similar contexts where the expectation

seems to be for them to teach in a language (mostly English) which is not their Mother Tongue.

The teachers for this study reported numerous learners struggling with reading, in need of intervention, thereby expressing a need of remedial training and support to assist those learners with reading problems. Teachers had no or very little support from a remedial or learning specialist to assist with learners experiencing reading problems.

Teachers reportedly were also faced with systemic challenges because the progression policy of the Education Department stipulates that if learners have failed once in a phase, they cannot fail a second time, therefore they be sent to the next grade. This factor together with curriculum changes as well as an overload of administrative responsibilities, compromises the classroom practice when developing reading literacy skills, as teachers should focus on teaching.

Learners

Teaching a diverse combination of learners presented a major educational challenge to teachers teaching particularly in disadvantaged contexts as was faced by the participants at the case study schools. Different language backgrounds, especially in the English Home Language classes, evidently affected reading ability of learners, as low reading achievement is the outcome. In the English Home Language classes, most of the learners came from Afrikaans and Xhosa-speaking backgrounds. This challenge is also highlighted by the PIRLS 2008 report that most pupils that are receiving instruction in English when English is not their mother tongue face grave challenges in education (Howie et al., 2008). As Janks (2011) bluntly puts it: “The PIRLS results show that children in Grade Four are not ready for English as LOLT as they do not have the vocabulary, language and literacy skills for learning across the curriculum” (p. 29). This language barrier is especially significant when developing reading literacy as this has an adverse effect when learners have to interpret questions during comprehension instruction. This notion is supported by Cummins’ (2007) finding that learners experiencing these language challenges struggle to catch up academically with the curriculum.

Teaching learners from difficult socio- economic circumstances is another major challenge for teachers when developing reading literacy. Teachers in those contexts have to deal with learners facing social problems, like poverty, broken families, absent and illiterate parents,

lack of resources e.g. reading material, lack of parent support as well as no reading culture at home. The above factors have a negatively impact on learners' reading literacy development (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012; Pretorius, 2014).

The importance of parent involvement and support is accredited as a contributing factor to high achievement in reading, also concerning reading ability and development of learners. Howie et al. (2008) in the PIRLS also identified home influence as a significant factor in reading performance.

School and classroom contexts that influence reading literacy development

Inadequate reading resources were observed as none of the two case study schools had a school library; therefore, learners did not have access to reading resources other than their textbooks, workbooks and class readers, which evidently affected reading literacy development in the case study schools. Library users display higher reading levels that positively influence reading performance according to the PIRLS report (Howie et al., 2011). However, two of the classes had reading corners, where the reading materials in one of the classes (Teacher A2) were mainly educational magazines and the other class (Teacher B3) had a varied selection of books in both Afrikaans and English.

Textbooks and workbooks were the main resources used by participant teachers in reading comprehension instruction. Overcrowded classrooms combined with the poor print classroom environments with empty walls indicated inadequate resources to develop learner's reading literacy effectively.

These unfavorable schooling conditions had a negative influence on reading instruction practices and need to be addressed as it has serious consequences for teachers when teaching and assessing reading.

5.4. Implications and Recommendations

5.4.1. Reading performance factors: teachers' subject content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge

The reading performance of South African Grade Four and Five learners in the PIRLS-Studies indicated gaps in classroom practice of reading comprehension approaches applied by Intermediate Phase Afrikaans and English Home Language teachers. This investigation

into teachers, questioning skills further provided possible reasons for the poor performance of South African learners in the PIRLS assessments.

Subject Content Knowledge

Based on the findings a strong subject or content knowledge base could strengthen teachers' own understanding as well as application of reading comprehension strategies when developing learners reading literacy through effective questioning on different cognitive levels during reading comprehension instruction. This could also contribute to effective interpretation and implementation of the official curriculum plan (CAPS) regarding comprehension strategies to develop learners' higher cognitive level skills when teaching reading comprehension through questioning.

Pedagogic Content Knowledge

A sound pedagogical knowledge of socio-constructivist principles could provide teachers with the understanding as well as inform their practice in the application of questioning techniques and strategies to scaffold the reading literacy development of learners that elicit learner's higher-order thinking skills during reading comprehension instruction.

The findings therefore suggest that in addition to a grounded subject knowledge, teachers should also have a strong pedagogical content knowledge as well as knowledge of the new curriculum, as this will enable them to use a balanced approach when developing reading comprehension strategies for questioning, that is crucial for learners' higher cognitive skills development to answer middle- and higher-order questions.

5.4.2. Development of teachers' questioning skills

This investigation attempted to highlight the significance of teachers' questioning skills and strategies when teaching reading comprehension using the PIRLS Assessment Framework as basis.

Given the disadvantaged contexts most South African Grade Four Home Language teachers find themselves in, it is therefore imperative that Intermediate Phase teachers be effectively trained and supported to be able to use their competency to prepare learners to ask and answer middle-and higher-order questions in their home language if learners are to move from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn' across the curriculum (Janks, 2011).

Teacher training

The conclusion that teachers need assistance and support in developing and improving their questioning skills through in-service as well as pre-service training has implications for pre-service as well as in-service training programs. It is important that teachers as one of the key aspects in the South African education system should be supported and given the best available training in the teaching of reading and writing in First Additional Language as well as Home Language.

Extensive pre-service as well as in-service teacher training should be specific and focused when preparing language teachers to use questioning techniques and strategies competently to develop reading literacy of learners effectively in the objective of enabling them to use their higher order thinking and reasoning skills. It also requires teacher training institutions as well as the Education Department's continuous professional development of language teachers, to provide more focused training programs to adequately develop and prepare language teachers to teach reading literacy in the challenging schooling environment, especially in the disadvantaged, multilingual contexts as experienced by the teachers in the case study schools, which present a microcosm of a wider phenomenon of similar classroom situations in the South African schooling set-up.

Evidently more specific training in reading comprehension strategies is required to develop Grade Four language teachers' knowledge base of reading comprehension instruction according to the comprehension levels as proposed by PIRLS to be able to effectively teach reading comprehension for learners to 'read to learn' in Grade Four. This would require training and retraining of pre-service as well as in-service teachers specifically in reading literacy development focusing on comprehension instruction including reading strategies and questioning strategies as this seems to be neglected areas (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012). I support Klapwijk and Pretorius's (2016) recommendation that teachers get specific training in frameworks that focus on explicit comprehension instruction, which would also include training in reading strategies including questioning.

Furthermore, training of and support for teachers to assist learners with reading difficulties should also be included in teacher training and continuous developmental programs therefore ensuring a functional intervention program in teachers' skills development.

Partnerships between teacher training institutions and the Department of Education could be beneficial to ensure the provision of a school-based support program for language teachers' literacy practices thereby assisting and mentoring them to develop learners' critical reading skills that is essential to function optimally in the schooling system as well as in wider society.

5.5. Potential significance of this study

According to Klapwijk (2012) teachers are the main agents that can bring about the change needed in the classroom. Given South Africa's low reading literacy achievement in the PIRLS studies in 2006 as well as in 2011, I wanted to discover mainly how Grade Four home language teachers in disadvantaged contexts teach reading comprehension by asking the following questions:

- How do teachers in multilingual, disadvantaged contexts teach and assess reading comprehension?
- What types of reading comprehension questions are learners exposed to?
- What is the knowledge base in the teaching and assessing of reading comprehension amongst the participating teachers?
- What are some of the challenges that contribute to low reading literacy levels faced by Grade Four HL teachers in disadvantaged multilingual contexts?

As a language student trainer at a higher education institution this research study gave me a deeper understanding and realization of the challenging contexts of the South African educational landscape that persistently highlight the low reading literacy performance of learners. It also made me aware that to be able to prepare language teachers effectively for the challenging contexts of the South African educational landscape I needed insight into the teaching and assessing of reading literacy in the vital transitional grade, which is Grade Four. It is during this important grade that the transition is made from 'learning to read' in Grade Three to 'reading to learn'. This will enable me to provide better support to language student teachers regarding the teaching and assessing of reading literacy focusing on reading comprehension and developing their questioning skills, which is a vital component of reading literacy development to develop learners' higher cognitive level skills.

I gained valuable insight in my understanding of how certain factors, e.g. large classes, language of learning and teaching, resources, social economic background, etc. influence

teachers reading comprehension classroom practices, which enhanced further understanding of the reading process, thereby informing my personal teaching experience to prepare pre-service language student teachers more specifically on questioning strategies during reading comprehension instruction.

This research study confirmed what has been pointed out by PIRLS (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012), as well as numerous previous studies that teachers' classroom practices when teaching and assessing reading literacy play a crucial role in developing learners higher-order reading skills to be able to 'read to learn'.

The concern about South African Grade Four and Five learners' low reading performance highlighted by PIRLS (Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2012) emphasize that changes in the reading instruction practices of Intermediate Phase teachers are needed. However, without systemic support to change the way teachers teach and assess reading literacy through reading comprehension, the current reading crisis experienced in the South African schooling system will persist.

Therefore, the challenge will be to ensure that teachers, especially in disadvantaged multilingual contexts receive the necessary training and support to become the changing agents in the reading literacy development of Intermediate Phase learners to be able to 'read to learn' as expected of them.

This study also left me with some questions, that could possibly be explored in future investigation:

- With all the current initiatives for reading literacy development from the Department of Education, why are there still the prevalent extensive inequalities in the disadvantaged schools?
- How can the system be more supportive in the literacy development in those challenging socio-economic circumstances by expanding strategies to give learners the necessary home and community support?
- How can it be ensured that teachers in those challenging circumstances get the support needed besides in-service training?
- Given teachers reliance on textbooks for comprehension questions, how can publishers and textbook developers be encouraged to ensure that prescribed textbooks provide the necessary systematic, scaffolded reading strategies for reading

comprehension instruction that include the modeling of processes of comprehension or different cognitive levels to develop learners' higher cognitive skills?

In closing, this study's findings emphasize and confirm the important role of teachers in the effective development of learners reading literacy through classroom teaching practices in reading comprehension instruction.

Given South Africa's prevailing unequal education system, a concerted effort is therefore necessary from all role-players to ensure that all learners are equipped with basic reading skills and given equal opportunities to meet the challenges of schooling to become independent learners, as well as for individual and national development.

The basis of change for me lies in the classroom practices, therefore teachers, as change agents need sustained support from all educational sectors.

5.6. Concluding remarks

Because of the vital role of teachers in the South African education system, this study set out to investigate the current reading comprehension instruction practices of five Intermediate (Grade Four) English and Afrikaans Home Language teachers in two primary schools, focusing on their questioning skills. This was an attempt to understand some of the factors contributing to the low reading literacy achievement compared to the international reading literacy standards.

The findings point to evidence that the participant teachers did not have the needed subject and pedagogical content knowledge as well as curriculum knowledge that is required to extensively advance reading comprehension skills of Grade Four learners to a higher cognitive-level to enable them to "read to learn" as is required from Grade Four learners.

This indicates that the learners in the study were not provided with adequate opportunities to develop their higher-order comprehension skills. These findings point to areas for further development of both pre-service and in-service teacher education to equip teachers with the necessary training and development to advance learners higher cognitive level when teaching and assessing reading. Proficient reading literacy development is the foundation for general learning at school, as reading together with writing develops children to meet the challenges of schooling to become independent learners, as well as prepare them to participate fully in the wider society.

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APPENDIX 1a: INFORMATION



University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa
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Fax: 021-9593358
cbutler@uwc.ac.za

Faculty of Education

Researcher: Ms. Caroline May Butler

Cellular number: 0729008785

Email: cbutler@uwc.ac.za

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Caroline Butler. I am currently registered as a Masters student in the Language Education Department, Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting research on literacy development, investigating the current “teaching-of-reading” practices of language grade 4 teachers in multilingual classes in disadvantaged contexts.

Research Title: My research topic is: Making the transition from learning to read to reading to learn in Grade 4: investigating the teaching of reading literacy in two Western Cape schools.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to investigate the reading literacy instruction practices of Grade 4 language teachers a multilingual context, in an attempt to understand some of the factors contributing to the low reading literacy achievement of the South African learners compared to international reading literacy standards. This study also wants to trace the kinds of support which learners receive from teachers to improve their reading literacy skills.

A key component of this study will be to identify the extent to which Grade four learners are taught the reading skills that studies such as Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) are testing.

I will obtain permission from the relevant authorities and the participants to collect data. Data will be collected through intensive observations of reading lessons, digital recording of some reading lessons and analyzing some of the reading lesson plans for grade 4 classes. Additional consent will be requested for the digital recording of certain lessons. Based on the collected information, I will be able to write up a research paper that will state findings and recommendations to the problem under research.

It is very important to know that the learners, teachers and school's participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and the participants that are; Intermediate phase grade 4 teachers and learners have the right to withdraw at any stage. The names of either the school or both teachers and learners of the grades to be studied will not be used in any writing up of the report. All information collected from the school will be kept strictly anonymous and a system of coding will be used instead of using the real name of the school, teachers and learners to be involved in this research. All digitally recorded lessons will be destroyed after data analysis processes in order to protect the dignity of the school, teachers and learners that will participate in the study.

Upon completion of the study, all thesis related confidential data will be stored for a minimum of five years at the Department of Higher Education Master's in Africa (HEMA) in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape.

It is hoped that this study will inform more effective training of pre-service language teachers, especially to equip them with strategies to develop learners' reading literacy competency.

Significance of the study

This research project intends to significantly contribute towards literacy pedagogical issues in the Intermediate phase. This means that the study hopes to bring out new insights related to teaching of reading approaches in multilingual literacy classrooms and appropriate assessment strategies for reading literacy skills.

If at any stage you have questions about the study please do not hesitate to contact me on the above provided details. Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor, Ms. Magaret Probyn on (021) 959 2442/ 2860

SIGNATURE OF THE RESEARCHER:

DATE:

APPENDIX 1b: Permission Request (WCED)



University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa
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Faculty of Education

The Research Director
Western Cape Education Department

Dear Dr. Wyngaard

Request for Permission to conduct research in Grade Four classes at two schools in the Western Cape.

My name is Caroline Butler. I am currently registered as a Masters student in the Language Education Department, Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting research on literacy development, investigating the current “teaching-of-reading” practices of language grade 4 teachers in multilingual classes in disadvantaged contexts.

Research Title: My research topic is: Making the transition from learning to read to reading to learn in Grade 4: investigating the teaching of reading literacy in two Western Cape schools.

The purpose of this letter is to obtain permission from the Western Cape Education Department to do my research in two schools in the Western Cape. My intention is to spend two weeks per school to collect the data for the research study. I need to emphasise that my presence in the classrooms will not disrupt, interrupt or interfere with any classroom activities.

The following will be adhered to in my research:

- Voluntary participation of principals, teachers and learners;
- Withdrawal of research participants at any time without providing any reasons for such action;
- The intention is to capture the research data through digital recording of lessons and interviews, but should research participants disapprove of such data collection procedures, the wishes of the participants would be respected

- Additional consent will be requested from the participants for the above procedure.
- Respect for the privacy and anonymity of all research participants;
- Making the research information available to research participants, should it be requested

Significance of the study

This research project intends to significantly contribute towards literacy pedagogical issues in the Intermediate phase. This means that the study hopes to bring out new insights related to teaching of reading approaches in multilingual literacy classrooms and appropriate assessment strategies for reading literacy skills.

If at any stage, you have questions about the study please do not hesitate to contact me on the above provided details. Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor, Ms. Magaret Probyn on (021) 959 2442/ 2860

Yours sincerely

Carol Butler



APPENDIX 1c
CONSENT LETTER FOR THE PRINCIPAL



University of the Western Cape

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Faculty of Education

Researcher: Ms. Caroline May Butler
Cellular number: 0729008785
Email: cbutler@uwc.ac.za
Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Research Title: My research topic is: Making the transition from learning to read to reading to learn in Grade 4: investigating the teaching of reading literacy in two Western Cape schools.

Research Objectives

I understand that the school's participation in this study is voluntary and at any circumstances the school has the right to withdraw from the study. I am also aware that the information collected from the school will be treated confidentially to protect the identity of the school. I am also aware of the intention of the researcher to capture some of the research data through audio/video recording of interviews and lessons. I am guaranteed that the findings will be used for research purposes, not to damage the name of the school.

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

I..... (Name and Surname) hereby give consent to the researcher to conduct research at my school in grades 4 classroom.

Principal's signature:

Date.....

APPENDIX 1c: CONSENT LETTER FOR THE TEACHER



University of the Western Cape

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Faculty of Education

Researcher: Ms. Caroline May Butler
Cellular number: 0729008785
Email: cbutler@uwc.ac.za
Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Research Title: My research topic is: Making the transition from learning to read to reading to learn in Grade 4: Investigating the reading literacy practices of Grade 4 language teachers in multilingual contexts at two under resourced schools in the Western Cape.

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

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

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

Teacher's Signature:

Date.....

ADDITIONAL CONSENT TO AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING	
<p>In addition to the above, I hereby agree to the audio/video recording of the interview and/or lessons for the purposes of data capture. I understand that the recordings will be kept securely and will be destroyed or erased once data capture and analysis are complete</p>	
_____	_____
Name and signature participant	Date

**APPENDIX 1c:
CONSENT LETTER FOR PARENTS/GUARDIAN**



University of the Western Cape

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Faculty of Education

Researcher: Ms. Caroline May Butler

Cellular number: 0729008785

Email: cbutler@uwc.ac.za

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

Research Title: My research topic is : Making the transition from learning to read to reading to learn in Grade 4: Investigating the reading literacy practices of Grade 4 language teachers in multilingual contexts at two under resourced schools in the Western Cape.

My name is Caroline Butler. I am a registered Masters student at the University of the Western Cape. I wish to conduct research at your child's school where I would like to do intensive classroom observations and audio/video recordings of some reading lessons for Intermediate Phase (grade 4). Since your child will be in one of these classes I respectfully request your written permission for your child to voluntarily participate in this study. It is important for you to know that the information gathered as a result of this study will be used for research purposes only. The following information may help you to make an informed decision regarding my request.

Aim of Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate how reading is taught by grade 4 teachers. The study seeks to investigate the processes of developing reading skills in a multilingual Intermediate Phase classroom. It will also investigate kinds of support which learners receive to enhance their reading skills.

My involvement in your child's class

In order to conduct this research, I will have to be present in some of your child's reading literacy lessons over a period of one month in order to observe literacy development specifically reading skills. I need to emphasise that my presence in the classroom will not disrupt, interrupt or interfere with any classroom activities. I may wish to digitally record some of the lessons when and where appropriate only when the teacher gives me permission to do so. These audio/video recordings will not focus on any particular child but will be on the classroom activities and interactions.

Child's Participation

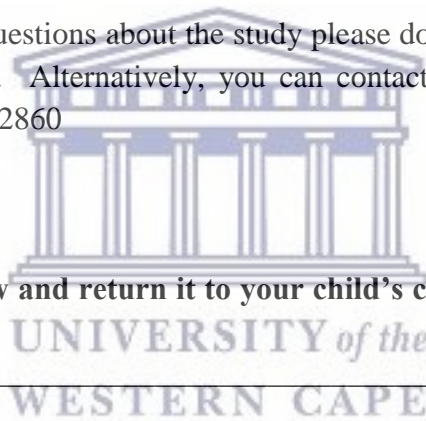
No information will be directly linked to your child and his/her privacy will at all times be respected. No child will be referred to by name in the writing up and presentation of any data as a result of this research. Your child will at all times be treated with respect and sensitivity.

I trust that the above information has helped you to make a decision with regard to my request.

If at any stage, you have questions about the study please do not hesitate to contact me on the above provided details. Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor, Dr. Magaret Probyn on (021) 959 2442/ 2860

CONSENT FORM

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



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

Parent/ Guardian's signature:

Date:

APPENDIX 2
INTERVIEW FRAMEWORK AND
TRANSCRIPTS

A. Introduction

For the purpose of this study one of the tools that will be used is semi-structured interviews with a fairly open framework to allow for focused conversational, two-way communication. Not all questions will be designed and phrased ahead of time to allow for flexibility and for the interviewer to probe for details or discuss issues.

B. Firstly, provide an overview of the study, the intended uses for the interview data, also measures taken to protect confidentiality and anonymity. Discuss and get permission for tape recording.

C. Questions

1. Questions to collect demographic data and educational history

Name

Position

Responsibilities

School / location

- Where and when did you complete your teacher training?
- How long are you in the teaching profession?
- Since when are you teaching at this school?
- Where have you taught previously?
- Are there any differences between your previous teaching experience at other schools and at this school?
- How long have you been teaching grade 4's?

2. Questions focusing on learners

- What can you tell me about the learners in your class?
- I'm interested in Multilingual (ML) learners. Do you have any learners in your class whose Home Language (HL) is not English/Afrikaans?
- In your opinion does your learners' background have an influence on their reading and learning ability? (Probe) Why do you say so?
- What are some of the challenges you observe learners achieving in reading?
- Are there some learners in your class that perform above average in reading? What do you ascribe that to?

3. Questions on teaching and assessing of reading

- Tell me how do you teach reading?
- Could you describe the method?
- Why did you /do you choose that method?
- What do you think is important when you teach reading?

- Do you think your learners understand what they read?
- What reading tasks do you give on a weekly or fortnightly basis?
- In your initial teacher training, how were you taught to teach reading?
- Since you joined the teaching profession have you had any specific in-service training in approaches to teach and assess reading?
- Do you know anything about the Foundations for Learning Program?
- How would you support a learner with reading difficulties?

Is there anything that I should have asked that you think is important?

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me?



UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

SCHOOL A

Teacher 1 - Grade 4 Afrikaans Home Language

Note: The interview was conducted in Afrikaans (Recording A04/38)

1. Questions to collect demographic data and educational history

Name: Mrs. T - 51 years old (TA1)
Teaching qualifications: Diploma in Education & BA degree
Position: HOD
Responsibilities: Grade 4 Afrikaans HL class teacher, as well as admin duties pertaining to HOD at a primary school
Language Proficiency: Afrikaans Mother Tongue Speaker
School / location: Littlewood Primary – For the purpose of research School A

- **Where and when did you complete your teacher training?**
*At Zonnebloem Teacher Training College from 1983-1985
I trained as a Foundation Phase Teacher.*
- **How long are you in the teaching profession?**
It is my 27th year. And I just did a straight BA degree afterwards
- **Where have you taught previously?**
I started at a primary school in Mitchells Plain where I taught for 1 year. Then I got a post in Elsies River, where I taught Foundation Phase grades 1 & 2 from 1988 to 2006.
- **Since when are you teaching at this school?**
I Started at this school in 2007.
- **If you think about your experience at Elsies, where you've taught for quite a while, is there any differences between your previous teaching experience at other schools and at this school?**
*There is a difference in the sense that In Elsies River and Delft there are 2 cultures and faith groups, actually 3 in Delft. In Elsies River, mostly one culture/ faith-Christian. The Moslem community in Elsies River did not practice their faith as strongly as the Christians. Moslems did not practice their faith as serious as her. In Delft I found that the Moslem parents are more serious about their faith. Also, the language.
In Elsies River the language was English and Afrikaans, mainly Afrikaans.
In Delft we find 3 languages, Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa. This is the difference.*
Probe: And your personal experience with that:
My personal experience with adaptation with the children of the different communities was not major. I think many of Elsies people moved to Delft. And the school where I used to be was in a similar area. Their social backgrounds were the same. If we look at the socio-economic circumstances it is worse in Delft. Here are bigger and more social problems and the challenges are bigger.
- **How long have you been teaching grade 4's?**
Since 2007 at this school.
Probe: Tell me which grades did you teach before?

Grade 1 & 2. I was trained as a Foundation Phase teacher and taught mainly grades 1 & 2 at the previous school.

2. Questions focusing on learners

- **What can you tell me about the learners in your class?**

Is it only in general?

Int. Response: Anything, positive or negative?

The positive. They make my day. Everyday something happens, even if it is small, that makes my day, something uplifting. It makes me realize that I am needed here. Especially the past 4 years, I felt a lot of negativity, as if I am going to lose myself with some of the children or my work. You can so easily lose yourself. The learners are very defiant. I started the year with 52 learners. The big classes are an enormous challenge. I can work with a child that has a learning problem that has good manners. I cannot handle a rude child. Many learners have social problems that are a big challenge. I can't handle rude learners that are defiant. I understand some of them. It comes out when learner open up and tell what happened at home because parents for instance fought the whole night. I am tuned in to see if learners have problems, and give personal attention, but because there are so many learners in the class it is not possible. I only get to know my learners at the end of the first quarter, because they are so many in the class. You can't place them, because they are so many. When I have a problem child I try to make time to find out what the problem is. I will call them aside and ask what happened yesterday, why you were acting like that, then they will tell, then I understand. But some parents sometimes do not want to acknowledge that there are problems, it is as they are too afraid to say this is the problem. For Example, one learner was giving problems in class, and according to the parents there was nothing wrong, but what the parents said and what she said was different, and vulgar language was her second language. I found out that the learner was bullied by the older brother. When we confronted the father, his response was that the brother is not there anymore, he is out of the house. And so, parents try to sidestep the problem.

- **I'm interested in Multilingual (ML) learners. Do you have any learners in your class whose Home Language (HL) is not English/Afrikaans?**

All learners in my class are Afrikaans speaking.

Maybe one could be English as the parents always correspond in English, for instance the learner's brother that is in grade 1 came to my class with a message and he spoke English. You can hear his English is better than his Afrikaans.

- **In your opinion does your learners' social background have an influence on their reading and learning ability? (Probe) Why do you say so?**

Yes definitely. I have a learner, who is weak whom I allow to sit one side, but he is still between the other learners and I let. His Mummy does not work, but she is never at home. I basically found out that the parents are not working and mother walks around and is never at home. He does not get the attention and if he doesn't get attention at home, he will also not get help and assistance with schoolwork.

- **What are some of the challenges you observe learners achieving in reading?**

If they cannot read, they cannot learn and that has an influence on their ability to do Mathematics. Learners ask to take the newspaper or magazines home because parents do not have money to buy some. That is challenging that they cannot do word

sums because they cannot read. Sometimes learners ask to take a book or magazine home, because there's no money and that has an influence on learning and reading. Obviously if they cannot read they cannot learn. Now this also influences their Mathematics. One learner if you give him a word problem, then he is gone because he does not understand. He is in grade 4 and it is difficult to go back. And that is challenging.

- **Are there some learners in your class that perform above average in reading? What do you ascribe that to?**

Yes. Parent involvement. Some learners want to learn also and need encouragement to build their self-confidence. I will also arrange to send that learner to a specific teacher in the next grade (5) as I have confidence in that teacher's ability to encourage and support those learners who want to learn. According to me she is the best grade 5 teacher to help the weaker learners, also to build their self-confidence because she has a pastoral background. She also has the psychological background.

Probing question: What do you mean by parent involvement?

One of the parents is a single mother e.g. has a rule that her child must first do homework when he comes from school. When she comes from work at 6:30 she will first do her home duties, but before the learner goes to bed she will go through the homework and tries to help. If she can't, she will ask and write a note asking for assistance to help her child. There are rules as the child knows the parent is interested.

Probing question: Are there more children?

That is an exception. But there are also other parents that are interested and attend parent evenings.

That is 5 out of the 50 learners are above average and all the parents of those learners show interest in their learner's progress.

Probing question: And the under-average readers?

Although some of the weak learners' parents also show interest, some of them have learning problems, and come from grade 1 with their learning problems. Year before last I had a FAS learner. The mother admitted, but the damage was done.

Probing question: And the Average learner/readers?

The average learners- for most of them social problems play a role. e.g. poverty, too many children in the house, etc.

3. Questions on teaching and assessing of reading.

- **Can you tell me how you teach reading /reading comprehension? Could you describe the method?**

I first discuss and sort the difficult words, to make sure they understand what they are reading. We make an effort that everybody knows what it is about. I always tell them to look at the word in the context of the sentence. You must understand the word when you read it in the sentence. We sort out the meaning of the words before we read. Is the word a verb or a noun, especially for the weaker learners? It is before you start reading, we sort out the meaning of the words.

Probing: And then when you read? And after you read etc.?

The reading. I read first, to make sure about the correct pronunciation.

I normally let individual readers read who can read. I give learners who put up their hands an opportunity to read. It's normally those who can read. It will disadvantage the whole group if I ask someone who do not read fluently. Even if they do not read with the necessary feeling, they can read. The reason why I read aloud is that I want to make sure that they know how the words are pronounced. They sometimes say I do too much, but if you read yourself you concentrate on your voice, the words, there are quite a few things.

But if you listen and follow you're relaxed and you can take in more, therefore I believe they understand better. Therefore, I read before or afterwards to make sure they understand.

Probe: And Afterwards?

Then I let the class or groups read the text. I prefer to ask learners that can read, read, as I feel that if I ask learners that cannot read I will disadvantage the class. Learners must first listen. Afterwards I let them read silently.

- **Why did you /do you choose that method?**

I want to make sure that those who cannot read understand. I read aloud as much as possible. I have about 12 learners that immediately understand what they read, that recognizes words and understands it. That is why learners must learn new words. I realize there is personal improvement if they learn the new words and understand it. It's about the personal improvement that the weaker learners make if they learn new words,

- **What do you think is important when you teach reading and reading comprehension?**

Learners should understand what they read. Discussions should be taken into account. Always be aware of pronunciation and punctuation.

- **Now do you think your learners understand what they read?**

Not all learners understand what they read- mostly those that can read independently and on their own.

- **What reading tasks do you give on a weekly basis?**

Skimming is the most important, because I want them to work on their own. Independence. They must be able to work on their own when they get to grade 5. I want to pump them as I know where they come from as I have experience of the Foundation Phase.

Probing: Do you only focus on skimming or are there other reading assessment activities?

Also reading comprehension and listening exercises. Strictly speaking I read alone, but I read it 3 times. Normally I use a short text or a poem. A Listening exercise should not be very long. A short text or I play a song. They must listen and I prefer to give them questions beforehand. Mostly Yes/no or multiple-choice questions. I give short questions Then they tick off yes or no or what the correct answer is.

As well as Comprehension and Listening exercises. With the Listening exercises, I choose a short text like a poem or play a song. I read it 3 times with pre-worked out questions, multiple choice Yes/No questions.

- **In your initial teacher training, how were you taught to teach reading/ reading comprehension?**

Not much concentration on teaching of reading method and assessment.

- **Since you were in the teaching profession did you have any specific in-service training in approaches to teach and assess reading?**

At CTLI also not much focus was on reading and assessing of reading. The Inspectors would give demonstration lessons, but for small groups. Subjected advisors concentrated on small groups and not the whole class. Not much value on that training because they concentrated on small groups. I was forward and requested that subject advisor to come to my classrooms to listen to maths lesson and tell me where to improve, or what should I concentrate on lessons, so that they can see where they had to improve. To help me improve myself to be able to help my learners as one is never too old to learn.

- **Do you know anything about the Foundations for Learning Program/ National Reading Strategy?**

We followed the blue books strictly.

Probing: Please tell me more about the Foundation for learning.

They concentrated on Mathematics and Languages.

Probing question: Was reading included in the Languages?

I feel the CAPS is much better. It's more structured than FFL. It confused me. When I really snapped it, then CAPS came in.

Probing question: What was their focus in the languages? Was there any reading?

It was not structured nicely. They did not give training to all the teachers. Only for certain teachers. I feel because it was something new everybody should have had it. At the end when I got the grip on it I realized it was old information with new names. It was too much information, thick files that we had to go through. We had to do research on the new concepts and realized it was actually old concepts with new names. Nice, new, long name. Why did they not say it is silent reading, or group reading?

I come from the old school now you must absorb the information and not bit by bit, but whole chunks. It was confusing.

- **If you have a learner with reading problems how would you as an experienced teacher help and support a learner with reading difficulties?**

I tried first, like at a previous school the ELSEN teacher told me, do not give me a hopeless case, like a semi- autistic child or a Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) child, as I cannot perform miracles. Give me a child that can at least do something, then I can take it from there. We were fortunate there; we had an ELSEN Teacher there. I prefer working with children that can do a little and not the hopeless cases.

We do not have an ELSEN teacher here. I start at a lower level, grade 2 or 3. I ask the teacher to send me some words. I have 49 learners in my class, if I can say, roughly 25 learners can read and understand what they read. The rest I must take by the hand and give extra assistance.

(No clear explanation of strategies)

Probing Question: How do you help the struggling 24 in your class?

About 15 of them repeated grade 1 and were sent through the system. They were referred. It seems that they have learning problems.

They are very weak as in very weak. I believe that a child foundation or beginning at school must be strong. Learners must rather fail than go to the next grade. If they repeat in the first two weeks I can see a difference. That extra is important. They must just stay in a grade. We must convince the parents. Some teachers let learners pass that never should have, just to get rid of them.

And so, it goes on and I am frustrated about that situation. I've got such a case now, and she is going to stay and I don't know if I can perform a miracle with her. She has missed a lot because she just sent through the system every time.

There is a learner that was born in 2004 that is in grade 4. She does not belong in grade 4. I asked the grade teacher to keep the learners that must stay, as there are not many failures in grade 3, because they will rather let them repeat grade 1 and 2. Explain to the parents. I normally sit with the parents and show them and compare their child with one that falls in the right age group. Just to show them the difference and to convince them that the child needs to be given another chance in the grade. I work with the child. As long as I called in the parents, because they want to know if you spoke to the parents if you want to keep a child in a grade. I only want to convince the parents that it is the best for their child if they repeat a grade.

Some learners started school early. The system allows learners to go to the next grade. It's unfair towards the child, they must rather repeat the grade. Also, learners should not come to school at an early age. Involve the parents and explain why they must stay another year in the grade. They miss too much if they are sent to a higher grade when they are not ready. Try and convince the parents.

- **Tell me miss; is there anything that I should have asked that you think is important?
Or is there perhaps anything that you want to ask me?
Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me?**

I will appreciate it if you can send, maybe remedial activities, I need some advice to do remedial, any ideas how to help weak readers. Learners cannot sit for too long. I am busy preparing learners for the WOW-spelling competition, and I picked up some of the problems. They have sounded for 2 years, and now they must start with the alphabet. Up till grade 7 we accept that they know the alphabet and that they do it in Afrikaans and English. They are struggling as the Afrikaans and English pronunciation of the alphabet differs. With the spelling competition, they must pronounce the letter in Afrikaans. It is small things. The grade 4's already knows, if I start the year, I always start with the alphabet in Afrikaans, and English, but I emphasize Afrikaans, because it is their Home Language. They get their page and I have my chart and I practice the pronunciation, small things, but they must practice the alphabet in Afrikaans. These are things that I do every year, because it is the beginning of a new phase.

There are certain things that we must get in place.

All that I ask of is to assist us with remedial activities and methods. I think mine are outdated.

Just this interesting case, about a learner e.g. that is that is suffering from Fetal Alcohol syndrome- he can't do anything. from grade 1, he could not do anything. Then we got the computer lab. In the computer class, he took interest in the computer program. It's a program with a reading and questions and exercises. Believe me, he could not read or do any Mathematics. There was nothing in his books, only

scribbles. While he was busy with the program I went to stand behind him, without him knowing and wow I could see the interest and what he is doing. I realized if we could have a computer for every learner and assess them in that way. His fine motor skills were not properly developed, but how he used the computer by dragging the pictures was remarkable given his academic record

I use grade 1 activities with pictures as well as exercises where they must put words in the place of the pictures. I also have exercises where they have to replace the picture with a word. I show the word then the learner would write the word on the board.

Probe: But that is remedial exercises that you're doing.

Last year I had an assistant. We do not have a teaching assistant.

Probing Question: Is there a need for teaching assistant?

There is a big need, because the classes are big and we have a lot of weak learners. It is actually a priority. Every class should have one. We share now at the moment.

I used to have one, but now a few classes must share one assistant. Because of the big classes a teacher –assistant is a big need, actually a priority. It is a great help and it worked well. The one that I had is training to become a teacher. I trained her according to the way I wanted her to assist me. We had a good working relationship. Translation of question papers in Afrikaans is an extra workload. I am busy setting the Mathematics paper in Afrikaans. Somebody else set the history paper then I must translate it in Afrikaans. I am responsible for question papers in Afrikaans, but also have to translate the other question papers in Afrikaans. It is frustrating and also an extra workload. We are faced with big challenges.

We also have a psychologist who has sessions on positive discipline. We appreciate what he does, he is a psychologist. We listen to everything, but when the learners get home they are hit with the reality. What we get in the book is unrealistic, not with such a lot of children.

We have to attend the sessions, but the book knowledge is different from the reality in class. We have big classes and learners with social problems confronting us in class and that is challenging.

The English class teacher has even bigger challenges as parents want their children in the English class even if they are Afrikaans and Xhosa – speaking.

Thanks for your time

End of the interview

**SCHOOL A –Teacher 2 – Grade 4 English Home Language teacher
(Recordings A16/38-8m 20s)**

**Questions to collect personal data and educational history Teacher 2 – Grade 4 English
Home Language**

Name: Mrs B (For the purpose of the study teacher A2) 44 yrs

Position: Post level 1 teacher grade 4 English Home Language

Responsibilities: Grade 4 English Home Language teacher, Responsible for Soul buddies as extra-mural activity. All responsibilities pertaining to grade 4 class teacher.

Language Proficiency: IsiXhosa Mother Tongue Speaker

School/ location: Delft – Littlewood (School A For the purpose of the study)

• **Where and when did you complete your teacher training?**

I studied at Good Hope teacher training College in Langa and then moved to Bellville Teacher Training College. They closed the Good Hope College. I finished in 1998. (1996-1998). I trained as a Foundation Phase (FP) teacher.

• **How long are you in the teaching profession?**

13 years. I started in 1999 in a part-time position. I only got Permanent position in 2007

• **Since when are you teaching at this school?**

Since 2006. I started in the Foundation Phase

• **Where have you taught previously?**

It was different schools.

I was in Delft South I taught grade 1 there.

Then at a primary school in Khayelitsha, where I taught grades 1 and 2 then I Was at Mfuleni Primary school. I went back to Delft South Primary.

• **If you think of your previous experience that you had at the other schools, are there any differences between your previous teaching experience at other schools and at this school? (As interview was taking place in the classroom there were interruptions as teacher had to address learners)**

My previous experiences were different, as I taught in the Foundation Phase most of the time.

Probing question: Now tell me, were you trained as a foundation phase teacher?

Yes, I was trained as a FP teacher.

Probing question: Now tell me, do you find it difficult to teach in the intermediate phase?

I find it difficult to teach in the Intermediate Phase. First of all, the language barrier the learners have. They are coming from grade 3 that is foundation phase where they had one teacher who gave all the subjects, then in grade 4 they have subject teaching. so now I have to teach subjects in the Intermediate phase.

• **How long have you been teaching grade 4's?**

This is my 3rd year that I'm teaching grade 4's.

4. Questions focusing on learners

• **What can you tell me about the learners in your class?**

My learners, they are a mixed group, Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English. The parents want them in the English class, but they do not speak English at home. I also have learners from the Congo and Kenya, which is a problem as even their parents cannot support and help them.

- **I'm interested in Multilingual (ML) learners. Do you have any learners in your class whose Home Language (HL) is not English?**

Most of them. As I've said most of them come from Afrikaans and Xhosa-speaking families. English is not their Home Language.

I see you've got learners from the Congo and Kenya

I also have those learners and there is a problem with the language. They do not understand and cannot read

In your opinion does your learners' background have an influence on their reading and learning ability? (Probe) Why do you say so?

It does have. Even the parents cannot read. Because the parents do not speak the language. As I have said their background definitely has an influence. Their parents cannot help them.

(Interview interrupted at this point as teacher has to go on with the class.)

(Recording A17/38 – 1m54s)

- **What are some of the challenges you observe learners achieving in reading? What are the challenges in their reading ability?**

They didn't get enough reading I think. They struggle with reading. They struggle a lot. If the parents can do extra like help the child, like sit down with a child, I think it can be better. But the 'most' thing is they can't read

Probe: And what do you ascribe that to? What are the barriers?

I think the barriers are the parents. They must be informed that if a child is Afrikaans speaking, it is not wise to send your child to an English class.

The child will get English in the classroom, it doesn't mean that the child must be in the English class. Parents must be informed, but they insist that the child must be in the English class.

If they insist they must get involved.

(Interview interrupted again, because the bell rang and the class had to begin)

(recording A18/38-32m34s)

- **Are there some learners in your class that perform above average in reading? What do you ascribe that to?**

Yes, there is only 1 learner out of the 50 learners in the class.

Probing Question: And what do you think is the reason for that?

It is the child's background. He is English-speaking and the assistance that the parents give.

Only a few are average, the rest are not even average. The learner's background and the parent's involvement helps.

Most learners read but they don't understand what they read.

5. Questions on teaching and assessing of reading

- **Tell me how do you teach reading/ reading comprehension? Could you describe the method?**

I choose the story and start with the vocabulary that I write on the board. I first read the text aloud, and then the class read together. They must write down the difficult words. Then I go to the story again and make I sure they understand the language. Then I read the questions

You must make sure that the learners understand the questions.

They must know how to answer the questions.

After the vocabulary, they must read the story and answer some questions on our story.

Then they must answer the questions on their own.

I go through the questions with them first.

(Interruptions because of background noise of learners)

- **Why did you /do you choose that method?**

I think it is better for them to understand the work. If I don't do that they do not understand the work. They sometimes don't understand the work and don't follow instructions.

Probe: Do you think your learners understand the work?

- **What do you think is important when you teach reading?**

Learners should understand the work.

- **Do you think your learners understand what they read? How do you know that?**

No, not always. When I look at their answers of the questions. I go around and check their answers.

- **What kind of reading tasks do you give on average every week or two weeks? For assessment or to develop their reading?**

They must go read stories in the class?

Question: How do you assess if they understand what they read?

I ask them questions

Probe: Just orally or?

I assess by asking questions, orally.

Probe: How would you assess reading comprehension?

They must answer the questions by writing down the answers

Question: Do you use any other book besides the Platinum textbook?

For homework, they use their Language workbook to do exercises.

Exercises they must do in their class work book

Question: How you assess the Reading Comprehension. When they answer the questions, how do you as the teacher assess it?

I go through their workbooks but it's a lot of work.

Question: Do you go back to make sure they understand?

We do corrections.

Questions: What do you think about personal dictionaries? Do they have a book that they write in words that they find difficult?

I go over the difficult words, but not enough.

Do you have dictionaries in the class?

No, but I think it should be part of the class.

Do you think the class should have dictionaries?

They should have. It should be part of the books they have.

For the reading comprehension, I mostly use the questions in the text books. I use the Platinum book.

- **In your initial teacher training, how were you taught to teach reading comprehension? Can you explain to me?**

They used storybooks and resources/ big storybook – for FP. First of all, you go through the pictures and discuss the pictures.

Read aloud first by teacher then class read after the teacher. I try to use that method. But we don't read enough.

Probe: Don't you think they need that kind of support

- **Since you joined the teaching profession did you have any specific in-service training in approaches to teach and assess reading? Did you go for extra workshops to develop?**

We did go for workshops, when OBE was introduced and to CTLI and CAPS.

Question: How do you find CAPS: The CAPS doesn't say much of reading as such. It is still early days. For grade 4 it did not change, like pictures and words discuss.

Probing: I see the CAPS speak about pre-reading, during reading and After-reading

- **Do you know anything about the Foundations for Learning Program?**

I am not so sure about the Foundations for learning program.

Question: What do you understand about the concept "Shared reading"?

You go through the pictures and the difficult words.

- **How would you support a learner with reading difficulties?**

I go through the work with them. They can't read. I go through the work with them. Take them aside. They need special attention. I try helping them by giving them extra reading. I try to go over the work with them. I sound

Probe: You say you just take them aside; you don't use cards or other resources to help them?

Question: What do think about the big classes?

That's another thing. There are too many.

I can't get to everybody. There are too many problems. Half of the class have language barriers. Also, the subject teaching is problematic.

Question: Do you think the fact that a lot of them can't read and not understand what they are reading; does that have an impact on their other subjects?

! They don't understand the words.

In the school, nothing is happening about support- for learning. Intervention is difficult because of the big classes.

Is there anything that I should have asked that you think is important?

I am looking for advice how to go about teaching reading. There is no support to help with the intervention with the learners who have barriers.

Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me?

Is there anything that you can advise me to how to go about teaching reading?

Discussion that followed, interviewer discusses pre-reading, during reading and after-reading strategies with teacher concerned.



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SCHOOL B
TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Teacher 1 – Grade 4 English Home Language teacher – B1
(recording A28/38 – 16m0s)

1. Questions to collect demographic data and educational history

Name: Ms. P – Teacher 1 school 2 – 26 yrs. old. Grade 4 English Home Language teacher (B1)

Teaching Qualification: BA degree –English and Psychology as majors & Post Graduate Certificate in Education with English and Life Orientation as methods.

Position: Post Level 1 teacher Grade 4 English Home Language Teacher

Language Proficiency: English Mother Tongue speaker

Responsibilities Beside teaching grade 4: I am the grade head. Responsibilities pertaining to a grade 4 English HL class teacher. Grade head for grade 4: collect information from all grade 4 teachers, arrange meetings and coordinate planning for grade 4 Home Language & Creative, Visual and Performing Arts.

School / location: Rosedale Primary in Delft – School B

• **Where and when did you complete your teacher training?**

At UWC (University of the Western-Cape) PGCE

Probe: What was your majors? My Majors for my degree was English and Psych. and for PGCE was English and Life Orientation.

Question: Which year did you complete?

2010

• **How long are you in the teaching profession?**

In 2011, I was actually working with my father. Up until August. Then I started late August probably the last day of August I started at Sunray Primary also in Delft up until December. Then last year April I started at Roosendal.

Probe: Is this a permanent position:

Yes

Probe: What did you teach at Sunray?

At Sunray, I also taught grade 4.

Probe: You're trained as a FET teacher, but you're actually teaching at a Primary school.

Yes

Probe: So, you have been trained as a FET teacher, but you're teaching at a primary school.

Yes, yes.

Question: How do you find the experience?

I think this is much more work actually. You have at the high school, when I did my teaching practice, one lesson that I gave to all the grade eights, for example or the grade 10's. But over here you have to have everyday a new lesson for all the subjects. But actually, I find it a lot of work so I find it very different between high school and primary school. When I started the year, I started with grade sevens and you only had to have a certain subject you only teach English and life skills but for grade 4 you teach all the subjects so you need to have your lesson plans.

Probe: Do you find the content manageable:

Yes, definitely.

- **Are there any differences between your previous teaching experience at other schools and at this school? When you taught at Sunray Primary, how was your teaching experience there?**

The teaching experience was very different. It was actually difficult over there because there were many things. Discipline!

Probe: Even though it was grade 4's?

Discipline and the context is more difficult over there than it is here. I actually have lighter or much easier to teach here, even if it is the same area, Delft, it was difficult for me. It is easier here, The discipline. The teachers also. There were actually only one or two teachers that actually helped me and assist me and gave support there, which is different here.

- **How long have you been teaching grade 4's?**

When I started here I taught grade 7 & 5,

Probe: How did you find the difference between Grades 7&5 and grade 4?

The grade 4's is more manageable.

Grade 5 is less manageable. Their attitudes are different. And the context. The subjects weren't that difficult. I could bring that across, so that was not a problem.

Questions focusing on learners

- **What can you tell me about the learners in your class?**

The learners in this class, I have good times with them and then I have not so good times with them, but in general I don't have a problem with my learners. Compared to, I always try to weigh, like when I was at Sunray and then now. I get much more out of them. I get a lot out of them.

Probe: Do you think it is a different kind of learner?

I don't want to say intelligent level wise, but I do think that is also part of it. It seems so. And also, the parents, I also get a lot of support from the parents. Some of them they do come to me and I see that parents sign their books, not all of them. I can see that there is involvement by the parents. With the discipline in this class there is a few, but most of them I don't have problems with. I can manage that. That is also what helps me.

- **I'm interested in Multilingual (ML) learners. Do you have any learners in your class whose Home Language (HL) is not English/?**

One learner in my class is Xhosa.

Probe: Are there any learners whose Home Language is Afrikaans?

Yes, I have found that there are learners, I can hear who speak mostly Afrikaans at home. Their Afrikaans comes through.

- **In your opinion does your learners' background have an influence on their reading and learning ability? (Probe) Why do you say so?**

I have spoken to many of my learners and specially parents as well and some of the parents, they struggle as well with the reading and even with Maths as well. They struggle. If it's difficult for them to understand and to get across and if the parent can't understand they can't help them. I have found about the background, that some of them come from less privileged homes as well. There is no culture of reading. I ask them, do you have newspapers or magazines at home then they would say, no my mummy don't buy. So, stuff like that.

What are some of the challenges you observe learners achieving in reading?

There is a gap. The learners come from less privileged homes. There is no culture of reading. No Magazines and books and newspapers at home.

- **Are there some learners in your class that perform above average in reading?**

There are learners.

- **What do you ascribe that to? How do you find out that they're above average?**

When we do have assessments. I find it out that way. Or some of them that ask out of their own and even with their vocabulary, the way they speak, I can actually hear, this is not a word we normally use

Probe: What do you ascribe that to?

Well, at home, their parents. The way they are raised.

1. Questions on teaching and assessing of reading

- **Tell me how do you teach reading comprehension? Could you describe the method?**

Well, I don't know. I basically read through the text, try and find out if there are any words they don't understand. Try to establish if they can basically give it back to me in their own words so that I can see they understand what they are reading. Then ask some informal questions. Then we go from there.

Then there is an activity for them to do on the specific text. Activities like questions and answers'

- **So why did you choose that method?**

I think it works for me for the specific class that I have.

Probe: How do you establish that it works for you?

Through the answers that I ask and the feedback I get back from them.

- **What do you think is important when you teach reading/reading comprehension?**

For them to understand what they are reading.

Especially when they have been left alone, when it is exam time or test time. I can't be there and the teacher that are there at that specific time don't read the

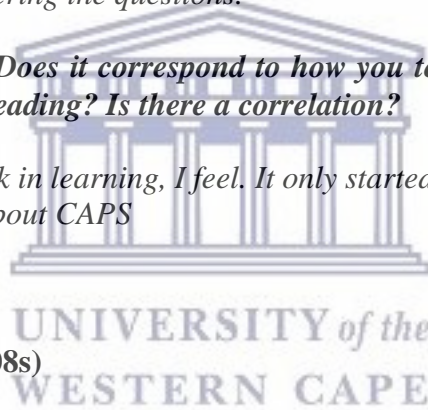
comprehension for them. They need to read on their own, they need to understand what they're reading and answer questions.

- **Do you think your learners understand what they read?**
Yes, yes. There are learners that are weak, who don't understand what they read. I know there are learners, but most of them understand what they read.
- **What reading or comprehension tasks do you give on a weekly or fourth nightly basis?**
We use the blue books and also the questions in the English for Success textbook. That is if there is a comprehension in there that we have to do for that week I would give them the comprehension out of the text book, and if not, I will give them the comprehension out of the blue book.
- **In your initial teacher training, how were you taught to teach reading comprehension?**
The way I can't remember. It was similar. I forgot. I'm sure there are things that I forgot. But the basic is reading the text a few times trying to see if they understand the language, to see if they understand certain terms. And also establishing some questions and answering the questions.

Question: CAPS – Does it correspond to how you teach reading and how CAPS want you to teach reading? Is there a correlation?

To a certain extent

But I think Caps lack in learning, I feel. It only started this year. There is a lot that I still have to learn about CAPS



(Recording A29/38- 17m 08s)

Question: How do you assess Reading Comprehension?

Reading Comprehension, for example like in the textbook. We have to basically use the textbook activities. It's not necessarily every week that there's comprehension.

And the lesson plans for example, here are different things that you need to go through. Reading comprehension won't feature perhaps every single week. We basically need to go through the curriculum and basically do what we need to do. I think it would be good if we can have that, reading comprehension frequently.

- **Since you were in the teaching profession did you have any specific in-service training in approaches to teach and assess reading/ reading comprehension? Did you have any extra training?**
No except for CAPS.
- **Do you know anything about the Foundations for Learning Program/Litnum?**
No. But we, the school have to have certain strategies for Litnum and we're currently busy with that. We're actually focusing more on Maths. I am not aware of the Foundations for Learning.
- **How would you support a learner with reading difficulties?**

Having exposure is very important. So, what I'll do with a learner that find it difficult to understand, like this learner that is from Zimbabwe I'll try to have extra classes after school with those learners.

Probe: What are the kinds of things that you'll do?

Reading texts. To go through and try to sound. I'll try my best. I don't have any training in the Foundation Phase. I don't know how to help them, I will try with what I can think will help

Probe: What about using dictionaries in the class?

Personal, it's very difficult

Probe? What do you think about that?

I think it's good, we do have it especially in Afrikaans as my Afrikaans is not on the level. It's difficult, the English as well. I would ask for dictionaries but it doesn't get to my class.

Question: Do you make use of dictionaries in the class? What do you think?

I think it is good, but difficult as there are no dictionaries available.

Question: What would you like see more being done, supported in terms of reading?

More readers, especially the readers. I've asked at the beginning of the term I have some of the readers. Every time I get the readers, I must give it back towards the end of the term. I have tried to get those readers back and the dictionaries but it doesn't get here.

Probe: and as a grade head?

Yes, yes as a grade head I've been trying and I go personally to explain we need the dictionaries, we need the readers and someone would promise, but it doesn't get here.

Probe: And going to the bookstore to fetch?

We are not allowed to.

Probe: And the book corner?

Like I say. That shelve was full of book in the second term, it is the English readers and I had to send it back, that's why there is no readers.

Probe: And Magazines, like Zone?

- **Is there anything that I should have asked that you think is important?**

Obviously, you are focusing on reading comprehension, most reading that we do is in the beginning of the term, and it is difficult now because there is so much pressure now this time of the term that is put on all of our teachers on assessment. We need finish the assessment. It is a bit difficult to focus on the curriculum and whatever it is, e.g. dialogue

Question: How do you assess reading besides reading comprehension that I focus on?

They basically read and we have a rubric. In the first 4/3 weeks, that is when we assess the reading.

- **Is there anything else that you want to ask that is important for you?**

We need support. I've been here a year and I do get support, but we need more. Even the teaching method, I don't have that experience that the experienced teachers, we need input from them.

I do go to workshops whenever there is one

I am open for learning, because I know I still have to learn a lot.

We have support, but we need more support even with teaching method, especially from the senior staff. We also need more professional development. I go to workshops and I am open for learning.

Any questions that you would like to ask?

There is a major gap at UWC between the training and what happens in schools. Is something being done

Probe: What do you suggest?

I was involved in my PGCE and there was very little time for teaching pracs. 2 weeks of observation and then we had to go out for teaching practice. Students need more time in schools to see what is going on and experience that for themselves. This is the reality.

Question: Do you have specific lesson plans?

What do you think about lesson plans? Do you have individual personal lesson plans as well?

This is the different templates of lesson plans. We have basically different templates. For Life skills or English, you have different templates

Probe: You don't have lesson plans in English for example for comprehension or poems? You basically have just what you do every day, just these headings. Nothing in depth.

Probe: Do you think you need more guidance in that respect especially because you come from FET training?

Yes, Yes. That is very important. It is just this planning for the lessons and then the assessments. That is all. Then you have to have your assessments and you have to had that in as well. That is all. They're very strict.

Probe: Have you got a personal individual plan, that you use that you can use next year again and the refine it as you use it?

It is basically just this plan as I've said and the books based on the CAPS. So, next year we will be using it again and the planning will be the same. And even the assessments would be the same. Next year comes we have to do it the same way. Because CAPS it's the same thing you do every year.

Probe: Is there a gap in what CAPS say and what you do in the class?

Yes, there is a gap. As I say there is still a lot I must learn because CAPS are new.

Probe: Is there a link in your teacher training and CAPS?

There is a link in some way but CAPS say it is trying to simplify, but I can't really see that.

Probe: Anything Else, Any Guidelines?

I just need some guidance. Is there anything that you give guidance when it comes to Afrikaans reading.

Discussion followed on reading stages pre-reading- creating of context, activation of prior knowledge, vocabulary extension.

During reading strategies- prediction, shared reading, group, individual, silent reading, summary

After-reading

SCHOOL B – Teacher 2 Grade 4 Afrikaans Home Language teacher (Interview conducted in Afrikaans) B2
(recording A 38/38)

1. Questions to collect demographic data and educational history

Name: Ms. B- Age 24 years (B2)
Teaching Qualifications: B.Ed. Business Studies in the Senior Phase.
Position: Post Level 1 teacher
Responsibilities Grade 4 Afrikaans HL Class teacher.
Language Proficiency: Afrikaans Mother Tongue Speaker
School / location: Delft – Rosedale Primary (School B)

- **Where and when did you complete your teacher training?**
Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)
- **How long are you in the teaching profession?**
I completed my studies in 2011 and started in May 2012. I'm in my second year.
- **Since when are you teaching at this school?**
I started in May 2012
- **Where have you taught previously?**
This is my first post. I have no previous experience.
- **Are there any differences between your previous teaching experience at other schools and at this school?**
This is my first post.
- **How long have you been teaching grade 4's?**
I started teaching grade 5 & 7's. At the end of 2012 I started teaching grade 4.

2. Questions focusing on learners

- **What can you tell me about the learners in your class?**
In the first place, it is different types of children that we work with. We're looking at social cases. But the one thing that is similar in most learner's cases it is that in every home there are broken families. Sometimes only the mother or father or grandmother. Out of the 39 learners, almost everyone has a history. Behaviour is very, very bad generally. It was a big shock for me to realize what teaching is really about. It is so bad that I feel really negative that I won't advise anybody to study teaching. What you learn here is your own personality. You learn to know your own personality. The learners help you to realize your own personality, what your strengths and weaknesses are. That comes to the fore.
- **I'm interested in Multilingual (ML) learners. Do you have any learners in your class whose Home Language (HL) is not English/Afrikaans?**
All the learners in my class are Afrikaans-speaking.
- **Do you think your learners' background have an influence on their reading and learning ability? (Probe) Why do you say so?**
Definitely, I would say, yes. There is no guidance or help at home. There is no support at home in most cases. If my mother or father would sit at home with me with a newspaper, e.g. it would be a help in the class. If they see their parents sit and read at home it will help such a lot for them in the class situation or if my mother helps me. But there is nothing like that. If the learner comes to school that's nothing to do with me, I'm only the mother at home I only give food and you sleep at home. What schoolwork and homework is concerned, the parent is totally cut off. I called in a parent and asked if there is no way to help her child, she told me straight that she

cannot even read so how can she help her child. So how can she help her child? That is really a big problem, the parents themselves. So, if the child can't read, it influences their learning. If you cannot read, you cannot learn. Most learner cannot read.

Probe: How did they come from grade 3?

The learner failed already in the phase, so they had to move to the next phase. Quite a few of them were passed on to the next phase.

What are some of the challenges with regards to reading have you observed by you learners achieving in reading?

What is actually sad that cannot identify simple words like **I (ek)**, **that (dit)**, **look (kyk)**. Which tells me they do not know the alphabet, and cannot read. A child sometimes cannot even read their own names and that is so sad. I've got a learner in my class. Normally I let the weaker learners sit at my table. When the whole class reads, he only growls with. He can write his name. but when I write his name he can't read it. Miss, there are children that only sit and stare in front of them. That let me ask the question: How did that child come from grade 1. Which means he failed in the phase and he had to be sent to the next phase. It is just not right that the child just goes through the system. So where does the problem lie?

Probe: Question: Where does the problem lie? If you think that children cannot even write simple words or their name?

The schools go according to the system of the Department. So maybe because they have failed already. You know the children come with that attitude, they know they cannot fail. Grade 4's tell me they were in grade 4 last year; they don't have to write their name. So why do the system let them through? The child cannot even read. It is an injustice to the child. When they get to high school, things, the periods have to move fast. There is no time to struggle. So, it is an injustice to the poor child. So, it is the system.

- **You have explained a lot of the negativity. Are there some learners in your class that perform above average in reading? What do you ascribe that to?**

There are about 4 learners that are above average where reading is concerned. It is also the learners that are mathematically inclined.

Probe: What is the key? What do you ascribe it to?

The one mother says that when she comes home in the evening after work then I must look at my child's work. She is a nurse, she must put down her bags and go through the child's books to see if the teacher marked the books. And ask, "what did you learn at school today?" The other child's mother is working in service and gets educational DVD's that the child looks at and that definitely helped the child to improve.

But the others do not have those privileges.

Probe: So, you ascribe it to parent involvement. Besides parent involvement, what else?

The child themselves. The child takes a decision part and decides, we are busy with reading, so I am going to sit and read with the teacher. That is also the child that is prepared to put up their hand and say that they do not understand or ask how to spell a word. So, the child realizes themselves that I want to learn. But that child gets

motivation at home, so automatically that child will take part. Not like the other learner whose parent says that she that can't even read.

3. Questions on teaching and assessing of reading/reading comprehension

- **Explain to me how do you teach reading or reading comprehension? Could you describe the method?**

I use the knowledge that I got from my teacher training at CPUT, like we were taught basically to start from the known to the unknown. Put words on flashcards on the door, the window, the cupboard. etc. The child sees it is a door and see the word. From the known to the unknown. What I also do is I read first, then they read with me and then identify difficult words, words that they see for the first time. So, I take it basically from there, they start with words, because if they cannot recognize the words they cannot read the sentence. So, I take it from there. They cannot say the words. It is very sad if children cannot recognize the word they cannot read the sentence. And for me if they learn a new word then I have achieved something.

Why did you /do you choose that method?

Words are important. For me the method of works. If you can read 5 words then you can read a sentence. If you can read and recognize words, you can read sentences. That is why this method is working for me. At the beginning of the year or term it works well, and then we can concentrate on words. I saw that if a child learns 5 words per week, they are able to read sentences. I start with that at the beginning of the year.

- **What do you think is important when you teach reading and reading comprehension?**

The learner should be able to retell the story, see the words and understand and be able to tell the story to someone else. I always tell learners if someone wakes you up you must be able to tell the story. Learners that cannot read must be able to understand to be able to tell the story to someone else. The child must know what is going on to be able to tell the story to an unknown person.

- **Do you think your learners understand at all times what they read?**

I will tell a lie if I say they all understand what they read. Here are learners, I do not know if they cut themselves off. I do not think all the learners understand what they read. I always come back, even if the assessment is done to make sure. If they cannot tell me, then the explanation was not clear enough or they did not understand.

Probe: When you had your training how were you taught to teach reading comprehension?

- **In your initial teacher training, how were you taught to teach reading?**

As I've explained I try to do what we have learned, starting with identifying words and then sentences Learners use the words to build sentences.

- **You are still young, since you were in the teaching profession did you have any specific in-service training in approaches to teach and assess reading?**

I have not had any in service training, we had CAPS training but they do not do in depth training.

- **Do you know anything about the Foundations for Learning Program or the National Reading strategy?**

I have heard about it, but has not followed up and read more about it.

- **How would you support a learner with reading difficulties?**

What I basically do now I go 2 grades lower for reading. I work with pictures and learners must use it to form sentences.

Question/Comment: I do not see any reading corner in the class. What do you think about the importance of a reading corner and a personal dictionary?

I had one, nicely painted, but all my books were stolen with the table, when we came back. The pictures were torn off the wall. Learners just started to give their cooperation. It is very important. The learners must be able to see the books and get up and read. I agree that there should be a reading corner.

And a Personal dictionary?

It is just as important? Learners have, but it can't be found anywhere.

Question: Do your learners use dictionaries?

Yes, I let them use dictionaries. At the back of their text books.

I see you have the Rainbow Platinum workbook. Do you use it a lot?

I use it for homework, especially language activities. There are very nice texts and exercises in there.

4. **Is there anything that I should have asked that you think is important?**

There is nothing that I can think of at this moment.

5. **Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me?**

It is such an injustice if children that are academically strong and want to learn against those learners that struggle and do not work. For me it is so difficult to give my lesson, because most of the learners are those that do not work. What do we do in such cases?

I am concerned about children that want to work. Most of the learners are children that do not work that cannot read and work on their own and they also do not even care about me as the teacher. What must we do, and how do we go about? Are there any resources that I can buy, a book or so?

Question: Do you get support from the department?

That is one of the factors that play a role.

Question: Do you think the curriculum is too full, is too much is expected from the teachers regarding this type of learners?

My question is, is it wrong to classify those learners as a group?

Well I do not want learners to be categorized in that sense, but why can't we have separate classes for learners where they get special assistance? It is probably wrong to say and separate them. But how do we help the better learner and how do we build the better learner. What can we do not lose the good children in the process? We can't scold the whole time and stop because the others don't understand. We lose that child because we concentrate only on the problem child. Is there no way that we can strengthen them? We must reprimand and discipline the whole time that we forgot about my top Maths child for example and the strong academic child because we concentrate and focus only on the problem children. Is there no way to help and strengthen those children?

Do you think teachers need extra training in their teacher training program to assist learners with problems?

What I've noticed is that the older teachers have a more efficient way of dealing with those learners. Really! Experienced teachers, like Mrs. W, has mostly those types of learners in her class, but has a way to handle them

Comment: Don't you think it is her experience that enables her to do it? Also, Professional development in time will enable you to handle such situations.

Question: Are you prepared to develop yourself professionally?

Yes, I am prepared to do anything that will help me to better my teaching. I am prepared to do anything.

Question: Do you think that during teacher training more attention needs to be given to problems in the class and be more realistic about the teaching situation?

Definitely, also to be more realistic about the classroom situation. On campus, you get another picture. Nobody speaks about the classroom reality. They must be more open and concentrate on reality and not to expect moonshine and roses. Be realistic so that a person knows what is expected of you.

SCHOOL B – Teacher 3 – Grade 4 Afrikaans HL class. B3 (Interview was conducted in Afrikaans)

1. Questions to collect demographic data and educational history

Name: *Mrs. W. – Age 51 (B3)*

Teaching Qualifications: *Diploma in Education III, specializing in Mathematics and Needlework, ACE- specializing in Mathematics and Technology.*

Position: HOD

Responsibilities: *Grade 4 Afrikaans HL class teacher & responsibilities pertaining to Head of Department at a primary school*

Language Proficiency: *Afrikaans Mother Tongue speaker*

• Where and when did you complete your teacher training?

Bellville Teacher Training College

• How long are you in the teaching profession?

26 years

• Since when are you teaching at this school?

Since 2004 – 10 years

• Where have you taught previously?

Eurocon Primary for 8 years, then Welcome Primary in Vanguard

Next at Nootgedacht in 1988. Then I went back to Euricon.

Are there any differences between your previous teaching experience at other schools and at this school?

Initially the experiences at the schools were more or less the same. At Vanguard, I taught in English. The English-speaking children had different attitudes. I worked better with the English children. They would complain and their parents gave better cooperation.

At Nooitgedacht we had a strict principal, who was very proud on his school's achievements and wanted quality teaching. In later years the children changed. At Euricon I knew the children as I stay in that area and wanted to be away from the area where I stay, that is why I came to Rosedale.

Initially it went well to a degree, but for the last 4 years it changed with more discipline problems. There is no support for the teachers from the department and school management and the children realize they can do what they want. The previous principal was more supportive. It is to such an extent that I want to resign because of politics in the school management. It is difficult because of the discipline. There is also a bottleneck because of the failures, which causes chaos. The transition and adaptation is problematic in grade 4. The adaptation in gr. 4 is too much and too fast for the learners. You just have to go on and finish the curriculum and there is no time for revising to lay down a firm foundation.

- **How long have you been teaching grade 4's?**

For 8 years.

1. Questions focusing on learners

- **What can you tell me about the learners in your class?**

Half of my class cannot read very well. I have a lot of failures. Learners are frustrated and it causes discipline problems. Specific attention needs to be given to reading. No specific remedial support. The remedial person responsible is being shifted all the time. Why was the remedial class taken away? No support is given, only a few get support. Children are left to their own device. Teachers are not trained for remedial teaching. The school can pay. There is no future for children that cannot read. They need help. I feel guilty, but with the workload it is not possible. It's a lot of work. The Department and Social workers don't make and show much progress.

- **I'm interested in Multilingual (ML) learners. Do you have any learners in your class whose Home Language (HL) is not English/Afrikaans?**

I do not have any other home language speakers. They are all Afrikaans speakers.

- **In your opinion does your learners' background have an influence on their reading and learning ability? (Probe) Why do you say so?**

Definitely! Parents often have social problems. I have learners that have been socially referred and should be taken out. Some learners cannot sit like normal learners in the class. They need psychological assistance. Parents are absent. They work. Because of their circumstances you do not always get the cooperation of the learners. When you inquire, they do not respond and do not open up.

- **What are some of the challenges you observe learners achieving in reading?**

I am passionate about reading and reading comprehension. I read and let the learners read till they understand. I do admin work at home and use teaching time to teach. Teaching time is important for me. Sometimes learners that can read are afraid to read. They are afraid of the children that cannot read. Learners do not want to read their second language (English)

- **Are there some learners in your class that perform above average in reading? What do you ascribe that to?**

There's about 2-3 learners out of the 36 learners in the class that can read well.

Parent involvement. Parents that take their children on educational excursions.

2. Questions on teaching and assessing of reading/reading comprehension.

- **Tell me how do you teach reading and reading comprehension? Could you describe the method?**

I read the text aloud a few times till learners understand. Learners must follow to understand. Then we discuss difficult words. I correct the learners if they get it wrong. I try to let the learners read themselves as much as possible.

- **Why did you /do you choose that method?**

I saw it works and learners enjoy it and the results also show.

- **What do you think is important when you teach reading and reading comprehension?**

Learners should be able to help themselves. They should not be afraid to read and to ask questions. It is important that they should express themselves and find things out for themselves.

- **Do you think your learners understand what they read?**

Not always. Quite a few of them struggle. It is difficult with this specific class. I haven't seen the results I would like to see.

- **What reading tasks do you give on a weekly basis?**

Mostly reading comprehension questions.

- **In your initial teacher training, how were you taught to teach reading?**

I did not do Afrikaans as a method subject. My majors were Mathematics and Needlework – not languages

- **Since you were in the teaching profession did you have any specific in-service training in approaches to teach and assess reading?**

No, not in language teaching and reading. I did an ACE course in Biology, not language.

- **Do you know anything about the Foundations for Learning Program?**

No. I went CTLI for science, not for Afrikaans. One of the other teachers went for Afrikaans.

- **How would you support a learner with reading difficulties?**

I take the learner individually at the table and let them read to see where they have a problem and where they go wrong. I am not capable to help them with sounding. We are busy organizing for the FP teachers to give us guidance and assistance to help the learners with reading problems.

Question: I see a nice reading corner in your class. How do you use it?

I allow learners that can read on their own to take out a book. And take the struggling readers at the table where I help them. I let them read books from a lower grade and let them read the pictures.

I use the Grade 4 Platinum series from Oxford.

Question: What about a personal dictionary?

Learners are slow. I cannot fit it in. I use the back of the language book for messages to parents.

Question: This is an Afrikaans HL class. Why are most of the posters in English?

I was away for the first semester and the previous teacher took most of the posters off.

3. Is there anything that I should have asked that you think is important?

I am disappointed in the support from the department to the teachers, especially for learners that cannot read and write. Annexure A (for children that failed) and Annexure B mean nothing for the children. It neglects the children. Teachers do not get the necessary training to work with children with problems and give up on the children that can't read. Schools must have remedial teachers. No attention is paid to children that can't read. School management can do more, can be more sympathetic.

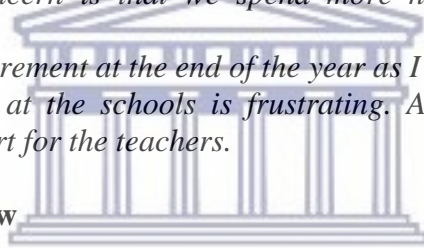
4. Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me?

Teaching specialization should be brought back. My passion is Mathematics and Needlework. It would be better if a teacher trained in Afrikaans would do the job. Learners that is more practical than academic should get a chance. You get learners that cannot read and write well but is e.g. practically inclined. Such learners get lost in the system. Maybe some form of subject teaching.

Also, Time – the curriculum should not be so full, to be able to cover all aspects thoroughly. My concern is that we spend more hours at school, but are less successful.

I opted for early retirement at the end of the year as I am frustrated with the system. Discipline problem at the schools is frustrating. And I am disappointed in the departmental support for the teachers.

End of the interview



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APPENDIX 3
LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

	isiXhosa	English	Afrikaans	
At home, my parents speak				with me
At home, my parents speak				with each other
At home, my parents speak				My other family members
At school, I'm in the				class

APPENDIX 4

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Observation
School A

Observation was done for 2 weeks at school A, which is situated in the Delft area. Although the school is a reasonably new building, occupation in 2007- the physical appearance of the school was dilapidated due to poor quality of work on school building. The school has no library.

The following 2012 ANA results were obtained from school.
Results obtained from school

Grade 4	Subject	Learners wrote	Grade Average For the school	% Achieving Above 50% at The school
	Home Language	136	40.8	41.2
	First Additional Language	43	43.1	41.9

Grade 4 teachers are responsible for all the subjects of the school curriculum. In this specific school however, because the English Home Language (HL) teacher of the class observed is a Xhosa mother tongue speaker, the FAL, Afrikaans, is taught by another Afrikaans mother tongue teacher.

For the purpose of the research only 2 of the grade 4 Home L language classes, were observed of two teachers. Teacher A1 is an Afrikaans Home Language teacher for a grade 4 class of 49 and Teacher A2 is an English Home Language teacher for grade 4 classes of 50

Observation for Afrikaans was done during Week 4 and for English in week 5 term 3 according to the CAPS document.

The observation for first teacher was over 4 days as the Friday was a public holiday

Although the focus of this study is reading and especially reading comprehension questioning, all Home Language classes were observed.

Teacher 1 (A1) –Grade 4 Afrikaans Home Language – class size 49 learners Year-started with 52 learners

Teacher A1 is an Afrikaans Home Language speaker.
The teacher explained that every day is started with informal reading sessions for about 20-30 minutes. No reading corner with resources was observed in this class.
Learners were organized in groups. Their text books and workbooks as well as activity files and exercise books were neatly organized where they are seated.
Very few pictures and posters were on display in classroom. Not a print rich classroom set up at all.

Because of the large number learners in the class, the classroom is overcrowded. There was hardly any space for extra cupboards in the class, or sufficient space for movement between the tables where the learners are seated.

Learners were requested to indicate their Language communication on a form which referred to the 3 official languages in the Western Cape which are Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa according to the following categories

Learners filled in the forms and the results are as follow: 49 learners in the class but only 43 learners completed the form.

	isiXhosa	English	Afrikaans	
At home, my parents speak			43	with me
At home, my parents speak			43	with each other
At home, my parents speak			43	My other family members
At school, I'm in the			43	class

According to the above, all the learners in this grade 4 Afrikaans Home Language class come from Afrikaans speaking backgrounds.

Day 1: week 4- term 1

Session 1

Teacher 1

Informal reading session started with teacher reading aloud, with intonation and voice expression from “Reënboog Afrikaans Huistaal -Grade 4 reader, terms 3 & 4.

The text is a drama piece and individual readers read different roles. One learner reads fluently with the necessary voice intonation and another learner who struggles with pronunciation, reading with assistance from teacher.

All the learners then read after the teacher.

Opportunity for individual reading is given. Teacher calls out for volunteers to read. Teacher assists learners with pronunciation and explanation of difficult words, e.g. characters, actors.

Teacher questions class on content of text e.g. ***What do you think? Why do you say so?***

Quite a number of Learners put their hands up and individual learners answer questions.

This is a morning session of about 20-30 minutes before the bell rings to indicate the start of the period. Teacher indicates that she will be teaching another learning area. I went back to the staff room as the arrangement is that teacher will send a learner to call me for the formal language session, which will be the period before interval, according to the class timetable.

SESSION 1- Informal reading session

Although this is an informal reading session it is mainly the Teacher reading aloud and Individual readers reading aloud – teacher assists with pronunciation and explanation of difficult words.

Oral questions focused mainly on the content of the text – Questions challenged learners to give their opinion-

What do you think? Why do you say so?

No individual silent reading. My initial understanding is that the informal reading session will be some silent/independent reading with the learner’s own choice of books

- Teacher instructs learners to identify difficult words and mark with pencil before text is read- the following Afrikaans words identified by individual learners as difficult

words: prospective photographer (*aspirant-fotograwe*), ordinary people, (*doodgewone mense*), judges (*beoordelaars*), draped (*gedrapeer*), personalise (*verpersoonlik*), impress (*beïndruk*), self-confidence (*selfvertroue*) were identified by learners.

- Teacher discusses meaning of the words with class.
- Group reading- different groups in class get opportunity to read aloud.
- Teacher reads aloud again.
- Class discussion follows on text content.
- The following questions were asked orally during the discussion.
 - *What is the name of the newspaper? (Wat is die naam van die koerant?)*
 - *What was the competition about? (Waaroor het die kompetisie gegaan?)*
 - *What is the theme of the competition? (Wat is die tema van die kompetisie?)*
 - *How many photos did the newspaper receive? (Hoeveel foto's het die koerant ontvang?)*
 - *What impressed the adjudicators? (Waarmee was die beoordelaars veral beïndruk?)*
- After the oral discussion of questions, a Language Lesson followed the oral comprehension.
- Resources used were Textbook, writing board, text in grade 4 reader (Rainbow)
- Teacher explained the purpose of prefixes and suffixes.
- Language lesson focused on prefixes (*voorvoegsels*) and suffixes (*agtervoegsels*), using examples from the text.
- Teacher wrote exercise (words with prefixes and suffixes) from textbook on the board. Instructs learners to copy it in their textbooks.
- Exercise is done orally first,
- Exercise contains primitive word with prefixes and suffixes. Learners have to analyze the parts of the word.
- Learners complete exercise by writing answers in Language Workbook

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DAY 2 – Teacher A1 – (recording A? /38-30min)

- Informal reading session in morning is FAL- English
- Teacher reads aloud from a cartoon text and class reading aloud followed by questioning.
- Questions asked mostly low cognitive recall questions focusing on content - individual learners answer.

Session 2 Formal Lesson (recording A? /38)

- Lesson starts with teacher requesting learners to take out language textbooks and turn to p. 104. – Platinum Afrikaans Huistaal- Gr. 4 Leerderboek
- Teacher reads aloud while class follows in textbook – p. 104 – Information text (p. 195) – Poisonous Insects (Dodelike Insekte)
- Teacher Reads text 3 times.
- Ask volunteers to do individual reading – 3 Learners read individually- Teacher assists learners during reading process with pronunciation.
- Next instruct class to do silent reading
- Instruct learners to do Scanning exercise in textbook- Soeklees- oefening
- Followed by language lesson on antonyms and synonyms. (p. 104)

- Teacher explains the difference between antonyms and synonyms and asks learners for examples.
- Learners complete the written textbook exercise on antonyms and synonyms in language exercise books

Informal session

Informal reading lesson, focused mainly on loud reading by teacher and whole class and individual learners, followed by questioning.

Oral questioning focused mainly on content– literal questions

Formal session

Note: No follow up on the previous day’s lesson on prefixes and suffixes. In other words, no reflection or revision of the language lesson on pre-fixes and suffixes.

Formal session

No pre-reading activities. Lesson started with teacher reading the text aloud, and individual learners reading

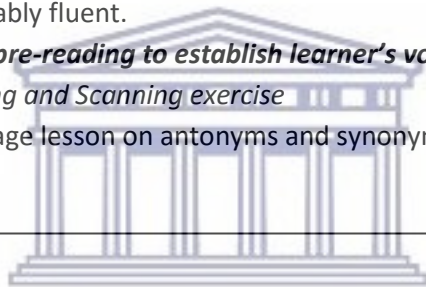
Different reading skills displayed by readers. 1st learner reads fluently, second learner reads slowly in a monotone voice, third one reasonably fluent.

(No questions on content also no pre-reading to establish learner’s vocabulary knowledge)

Reading assignments: Silent reading and Scanning exercise

Followed by a formal lesson language lesson on antonyms and synonyms.

Scaffolding ??



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DAY 3

On the request of the teacher the informal morning reading session was not observed as the Teacher is busy organizing Departmental spelling competition, learners busy with silent reading. She also asks me to assist with learners who have to take part in the spelling competition. While waiting to be called to the class for observation, a group of learners came to the staffroom to practice for the spelling competition under my supervision.

Session 2: Formal lesson – 1hr

The formal reading session is based on the same text that the teacher used the previous day for the language lesson on antonyms and synonyms.

- Reading Comprehension - Teacher in front of the class with textbook
- Teacher ask volunteers to read text aloud- 3 learners read
- Individual learner reads aloud. Teacher assists with pronunciation during reading process
- Instructs class to do silent reading of text.
- Vocabulary extension- Discuss difficult Afrikaans words in the text: harmless, (*skadeloos*), Poisonous (*giftig*), -approximately (*ongeveer*)
- Teacher reads first paragraph aloud
- Followed by loud reading by individual learners.
- Teacher assists individual readers with pronunciation of words

- Individual Learners take turns to read paragraphs while teachers assist with pronunciation.
- Once again class is instructed to read the text silently.
- Teacher leads class discussion of difficult words in the text, (*bug, insects- gogga, insekte*)
- Teacher explains function and meaning of suffix. -less in the word harmless (*-loos in the word skadeloos* Teacher explains meaning of difficult words in the text. (*vergif- poison, vergiftig, malaria - malaria*)
- Teacher instructs learners to identify difficult words which teacher then give meaning. (*onskadelik-harmless, aangetref, ongeveer-approximately/about*)
- In explanation teacher refers to the lesson on pre-fixes and suffixes done on Day1
- Class reads text aloud twice again and then individual silent reading again.
- Teacher reads comprehension questions from textbook one by one to class and explains how learners should answer questions.

Questions:

1. *Which insect is seen as the most dangerous for human? (Watter insek word as die gevaarlikste vir die mens beskou?) Answers by learners: perdeby x wrong reponse – teacher gives answer (Mosquito is the most dangerous insect in the world (musket is wêreld se gevaarlikste insek)*
2. *How does it poison its host? (Hoe vergiftig hy sy gasheer?) – learner's answer not clear, therefore, teacher completes answer – (Sucks blood and carry poison)*
3. *Name 3 insects that is poisonous? (Noem 3 insekte wat gif dra) (Learners answer- bee, mosquito and ant)*
4. *Name an insect that is not poisonous. Noem 'n insek wat nie giftig is nie.*
5. *Do we have to kill the insects in our houses, Yes or No? Give a reason. ((Yes, because we don't always know if it is poisonous. Moet 'n mens die insekte in jou huis doodmaak Ja of Nee? Gee 'n rede*
 - Learners get opportunity to read text once again and
 - Learners answer comprehension questions in their language exercise books while teacher moves between learners to support individual learners.
 - For assessment purposes teacher requests learners to exchange books with partners – peer assessment
 - Learners give answers to the above-mentioned questions and teacher writes answers on the board, while learners mark each other's answers.
 - T instructs learners to check the correct spelling of the words on the board.
 - Learners, hand back the books and do their corrections.
 - When learners give feedback, there were no learner who had all 5 answers correct.
 - Teacher signs the books while learners do corrections.

Pre-reading: No creating of context or activating prior knowledge

Lesson started with individual loud reading, followed by vocabulary discussion.

pre-reading mainly focused on vocabulary and discussion of vocabulary, which took place after text was read.

During-Reading activity consists mostly of reading aloud by teacher, individual learners and whole class a few times. No other reading strategies observed.

Silent reading included

No informal oral questioning while reading or before reading.

Five Comprehension Questions from textbook was read and discussed – questions were mostly content based.

2 of Individual Readers read very slowly, without emphasis, pausing and intonation, one reader reads fluently. Reading comprehension lesson is based on the same text used previous day for language lesson on antonyms and synonyms.

First language exercise, then comprehension.

While learners do written exercise, teacher discussed concerns regarding individual learners and challenges.

Because only one reading comprehension lesson was observed, when questioning teacher, she explained, that this is the pattern that she normally follows when she has a reading comprehension lesson.

Day 4 (A1) (Recording A /38)

Session 1

Informal reading session – Drama text.

- Teacher first discusses words like stage props (rekwisiete), characters (*karakters*) casting (*rolverdeling*), actor (*akteur en aktrise*), agtergrond(*agtergrond*)
- Teacher reads aloud
- Give individual learners different roles to read aloud
- Teacher reads secondary text of the play.
- Teacher gives other group of learners to *do role play reading* of text.
- Most of learners read with reasonable skill, and try to read with voice expression and intonation although there are a few who do not read with the necessary confidence.
- During the loud reading the teacher assists with pronunciation, and supports learners when they get stuck during the reading process.
- After reading of the text by different groups, teacher explains the use of the different punctuation symbols during the reading process, e.g. the use of your voice when you ask a question or see an exclamation mark.
- Teacher explains the purpose of role play reading as well as body language and facial expressions in especially drama.

Informal reading session consist mainly of teacher reading aloud, and in this case followed by individual role reading.

Vocabulary discussion by teacher.

Teacher gives input by assisting with pronunciation when individual learners read.

Teacher led discussion of text. **No informal oral questioning. Mostly teacher explanation.**

Session 2

Formal Language Lesson (recording A4/38 – 44min)

-
- Formal lesson is based on a Poem: The Heirloom – *The Heirloom*
- Lesson is introduced by teacher asking question on the title:
What is the title of the poem?
- Learners have to explain the difference between the way the title stands out against the rest of the poem
Questions: Is the title and the rest of the poem the same? Is it written in the same way? What is the difference between the form of the letters of the title and the letters of the rest of the poem?
- Learners respond orally

- T discuss & explains how the title of the poem stands out from the rest of the poem
- Teacher explains structure of the poem: stanza, line, rhyme. (strofe, versreëls, rym)
- Instructs learners to establish the number of stanzas:
- **Questions: How many stanzas does the poem have? How many lines in the first stanza? How many lines in each stanza?**
- Individual learner responds to question – T writes answers on the board.
- Teacher instructs learners to identify words that have the same sound in each of the stanzas of the poem to establish rhyme pattern of the poem.
- Learners actively involved in giving feedback and discussing the rhyme pattern of the poem.
- Most learners show understanding in the concept of rhyme and teacher writes the correct answers given by individual learners on the board.
- Teacher give detailed explanation of the different rhyme patterns, e.g pair, cross, by looking at the rhyme pattern of all the stanzas in the specific poem. – using the board for notes
- Learners repeat the rhyme pattern by reading the letters used to outline the rhyme: abab, etc
- Teacher explains concepts like assonance (*assonansie*), alliteration (*alliterasie*), metaphors, onomatopoeia (*klanknabootsing*), comparisons (*vergelykings*). Ask learners to give examples from the poem
- At this point teacher focused primarily on the title, rhyme pattern and literary elements e.g. figures of speech.
- Teacher reads poem aloud.
- Ask learner's questions on the content as she reads the poem also activate learner's knowledge with questions.
Questions: What is the name of the sickness? (Wat is die naam van die siekte?)
Is it a real illness? (Is dit 'n rerige siekte?)
- **Name the title of the poem? Where do you find the title? (Wat is die titel van die gedig?)**
Waar staan dit?
- **How is a poem divided? (Hoe word 'n gedig opverdeel?)**
- **What do you call the lines in a poem? Wat word die reëls in die gedig genoem?**
- **Who wrote the poem? Wie het die gedig geskryf?**
- Oral questions asked to probe and test learners' knowledge about the literary elements discussed during the earlier part of the lesson,
- Following activity is questions based on the content of the poem. Learners answer the questions orally and no written activity on the poem is given.
- Questions from textbook.
Is the title suitable for this poem? (Hoe pas die titel by die gedig?)
Make a list of all the diseases in the poem. (Maak 'n lys van al die siektes in die gedig?)
What emotions do you experience when you read the poem? (Watter gevoelens ervaar jy wanneer jy na die gedig luister?)
How many lines in the whole poem? (Hoeveel versreëls het die gedig?)
Name the words in the poem that rhyme? (Watter woorde in die gedig rym? Waarom rym die woorde?)
Why do poets use words that rhyme? (Waarom gebruik digters rymwoorde?)

Only 4 days were observed with teacher 1 at school A, as the Friday was a Public Holiday and therefore no schooling took place.

Although it is a big class, it is well managed and learners were co-operative despite being overcrowded. Teacher's questions on the title of the poem focused mainly on the way the title is written, as well technical aspects, and not the meaning. Prediction as a reading comprehension strategy not explored extensively. The question -What is the title of the poem- is straightforward.

No silent reading observed

Not a variety of reading strategies observed in during reading phase, mostly loud reading by teacher and class and oral questioning

The literary elements, e.g. rhyme and metaphors, etc. was first discussed and then the content and meaning of the poem.

Although learners seem to understand concept on rhyme it's not clear if learners had a clear understanding of other literary aspects e.g. metaphor and assonance e.g. and the content and meaning of the poem, although they were actively involved in the discussion through answering questions by teacher. However, the discussion was teacher initiated and learners were not encouraged to asked questions.

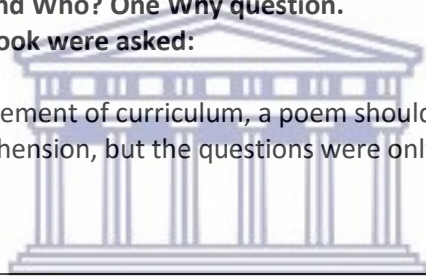
As Introductions Seven Oral questions asked mostly on technical aspects of the poem – literal recall questions Very few oral questions on the content and meaning of the poem.

Six Questions while reading the poem- Four on the technical aspect of the poem, one on content, and one question a personal response question.

Questions mainly, What? How? and Who? One Why question.

Next six questions from the textbook were asked:

Although according to CAPS requirement of curriculum, a poem should be the topic, this lesson could also be seen as part of reading comprehension, but the questions were only discussed orally and no written exercise was given on the poem



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Informal Reading sessions: The pattern visible in the informal session.

- A daily activity – either English or Afrikaans texts used
- Mostly loud reading by teacher
- Loud Reading by whole class or group or individual learners
- Teacher questioning mostly focused on the content of the text.
- No silent /independent reading during the informal sessions

Pattern visible in the language lessons observed

- Language lesson is followed by reading and questioning
- Learners identify difficult words
- Discussion of meaning of words
- Teacher reads aloud more than once
- Class reads aloud
- Oral questions-discussion
- Exercise written on the board
- Learners complete written exercise in class work books.

Pattern visible in the Comprehension Lesson observed

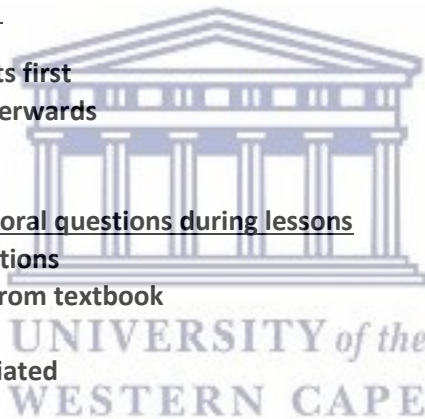
- Individual reading
- Silent reading
- Teacher reading aloud several times
- Identifying difficult words
- Vocabulary discussion
- Class reading a few times
- Silent reading
- Teacher questioning orally
- Written exercises completed in class work books
- Peer assessment – answers on board
- Corrections by learners.
- Text book main resource
- Pre-reading, during reading and after reading activities not extensively part of classroom instruction

Comprehension strategies observed

- Vocabulary discussion
-

Pattern visible in lesson on poem

- Focus on literary elements first
- Content and meaning afterwards
- Mainly oral questions.
- Pattern visible regarding oral questions during lessons
- Mostly Literal recall questions
- Focus was on questions from textbook
- No probing questions
- No learner questions initiated



**TEACHER 2 (A2) – Grade 4 ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE Class of 49 learners-
WEEK 5 TERM 3**

Teacher 2 is a Xhosa Home language speaker, who is responsible for a grade 4 English Home Language class.

This class has a reading table, with mostly educational magazines, e.g. Zone and very few books. Class is overcrowded, with hardly any space to move in between the tables.

Very few posters or pictures on display in the classroom. - Not print rich environment.

According to the teacher, informal reading sessions take place every morning, where she allows learners to choose any book or magazine from the reading table. Learners are allowed to read quietly in their groups, where they sit. After 20-30 minutes of reading, individual learners are asked to come to the front of the class and give feedback or explain what he/she has read.

Learners were requested to indicate their Language communication on a form which referred to the 3 official languages in the Western Cape which are Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa according to the following categories

There are 49 learners in the class - 37 Learners filled in the forms and the results are as follow:

	isiXhosa	English	Afrikaans	
At home my parents speak		14		with me
At home my parents speak	11	5	21	with each other
At home my parents speak	11	8	18	My other family members
At school, I'm in the		37		class

Day 1

Session 1 – Informal Reading Session (A05/38)

- Learners chose book or magazine from reading table.
- Teacher instructs one learner to first read aloud in class
- After about 20-30 minutes, teacher calls on volunteers to come and share in their own words what he/she has read.
- About 3 learners volunteer to give feedback on what they have read in the 30 minutes.
- Learners tell the story in their own words
- Feedback by individual learners show understanding of reading

Session 2 Formal Language session (A 06/38
40min)

- Teacher instructs whole class to read title of story in text book) Title: The Street Detectives
- Refer learners to picture in story and ask learners give feedback on what they see in the pictures:
- ***Questions: What do you see in the pictures? What do you think is happening in the picture?*** Individual learners give feedback on questions asked.
- Teacher reads story aloud.
- Whole class read together
- Different groups read paragraph each.
- Teacher asks informal oral questions.
***Questions: Who are the people in the story?
Describe the people in the story. (characters)
How many characters are in the story?
What is the story about?
Where are the people in the story?***
- Teacher asks questions to test the learners understanding of the content.
- Individual learners give positive feedback.

- **Question: Where does the story take place?** Teacher explains that it refers to the setting.
- **Question: How does the story end?** Teacher explains it refers to the ending or conclusion.
- Teacher explains elements of a story with reference to exposition, characters, plot, setting, ending.
- Teacher reads story aloud again
- Then whole class read story again.
- Learners instructed to answer textbook questions in their language books.
- Learners complete reading comprehension exercise in class

INFORMAL READING SESSION

Learners take time to settle. Much time is taken up by teacher to try to get learners to read silently. Learners fetch the reading material from the reading table and take time to settle and read quietly and teacher had to contain learners all the time.

Not much silent reading takes place as teacher tries to contain restless learners.

The learner's feedback shows understanding of content, but not enough confidence when communicating in English. But only few learners respond during feedback time.

Formal Language session – reading comprehension

No extensive Pre-reading activities and creation of context. Teacher referred to picture and ask in general for learners to discuss of picture. No discussion of vocabulary. **Two Oral questions asked referring to the pictures**

During reading strategies: Loud reading by teacher and class as whole or group reading more than once. Reading pace is very slow and also not fluent, but word for word. When whole class or group reading takes place, quite a few learners do not participate. Learners lack sufficient confidence when reading aloud, even in group reading

Teacher used questions to scaffold learners understanding of elements of story by focusing on setting, character, and conclusion. **Five oral questions asked** while reading and **two more questions** to scaffold learners in understanding of text features of narrative.

Oral questioning- In feedback on questions its mostly same learners answering questions

After reading- written exercise from textbook. No reading and discussion of textbook questions on text. No explanation of requirements by the teacher regarding answering of questions in textbook exercise.

No informal reading session observed as teacher forgot to call researcher.

Session 2 (A 07/38)

According to the timetable the class gets Afrikaans first Additional Language (FAL), so observation was done in the FAL class.

Formal Home Language Period

I Observed FAL Afrikaans lesson for teacher 2's Eng HL class. Policy of school is that gr. 4 HL teacher, also teaches the FAL, in this case Afrikaans. Because the Eng HL teacher is a Xhosa MT speaker, one of the Afrikaans speaking grade 4 teachers is responsible for teaching Afrikaans FAL of that specific grade 4 class.

This observation was audio-taped, but is not included.

Day 3

Session 1 (A 08/38 - 45min 13 sec)

Informal morning reading session -

- Silent reading. Each learner chooses a book/magazine from reading table corner to read to read quietly
- After “silent reading period”, about 20 minutes, teacher requests volunteers to give feedback on what they have read.
- Individual Learners explain in their own words what they have read.

Session 2

Formal Home Language Period

- Poem: Title: The bottle of perfume
- Teacher reads text (a poem) aloud.
- Whole Class reads poem twice aloud.
- Teacher explains language used to describe poem e.g. similes, metaphors to describe emotions in the poem.
- Class discussion follows through questioning learners knowledge on the emotions in the poem e.g.
 - *How did Millicent feel about perfume?*
 - *Why do you think so?*
- Individual learners give feedback.
- Teacher uses picture in the textbook for learner input.
- Teacher discusses words in the poem e.g.
- Learners to identify words in the poem that e.g. describe unhappiness
- Lesson could not continue as it was the class’s turn to fetch food.

Informal Reading session

Learners take time to settle. Teacher struggles to contain restless learners who cannot sit quietly and read.

Formal session- poem

Lesson starts with teacher reading poem aloud.

No Pre-reading activities and activation of prior knowledge – **Two questions** ask in pre-reading phase -

Focus is on literary elements of poetry.

The school feeding system interrupted the lesson and teacher could not complete lesson. Learners called to fetch their food in the middle of the lesson.

Day 3

Formal Lesson – Reading Comprehension (A 09/38- 1h 22 min 39s)

Platinum Gr 4 learner book-Understanding Global warming – Information Text

- Teacher discuss word list in text book – Ask Learners to describe their understanding of certain words e.g. reduce
- Learners read words aloud and give the meaning/understanding of difficult words e.g. global warming (p 129)
- Teacher explains meaning of words.
- Learners repeat words e.g. emission, forestation,
- Teacher first read text aloud – Information text on Global warming
- Teacher uses pie chart in text to discuss content.

- Whole class read together – pronunciation of words not explained by the teacher.
- Teacher discusses words in text e.g. atmosphere, waste and water,
- Discuss function of pie chart in the text and how global warming is happening
- Then group reading- each group reads a paragraph- Title: Understanding global warming.
- After group reading- whole class reads again
- Teacher questions learners understanding:
- *Do you understand or what don't you understand? Do you understand all the words? (no response)*
- Teacher goes on to read text book questions to learners
- *Questions: True/false questions: Do we know how to solve the problem of global warming? True or false? (False) why do you say so? Where did you find that answer?*
- Teacher reads Questions from textbook and learners to answer orally first e.g. *Name the two main causes of global warming. Name three problems that global warming will cause in future? Write down five things that you can do to save energy.*
- Then follows oral discussion of questions answered by individual learners
- Teacher let learners read the questions aloud.
- Discuss answers with learner – discussing content again.
- Teacher explains how questions in textbooks on comprehension need to be answered. - in their own words
- Learners do written exercise on questions in their Home Language exercise book.
- Teacher assists slow group, giving them reading support in front while rest of the class complete comprehension exercise in HL books.

Informal reading session:

Takes the same format as previous sessions observed.

Very little silent reading takes place as Learners are restless during the reading session, with some walking around and teacher often reprimanding individual learners for not reading silently.

Formal comprehension session

A total new lesson is started – No follow-up and conclusion on the interrupted lesson of the previous day was observed

Pre-reading mainly focused on discussion of vocabulary by teacher. Learners read words and teachers explain and discuss meaning.

During Reading activities is mainly reading aloud by teacher, followed by whole class reading more than once and group reading.

Teacher reads and explains questions from textbook

Oral discussion of textbook questions and answers

Only a few Learners respond when questioned by teacher

Written exercise on reading comprehension.

Day 4 (recording A10- 14min 2 s)

Informal reading session

Assessment of group reading skills with rubric started

Different groups are organized to read aloud for teacher in front.

Teacher assesses learner's loud reading skills in a group according to rubric

Recording A 11/38 25min 22s (&12 /38 (28min 08s)

Teacher A2 do not have another Language lesson, therefore an English FAL was observed in the Xhosa MT class.

Extra Observation of English FAL class by Xhosa MT teacher for Xhosa-group

Day 5

Session 1 (A 13/38- 22 min 29s)

- Continuation of previous day loud reading assessment.
- Lesson is started by letting whole class read story together.
- After teacher's explanation, whole class reads together again.
- Teacher calls different groups for assessment of loud reading skills according to rubric.
- One of learners in group reads first, and then the whole group reads aloud.
- Followed by another group for assessment.
- Same procedure is followed for all the groups
- First individual learner in group reads and then whole group reads aloud.
- When all the groups complete reading assessment teacher goes on with formal language lesson.
- No questioning took place in this session.

Session 2 (A1.38 – 17 m 20s)

Formal Language Lesson – Tenses – continuous tense

- Learners read text together from text book.
- Ask learners to give examples e.g. walking, talking, and laughing.
- Tenses – Learners asked to identify tenses from examples in textbook and give own examples.
- Teacher explains examples of continuous tense using board: I am eating,
- Learners read examples in textbook.
- Learners give own examples of past, present and future continuous tense.
- Interval for learners
- After interval teacher revise work done before interval.
- Learners read exercise in workbook aloud.
- Teacher goes through questions and answer questions orally. (recording)
- Learners read sentences in textbook twice.
- Teacher go through exercise in textbook with learners
- Individual responses to questions in exercise
- Class read sentences of exercise together, and then individual learners read again.
- Class read exercise once again aloud.
- Learners complete written exercise while teacher moves around to help individual learners.

(No reflection or feedback session on previous day's comprehension lesson)

Assessment of group reading skills. Only loud reading is assessed with a rubric. No understanding of content is assessed.

Formal language Lesson

Loud reading by whole class

Teacher explaining language concepts

Focus on decoding not reading for meaning

No formal questioning

Informal reading sessions

Silent reading sessions most of the time not silent, as class takes time to settle before lessons can start.

When individual learners give oral feedback not enough confidence is displayed

During class sessions, quite a few learners do not participate – or pay attention, which seems difficult for teacher to control.

Some learners are easily distracted – because of class size and overcrowding teacher do not notice learners that do not participate

When story is read by whole class, many learners do not participate, clearly struggling to read with the rest of the class, although the pace is very slow.

Repetitive reading aloud by teacher and class during reading sessions.

Questions not always discussed with learners before doing the reading comprehension.

Not sure if all the learners clearly understand what they read.

Learners communicate with each other in their MT, which is mostly Afrikaans and isiXhosa – need to be explored for learners to understand content

Learners take time to settle and teacher struggles to discipline learners.

Informal reading session – The pattern visible in the informal session

- Learners choose resource from reading table
- Read silently for 20/30mins
- Individual learners asked to retell in own words
- Learners not fully co-operative –not effective silent reading taking place
- Lot of time spent on containing learners to do silent reading.

Pattern visible in the formal language sessions- 2 reading comprehension lessons

- Pre-reading activities – reading and discussion of meaning of words & pictures in text
- Teacher reads aloud a few times
- Whole class read more than once
- Different groups read aloud/ no individual reading
- Teacher questions learners understanding of content
- Teacher discuss questions in textbook with learners
- Learners do written exercise in language books

Comprehension strategies observed

- Prediction
-

Teacher dominate lesson –learner's passive talking

Textbook main resource

No opportunity for learners to pose questions

Teacher asks Do you understand? But not much opportunity given to further probe learners understanding.

Mostly questioning by teacher and answering by learners

Noise was frequent and loud, even while lesson is ongoing and valuable class time was spent on non-instruction activities, (chastisement)

**OBSERVATION
SCHOOL B**

Observation was done for 2 weeks at school 2, which is situated in the Delft area. The following 2012 grade 4 ANA results were obtained from WCED.

Roosendal Primary (School B for the purpose of the research)

SUBJECT	LEARNERS WROTE	GRADE AVE % FOR THE SCHOOL	% ACHIEVING ABOVE 50% AT THE SCHOOL
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	Home Language	196	56.8	68.4
SUBJECT	First Language	Additional	0	0
			0	0

For the purpose of the research only the Home Language (HL) classes, were observed of 2 teachers chosen by the school. Teacher 1 is an English Home Language teacher for a grade 4 class of 36 and Teacher 2 is an Afrikaans Home Language teacher for a grade 4 class of 36

Observation for English was done during Week 5, and for Afrikaans in week 6 term 3 according to the CAPS document.

Observation was also done in a third teacher's class, which was a grade 4 Afrikaans HL class. The principal recommended as he was of the opinion that a more senior teacher should be involved in the research. Observation had already started in the class of teacher 2.

This school does not have a library.

Although the focus of the research is reading and reading comprehension observation was done in the language classes

Class Information

Teacher 1 (B1) English Home Language Class size 36

Classroom organization: Class has smart board and learners sit in pairs

No reading corner/table observed. Text books organized on shelves at the back of the class, according to different subjects.

Learners were requested to indicate their Language proficiency on a form which referred to the 3 official languages in the Western Cape which are Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa according to the following categories. Few posters are on display, but not print rich environment.

33 Learners filled in the forms and the results are as follow: Class have 36 learners

	isiXhosa	English	Afrikaans	
At home, my parents speak		27		with me
At home, my parents speak	1	2	30	with each other
At home, my parents speak		7	27	My other family members
At school		33		class

Day 1

Session1 (Recording A19/38 – 23m13s)

- Topic – Poetry -Metaphors – (Textbook- English for success gr. 4 - Oxford. p. 143)
- Explain figurative language

- Teacher asks questions: **Where do you find the words like & as? – What do call that?**
- And explains the term metaphor to establish learner’s knowledge about the term.
- Teacher gives examples and learners must identify. Without using the words **like and as**
- Activity given in form of a guessing game.
- Poem is first read aloud by teacher-
- There after individual learners read and express different emotions- e.g. excited, sad, delighted.
- Ask learners to identify words in poem that express emotions
- Teacher reads poem again, with necessary intonation, pausation
- T Ask learners to read poem in different ways
- Learners asked to explain: What does the poem tells us? – Individual learners respond: poem describes sun. **What about the sun?**
- Learners requested to give examples from the poem. Learners actively respond.
- Individual learners read aloud
- Fluent reading by individual learners and reading with necessary intonation.
- Learners are asked about correct pronunciation of words
- Teacher explains that reading a poem reading expressing in different ways. ??
- Whole class reading takes place while teacher use finger clicking to pace the loud reading process.
- Learners get tasked to write their own metaphor poem.
- First they must identify and choose any object to use as topic for the poem, e.g. pencil, doll, monkey, bicycle, etc.
- Learners actively busy, while teacher moves around in class to assist.
- Poems to be completed as homework for feedback next day.

Well managed class and good co-operation from learners during lesson activities
 Pre-reading strategies observed, -questioning, vocabulary activity
 During reading strategies- loud reading by teacher, whole class and individual learners
 (*Good /fluent reading skills displayed by individual learners*)
 Teacher reading aloud few times
 Whole class reading
 Individual reading
 Teacher explanation
 After-reading- Writing exercise
 Focus was writing-
 Textbook and writing board main resources

What is going on here?
 Who is doing what?
 Have I seen this particular event or action before? Is it significant? (and why? Or why not?)
 What things are happening or being done more than once? What does this mean or suggest?

Session 2 (Recording A 20/38 – 34m 20s)

- Observation was done while the teacher got IQMS assessment by 2 other teachers.
-
- Topic: Dialogue
- Test learner’s knowledge of a dialogue- **Question: Who can tell me what a dialogue is?**
Learners explain their understanding. (*Recording for questions*)
- **Question: Where do you see dialogues?**
- Teacher writes learner’s feedback on board.

- Teacher explains purpose of a dialogue – difference between dialogues and e.g. paragraph/sentence.
- **Questions: What do we use when using dialogues? Why? - (speaker's name, followed by colon.)**
 - Learners give input and participate actively and
 - Teacher writes example of a dialogue on the board used to explain.
 - Teacher asks two learners to role play a dialogue.
 - Teacher refers learners to dialogue text in textbook and give Different learners roles to read to participate
 - Teacher explains role reading and the use of direct speech and punctuation e.g. quotation marks
 - Teacher reads aloud
 - Individual learners read different roles.
 - Teacher reads again
 - Teacher focus learner's attention on elements of drama: **Question: Who can tell me what happens in a drama?**
 - Teacher explains dialogue with focus on elements of drama. E.g. characters, plot, theme, message, and dialogue as the direct words of the characters.
 - By asking the question: **What does a story normally have?** The teacher wants to point out the difference between a drama and a story.
 - Learners copy board notes on elements of drama in their class workbooks.
 - T explains punctuation and gives learners a Language activity based on a drama script as exercise, focusing on punctuation: **Question: What is a colon?**
 - Activity is first worked through orally thereafter
 - Learners complete language exercise on a script in class workbook. Activity, e.g. punctuation, choose the correct word (is/are), (like/liked), (behave/behaves), (yourself /yourselves).
 - For assessment Learners must write own dialogue.
 - Dialogue should have theme as well as the following elements: characters, content, correct punctuation
 - **Questions to consider: Does your dialogue have a theme? What does interesting content mean? What do you do when you do not know how to spell a word?**
 - Teacher explains format of a written dialogue using the board for writing notes
 - T reads dialogue example in textbook aloud.
 - Then whole class read together, while teacher pace by clicking fingers.
 - Activity on board to be completed by learners as well as exercise in the textbook, while teacher moves between learners to assist and check workbooks.
 - Teacher reminds class that they should refer to example in textbook when they write their dialogue.
 - Homework for the feedback the following day

Three questions asked to activate learner's prior knowledge of dialogue
Explanation by teacher
Practical demonstrations of dialogue by Learners role play reading.
Teacher explanation
Notes on board
Teacher reading aloud more than once
Whole class reading aloud few times
Written exercise
Oral Questions:

Day 2 – 20 Aug (Recording A21/38- 40m50s)

- Writing – Topic Limerick
- Teacher explains rhythm and rhyme in limerick by using sounds in a rhythmic way.
- Teacher demonstrates the way in which a limerick should be read.
- Instructs learners to write their own limerick
- Learners actively busy writing their own limericks ± 10 minutes.
- Explanation of rhyme and rhythm patterns – where to put emphasis
- Teacher reads example of limerick aloud and time by clapping
- Whole class read limerick together, while clapping
- Teacher reads aloud and use voice intonation for timing
- Teacher and Class read together again, clicking fingers to rhythm
- ***Question: What did you notice when you read the limerick?***
- Individual learner repeats limerick through rhythmic timing.
- ***Question: What did you notice about the poem? Is the rhythm the same? Teacher explains rhyme***
- Class reads example in textbook again while teacher paces.
- Discussion lead by teacher to assess learner's knowledge of rhyme and rhythm – Learners give input.
- ***Question: Are there homophones?***
- Teacher explains the concept of homophones
- Learners knowledge of Language aspect tested – homophones
- Teacher reads limerick again. ***Questions: What do you notice about limerick? What do you notice about lines?***
- Individual learners repeat limerick rhythmically
- Followed by Whole class reading, while teacher pace reading by clicking fingers
- Teacher explains use of voice when punctuation changes, e.g. question mark
- Teacher reads again.-ask learners to identify rhythm.
- Whole class read together.
- Reading by individual learners
- Discuss questions (*refer to recording*)
- Next discussion and explaining of meaning of different words in section by learners
- Difficult words explained by learner's e.g.
- Learners are asked to identify homophones in the limerick example in the textbook.
- Focus on Language structure –homophones-discussed, e.g. **flee/flea**
- Teacher request individual learners to draw picture of flea on the board
- Learners asked to explain different meanings of the words **flea** and **flee**
- Learners spell the words aloud.
- Spelling and meaning of **flea/and flee** discussed- **flew /fly** – learners practice spelling of the words. As well as give meaning
- Learners do written exercise on homophones – to identify homophones and also tenses.
- Individual learners asked to give feedback on previous day's homework on metaphor poem they had to write.
- 2 learners read their poems
- Teacher repeats one of the learners' poem

New lesson is started immediately.

Notice that follow-up on previous day's work metaphor poem takes place after new lesson and not at the beginning of the session.

Reading aloud by teacher, whole class and individual learners several times.

No pre-reading activity. No explanation or discussion of meaning of limerick to see if learners understand the content of the poem.

Topic limerick, integrating language aspect

Teacher loud reading few times

Whole class reading more than once.

Individual learners reading

Questioning

Written exercise on language aspect

What is going on here?

Who is doing what?

Have I seen this particular event or action before? Is it significant? (and why? Or why not?)

What things are happening or being done more than once?

What does this mean or suggest?

Day 3

Session 1 (Recording A 22- 51m 56s & 23/38 – 8m 6s)

- Learners given activity for assessment purposes – to write a dialogue on an assessment page.
- Teacher explains example of dialogue in textbook.
- Thereafter T reads dialogue aloud (p.161 –English for Success)
- Then discusses elements of script with learners. Example – the setting
- Learners to explain what is meant by a setting as an element of a script.
- Learners asked to give input regarding writing a dialogue and use of punctuation e.g. colon
:
- Teacher gives examples of setting the scene and learners also give input about writing a dialogue.
- Learner given activity to write a dialogue for assessment purposes.
- Learners to look at example in textbook
- Example of dialogue on board
- After discussion – learners get opportunity to work on activity for assessment.
- Task- they must write their own dialogue.
- Learners actively involved, teacher interact by assisting individual learners
- Teacher reads individual learners edition of written dialogue to the rest of the class
- Class to complete written dialogues while teacher assists individual learners.
- Individual learners read their written effort of which one or two are well written.
- Learners complete their writing while teacher encourages use of dictionaries to check spelling.
- Incomplete work of students handed in at end of the period – to be completed the following day.

- Teacher explaining
- Teacher reading
- Teacher discussion
- Learners explanation
- Learner written activity

Day 3

Session 2- B1-Afrikaans FAL lesson (Recording A24 /38 13 m 41s&25/38- 6m1s)

- Story was read in a previous FAL session
- Lesson is started with one question on the content of the story
 - *Where did Hei and his grandmother go? (Waarheen het Hei en sy ouma gegaan?)*
- Whole class reads story aloud
- Teacher supports by helping with correct pronunciation and asking probing questions while class is reading
 - Questions: e.g. What is a bus stop? (Wat is 'n bushalte?)*
 - What is a pensioner? (Wat is 'n pensioenaris?)*
- Learners practice pronunciation of the word **pensioner** (*pensioenaris*)
- Learners read questions on story aloud from the textbook.
 - Questions:*
 - *Which other places are there where you can find animals? Watter ander plekke is daar waar diere voorkom?*
 - *What other animals are there? Watter ander diere is daar?*
- Learners instructed to write a story about an outing.
- Teacher gives examples of topics from which learners can choose.
- Teacher assists learners planning by writing example on board.- 3 paragraphs
- Learners plan story about animals.

Pre-reading activity consisted of **one revision question** at the start of the lesson. Instructions during the lesson were explained in English, while this is an Afrikaans language lesson. At times questions are asked in English, but the expectation is that learners should answer in Afrikaans. Code-switching to English by teacher happened all the time during the lesson.

Whole class reading

Teacher explanation

Two during reading questions – literal information retrieving

After reading - **Two questions** from textbook- recall info

Focus is writing of story and reading comprehension

Instructions not clear

Planning a writing activity in 1 period??? Time?

Process approach???

Although the lesson started as comprehension lesson, the assessment was writing a story.

Teacher 1 is an English Mother Tongue speaker and is obviously not comfortable teaching Afrikaans as FAL. Policy of the school is that grade 4 class teachers must teach both languages. During observation of an Afrikaans FAL lesson in the specific teacher's class, it was obvious that she was not confident enough in the language for teaching purposes as a lot of code-switching to English took place.

Day 4

Session 2 (Recording 26/38 – 29m58s)

- Lesson starts by Teacher reading statement poem
- **Teacher Question: Why is that specific word underlined?** - conjunction.
- Followed by discussion of language structure – conjunctions
- Teacher refers learners to written notes on the board

p.145 –in text book

Practice statements e.g.

Statements are sentences that states facts.

“ can be in the past, present or future tense.

E.g. my mother was born in Tzaneen, I am 10 years old. I will be in grade 5 next year.

- Teacher first read aloud
- Then individual learners read
- Fluent and confident reader
- ***Question: What was happening in the poem?***
- Learners questioned by Discussion of words that was added to the statement
- Whole class read statement poem together while teacher pace reading by clicking finger
- Continue lesson-learners asked to give examples of conjunctions: and or but – teacher request learners to use word to make sentences.
- ***Question: Give interesting descriptive sentence – very happy. Warm, zipped, hooded black jacket.***
- (*I have a desk. I have a wooden desk. I have a wooden brown desk. I have a hard, wooden, brown desk and I can put books on it.*)
- Learners given written exercise to write own statement poem and join sentences with conjunction e.g. and or but not forgetting the use of punctuation, especially commas between descriptive words.
- Learners actively busy while teacher assists.
- Individual learners asked to read their statement poems in class.
- T explains steps to write and add adjectives.

No revision and Reflection and review of previous day's lesson. No follow up of previous day's lesson, which was the dialogue that some learners still had to complete'

Teacher reading aloud

Whole class reading

Individual learners reading loud

Written exercise

Three questions posed to establish learners understanding of content and language concept.

Day 5 (On Fridays, periods are shortened for the school to close earlier.)

(Recording A27/38-21m 54s)

- Teacher use exercise from Workbook for learners p. 14 Workbook is divided according to the CAPS (week 2 /activity/book review)
- Topic – comprehension on a book review text
- Teacher first explains what a book review is and where it can be found.
- There after teacher reads aloud from an example
- ***Question: Would you read a book that is difficult to read?***
- After first paragraph- teacher stops and ask question- focusing on place/setting and characters (***Where did the story take place? Who was the character?***)
- Next paragraph whole class read together while teacher assists with correct pronunciation.
- ***Questions: Do you understand? Can anyone tell me the story? What is the grandfather's name? Is she alone? What happened in the end?***
- Teacher asks individual learners to retell the story during which she asks leading questions to guide learners understanding.

Questions Do you understand what is happening to Be and her mother? Do you see any words that are unfamiliar? What is the title of the book? What is the book about? In which country do the San live? Where did the San people live before the farmers came? Describe the San's old way of living.

- Teacher writes learners feedback on the board.
- Ask learners to identify any difficult words
- Learners given a written exercise on the text from textbook – change statements into questions
- Teacher goes through questions orally and writes the learner's answers on the board
- **Questions (textbook)**
Statement: Song of Bee is a book about a San girl – **What is the book about?**
S. As young girl Be lived with her mother in Namibia. Q: **Where did Be and her mother live?**
S. Her grandfather lived on a farm. Q: **Who works on a farm?**
S. Aja is Bee's mother. Q: **Who is Be's mother?**
S. They left Aotcha to go Aja's parents. **Why did they leave Aotcha?**
- Teacher goes through questions one by one in the activity and learners have to fill in answers in their workbooks
- Exercise: e.g. statements in questions to be changed
- Homework: p.16 in workbook.
- **Questions: What is the book about? Where did her mother live? Who works on a farm? Who is his mother? Why did they leave Aotcha?**

Pre-reading- one question -teacher explanation

During reading: teacher reading aloud. **Six questions** on content while reading, reading strategy observed - retelling by learners, while asking probing questions – seven questions. vocabulary discussion of difficult words

Whole class reading aloud

After reading oral discussion of textbook Questions take place.
- five questions.

Post-reading: Written exercise

Questions: What? Where? Who? Why?

What is going on here?
Who is doing what?
Have I seen this particular event or action before? Is it significant? (and why? Or why not?)
What things are happening or being done more than once? What does this mean or suggest?

-Summary School B -Observation T1

- CAPS week – term 3 week 3
- Resources used Text book & smart board -no other ICT's or other resources
- All Lessons observed based on textbook - English for Success (Oxford)
- Systematic reading strategies in reading phases as set out by CAPS, especially pre-reading and during reading not extensively used when teaching reading comprehension.
- During reading strategies-mostly Loud reading by teacher, whole class, groups and individual learners
- After reading focused on written exercises from textbooks.
- Teacher explanation and learner oral feedback basis of lesson
- No Revision and reflection on previous lessons or topic before new lessons is started.
- No informal or silent reading activity observed

Pattern visible in the formal language sessions-

- Pre-reading activities – Teacher explanation of topic & questions on learner’s knowledge
- During reading- Teacher, whole class, groups, individual learners reading aloud. Oral questioning during reading
- After reading- questioning followed by written exercise
- Questions mostly from textbook
- Questions focused mostly on information retrieval based on content of the text or the topic.
- Textbook based lessons
- Only Textbook and writing board as resources
- No revision and reflection on previous day’s lessons observed.

Pattern observed in comprehension lesson

- Teacher explanation
- Teacher reading aloud
- Whole class reading
- Comprehension strategies observed: questioning while reading, retelling/summarizing,
- Teacher direct oral questioning include word meaning explanation.
- Oral teacher led Discussion of questions in textbook
- Written exercise – learners formulate questions from statements.

No systematic Scaffolding activities during the comprehension lesson e.g. pre-reading, during reading, after reading, although the above included strategies that fall into the different phases.

A 28/38 (16m 38) – Interview B1
A29 / 38 (17m 8s)

Teacher 2– Afrikaans HL (B2)

Class information 36 learners

Lessons were observed in 2 Gr. 4 Afrikaans HL classes Teacher 2 & Teacher 3, where teacher 2 was a first-year teacher and teacher 3 a more experienced senior teacher, who was also a HOD.

No reading corner /table in the class. Walls empty-not print-rich.

33 Learners filled in the forms and the results are as follow:

	isiXhosa	English	Afrikaans	
At home, my parents speak			√	with me
At home, my parents speak			30	with each other
At home, my parents speak			27	My other family members
At school			√	class

Day 1 (26/8) (Recording A30/38 – 56 m)

All learners in the class according to the questionnaire are from Afrikaans speaking backgrounds.

- Reading Comprehension — The story of Helen Keller- *Die storie van Helen Keller*
- Girls read together aloud
- Class reads title together
- Teacher ask learners to underline difficult and unfamiliar words in the text
- Request learners to repeat reading the paragraph and read at faster pace.
- Teacher click fingers to indicate faster pace for loud reading
- Teacher reads title and Ask learners to predict what story is about
- Teacher and learners read paragraph
- Learners to underline difficult words in the text
- Learners read next paragraph together, during which teacher gives guidance on pronunciation of certain words. Teacher stops reading process while she helps with correct pronunciation.
- Teacher explains the importance of the writer of a story.
- Underline difficult words
- Learners to do activity on board-
- Title of story written on the board
- Individual learners to write a word on the board that they identified as difficult. Learner write examples like Alabama, deaf –and-dumb (*doofstom*), construe (*konstrueer*), ability (*vermoë*),
- Individual learners have to read the sentence in which the identified word is.
- Learner read the words on the board that they identified as difficult and unfamiliar.
- Teacher gives activity- request learners to look up meaning of difficult words on the board, e.g. Deaf-and-dumb (*doofstom*), *ability* (*vermoë*)
- Individual learners give feedback on their understanding of difficult words
- Teacher discusses meaning of difficult words and asks more feedback from the learners on which individual learner respond.
- Classroom activity- Learners discuss with friend and then writing two sentences about story of Helen Keller.
- **Question: What can we learn from Helen Keller? (Wat kan ons by Helen Keller leer?)**
How do you think Helen Keller felt when she became the first blind and deaf-and –dumb person that obtained a degree in the Arts? (Hoe dink julle het Helen gevoel toe sy die eerste blinde-en doofstom persoon geword het met 'n graad in skone kunste?)
- Classroom exercise on text- answering of questions in class work book were given as homework

Pre-reading- vocabulary exercise learners underline difficult words

During reading: teacher reading aloud, learners reading aloud few times

While reading vocabulary is discussed

Focus on decoding and not reading for meaning

Written exercise on text

Learners unsettled and un-co-operative.

Very slow and incoherent reading when class reads aloud. Not all the learners are participating.

No evidence of planning of outcome of lesson. **Is it a reading comprehension lesson?** Only Two Questions

Focus was mainly on vocabulary. Not clear if learners understood the content.

Textbook main resource

Day 2 – Teacher B3 (27/8) (recording A 31/38-51m37)

- Class has reading corner with variety of Afrikaans and English books, classic books, e.g. Oliver Twist –Quite a few posters on walls mostly in English.
- Teacher hands out readings on activity sheets to learners. Topic of the Text is The locust and the Ants - *Die Sprinkaan en die miere*
- Teacher reads title.
- Start lesson by asking Learners to identify title: ***What is the title? Wat is die titel?***
- Ask learners to predict by looking at title and the picture: ***What do you think is the story about? Waaroor dink julle gaan die storie?***
- Teacher activates learner's Prior knowledge by asking questions to find out what learners know about ants.
Questions: ***What can you tell me about ants? Wat kan jy my vertel van miere?***
What does ants do? Wat doen miere?
What did you see what ants do?
What do you know about an ant that a locust does not know? Wat weet jy van 'n mier wat 'n springkaan nie van weet nie?
What do you do if you do not want ants? Wat sal jy doen as jy nie miere wil hê nie?
- Teacher writes individual learner's feedback on the board.
- T Explains what ants do.
- Teacher reads text with necessary intonation and pausing.
- Then groups read a paragraph each
- While groups read teacher give guidance regarding pronunciation.
- Then reading by whole class
- Followed by Individual reading –during reading teacher assists with pronunciation.
- Teacher ask volunteers to retell the story
- Individual learners give feedback retelling the story in their own words.
- Focus next on vocabulary
- Request Each learner to identify an unknown word in the text and underline it
- Individual learners read sentence in the text where word is to try and understand the meaning of the word.
- Individual Learners write words they perceive as difficult on the board.
- Individual learners give feedback on the meaning of the words: Panicky, ignored, future plans, disdainful, snap (*paniekerig, toegesnou, geïgnoreer, minagtend, toekomsplanne*)
- Activity – Learners to look up difficult words in dictionary and write down the meaning in their language books.
- Teacher moves around to assist individual learners with exercise
- Learners involved and actively busy
- Learners give feedback and compare with information on the board.
- Teacher write meanings of words-given by individual learners-on board
- Discussion and input by learners
- Teacher assists with the spelling of words.
- Learners complete exercise in language book
- Teacher go through books of individual learners at the table

Activity sheet used – not textbook

Pre-reading – strategies- prediction, picture discussion, activation of prior knowledge through questioning

During reading: teacher reading aloud, groups reading aloud, individual reading, learners retell story, discussion of vocabulary, dictionary activity, spelling assistance

Written exercise- focusing on vocabulary

Day 3 Teacher 3 (28/8) (recording A 32/38- 34m 2s)

- Lesson a continuation of previous day's comprehension lesson with the title: The ant and the locust
- Teacher once again refers to title: *What is the title of the text? and ask learners to predict*
- Refers to pictures and ask questions pertaining to the pictures
- **Questions: What is the story about? If you look at the title, what is the story about?**
- Teacher repeats title.
- **Questions to activate learner's prior knowledge: What do you know about an ant that a locust doesn't know? What do you do when you do not want ants?**
- Teacher writes learners feedback on the board
- Learners asked to give their opinion on certain aspects
- Teacher also refers to other subject- natural science – where topic is applicable
- Teacher Discuss textbook questions to establish learners understanding as learners have to complete comprehension in their language books.
- Explain instructions regarding questions e.g. circle the correct answer
- **Question: Which words describe the locust? (Caring & nice/ playful& lazy/helpful)**
- Discuss the questions and ask Learners to go to text and give oral feedback
- Teacher reads section in text aloud again
- Discuss questions in text on that section: **Questions: Where did ant stay?**
- Teacher reads part of the text again for learners to find the answer.
- **Questions: During which time of the year did ants gather its food?**
Probing by teacher: Why in summer?
How did locust feel in the season after autumn?
When you read the story, who did you have sympathy for?
Did you feel sorry for Ant or Locust?
What were the consequences of locust's teasing? (gespot)
What did ant do that caused locust to laugh at him?
What was the uitwerking(outcome) of locust's relaxed attitude in summer, when winter came? What do you think?
- Learner answer questions on text in their language books
- Class Exercise on sound & syllables in class workbook
- Learners actively busy

Revision and reflection on previous day's comprehension session

Prior knowledge activated through questioning, as well as learner's opinion asked regarding the topic.

Mostly interactive discussion.

Scaffolding - When discussing questions on text, teacher reads specific paragraph that contain answer and learners to respond

Written exercise on text

2 sessions spent on reading comprehension.

Teacher made sure learners understand content to be able to answer the questions

A 33/38 Interview (B3 – recording – 30m17s)

Day 4 (Teacher 2) 2 Sept (Recording A 35/38 – 34m15s)

Textbook- Almal Verstaan McMillan- Term 3 week 9-10 – Drama

- Story was read previously – Lesson starts by revising story
- Teacher recalls previous knowledge of story by means of discussion and questions.
- **Questions: What is the story about? (Waaroor handel die storie?)**
- Teacher asks volunteer to retell the story.
- Discuss background of the story- feedback from learners.
- Instructs learners to do an oral activity by having a conversation with a friend- dialogue
- **Questions learners: What is a dialogue? What did you speak about?**
- Individual learners describe the dialogue they had with their friend.
- Practice pronunciation of the word: *dialogue* – Afr – *dialog*
- Discuss pronunciation of the word dialogue through questioning.
- **What do we need when we do a dialogue? What punctuation do we use when we do a dialogue?**
- Discuss the use of the colon;
- Names of characters indication whose turn it is to speak
- Writes an example of a dialogue on the board.
- Discuss steps that learners should follow when doing the writing activity:- dialogue
- Learners must write the names of the characters in the story and write a dialogue.
- Teacher explains requirements when reading the different roles in a dialogue e.g. voice projection, intonation
- Learners give feedback regarding writing of a dialogue.
- Individual Learners read their dialogue in pairs –2 learners role play the dialogue- followed by another 2 learners

(Recording A 36/38 – 24m12s) B2

- Whole class read dialogue on board together a few times
- Question: **What are the direct words of the speaker?**
- Teacher explains direct speech and the connection to a dialogue
- Explains how learners must use the direct words of the speaker when they write a dialogue
- Teacher discuss sub text with learners- explains what a sub text is.
- **Questions: Where will we find a subtext?**
- Activity: Learners examine text to see where the subtext is found. And write it in their books
- Activity – learners to write the sub-text of the story and complete the exercise in the text book

Lesson started with revision of previous lesson-retelling and background discussion.

Next is practical activity to start new topic-dialogue

The transition from one activity to next seems to happen as if one moment teacher is busy with one activity and next moment learners must start with next activity.

The transition is from one to the other activity is not smooth - Activities are not scaffolded

Teacher struggling with discipline – a lot of time spent on chastising learners that moves around in class. Some of the Learners are not giving co-operation while teacher is busy with lesson. Not all learners e.g. participate when whole class reads and quite a few struggles to concentrate.

Although all learners indicated that they are Mother Tongue Afrikaans speakers they are not confident readers.

Oral questions –mostly Literal retrieval of information

Very few questions asked by teacher- Mostly teacher talk through discussion

Day 5 (Teacher B3) – 3 Sept – (Recording A37/38 – 47m 33s)

Textbook- Almal Verstaan McMillan- Term 3 week 9-10

Learners Class work books are kept in class

- Teacher reads title: Amanzi and the Masked ball
- Questions: ***What is a masked ball?*** Wrong response by learners
- T repeats question. Teacher discuss answers
- Teacher reads story aloud to the class
- Ask learners the meaning of words in the title: ***Who realized now what a masked ball is? What is a masked ball that the title refers to?***
- Teacher explains the meaning of the word ***masked ball***. Mostly teacher explanation
- Then whole class read the story together while the teacher reads with learners. Teacher assists with pronunciation of words e.g. ***fantasy costume***. Try to establish if learners understand the pictures in relation to the content of the story.
- Teacher asks questions to assess learners understanding of the story.
- ***Questions: Why did rabbit and bear want to hide Amanzi's costume?*** Learners respond and teacher explains further.
What does it tell about their characters that they want to hide the costume? Learners respond positively. Teacher comments on content.
Why are they envious? Why do we say so?
What did they want to prevent?
- Learners feedback on questions show that they understand the content of story
- Teacher continues using the content to explain syllables of words in the story
- Focus on syllables of difficult words, e.g. ***costume, sadness, maybe, Ananzi, outstanding, disappointed***
- Learners clap hands to indicate number of syllables in different words
- Learners give examples of words and divide it into syllables.
- Teacher use method for more examples
- ***Question: What is a sound syllable?***
- T. Explain difference between sound and letter syllables
- Learners practice words by sounding it and practice pronunciation
- Exercise on difference between pronunciation of different words in the text
- Learners complete textbook exercise in class work book.
- Look for synonyms in the text.
- Most learners actively busy
- Teachers call individual learners to the table to mark exercise.

Pre-reading- Discussion of title

During reading- reading aloud by teacher and whole class, discussion of pictures and questioning on content.

Teacher makes sure learners understand content of story through questioning before moving to language lesson on syllables and synonyms

Vocabulary from the story is focus of language lesson on syllables as well as synonyms

Written exercise

Lesson scaffolded by reading first then followed by language lesson.

Oral questions

What & Why questions

Mostly literal questions

APPENDIX 5
Questions asked during Language lessons

- (1) = *Focus on Retrieve Explicitly Stated Information*
 (2) = *Making Straightforward Inferences*
 (3) = *Interpret Ideas and Information*
 (4) = *Examine and Evaluate Content, Language, and Textual elements*
 (5) = *Inappropriate/Unclear/Off the point*

Lesson	QUESTIONS		Question Type					Learners responses		
	Oral Questions	Textbook Questions	1	2	3	4	5	Whole class oral only	Whole class Oral & Individual writing	Individual writing only
A1.1	Newspaper article Oral Comprehension									
	1. What is the name of the newspaper? (Wat is die naam van die koerant?)	1. What is the name of the newspaper? (Wat is die naam van die koerant?)	1					1		Writing exercise Focussed on pre-fixes and suffixes
	2. What was the competition about? (Waaroor het die kompetisie gegaan?)	2. What was the competition about? (Waaroor het die kompetisie gegaan?)	1					1		
	3. What is the theme of the competition? (Wat is die tema van die kompetisie?)	3. What is the theme of the competition? (Wat is die tema van die kompetisie?)			1			1		
	4. How many photos did the newspaper receive? (Hoeveel foto's het die koerant ontvang?)	4. How many photos did the newspaper receive? (Hoeveel foto's het die koerant ontvang?)	1					1		
	5. What impressed the adjudicators? (Waarmee was die beoordelaars veral beïndruk?)	5. What impressed the adjudicators? (Waarmee was die beoordelaars veral beïndruk?)		1				1		
TOTAL	5	5	3	1	1	0	0	5	0	0

			1	2	3	4	5			
A1.2	Text: Information text on Poisonous Insects- Poisonous Insects- Topic: language lesson on Antonyms and Synonyms									Scanning exercise in textbook Textbook exercise on antonyms and synonyms
L2	No Questions asked on content Information text read		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A1.3	Text: Information text on Poisonous Insects- Reading Comprehension (Same text used previous day for language lesson on antonyms and synonyms)	Textbook Questions	1	2	3	4	5	Questions answered orally	Oral and written	Written only
	1. Which insect is seen as the most dangerous for human? (Watter insek word as die gevaarlikste vir die mens beskou?) 2. How does it poison its host? (Hoe vergiftig hy sy gasheer?) 3. Name 3 insects that is poisonous? (Noem 3 insekte wat gif dra) 4. Name an insect that is not poisonous. Noem'n insek wat nie giftig is nie. 5. Do we have to kill the insects in our houses, Yes or No? Give a reason. (Moet 'n mens die insekte in jou huis doodmaak Ja of Nee? Gee 'n rede)	1. Which insect is seen as the most dangerous for human? (Watter insek word as die gevaarlikste vir die mens beskou?) 2. How does it poison its host? (Hoe vergiftig hy sy gasheer?) 3. Name 3 insects that is poisonous? (Noem 3 insekte wat gif dra) 4. Name an insect that is not poisonous. Noem'n insek wat nie giftig is nie. 5. Do we have to kill the insects in our houses, Yes or No? Give a reason. (Moet 'n mens die insekte in jou huis doodmaak Ja of Nee? Gee 'n rede.)	1 1 1	1			1		1 1 1 1	
TOTAL	5	5	3	1	0	1			5	0

A1. 4	Text: Poem: The Heirloom	Textbook Questions	1	2	3	4	5			
	1. What is the title of the poem?	1. Is the title suitable for this poem? (Hoe pas die titel by die gedig?)	1				1	2		0
	2. Is the title and the rest of the poem the same?	2. Make a list of all the diseases in the poem. (Maak 'n lys van al die siektes in die gedig?)	1				1			0
	3. Is it written in the same way?	3. What emotions do you experience when you read the poem? (Watter gevoelens ervaar jy wanneer jy na die gedig luister?)			1		1	2		
	4. What is the difference between the form of the letters of the title and the letters of the rest of the poem?	4. How many lines in the whole poem? (Hoeveel versreëls het die gedig?)					1			0
	5. How many stanzas does the poem have? No	5. Name the words in the poem that rhyme? (Watter woorde in die gedig rym? Waarom rym die woorde?)	1	1				1		0
	6. How many lines in the first stanza	6. Why do poets use words that rhyme? (Waarom gebruik digters rymwoorde?)	1	1				1		0
	7. How many lines in each stanza?									0
	8. What is the name of the sickness? (Wat is die naam van die siekte?)							1		0
	9. Is it a real illness? (Is dit 'n rerige siekte?)							1		0
			1					1		0
	107. Name the title of the poem?		1				1	1		0
	Name the title of the poem? (Repeat)		1				1	1		0
	10. Where do you find the title? (Wat is die titel van die gedig?)		1					1		0
	11. Waar staan dit?							1		0
	12. How is a poem divided? (Hoe word 'n gedig opverdeel?)		1							0

	13. What do you call the lines in a poem? Wat word die reëls in die gedig genoem? 14. Who wrote the poem? Wie het die gedig geskryf?							1		
TOTAL	14	6	11	1	1		6	20	0	0
A2.1	Narrative text: The Three detectives – elements of a story	Textbook questions	1	2	3	4	5	Questions answered orally	Oral and written	Written only
	1. What do you see in the pictures? (<i>Prediction</i>) 2. What do you think is happening in the picture? (<i>Prediction</i>) 3. Who are the people in the story? 3. Describe the people in the story. (characters) 4. How many characters are in the story? 5. What is the story about? 6. Where are the people in the story? 7. Where does the story take place? 8. How does the story end?	<i>No reading and discussion of textbook questions on text. No explanation of requirements by the teacher regarding answering of questions in textbook exercise.</i>	1	P P 1 1 1 1 1 1				1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1		0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 Students did written RC exercise
TOTAL	8	0	3	4						??
A2.2	Text: Poem: The bottle of perfume		1	2	3	4	5	Questions answered orally	Oral and written	Written only
(Lesson interrupted by school feeding system)	1. How did Vincent feel about perfume? 2. Why do you think so?			1 1	1			1 1	0 0	0 0

TOTAL	2			1	1			2		
A2.3	Information Text: Global Warming Topic: Reading Comprehension									
	1. Do you understand or what don't you understand? 2. Do you understand all the words? 3. True/false questions: Do we know how to solve the problem of global warming? True or false? (False) 4. Why do you say so? 5. Where did you find that answer?	1. Name the two main causes of global warming. 2. Name three problems that global warming will cause in future? 3. Write down five things that you can do to save energy.	1 1 1 1	1 1		1 1		1 1 1	1 1 1	
TOTAL	5	3	5	2		2	1	5	3	
A2. 4	Topic: Continuous Tense		1	2	3	4	5			
	No formal questioning. Teacher explained language concept based on workbook exercise. Teacher wrote examples on board and ask learners to give similar examples		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B1.1	Text: Poem: Topic Use of Metaphors in poems	Textbook questions	1	2	3	4	5	Questions answered orally	Oral and written	Written only
	1. Where do you find the words <u>like</u> & <u>as</u> ? – 2. What do you call that? 3. What does the poem tell us? 4. What about the sun?		1	1 1 1		1		1 1 1		Written exercise was writing a metaphor poem for homework.

	5. (T Explanation) Give examples of metaphors?					1		1		
TOTAL	5	0	1	3		2		5	0	0
B1.2	Text: Dialogue: Features of a dialogue / Elements of a drama	Textbook questions	1	2	3	4	5	Questions answered orally	Oral and written	Written only
	1. Who can tell me what a dialogue is? 2. Where do you see dialogues? 3. What do we use when using dialogues? Why? 4. Who can tell me what happens in a drama 5. What does a story normally have 6. What is a colon? 7. Does your dialogue have a theme? 8. What does interesting content mean? 9. What do you do when you do not know how to spell a word?		1			1		1		Written exercise was writing a dialogue and roleplay it
						1	1	1		
				1		1	1	1		
					1		1	1		
						1		1		
						1		1		
TOTAL	9	0	1	1	1	6		9	0	0
B1.3	Text: Limerick Topic: Using limerick to teach a Language structure: homophones	Textbook questions	1	2	3	4	5	Questions answered orally	Oral and written	Written only
	1. What did you notice when you read the limerick? 2. What did you notice about the poem? 3. Is the rhythm the same? Teacher explains rhyme.					1		1		Written exercise was a language exercise on homophones
						1		1		
						1				

	4. Are there homophones? 5. What do you notice about the limerick? 6. What do you notice about lines?					1		1		
TOTAL	6	0	0	0	0	6		6	0	
B1.4	Text: Narrative: Oral Comprehension Afrikaans FAL Topic: Writing a story	Textbook questions	1	2	3	4	5	Questions answered orally	Oral and written	Written only
:	1. Where did Hei and his grandmother go? (<i>Waarheen het Hei en sy ouma gegaan?</i>) – <i>Activating prior knowledge</i> 2. What is a bus stop? (<i>Wat is 'n bushalte?</i>) 3. What is a pensioner? (<i>Wat is 'n pensioenaris?</i>) 4. Which other places are there where you can find animals. (<i>Watter ander plekke is daar waar diere voorkom?</i>) 5. What other animals are there? (<i>Watter ander diere is daar?</i>)	1. <i>Which other places are there where you can find animals. (Watter ander plekke is daar waar diere voorkom?)</i> 2. <i>What other animals are there? (Watter ander diere is daar?)</i>	1	1				2		Lesson started as reading comprehension but Learners instructed to write a story
			2					1		
			1					1		
			1					1		
			1					1		
TOTAL	5	2	6	1	0	0	0	7	0	0
B1.5	Text: Statement Poem Topic: language structure: Conjunctions	Textbook questions	1	2	3	4	5	Questions answered orally	Oral and written	Written only
Topic:	1. Why is that specific word underlined?					1		1		Learners given written exercise to write own statement poem and join sentences with conjunctions
Conjunctions	2. What was happening in the poem?		1					1		
	3. Give interesting descriptive					1		1		

	Sentences – very happy. Warm, zipped, hooded black jacket.									
TOTAL	3	0	1	0	0	2		3	0	0
B1.6	Text: A Book review Topic: Reading Comprehension	Textbook questions	1	2	3	4	5	Questions answered orally	Oral and written	Written only
	1. Would you read a book that is difficult to read? 2. Where did the story take place? 3. Who was the character? 4. Do you understand? Can anyone tell me the story? 5. What is the grandfather's name? 6. Is she alone? 7. What happened in the end? 8. Do you understand what is happening to Bee and her mother? 9. Do you see any words that are unfamiliar?	1. What is the book about? 2. Where did her mother live? 3. Who works on a farm? 4. Who is her mother? 5. Why did they leave Ayota?	1 2 2 1 2 1	1 1 1 1				1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	1 1 1 1 1	
TOTAL	9	5	9	2	1	1	1	9	5	0
B2.1	Text: Narrative: The Story of Helen Keller Topic: Reading Comprehension	Textbook questions	1	2	3	4	5	Questions answered orally	Oral and written	Written only
	1. What can we learn from Helen Keller? (<i>Wat kan ons by Helen Keller leer?</i>) 2. How do you think Helen Keller felt when she became	1. What can we learn from Helen Keller? (<i>Wat kan ons by Helen Keller leer?</i>) 2. How do you think Helen Keller felt when she became		1					1 1	

	the first blind and deaf-and – dumb person that obtained a degree in the Arts? (<i>Hoe dink julle het Helen gevoel toe sy die eerste blinde-en doofstom persoon geword het met 'n graad in skone kunste?</i>)	<i>the first blind and deaf-and – dumb person that obtained a degree in the Arts? (Hoe dink julle het Helen gevoel toe sy die eerste blinde-en doofstom persoon geword het met 'n graad in skone kunste?)</i>								
TOTAL	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0
B2.2	Text: Dialogue Topic: Dialogue: Elements of Drama	Textbook questions	1	2	3	4	5	Questions answered orally	Oral and written	Written only
	1. <i>What is the story about? (Waaroor handel die storie?)</i> 2. <i>What is a dialogue? (Role Play activity)</i> 3. <i>What did you speak about?</i> 4. <i>What do we need when we do a dialogue?</i> 5. <i>What punctuation do we use when we do a dialogue?</i> 6. <i>What are the direct words of the speaker?</i> 7. <i>Where will we find a subtext?</i>			1		1		1		Written exercise was writing a dialogue
				1		1		1		
						1		1		
						1		1		
						1		1		
TOTAL	7	0	0	2	0	5	0	7	0	0
B3.1	Text: Narrative: The Ant and the locust Topic: Reading Comprehension	Textbook Questions	1	2	3	4	5	Whole class oral only	Whole class Oral & Individual writing	Individual writing only
	1. <i>What is the title?</i> 2. <i>What do you think is the story about?</i>		1	1				1		
								1		

	<p>3.What can you tell me about ants?</p> <p>4. What does ants do?</p> <p>5. What did you see what ants do?</p> <p>6.What do you know about an ant that a locust does not know?</p> <p>7.What do you do if you do not want ants?</p>				1			1		
			1					1		
			1					1		
					1			1		
						1		1		
TOTAL	7		3	1	2	1	5	7	0	
B3.2	<p>Text: Narrative: The Ant and the locust Topic: Continuation of previous day's Reading Comprehension</p>	Textbook questions	1	2	3	4	5	Questions answered orally	Oral and written	Written only
	<p>1. What is the title of the text?</p> <p>2.What do you think is happening in the story?</p> <p>3. What is the story about?</p> <p>4.If you look at the title, what is the story about?</p> <p>5.What do you know about an ant that a locust doesn't know?</p> <p>6. What do you do when you do not want ants?</p> <p><i>Probing by teacher:</i> - Why in summer? -When you read the story, who did you have sympathy for? - What do you think?</p>	<p>1. Which words describe the locust?</p> <p>2. Where did ant stay?</p> <p>3. During which time of the year did ants gather its food?</p> <p>4. How did locust feel in the season after autumn?</p> <p>5. Did you feel sorry for Ant or Locust?</p> <p>6. What did ant do that caused locust to laugh at him?</p> <p>7. What were the consequences of locust's teasing?</p> <p>8. What was the outcome of locust's relaxed attitude in summer, when winter came?</p>	2					1	1	
			1	1				1	1	
			1	1				1	1	
			1	1	1			1	1	
			1			1		1	1	
			1	1				1	1	
			1			1		1	1	
				1				1		

TOTAL	9	8	9	5	2	1		9	8	
B3.3	Text: Narrative Amanzi and the Masked ball Topic: Difference between sound syllables and synonyms		1	2	3	4	5			
	1. What is a masked ball? 2. Who realized now what a masked ball is? 3. What is a masked ball that the title refers to? 4. Why did rabbit and bear want to hide Amanzi's costume? 5. What does it tell about their characters that they want to hide the costume? 6. Why are they envious? 7. Why do we say so? 8. What did they want to prevent? 9. What is a sound syllable?		1	1				1		Written exercise given on difference between written and sound syllables of words in the text
			1	1				1		
TOTAL	9	0	3	4	2			9	0	0

APPENDIX 6
Observed Reading Comprehension Lessons

The following table is a summary of observed classroom activities of the five participant teachers during Reading Comprehension instruction.

Teacher	No of Comprehension lessons	Pre-reading	During reading	After-reading
A1	2 lessons	<p>LESSON 1 Information text No extensive pre-reading activities observed. Lesson is started by teacher reading aloud while learners listen. No informal oral questioning to activate prior knowledge</p>	<p>LESSON 1 Teacher reads aloud Repeated reading aloud by teacher, whole class and individual learners Vocabulary discussion after reading text Teacher- led discussion of topic. Silent reading by whole class observed. While reading by learners teacher assisted with pronunciation and discuss meaning of vocabulary which learners identified as difficult. No questions asked during reading.</p>	<p>LESSON 1 Teacher read questions from textbook. Teacher-led discussion of textbook questions – 5 questions 3 recall/ 1 inferential / 1 personal response. Learners do written exercise in workbooks</p>
		<p>LESSON 2 Text- Poem Activation of prior knowledge through pre-reading questions focused mostly on technical aspects of poem- e.g. title, structure, rhyme, e.g. <i>What is the title of the poem?</i> <i>Also to be noted is that teacher repeated some of the question.</i></p>	<p>LESSON 2 Loud reading by teacher and whole class. Questions asked Followed by silent reading by whole class. Reading Strategies observed- loud reading, silent reading and oral questioning by teacher while reading aloud. Oral questions asked during reading mostly technical on literary elements of poem.</p>	<p>LESSON 2 6 textbook Questions on poem discussed orally by No written exercise</p>
A2	2 lessons	<p>LESSON 1 Narrative text The street detectives 2 prediction questions on pictures to activate learner’s prior knowledge of the topic. Interactive discussion on pictures.</p>	<p>LESSON 1 Repeated reading aloud by teacher and whole class and groups. 7 questions asked on content during the reading process- 5 on content and elements of narrative and 2 to scaffold referring to text features</p>	<p>LESSON 1 Written exercise answering the prescribed textbook’s comprehension questions. No prior discussion of questions and instructions.</p>
		<p>LESSON 2 Information text: Understanding Global Warming</p>	<p>LESSON 2 Repeated Loud reading by teacher, whole class and groups. No questioning and</p>	<p>LESSON 2 Reading and discussion of textbook comprehension questions. Few (2) probing</p>

		Vocabulary work- teacher explained the meaning of difficult words in text. Learners discuss word meaning.	discussion while reading the text.	questions asked on learner feedback. Written exercise on reading comprehension textbook questions.
B1	1 lesson	LESSON 1 Text type- Book review Teacher explained the text type-book review.	LESSON 1 Teacher read aloud. 15 Questions asked during reading to test content. 2 after 1 st paragraph Whole class read while teacher assisted with pronunciation. Oral questioning while reading- Retelling of story by Individual learners guided by leading questions from teacher. Feedback written on board	LESSON 1 Identification of difficult words by learners Oral discussion of the 5 textbook questions. Written exercise on textbook questions
		Note: The other Reading Comprehension lesson was an Afrikaans FAL lesson.		
B2	1 lesson	Lesson 1 Text- Narrative Lesson started by whole class reading the text. Teacher read title. Prediction strategy used. Learners to predict story according to the title. Teacher discussed title Focus was mainly on vocabulary. Learners underline difficult words.	Reading aloud alternately by teacher and learners while teacher pace with fingers and assist with pronunciation <u>Vocabulary work</u> - Underlining of difficult words during reading. Meaning written on board. Individual reading of sentences. Dictionary activity -Learners look up meaning of words. Learners give feedback.	Discussion of word meaning Oral discussion of textbook questions. Written exercise- only two questions
B3	2 lessons Lesson 2 was a continuation of the same text	LESSON 1 Narrative text Teacher read title and asked learners to predict. Activated prior knowledge through questions on topic. Picture discussion. Feedback written on board. Teacher explained aspects of topic.	LESSON 1 Teacher reading aloud. Group reading while teacher assist with pronunciation. Whole class reading. Individual reading. Individual retelling of story. Vocabulary work- discussion of vocabulary, dictionary activity. Spelling assistance during reading.	LESSON 1 Written exercise- focusing on vocabulary extension in preparation for reading comprehension
		LESSON 2 Revision and reflection on previous day's comprehension session. Prior knowledge activated again through questioning and discussion of the topic. Feedback written on board.	LESSON 2 Teacher scaffolded learners by assisting in reading specific paragraphs that contain answers of questions.	LESSON 2 Oral discussion of textbook questions. Discuss instructions regarding questions. Teacher read section in text that contain answers. Reading comprehension exercise. Learners do written exercise on reading comprehension.

APPENDIX 7

TEACHER'S QUESTIONS

1. **Retrieve Explicitly Stated Information**
2. **Making Straightforward Inferences**
3. **Interpret Ideas and Information**
4. **Examine and Evaluate Content, Language, and Textual elements**
5. **Questions: Inappropriate/not clear /off the point**

TEACHER	QUESTIONS	QUESTION TYPES ACCORDING TO PIRLS READING PROCESSES				
		1	2	3	4	5
A1 Afrikaans HL	Pre-PIRLS Text- Van Ruspe tot Skoenlapper (From Caterpillar to Butterfly) (49/50 Learners – 45 wrote)					
	1.Waarin het die onderwyser die ruspe skool toe gebring? <i>(What container did the teacher use to bring the caterpillar to school?)</i>	1				
	2.Wat gaan die ruspe aan die einde van die groeiproses wees? <i>(What will the caterpillar be at the end of the growth process?)</i>	1				
	3.Voltooi: 'n Ruspe is dieselfde soos 'nwie se lewe begin het as 'n klein eiertjie. <i>(Complete: a Caterpillar is the same as awhose life started as a small egg.)</i> <i>(Inappropriate- question suitable for pre-reading)</i>					1
	4.Wat is die verskil tussen die mens(ons) se vel en dié van 'n ruspe wanneer dit groei? <i>(What is the difference between a human's skin and the skin of a caterpillar when it grows)</i>			1		
	5.Hoeveel keer het die ruspe sy vel afgegooi? <i>(How many times did the caterpillar shed its skin?)</i>	1				
	6.Wat noem ons die ruspe voordat dit heeltemal in 'n skoenlapper verander? <i>(What do we call caterpillar before it changes completely into a butterfly?)</i> <i>(question not clear should be rephrased)</i>					1
	7.Wat noem ons woonplek van diere wanneer ons Natuurwetenskap doen <i>(What do we call the place where animals stay when we stud Physical</i>					1

	Science?) <i>(Suitable to test prior knowledge)</i>					
	8. 'n Mens het arms en bene om mee te beweeg, maar 'n skoenlapper het <i>(Humans have arms and legs to use for movement, but butterflies have.....)</i> <i>(Could be answered without reading the text)</i>					1
	9. Daar word deur die hele leesstuk gepraat van "ons". Wie is die "ons" <i>(Throughout the text, the word "we" is used. To who does the word "we" refer to?)</i>			1		
	10. Sou jy graag 'n skoenlapper wou wees? Waarom? <i>(Would you like to be a butterfly? Why?)</i> <i>(relates to topic but not comprehension question. Don't have to read and understand the text to answer) Personal response</i>					1
	TOTAL	3	0	2	0	5
A2 ENGLISH HL	Pre-Pirls Text- The Lonely Giraffe- 49 Learners in class – 44 wrote)	1	2	3	4	5
	1. Name the animals in the story.	1				
	2. Where are the animals in this picture?			1		
	3. Why did the animals met every morning?	1				
	4. State whether the following statements are true or false: a) The giraffe was very tall b) By the time the giraffe lowered his head to the ground to speak, the other animals was excited c) The monkey heard a distant roar.		1			
	5. Why do you think the giraffe spent all day with his head in the trees eating?		1			
	6. What did the leopard heard ? <i>(Poor question-learners can answer without understanding the text)</i> <i>grammatical error)</i>					1
	7. How did the animals know that the river was flooding?		1			
	8. How did the animals escape the flood?	1				
	9. What is the lesson in this story?				1	
	10. Give the story another title . <i>(Unclear)</i> <i>Spelling error</i>					1
	TOTAL	4	3	1	1	2
B1 ENGLISH HL	Pre-Pirls Text- From Caterpillar to Butterfly	1	2	3	4	5

	<i>(36 Learners in class and 31 Learners wrote)</i>					
	1.What is the title of the story and who wrote it?	1				
	2.As what did the caterpillar start out as	1				
	3.What was the caterpillar’s job?	1				
	4.How long did the caterpillar eat and grow? <i>(Formulation. Question can be interpreted in more than one way.)</i>					1
	5.TRUE or FALSE: 5.1. A Caterpillar’s skin grows with it 5.2. process where a caterpillar crawls out of its skin is called shedding		1			
	6.What does the caterpillar use a button for?	1				
	7.What are the changes happening inside of the hard shell?	1				
	8.In your own words explain what happened after the children saw the shell crack.	1				
	9.Explain why we shouldn’t keep butterflies in a jar?		1			
	10.Would you like to see the process of a caterpillar transform into a butterfly? Why? <i>(Personal response needed. Not a reading comprehension question)</i>					1
	TOTAL	6	2	0	0	2
B2 AFR. HL	Pre-Pirls Text- Dapper Bettie / Brave Charlotte <i>(Class size 36- 25 Learners wrote)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
	1.Wat is die naam van die hoofkarakter? <i>(What is the name of the main character?)</i>	1				
	2. Waar woon Betty? <i>(Where does Betty/Charlotte stay?)</i>	1				
	3. Wie is Jack? <i>(Who is Jack?)</i>	1				
	4. Wanneer al die ander slaap, wat doen Betty? <i>(What was Betty/Charlotte doing when all the others were asleep?)</i>	1				
	5. Gee die antoniem vir die woord: “snags” nightly <i>(Give the antonym for the word snags)</i>		1			
	6. Wie het vir hulp gaan soek nadat die skaapwagter geval en sy been gebreek het? Skryf ‘n sin uit die leesstuk <i>(Who went to look for help when the shepherd fell and broke his leg? Write a sentence from the passage.)</i>	1				

	7. Waaroor was die ander skape “rasend” bekommerd? <i>(Why were the other sheep so concerned?)</i>		1			
	8. Wie het vir Betty in die middel van die nag raakgesien? <i>(Who saw Betty/Charlotte in the middle of the night?)</i>	1				
	9. Sê of die volgende stelling WAAR of ONWAAR is: Betty het met haar oor aan die boer se venster geklop. <i>(True or False: Betty used her ear to knock against the window of the farmer)</i>		1			
	10. Voltooi die sin: Die skaapwagter se been was vir ses weke in <i>(Complete the sentence: The shepherd's leg was in afor six weeks)</i> <i>(Learners don't have to understand the meaning.)</i>					1
	TOTAL	6	2	1	0	1
B3 AFR HL	Pre-PIRLS text-Two Giant Dinosaurs (Class size 36)	1	2	3	4	5
	1. Noem die twee karakters in die storie. <i>Name the two characters in the story.</i>	1				
	2. Skryf een woord uit paragraaf twee neer wat sê dat dinosaurusse baie groot diere was. <i>Write down one word from paragraph 2 that describe the dinosaurs as very large animals.</i>				1	
	3. Wat is T-rex se regte naam? Noem die betekenis daarvan. <i>What is the T-rex correct name? Give the meaning of the name.</i>	1				
	4. Beskryf Diplodocus, die dinosaurus. <i>Describe Diplodocus, the dinosaur.</i>	1				
	5. Noem enige verskille tussen die twee dinosaurusse. <i>Name any differences between the two dinosaurs</i>		1			
	6. Hoekom dink jy het T-rex 'n lang stert? <i>Why do you think T-rex's tail is long?</i>		1			
	7. Skryf “ waar of Onwaar ” by die onderstaande sinne neer: 7.1 As T-Rex se tand afgebreek het, het 'n nuwe een uitgegroeï ____ 7.2 Die klippe in Diplodocus se maag het meer as _____ geweeg <i>Write down true or false next to the following sentences:</i> 7.2 When T-Rex's tooth broke off, a new tooth grew out _____	1				

	7.2 <i>The stones in Diplodocus stomach weighed more than _____</i>					
	8. Voltooi: Die twee dinosourusse het meer as _____ geweeg. <i>Complete: Diplodocus weighed more than.....</i>	1				
	9. Die twee dinosourusse was _____om by sy manier van lewe te pas. <i>The two dinosaurs wereto adapt to their lifestyle.</i>	1				
	10. Wat het jy uit die storie geleer? <i>What did you learn from the story?</i>				1	
	TOTAL	6	2	0	2	0
	TOTAL	25	12	3	2	10
		50%	24%	4%	4%	20%



APPENDIX 8

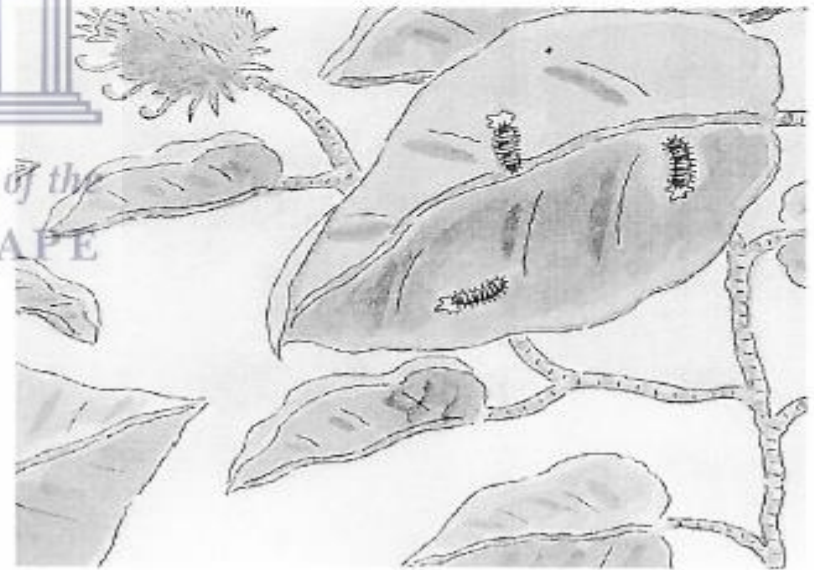
Caterpillar to Butterfly

*By Deborah Heiligman
Illustrated by Bari Weissman*

One day our teacher brought a caterpillar to school in a jar. It was eating green leaves. This tiny caterpillar was going to change into a butterfly. Caterpillars usually turn into butterflies outdoors. But we watched our caterpillar change into a butterfly right in our classroom.

Our teacher told us our caterpillar started out as a tiny egg. The mother butterfly laid the egg on a leaf. The mother butterfly chose the leaf of a plant that the caterpillar would eat. When the caterpillar hatched out of the egg, it was hungry. It ate its own eggshell! Then it started to eat green plants right away.

The caterpillar's job was to eat and eat, so it would grow. Each day it got bigger. The caterpillar ate and grew for 12 days.



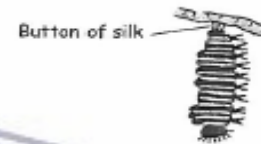
Our skin grows with us. But a caterpillar's skin does not grow. When the caterpillar got too big for its skin, the skin split down the back.



The caterpillar crawled right out of its own skin. It had a new skin underneath. This is called shedding. Our caterpillar shed its skin four times. After many days our caterpillar was finished growing. It was almost as big as my little finger.



Then our caterpillar made a special house. First it made a button of silk. It used this button to hang upside down from a twig.



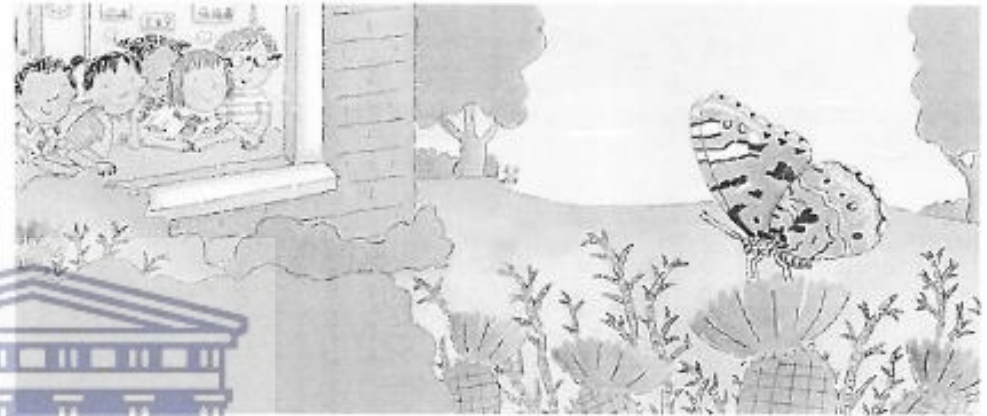
Then it shed its skin for the last time. Instead of a new skin, this time it formed a chrysalis with a hard shell. We watched the chrysalis for a long time.



Every day the shell looked the same. But inside the shell changes were happening.



We waited and waited. Then, one day, somebody shouted, "Look!" The shell was cracking. It was a butterfly! Our butterfly was damp and crumpled. It hung on to the shell while its wings flapped. This pumped blood into its wings. The wings stretched out and dried. Soon our butterfly was ready to fly.



Our butterfly could not stay in the jar. It needed to be outside with flowers and grass and trees. We watched our butterfly land on a flower. It sipped the flower's nectar through a long, coiled tube. Maybe it was a female butterfly. Maybe someday she would lay an egg on a leaf.

Dapper Betty

Deur Anu Stohner

Geïllustreer deur Henrike Wilson

Betty was reg van die begin af anders as al die ander skape. Terwyl al die ander lammetjies net skaam-skaam by hulle mammas staan, spring Betty rond, reg vir avontuur.

Betty woon saam met al die ander skape op 'n heuwel ver van die plaas. Hulle het 'n skaapwagter wat hulle moet oppas en hy het 'n ou hond genaamd Jack. Jack probeer om vir Betty in toom te hou, maar sy is nie bang vir hom nie.

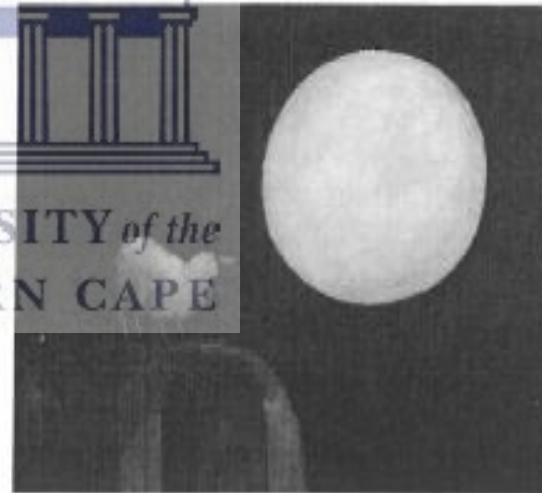


Eendag spring Betty teen die rivierwal af en gaan swem in die winnig vloeiende stroom.

"Ai, ai," sê die ouer skape en skud hulle koppe.

Wat sal hulle sê as hulle weet dat Betty snags in die geheim in die veld rond dwaal?

Wanneer al die ander skape slaap, sluip sy weg na haar spesiale plekkie en staar na die maan. Selfs Jack kom dit nie agter nie. Sy ore is deesdae nie so goed nie.



Eendag gebeur iets vreesliks. Die skaapwagter val en breek sy been. Jack blaf en hardloop kringe om hom, maar dit help niks. Die skaapwagter lê in die gras en weet nie wat om te doen nie.

“Ai tog, ai tog,” sê die ouer skape. “Iemand moet by die boer se plaas in die vallei gaan hulp kry.”

“Jack moet gaan. Hy is al een wat die pad ken.”

“Maar dit is te ver. Hy kan deesdae amper nie meer die trop hanteer nie

“Ja, dit is waar,” sê die ander, en skud moedeloos hulle koppe.



Toe sê Betty, “Ek sal dit doen. Ek sal gaan.”

“Betty?” brom die ouer skape.

“Buite die kwessie! ’n Skaap het nog nooit alleen vallei toe gegaan nie.”

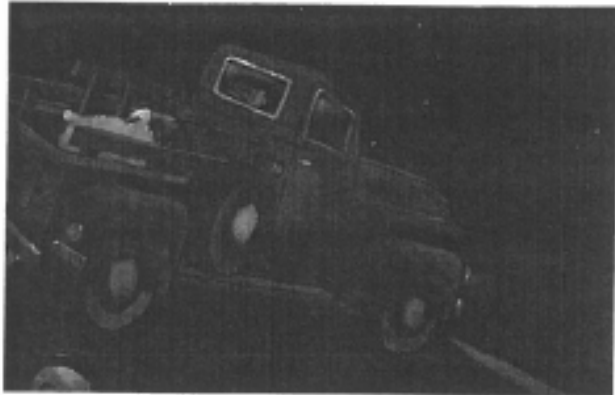
Die ouer skape is rasend van bekommernis. Maar Betty kan hulle nie hoor nie. Sy is alreeds weg om die regte pad na die vallei te soek

Sy huppel oor veld, deur die rivier en oor die berg.



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Toe Betty by die besige pad aankom, was dit in die middel van die nag. Sy staan en kyk na die verkeer.

'n Vragmotorbestuurder sien vir Betty en hou in die pad stil.

"Gaan jy vallei toe?" vra hy. Betty knik.

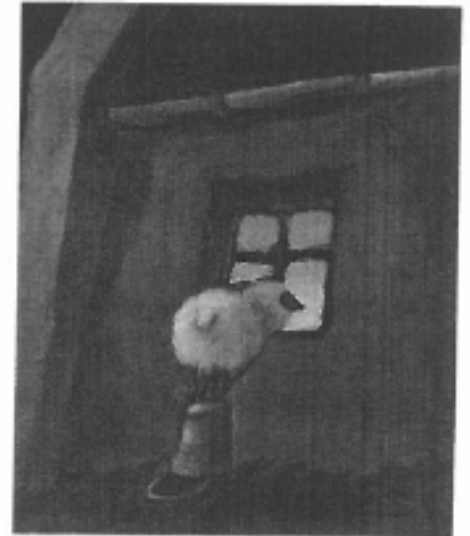


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Dit was so lekker om in die vinnige vragmotor te ry dat Betty amper jammer was toe hulle by die boer se huis aankom.

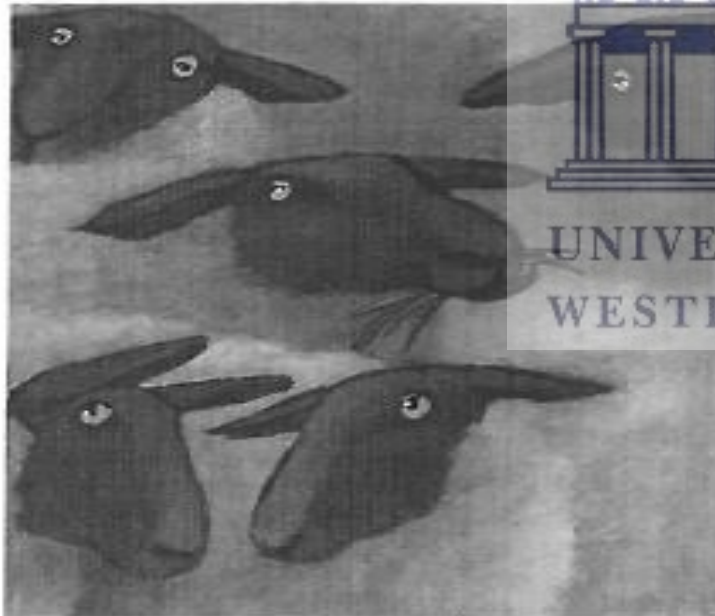
Die boer het geslaap toe Betty met haar neus aan sy venster klop.

"Dis Betty," sê die boer, "en sy is alleen. Iets moet verkeerd wees."



Betty en die boer ry met die trekker om die ander skaap te soek. Toe hulle daar aankom, lê die arme skaapwagt nog steeds in die gras. Die boer neem hom dadelik hospitaal toe.

Die skaapwagter se been was vir ses weke in gips voor hy na die skape kon teruggaan. By sy terugkoms glimk hy breed vir Betty. Van toe af was Betty vry om rond te loop soos sy wil



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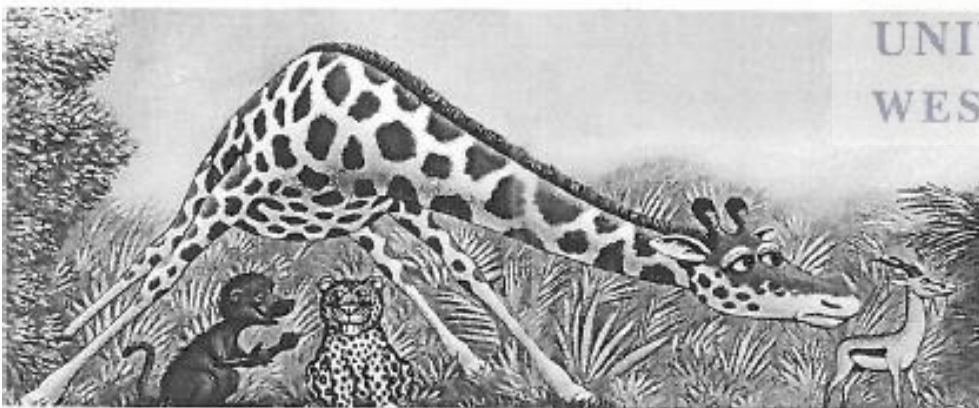
The Lonely Giraffe

By Peter Blight

Illustrated by Michael Terry

The jungle animals were a friendly bunch. All the animals met every morning to talk about the jungle news. Everyone took their turn to speak, but no one listened to the giraffe.

The giraffe was just too tall. By the time he lowered his head to the ground to speak the other animals had lost interest.



So the giraffe would lift his long neck and wander off. He spent all day with his head in the trees eating the sweetest leaves.

He didn't know that the birds were frightened of his large head suddenly appearing in the treetops. Or that the small animals on the ground ran away because they were scared of being stepped on.

After a while, the lonely giraffe stopped trying to speak to anyone. This went on for the rest of the long dry summer.



Then the rainy season came. The rain poured down for days. The animals huddled together beneath the bushes. Then the leopard heard a distant roar. But nobody could think what it was.

The giraffe looked over the heads of the animals on the ground. His big eyes widened like saucers and he slowly bent down until the worried animals could hear him.

"The river is flooding," said the giraffe. "A wall of water is racing down the valley and will soon be here."

"What can we do?" asked the gazelle. "It's too late to run away."

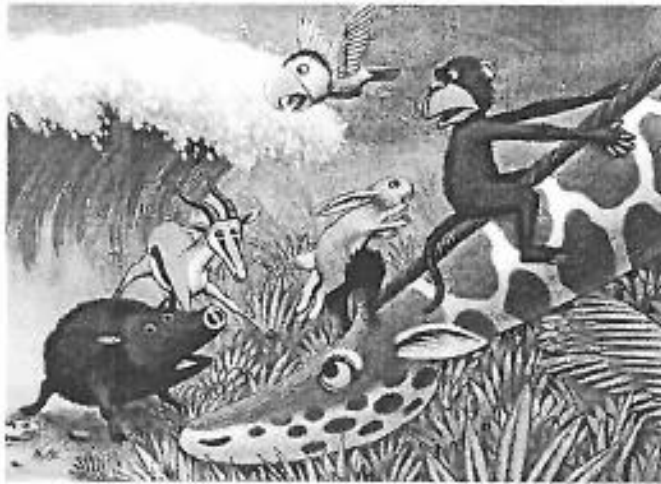
"Climb up here," called the monkey from the treetops.
"The river won't reach the high branches."



The animals raced to the trees. But some of them could not climb up the slippery tree trunks. Their hooves and tails were not made for climbing.



Then the giraffe had an idea. He bent his knees and spoke to the animals. "Climb on to my back. The water is almost here."



The flooded river was splashing around the animals. The monkey jumped onto the giraffe's neck and called to the others. The hairy wart hog was next to carefully climb on. One by one the animals helped each other to safety.

The giraffe straightened his knees as the water flooded the jungle. He stretched up his long neck and the last few animals hurried into the branches. The water washed around the giraffe's strong legs and sprayed the animals in the trees.



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Then the flood rushed on. The water slowly sank back to the ground and the sun came out from behind the clouds. The giraffe poked his head up into the high branches and the animals slid down his back to the ground.

From that day on the giraffe was never lonely again.

Twee reuse dinosourusse

Dinosourusse was diere wat miljoene jare gelede geleef het. Hierdie stuk vertel julle van twee reuse dinosourusse, die Tyrannosaurus Rex (kortliks T. Rex genoem) en die Diplodocus.

Alhoewel hulle albei yslik groot was, het hierdie twee tipes dinosourusse baie verskil. Hulle het verskillende kos geëet en het elkeen hulle eie manier van lewe gehad. Elkeen se reuseliggaam was gebou om by sy manier van lewe te pas. Jy kan op die volgende bladsye van hulle lees.



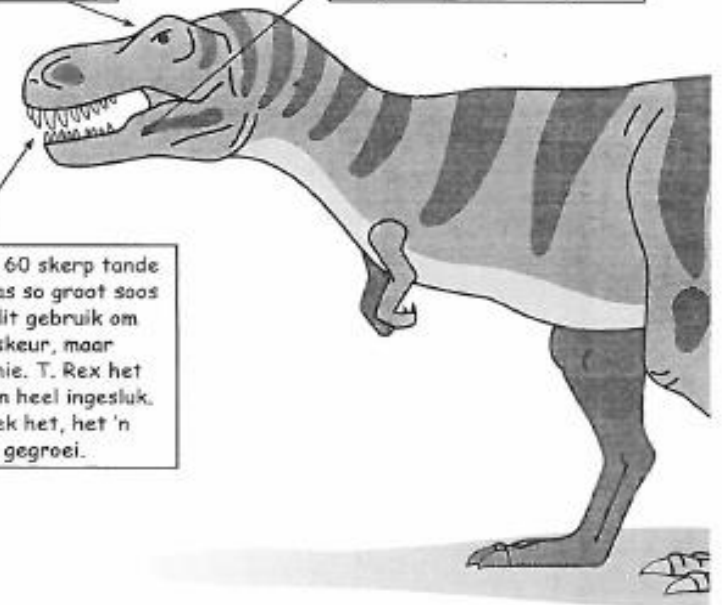
Tyrannosaurus Rex — kortliks T. Rex genoem

Tyrannosaurus Rex se naam beteken “verskriklike akkediskoning”. Dit was een van die grootste diere wat ooit geleef het. Hy was so groot soos ’n kameelperd en was meer as 12 meter lank. Hierdie dinosourus het vleis geëet en was ’n goeie jagter.

Oë - T. Rex se oë het na vore gekyk en kon ver sien. Dit het hom gehelp om diere te op te spoor wanneer hy gejag het.

Kake - T. Rex het ’n groot kop en groot kake gehad. Hy het sy sterk kake gebruik om groot prooi te vang.

Tande - T. Rex het 60 skerp tande gehad. Elke tand was so groot soos ’n piesang. Hy het dit gebruik om vleis uitmekaar te skeur, maar nie om mee te kou nie. T. Rex het stukke vleis en been heel ingesluk. As ’n tand afgebreek het, het ’n nuwe een in sy plek gegroei.



Diplodocus

Diplodocus was selfs groter as T. Rex. Hy het meer geweeg as twee olifante tesame! Diplodocus het plante geëet en nie vleis nie. Hierdie dinosourus moes heeldag lank eet om sy groot liggaam aan die gang te hou.

Stert - T. Rex het 'n lang stert gehad wat hy regop gehou het. Dit het hom gehelp om sy balans te hou sodat hy nie vooroor op sy swaar kop val nie.

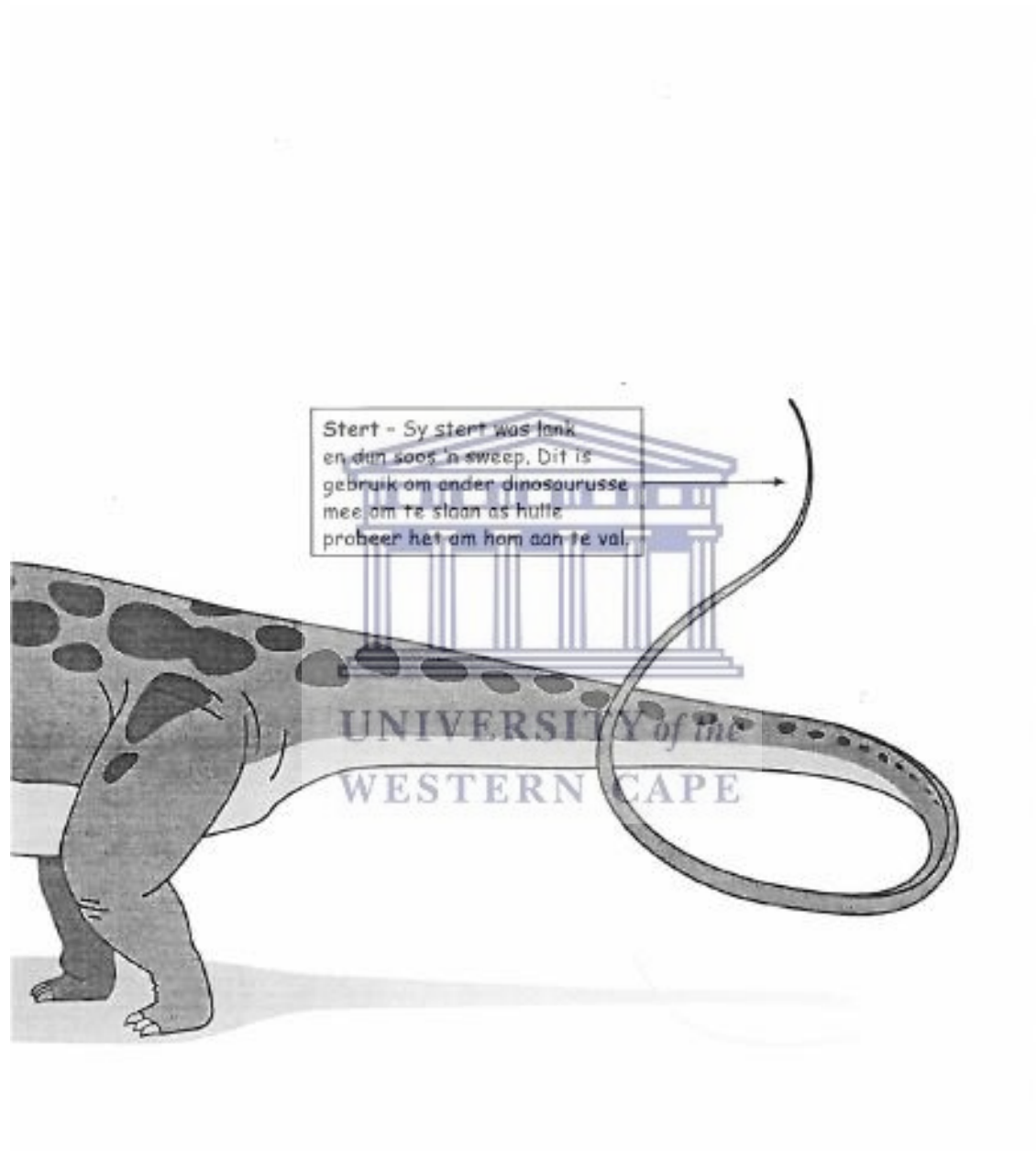
Bene - T. Rex het op twee groot, sterk bene geloop. Met dié dat hy tweebenig was, kon hy vinniger gehardloop as talle vierbenige dinosourusse. Dit het dit baie makliker gemaak om sy kos te vang.

Pote - T. Rex se pote het drie yslike tone met skerp kloue gehad. Hy kon die kloue gebruik om ander diere te krap of hulle vas te trap.

Nek - Diplodocus het 'n lang nek en 'n klein koppie gehad. Dit het hom gehelp om sy kos by te kom. Sy klein koppie kon plante bykom tussen die bome waar sy liggaam nie sou inpas nie.

Tande - Hierdie dinosourus het tande soos groot, stomp potlode gehad. Hy het hulle gebruik om blare van plante af te stroop. Dan het hy die blare ingesluk sonder om dit te kou.

Maag - Aangesien hy nie sy kos gekou het nie, het Diplodocus klippe ingesluk. Hierdie klippe het in sy maag gebly en gehelp om die plante wat hy geëet het, fyn te maak.



Stert - Sy stert was lank
en dit was 'n sweep. Dit is
gebruik om ander dinosourusse
mee om te slaan as hulle
probeer het om hom aan te val.

Van Ruspe tot Skoenlapper

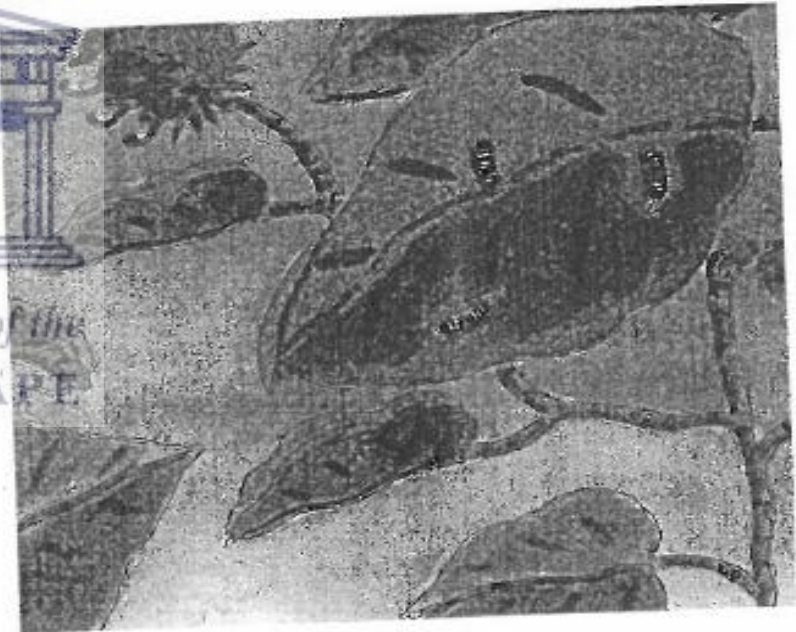
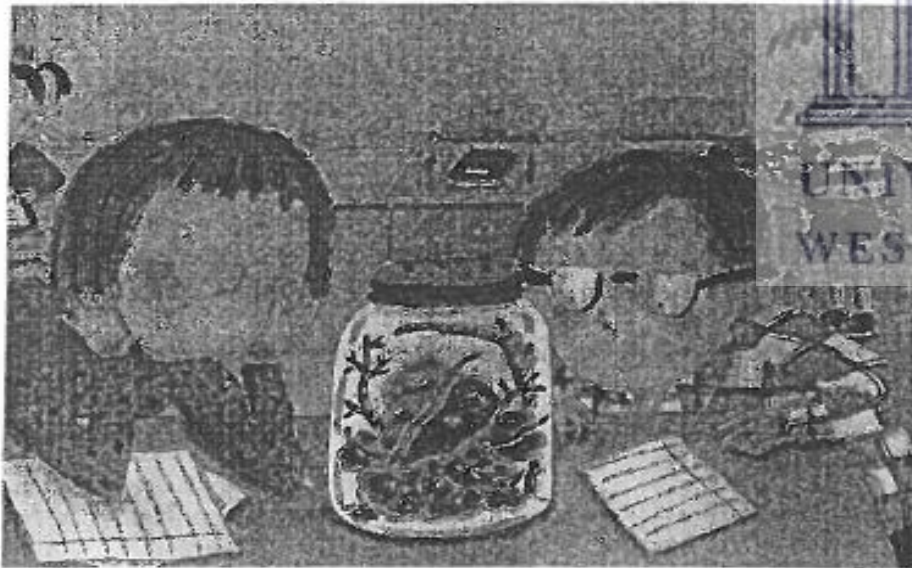
Deur Deborah heiligman

Geïllustreer deur Bari Weismann

Eendag het ons onderwyser 'n ruspe skool toe gebring in 'n glasfles. Dit het groen blare geëet. Die klein ruspe gaan verander in 'n skoenlapper. Ruspes verander gewoonlik in skoenlappers in die buitelug. Maar ons het in die klaskamer gesien hoe ons ruspe in 'n skoenlapper verander.

Ons onderwyser het ons vertel dat ons ruspe begin het as 'n klein eiertjie. Die ma-skoenlapper het die eier op 'n blaar gelê. Die ma-skoenlapper het die blaar gekies van 'n plant wat die ruspe sal eet. Toe die ruspe uitgebroei het uit die eier, was dit honger. Dit het sy eie eierdop opgeëet! Toe begin dit dadelik om groen plante te eet.

Die ruspe se werk was om te eet en te eet, sodat dit kan groei. Elke dag het dit groter geword. Die ruspe het vir 12 dae geëet en gegroei.



Toe het ons ruspe 'n spesiale huis gemaak. Eers het dit 'n knoop van sy gemaak. Dit het die knoop gebruik om onderstebo te hang aan 'n takkie.



Toe het dit sy vel vir die laaste maal afgegooi. In plaas van 'n nuwe vel het dit hierdie keer 'n papie met 'n harde dop gevorm. Ons het die papie vir 'n lang tyd dopgehou.



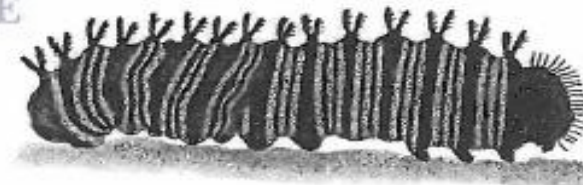
Elke dag het die dop dieselfde gelyk. Maar binne in die dop was veranderinge besig om te plaas te vind.



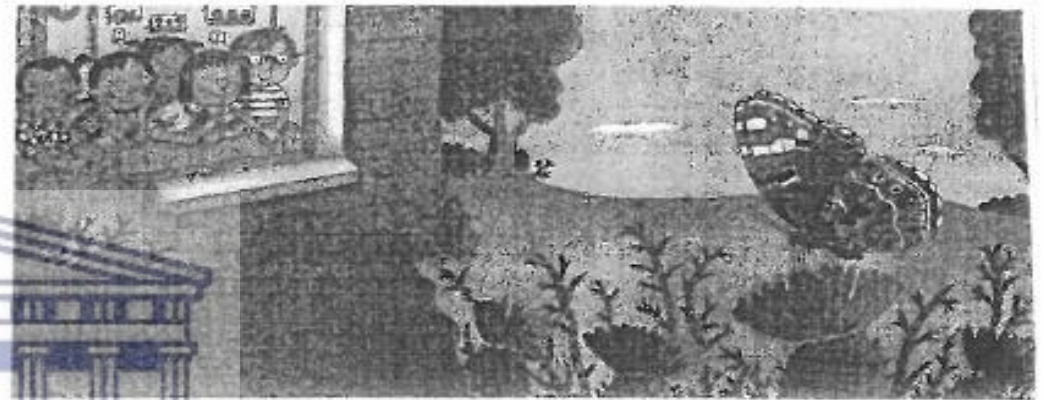
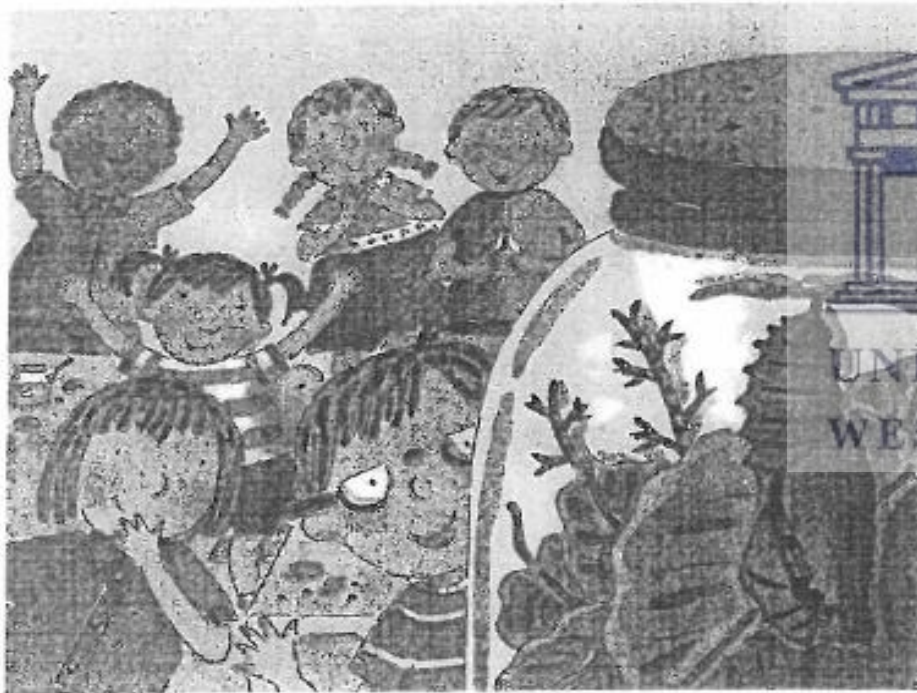
Ons vel groei saam met ons. Maar 'n ruspe se vel groei nie. Toe die ruspe te groot word vir sy vel, het die vel in twee geskeur langs die rugkant.



Die ruspe het heeltemal uit sy eie vel gekruip. Dit het 'n nuwe vel onder die ou vel gehad. Dit word vervelling genoem. Ons ruspe het vier keer sy vel afgegooi. Na baie dae het ons ruspe klaar gegroei. Dit was amper so groot soos my klein vingertjie.



Ons het gewag en gewag. Toe eendag, het iemand geskree, "Kyk!" Die dop was besig om te kraak. Dit was 'n skoendlapper. Ons skoendlapper was klam en verkreukel. Dit het aan die dop gehang terwyl dit sy vlerke geklap het. Die geklap het bloed in die vlerke gepomp. Die vlerke het uitgestrek en droog geword. Baie gou was ons skoendlapper reg om te vlieg.



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Ons skoendlapper kon nie in die fles bly nie. Dit moes in die buitelug wees met blomme en gras en bome. Ons het gesien hoe ons skoendlapper op 'n blom gaan sit. Dit het die blom se nektar gedrink deur 'n lang, gedraaide buis. Miskien was dit 'n vroulike skoendlapper. Miskien sal sy eendag 'n eier op 'n blaar lê.