TRAMPOLINE TRAJECTORIES: A DIALECTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE TEACHING OF READING AND THE LEARNER - ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN A SOUTH AFRICAN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Using the *Learning to Read* methodology as an intervention, the study explores the phenomenon of the teaching of reading in a poor rural South African primary school. It examines the centrality of reading in the overall improvement of academic performance of learners across the curriculum. The study foregrounds as its theoretical and conceptual framework Bernstein's, Vygotsky's and Halliday's theories that collectively inform the *Learning to Read* methodology to conceptualise the study, generate data and theorise the research findings. The Mixed Methods approach as a research methodology, Embedded Design as a research design, classroom observation, semi-structured interviews and documentary evidence collectively are used to generate data. Research findings reveal that there are fundamental assumptions that underpin teachers' practices regarding the teaching of reading. Such assumptions tend to impact negatively on the academic performance of learners and/or produce positive outcomes for them. Thus, the attitudes, practices and perceptions ("understandings") of practitioners on reading instruction as a phenomenon reflected in the kind of academic achievements of learners before, during and after the intervention are a major contribution to the field of language education. Crucially, the study reveals that the teaching of reading contributes significantly towards the improvement of learner academic performance when practiced across the curriculum, particularly in settings of extreme disadvantage.

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

DECLARATION

I, **Bheka A. Makhathini,** declare that

1. The research reported in this paper, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This paper has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.

3. This paper does not contain any other persons' data, pictures, graphs or any other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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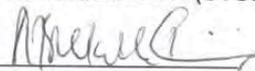
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As Supervisor, I hereby approve this thesis for submission to be examined.

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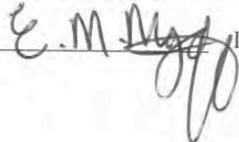
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AL	Additional Language
ANA	Annual National Assessments
B.PAED	Bachelor of Pedagogics
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DI	Direct Instruction Approach
DoBE	Department of Basic Education (2009 – current)
DoE	Department of Education (before 2009)
DSP	The Sydney-based Disadvantaged Schools Programme
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EMS	Economic and Management Sciences
ESL	English as a Second Language
FAL	First Additional Language
GET	General Education and Training Band
HL	Home Language
HOD	Head of Department
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
JPTD	Junior Primary Teachers' Diploma
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
MKO	More Knowledgeable Other

NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSNP	National Schools Nutrition Programme
NS&TECH	Natural Science and Technology
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SGB	School Governing Body
SE	Systemic Evaluation Report
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
SMT	School Management Team
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UNISA	University of South Africa
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dearest father, Patrick Thabani Makhathini, who passed away in 2007 before he could witness history by one of his own. He could not reach the highest echelons of education himself, but he instilled the value for it among his children. I hope he is proud wherever he is. This is in remembrance of you Mkhumbe, Gubese, Nondaba, Donda, Mtshahe, Mncwabe. Gezangob'bende benyamazane!

Chapter 1

Understanding the Phenomenon and Context

1.1 Introduction

This study aims to explore the phenomenon of the teaching of reading in a rural, disadvantaged South African primary school. Employing a curriculum intervention at this school, it seeks to interrogate implications of the pedagogical practices adopted by teachers when teaching reading, and how such practices impact on the overall academic performance of learners in the subjects taught across the curriculum in Grades 3 and 6. It is important to note at the outset that, for the purposes of this study, various subjects taught at schools are encapsulated under two broad categories, namely Literacy and Numeracy. This subject classification is the benchmark in most international and local assessments to determine the performance of learners. It is envisaged that the results of this study will contribute towards informing both the teachers' pedagogic practices, as well as future education policy choices in the country.

Engaging an interpretative paradigm, the study has sought to adopt 'Trampoline Trajectories' as a distinct metaphor to theorise and interpret numerical data regarding the performance of learners. According to the South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (2002, p. 1245), a "trampoline" is "a strong fabric sheet connected by strings to a frame, used as a springboard and landing area in doing acrobatic and gymnastic exercises". It further defines the word "trajectory" - used mostly in Geometry - as "a curve or surface cutting a family of curves at a constant angle" (2002, p. 1245). Therefore, "trampoline trajectories" as a

metaphor in this study is conceived as the imaginary lines "cutting a family of curves at a constant angle" as one 'jumps up and down' in "acrobatic and gymnastic" fashion, as if drawing geometrical, statistical graphs, to indicate the various heights and lengths (or proportions) of such jumps. As will be shown in the ensuing chapters, this metaphor also shares very close affinities with some of the key theories that underpin this study.

1.2 Broad Scope and Focus

The teaching of reading is cited in many seminal studies as probably one of the most problematic areas in the educational arena, resulting in dismal statistics in Literacy and Numeracy, both in South African schools and internationally (Saville-Troike, 1984; Wells, 1986; Pretorius, 2002a; Ribbens, 2008). The trajectory of these results points to some serious deficiencies, necessitating the adoption of literacy interventions in schools in many education systems and calling for concerted efforts by researchers to diagnose these untenable trends[1]. Ribbens (2008, p. 106) writes:

> Poor levels of academic literacy are a matter of concern and reading intervention campaigns have been put in place, not only locally, but also in America and the United Kingdom. The front page of *The San Fransisco Chronicle* of 16 August 2006 reads: 'Fewer than half of California's students can read or calculate at grade level nearly a decade after the state began its top-to-bottom overhaul of public education ...' In Britain, too, because of the poor performance of pupils, 2008 has been declared 'National Year of Reading'. In South Africa decisions to tackle the problem afresh were taken before the announcement of the results in late November 2007 of the *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS).

As reflected above, this is indeed a worldwide dilemma, and one that creates

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[1] Results of some studies are discussed in more detail in Section 1.3 of this chapter.

uneasiness in the international community. That students cannot "read and calculate at grade appropriate level" speaks directly to these deficiencies in Literacy and Numeracy. Within South Africa (SA), this state of affairs has resulted in the proliferation of research that interrogates the reciprocal causality of poor academic performance of South African learners in Literacy and Numeracy and their reading illiteracy (or poor reading habits) (Moloi and Strauss, 2005; Howie, Venter, van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Scherman and Archer, 2007; Pretorius and Mampuru, 2007; Sailors, Hoffman and Matthee, 2007; Fleish, 2008). South Africa's participation in various international studies such as SACMEQ[2], PIRLS, and TIMSS[3], as well as other local studies, for example, Systemic Evaluation (SE[4]) and the Annual National Assessments (ANA[5]), which track learner-performance in Literacy and Numeracy, have also assisted in yielding data to illuminate these unflattering trajectories. Most of these endeavours consistently implicate the learners' poor reading literacy as 'relation-able' to poor academic achievement, thereby confirming this symbiosis between the two. In her "What do students do when they read to learn? Lessons from five case studies", Pretorius (2005) states:

> Between 1998 and 2001 quantitative assessment of the reading abilities of undergraduate students was taken at the University of South Africa (Unisa), and the relationship between reading ability and academic performance

[2] SACMEQ *(Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality)* focuses on primary school Literacy and Numeracy and monitors 15 countries.
[3] TIMSS (*Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study)* is a series of international assessments conducted at 4-year intervals allowing education systems to compare students educational achievements.
[4] SE (*Systemic Evaluation Report)* is an assessment study to determine the extent to which the South African education system achieves its goals by measuring learner-performance in Grades 3, 6 & 9 in Literacy and Numeracy.
[5] ANA (*Annual National Assessments*) is an instrument to track learner performance once a year to diagnose the state of education at General Education and Training level (GET). It focuses on Literacy and Numeracy in Grades 1-6 & 9.

examinationined. The findings consistently revealed a robust relationship between the ability to comprehend expository texts and academic performance (Pretorius, 2005, p.790).

While the above applies to a tertiary environment, a number of studies (Hugo, 2010; Pretorius and Machet, 2004a; Howie, 2008; Nassimbeni and Desmond, 2011; van Staden, 2011; Lemmer and Manyike, 2012; Pretorius and Mampuru, 2007) corroborate the findings raised above as a system-wide problem – from primary school through to university. It is findings such as in these studies that have prompted a further investigation into the phenomenon, particularly in a rural primary school setting, and to use a curriculum intervention as a vehicle to discover the teacher's understanding of the role of the teaching of reading in the learners' academic performance and concomitant implications. Hugo (2010), for example, whose study is based on the Foundation Phase at primary school level, suggests that: "Research needs to be done in South African schools to advise individual schools on their language policy and the teaching of reading" (Hugo, 2010, p.133). For Hugo (2010), "The findings of this research can also be used to pave the way for well-planned in-service teacher training on the teaching of reading" (Hugo, 2010, p.133). These are some of the key objectives in this study. If anything, these studies have drawn attention to, and accentuated the need to further examine the centrality of the teaching of reading as a primary driver for academic excellence across the curriculum. Pretorius and Machet (2004a); Hugo, (2005); Christie (2005) and Howie (2008) for example, interrogate the socio-educational, sociocultural and socioeconomic contexts of learners' literacy accomplishments to make certain determinations about this centrality. Others trace the teaching of reading in relation to early school years, including home education (Pretorius and Machet, 2004); they probe the "availability of books as

a factor in reading, teaching and learning behavior in twenty primary schools in South Africa" (Nassimbeni and Desmond, 2011); they examine the teaching practices of teachers in relation to learners struggling with reading (van Staden, 2011); and, more importantly, some researchers investigate how the teaching of reading impacts on the second language speakers who reside in rural, disadvantaged areas (Lemmer and Manyike, 2012) or poverty-stricken communities in general (Pretorius and Mampuru, 2007). As demonstrated in the choice of the title in this study, all these elements are examined with the focus on the interest on the teaching of reading, rurality and disadvantage in the South African context.

1.3 Understanding the phenomenon and related Issues

To understand the phenomenon under study, it is critical to deconstruct and isolate key concepts in the topic of this study. To that end, concepts such as 'reading', 'the teaching of reading' and 'rurality' will be scrutinized. In doing so, fundamental questions are addressed, for example, 'Who is supposed to teach reading?' as well as 'How is reading taught?' In the process, and emerging from this deconstruction, clues will be provided for pertinent issues to be expanded upon later in the thesis, concerning why learners achieve the outcomes they do in Literacy and Numeracy. These are speculative questions, but they nonetheless remain fundamental in shaping the focus of the inquiry and placing issues into perspective.

Dechant (2006) views reading as a process which is complete only when comprehension is attained. Kelly (2007) defines reading as an active process in

which readers interact with the text to reconstruct the message of the author. Palincsar and Brown (2009) view reading as a process: it is strategic, interactive and its instruction requires orchestration. Yusuf (2009; 2010) describes reading as a process involving the use of both the information provided in the text by the author, as well as the sources of information outside the text, and that reading is the key to success in life. For the purposes of this study however, it is Eskey (2002) who provides a concise and comprehensive definition: reading is "acquiring information from a written or printed text and relating it to what you already know to construct a meaning for the text as a whole" (Eskey, 2002, p.6). It is also a form of sociocultural practice where one is "being enculturated (to one's own culture) or acculturated (to someone else's culture) in a kind of apprenticeship" (Eskey, 2002, p.7). Eskey (2002) suggests that "reading thus becomes engaging in reading behaviour with the help of those who already do so, and, especially in EFL situations, it is usually the teacher who must play this role, who must transform his or her classroom into a … literary club" (Eskey, 2002, p.7). As clearly enunciated in this scholarship, reading is not only about an end-result – an acquisition of information from a text – but it is a complex combination of "psycholinguistic", "sociocultural" and behavioural processes. Hugo (2010) also echoes a similar sentiment that "reading is not only a cognitive process; the affective domain also plays a role in reading acquisition" (Hugo, 2010, 142). Therefore a simplistic answer to the question 'How reading is taught' is that teaching reading involves a responsibility to ensure that learners carry out all the tasks as propounded by these studies. This is crucial in an attempt to contextualize the study.

Hence, who should teach reading at school? In their "Teaching Reading across the curriculum", Yusuf and Enesi (2011, p. 1583), contend that:

> ...teaching reading is an integral part of all content areas. Every teacher must be a reading teacher...Many teachers, especially those in the primary and secondary setting, feel that it is someone else's job to teach pupils to read facts. It is a shared responsibility that every teacher should know enough about phonics and other reading cues to be able to support pupils' reading development.

The notion that, for example, teachers of languages are the only custodians of the teaching of reading is, according to Yusuf and Enesi (2011), problematic, because it is flawed. Indeed, each subject within the schooling context has a subtle subject-specific genre and sub-genres to which learners are exposed, and which become the drivers of the content that those different subjects carry. Such genres need to be taught by the subject specialists.   Thus, for Yusuf and Enesi (2011), the view that there are particular generalised genres that could only be offered by a single subject, in this case, languages, as a preparatory ground for content subjects, is grossly flawed. All content areas, they rightly argue, have specific genres and content knowledge that need to be read and written in subject-specific ways, informed by their own orientations. Thus, restricting the teaching of reading to the 'realms' of language teaching is inhibitive and counterproductive. Learners may never be able meaningfully to 'read' geographical maps, or mathematical instructions, or even scientific experiments, which are all distinct genres outside the ambit or competency of a language teacher. Chall, Jacobs, and Baldwin (1990) make a somewhat similar point. They argue that if reading abilities are not acquired through the middle school years, there are severe consequences. For Chall, Jacobs and Baldwin (1990, p. 14), "reading science and social studies texts become an almost impossible task for

students who cannot read [at this] level". They are, however, non-committal regarding who takes the responsibility of teaching reading. For this study, the teaching of reading should transcend the scope of languages and extend to content subjects. Anything less diminishes academic excellence as even the remotest option. Having said that, the pervasive inclination by teachers generally to relegate the teaching of reading to the teachers of languages is plausible and not without substance: not only is the teaching of reading a linguistic function, but also, there is a tricky proximity between the teaching of reading and the teaching of literacy (often misconstrued as synonymous), and some literature fails to explicate the subtle distinctions between the two (Williams, 1986; Elley, 1996; Cambourne, 2002; Nuefeld, 2006). Furthermore, because of the focus on increasing the vocabulary size of learners, itself predominantly a function of language teaching (Laufer, 1992; Mol and Bus, 2011; Scheepers, 2008), and the pressure of international tests to improve reading literacy, teachers have tended to liken such activities to parts of language (especially, English) lessons (Dibbels, 2008). It is in the context of such debates that this study explores the role that the teaching of reading plays in learner-academic performance in Grades 3 and 6 within a primary school located in an impoverished, economically and educationally disadvantaged rural context in South Africa. Macalister's (2011, p. 161) study, conducted within an international, 'first world' context, relates one of the most common features of classroom practice:

> … the teacher enters the room and announces a reading lesson. She begins by pre-teaching a number of difficult words specific to the text, then tells the students to read the text and answer the questions that follow. When they have done this, the students exchange books and mark each other's work. The teacher calls on students to read out their answers, and says whether the answers are right or wrong. Thus, teacher and

students think, reading has been taught (Macalister, 2011, p. 161).

What Macalister (2011) refers to above is a universal practice that is prevalent in South Africa as well, when teachers engage in what is called 'intensive reading', a process where a teacher works with small amounts of texts in class to support learners in making sense of texts they may not be able to do successfully by themselves (the opposite of 'extensive reading' where a teacher assigns whole texts to be read outside of class or in a library setting). These are the two most common forms of reading to which teachers expose their learners (Macalister, 2011; Eskey, 2002). There are no major controversies regarding 'extensive reading'. Conscientious teachers are happy to provide learners with opportunities to read independently and, as indicated, it does not need to happen within the classroom environment. Within 'intensive reading', however, where there are nuanced views. While there is a general consensus that 'intensive reading' has an important place in pedagogy, there is "a criticism of this type of intensive reading activity [such as the one recounted above] with its skewed reliance on comprehension questions [and also] that it does not in fact teach reading" (Macalister, 2011, p. 161). Others are even more scathing in their criticism, suggesting that "using a text does not necessarily equal teaching reading" (Williams, 1986, p. 45). Nation (1979, p. 85) held a similar view that, "although they may have a role to play in *practicing* reading, the various forms of reading comprehension questions are unsuitable for *teaching* learners to read". The major issue here, it seems, is the distinction between practicing reading and teaching reading. Macalister's (2011, p. 167) approach, for example, is aimed at circumventing these criticisms by "ensuring that learners are not just practicing

reading, but are indeed learning how to read". Macalister (2011, p. 162) further

argues that:

> In order to teach learners how to read, there needs to be a
> focus on developing skills and strategies that will assist future
> reading; recognizing conjunction relationships such as cause-
> effect, guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words from their
> content, and predicting likely content are examples of such
> foci. If the learners are practicing reading, on the other hand,
> such foci are absent.

Macalister's (2011) main argument, it may be argued, is that teaching reading

must make reading every second text a much better experience compared to

reading the first one, hence the need concretely to teach skills and strategies that

assist the learner's future reading. He does this by offering teachers a formula for

a balanced reading activity in the form of a mnemonic M I N U S:

> M – there is a focus on meaning
> I – the texts and tasks interest the learners
> N – there is new learning
> U – for understanding; the input is understandable, activities
>   help understanding
> S – tasks are stress-free or, at least, designed to reduce stress
>   for learners
> (Macalister, 2011, p. 162).

Such a formula is meant to guide teachers in the preparation of reading-based

lessons as part of teaching 'intensive reading'. This is crucial because, as a

general rule, we learn from independent reading (Rose, 2004). In this regard,

'intensive reading' prepares the learners for 'extensive reading' and 'extensive

reading' gives them tools to learn from reading across the curriculum. Discussing

the stages in the literacy development sequence, Rose (2004, p. 93) makes this

point succinctly:

> Yet even in the upper primary curriculum, skills in learning
> from reading are rarely taught explicitly. Rather, the overt
> upper primary curriculum tends to focus on content 'themes',
> using a variety of class and individual activities which
> implicitly support primary students to continually practice
> learning from reading, and to reproduce what they have

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learned as written and oral performances. Student who benefit most from the underlying literacy development functions of these activities are those who are already able to read independently with comprehension and accuracy, and to write extended texts that draw on the experience of written language in reading.

By arguing that "skills in learning from reading are rarely taught explicitly", Rose (2004) introduces another concept in this discourse. He addresses the pervasive assumption that learning from reading is an automatic process. In other words, Rose's (2004) argument is that teacher activities during 'intensive reading' are building-blocks for when the learner embarks on 'extensive reading'. Thus the notion that teachers may simply ask learners to read and then ask them questions afterwards, as in the scenario above, sidelines those learners who have not developed sufficient tools to learn from independent reading. 'Intensive reading' provides an opportunity to teach the reading skill "explicitly". This point is further reinforced in Eskey's (2002, p. 8) argument that:

Most teachers take the process for granted and go directly to the creation of a related product (e.g. asking students to answer comprehension questions orally or in writing). These activities test reading but do not teach it, and this contributes little to improving any student's reading performance.

The other critical issue is the distinction between teaching reading and testing reading. It is often easy for teachers to assume they are teaching reading when all they are doing, in fact, is testing reading and not teaching it, barely helping a sizable number of learners in the process. As a skill, reading needs harnessing and requires certain strategies. Day (1993) and Anderson (1999) provide useful discussions on strategies that teachers may implement to teach reading without resorting to mere testing. However, this study will explore mainly those strategies employed by Rose (2005) to teach reading in his methodology,

Reading to Learn, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. The critical issue at this point is the significance of the awareness the teachers (and by extension, learners) ought to have about the meta-language of texts in the reading process. Eskey (2002, p. 9), on the other hand, explains the essence of the teaching of reading with what is conceivably the simplest answer: "People learn to read and to read better, by reading". Eskey (2002, p. 9) adopts a 'fundamentalist' approach when he declares:

> No one can teach someone else to read: The process is largely invisible and thus cannot be demonstrated, and it mainly occurs at the subconscious level and thus cannot be explained in any way that a reader could make conscious use of. Nonetheless, anyone can learn to read, just as anyone can learn to draw or to sing at some minimal level of competence. Most human beings are capable of learning to read, given the right opportunity and guidance (Eskey, 2002, P. 9).

Contrary to Macalister (2011) who disputes the equivalence of teaching and practicing reading, and to a lesser extent, Rose (2004), who agitates for explicit teaching of reading skills (although not opposed to quantity reading activities), Eskey (2002) opts the promotion of practice as the most effective way to help learners master reading. While his notion that "No one can teach someone else to read" may be a philosophical argument, and may even ring true at that level, it is difficult to sustain this in a pedagogic context where, for example, a Grade 1 teacher is able to teach basic reading skills using a flashcard or use any other means to teach a learner how to 'read' a vowel, consonant, word or short sentence. His key argument nonetheless is that, primarily, the teacher's major preoccupation ought to be the introduction of learners to appropriate texts – "texts that are at the right level linguistically and are interesting and relevant to their needs – and to induce them to read such texts in quantity" (Eskey, 2002, p.9). Secondly, he posits that: "the reading teacher must teach productive reading

strategies, both for bottom- up processing (e.g. reading at a reasonable rate …
and reading without stopping to look up words in the dictionary) and for top-
down processing (for example, skimming a text before reading and formulating
specific questions that the text might be expected to answer)" (Eskey, 2002, p. 9).
Notably, there are consistent patterns of similarities in focus between
Macalister's (2011) and Eskey's (2002) strategies, and Rose's (2005)
methodology, despite their obvious differences. There have been many other
strategies on the teaching of reading introduced over the last few decades. Two
major theories (or perspectives) on the teaching of reading are discussed in
chapter 2, namely the Immersion Theory and the Direct Instruction Approach.
There is, furthermore, a great deal of research conducted on the effectiveness of
the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model and the Cognitive
Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) (Herrera & Murray, 2005), both
of which do not form part of the scope of this research. They are, however,
themselves reading strategies. The same applies to Bolos (2012), who also
discusses three strategies to teach reading and locates them in the middle
grades: the interactive read-aloud, comprehension strategies and vocabulary
enrichment. However, this work is also not examined in this study.

The issue of a methodology that optimises the role of the teacher in the teaching
of reading is paramount in the study. It is important for teachers to operate in an
environment of certainty, particularly in their dealings with a matter as central
as the teaching of reading. Teachers ought to be clear on their role in the
illumination of different genres necessary in their own subject discourse.
Furthermore, every teacher needs to understand the discourse semantics of the

subject he/she is charged with teaching. Crucially, the particular teacher that this study explores must understand his/her omnipotent role as an active functionary in reversing the plight of the learners under his/her care. This kind of teaching is as much about content as it is about challenging the social order.

For this and other reasons already cited, I propose to put forward as a prominent feature in this study, a methodology to probe all of the issues that have been raised thus far. And, as stated earlier, the proposed methodology is *Reading to Learn* by the Australian educationist, David Rose. Inherently it serves as a curriculum intervention proposed for this research study. The major purpose of Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology as a curriculum intervention is to confirm or transform the teachers' understandings of the phenomenon under study: the teaching of reading. As evidenced in the pre-intervention and post-intervention phases, determinations about the teachers' pedagogic practices are made.

Briefly, Rose's (2005) methodology is premised on active engagement with reading through the use of the scaffolding interaction cycle whilst teaching content (and/or genres) in the classroom. It places the teacher at the centre of the teaching and learning reading processes and, at the same time, providing learners with a 'scaffold' to learn further. As a further explication of the methodology in chapter 2 will demonstrate, learners who learn through this methodology are given a much better opportunity to achieve a higher trajectory of results, compared to learners who are taught using the mundane methods of instruction (Rose, 2005). The assumption is that reading literacy, in particular, decoding and comprehension, and the frequency of exposure to reading texts by

an actively involved 'knowledgeable other', as an indispensable and necessary introduction, are a precursor and predictor of excellent academic performance. Such a hybrid model militates against redundant approaches to reading, or even a poor emphasis on reading at primary school level, which is something that stands out consistently as a major antithesis to the objective of academic excellence. Rose's (2005) methodology promises to draw on the strengths of other approaches, and simultaneously deal with the issue of socio-educational backgrounds of learners, which is the single most daunting challenge in the teaching of reading. Moreover, some studies cited above (Pretorius and Machet, 2004, 2004a; Pretorius and Mampuru, 2007; Scheepers, 2008; Nassimbeni and Desmond, 2011; Lemmer and Manyike, 2012) suggest that it is particular types of schools that are found to be grossly underachieving: where the majority of the South African learner-population attends schools in communities-in-distress, and mostly schools in poor rural areas. Learners in well-resourced schools tend to attain higher literacy levels than learners from high poverty schools (Elley, 1994; Allington, 2002). The trajectory of performance of a school (or learners in that school) is determined by the quality of its resources, of socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-educational contexts of such a school, and teachers are a critical part of that.

The issue of teaching reading in the rural primary school milieu and its implications for learner academic accomplishments is a pivotal theme in this study. It brings into sharp focus the plight of "rurality" in this discussion. According to the Human Science Research Council (HSRC, 2005), learners who

are based in rural areas in South Africa account for almost half of the entire learner population of the country. They further state that rural schools are poorly resourced, located in isolated areas with high poverty levels, disease and unemployment (HSRC, 2005, p. 38). Compounding the problem is the fact that, for the majority of these schools, learning instruction is conducted mainly in English – the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) – particularly in the Intermediate Phase, to which "parents, teachers and learners in rural areas lack sufficient exposure" (Chimbutane, 2011, p. 18). The concept of rurality, as viewed in this study, is explored in greater detail in Chapter 3 (p. 64). The study argues that teaching and learning reading in this environment is a double disadvantage. It is not surprising that a general consensus among scholars is that the single most 'culpable' contributor to the problem of underperformance in schools is a cohort of learners from disadvantaged communities, especially those located in rural schools and, to a lesser extent, township schools (Lemmer and Manyike, 2012; Stockard, 2011; Pretorius and Machet, 2004; Pretorius and Ribbens, 2005). This is largely due to the socio-economic, socio-cognitive and developmental adversities with which they are confronted. That is why the primary focus of this study is to interrogate the capacity of teachers who teach reading in these schools and to examine ways in which to confront the scourge of poor academic performance in schools. By means of Rose's methodology as an intervention, the study hopes to explain how teachers understand the role the teaching of reading plays in the academic performance of learners in Grade 3 and 6 in a rural primary school. It further hopes to utilize the intervention to confirm or transform the teachers' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in the academic performance of learners. Principally, Rose's methodology

is instrumental in the provision of answers to the study's key research questions.

During the writing of this thesis, the National Development Plan (NDP) was adopted as the government's inaugural long-term plan in twenty years of democracy. It can be described as a creditable effort (albeit long-overdue) by the democratic government in a bid to address the challenges of gross underachievement among South African learners, particularly those who come from the poorer communities, by the year 2030. In the words of Spaull (2013, p. 10):

> The recent National Development Plan (NDP) published by the National Planning Commission (NPC) is quickly becoming a roadmap for South African progress, being acknowledged as authoritative by government, business, academia and the public at large. The document is both explicit and comprehensive, giving equal treatment to the reasons for the country's underperformance and the proposed way forward. One area which receives considerable attention is that of education. The report stresses the links between education, opportunities and employment, with particular emphasis on the notion of building capabilities.

This is an unambiguous demonstration of the government's resolve to turn matters around because it is unjustifiable that the bulk of society continues to be left on the sidelines of development. Quality education is at the centre of that redress. However, it is unclear whether or not the NDP will meet its 2030 targets and justify its unapologetic stance. For example, it declares boldly:

> The quality of education for most black children is poor. This denies many pupils access to employment. It also reduces the earnings potential and career mobility of those who do get jobs – and limits the potential dynamism of South African business (NPC, 2012, p. 38).

Simply stated, the NDP attaches responsibility (and complicity) for the lack of economic prospects among the poor squarely on the education system of the

country, and the teaching of reading in schools (or lack of it) is a small, but crucial, part of that complicity. Without being pre-emptive, explicit, unambiguous and coherent policy positions on the teaching of reading as a strategic focus of the National Department of Basic Education (DoBE) is an urgent matter in this new dispensation and may no longer be held in abeyance. As long as the trajectories of educational results are still skewed in favour of children from advantaged and mostly white and middle-class backgrounds, this will remain a challenge. Apart from highlighting and providing details about the institutional and systemic factors that prevent progress in South African schooling system, the NDP actually elevates "improving the quality of education, skills and innovation" (NPC, 2012, p. 295) as one of the three key priorities of government towards achieving the goals of redress as envisaged in the NDP itself. This, it is hoped, will go a long way towards eradicating the stigma that South Africa is a perennial underachiever compared to her fellow low and middle-income counterparts, particularly those who participate in the international assessments on Literacy and Numeracy. A similar sentiment is echoed in the Spaull (2013, p. 10) report:

> As far as educational outcomes go, South Africa has the worst education system of all middle-income countries that participate in cross-national assessments of educational achievement. What is more, we perform worse than many low-income African countries.

If the NDP is to succeed, then it will have to unravel some of these conundrums. To that end, the study identifies the teaching of reading at schools as possibly the entry point towards addressing this complex problem. Crucially, this study offers a prototype of policy implementation in the form of the study's curriculum intervention on the teaching of reading – the *Reading to Learn* Methodology. This

is discussed in detail in chapter 4. Such an intervention is necessary and the Spaull (2013, p. 10) report confirms and states quite unequivocally that:

> While there have been some recent improvements in pupil outcomes, as well as some important policy innovations, the picture that emerges time and again is both dire and consistent: however one chooses to measure learner performance, and at whichever grade one chooses to test, the vast majority of South African pupils are significantly below where they should be in terms of the curriculum, and more generally, have not reached a host of normal numeracy and literacy milestones. As it stands, the South African education system is grossly inefficient, severely underperforming and egregiously unfair.

To further validate this notion, the 2001 Audit conducted by the South African National Department of Education (DoE, 2001) on Literacy levels among Grade 3 learners in the country revealed that only 38% of learners could read at appropriate Grade level in what is called Home Language (HL). This gloomy picture is further substantiated in the Spaull (2013, p.3-4) report. It exposes, for example, the disproportionately high prevalence of underachievement among learners in the ANAs despite South Africa's economic powerhouse status in the region; with a *per capita* expenditure on education much higher than most African states. Credible research findings on learner-performance in South Africa also show a grim portrayal of learner-performance in the SACMEQ II (2002) and SACMEQ III (2007) Literacy and Numeracy results in which South Africa participated. The results showed that South Africa had not recorded any improvements in Grade 6 Literacy and Numeracy over a seven-year period. In the 2007 version of SACMEQ, South Africa could only manage to rank 10th out of 14 Education Systems in Grade 6 Mathematics, including being behind the much smaller economies like Swaziland, Kenya and Tanzania. The average percentage of learners who had satisfactory levels of mastery in reading at Grade 6 level was

36.7%. SACMEQ results also found that learners from Grades 1 to 6 could only read at two levels below their own grade in English and in their Home Language. The TIMSS (1995, 1999, 2002, 2007 & 2011) study also revealed that South Africa could not register any progress between 1995 and 2002 in Grade 8 Mathematics and Science. In the 2007 version of TIMSS the Grade 8 tests had to be given to Grade 9 learners because it was said to be "too difficult" for the Grade 8 learners. In 2011, though, there was a level of improvement recorded in Grade 9 TIMSS results. But, as the Spaull (2013, p. 4) report states:

> Part of the reason for the improvement is the fact that South Africa started from an exceedingly low base in 2002. To place this in perspective, South Africa's post-improvement level of performance is still the lowest of all participating countries, with the average South African Grade Nine child performing between two and three grade levels lower than the average Grade Eight child from other middle-income countries.

Clearly, this is not a reason to celebrate. Moreover, the Systemic Evaluation Report (2005) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2006) also prove that the levels of underperformance by the learners in the General Education and Training (GET) Band is a serious cause for concern. In PIRLS (2006), the South African Grade 4 and 5 learners achieved the lowest mean performance scores in comparison to Grade 4 learners from thirty-nine other participating countries. The results of learner-performance in reading literacy (PIRLS (2006), together with others (Moloi and Strauss, 2005), strongly suggest that teachers, for a variety of reasons, struggle to assist learners towards optimum development of their reading abilities during the primary school years.

Having discussed the phenomenon under investigation and all the emergent issues surrounding it in this introductory chapter of the study, the key research questions are:

1. What is the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic performance in grade 3 and 6 at the school?

2. How does the intervention confirm or transform practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic performance in grade 3 and 6 at the school?

Based on these questions, the study disaggregates the data, makes findings and then offers a list of recommendations. The following section summarises the sequence in which the chapters are organised and presented.

1.4 Sequencing and delineation of chapters

Chapter 1 offers an introduction to the premise of the study and outlines insights on the general structure of the entire thesis (Broad Scope and Focus). It initially provides the rationale for the study and objectives, and, finally, it describes the sequencing and delineation of the remaining chapters of the study.

Chapter 2 critically engages with scholarship whose focus is the phenomenon under study: the teaching of reading. Literature from such scholarship explores links between the ability to read and academic performance. The chapter reviews literature that takes on an internationalist outlook and locates the

discourse at a global level and also evaluates literature from a South African context to reflect on the national standpoint regarding this phenomenon.

Chapter 3 discusses various theories and concepts that are used to conceptualise and theorise the research findings in this study. In the process, the contents of this chapter critically engage with the issues of relevance and appropriateness of the theories and concepts selected to engage with the phenomenon under investigation in this study. To this end Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology is foregrounded as the preferred curriculum intervention in the study.

Chapter 4 focuses mainly on the choices made regarding research strategies that were employed to generate data within the context of the research questions. More specifically, the chapter contains detailed discussions on the research site, research methodology, research design, research instruments and the sampling technique used to identify the research site and the study participants. The rationale for each of the choices discussed in this chapter is also rendered. The chapter then offers a brief discussion on the limitations of the study and how such limitations were negotiated and concludes with a discussion on ethical considerations that need attention.

Chapter 5 presents a discussion on the qualitative and quantitative research findings associated with key research question 1. An analysis of the 2012 research findings is presented, and the various strands are consolidated.

Chapter 6 is inclusive of a presentation and discussion on qualitative and quantitative research findings associated with key research question 2. A comparative analysis of the two sets of research findings (2012 and 2013) is presented, and the various strands are consolidated.

Chapter 7 is a presentation and discussion of the qualitative and quantitative research findings associated with both key research questions as a culmination point of the entire analysis stretching from 2012 through to 2014. A comparative analysis of research findings is presented, and the various strands are consolidated.

Chapter 8 presents a summary of the study and the main findings. It also includes reflections on the research methodology and conceptual framework utilized. The chapter also draws conclusions based on the study and offers implications for policy, practice and further research. In a nutshell, it is a consolidation of key issues and findings presented as recommendations to relevant institutional bodies or organizations.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to locate the topic within the current educational debate on poor learner achievements in South Africa and the effects of reading literacy in the overall academic performance. It foregrounds this as the rationale for the study and discusses key objectives of the study, as well as the emergent issues that the study expands on in the following chapters. To that extent, it sketches the broader context and focus, considering various studies locally and abroad to

determine how South Africa compares with the developing and developed world in the manner it performs in Literacy and Numeracy. Furthermore and centrally, it interrogates the phenomenon of the teaching of reading and links it diametrically to the key research questions of the study. Towards the end, the chapter shows how the ensuing chapters are organized and sequenced. Chapter 2, however, is a detailed and interrogative review of relevant literature that deals with the phenomenon under study. It investigates merits and trends in various local and international studies relating to this phenomenon, and identifies and subjects to scrutiny the substantive and common features among them.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 provided the broad scope and focus of the study, as well as the rationale for this study. It is evident that the teaching of reading is central to the various academic achievements made by learners in schools. Furthermore, Chapter 1 shows that research on the relationship between reading ability and educational success is as crucial in South Africa as it is in other parts of the world. What is notable, however, is the fact that the chapter unfolds the pedagogical practices of teachers who teach reading, and offers insights on who should be teaching reading at the school and how they should be approaching this task. The chapter concludes with the view that the teaching of reading and learning to read and write are the cornerstones of formal education. Teaching, regardless of how innovative, sophisticated and technologically advanced it may appear to be, becomes obsolete without the ability to read.

Chapter 2 elaborates on these issues by critically engaging with scholarship where the focus is the teaching of reading. Literature emanating from such scholarship explores links between the ability to read and academic performance. The chapter reviews literature that takes on an internationalist outlook and locates the discourse at the global level. This includes drawing on the reservoir of continental (African) perspectives. The chapter also reviews literature within a South African context and reflects on the national standpoint regarding this phenomenon. Of note, the literature under review makes a

principled reference to underprivileged communities and the limiting effects of the background of learners from these communities. Crucially, however, is the manner in which literature interrogates methodologies of mediation adopted by the relevant schools of thought: the Immersion Theorists ("whole-language" approach) which represent progressivist orientation, on the one hand, and the proponents of the more explicit Direct Instruction (DI) (basal reading instruction, Alphabet or Phonic Approach), on the other hand, representing traditional pedagogies. There will be an exploration of another option, Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology as possibly a 'third way', later in the chapter.

2.2 The teaching of reading: International Perspectives

The challenge of poor reading literacy within learning environments located in disadvantaged communities is a global phenomenon (Barley and Beesley, 2007; Sherwood, 2000; Stern, 1994; Crossley and Murby, 1994; Elley and Mangubhai, 1979; Greaney, 1996; Smith and Elley, 1997; Walker, Rattanavitch and Oller, 1992; Verspoor, 1989). Drawing from different theoretical orientations, many scholars have tackled this subject. Steeped in the authority of their positioning, such scholars make assumptions and generalizations about the teaching and learning process, including literacy reading instruction. In the articulation of their various positions on reading literacy, two strong voices emerge – those who draw inspiration from the Immersion Theory (known to be very popular in the United States) and those who come from a Direct Instruction (DI) orientation. Therefore, the following literature is reviewed with the express agenda to distinguish between the two schools of thought, but importantly also to determine the factors which inform their orientation.

In his book, "The potential of book floods for raising literacy levels", Elley (2000, p. 235), a fierce global proponent of the Immersion Theory based in New Zealand, observes:

> The typical Third World classroom still consists of an under-educated, underpaid teacher, in charge of 40-50 pupils in a bleak overcrowded room, with bare walls and tiny blackboard. The pupils are typically learning in a second or third language, by rote authoritarian methods, with the aid of a few textbooks, often of doubtful quality and marginal relevance to the children's interests. There is no school or classroom library and virtually nothing of interest for the children to read. Few teachers are enthusiastic about their calling.

It is evident from the above quotation, that Elley (2000) identifies the problem of weak literacy levels in Third World classrooms as having to do with the lack of meaningful and deliberate reading practices, the lack of relevant reading materials and the lack of enthusiastic teachers. It is for this reason that Elley (2000) argues for a 'back-to-basics' approach, a revisiting of general conditions of what he calls "Third World classrooms". He advocates for the channeling of energies and time towards the creation of enabling environments in these classrooms, but also to the reinvigoration of the teacher capacity and teacher morale as starting-points. Importantly, he acknowledges the pivotal role of the teaching of reading in the process of 'resetting' the classroom. It is interesting to note that Elley (2000), in this context, summarily equates "Third World" classrooms to classrooms in developing countries because they are generally associated with poverty and disadvantage. However, not all developing world classrooms have 'Third World' characteristics and tendencies described above. Furthermore, some First World countries do exhibit semblances of 'Third World' character in their classroom practices. The proliferation of research studies on

poor learner attainment even in typically developed countries like the United States account for this fact. Good, Simmons and Smith (1998), in their "Effective academic interventions in the United States: evaluating and enhancing the acquisition of early reading skills" and Barley and Beesley's (2007) "Rural school success: what can we learn?", both exemplify this notion.

Whilst it has to be agreed that Elley's views (2000) are genuine concerns and are suitable descriptions of the state of many "Third World" classrooms across the globe in underprivileged communities, I nevertheless view his "Book Flood" approach as tantamount to 'throwing books at the problem' of poor reading literacy and hoping that the problem will resolve itself. The lack of denseness and substance in his approach towards empowering teachers with effective pedagogies to undo what he has correctly identified to be the fundamental flaws in the Third World classrooms across the world cannot be left unquestioned. In support of the observation he makes above, Elley (2000, p.250) states that:

> ...a rich diet of high-interest reading materials has produced powerful language benefits for children learning in a second language, in developing countries, in a context where books are scarce, and teachers are not highly educated. If a set of suitable books is provided in the classroom, and teachers are shown how to ensure that the children *interact with them everyday*, the children become enthusiastic about the books, they learn the vocabulary and grammar of the books readily, and they improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously. Moreover, they appear to transfer their enhanced skill to other subjects of the curriculum that depend heavily on reading (my emphasis).

The sentiment Elley (2000) enunciates raises two pertinent issues. First, it is the notion of the establishment of a 'routine' as part of the teachers' methodology that manifests as "the children interact with [books] everyday". Secondly, it deals

with the 'ripple effect' of reading on other subject areas, when he talks about the transfer of "enhanced skill to other subjects". While Elley's approach seems to promote a tacit acquisition of literacy skills, it nevertheless negates the central role played by the teacher throughout this process. It provides no guarantees for equitable acquisition of these skills by at least the majority of the learner population in the Third World classrooms.   What is disturbing about his approach is that it may in fact present some challenges when it comes to measuring its success rate. This is because it is too dependent on the individual learners' capacity to engage with books and then assimilate knowledge and skills. In terms of the transfer of skills from reading "to other subjects", however, Elley (2000) makes a critical observation about the teaching of reading as a phenomenon: when the learners' literacy skills are enhanced, such skills are most likely going to impact the academic performance of those learners in other subjects they are learning as well. Cawelti (1991, in Shukakidze, 2013, p.131) confirms this view: "A student's achievement in reading is one of the key contributing factors, not only in determining his / her success in other subject areas but also in the formation of well-informed citizen".

Also in concurrence with Elley (2000), although basing his discussion on the teaching of English as a foreign Language (EFL) – a context of disadvantage in its own right, Ling (2012) supports the stance of Immersion Theory by advocating the "Whole-Language" approach and championing its application to the teaching of English reading. He recounts the advantages of this theory:

> Firstly, with this theory, it becomes easier and more possible
> for the students to understand the whole text. Secondly, it
> blends the practices of listening, speaking, reading and writing

into an organic unity, avoiding developing the reading ability only in the teaching of English reading. Thirdly, it adopts informal assessment so that the students can get a more objective score (Ling, 2012, p.152).

These advantages are noted and welcomed, but Ling (2012) barely touches on the disadvantages. However, the pitfalls of the "Whole-Language" Theory are palpable. Its failure to attend to the systematisation of the teaching of grammar is a case in point. Its *ad hoc* approach to the teaching of grammatical subtleties and rules, furthermore, ensures that only the aspects of grammar that appear in the text stand any chance of receiving attention in the reading lessons. At worst, this approach apportions the teacher the insignificant role of a well-meaning bystander in the hope that learners will assimilate grammatical rules, a typical role for teachers associated with progressivist theories. The overall sense of the text, although vital, does not supersede the experience of generating and learning new vocabulary whilst learning to read and reading to learn.

Mol and Bus (2011) are even more steadfast in their endorsement of the Immersion Theory. They suggest that academic performance of learners is attributable to reading for pleasure. Like all Immersion Theorists, they lobby for the maximising of print-rich environments because consistent exposure to print media brings with it a set of guarantees for learners, not least of which is proficiency in the language, including first-rate reading literacy and therefore high academic performance. They state:

The meta-analysis suggests that reading routines, which are part of the child's leisure time activities, offer substantial advantages for oral language growth. Interestingly, independent reading of books also enables readers to store specific word form knowledge and become better spellers. Finally, college and university students who read for pleasure

> may also be more successful academically ... Our findings suggest that the relation between print exposure and reading components is reciprocal, as the intensity of print exposure also depends on students' reading proficiency. Print exposure become more important for reading components with growing age, in particular for oral language and word recognition (Mol and Bus, 2011, p.289).

There is merit in the claims made by these scholars. In fact, there are many studies that justify some of these claims (Stanovich, 1986; Dickinson and McCabe, 2001; Phillips, Norris, and Anderson, 2008). Therefore, frequent exposure to print media does impact positively on academic success, especially in instances where the reading development happens before formal schooling. Clearly, books provide a meaningful context for learning to read for young children. However, the tendency with this conception is to marginalise the learners whose socio-economic conditions, backgrounds and circumstances do not fully accommodate this experience. For a variety of reasons, not all learners benefit from early instruction in their home, at least not along the lines of development of technical reading skills at early childhood levels, like some Immersion Theorists would have us believe. There are certain assumptions and dangerous generalisations implied in the notions that lend themselves to the perpetuation of a stratified society. This issue is discussed further in the study together with Rose's methodology.

In keeping with the above discussion, Scheepers (2006) critiques the proponents of 'Immersion' theory to reading and language acquisition. With her focus rooted firmly in vocabulary building, she echoes Laufer's (1992) sentiment that "[v]ocabulary is a good predictor of reading success in second language studies... Academic ability does not make up for a lack of vocabulary: even good readers

will not perform well in a second language if their vocabulary level is below the threshold of 3000 word families" (Scheepers 2006, p.5). Importantly, and in line with the preceding discussion on the link between reading fluency and academic performance of learners, Scheepers (2006, p.5) agrees with Pretorius (2002, p.187) that a "lack of reading ability functions as a barrier to effective academic performance". Scheepers (2006) develops her thesis further in her subsequent (Scheepers, 2008) work where she dedicates a section to this specific issue under the heading "Academic success and vocabulary size" (Scheepers, 2008, p.32). It is in this work where she makes a salient observation:

> Extensive reading alone is clearly not enough – they need explicit vocabulary instruction early on. In order to read successfully at high school level, a learner needs a working knowledge of academic vocabulary, and this knowledge is developed by reading – but learners cannot read successfully without an adequate basic high-frequency vocabulary. Intervention at an early stage is essential if these learners are to develop their vocabulary to a size and depth which will allow them to cope with their high school textbooks. Teachers should be encouraged to view vocabulary development as vitally important: they must make learners aware of the value of knowing about words, the building blocks [6]of language and reading development. Teachers must be made aware that learners need frequent exposure to words in order for them to become part of their productive vocabulary (Scheepers 2008, p. 41-42).

Could it be that Scheepers here is criticising the proponents of the Book Flood Theory (Elley, 2000, comes to mind)? Is this a vote of no confidence to approaches that rely on the learners' tacit acquisition of literacy skills, or is she merely expressing approval of methodologies that pay particular attention to the explicit teaching of reading to ensure maximum benefits for all learners? I am inclined to believe that Scheepers (2008) is advocating a more interventionist

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[6] The Book Flood Approach was initiated by Warwick B. Elley and Francis Mangubhai in Fiji between 1980 and 1981, with the support of Suva Institute for Educational Research (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983).

approach to teaching reading. This, however, is an intervention where the teacher is constantly in touch with the progress of the learners in their journey to make sense of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and the 'stories' that are told. It is about unbundling the reading process so that the "size and depth" of the learners' vocabulary is very often the preoccupation of the teacher.

The data that emerged from a comparative study to examine family, school and student related factors' influence on student academic performance in reading in developed (Estonia) and developing (Azerbaijan) countries (European Commission, 2009 International Assessment Study on Reading) is an example of this set of circumstances. The focus of the study was on selecting "those variables that have more explanatory power / impact on students' achievement in reading" (Shukakidze, 2013). The study shows how urban school students seemed to outperform their peers from rural areas within Azerbaijan. But also, the developed Estonia outperformed the developing Azerbaijan on all fronts when it came to reading literacy (Shukakidze, 2013). The above statistic not only puts into perspective the universality of poor reading literacy, but it also constructs it as a problem of under-privilege.

Shukakidze (2013) concludes in this study that the student's background, primarily the impact of parents on the education of their children and the training of teachers in modern ways of teaching reading literacy, are all contributory factors in the scourge of poor reading competency, resulting in poor academic performance by learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Interventions in these areas are required early in the learners' educational life if

there is to be an improvement in their academic life. Therefore, Shukakidze's (2013) study raises much more pressing issues than it actually presents. It raises issues of social stratification, disenfranchisement and the legacies of the past (in the context of educational and literacy developments in the former Soviet Block) – all subsumed into one issue of (early) teaching of reading literacy and the role of the teacher, the school, the parents and the general community. The discussion of Rose's (2004) *Reading to Learn* methodology in this study is an attempt to grapple with similar issues. His (Shukakidze, 2013) study, therefore, is a perfect antecedent to that discussion.

Many studies explore the need for early intervention through the teaching of reading as a critical step towards the improvement of the academic performance of learners in disadvantaged environments. Geary (2006), for example, notes that: "Researchers believe that if a child does not learn the ins and outs of reading (of which comprehension is a major part) by third grade, they will fall so far behind their peers that they will never be able to catch up" (in Prado and Plourde, 2005, p.35). On the whole children learn how to decipher the "code of reading" any time between the ages of five and eight (Johnson and Sulzby, 1999). Unfortunately 'early intervention' means two different things, depending on one's position in the social strata. It differs for people in the developed Estonia from those in the under-developed Azerbaijan, to those in the middle class from those in lower social classes. Particularly in urban, privileged settings, 'early' means 'at home' because that environment is permissive to introduce children to reading literacy. However, for those in the lower strata of society, ''early'' can only mean in the Foundation Phase in the school situation. Mostert and Wikan

(2008), whose study entailed investigating the reading habits and attitudes of primary school pupils in their respective countries (Namibia and Norway), also confirm that "there is a strong link between [early] reading ability and school performance"(Mostert & Wikan 2008, p. 104). They encapsulate this point more succinctly:

> ... pupils need to have ample access to reading materials within the home environment if we want them to develop positive attitudes and habits towards reading. Steps should be taken to assist parents from especially the lower socio-economic groups to obtain some reading materials. Parents need to be educated to encourage pupils to read and to ensure that they obtain more reading materials that are suitable for their children. Pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds should be identified at an early age and be given space and additional opportunities for reading within the school environment after normal teaching hours. Where possible, they should be identified even before school-going age and be provided with intervention programmes that include the input of parents (Mostert & Wikan, 2008, p.104).

It may seem ambitious, but the point that these authors are making (perhaps not strictly about their native countries) is that all parents (including those from lower socio-economic backgrounds) should be drawn into early interventions that seek to help their children, and that the importance of home-based reading needs to be promoted, even through unconventional means (Duursma, 2007; Fletcher and Reese, 2005; Raikes, Pan, Luze, Tamis-LeMonda, Brooks-Gunn, Constantine, Tarullo, Raikes, and Rodriguez, 2006). It is that realisation that is needed to catapult the learners currently on the fringes of society back into the centre of academic excellence (Mol, Bus, de Jong and Smeets, 2008). It has to be accepted, however, that for the majority of children who find themselves in poverty-stricken situations, their priorities and those of their parents are limited to survival. Unlike their privileged peers who can afford home-based literacy, for learners from disadvantaged communities the school remains the only

battleground for the advancement of literacy skills (Lemmer and Manyike, 2012). This point is crucial to this study. Furthermore, there seems to be an undercurrent in this Namibian-Norwegian study, that of a tacit subscription to the "Whole-language" doctrine, and where there is an undeclared rejection of the explicit or direct instruction. It seems unquestioningly to uphold a belief that consistent exposure to print serves to improve learners' reading literacy, and consequently, their academic performance. There is no focus on the role of the teacher (or adult, in this case) to take charge of that process empowered by relevant pedagogies. Furthermore, the authors appear insensitive to the plight of those whose main concern in life is survival. They seem to be enmeshed in an elitist mentality that denies the realities of poverty and underprivilege for the majority of people in the world.

In contrast to the above, a study conducted in the rural districts of the United States identifies ways to help rural schools improve teachers' pedagogical skills by examining changes in reading skills through the primary grades, after the implementation of a "highly structured and explicit reading curriculum" (Stockard, 2011, p, 1). Explicit reading instruction is part of the Direct Instruction (DI) corpus of reading literacy methodology and is "unambiguous and clear … Examples of strategies used in such programmes include clear instructional targets, modelling, guided and independent practice with corrections, and assessments embedded within the instruction" (Stockard, 2011, p.2). In this approach, the teacher is placed at the centre of the action, guiding the learning process, and ensuring that the design and organisation of instruction, and the teacher-learner interaction is effective and efficient. He maintains that :

> The approach attempts to control all the major variables that impact student learning through the placement and grouping of students into instructional groups, the rate and type of examples presented by the teacher, the wording that teachers use to teach specific concepts and skills, the frequency and type of review of material introduced, the assessment of students' mastery of material covered, and the responses by teachers to students' attempts to learn the material (Stockard, 2011, p.3)

The results of the analysis showed that from 'kindergarten' to Grade 3 learners, cohorts with full exposure to the programme had significantly higher reading literacy scores than those in cohorts with less exposure. Most importantly, the results illustrate how, through Direct Instruction (DI), rural school districts can improve student achievement despite their 'geo-social' disadvantage. Results also showed that the programme was most likely to succeed when teachers fully understand the programme, and when students are introduced to it at an early age. Apart from its de-emphasis on context and genre, this methodology bears strong affinities with Rose's pedagogy which will be discussed at length in Chapter 3. Many aspects of this programme – *Reading Mastery* – appear to have been considered in Rose's *Reading to Learn* and they depict an admissible degree of sensitivity to the unfortunate situation of rural schools and communities.

On the subject of early instruction of reading in ensuring that learners acquire the English language to make a success of their educational careers, in his "Synthetic Phonics as a tool for improving the reading skills of Nigerian pupils", Eshiet (2012) discusses his preferred use of synthetic phonics as a methodology to teach early reading in the primary schools in Nigeria. He contends that the methods employed at this level in that country are largely primitive. Ekpo, Udosen, Afangideh, Ekukinam, and Ikorok, (2007) (in Eshiet, 2012, p. 143) assert

that: "The method of teaching early reading in government schools in Nigeria is the rote learning method". In their words regarding the teaching and learning experience in Nigerian primary schools, Dixon, Schagen and Seedhouse (2011, in Eshiet, 2012, p.143) point out that:

> Currently, teachers start by teaching the letters of the alphabet and build on this by teaching the pupils to memorise 2 letter words, then 3 letter words, followed by phrases, and then whole sentences. This is usually done through repeated drills where the teacher chants the words and the pupils repeat after the teacher in unison.

On the contrary, "children taught using the synthetic phonics method have demonstrated reading skills far ahead of their contemporaries who were taught using other methods" (Eshiet, 2012, p.142). The Phonics method subscribes to the DI School of Thought, and is perceived as an oppositional approach to the "Whole-language" approach. Phonics (or Alphabet) Approach's chief criticism is that, while intensive and "recontextualises the brick-and-mortar model of formalist linguistic theories, [it nonetheless ignores] higher levels of text and context" (Rose, 2006), and it leads learners to pronunciation without understanding, a classical case of practicing reading but not learning to read.

While the teacher is functionally pivotal in this approach, and unless handled with due care, it may amount to the segmentation of reading learning that may lead to fragmentation in pronunciation and speech, as well as a lack of coherence and fluency in reading among learners. In the overall study, however, Direct Instruction is viewed as a precondition for comprehension, and it gives impetus to spelling, word recognition and vocabulary building, provided it is manipulated effectively and efficiently. Rose's methodology extends from the DI in its careful handling of text and context. This could very well be the thinking of Prado and

Plourde (2005, p.41) when they submit that: "Because mastering reading is a life-long process, care should be taken so that students have a strong foundation on which to build their skills. A solid reading program that includes carefully planned instruction that takes into consideration where students are [the context] and provides them with feedback that can help them grow is essential". That is why, after interrogating various strategies of reading to increase comprehension, Prado and Plourde (2005, p.41) recommend at the end of their study that:

> The use of reading strategies should continue to be taught because there did seem to be a connection with increase in reading comprehension. Teachers need to make sure that children are familiar with all of the reading strategies and that they are given plenty of opportunities to use them. Some of the research pointed out that although it seems students understand the reading strategies, they do not transfer them to different genres of reading, and in many cases do not understand their importance in their reading success.

Zhu and Han (2010, p.142) endorse this notion and offer a Chinese perspective of an analysis of "the theory of context, including the features of context and some principles in context theory". These scholars propagate "the application of context theory in English teaching of reading, including some problems encountered in reading comprehension tests and some teaching methods related to context theory (Zhu and Han, 2010, p.142). They conclude that: "in English teaching of reading, if the teacher consciously uses context theory to guide teaching, the students will overcome difficulties in reading comprehension more easily and they will read faster and make fewer mistakes" (Zhu and Han, 2010, p.146). If anything, this conclusion marks a departure from the two competing orientations discussed thus far: whole-language and basal reading (or DI). What this scenario presents is the evidence of the possibility for the third way where

preoccupation is with understanding context as a precondition for understanding text. This will be addressed more fully in the next chapters. This section now turns to a discussion of South African perspectives on the teaching of reading.

2.3 The teaching of reading: the South African scholarship

Following on the reviews of international literature on the phenomenon under study, it is apparent that the issue of reading literacy is becoming unrelenting in its urgency. It may be argued that reading literacy teaching is even more urgent in the South African context, considering our history of marginalisation. With the country still attempting to rid itself of the legacies of apartheid that are entrenched in every fibre of society, and in particular, in the culture of schooling, the prominence of reading literacy (or lack of it) is gradually being elevated to alarming proportions, so much so that it appears to overshadow any gains achieved by the democratically elected government.

This urgency is vividly captured in the recent titling of educational scholarly articles, *inter alia* : "*Literacy and Disadvantage: learners' achievements in the early primary school years*" (Pretorius and Machet, 2004); "*What do students do when they read to learn? Lessons from five case studies*" (Pretorius, 2005); "*The socio-educational context of literacy accomplishment in disadvantaged schools: Lessons for reading in early primary school years*" (Pretorius and Machet, 2004a); "*Foundation Phase teachers: The 'battle' to teach reading*" (Hugo, 2010); "*Far from the city lights: English reading performance of ESL learners in different types of rural primary school*" (Lemmer and Manyike, 2012) and "*Put reading first:*

Positive effects of direct instruction and scaffolding for ESL learners struggling with reading" (Van Staden, 2011). However, the study titled *"Reading ability and academic performance in South Africa: Are we fiddling while Rome is burning*?" (Pretorius, 2002) is foremost in describing the urgency of this phenomenon in the South African context. This study investigates the relationship between reading skill and academic performance at undergraduate level. Although not focused on primary school education, her work nonetheless probes what can be construed as fundamental flaws and issues in the South African education system as a whole. She posits:

> Many additional language (AL) students have serious reading comprehension problems, which means that they have ineffective and limited access to the rich sources of declarative knowledge provided by print-based materials in the learning context. Reading is important in the learning context not only because it affords readers independent access to information in an increasingly information-driven society, but more importantly because it is a powerful learning tool, a means of constructing meaning and acquiring new knowledge. If developing countries aim to produce independent learners, then serious attention will need to be given to improving the reading skills of students and to creating a culture of reading (Pretorius, 2002, p.169).

Students at tertiary level are prepared (or unprepared) for success both at home and at school levels. A deficiency in any of these levels could result disaster for the learners in subsequent levels, where university is the culmination point. Hence Pretorius' (2002) caution extends beyond university education and resonates strongly with primary and secondary education as well. Importantly, these students described above are the products of their society: schools and communities alike. In the South African context their problems are deep-seated and reflect the cleavages of our society based on our history. The reality is that the AL students referred to here are mainly the black African youth who endure

exclusion as a result of the position taken by our education. Effective teaching of reading, therefore, remains the one major mechanism to give these students (and many other learners from this background across South Africa) "access to the rich source of the declarative knowledge". It has to happen, and soon; it is mandatory.

Van Staden (2011) pursues the same theme under the title "*Put reading first: Positive effects of direct instruction and scaffolding for ESL learners struggling with reading*". Her paper investigates whether the reading and reading-related skills of ESL learners in post-apartheid South Africa can improve significantly, following evidence-based direct instruction and reading scaffolding techniques to enhance reading comprehension in the primary school setting in the Free State. Van Staden (2011) is unequivocal about the DI approach she intends to apply. She describes it as a method where "learners received small-group instruction, which includes evidence-based direct instruction reading that explicitly targets skills such as phonological/phonemic awareness, and the application of reading comprehension skills" (Van Staden, 2011, p.10). She is an advocate for DI and values 'explicitness'. However, the version of DI that she advocates shows some variances with traditional, quintessential DI that was discussed earlier in this chapter. Hers has transformed to incorporate newer elements in the form of scaffolding techniques. Scaffolding' is extensively discussed in this study (chapter 3) and it concurs with Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology; his discussion underpins all the chapters in this study as the fundamental methodology for the proposed curriculum intervention. Therefore, the DI version proposed by Van Staden (2011) gravitates towards Rose's

pedagogy and seems to be informed by the ideological orientation that renounces 'exclusion' of learners on the basis of their socio-cultural, econo-political and class consciousness. Both Pretorius (2011) and Van Staden (2011) rebuff notions of 'exclusion' and 'perpetuation of inequalities,' albeit from different angles: one from a tertiary platform and the other from a primary school perspective.

In a slightly different discourse, Lemmer and Manyike (2012) introduce the notion of rurality into the equation of an already untenable ESL environment. They further complicate the situation by introducing the concept of English as LoLT (the language of learning and teaching), which is 'foreign' to the majority of learners. They observed the English reading performances of primary school ESL learners and examined and explored how poor scores can be explained by the social context of learners and schools. Throughout this chapter, whenever rurality is discussed, it has been used to define disadvantage. Therefore to have a foreign LoLT in a rural environment is tantamount to double disadvantage. In South Africa double disadvantage is a prominent feature of communities living in rural areas, despite constitutional provisions and legislative frameworks to alleviate that very occurrence. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (RSA, 1996a) grants equal status to the country's eleven languages as official languages. Among other provisions, the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) (1997, p.106) promotes additive multilingualism. Despite these provisions, South African society appears intent on maintaining its stratification, it is a society prepared to perpetuate inequalities and sacrifice some of its own in that process. Lemmer and Manyike (2012, p.31) make a valid observation:

> Using common LoLT does not mean that linguistic capital is equally distributed throughout a schooling system. Many ESL learners come from homes that seldom provide literacy practices in English. Their acquisition of English proficiency is therefore more dependent on the quality of the linguistic resources provided by the teaching staff and the general school and community environment.

If reading literacy instruction is to be mediated meaningfully to learners, questions about the "quality of the linguistic resources by the teaching staff" should rank high on the agenda. Otherwise there is a risk that one may continue to 'beat the system' and subconsciously subjugate rural communities even further. The social context within which learners operate becomes even more essential in this discourse on semantics, more so within an environment where the teaching of reading includes an additional language that also happens to be a LoLT. It comes as no surprise that in the research findings the two village schools in that study showed poor performance in both reading comprehension and grammar compared to the former Model C schools (a South African definition of privileged former 'white' government schools) and independent (schools for the affluent, also previously known as 'private') schools. If anything, the results reinforce the urgency and need for more revolutionary methods of teaching reading that will fast-track equity and redress, particularly for underprivileged communities. The systematic teaching of reading has the potential to catapult learners on the fringes of society back to the mainstream of academic high performance. There is a large body of research that proves a correlation between reading literacy and high academic performance of learners (Pretorius, 2002; Pretorius and Ribbens, 2005; Pretorius and Mampuru, 2006; Scheepers, 2008; Hugo, 2010) by enabling "them to broaden their general knowledge, increase their vocabulary and develop strong language skills" (Pretorius and Machet,

2004a, p.46). This is the window of opportunity that South African educational fraternity should be capitalizing on to save disadvantaged learners, and by extension, their communities. However, that is only possible if the teaching practices of teachers are raised to the levels where they are able to carry out their tasks. In the words of Pretorius and Machet (2004a, p.58):

> Primary school teachers are professionals who are supposedly deeply involved in developing literacy skills in their learners. Yet it is precisely in the domain of literacy that many teachers are themselves unskilled. Many primary school teachers come from communities with a strong oral culture and so they are not inclined to be readers themselves, nor are they familiar with the traditions of storybook reading or books for young people. Furthermore, many of them teach in disadvantaged schools where the non-delivery of books, lack of supplementary reading material and lack of access to libraries are common features.

This incidence is a vicious cycle that leads to the perpetual stratification of South African society. That is where interventions should be targeted if there is any reasonable hope for the reversal of this situation. Otherwise this ill-fated legacy will live on. This study agitates for interventions that target teachers of reading based on these philosophical and ideological conundrums. It is our social context and "the school and teachers are a central part of this context" (Pretorius and Machet, 2004a, p.45). It is for this reason that this study concurs with their argument that: "the acquisition of literacy skills is the product of a set of socio-educational circumstances that translate themselves into specific literacy environments for learners" (Pretorius and Machet 2004, p.45). That "delivery of books, lack of supplementary reading material and lack of libraries are common features" in this context, is the subject that many researchers have commented on. It refers to a typical case where learners are condemned to "Playing football without the ball" (Pretorius and Mampuru, 2006), metaphorically speaking, as

shown in the title of their paper with the same name. Nassimbeni and Desmond (2011), also use the title of their paper to wage this war and put this matter into perspective. They title it as: *Availability of books as a factor in reading, teaching and learning behavior in twenty disadvantaged primary schools in South Africa*" (Nassimbeni and Desmond, 2011). In this study there are a number of disadvantaged schools where learners were seldom encouraged to explore books, and as a result academic levels in those schools did not show any improvement, while in schools where the reading of books was encouraged as part of the culture of the school, there was remarkable improvement in learners' academic performance – a tacit reference to the Immersion Theory. A disconcerting feature in many of the previously disadvantaged schools is that role-players are not fully aware of the centrality of the teaching of reading and how this relates to the improvement of academic learner-performance. Pretorius and Ribbens (2005) observe that, despite the bulk of research to support the need for schools to focus primarily on reading to improve academic achievements of learners, many teachers are completely oblivious to that reality. They continue to pursue their own assumptions about what works, even though such assumptions are often not based on research or reality. They (Pretorius and Ribbens, 2005) argue:

> The fact that most schools do not cultivate a culture of reading or have a dedicated reading or literacy period in their timetable suggests that reading is not perceived as being *central to learning* ... If schools wish to improve the overall academic performance of their learners, they should change their assumptions about what is important, and provide opportunities for their learners to develop their reading skills (Pretorius and Ribbens 2005, p145: my emphasis).

The fact of the matter is that many teachers still regard the teaching of reading as an add-on. For some it is something that must be done to pass the time, or to keep the learners occupied, rather than view it as an essential part of the teaching and learning process. The core task is the passing on of facts to the learners in a mechanistic teacher-centered way. Such assumptions are harmful and have misguidedly relegated the teaching of reading to the periphery of pedagogy. There is a growing body of research that foregrounds the link between the academic performance of learners and reading. In fact, currently a long-standing practice is being re-implemented across the developed world, using reading assessments to diagnose the various systems of education (PIRLS, 2007). In most international studies, effective national systems of education always show higher reading competencies of the learners in those systems. Pretorius and Ribbens (2005, p.139) also make this observation. But the reality is that South Africa, unlike the developed world, has to deal with a host of legacy issues that have a negative bearing on the academic performance of learners, not least of which are poverty and disadvantage in rural areas. It is for that reason that this research attempts to link the teaching of reading and learner-academic performance of a rural primary school in the Annual National Assessments (ANA) as a focal point for this study. Extrapolating from the study Pretorius and Ribbens (2005) conducted on Grade 8 learners who had poor reading competence, they state:

> It is time for educationists to take the reading crisis in our schools seriously. The socio-economic status of learners is a variable that schools cannot change. Consequently, the responsibility for providing a stimulating and rich literacy environment for learners falls on the school. Schools need to recognize the fact that the establishment of sound instructional practices and the availability of books are the cornerstones on which learners' later academic success

> depends. This is particularly important in schools that serve
> disadvantaged communities, where learners are unlikely to be
> exposed to literacy practices and books within the home
> environment. Developing a culture of reading at school can
> only be established if the principal, school governing body,
> teachers and the learners have the collective will to take
> reading seriously. (Pretorius & Ribbens 2005, p.146)

Implicit in this assertion is an acknowledgement that the responsibility to lead the transformation agenda of the community where the underprivileged school is located, rests with the school itself. It does this through forming partnerships with all the stakeholders including learners, teachers, the School Governing Body (SGB), parents and other community members who have a direct or indirect interest in education. Transformation remains a 'communal' effort, and one that is informed by a determination by all concerned to contribute maximally to this impetus for change. At the heart of any strategy the school puts in place, reading and its teaching ought to become distinctive features. Managed optimally, reading and its teaching at the school, have the potential to serve as useful vehicles to optimise academic performance and consequently alleviate poverty in the community.

Pretorius and Mampuru (2007), for example, contend that learners from poor rural backgrounds can reach the levels of performance enjoyed by their counterparts elsewhere provided a conducive atmosphere is created for them to succeed. Pretorius and Mampuru's (2007) metaphor in *"Playing football without a ball: language, reading and academic performance in a high-poverty school"* (2007), for example, bears testimony to the stark reality revealed in one such school. At the end of this paper they conclude:

> The notion of learning to play football without a ball is
> preposterous to anyone familiar with soccer – it would cause

outrage among soccer fraternity. Yet the fact that many hundreds of thousands of learners are expected to acquire literacy skills without books is a common occurrence in many schools in developing countries, and one that hardly raises an eyebrow. This study indicates that putting the reading ball onto the educational playing field not only enhances the skill but also makes the game more meaningful (Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007, p.56)

The authors confirm that most schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged communities do not have any meaningful, carefully designed programmes to encourage reading. In fact, most schools in this category do not have any reading material. The learning environment is print-poor. There are no classroom reading-corners. There are hardly any school libraries and generally there is no emphasis placed in the teaching of reading because teachers are themselves not adequately empowered in this area. Parents are not systematically drawn in so that they can play their parental role and assist the school by promoting home-based reading. Learners, Pretorius and Mampuru (2007) concur, are expected to acquire these decisively critical skills without any real effort to support them. Clearly, for the 'game' to be meaningful it has to begin by putting deliberate systems in place: a conscious effort at empowering teachers on their instructional approaches to reading, institutionalising the culture of reading among all stakeholders at the school, making available critical resources such as fictional and non-fictional books, charts, posters, readers and, where possible, the provision of an infrastructure. The outcome, as shown also in the Pretorius and Mampuru study, is a resounding vote of confidence and ultimately the upward trajectory of academic results.

Referring to Zinn (2011) and Bloch (2007, p.54), Nassimbeni and Desmond (2011) take this point further and admonish unprincipled practitioners who operate in some of the underprivileged schools. They contend that:

> Teachers' refusal to allow pupils to look at or borrow books is not a rare phenomenon in South African schools, where many researchers have reported that book donations and school workbooks provided by the departments of education remain in their cartons, stored in the principal's office, or relegated to a storeroom (Nassimbeni and Desmond, 2011, p.102).

It is instances such as these that this study (and similar studies) campaign for school practices that elevate the book[7] to its traditional status as the authority for excellence, and which necessitate the "ambush tactics" by researchers who use the titles of their scholarship literature to highlight this fundamental problem in South African schools, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The notion of "school workbooks provided by departments of education remain[ing] in their cartons" is a serious indictment on the system and a contentious issue in this study. Workbooks are an innovation introduced into the system of education as a result of unsatisfactory results by South African learners in international studies (Systemic Evaluation Report, 2005; PIRLS, 2007; SACMEQ 2000 & 2002, TIMSS, 2011 and in the Department of Basic Education's (DoBE) Annual National Assessments (ANA)(DoBE, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013). In particular, reports on ANA (DoBE, 2013) clearly cite workbooks as an intervention strategy by the DoBE to improve learner performance. This is in line with the Education Sector's blueprint, *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the realization of Schooling 2025*: a forward-looking plan by the department to turn

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[7] The researcher is sensitive to the availability of other modern applications in schools currently, for example, the tablets, ipads and e-readers. These applications, whilst vital, are nonetheless far removed from the context of this study and, as such, are not factored into the discussion.

around the system of education in the country by 2025. Workbooks are intended as a substantive measure to address the problem of lack of key resources in the schools, in particular reading material and standardized tasks for teachers who wish to provide learners with written work. DoBE (2012) describe workbooks as an intervention aimed at :

- Ensuring that schools that lacked learning resources and photocopying facilities would be supported through the provision of worksheets;

- Providing a variety of activities to reinforce Literacy/Language and Numeracy skills;

- Introducing learners to the language and concepts required for learning and understanding their other subjects;

- Assisting teachers to focus, in a targeted manner, on the skills that learners should be acquiring in each grade, as outlined in the curriculum;

- Helping teachers to monitor learners' performance in key activities, and   preparing learners for the formats used in various standardised assessments; and,

- Each workbook is made up of at least 128 easy-to-follow worksheets to improve listening, reading, writing and mathematical skills (DoBE, 2012).

As all the previous literature reviewed in this chapter has shown, these are the critical areas where interventions are necessary, and credit should be given to the DoBE for this. Nonetheless, critical questions remain regarding the capacity of teachers to make a meaningful impact with these resources, especially in previously marginalised communities. In fact, if the recent ANA reports are anything to go by, there is little or no impact of these workbooks in schools whose social context is characterised by disadvantage (DoBE, 2012a). Clearly, it is not because workbooks are themselves ineffective. The DoBE has introduced more of these interventions: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) which is a reviewed version of the curriculum to make it more accessible

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to the majority of teachers; Integrated National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy: A whole-school approach which is "a platform to improve effectiveness of schools and district offices in general" (DoBE, p.7) but to improve Literacy and Numeracy, in particular; the supply of ANA exemplars in order to equip teachers with insight into the standard and style of ANA; a Curriculum Coverage Instrument which "focuses on intensified monitoring, guidance, control, and support of teaching and learning, and gives prominence to … aspects of curriculum delivery" (DoBE, p.8); National Strategy for Learner Attainment which "gives effect to the intent of the *Action Plan [to 2014]* to improve learner performance" (DoBE, p.8), and Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) and District Support. It is a vast array of strategies which cover a broad spectrum of problem areas. However, there is a paucity of active strategising around the empowerment of the teacher as the most prominent role-player in this vision. The implication is that once all these systems are in place, the teaching practices will also simply 'fall into place'. A major concern is that the importance of reading literacy is merely implied in this broad strategy. One would expect that something as pivotal as reading or reading pedagogy, at least, would enjoy substantial coverage in the plan. ANA, by all accounts, is under enormous pressure; it bears the responsibility to put the laudable strategies of the DoBE to the test across the country, year in and year out. However, it is debatable whether the literature reviewed in this study has been of any merit at all. Where ANA becomes most important, is in its interface with this study. Noting that the study is set in an underprivileged rural context characterised by underperformance and general disadvantage, ANA – viewed through the lens of the Department of Education is intended to remedy the situation. ANA *per se* is,

however, not under study in this research, it is how it relates to the study that is of relevance. The Department provides a glimpse into the importance of this study when it articulates that:

> The purpose of ANA is to make a decisive contribution towards better learning in schools. Under-performance in schools, especially schools serving the poorest communities, is a widely acknowledged problem. Clearly ANA cannot bring about improvements on its own and should be seen as part of the *wider range of interventions* undertaken by Government to promote quality schooling (DoBE 2011, p.5, my emphasis).

The above comment does not only vindicate the need for the study, the type of intervention curriculum (Rose's methodology) the study proposes and reasons thereto, but also places into perspective the context where under-performance is located (at underprivileged rural schools); even more significantly, the comment justifies the choice of the mixed method research (Embedded design) referred to and opted for in Chapter 4. The situation is critical and there is a need for research undertaken into a "wider range" of complementary methods that will be adopted to ensure that the outcomes of the research are solid, coherent and dependable. Within that context, Rose's pedagogy enjoys an omnipresence in this study. It is predicted to provide solutions to what appears to be intricately complex socio-cultural dynamics and contradictions that are present in the South African system of education.

2.4 Rose's *Reading to Learn*: The Background

In his "Beating educational inequality with an integrated reading pedagogy", Rose (2011b, in Christie and Simpson) provides an account of his development of a pedagogy in the late 1980s based on his experience with the underprivileged Pitjantjatjara indigenous community in Australia. This community suffered a

disaster of self-destruction primarily because their inferior education could not pull them out of the quagmire of disadvantage. Rose (2011b) relates how virtually every child of school-going age in this community was addicted to substance abuse and lived a life filled with despair. He discovered that learners could not read at age appropriate levels, despite their teachers having been trained to similar degrees as their counterparts in other Australian state-funded schools. In Rose's (2011b, p.102) words: "Whatever other problems were hampering the education of these children, their inability to read the school curriculum was clearly an overwhelming stumbling block". He later asserts that this proved to be a worldwide phenomenon for all communities in distress.

Rose (2011b) took on this challenge as a Social Justice project in an attempt to reverse the social inequalities in this community through interventions in the classroom setting. He used a series of studies (Folds 1987, Malcolm 1991, Alexander 2000, Gibbons 2002, Nassaji and Wells 2000, Rose 2004) to devise a methodology that involved a question-response-feedback pattern, supported by "*Scaffolding reading and writing for Indigenous Children in School",* a programme developed in collaboration with his colleagues in other initiatives targeting disadvantaged communities (Christie and Martin 1997, Rose 2008). He noted that non-exposure to early reading (parent – child reading) had a direct bearing on the learners' performance, and that learners in primary schools were not ready to learn from reading as expected. Rose (2011b, p.103) notes:

> The key difference with the Pitjantjatjara children was not just that a non-English language was spoken in the home, since a high proportion of other Australian children also come from non-English speaking families, but that there was no parent-child reading in the home... Could it be that the reading strategies their early years teachers were trained in simply did

not work with children who had no experience of parent-child
reading in the home?

His methodology was structured not only to answer the critical question raised in the above quotation but also to breach these shortcomings. Rose (2005, p.131) points out that his methodology "has been developed in response to current urgent needs, particularly of Indigenous and other marginalised learners, to rapidly improve reading and writing for educational access and success". The results of his initiative began to bear fruit within a year of intervention; learners began to read at age appropriate levels, and hence began to improve their performance across subjects (McRae, Ainsworth, Cumming, Hughes, Mackay, Price, Rowland, Warhurst, Woods, & Zbar, 2000; Gray, Rose and Cowey, 1998). To date, his pedagogy is being used in many states in Australia and across the world.

2.5 A glimpse into critiques of Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology

There are many examples where the *Reading to Learn* methodology has been implemented successfully in various educational sectors in Australia and around the world. Liu (2013) cites numerous instances where this pedagogy has been successfully implemented, even though some of these sectors are not the traditional classroom settings. McRae, Ainsworth, Cumming, Hughes, Mackay, Price, Rowland, Warhurst, Woods, & Zbar (2000) conducted an investigation on the impact of the programme, where it was demonstrated that the approach was effective for Indigenous students at both the primary and secondary levels, as significant increases in learner-achievement were recorded. The Carbines, Wyatt and Robb (2005) study also showed a general improvement for all learners, not

only the weaker learners, as it was claimed to do; this was part of an evaluation of the Year 7 – 10 English Aboriginal Support Pilot Project. The project revealed how the pedagogy had been instrumental in building the learners' confidence and preparing them to challenge new reading situations. Rose, Lui-Chivizhe, McKnight, & Smith (2004) tried the methodology with indigenous adults preparing to enter the University of Sydney, with resounding success; students improved on their reading and could demonstrate this by writing summaries of what they had read. Joyce, Hood and Rose (2008) investigated the impact of *Reading to Learn* on adult literacy and found that the pedagogy was effective in helping ESL adult learners to improve their reading and writing skills.

These examples confirm the view that this pedagogy is predicated on providing a stable environment for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Based on these examples, Rose (2005) proposes a re-orientation of classroom practices in education systems that have a tendency to reward the elite few and marginalise the majority (Rose, 2005). By all accounts this methodology was designed for the education systems similar to that of South Africa where instances of disadvantage are most obvious. Liu (2013) offers a more extensive description of this model:

> The distinctive features of this model are its focus on grammar as a meaning-making resource and its focus on text as semantic choice in social context. In terms of pedagogical orientations, the innovative approach is characterized by its adoption of an explicit mode of transmission and its ideologically motivated advocacy to empower the disadvantaged groups in Australia [and in the world] (Liu. 2013, p.387).

Rose's *Reading to Learn* pedagogy is both explicit and subversive (as revealed in chapter 3). Users of this methodology guide learners through a systematic

process that covers the clarification of grammatical concepts, and interpreting them within their contexts. Rose's pedagogy is motivated by the ideological imperative to negate subjugation and social stratification of society. In South Africa, where social stratification has been entrenched over decades, and where educational inequalities are a manifestation of the social order, *Reading to Learn,* at the very least, offers some potential for redress.

Mgqwashu (2011) - himself a fervent advocate of this methodology - calls it Reflexive Pedagogy, and having tested it on his own first-year students at tertiary level, approaches it from a somewhat different context. He submits that he:

> ...emphasizes the centrality of *the ability to learn from reading* in formal education and presents a qualitative evaluation of reflexive pedagogy's role in developing such ability. In the process of theorizing module content, designing lectures and tutorial worksheets, and teaching...reflexive pedagogy informs [his] considerations with regard to *the explicit teaching of reading across the curriculum*. (Mgqwashu 2011, p.24)

By way of re-affirming the position stated by Liu (2013) earlier, Mgqwashu (2011, p.23) insists that Rose's methodology provides an opportunity for the "realisation of the post-apartheid ideals in South Africa". He maintains that it is as much a political tool as it is a pedagogic one. Importantly, however, like Rose (2004), Mgqwashu (2011) emphasises the need to recognize the efficacy of this tool as not only limited to primary and secondary education discourse. He goes on to criticize his detractors for failing to realise that reflexive pedagogy is "a practice designed to facilitate epistemological access" and that such "failure to pay attention to the explicit teaching of reading across the curriculum from primary to higher education means that our classrooms perpetuate inequalities"

(Mgqwashu, 2011, p.23). It is in Rose's methodology, he suggests, that we need to find solutions to the current education dilemma.

Rose (2005) sums up the six stages of his methodology as: Preparing before Reading, Detailed Reasoning, Preparing before Writing, Joint Construction, Individual Reconstruction and finally, Independent Writing (see Figure 3.6 in chapter 3). Whilst the first three stages adopt a top-down approach and are comparatively more communal, the last three stages take a bottom-up route and become more individual and challenging as the learner prepares to take on the next task. However, the scaffolding learning cycle (SLC) is considered the foundation of the *Reading to Learn* pedagogy. It takes the form of defining technical or literate wordings, explaining new concepts or metaphors or discussing students' relevant experience. The SLC aims to enable students to access academic discourse and improve learning performance (Liu, 2013). It is for this reason that Rose (2005) argues that through his pedagogy, "a teacher can potentially support learners to operate at a high level no matter what their independent ability" (Rose, 2005, p.142). In his words:

> *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* pedagogy assumes this possibility, but takes it further to support **all** learners in a class to simultaneously operate at the same high level ... In the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* methodology, 'scaffolding' supports all learners to do the same high level tasks, but provides the greatest support for the weakest learners. Rather than developing in incremental steps, learners acquire independent competence through repeated practice with high-level tasks, and scaffolding support is gradually withdrawn as learners take control. This then is the principle by which an unequal moral order can be transformed into a democratic classroom, where successful learner identities can be distributed equally to all students (Rose 2005, p.142).

Interestingly, this happens without compromising access and success for the more competent learners. The emphasis appears to be on the role of the teacher in 'scaffolding' learners. Unlike in other pedagogies (particularly those that propound progressivism) where teachers are not viewed as the central role-players, in Rose's methodology the teacher is in control and provides the directives. Considering the urgency surrounding poor learner-academic performance in the South African context, Rose's methodology appears to be a welcome venture. As if to pre-empt the critique that the fundamental challenge in the South African context is the lack of reading literacy in the home, the environment usually characterised as 'the enabler', Rose (2005) reiterates: "The good news is that it is possible for all learners to rapidly acquire skills in reading and writing at any stage of the curriculum, by teaching them explicitly instead of leaving them for tacit acquisition" (Rose, 2005, p. 139). As in the context of Mgqwashu (2011), in the *Reading to Learn* program, the presentation explores relations between elaboration and academic discourse (Liu, 2013). Fundamentally, only the levels of "elaboration and academic discourse" differ, the overall principle behind the methodology applies across subjects and disciplines.

2.6 Conclusion

After a wide-ranging review of different literature on the phenomenon under study, and the exploration of the various perspectives from both locally and abroad which has pointed out the subtle differentiation between opposite schools of thought, the researcher chapter was not only reflected on the main themes and sub-themes of the scholars under review - the literature addressing

themes of disadvantage, rurality and underprivilege, and explored issues of context, poor provision of resources at schools and problematic teaching and learning practices - but more importantly, presented a comprehensive theoretical grounding as a prelude to the next chapter on the Theoretical and Conceptual Framework.

Chapter 3 will engage with theories and concepts that the study will use to theorise the research findings in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed selected literature on the phenomenon under investigation in this study: the teaching of reading. It is clear in Chapter 2 that studies concerning the teaching of reading, both locally and internationally, tend to be polarised mainly between the two broad theories: Immersion and Direct Instruction – progressive and traditional pedagogies respectively. The challenge identified by several studies reviewed in Chapter 2 is that both these theories and pedagogies reveal glaring limitations in their respective persuasions, particularly in terms of schools located in underprivileged communities. This study, however, is better positioned to introduce a third option that hopes to circumvent some of the identified limitations between the two stated orientations. It is for this reason that the conclusion is reached to employ Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology as a curriculum intervention and as a third way to determine answers to the key research questions of the study. These issues are addressed in chapter 5 where the data is analysed and discussed.

Various theories and concepts that were used to conceptualise and theorise the research findings in this study will be discussed in this chapter. In the process, the chapter will show a critical engagement with the relevance and appropriateness of the theories and concepts selected to investigate the phenomenon under scrutiny in this study. This critical engagement is underpinned by the work of Bernstein (1990; 1996; 1999) (Theory of Pedagogic

Discourse), Vygotsky (1978; 1981) (Cognitive Development Theory and Halliday (1975; 1978; 1989; 1993; 1994; 1996) (Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) Theory). The proven efficacy of Rose's (2005; 2011b) *Reading to Learn* methodology within disadvantaged social contexts forms the nexus of this study, including an examination of how each of these theories contribute to Rose's work. It is in this context that rurality is also discussed in this chapter. The chapter concludes with the discussion of the two key research questions and the role that each theory plays in the analysis of data made available through the following questions:

(i) What is the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in the learner academic performance in Grade 3 and 6 at the school?

(ii) How does the intervention confirm or transform the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in the learner academic performance in Grade 3 and 6 at the school?

3.2 Rose's *Reading to Learn* Pedagogy: a principled approach to democratise the classroom

Rose (2005) declares that his methodology is configured around that of Bernstein's (1990; 1996; 1999) Pedagogic Discourse, Vygotsky's (1978; 1981) Cognitive Development and Halliday's (1975; 1978; 1989; 1993; 1994; 1996) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theories. He claims to have integrated the theoretical and conceptual underpinning of these theories into robust teaching strategies (Rose, 2005, p.132). Figure 3.1 below attempts to represent this:
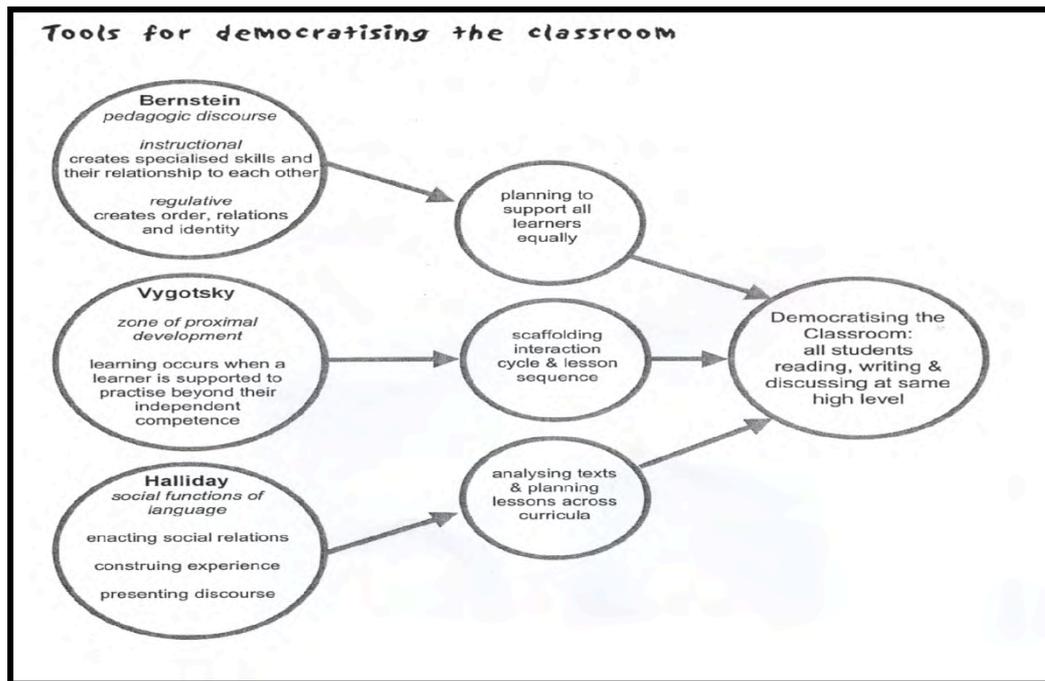
Figure 3.1: Rose's tools for democratising the classroom (Rose, 2005)

As suggested in Figure 3.1 above, Rose (2005) claims that this methodology ensures that learning and teaching become a democratic experience for all learners and accelerates learner-achievement, regardless of their family or educational background. This is a profound claim, and one whose efficacy this study hopes to explore within the context of a rural primary school in South Africa. "[T]he broad educational context in which [Rose's strategies] have been developed and applied, and the theoretical bases from which they have evolved" (Rose, 2005, p.132), will be discussed in the next section.

3.3 Bernstein's Theory of Pedagogic Discourse

In his introduction to "*The Powers of Literacy: A genre approach to teaching writing*" (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993), the series editor quotes an Afro-American writer, Lorde, (1990, p.287): "the master's tools will never dismantle the

master's house". Lorde's (1990) point here is that it is inconceivable that traditional conventions of dominant cultures and discourses are likely to subvert the systems they are founded on and expected to perpetuate under the guise of orthodoxy, when they themselves are complicit to the very acts of such systems. In pedagogical terms, her submission is that there is a need to subvert and modify conventions of discourse that seek to entrench "social relations of inequity" (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993, p.vii) by marginalising others while privileging dominant, mainstream cultures.

Within the context of this study, it is important to note that these 'social relations of inequity' are explored in depth. In the South African context (and where this study is located), social relations of inequity are most pronounced in rural areas where, particularly the Black African majority resides. Rurality, in this study, is therefore loosely construed as a setting of disadvantage, of distress, and of under-privilege, represented in the type of community (of oral culture) where the research site for this study is located, but also in the type of learner that attends this school. Importantly, social relations of inequity are represented in the kind of pedagogic discourse that obtains in this environment (Rose, 2011b; Mgqwashu, 2011).

Bernstein (1990; 1996; 1999) himself explores a similar theme of social relations of inequity' in his theory of Pedagogic Discourse by his conceptualising of power and control relations in the manner pedagogies are configured. He discusses and refers to the "instructional discourse" and the "regulative discourse" (a discourse of social order), and goes on to state that the instructional discourse is

embedded within the regulative discourse (Bernstein 1990, 1996). Again, in his later research, Bernstein (1999), who aptly calls his theory "the Pedagogic Device" (Bernstein 1990, p.1), rebrands this phenomenon as consisting of two forms of discourse, namely: the vertical and the horizontal discourses. He describes the horizontal discourse as 'common to all', and as merely concerned with the transmission of skills (its focus is on the superficial and the accessible). He explains the "instructional discourse" in somewhat simplistic and understandably accessible manner:

> We are all aware and use a form of knowledge, usually typified as everyday or 'common-sense' knowledge. Common because all, potentially or actually, have access to it, common because it applies to all, and common because it has a common history in the sense of arising out of common problems of living and dying. This form has a group of well-known features: it is likely to be oral, local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered, and contradictory across but not within contexts... the crucial feature is that it is segmentally organized.... The knowledge is segmentally differentiated (Bernstein, 1999, p.159).

Contrary to the horizontal discourse, vertical discourse, a regulative discourse, is responsible for "regulating access, regulating transmission and regulating evaluation" (Bernstein 1990, p.3). Bernstein (1999, p.159) explains:

> A vertical discourse takes the form of a coherent, explicit, and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organized, as in the sciences, or it takes the form of a series of specialized languages with specialized modes of interrogation and specialized criteria for the production and circulation of texts, as in the social sciences and humanities.

The horizontal discourse is subsumed within the vertical discourse. In this context, the vertical discourse becomes dominant and deals with issues of power and strategy - the profound and inaccessible. The vertical discourse also enjoys the distributive powers and functions. Bernstein (1999) calls it "distributive rules". Only the powerful, however, have access to this discourse. Where there is

a semblance of interface between these two discourses, vertical and horizontal, it is usually instances of "pedagogic populism" (Bernstein, 1999). This happens when those in power deliberately 'leak' some peripheral codes of the vertical discourse to the horizontal discourse for nefarious reasons. Bernstein (1999, p.169) explicates this phenomenon:

> Here, access and recontextualised relevance meet, restricted to the level of strategy or operations derived from horizontal discourse. Vertical discourses are reduced to a set of strategies to become resources for allegedly improving the effectiveness of the repertoires made available in horizontal discourse. However there may be other motives. Horizontal discourse may be seen as a crucial resource for pedagogic populism in the name of empowering or unsilencing voices to combat the elitism and alleged authoritarianism of verbal discourse.

At this level of discourse the content that is internalised at learning institutions, for example, is packaged and masqueraded as a skills curriculum when, in fact, subsumed therein, is a cover-up of a bigger agenda: an "evolved (rather than designed)" (Rose, 2005, p.133) conspiracy to reproduce a stratified social order, as illustrated by Figure 3.2 below.
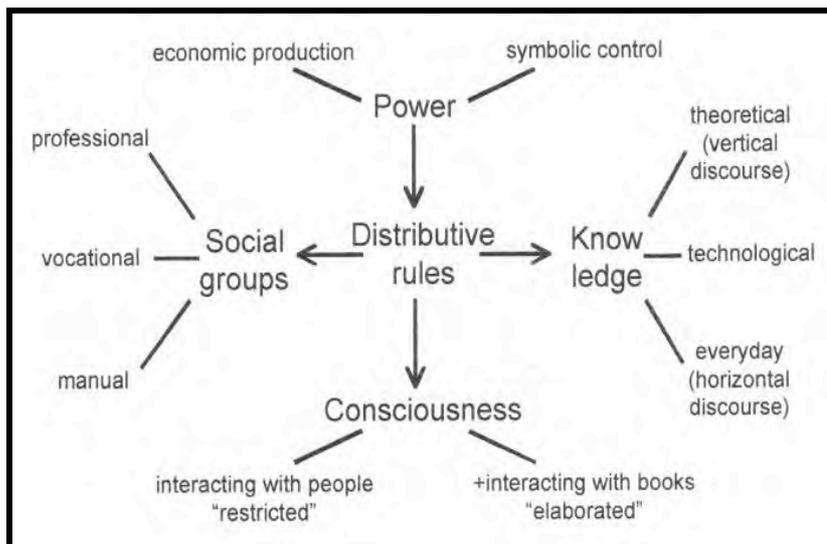
Figure 3.2: Distributive rules of the pedagogic discourse (Rose, 2006)

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Figure 3.2 above indicates that what such a distributive arrangement guarantees, in all measures, is that the social strata is configured in such a way that only a manageable chunk of the elite is maintained, a reasonable bulk of middle class is preserved and that the rest of the population is relegated to the lowest stratum of society, either as the semi-skilled or unskilled (Rose, 1998).

Bernstein's (1990) theory, furthermore, offers an account of the moral order that obtains in society, in general, but also specifically to all our classrooms. This is because he also refers to pedagogic identities and relationships that are made and realized through the selection and packaging of curricular knowledge. Furthermore, Bernstein (1990; 1999) seems to argue that the inequalities in our classrooms are not incidental, but are manifestations of a conspiracy by the 'master' (in Lorde's words above), or simply those who want to maintain their hegemony in a bid to hold on to power; that is, those for whom it is not in their interest to have equity remaining on the educational agenda. In effect, Bernstein (1990, p.73) becomes an advocate for social and curricular justice and espouses a "visible pedagogy" as opposed to invisible pedagogy, the two phenomena elaborated on hereunder.

On the basis of the above, it is inevitable to conclude that the outlook of Rose's pedagogy: *Reading to Learn* draws significantly on Bernstein's theory. Rose's pedagogy is itself a social justice project as it deals with the politics of power relations in society. His motivation is that of according justice to the marginalised, especially learners from an oral culture. His mission is that of challenging the unequal moral order of the classroom, and by extension, the

stratification of society. Rose (2004a) suggests that, in order to interpret the intractability of educational inequality one needs to go beyond the internal features of schooling to recognise that it is an evolved system adapted to the context of a stratified socio-economic system, and that it functions as the 'pedagogic device', as Bernstein aptly terms it, of that stratified social system. This means that the internal features of the device at every level, from early childhood practices to teacher training and pedagogic theorising have also evolved in that context and probably contribute in some measure to that global function (Rose, 2004a).

Following on Bernstein's (1990; 1996; 1999) theory, Rose's pedagogy is therefore to be construed as a bold and ambitious attempt to look beyond the superficial features of instructional discourse, but stare firmly into the regulative. It begins to ask probing questions and forces curriculum planners and practitioners alike (construed as representatives of the dominant class) to interrogate their complicity to the 'crime' against the underprivileged. For example, how do they select, package, distribute and evaluate curriculum content in such a manner that every learner benefits maximally and equally from the education system, despite their socio-economic context and backgrounds? How do they ensure that the regulation of social relations and the concomitant identities of learners in education institutions manifest promotion of equity and redress? In an apparent response to these probing questions, Rose (2005, p.133) castigates the dominant class for what he calls "the naturalization of inequality" in all education settings, especially in primary and secondary schools where it is mostly manifest. Rose (2004a) notes that the apparent inevitability of stratified

outcomes is naturalized and rendered palatable for teachers and schools by the achievements of their most successful students. This standard for successful teaching practice is validated by institutions and the state, and is the yardstick by which schools and teachers typically measure their own professional worth. He further states that the relatively low achievement or failure of other students is generally not what teachers would wish, but is ameliorated by the few success stories, those who achieve high grades or university matriculation, and engage actively in class activities (Rose, 2004a).

One way in which Rose (2005) deals with some of these questions in his methodology is to launch an attack on the proponents of the progressivist pedagogies, where the strategy to subjugate the marginalised appears to be masterminded. He charges that progressivism is, by design, meant to benefit the middle-class and the elite at the expense of the poor, and therefore to reinforce the status quo: the reproduction of the stratified socio-economic order. In a veiled conspiracy, the emphasis by progressivists is often placed on 'smooth' terminology to mask their true intentions: learner-centredness, learner-abilities as opposed to learner inequalities, inclusivity, self-discovery, learner grading – all notions of "the invisible pedagogy" (Bernstein 1996). It is in such pedagogic practices where Bernstein (2003) makes compelling observations. He distinguishes between the visible and the invisible pedagogies. For him, the visible practices are inherently explicit and characterized by different subjects or related chunks of knowledge, whereas the invisible practices usually manifest in the form of integrated 'knowledges' or fields of knowledge, as Figure 3 below illustrates:

```
Rules                           Practices

                                        Visible (explicit)
 Hierarchy

                        Autonomous              Dependent
                        Knowledge  –            Market –
                         specialized:           specialized:
 Sequence                 integrated             integrated
 Pace

                                        Invisible (implicit)

 Criteria

                    Intra-individual              Inter-group

                                 Integrated
```
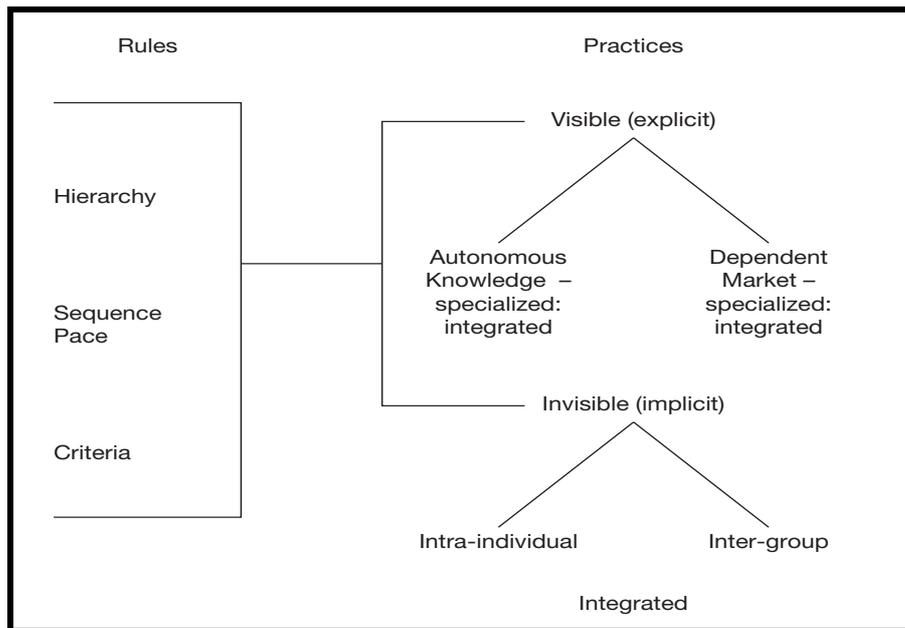
Figure 3.3: Pedagogic practices: Generic form and modalities (Bernstein, 2004, p.197)

It is clear from Figure 3.3 above that the forms of knowledge that are relayed in invisible and visible pedagogies differ according to the intentionality offered by these pedagogies, but importantly, they differ according to the nature of the discourse paradigm. In other words, whereas the visible pedagogy gives rise to clearly delineated paths where the learner understands where the chosen path leads to, the invisible pedagogy is implicit, obscure and framed, often impacting on the learners' culture in surreptitious ways.

Another disconcerting phenomenon, and somewhat related to the above, which hampers a significant number of disadvantaged learners from 'making it' through schooling, is the very conception of a stratified social system in the form of the imposed rules of sequencing and pacing of the curriculum. In Bernstein's (1990, p.78) view:

> The strong pacing of the academic curriculum of the school
> creates the necessity of two sites of acquisition [school and
> home]. It creates a particular form/modality of

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> communication which does not privilege everyday narrative [the inner structure of the communicative principle children use in everyday life]. In this structure children of the disadvantaged classes are doubly disadvantaged.

Rules of "sequencing" and "pacing" of the curriculum remain two fundamental antitheses to the subversion of the dominant culture. If anything, they are being used as excuses to perpetuate educational injustices against those who come from the subservient classes (Rose, 2004a). 'Sequencing' and 'pacing' presuppose where learners ought to be at the various stages of the learning continuum. The reading development sequence illustrated in Figure 3.4 below is a perfect example of this often-inaccurate presupposition on reading levels by learners at different junctures.
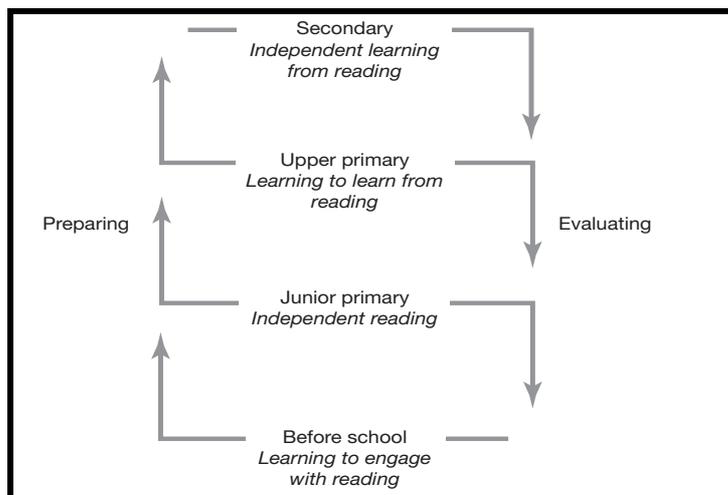
Figure 3.4: Reading development sequence (Rose, 2005)

The utopian standard of the reading development sequence that 'prescribes' that learners must "learn to engage with reading" even before they begin schooling, as Figure 3.4 illustrates, is simply incomprehensible at best. Bernstein (1990, p.75) argues: "Children who can meet the requirements of the sequencing rules will eventually have access to the principles of their own discourse". The reality

is that learners from underprivileged communities are destined never to meet these stringent requirements, unless they are given access to the language of power. At the most basic level, they do not have access to, say, any form of reading at home in their early years, while education institutions assume that every learner who starts school is able to learn from reading, as depicted in Figure 4 above. No real effort is made to 'bring on board' these learners and to breach the gap that this type of learner brings to school. Rose (2004a) is unequivocal about where the problem resides that contribute to maintaining this inequality: the sequencing of literacy development through school years and teaching practices that evaluate students' development (Rose, 2004a). By contrast, the middle-class counterparts of these poor learners get at least 1000 hours of exposure to reading from typical home discourses even before they are introduced to formal education, giving them an unassailable head start compared to their not-so-privileged fellow learners (Bergin, 2001; Rose, 2004a). Rose (1998) suggests that the apparent inertia of inequality is a consequence of sequencing and pacing principles of the underlying literacy development curriculum that are deep-rooted in the structure of modern educational systems, functioning to optimize the preparation of the elite students for university study, while consigning others to vocational or manual occupations. And that is how we entrench and "naturalise" the inequalities. This way the rich become richer, and the poor become poorer – a classical case of the Matthew Effect (Stanovich 1986). Rose (2005, p.139) describes the resultant "double function" of this act:

> One is to prepare the successful few for university; the other is
> to ensure that other learners do not acquire the same skills.
> The first function is achieved by forcing able learners to
> continually practice reading and writing across the
> accelerating content curriculum; the second is achieved by not

allowing time to teach these reading and writing skills explicitly.

As an alternative, Rose (2005) adopts a more pragmatic approach. He ameliorates offers to initiate his methodology at any level of the reading development continuum, starting at the early grades. Because of the explicit nature of its instruction, it is able to meliorate deficits created by, more especially, learners from under-privileged communities, allowing them to succeed as rapidly as those who come from privileged backgrounds. Rose's (2005) stance appears to have benefitted from Bernstein's (1990) theory of Pedagogic Discourse, itself being an adventurous, but enabling, architecture for access and success in education. Bernstein (1990, p.53), agrees: "It is crucial to read early in order to acquire the written code, for beyond the book is the textbook, which is the crucial pedagogic medium and social relation". What we write in school is a by-product of what we learn from reading. It is only through our experience with reading that the writing codes and discourses are inculcated and entrenched. We are about reading. Therefore, in direct relation to this study, Bernstein's (1990) theory becomes particularly useful in providing context to the situation of the school under study – rural, disadvantaged, and under-resourced, among other challenges. Most importantly, Bernstein's theory offers this study tools to devise strategies to collect data that could respond to two critical research questions:

- What is the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic performance in Grade 3 and 6 at this school?

- How does the intervention confirm or transform the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic performance in Grade 3 and 6 at this school?

In a nutshell, Bernstein's theory provides this study with additional conceptual tools to explore the distributive and sequencing rules as well as the pacing of the curriculum at the research site, the underlying impact of those rules and pacing in the pedagogic discourse, and how this impact finds expression in the learners' academic performance in Literacy and Numeracy.

3.4 Vygotsky's Theory of Cognitive Development

Primarily premised on the relationship between cognition and learning, Vygotsky's (1978) theory takes a social constructionist approach and stresses the pivotal role of social relations in the process of learning. Vygotsky (1978; 1981) views learning as the internalisation of activity-based cultural heritage through guided, legitimate peripheral participation in situated social practice. To that extent, Vygotsky (1981) believes strongly in the centrality of community in the 'meaning-making' process, and that culture is a prime determinant of individual learning. According to him, social activities are the basis for complex cognitive processes. While Piaget (1928) believes that learners actively construct knowledge through experiences, Vygotsky (1978) holds the view that it is, in fact, the adult population and the wider society in general that create those experiences which ultimately facilitate learning. He argues that abstract knowledge is constrained or guided, or even structured by the social environment in which learning takes place (Vygotsky 1978). According to

Vygotsky, abstract knowledge is: "semiotically mediated", which effectively implies the indispensability of the "More Knowledgeable Other" (MKO) (Vygotsky, 1978).

Another important element in Vygotsky's (1978) theory, an aspect that may be attributable to teachers, is that of the design of differentiated tasks aimed at maximising each learner's development potential. The emphasis here is on differentiated instruction and learning, not along the lines of either the traditional or progressive pedagogies, but in line with the "scaffolding" approach (Bruner, 1986, p.74). Its purpose is always to guide and support learning in order to bolster the development capacity of the learner (which should not be confused with individuated learning promoted by the progressivist schools of thought). The above, along with the reality that social interaction, even among learners themselves, plays a key role in their cognitive growth, remains unquestioned. Feez retorts:

> Vygotsky's work suggests that pedagogies that are only concerned with existing independent functioning will not give the learner the chance to progress. By contrast, pedagogies that support learners as they move to their potential level of performance make genuine learning and progress possible (in Johns, 2002, p.56).

The word 'trampoline' in the title of this study and the metaphor of 'trampoline trajectories' as construed in this research shares very strong affinities with, and is largely influenced by, the Vygotskyan theoretical model of social development. The metaphor is in line with Vygotsky's (1978) assertion that social interaction is fundamental in the cognitive development of a child, and with his idea of the development of cognition as dependent on the "zone of proximal development"

(ZPD) (Vygotsky 1978; 1981). The two concepts, MKO and ZPD are central to the works of Vygotsky. His research on ZPD forms the epicentre in his theoretical contribution to the pedagogic discourse. He defines the ZPD as a space where the learner and the teacher meet each other halfway. The learner brings to the zone what he or she is able to do independently, what he or she has learned; the teacher brings support, so that what the learner is able to do beyond this zone is supplemented and augmented by the support of the teacher. Figure 3.5 below illustrates this point:
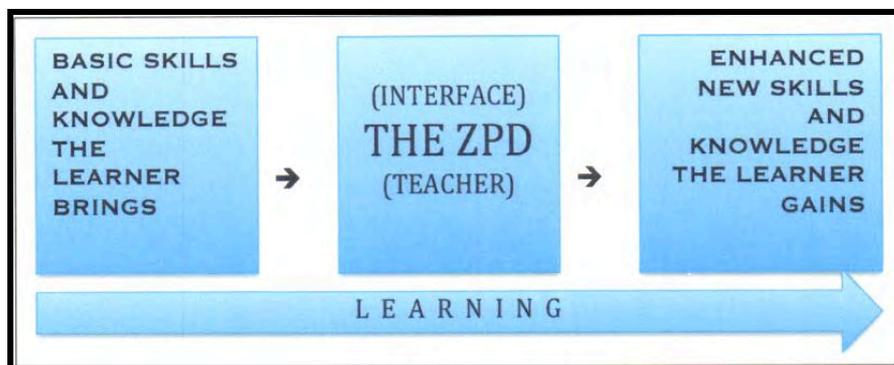
Figure 3.5: An illustration of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The zone becomes a 'trampoline' of sorts for, both the zone and the trampoline represent the interface that makes learning a social construct. The role of the teacher, in both these instances, is neither that of an authoritarian figure nor that of a docile observer - or a benign bystander - but rather that of a catalyst who improves the speed and depth of the learner's cognitive development, utilizing scaffolding as a measure to support the learner as he or she grows in confidence (Vygotsky, 1978; Rose, 2005). The 'trampoline effect' describes a process by which a learner's skills start off as elementary and are limited to ordinary jumps on the ground. As he or she interfaces with the trampoline (the teacher), his or her skills become more advanced, which may extend his or her trickery to

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something like somersaults and flips in the air. Feez sums up this notion eloquently:

> Vygotsky's notion of collaborative learning provides a theoretical basis for genre pedagogy, making it possible to plan language learning as a process of social construction with two key characteristics, scaffolding and joint construction. Scaffolding occurs when the teacher contributes what learners are not yet able to do alone or do not yet know. Teachers adjust, and strategically diminish, their contribution, supporting learners as they progress towards their potential level of independent performance. Joint construction occurs when the teacher and the learner share the responsibility for functioning until the learner has the knowledge and skills to perform independently and with sole responsibility (in Johns, 2002, pp.56-57).

Rose (2004a; 2005) leverages extensively on this social constructionist approach adopted by Vygotsky (1978) in his methodology: *Reading to Learn*. When analysing the problems of underprivileged learners, especially in indigenous communities, Rose (2011b) notes that learners in these communities lack the tools of accessing formal education because of their limiting backgrounds – and this is a permanent feature in the research site as well. The community is based in a deep rural area, which is generally poor. The school used as the research site in this study, for example, has been granted the Quintile 1 grading. This is in line with the poverty index of its community (Quintile 1 represents the most impoverished community), often remote and far-flung, mostly illiterate and comparatively apathetic to the educational needs of their children. The levels of learner-performance are equally uninspiring, and this is partly due to the teachers' low qualifications, as revealed in chapter 5, where research findings are analysed and critically discussed. Chapter 5 also reveals that the research site has no library and meaningful collection of reading material. As Yin (1994, p. 36) points out, a "theory must be tested through replications of the findings in

(other) contexts where the theory has specified that the same results should occur". The school therefore compares favourably with those of the Pitjantjatjara indigenous community in Australia, where the *Learning to Read* methodology, the thrust of this study, was tested and found to be successful in changing educational outcomes (Rose, 2011b). In effect, Rose's (2005) methodology seeks to address this disproportion. Referring to this disadvantaged community, for example, he cites the fact that learners are not exposed to any form of early reading at home as a clear socio-cultural deficit, that the home generally provides no meaningful support for the children to succeed at school. In his methodology, and drawing from Vygotsky (1978), Rose's (2005) methodology ensures that he caters for mechanisms to 'repair' such social deficits, as a condition and basis to guarantee access and success for these learners – hence the introduction of the scaffolding learning cycle sequence.

Like the ZPD in Vygotsky's theory, Rose (2005) emphasizes the role of the "More Knowledgeable Other" in ensuring that learners read and write at the highest possible levels, with the comfort of knowing that they are under the direct guidance of the adult who has experiential knowledge - the teacher. In both instances, the role of the teacher is no longer peripheral, as advocated by progressivism, but very much at the centre of the reading and writing processes, understanding when to intervene and when to allow for individual or social development. In agreement with Rose's sentiment above, and in an apparent dismissal of 'progressivist' process approaches, Hyland (2003, p.21) states:

> From a social perspective, a writer's choices are always
> context-dependent, motivated by variations in social activity,
> in writer-reader relations, and by constraints on the progress

of the interaction. As a result, teachers cannot expect weak writers to improve simply by equipping them with the strategies of good writers. Not only are such strategies only part of the process, but they too are likely to vary with context. Instead, we need to explore ways of scaffolding students' learning and using knowledge of language to guide them towards a conscious understanding of target genres and the ways language creates meanings in context. This is the goal of genre pedagogies.

Both Rose's (2005) and Vygotsky's (1978) scholarship pursues the argument that guided learning is fundamentally part of the social justice project. Their research findings reveal that when pedagogic instruction ensures that learners operate at higher levels of development at all times, with the 'scaffold' continually being used to carry the struggling learners to reach the levels of their counterparts, classrooms become democratic and all learners operate from an equitable level. This is in sharp contrast to traditional and progressive pedagogies that allow for antiquated teaching practices; the more adventurous ones advocating tacit acquisition of knowledge. They pedagogies and practices come in many guises, but the real intention (often unwittingly on the part of the teachers) is to maintain a stratified society. In metaphorical terms, these traditionalists are seen as carriers of learners as passengers in a train, where only teachers know the destination. The progressivists, on the other hand, hold that the learner is conceived of as an explorer on a long journey of discovery. As the literature review (Chapter 2) reveals in this study, most disadvantaged learners are too inexperienced to embark on such a journey on their own. Rose's (2005) model, on the other hand, informed by Vygotsky's theory of social learning (1978), is akin to a safari - the learners have a tour guide to explain to them the intricacies of the adventure, but they also are provided with the

opportunity to discuss among themselves, before they recreate the journey on their own.

Rose (2005, p.147) asserts, for example, that "In each stage of the *Reading to Learn* cycle, one or more components of reading and writing tasks are practiced, first as communal activity, with the teacher as authoritative guide, and then as an individual activity". Figure 3.6 below shows the various stages of the *Reading to Learn* cycle.
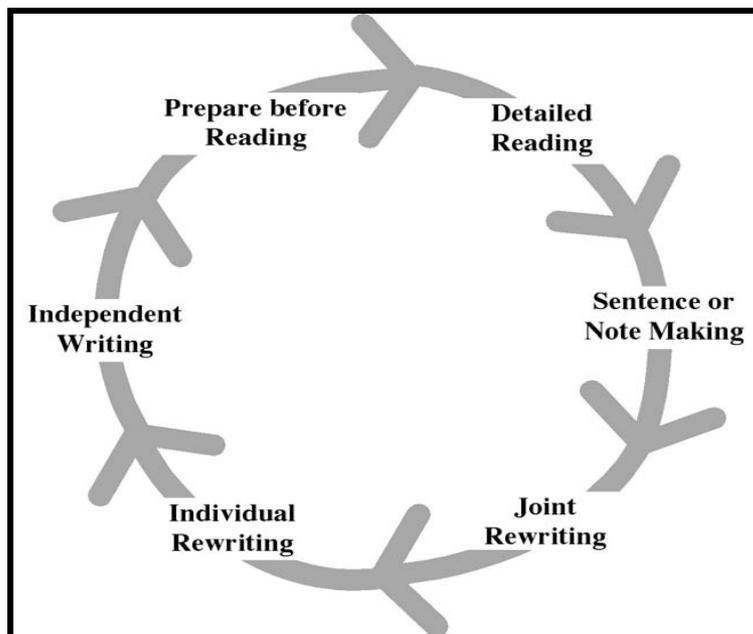
Figure 3.6: Rose's *Learning to Read* cycle (Rose, 2005)

The 'scaffolding' model used by Rose (2005) in his pedagogy, particularly his insistence on the use of the social learning model throughout the teaching-learning cycle, reflects the clearest influence of the Vygotskyan theory of Social Learning - apart from the 'omnipotence' of the teacher in the learning process, there is joint reading among learners and joint construction in writing. It is

almost an implied admission that independent learning depends largely on the social interaction between the learner and the teacher, the learner and other learners, and learners with the teacher. Thus, in relation to the research questions in this study, the Vygotskyan theory will interrogate this "admission". The question: 'what is the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic performance in grade 3 and 6 at the school?' has yielded data that explains whether or not there is any evidence of that 'admission' in the way teachers conduct their business at the school, and how it resembles or differs from the model proposed by Vygotsky (1978). Data findings in chapter 5 also offered this study an opportunity to examine the use of scaffolding mechanisms, and the role of the teacher during the teaching-learning cycle, and the sacrosanct nature of the interface – the ZPD. Such an examination assisted in engaging with the second critical research question: 'how does the intervention confirm or transform practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic performance in grade 3 and 6 at the school?' Additionally, trajectories of learner-academic performance in the findings reveal whether or not the terminology and other tools offered in Vygotsky's theory have any kind of impact.

3.5 The Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

What sets Halliday's (1985a) linguistic analysis apart is the premium he places on the systematic connection between the social context and meanings of and in texts. From a genre perspective, people centrally write to accomplish different purposes in different contexts and this involves variation in the ways they use language, not universal rules (Halliday, 1994). In Cope and Kalantzis' (1993,

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p.14) words, Halliday construes his "tools for analysing texts in their infinite variety and subtle variations". Christie & Martin (1997) put it differently: "This model of genre stresses the purposeful, interactive and sequential character of different genres and the ways language is systematically linked to context through patterns of lexico-grammar and rhetorical features". In Hyland's (2003, p.22) words: SFL "offers the most theoretically sophisticated and pedagogically developed approach … underpinned by a highly evolved and insightful theory of language and motivated by a commitment to language and literacy education". Halliday (1985, p.12) further identifies the interrelatedness of three key elements which make up the register of a text: "field" or what the text is about, "tenor" or an explanation of the interpersonal relations in the text, and "mode" or a demonstration of how the text interacts with the world. Halliday and Hasan (1985, p.11-12) point out that:

> The context of situation, the context in which the text unfolds, is encapsulated in the text not in a kind of piecemeal fashion, not at the other extreme in any mechanical way, but through a systematic relationship between the social environment on the one hand, and the functional organization of language on the other. If we treat both text and context as semiotic phenomena, as modes of meaning, so to speak, we can get from one to the other in a revealing way.

The point Halliday and Hasan (1985) are making in the above quotation is that the context of situation and register become the primary modes of portrayal of context in texts and/or in text analyses, and that nuanced meanings in texts are themselves projections of the socio-cultural context. The two should be analysed in tandem. Halliday (1993) refutes the notion of playing down the "social semiotic" of a culture in any discourse system, as this is what informs the texture of a text, as Figure 3.7 below illustrates:
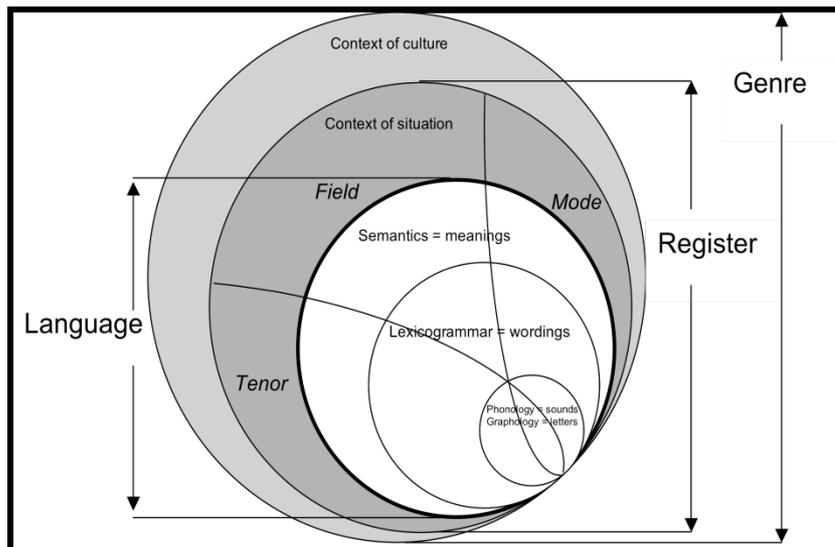
Figure 3.7: A stratal interpretation of the relation of language to social content

Figure 3.7 implies a deliberate attempt at foiling what Halliday (in Rose & Martin 2012, p.30) calls "benevolent inertia", a term he attributes to the proponents of progressivism who promote incidental learning – the 'Immersion' or 'whole language' theorists whose focus on the teaching of reading and text analysis is limited to the comprehension of meaning. The Hallidayan model, furthermore, offers a critique of the "brick and mortar" approach (Rose, 2005, p.145-146) by the traditionalists who believe in teaching reading through placing the focus on sounds or letters, and then building on from there to words-phrases-sentences, as particularly tedious and complex.

Thus, Halliday's theory provides a third option, it may be argued, with its focus on lexico-grammar, complemented by the "register variation" theory (Cope and Kalantzis 1993, p.14). This is an acknowledgement that as we read we 'decode' letters and words as much as we 'predict' sequences of meanings (Rose, 2005). Crucially, however, Halliday (1996) suggests that the understanding of the

overall meanings of texts provides a sound context for further grasp of detailed, nuanced, and often subtle other meanings within sentences in the same texts, all of which being important and necessary steps in the systemic functional model.

Likewise, in Rose's methodology, learners are orientated to the 'genre' and 'field' of the text before reading it. Following on what Rose (2005) has dubbed the "scaffolding interaction cycle", learners are allowed to go through the stages of 'preparation', 'identifying' and 'elaborating', a structured, consistent and intensive sequence meant to benefit them in the total mastery of the complexities of the text, as shown in Figure 3.8 below:
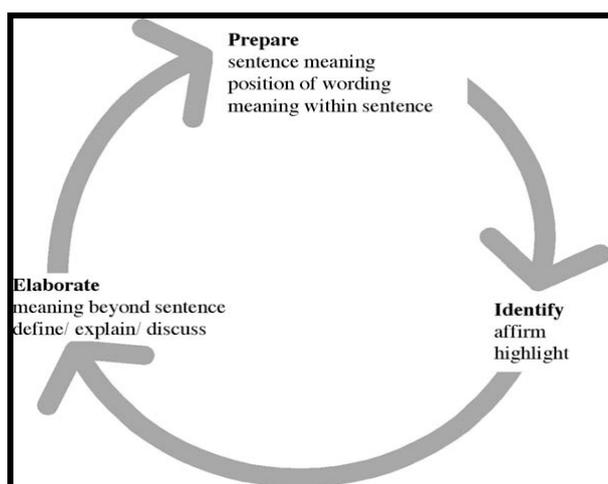
Figure 3.8: A scaffolding interaction cycle (Rose, 2005)

This model not only emulates and extends practices within the parent-child reading discourses at home, but also reinforces Halliday's theory of register variation, over and above drawing from the Vygotskyan theory of social learning. Rose (2011b) refers to his *Reading to Learn* methodology as "an explicit wholistic pedagogy" and integrates many elements ascribed to Halliday (1985; 1993; 1996). His pedagogy involves purposeful modelling and repeating as the

base for both spoken and written language development. Importantly, learners are treated equitably and the same high level of output is both expected from, and guaranteed for, all of them, despite their social and language backgrounds (Rose, 2005). Hyland (2003, p.22) captures these sentiments (about SFL):

> Basically, Halliday's theory systematically links language to its contexts of use, studying how language varies from one context to another and, within that variation, the underlying patterns which organise texts so [that] they [are] culturally and socially recognized as performing particular functions. The exploration and description of these patterns and their variations has been the focus of genre theory and the resources it exploits to provide disadvantaged learners with access to the cultural capital of socially valued genres.

As evident in the above excerpt, this theory provides adequate mechanisms of support for all learners according to need. Of particular interest to study, Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology subscribes, both in spirit and in outlook, to the revolutionary Australian Genre Pedagogy, in particular, The Sydney School. If we move from the premise that Rose (2005) is a proponent of the Sydney School, and that the Sydney School is largely founded on the principles of the Hallidayan SFL, then it is logical that the Hallidayan SFL is the founding architecture and pillar of both The Sydney School and to a certain extent, Rose's methodology. Thus Halliday may be linked to some strands (or camps) of Genre Theory (for example, the New Rhetoric and English for Specific Purposes do not have any relations with the Hallidayan theories). It is the Sydney School that draws inspiration from the Hallidayan SFL and therefore tends to be *linguistic-grounded*, "applying theories of functional grammar and discourse and concentrating on the lexico-grammatical and rhetorical realisation of communicative purposes embodied in a genre" (Flowerdew in Johns 2002, p.91). With their roots firmly grounded in Halliday's theories, The Sydney School has

sought to assume, as a principled and pedagogic position, that there is a relationship between language use and its social environment. Discussing a social theory of language, Christie (2005, p.8-9) affirms this position. She points out:

> Two terms that are essential to the understanding of the functional model of language used here are text and context … The functional model of language used here states that text and context are intimately related, so that a context is known because of the text that gives it life. Conversely, a text is known only because of the context that makes it relevant.

To understand the relationship between text and context, it is important to contextualize it within the Hallidayan discourse on register: that a text embodies three variables of field, tenor and mode (Halliday, 1985; 1996). Proponents of The Sydney School are in agreement with Halliday's stratal interpretation of the relation of language to social context (in Figure 3.7 above) although they have improved on it over the years to de-link 'register' and 'genre', and modelling genre at the stratum of culture, and thereby have "added another layer to context of situation" (Macken-Horarik in Johns, 2002, p.20), as shown in Figure 3.9 below:
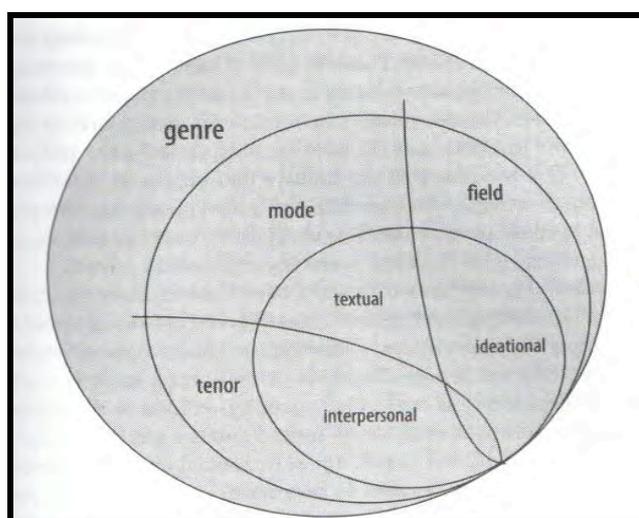
Figure 3.9: Genre as an additional stratum of analysis beyond tenor, field and mode (Martin & Rose, 2008)

Christie (2005, p.11) takes a practical route and elucidates:

> Both ['context of situation' and 'context of culture'] need to be understood in order to comprehend what is constructed in a text. There are the immediate meanings of the context of situation, but there are also the meanings of the context of culture, and these differ. Consider, for example, trading encounters, and how different are the behaviours depending on whether one is bargaining in an Asian market, or shopping in a western supermarket. In the latter two contexts of culture, very different values and practices apply.

Martin and Rose (2008, p.16) also express this sentiment: "In this step we had remodelled language in social contexts as an integrated semiotic system, in which 'situation' and 'culture' were reconstrued as social semiotic strata – register and genre". This aspect accommodates Hyland's (2003, p.20) concern that credible methodologies should engage with "the socio-political realities of students' everyday lives and target situations". Of even more significance, the Sydney School has sought to function within the realms of social functional linguistics, and often explores the role of genre and register in the pedagogical process. They, too, generally believe that language structure is an integral part of the text's social context and function, and would thus have interest on how genre influences pedagogy. It is on this basis that Halliday (1978; 1989) assumes the ancestral role – in the "logogenesis" (Rose, 2006).

The Sydney-based Disadvantaged Schools Programme (DSP), an initiative conceptualised and executed under the banner of the Sydney School, and which typifies the thinking of this camp, is a particularly relevant and appropriate example of how the notion of genre impacts the classroom within this camp. During its implementation, DSP has dealt successfully with Secondary School teachers from disadvantaged backgrounds who "wanted access to resources and

assistance that would help them to integrate literacy and learning in different subjects with perceivable pay-offs for both subject-area learning *and* literacy" (Macken-Horarik in Johns, 2002, p.18). It is a demonstration of how genre pedagogy - the Halliday-inspired version in this instance - applied across the curriculum, can benefit both teachers and learners, despite their handicap of disempowerment.

Since Halliday's theory professes to delve into the linguistic intricacies of the genre discourse, it informs the response to this study's third research question on how the current role of the teaching of reading impacts on the learners' academic performance in the research site. The Hallidayan theoretical concepts such as 'context of culture' and 'context of situation' – its tenor, mode and field – is referred to, to engage with how they impact on the learners' understanding of texts in the research site. Halliday's theory is also used to explicate the role of the teaching of reading and writing in the research site, with a focus on the 'social semiotic' and register. Therefore, what the Hallidayan SFL offers Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology is the assurance that the learning process involves intensive analysis of texts that, in turn, ensures that every learner is on board in that process; it also caters for the exploration of the learners' social context in texts. Importantly, all learners are given a fair chance to succeed, even those whose socio-cultural backgrounds are not represented in the dominant discourse.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to foreground Rose's *Reading to Learn* Pedagogy by illuminating its theoretical structures. In the process, Bernstein's Theory of Pedagogic Discourse, Vygotsky's Theory of Social Learning and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics were explored. The relevance and connections of these theories to Rose's model were also established.

Throughout the discussion of these theories, substantial terminology, which will later be used to analyse, interpret and critically discuss research findings (in chapters 5 and 6), was generated and explicated. From the Bernsteinian Theory, concepts such as the "horizontal" and "vertical" discourses, "invisible" and "visible" pedagogies, "distributive rules", rules of "sequencing" and "pacing" of the curriculum were discussed within the context of pedagogic practices. The Vygotskyan Theory, on the other hand, was examined and made available such concepts as "the zone of proximal development" (ZPD), "semiotic mediation", "The More Knowledgeable Other" (MKO) and emphasized "scaffolding", for example. Hallidayan SFL situated into prominence notions of "context of culture", "context of situation", "register" ("field", "tenor" and "mode"), "lexico-grammar" and "semantics", and tied them to the abstraction of the process of understanding texts. In the discussion of these notions, an attempt was made to discuss how they shape Rose's methodology. The chapter thus revealed how Rose's methodology is emancipatory (Bernstein), with conception of learning as a social experience (Vygotsky), as well as linguistically explicit (Halliday). In preparation for the next chapter, this chapter served to introduce key research questions for this study.

Chapter 4 turns to the discussion of the research design and methods used to generate data in this study. It presents in more intricate detail, the research methodological choices used to generate data.

Chapter 4

Research Design and Methodology

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 centres on a discussion of key theories and concepts that frames the collection, analysis and interpretation of data findings in this study. It was made clear in chapter 3 that Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology, which is central to this study, is a consequence and by-product of Bernstein's (1990; 1996), Vygotsky's (1978; 1981) and Halliday's (1975; 1978; 1989; 1996) work on Pedagogic Devise, Zone of Proximal Development and Systemic Functional Linguistics, respectively. What is evident in Chapter 3, is that most of the key concepts deriving from the scholarship of these researchers, find expression in Rose's methodology. Most importantly, given the broader purpose and the research questions in this study, careful consideration was necessary in selecting the research site, research methodology, design and instruments, the sampling technique and the study participants.

Hence, for this reason, Chapter 4 focuses mainly on the choices made regarding research strategies that were employed to generate data within the context of the research questions. More specifically, the chapter discusses in detail the research site, research methodology, research design, research instruments and the sampling technique used to identify study participants. The rationale for each of the choices discussed in this chapter is also provided. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion on the limitations of the study and how such

limitations were negotiated. The key research questions for the study, as already mentioned in Chapter 3, are:

- What is the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learners' academic performance in Grade 3 and 6 at this school?
- How does the intervention confirm or transform the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learners' academic performance in Grade 3 and 6 at this school?

4.2. Understanding the research site

Almost half of South African learners reside in rural areas where educational underachievement is a major component of a cycle of disadvantage (Human Science Research Council (HSRC) & Education Policy Consortium, 2005). The research site for this study is a deep rural area that is remote and far-flung. 'Deep rural' in the South African context is associated with poverty, disadvantage and lack of economic and educational opportunities. As stated in the previous chapter, the school was granted a Quintile 1 status, in keeping with the poverty index of the community the research site serves. Quintile 1 status is a classification for schools that are located in extremely impoverished communities. The community in the research site has inadequate facilities and buildings. There is no library; no meaningful collection of reading material, no sporting facilities for the children, and the school has only recently acquired electricity. As the HSRC (2005) report indicates: "Rural learners frequently attend poorly resourced schools, located in isolated areas, with high levels of

poverty, disease and unemployment (HSRC, 2005, p.38). The implication in this context is that the research site services children from mostly poor backgrounds who, by virtue of their adverse circumstances, cannot afford to access better educational opportunities elsewhere. The research site was chosen because it represents a typical disadvantaged school in the South African context. Internationally, there is a large body of research on the relationship between contexts of poverty and the underperformance of schools (Ylimaki, Jacobson & Drysdale, 2007; De Lisle, 2011). It is a worldwide phenomenon for communities in distress. In South Africa, the learner-performance in schools such as the chosen research site, as pointed out above, is usually very poor (Department of Basic Education (DoBE), 2010; 2011 & 2012) despite the support that DoBE purports to be giving to these schools. The DoBE (2012) report on the Annual National Assessments (ANA) details some of these interventions:

> Strategies range from the review of the curriculum, the launch of a comprehensive Literacy and Numeracy strategy, comprehensive feedback that was given to schools following the release of ANA 2011 results, learner support materials placed in the hands of teachers and learners, and support given to districts" (DoBE, 2012, p.6).

Specifically, these schools receive preferential treatment in the form of the National Schools Nutrition Programme (NSNP), a no-fee school status (where learners do not pay school fees) and a substantially higher *per capita* funding allocation for learners (Norms and Standards for Funding of Schools, 2006). However, despite these interventions by the DoBE, the 2013 ANA results could only manage an improvement of -1% (Grade 3 HL), 10% (Grade 6 FAL), 12% (Grade 3 Mathematics) and 12% (Grade 6 Mathematics) nationally, inclusive of all schools (privileged and underprivileged). In the recent report on Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) conducted in 2006, South Africa

scored the lowest of all the participating countries (TEACH South Africa, 2010, p.2).

Furthermore, as indicated in the previous chapter, this study intends to use Rose's methodology, *Reading to Learn*, as a curriculum intervention to determine the correlation between the teaching of reading and the improvement of learner academic performance at the research site. This is because his methodology has been proven to work successfully in improving learner-performance, even in contexts characterised by disadvantage. The research site hence may be viewed as presenting an opportunity to use this methodology to explore the extent of that correlation. In this context, the description of the research site becomes very important as it necessitates the provision of answers to the first key research question of the study: 'What is the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic performance in Grade 3 and 6 at this school?' The answers to this question relate to the practitioners' perceptions, attitudes and assumptions, to the physical attributes of the research site (in this case, classrooms), to issues of teacher capacity as well as to availability and use of the necessary resources in creating an enabling environment to make the teaching of reading an achievable goal. The answers, however, also extend to other socio-cultural factors surrounding learners. The second key research question 'How does the intervention confirm or transform the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learners' academic performance in Grade 3 and 6 at this school?' examines how the implementation of Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology shapes the

pedagogical discourse, given the contextual factors surrounding the research site. The next section focuses on the study participants selected in the study.

4.3 Study participants as an extension of the research site

The participants in this study are teachers who teach different subjects in Grade 3 and 6 at this research site. Using their pseudonyms, the table below illustrates their personal details.

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	GRADE TAUGHT	PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION HELD	SUBJECTS TAUGHT
A: Anele	F	3	JPTD	Numeracy, Literacy, Life Skills & First Additional language (FAL)
B: Bongani	M	6	B. Paed	Mathematics & Natural Sciences and Technology (NS&Tech)
C: Celani	M	6	NIL	English & Creative Arts
D: Dumisani	M	6	NIL	EMS & IsiZulu

Table 4.1: Representation of participants' educational information

As Table 4.1 indicates, there is a female teacher who teaches Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills in Grade 3 (Foundation Phase), and three male teachers who teach all six Grade 6 (Intermediate Phase) subjects between them. The female teacher has a Junior Primary Teachers' Diploma (JPTD) from the College of Education, while among her Grade 6 counterparts, one teacher (an HOD at the site) has a Bachelor of Pedagogics degree (and is currently furthering his studies), and the other two are not yet qualified (although they are currently doing their studies on a part-time basis). This is in keeping with the HSRC (2005) report on *Education in South African Rural Communities*. This report engages with issues concerning inadequate teacher qualifications in schools such as the one selected as the research site in this study. Due to a number of unsatisfactory conditions the research site has failed to attract a significant number of qualified teachers. Qualified teachers at the research site are constantly looking for schools where there are better working and living conditions. The research site has lost two

qualified teachers in the past three years as a result of 'teacher-poaching' that negatively affects schools such as this one. These teachers were headhunted by schools that are based in urban locations, and where conditions of living and employment by far surpass those of deep-rural areas where the research school is located. This is one of the major reasons why learners in similar schools often struggle to produce the desired results (Lemmer & Manyike, 2012).

In order to select participants in this study, Stone's (1988, p.150) principles regarding the sampling of participants were used. Participants must:

- "have had experiences with the phenomenon being researched";
- be "verbally fluent and able to communicate their feelings, thoughts and perceptions"; and,
- must show utmost dedication and commitment to the research by showing a willingness to see it through to its finality.

Given the above, the study used purposive sampling to select the participants. They were purposively selected because, firstly, as teachers the participants, in one way or the other have already engaged with the phenomenon under investigation, that is, the teaching of reading. The participants also matched the required profile, both in terms of their qualifications and the context of their situation. Their circumstances resembled those in the Australian schools where Rose (2011b) conducted his study that gave rise to the methodology implemented as a curriculum intervention in this study. Secondly, as teachers, the participants could communicate in the language of the interview, English. Thus, in so far as expressing their "feelings, thoughts and perceptions", they were unambiguously clear. Finally, these participants showed a high degree of

commitment to the subject investigated in this study. This is because they believed the experience would make them better teachers; they hoped that the experience would positively impact on the academic performance of their learners in numeracy and literacy, and wanted to maximize whatever other 'benefits' would arise as a result of their participation in the study.

After these participants were purposively sampled, training-sessions on Rose's methodology began. These training sessions were conducted by *Reading to Learn* South Africa. This is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) established by the adherents of Rose's methodology, *Reading to Learn*. Its purposes is to expand the teachings of the founder of the methodology, including, but not limited to holding colloquia, seminars, and other gatherings around this methodology across the developed and developing world. The purpose it served in this study was to provide training of participants on Rose's methodology at the research site. More specifically, *Reading to Learn* South Africa: 1) screened videos for participants on the methodology-in-practice, 2) designed exemplar lesson plans to be used, and offered modelling lessons and 3) conducted lesson observations during implementation and general monitoring of the whole process alongside the researcher. This training was necessary for four interrelated reasons. Firstly, it facilitated access to the novelties of the methodology. Secondly, it provided the necessary guidance and capacitation to participants in employing this methodology. Thirdly, it provided participants with practical tools to implement the methodology efficiently. Finally, it gave credence to the intervention curriculum by providing legitimacy to the entire study. These sessions took place in the afternoons, but sometimes continued into

the early evening. During these sessions, participants were willing to be observed, especially in the classroom situation and visits from both the *Reading to Learn* South Africa trainers and the researcher. They were willing to make available all their planning documents and accepted input. They were even prepared to declare and share their challenges. Overall, they were unflinching in their willingness to implement the curriculum intervention in their classes. The sampling of these particular participants was driven by the need to generate the most appropriate data to use in answering the key research questions. The participants agreed to work on the research in their very first meeting when the concept was introduced to them. Learners, although vital to the study, do not necessarily teach reading; they only feature as intended beneficiaries through the efforts by teachers who teach reading. Accordingly, learner-scripts for Grade 3 and 6 are sampled for the study, purely as evidence for the participants in the field. Furthermore, class numbers in the chosen research site were manageable with between twenty and thirty learners per classroom in the target Grades. As such, all Grade 3 and 6 learner-scripts in ANA Literacy and Numeracy papers were considered for sampling in the study. Thus, in some respects, data generated through this documentary evidence, one of the research instruments, represents the learners' voice, although not necessary as data.

4.4. Research Methodology: Mixed-Method Research (MMR)

Cameron (2011, p.96) defines Mixed-Method Research (MMR) as research "in which the investigator collects, analyses, mixes, and draws inferences from both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or programme of inquiry". Teddlie and Tashakkori (2010, p.5), on the other hand, view this methodology as

"the broad inquiry of logic that guides the selection of specific methods and that is informed by conceptual positions common to mixed methods practitioners (e.g., the rejection of "either-or" choices at all levels of the research process)". Both definitions seem to suggest that there is a certain degree of richness in combining qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to achieve validity and reliability of findings.

In the context of this study, MMR presents an opportunity for the study maximally to exploit the strengths of the combined methods to interpreting data with its implied emphasis on and grounding in triangulation (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie's (2003) suggestion that mixed methods are not limited to the triangulation of results, however, confirmed the researcher's preference for this methodology. This method was made more appropriate to this study as it could be used for (a) complementarity (i.e., seeking elaboration, enhancement, illustration, and clarification of the results from one method), (b) development (i.e., using the result of one method to help inform the other method, (c) initiation (i.e., discovering paradoxes and contradictions that lead to a reframing of the research question), and (d) expansion (seeking to expand the breath and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components) (Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie, 2003, p. 353). Since qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used to generate data in the study, the mixed method approach seemed to be better positioned to reduce the weaknesses of either method and, in the process, facilitated the illumination of the phenomenon under study from all angles. Various studies have used the mixed method approach across most disciplines. In the context of

education, some of the recent studies are those by De Lisle (2011), Cieslak (2011), Eli (2009) and Hugo (2010). In Hugo's (2010) study, for example, MMR was used to investigate reasons for failure rates in Grades 1 to 3, particularly as a consequence of low reading proficiency among learners in the junior grades eleven schools in the Gauteng Province. Given what MMR makes available to the research process, it was possible for the study to establish that:

> ...due to many problems, teachers 'battle' to teach reading properly. These include home language spoken by the learners and the teachers, the reading methods used in the classrooms and the lack of reading materials in the classrooms... (Hugo, 2010, p.133).

Another advantage that emerged out of that study as a result of the MMR is that it enabled the researcher to establish the extent to which teachers of reading are required "to have sound knowledge about various aspects related to the acquisition of this important skill in the academic life of learners" (Hugo, 2010, p.142) in ways that other methodologies could not. Creswell's (2009, p.4) definition of MMR offers reasons for the strengths in this methodology:

> ...an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study. Thus, it is more than simply collecting and analysing both kinds of data; it also involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research.

With regard to the example provided above, the Hugo (2010) employed interviews and classroom observations of language lessons. During the interviews, she asked semi-structured interview questions and completed questionnaires for quantitative data; a checklist was also kept for various details, and some additional information was recorded. In instances where this was

possible, she also listened to the learners' reading. Additional data (yielded through interviews) and field observations provided the researcher with qualitative data (Hugo, 2010, p.136). This is critical to this research because Hugo's (2010) study followed similar procedures in collecting data in relation to key research questions. It is important to note that from the interview the researcher was able to glean both qualitative and quantitative data through the use of interviews and other data sources. ANA, on the other hand, does not answer the first key research question directly, but only authenticates and/or refutes the participants' initial assumptions (or answers in questionnaires and interviews), through the performance of learners in ANA itself. On the contrary, ANA (quantitative data) directly offers answers to the second research question. Merely by collecting and analysing the academic performance of learners in ANA, the researcher comes to a reasonable conclusion about the impact of the teaching of reading as reflected in the results (Rose's methodology was mediated to establish exactly that). This interpretation is represented in Figure 4.2 below.

METHOD	INSTRUMENT	RESEARCH QUESTION
Qualitative	Classroom observation Interviews	1. What is the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic performance in Grade 3 and 6 at this school?
Quantitative	Learners' written work ANA scripts / papers Questionnaires	
Qualitative	Classroom observation Interviews	2. How does the intervention confirm or transform the understanding of practitioners of the role the teaching of reading plays in the learner academic performance in Grade 3 and 6 at this school?
Quantitative	Learners' written work ANA scripts / papers	
Methodology: Mixed Methods Intervention: Rose's *Reading to Learn*		

Table 4.2: Compatibility of MMR to research questions

Therefore, drawing from the above discussion and Figure 4.2, it may be concluded that the characteristics of the MMR, particularly its provision for a

variety of methods, clearly lends itself to compatibility with the key research questions of this study. Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie's (2003) conception of complementarity, development, initiation and expansion inform the choice of this methodology. Finally, the breadth of the inquiry was expanded in that it can "incorporate the strengths of both research methods" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2006, p.23). The critical point, however, is that this methodology maximises opportunities for the verification of research findings. This is crucial in this study, given the fact that it taps into the diverse sources of data in a circuitous process which culminates in the interpretation of the entire analysis, as will be discussed in the next section.

4.5 MMR: Format of the Study

The study intervention was conducted over a period of two years (2013 to 2014), targeting teachers of Grade 3 and 6 at the research site as participants in those two consecutive years. Prior to that, from July to September 2012, the researcher developed instruments (questionnaires and interview questions based on the phenomenon of the teaching of reading) and implemented these at the research site, generating both quantitative and qualitative data in the process (Creswell, 2009). This baseline study was intended to facilitate an understanding of the context of the research site in relation to the phenomenon under study. In September 2012 the Grade 3 and 6 learners wrote ANA 2012, again generating quantitative data for this research. The two databases were analysed separately and then compared with each other, using the procedures prescribed in scholarly literature (Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006).

At the beginning of 2013, the researcher introduced a curriculum intervention at the school. *Reading to Learn* South Africa was charged with driving this process. Throughout 2013 and concurrent with the intervention, qualitative and quantitative data were again collected from the participants in the form of questionnaires, interviews and field observations (for teacher participants) and in the form of the learners' work. Again, in September of 2013 the Grade 3 and 6 (2013) cohort of learners sat for ANA, privileging the researcher with a second supply of this data. Thus, the cycle of 2013 was accordingly repeated in 2014. Following that process, where all four sets of data were collated and analysed, a new process of interpretation of the entire analysis unfolded (Creswell, 2009).

In effect, what the researcher has done in this study is to conduct an experiment. More specifically, he uses an analogy of an experiment. Experimenting with human beings is a convention that can be traced back to the early natural scientists and psychologists. Dehue (2001) places it in various procedures in these fields (Kuhn, 1983; Galison, 1997; Danziger, 1990; Wintson, 1990; Wintson and Blais, 1996). She cites Campbell (1969): "True experimentation implies that particular groups of people are subjected to a treatment and compared with an untreated control group. Most importantly, it also means that the comparability of the groups is guaranteed because they are composed on the basis of chance". Similarly in this study, there are three groups of learners: the 2012, the 2013 and the 2014 cohort. The concepts 'experimental group' and 'contrast group' (as opposed to 'control group') draw inspiration from the paradigm of experimental and quasi-experimental designs, which this study is not. Inadvertently, the 2012 cohort of learners that did not go through the curriculum intervention served as

a contrast group, whereas the 2013 and 2014 cohorts (that experienced Rose's methodology) became experimental groups. Of note, both sets of learners (2012 cohort, on the one hand, and 2013 and 2014 cohorts, on the other) were drawn from the same research site, and from the same community. Furthermore, the same teachers (the participants in the study) taught both cohorts in consecutive years. To elaborate on this, Dehue (2001) refers to a 1960 example of how experiments evolved. This experiment was an attempt at finding the most effective and least costly alternatives in achieving social progress. She uses it to demonstrate how this terminology works:

> This sample was randomly divided into a control group that did not receive an allowance and experimental groups that differed as to the combination of the amount received and the income level at which help was stopped. All groups were regularly monitored throughout the 4-year term of the experiment. Many comparable experiments followed (Dehue, 2001, p.295).

This is precisely what was achieved by this study. The management of variables is a strict measure put into place to manage issues of validity as part of the MMR tradition (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Therefore, the idea of conducting these processes in three cycles, using control and experimental group cohorts, broadly cements the notion of compatibility between MMR and the research questions in this study, particularly, within the context of the ensuing discussion on research design.

4.6 Research Design: Concurrent MMR - Embedded Design

For the purposes of this study, the preferred design of MMR is the Embedded Design. According to Caracelli and Green (1997) and Green (2007), the embedded design "is a mixed methods approach where the researcher combines

the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data within a traditional quantitative research design or qualitative research design" (in Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p.90). In providing further clarification, Creswell & Plano Clark (2011, p.110) posit that, effectively, this is when "the researcher implemented a secondary qualitative strand within a larger quantitative experiment, the qualitative methods occurred during the conduct of the experiment, and the qualitative strand enhanced the conduct and understanding of the experiment". This design comprises two phases of quantitative data collection and analysis occurring before and after an intervention, in a typically protracted sequence that ends with the interpretation of the entire analysis. Figure 4.1 below illustrates this process:
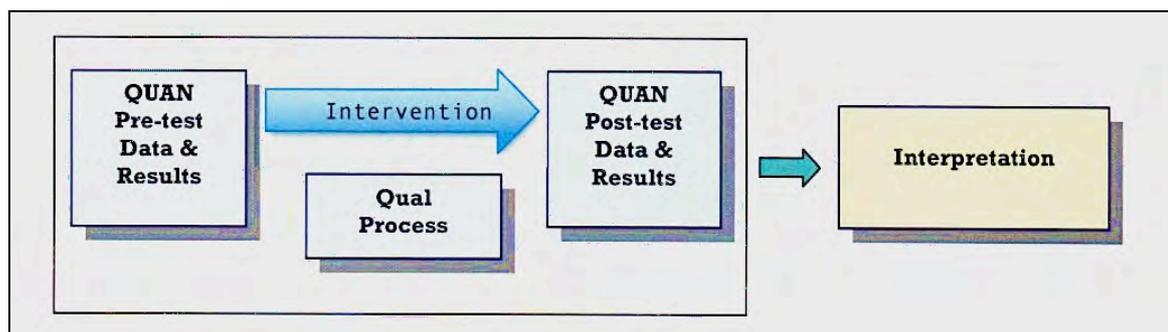
Figure 4.1: The Embedded Design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011)

The two processes of quantitative data collection and analysis (pre-intervention), on the one hand, and quantitative data collection and analysis (post-intervention), on the other, interface with a *qualitative process*, effectively adding a concurrent strand of qualitative data collection and analysis to the sequence. This is intended as a mechanism to establish trustworthiness. Crucially for this study, this sequence is meticulously repeated before, during and after the curriculum intervention to allow for comparison of data between

the baseline information and the outcomes of the study covering 2012, 2013 and 2014. This nexus of structural organisation of the design is best captured in Teddlie and Tashakkori's (2003, p.3) description of the field of mixed methodology as entering a stage of "adolescence" where it shows some 'irregular development patterns'.

Embedded design has been used widely as a strategy to inform the architectural structure and provide a vehicle to answer research questions for various studies. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p.123-127) illustrate how this research design works by reviewing Brady and O'Regan's (2009) article on their use of the embedded design. The purpose of that study was twofold: "to assess the impact of the [Big Brother Big Sisters] BBBS mentoring program for Irish youth and to examine the process and implementation of the program". They go on to state that: "The authors provided a rich discussion of how a pragmatic foundation and dialectical position allowed them to be open to adding a qualitative component to an overall experimental design" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p.123).

This study is also a quantitative experiment in its own right, and the primary purpose is to analyse, in a *dialectical* way, the correlation between the teaching of reading and the improvement of the learners' academic performance. In this study too, qualitative data was used to enhance the overall quantitative experimental design. ANA, the national assessments currently being used by the DoBE to diagnose learner (under)performance in the South African education system, was used to provide the study with quantitative data required to make this determination. This provides the study with a quantitative and explorative

character. Therefore, in the context of this study, greater emphasis was given to the quantitative framework; the qualitative research only characterised the supplemental strand (Sandelowski, 1996), itself an important part of the study. It lent character and strength to the inquiry by strengthening its essentially qualitative mien. The apparently intricate arrangement of an embedded design, its accommodative inclinations towards interventions, should be construed as that of a strength rather than a limitation. "In an embedded design, quantitative and qualitative data can be collected either sequentially or concurrently or both" (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p.190). A curriculum intervention was deployed in this study and because of that, it followed rigorous processes that ensured dependability and validity. Data was collected before, during and after the experiment, and was continually used to track and verify occurrences during the study. Figure 4.2 provides a flow-chart to illustrate this point.
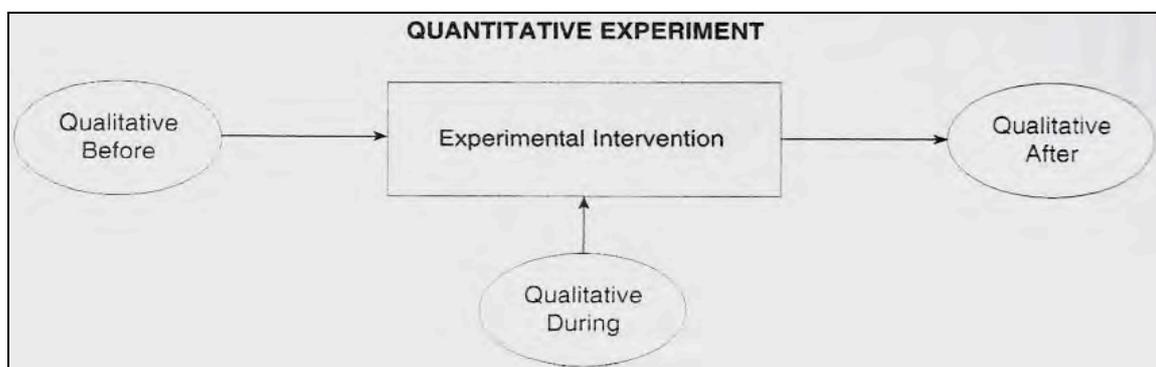
Figure 4.2: Basic procedures in implementing an Embedded Design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011)

As such, data was collected both 'sequentially' and 'concurrently': 'sequentially' because it recognised the two phases ('before' and 'after'), but 'concurrently' because of the data that was collected during the intervention itself. Qualitative data collection and analysis were effected using the learners' written work,

interviews and classroom observations; quantitative data collection and analysis, on the other hand, occurred through the use of questionnaires, ANA learner-scripts and question papers, and other documentary evidence that described a continuum of before, during and after. "Unquestionably, more and more designs and procedures are being used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell and Tashakkori, 2007). Undoubtedly, embedded design draws attention to the threatening inadequacies of one set of data towards fulfilling the imperatives of a study. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p.91) observe:

> The premises of this design are that a single data set is not sufficient, that different questions need to be answered, and that each type of question requires different types of data. In the case of the embedded experimental mixed methods design, researchers use it when they need to include qualitative data to answer a secondary research question within the predominantly quantitative study.

Similarly, as predominantly quantitative, this study's overall purpose is answered in the performance of the learners in ANA. Essentially, this is the locus of the study, as reflected in the two critical research questions. Embedded qualitative research, in this context, served to enhance this particular project. This project could only be meaningful when the process is also conducted within the realms of qualitative research. The 'what' and 'how' research questions of this study yielded data that demonstrated the embeddedness of the answers (and context of participants) in the bigger experiment, the expression of which is manifested in the ANA results. The 'how' question is particularly crucial because ANA results could not definitively answer it, and as such, needed to be couched in a qualitative research within the broader quantitative experiment. This occurred when a comprehensive assessment of baseline information was compiled and the researcher was grappling with understanding the context of

study before the intervention – '*pre-intervention*'. During the intervention it occurred when the researcher wanted to understand the impact of the intervention on the participants, where the quantitative outcomes were validated with qualitative data representing the voices of the participants – '*during-intervention*'. Finally, the 'couching' referred to above occurred after the intervention, when the researcher reviewed the entire intervention with the participants, and most important of all, in the assessment of the context when comparisons of outcomes are made with baseline assessment – '*post-intervention*'. It is a long and protracted period of painstaking exercise. Creswell, Fetters, Plano Clark, and Morales (2009) provides a table giving reasons for adding qualitative research into intervention trials. For example, ANA was written in September 2012, by which time the researcher had employed his questionnaire and conducted initial interviews with participants prior to ANA. In September the writing of the ANA was monitored and the ANA scripts collected from the research site by the researcher for analysis; this accounted for the first cycle of the research. The amount of time between ANA 2012 and the start of the school term in 2013 was sufficient for the mediation of the intervention curriculum for participants in preparation for the implementation of Rose's methodology early in 2013. Following that, the process of data gathering proceeded on an on-going basis during the intervention up to the writing of ANA in September 2013, whereupon the researcher collected all ANA scripts for the target groups, thus completing the second cycle of the research. That process was again repeated during ANA 2014, the final cycle. The final phase of the research was then embarked on: that of interpreting the entire analysis. Critically, this protracted sequence served to inform the researcher more on the

understanding of the practitioners on the phenomenon under study and how such understandings impacted on the performance of learners at the school as well as how the intervention confirmed or transformed the practitioners' understanding – the two critical research questions. It was paramount that the timing of the research design in all its facets did not compromise the rigorous implementation of Rose's methodology, the experimental intervention of the study, if the inquiry was to be credible. These two research questions, by all accounts, reinforce the argument about the primacy and subservience of the embedded design, and establish the notion of being separate but connected. The "primacy" of the key research questions is answered in the ANA results, and yet the "subservience" of these key research questions is reflected qualitatively, but within the ambit of the "predominantly quantitative study". The two are separate, yet connected.

In this chapter it was argued that in embedded design, quantitative data is primary and qualitative data is supplemental, and implies that this design facilitates the mixing of data from the two sources. It will now be shown how data is mixed in the context of this study. According to Creswell (2009, p.208), there are three main ways to mix the data: connecting, integrating and embedding. This study used both the integrating and embedding procedure. In this case, data was analysed from interviews and field observations separately; thereafter data was analysed from learners' ANA scripts, documentary evidence and questionnaires in a separate process as well. Once the qualitative data was coded and themed, it was 'integrated' and compared with the (coded and themed) data from the questionnaires and ANA. In a 'coding' and 'theming'

(Hugo, 2010) process, qualitative data is reduced to manageable chunks that will be comparable to some aspects of the broader quantitative data during the interpretation stage. The quantitative data retains the greater focus. Therefore the structure of the design, in particular the 'mixing' procedure, facilitated the yielding of an answer to the key research questions of the study and therefore to the overall purpose of the entire study. Consequently, discrepancies as a result of the inaccurate data in the qualitative research with reference to any of the research questions, for example, were identified and dealt with in the quantitative findings. In that way, the study benefitted from triangulation in the research design to ensure validity and reliability of the inquiry, but also in complementarity, initiation and expansion (Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie, 2003, p.353).

However, where the benefit of this design is most pronounced is in its compatibility with the study's curriculum intervention, Rose's methodology *Reading to Learn*. The structure of the research design is receptive to Rose's methodology, as the embedded design is structured to accommodate interventions between its two cardinal points. The fact that it is applied in three comparable cycles, before, during and after the intervention, guaranteed the isolation of the impact of the intervention, so that research questions were answered. This gave rise to the validity of research findings and gave credence to the interpretation of the entire analysis (viz. how the teaching of reading impacts on learner-academic performance at the school).

4.7 Research Instruments

The study has used four different types of instruments to generate data: questionnaires, interviews, field observation (covering learners' written work produced) and ANA question papers and results statistics from learner-scripts. Polit and Hungler (1997, p.466) define a questionnaire as "a method of gathering information from respondents about attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and feelings". Brown (2001, p.6) describes questionnaires as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers". As an important research instrument and a tool for data collection, a questionnaire has its main function as measurement (Oppenheim, 1992, p.100). Together with ANA results (learner-scripts) discussed later, it is one of the two key data collection methods used in this study to yield quantitative data. However, as Donrnyei (2007, p.101)) suggests, questionnaires may also be used to generate qualitative and exploratory data as well.

In this study the questionnaire was developed and applied, noting that the first key research question for the study interrogates the role of the teaching of reading in the school. Having no previous meaningful encounter with participants, this instrument was used as an icebreaker, an introductory means to access and establish an academic relationship with the participants. However, an advance warning to the respondents informing them of the study was accordingly given to them and details about the study, methods of sampling used and generally how they came to be selected for the study, communicated.

Importantly, all these processes were supported by documentary evidence to prove legitimacy of the study, and that all due processes were followed.

Ong'anya and Ododa (2009) state that the questionnaire may be self-administered, posted or presented in an interview format. The latter was selected. It was found that the questionnaire, implemented in this way, assisted in paving the way towards earning the trust of the participants as they joined the researcher on a journey of discovery. Because of the non-intrusive way it appeals to participants, the questionnaire was able to interrogate aspects that arose out of the key research questions without evoking feelings of discomfort, while yielding the participants' understanding of the phenomenon under study. The questionnaire was a simple ten-question instrument written in English, and the participants were questioned separately.

The use of questionnaires allowed the researcher to access three types of data in the study. Firstly, it was factual information (which included the demographic details, socio-economic status, and education levels, amongst others), followed by behavioural information (which deals with both the past and present pedagogic practices of the respondents), and then attitudinal information (comprising the participants' worldviews in relation to the phenomenon of the teaching of reading (see Appendix E1). This covers their (or others') opinions, attitudes, beliefs and values. However, because of the convenience and functionality of this instrument, participants did not feel overwhelmed or overburdened. The instrument avoided initiating the process with sensitive questions that could deter respondents from participating. The researcher

followed what Seymour and Bradman (1983) call "a funnel approach" as a questionnaire design; the researcher started with a general question, and then narrowed it down to specifics. The type of questions asked were 'closed questions' and easy to answer. They adopted a "semantic differential scale" and "numerical rating scale" (Oppenheim, 1992) approach, where a respondent was presented with a continuum of wide-ranging answers between two extreme poles. These characteristics distinguish questionnaires from other closely related instruments, like the interview.

Kvale (1996, p.14) perceives interviews as "an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situatedness of data". Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p.267) on the other hand, caution that "the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable". Therefore, this study employed the interview as its data collection mechanism precisely because 'its human embeddedness' could only give substance to the objectives of the inquiry itself. It assumed that the interview, although it "has its own issues and complexities, and demands its own type of rigour" (O'Leary, 2004, p.162) nonetheless illuminated the teaching of reading as a phenomenon. Questions asked succeeded in eliciting answers from respondents to ensure the 'rigour' to which O'Leary (2004) refers above. This is because the interview questions in this study demonstrated dual goals of motivating the respondent to give full and precise replies while avoiding biases stemming from social desirability,

conformity, or other constructs of disinterest. This is the nature of that rigour referred to here.

The researcher opted for the semi-structured interview model in the study. This is a non-standardized type of interview that is mostly associated with qualitative analysis. This is the case in this study because it seeks to understand the phenomenon of the teaching of reading; there is no hypothesis that the study attempts to test (David and Sutton, 2004, p.87). Instead, the researcher formulated a list of key themes, issues and questions to be covered in the interview. This is in line with David and Sutton's (2004, p.87) suggestion that having "…key themes and sub-questions in advance lies in giving the researcher a sense of order from which to draw questions from unplanned encounters". The same questions were posed to all four participants and they provided for respondent elaboration and interviewer probing. Hence his type of interview allowed for the researcher to probe the views and opinions of participants. Probing is a way for the interview to explore new paths which were not initially considered (Gray, 2004, p.217). The researcher drew from Patton's (2002, p.343) recommendation to:

> …explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject … to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined.

To typify this thinking, the interview questions were developed and put to the participants. Centrally the questions inquired about the past and present pedagogic practices of participants and generally their worldviews in relation to the phenomenon of the teaching of reading. Often, this covered their opinions,

attitudes, beliefs and values, as well as those of others, for example, the parents of their learners and community members (see Appendix A1 and A2).

Consequently, and in the context of this study, the interviews contributed in the answering of the two critical research questions referred to in this chapter. Qualitative data from the interview offered the study a 'lived experience' of participants in their effort to teach reading. It also served to clarify issues (from the point of view of participants) and helped build towards the next phase of collecting and analysing quantitative data, in a manner that 'field observations', for example, may not be able to do.

Philosophical positioning is fundamental in the conceptualisation of a "field". "Realists consider that the field represents a natural entity, out there, which needs to be objectively described by the observer, who acts as an impersonal channel through which information is conveyed to the reader" (Mulhall, 2003, p.310). In contrast, for many ethnographers it is "something we construct both through the practical transactions and activities of data collection and through the literary activities of writing field notes, analytic memoranda and the like" (Atkinson 1992, p.5). Where the field is actually represented in this study, however, is in the classroom where the teaching and learning (of reading) takes place. "Observation" as a research method, on the other hand, is construed in two distinct ways: structured and unstructured (Pretzlik, 1994). Mulhall (2003) distinguishes between these two types:

> In positivistic research structured observation is a discrete activity whose purpose is to record physical and verbal behaviour. Observation schedules are predetermined using taxonomies developed from known theory. In contrast,

unstructured observation is used to understand and interpret cultural behaviour. It is based within the interpretist/constructivist paradigm that acknowledges the important of context and the coconstruction of knowledge between researcher and 'researched' (Mulhall, 2003, p.306).

It is in the latter interpretation that this study is based. The study adopts the 'interpretist/constructivist paradigm' that is consistent with the proposition of the unstructured observation. This principled position is based largely on the quest to 'understand' and hence the need to construct meaning around the phenomenon under study. Crucially, field observation as an instrument allowed the researcher to answer the "what" research question, which sought to establish the understanding of the practitioners on the role the teaching of reading plays in learners' academic performance in Grades 3 and 6 at the school, based on the observable practices and orientations. Participants were allowed to 'demonstrate' those understandings. Further, this instrument also gave 'clues' to the researcher "how" (second research question) the intervention confirms and transforms the understandings mentioned above about the phenomenon at the school.

Therefore the role of the researcher and the extent of involvement of participants in the data gathering process were informed largely by the standard typology of research roles as enunciated by Gold (1958) below:

- the complete observer, who maintains some distance, does not interact and whose role is concealed;
- the complete participant, who interacts within the social situation, but again whose role is concealed;
- the observer as participant, who undertakes intermittent observation alongside interviewing, but whose role is known;
- the participant as an observer, who undertakes prolonged observation, is involved in all the central activities of the organization.

For purposes of this research, the researcher juggled between and among these roles. He was flexible and entered the field with no predetermined or preconceived notions as to the behaviours and practices he might observe. He had some ideas as to what to observe, but these changed over time as he gathered data and gained experience in this setting. For example, at the beginning of the study, the researcher understood that he would observe different pedagogical practices of participants, and how these related to the phenomenon. However, on becoming familiar with the setting, the research began to uncover a conspicuous lack in the understanding of participants regarding suitable considerations and choices in approaching the phenomenon in their field.

The primary purpose of conducting field observation is to check whether what participants say they do is the same as what they actually do, what Silverman (1993, p.42) refers to as "to use our eyes as well as our ears in observational work". This is important to point out because field observational reports corroborate other data emerging from other data sources like interviews, for example. They strengthen the 'triangulation' thesis of research inquiry. In this case, field observations were useful in revealing what the participants could and could not do, what they understood and what they lacked, but more importantly, the real-life situation of their context. For example, by conducting field visits the researcher was able to record the physical environment of fields in ways that other instruments could not do. Initially there were no charts and posters on the walls; those that were there were old, irrelevant and ineffective. Mulhall (2003,

p.308) maintains that: "observation is valuable because it informs about the influence of the physical environment".

Finally, there is always an argument about the 'honesty' of the 'observee' during the field observation process, which needs mentioning in the context of this study. There is a notion that in a majority of cases observees 'fabricate' the context: they teach differently, bring in more teaching aids than they normally do, even decorate their classrooms, and conveniently enhance their field environment. It is not a situation that an observer has control over. It may very well have manifested in some of the observations conducted as part of the study. Frankenberg (1998), however, dismisses this view and suggests: "I do not think that a single observer in, say, a village or tribe is going to change custom and practice built up over years or even centuries" (Frankenberg, 1998, p.51). Thus, despite the 'acting', the observation process still reflects the true value of a social interaction. As proven in this study, the participants' guise during the observation period is temporal and cannot outlast the purpose of the observation. Within the context of this study, the reality that the 'acting' was to be preceded by the writing of ANA where the true reflection of the participants' capacity is reflected in their learners' performance could only mean that there was no point in pretending.

ANA, on the other hand, is a diagnostic annual national assessment conducted by the DoBE to determine the extent of curriculum implementation in the public schools and to 'diagnose' the system of education in South Africa and helps with the identification of problem areas in the system. In the introduction to a DoBE

(2012a, p.4) Diagnostic Report, the authors write as follows:

> The Department of Basic Education (DoBE) conducted the Annual National Assessment (ANA) in September 2012 on learners in Grades 1–6 and Grade 9 in Language and Mathematics. The purpose of the ANA is to determine what learners can and cannot do with regard to the skills and knowledge that they have acquired as a result of teaching and learning experiences in school. After the administration of the ANA tests, the DBE compiled this diagnostic report in which an analysis is made to provide evidence that will inform and direct appropriate interventions for (a) teaching and learning, (b) management of curriculum implementation by School Management Teams (SMTs), (c) curriculum and management support at district level and (d) resource provision and monitoring at provincial and national levels.

Accordingly, the ANAs that were written in September 2012, 2013 and 2014 therefore served to provide the study with the fourth research instrument: the learner-scripts (ANA question papers were simultaneously answer scripts). This was informed by O'Leary's (2004, p.150) remark that: "Collecting credible data is a tough task, and it is worth remembering that one method of data collection is not inherently better than another". This is particularly true for a study that is premised on the use of mixed method as a methodology. As much as all the methods and instruments discussed above have a particular place in the study, so does ANA statistic with its comprehensive yield of quantitative data. In fact, in the context of the study, ANA carries the largest share of this quantitative experiment.

After monitoring the writing of ANA, and gaining access to the learners' ANA scripts, these instruments were removed from the research site for analysis. The data presented in ANA was organised and themed around key research questions, in line with the pre-, during- and post-intervention arrangement of 2012, 2013 and 2014. This was done so that ANA data could be comparable to

other data sources, like interviews, field observations and questionnaires that were conducted around the same time. In addition, it was crucial for comparative analysis of cyclical data to determine the impact of the intervention across the three-year period. Primarily, such themes derived from item-analysis of learners' responses to ANA questions which were then juxtaposed with the practitioners' understanding. This is consistent with the methodology used by the DoBE themselves to conduct a diagnosis of their system. The DoBE (2012a, p. 4) Diagnostic Report clarifies: "From the ... scripts, a sub-sample was collected for capture of marks per item so as to analyse the information at item or individual question level to identify the nature and quality of the responses that learners gave to questions". This is precisely what transpired during the data analysis process. Pieces of evidence drawn from learners' responses in ANA formed the basis for the corroboration of other data sources. Importantly, all these sets of data were further used to answer the two key research questions in respect of how the teaching of reading impacts on the learners' academic performance. Therefore, the results gleaned from the ANA served to confirm or disprove the understanding of practitioners as well as whether or not there is a relationship between the teaching of reading and the improvement of learners' academic performance at the school.

4.8 Possible limitations of the study

While the study reflects on the possible advances achieved as a result of the curriculum intervention, Rose's *Reading to Learn* pedagogy, as employed in the research, it however, falls short in so far as proving definitively that the progress

(if any) is as a result of the intervention itself, and not other dynamics that play out within the school environment. The DoBE continually introduces interventions and innovations into the system: numeracy and literacy workbooks for every learner in every school, among others, are a vital example in justifying this notion. Such innovations do account for the slight improvements that occur in ANA year after year, especially in better-equipped schools. It is thus important to indicate that any possible movement that reflects in the academic performance of learners, during and after the study, has to recognise that there could be other contextual factors that may also have contributed towards any change in learner academic performance. However, some of these interventions are not new. The DoBE has been conducting ANA in the last few years without any significant measure of success, particularly in schools located in rural, underprivileged areas. Some of the problems identified in learner performance in most these schools seem to recur despite these interventions (DoBE, 2010; 2011; 2012). Rose's methodology, on the other hand, has supposedly successfully dealt with some of these problems, as the literature review in chapter 2 indicates. The research site, like all other schools similar to it, benefit from these interventions, with marginal success. Thus the study has minimized the influence of factors such as these DoBE interventions by isolating Rose's pedagogy as the only curriculum intervention which distinguishes this research site from the rest. Crucially, the study focuses attention on how different cohorts of learners deal with similar questions in ANA as control items before, during and after the intervention in a three-year phase. The research findings in chapters 5, 6 and 7 highlight and explain some of these issues and factor them into the discussion of data findings.

Another possible limitation is the fact that the study is being measured by the learners' performance in the DoBE's ANA. This national assessment has been criticized as being grossly unreliable: teachers mark their learners' work themselves, under uncontrolled conditions; the assessments themselves are said to be subject to manipulation; there are poor verification processes, among some criticisms. However, these national assessments are the only readily available, benchmarked, recognized and standardized measure that the Department has at its disposal currently to diagnose the system of education. Besides, all these above criticisms have been addressed in the recent past: the DoBE introduced a mechanism for checks and balances in the form of the conduct of Universal ANA (generally uncontrolled) on the one hand, and the Verification ANA (strictly controlled and used for verification purposes), on the other. However, the latest approach by the DoBE whereby a selection of thoroughly screened teachers and departmental officials gather at a neutral venue (in controlled conditions similar to marking centres of matric papers) to mark and moderate ANA scripts seems to be the one that has dealt decisively with these criticisms (DoBE, 2013). In the study, however, the researcher monitored the data collection (ANA examinations) process very closely, and the marking process was also doubly controlled (teachers and experts mark and re-mark scripts). But importantly, this study adheres to the highest standards of compliance in ensuring validity and reliability of data.

4.9 Ethical considerations

These relate to moral standards that the researcher should consider in all research methods and in all stages of the research design. Researchers need to

exercise care that the rights of individuals and institutions are safeguarded (Polit and Hungler, 1999, p.132-134). Permission to conduct this study was sought and granted at different levels. First, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education granted their permission. This was based on the fact that the school that had been identified as a research site was in their jurisdiction. Furthermore, the participants are the employees of the Department. Finally, the learners' work (in particular, ANA papers and learner-scripts) is the official documentation of the Department. A detailed proposal was made to the Department and the researcher duly received an official letter signed by the Head of Department (HOD). This was a condition for the receipt of the UKZN authorization letter.

Next it was the University of KwaZulu-Natal, under whose auspices the research was being conducted. Again a detailed proposal was made to the University, covering all aspects of the study, even stating the measures to ensure ethical conduct during the course of the study. The researcher furnished the University with all the details after which a letter of authorization was granted to conduct research. The letter is attached as Appendix C. This was a condition on which the study depended to proceed.

Finally, meetings were held with the Principal of the school where the research was to take place, to explain all the processes and procedures. Reciprocal benefit to the institution was explained, including how that should not compromise the legitimacy of the study. It covered issues of risk assessment, confidentiality (including the use of pseudonyms for participants), consent, data access and ownership as well as data collection boundaries. This process was repeated with

the School Management Team (SMT) and other staff members of the school, and then, importantly, with the participants themselves. This is in line with the principles of research ethics (Patton, 2000, p. 404-5 and Gray, 2004 p. 235). Over and above, letters to the Principal and participants explaining all these details including, their right to refuse to participate in the study, were made available in hard copies to them. All participants, including the Principal of the school signed these letters as consent forms to be part of the study, and these letters were, again, a condition for the University to authorize the research. Therefore, the principles of research ethics, the principle of beneficence and the principle of respect for human dignity were valued and respected in the study.

4.10 Conclusion

Given the broad purpose of this study to explore the correlation between the teaching of reading and the improvement of the learner-academic performance in a rural South African school, it was argued that MMR is the research methodology suitable for that purpose. This is informed by the nuanced and multifaceted nature of circumstances surrounding the phenomenon being studied. The teaching of reading, itself a distinct subject in the study, is measured not only on the basis of the qualitative reportage of context, but also through the expressions of learners in their ANA assessment, which is quantitative in nature. The chapter discusses this complex combination of factors and further proposes the Embedded Design because it accommodates qualitative findings within a bigger quantitative experiment and offers opportunities for triangulation. Based on this set of circumstances, the context of the research site and the various instrumentation used in the study are discussed, as well as how best they are

prepared to answer the key research questions. Having used at least four instruments, the researcher shows how this tapestry of instrumentation ensures validity and reliability of the inquiry but, importantly, the suitability of the MMR as a methodology of choice in the study. Learners' ANA results and other written work played a pivotal role in clarifying issues that emerged from interviews, observations, and even from questionnaires. This is over-and-above giving substance to a comprehensive data analysis process. Towards the end, the chapter reveals the possible limitations of the study and how they are negotiated, before finally concerning itself with ethical issues around the study. The next chapter, however, will turn to the intricate subtleties of the data generated through the mechanisms (in particular, instrumentation) discussed in the present chapter, so that specific meaning can be afforded to the key research questions of the study.

Chapter 5

The practitioners' understanding on the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic performance in Grades 3 and 6 at the school.

5.1 Introduction

While the description of the methodological choices that were used to generate data in this study formed the nexus of the previous chapter, this chapter presents a discussion of data generated through qualitative and quantitative research methodologies as outlined and described in Chapter 4. It (Chapter 5) specifically focuses on data generated in response to the first critical research question:

- 'What is the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic performance in grades 3 and 6 at the school?'

The theoretical underpinnings discussed in earlier chapters and which relate to this data is further explored in this chapter. To achieve this, the chapter is divided into three main parts. Part I engages with data generated through the questionnaires that were sent to the participants in this study. Part II centres on a discussion of the participants' general thoughts and beliefs (generated by means of interviews) on the role of the teaching of reading in academic success, and how these manifest in their teaching practices. Part III juxtaposes the practitioners' understanding with ANA results at the pre-phase of the curriculum intervention. As alluded to earlier, throughout this process the study demonstrates an application of key terminology made available in selected theories that were discussed at length in chapter 3. The chapter concludes with a

summation regarding the practitioners' understanding and how this reflects on ANA.

PART I

5.2 Data on the Participants based on the Questionnaire

Ong'anya and Ododa (2009) describe three types of data regarding participants that may be accessed by means of the questionnaire instrument. Data may be extracted using factual, behavioural and attitudinal questions. *Factual questions* include, inter alia, demographic information, socio-economic status and education. *Behavioural questions* deal with both the past and present actions of the respondents. *Attitudinal questions* comprise world-view; it includes the individual's opinions, attitudes, beliefs and values. The questionnaire used in this study broadly matches these (Ong'anya and Ododa, 2009) descriptions. "As an important research instrument and a tool for data [generation], a questionnaire has as its main function measurement" (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 100). The researcher opted for a self-administered questionnaire that was presented to the participants, even though he remained available to assist in clarifications (Ong'anya and Ododa, 2009). The following data provides key information about the participants and a framework for the answers to the first key research question.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT	QUALIFICATION	SUBJECTS TAUGHT	LOLT	EXPERIENCE
ANELE (Grade 3)	JPTD	Literacy Numeracy Life Skills First Additional Language	IsiZulu	6-9 years
BONGANI (Grade 6)	Bachelor of Pedagogics	Maths and Natural Science & Technology	English	10 years or more
CELANI (Grade 6)	Unqualified	English, Creative Arts and Life Skills	English	5 years
DUMISANI (Grade 6)	Unqualified	Economic and Management Sciences IsiZulu	English & IsiZulu	2-3 years

Table 5.1: Data provided by study participants to factual questions

Table 5.1 is a summary of the participants' responses to factual questions. It reveals that two out of the four participants are unqualified. The two unqualified participants both teach Grade 6. The teaching experience of the two unqualified participants is also minimal, compared to their qualified colleagues. The combination of the lack of qualification and the minimal teaching experience are potentially volatile features in the ability to teach (and teach reading) meaningfully. While this problem may be attributable to deployment strategies of the school management, the limitations regarding choices confronted by management as a result of their context cannot be ignored. This is crucial for Part III of this chapter where the researcher seeks to provide explanations in the disaggregation of the ANA results of the school. Sanders and Rivers (1996) stipulate that students who are continuously assigned to ineffective teachers have significantly lower achievement and learning rates than those who are assigned to a sequence of effective teachers. In fact, the practice of allocating unqualified teachers to schools in underprivileged communities is not only ill-judged; it is also illogical considering the severity of their circumstances. In Bernsteinian terms, it represents what he refers to as "pedagogic populism", a

feature he explores in his 'Pedagogic Device' and attributes to those in power who conveniently leak the codes of the "vertical discourse" to the "horizontal discourse", often for obvious political reasons. The powerful in society cannot afford to deprive the poor of education; instead, they give them a semblance of education sufficient to hide the fact that they do not consider them entitled to quality education. This partly explains why the phenomenon of unqualified teachers is often more prevalent in the poorer communities of society. It is a fabric of social stratification, a manifestation of the distributive rules of the pedagogic discourse. Furthermore, Anele is the only Grade 3 teacher, the rest of the participants teach Grade 6. This is also important as Anele can singularly account for the performance of her learners in Grade 3, whereas in Grade 6 three teachers share the responsibility for the performance of learners, with some being lesser qualified. Grade 6 teachers at the research site do not enjoy any meaningful specialisation. Instead they teach unrelated chunks of knowledge or subjects as determined by the distributive rules whose inherent objective, as mentioned earlier, is social stratification – another form of "invisible pedagogy" which is implicit, in Bernsteinian terms. The consequences of this 'implicity' in underprivileged schools is harmful to the learners these teachers teach. Once again, this data will prove useful in Part III where the ANA documentary evidence is interrogated.

In relation to questions that dealt with the practitioners' attitudes towards the teaching of reading, the data showed interesting trends. Popoola, Ajibade, Etim, Adeleke and Oloyede (2010), whose study focused on the attitudes of Nigerian

teachers to reading, hold the view that "teachers are expected to contribute very largely to [the learners' reading] development, it is important to examine their ... attitude as an independent variable" (Popoola *et al*, 2010, p. 144). The following data illustrates the participants' attitudes as reflected in the frequency with which they teach reading (as shown in the questionnaires), and how these relate to their teaching practices:

Interview Question	Data Source	Frequency
How many times do you teach reading?	Anele Bongani Celani Dumisani	• "once or twice", following the "time-table" • "not at all", "don't teach reading specifically" • "sometimes", following "logic" • "once or twice", following "logic"
On a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 means most important and 6 means least important, where would you rate the teaching of reading?	Anele Bongani Celani Dumisani	• 5 • 4 • 4 • 2
How long ago in the last 10 school days have you taught reading?	Anele Bongani Celani Dumisani	• "very few times" • "None times" • "At least once" • "None times"
How much help do you think you need in the teaching of reading?	Anele Bongani Celani Dumisani	• "Serious help" • "Serious help" • "Serious help" • "Serious help"

Table 5.2: Frequency of teaching reading in a week (see Appendix E - Questionnaires)

There are clear patterns in the four responses to the questions asked. Firstly, they all barely teach reading in their classes. Secondly, and judging by their own ranking of its importance, they do not rate the teaching of reading highly at all. With the exception of Dumisani, who ranks the teaching of reading as 2, which is fairly high, the rest of the participants think lowly of the teaching of reading. It is not surprising that none of them had taught reading regularly during the ten days preceding the interview. This behaviour among teachers can be attributed to their attitude towards reading. To confirm this, Dumisani, who appeared to rate the teaching of reading higher than others (recognising its importance), also

admits that he had taught reading "none times" in that period. However, this situation can also be attributable to the participants' limitations regarding their ability to deliver the teaching of reading. A unanimous "serious help" that they each give to the last question in the table, on how much help they think they need on the teaching of reading, confirms this notion. Therefore, it may be surmised, based on their responses, that central to the failure to teach reading among participants, and their ambivalence towards doing so, is actually the feeling of ineptitude on their part, resulting in a negative attitude towards the teaching of reading. This "serious help" sought is a serious admission because practitioners in this position can neither adopt a teacher-centred mode (because of capacity issues) nor a learner-centred mode (which tends to produce and maintain learner-identities). In fact, this call by teachers invokes Vygotsky's (1978, 1981) theoretical model where he claims that learning happens in the "zone of proximal development" where the teacher provides support to what the learner can do independently. A teacher who still needs "serious help" is not in a position to offer the learners any substantial support in the "zone". He should rather be the target for development instead, even before he attempts to help the learners in that zone. The supremacy of reading and its teaching in the learner-attainment is central to the study and as such, positive attitudes among practitioners and correct capacities are critical. Therefore, ANA results in Part III will be crucial in investigating this fact. Further questions that interrogated the participants' perceptions regarding the teaching of reading confirm this notion of teacher ineffectiveness:

Questions	Data Source	Responses
How much of what your learners know can be attributed to reading regularly?	Anele Bongani Celani Dumisani	• "I'm not sure" • "None of it" • "I'm not sure" • "I'm not sure"
Do you think that learners who read more have a better chance of passing all other subjects?	Anele Bongani Celani Dumisani	• "Of course, yes" • "Maybe" • "Not really" • "Maybe"
Do you think a lot of teachers take reading seriously enough to teach it?	Anele Bongani Celani Dumisani	• "Few of them" • "No" • "Few of them" • "No"

Table 5.3: Practitioners' perceptions on the teaching of reading (see Appendix E – Questionnaires)

Although it is prejudicial to expect definitive answers to the questions on perceptions, the responses indicate a certain level of uncertainty about the participants on the teaching of reading. Bongani is the one participant who has a consistent opinion about the teaching of reading: that at least in the subjects he teaches, "none" of what his learners know can be attributed to reading regularly. Whether correct or not, for him the two (Mathematics, Science and Technology vs reading) are completely unrelated, and therefore he does not teach any reading in those subjects. On a positive note, Anele concedes that learners who read more have a better chance of doing well in all other subjects. But, the participants concede that teachers generally do not take reading seriously enough in their teaching practice. This is an important revelation as it frames the context of the research site in this study, and perhaps those of similar contexts. Perceptions tend to inform teaching practices; it is often these perceptions that deprive the majority of learners of any form of meaningful support at the "zone", perpetuating social stratification in the process.

The rest of the questions in the questionnaire were designed to investigate the nature of the support systems the participants enjoy as practitioners with regard to their delivery of reading instruction:

Interview Question	Data Source	Responses
1. Have you ever been trained by the Department of Education or any other stakeholder on the teaching of reading?	Anele Bongani Celani Dumisani	• "Never" • "Never" • "Never" • "Never"
2. How would you describe the efficiency in supplying reading material to your class?	Anele Bongani Celani Dumisani	• "Very poor" • "Very poor" • "Very poor" • "Poor"

Table 5.4: Support systems in the study site (see Appendix E – Questionnaires)

As illustrated in table 5.4, all the participants confirmed that they had never received any training from the Department of Education or any other agency on the teaching of reading. They further maintained that the supply of reading materials to the school was, at best, "very poor". These responses can arguably be interpreted to mean that the teaching of reading is not perceived by the decision-makers in the higher echelons of the DoBE as pedagogically crucial in the South African primary education context. Questions can be posed regarding their commitment to provide quality education to the underprivileged. It sheds light on perceptions of social engineering that scholars such as Bernstein (1990) mention. That teachers, some of whom have been in the system for nine to ten years, have never been exposed to any form of training in the teaching of reading, an area considered to be critical in a pedagogic situation, underscores this notion, and explains why reading material is slow in reaching the school. However, the issue of the supply of reading material will be more broadly discussed in the next section.

PART II

5.3 Data on the practitioners' thoughts and beliefs on the teaching of reading

In order to generate data regarding the participants' thoughts and beliefs in relation to the teaching of reading, semi-structured interviews were used as the research instrument. As already discussed in chapter 4, the strengths in using this research instrument is that the researcher can probe deeper into the given situation. In addition, the researcher can explain or rephrase the questions if respondents are unclear about the questions (Kajornboon, 2005). This is particularly important because, as will be shown, the levels of the participants' qualifications and experience on the subject at hand differs disproportionately, and with this type of interview the order of questions can be changed, depending on the direction the interview may take. To understand fully and to critique the participants' understanding of the role of reading in academic success, their responses are categorised into: (a) the responsibility for the teaching of reading in the school, (b) teaching practices of reading by practitioners, (c) the value of the teaching of reading and (d) unwritten codes and myths regarding the teaching of reading. These broad categories or themes form part of the researcher's interview guide in the semi-structured interview. According to Kajornboon (2005), an interview guide is an essential component of conducting interviews. It is the list of questions, topics and issues that the researcher intends to cover during the interview, even though additional questions may be asked. These broad categories, therefore, are critical and comprise the key topics and issues that this study interrogates.

(a) The responsibility for the teaching of reading in the school

Virtually all the practitioners who were interviewed on the responsibility for the teaching of reading at the school unanimously regarded it as the task of the language teachers. The Foundation Phase practitioner for Grade 3, Anele, seems to reinforce the same dubious notion about the residence of reading instruction:

> **BAM**: Do you think that teachers in general, and in this school, in particular, view reading as a major component in the learning and teaching process? Explain this if you don't mind.

> **ANELE**: No, I don't think all the teachers take reading as a very important aspect because you only find out that maybe in Intermediate [Phase], you find out that there are different teachers for different subjects, only the teacher for language that is responsible for reading … and others never mind about reading, they just do their work (Anele, Interview 1).

This is consistent with the assumptions of most practitioners interviewed at this school despite the myriad of literature to the contrary (Rose, 2004, 2005, 2010; Becher, 1989; Keene and Zimmerman, 1997; Horning, 2007). In other words, an average practitioner believes that the responsibility for the teaching of reading resides with language teachers and that it is not compulsory (perhaps, not even relevant) for content teachers to teach. This belief is discouraged both in Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology and its forerunner, the Hallidayan systematic functional model. As discussed earlier, both of them refer to 'text' and 'register' in a broad sense. They do not restrict texts to particular disciplines, not least of all, the languages. In fact, in the examples where Rose (2005) applies his methodology, he uses a broad spectrum of texts, including texts from the social sciences. 'Register' remains an embodiment of three variables, namely, 'field', 'tenor' and 'mode' (Halliday, 1978) irrespective of the discipline or subject area. It is interesting that Anele distinguishes between those teachers who are

"responsible for reading" and others who "do their work". It is an 'either or' situation – either one teaches reading or one does one's work. By implication, a teacher who is teaching reading is not doing his/her work. A distinctive comment by Anele is made towards the end of her interview:

> **BAM**: ... you were saying something very interesting - the way that we were taught is contributing towards most teachers to not focus on reading but only the language teachers to focus on reading. I think that's the only area that I wanted you to explain a little bit more.
>
> **ANELE**: Eh, you find that it's language teachers who are only interested in teaching reading because if an NS [Natural Sciences] teacher comes into the class, he just came with his work, they do his work, he can only explain those few words that are difficult for the learners. He cannot say: 'let us read this passage'. He just reads for the learners, and give the learners work (ANELE, Interview 1).

Anele raises a similar point made by her colleagues: that "only" language teachers are "interested in teaching reading" and that content subject teachers are not; their primary focus is the teaching of their particular subject matter. The "belief" in the responsibility to teach reading as residing with languages is mindset-oriented; it is an unwritten 'code', the validity of which is questionable. Furthermore, from Anele's explanation above, the participants struggle with the understanding of the concept of 'teaching reading'. For them, the teaching of reading refers to a language lesson where learners are afforded an opportunity or reading period exclusively to read some fictional story, often read in a language class as part of the language curriculum. That is why the teaching of reading is relegated to the language teachers. It is not accommodative of reading as a methodological choice a practitioner makes, using genre and register to delve into the complexities of a social semiotic in non-fictional or factual texts. Anele's statement that a content teacher "cannot say: 'let us read this passage'.

He just reads for learners and give them work" (Anele, Interview 1) portrays that her understanding (and those of content subject teachers) fails to take into account the much broader significance of reading as a teaching strategy. An NS teacher could, for example, read the passage to his learners using a non-fictional, science-related text for a variety of purposes. Rose (2005) demonstrates this with his six-step methodology (prepare before reading, detailed reading, sentence or note-making, joint rewriting, individual rewriting and independent rewriting).

However, the most daring notion of whose responsibility it is to teach reading in the school came from Bongani, a Grade 6 Mathematics and Natural Sciences & Technology (NS & Tech) teacher. When asked if he thought Mathematics teachers should be teaching reading, he responded:

> No, not at all. I really don't think they need to teach reading because there's not much of reading in Mathematics. Actually there is not. I mean Maths is numbers. I really do not believe that we must focus on reading because there are language teachers who are doing reading with learners (Bongani, Interview 1).

Even when probed regarding the word sums, which effectively are written statements or problems, Bongani was adamant that word sums are merely "guiding words" and that the thrust is on mathematical concepts that those words are meant to introduce to the learners. He is convinced that the teaching of reading is a linguistic function that only a language teacher should exercise. This seems to be in line with Dumisani's thoughts when confronted with the question why content subject teachers do not teach reading. Interestingly, Dumisani represents both views. He teaches IsiZulu to Grade 6, which makes him

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a language teacher, as well as an Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) teacher respectively. He states:

> I think they [content subject teachers] depend more on Language educators. In their minds, that's how and what they feel, that it should be Language teachers. For them I think they think they should take what Language teachers have taught, and start from there. It's not for them to teach A, B, C; for them it's to teach D, E, F. G. That's how I understand it. But basically language teachers must. That's how I feel… Basically I would say both [IsiZulu and English] language teachers are responsible for [the teaching of reading], so that the other content educators won't have a problem" (Dumisani, Interview 1).

In effect, as evidenced by Dumisani (and to some extent, Bongani), the task of the teachers of languages is to level the ground for content subject teachers to teach content more effectively. Seemingly, content carries more currency than language. There seems to be no appreciation for the fact that content subjects have specific genres and jargon that language teachers cannot deal with or prepare for.

> To be an expert reader in a particular subject area, students need to come to understand the genres and conventions of that discipline. So in Natural and Social Sciences, for instance, understanding research reports … is one way to facilitate reading in these areas (Horning, 2007, p. 12).

It is the content subject teacher's (in this case, Natural or Social Sciences teacher's) duty to ensure that his learners are equipped to comprehend the content specific jargon, and not necessarily the language teacher's. But language teachers themselves seem content to carry the burden of this responsibility, as shown in Dumisani's suggestion above. The ambivalence to teach reading explicitly among teachers, particularly those of content subjects, can be traced back to the "tyranny of curriculum pacing" (Rose, 2004, p. 93) in our schools. Content teachers have the obligation to cover certain 'prescribed' topics within a

specified timeframe and time is hence of the essence. Any time devoted to teaching reading affects the possibility of completing the syllabus at a specified point, and as such, the onus of teaching the language aspect lies with the language teachers. Language teachers also have prescribed areas to cover, and so they themselves may sideline the teaching of reading. This dilemma presented by the sequencing and pacing of the curriculum, is aptly captured in the interview with another participant, Celani, a Grade 6 English teacher. He expressed a similar sentiment regarding who should be teaching reading at the school, when probed on this issue. He attributes it to some mythical belief:

> **CELANI**: There's this belief, as I have been saying earlier on, that reading is for language people only, like English and Zulu. Those are the only people that people believe they must teach reading in schools; only language people (Celani, Interview 1).

It is this "belief" that appears to be an unscripted code for teachers to teach or not to teach reading at the school, depending on whether one teaches content subjects or languages. Its source is as vague as its rationale. When challenged on the fact that language teachers also do not teach reading, similar to the content subject teachers, Celani's reasoning regarding this issue was equally vague. He stated: "They don't take reading as an important thing to teach. The only thing that they are taking seriously is the grammar and other things, but not reading specifically" (Celani, Interview 1). It is interesting that Celani separates the teaching of grammar from the teaching of reading, particularly within the context of second language teaching and learning. According to Rose (2005), this pedagogic practice is seriously flawed. Drawing from the Hallidayan SFL, Rose (2005) posits:

> In Halliday's stratified model of language, this polarization dissolves into different perspectives on the same phenomenon, from the stratum 'above' of meaning or discourse semantics, and from the stratum 'below' of sounding and lettering or phonology / graphology … It is the stratum between, of wording or lexicogrammar, that is typically conceived as what we are reading, since the written page consists of words organized into sentences.

Hallidayan SFL, for example, dictates that it is imperative for the context of situation and the context of culture to be understood in order to make meaning of what is written in a text. His version of SFL, grounded in linguistics, applies theories of functional grammar and discourse, concentrating on the lexico-grammatical and rhetorical realisation of communicative purposes embodied in a genre (Flowerdew, in Johns 2002, p. 91). From data extracted from the participants' learners in the study site, they have not benefitted from this understanding. The practitioners themselves appear to be devoid of this consciousness. Even The Sydney School, of which Halliday's has links, refers to the primacy of genre and register in the pedagogical process and firmly believes in language structure as being integral in the social construct of texts. Any attempt at separating grammar from the teaching of reading is misplaced. Interestingly, Cope and Kalantzis (1993), also influenced by The Sydney School, argued that the teaching of grammar in relation to genre was critical and necessary to empower learners from classes in which exposure to those genres (especially the powerful ones) was not to be assumed. Furthermore, the participants' insistence on the restriction of reading instruction to non-content areas is porous and lacks substance. When asked why practitioners think the way they do about the teaching of reading, Celani provides an unexpectedly vague response:

> **BAM**: ... What do you think is the reason why the teachers of science, mathematics and other content subjects think they should not be teaching reading?
>
> **CELANI**: Most teachers want to give information to the learners. They do not want learners to gather information for themselves. So that's their main problem when it comes to this situation. That's what I think (Celani, Interview 1).

What can be gleaned from Celani's answer is a methodological conundrum seemingly experienced by practitioners regarding the reading instruction. There is always an inclination to "give information to the learners" which ought to be fulfilled, and there is a concern that (the teaching of) reading has the potential to 'adulterate' this process of transmitting information. Rose (2005) observes that this is a phenomenon most prevalent in a teacher-centred mode, a hallmark of traditional pedagogy. Teachers feel obligated to present information to learners and then expect them to assimilate and use it independently. This is contrary to the learner-centred approach, where learners are expected to discover concepts for themselves. The ZPD, on the other hand, presents a perfect opportunity to harmonise the two orientations. It is for this reason that Vygotsky (1978, 1981) is a pivotal part of the theoretical framing discussed in chapter 3, and why Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology, which encapsulates the full essence of the ZPD, is a preferred curriculum intervention for the study site. In consolidation, that "Grammar and other things" is the information that must be given to learners, and reading is not, is by all accounts mythical and is not supported by any literature. Rose's methodology (an off-shoot of the Hallidayan SFL), for example, is described as "an explicit wholistic pedagogy" (Rose, 2011b) and as such contradicts this notion of fragmentation of the teaching of grammar and the teaching of reading, as implied by the participants. He proposes the 'scaffolding

interactional cycle' as the most intensive method for practitioners who struggle with this quandary. Contrary to the participants' perceptions, it guarantees that learners will be beneficiaries of the orientation on genre and field of the text even before reading it. An understanding among participants where the teaching of reading runs parallel to the teaching of content is therefore challenged through the curriculum intervention in the next chapter. Horning (2007) concurs that "hand-in-hand with the current renewed emphasis on student success and the resurgence of Writing Across the Curriculum, instructors in all disciplines need to refocus on Reading Across the Curriculum to address students' needs, to achieve instructional goals and to prepare citizens for full participation in our democracy". Part III looks at the study site's "student success" or lack thereof, and examines the role the teaching of reading played (or did not play) in that dilemma.

The practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays, as reflected in their interviews, reveals a deep-seated dilemma in appreciating how abstract knowledge is "semiotically mediated" (Vygotsky, 1981). This is important because it implies the need for emphasis on differentiated instruction and learning in the study site, a concept with which practitioners appear to be struggling. However, the unexpected change in perception as displayed by Bongani at the end of his interview provides hope - as after his steadfast conviction about who should be teaching reading at the beginning of the interview, he eventually warmed to the idea himself:

> Well, as I've said, when I was looking at the ANA questions and the way they set their questions when setting ANA, they [the learners] need a lot of understanding. The learner must read

> the instruction and understand what is required, and then they'll be able to answer; because what I discovered when I was marking my Maths scripts is that the things that I'm sure that they know, things that I've taught them, they couldn't answer when they were given to them, the reason being that they did not understand the instructions. So I think maybe starting from now onwards if I start focusing on reading and maybe introducing reading maybe even in Maths, maybe it will help. Yeah. (Bongani, Interview 1).

This appears to be a resolve necessitated by circumstance: his learners fail to read instructions and, therefore, fail to answer questions. Ironically, Bongani's ambivalence regarding the teaching of reading serves as an indication of his pragmatist stance as a teacher. He grudgingly ventured into the unthinkable and offered to "start focusing on reading … even in Maths". Evidently, not all of Bongani's learners are adequately advanced in their reading and understanding to be able to do well in Mathematics, as the previous ANA results revealed. Rose (2004, 2005) advocates for a reading strategy that will democratise the classroom and accelerate learner achievement across the board, irrespective of the background of the learners or subjects on offer. Democratising the classroom, for him, means that all the learners' reading, writing and discussions are at the same high level. It is an intensive process that involves planning to support all learners equally, a scaffolding interactive cycle and lesson sequence as well as the analysis of texts and planning lessons across the curriculum.

(b) Teaching practices of reading by practitioners

"A lot of studies … have examined teachers' poor teaching strategies in teaching reading as a major problem and call for a change" (Popoola *et al*., 2010, p. 146). During interviews, almost all participants struggled to answer the question where they were required to provide three factors they considered important for the

successful teaching of reading. Eventually, most of them mentioned the need for suitable reading material to be available for successful reading lessons, but the contention is: graded readers and other reading material on their own are not sufficient to teach reading. None of the participants referred to their ability (or lack of it) as one of the key factors in a successful delivery of a reading lesson. Anele is one of many teachers who are the victims of this mentality. Like her colleagues, Anele cannot bring herself to accept that her teaching methods are a hindrance to success in learning to read by her learners. Against the background of what is offered in the various theories discussed in this study (Bernsteinian, Vygotskyan and Hallidayan), culminating in the *Reading to Learn* methodology by Rose, Anele's tools to carry her learners through are somewhat suspect. She was probed on this issue:

> **BAM**: But do you think you are equipped to be able to teach reading successfully? (Silence) Have you been trained in any way to teach reading? Do you think that you are able to teach reading successfully in your class? Or do you think you will succeed in teaching reading in your class?

> **ANELE**: No, actually, the way I [teach] reading in my class, I'm not satisfied because I can see there is a problem with my learners; not all of them can read; most of them cannot read. There are few learners who can read properly (Anele, Interview 1).

First, Anele's response is not 'inward-looking' but is learner-focused. The learners' failure to read, according to her, is a reflection on the learners themselves and only marginally on herself, hence the statement: "I'm not satisfied because I can see there is a problem with my learners; not all of them can read; most of them cannot read". In terms of the Vygotskyan theory, there ought to be a robust support system to facilitate reading and comprehension that a practitioner should bring to bear in the class. In Anele's case, what appears to

be "a problem" is not so much with the learners as with the practitioner. The practitioner does not appreciate that she is neither an authority presenting information (traditional pedagogy) nor a facilitator managing the learning context (progressive pedagogy). She ought to be providing a zone and a scaffold to support learners to make meaning of texts. In the *Reading to Learn* methodology, for example, a practitioner utilizes the scaffolding method to support all learners to carry out the same high-level tasks, but provides the most support to the weakest learners in her class (Rose, 2005). That way, Anele could circumvent a problem where she remains with only a "few learners who can read properly". Anele thinks she can teach reading but wonders why most learners still cannot read. Towards the end of the interview, Anele provides a sense of what she does when she teaches learners to read:

> **BAM**: So how do you normally teach reading whenever you teach it?
>
> **ANELE**: Firstly I take out the words; I read the story for myself.
>
> **BAM**: Read the story to them?
>
> **ANELE**: No, I read it before I go to the class. I read the story and take out these few words, new words that they don't know, I take them, then we read them the words before the story, in the class. We read the words until they know them.
>
> **BAM**: Okay
>
> **ANELE**: Then when they know the words, that's where I can start reading the story with them. I read for them. They listen, maybe I read two times or three times. After that, then we read together, we read together and we form groups. Those who can read they read together and I help those who are struggling, reading maybe in, say, a group of three or group of four. Then we read together with them. The first groups that are able to read they read for themselves. And I go to those who are still struggling. I help them to read, yes, they read until they catch it, then they join the first group and [then I] go to the other group (Anele, Interview 1).

Throughout this detailed explanation, Anele seems to be applying what the progressivists have come to call the Immersion Theory (believed to be more suited for learners who come from advantaged backgrounds), where learners assimilate meaning of the content they are reading merely by reading and re-reading it. This is the opposite of the more traditional DI approach that she also uses when she "drills" them. She 'models' the reading for the learners: "I read for them. They listen, maybe I read two or three times". But her approach seems inadequate; there is a need for differentiated instruction. What appears to be a logical approach, and a middle-ground between her two approaches, is Vygotsky's ZPD or its progenitor – Rose's *Reading to Learn* – referred to above, possibly as the way to "help those who are struggling". This strategy is considered to be appropriate because it is engineered to provide support especially to the struggling learners. It scaffolds them in the 'trampoline effect' as discussed as per the title of this study. In Anele's description of how she teaches reading, learners are almost left to their own devices. There is, furthermore, no reference to the context of culture or situation. The concept of register is absent in her dealings with the text. It may well be the reason why her learners seemed to be "struggling". But Anele has a logical explanation for teaching reading the way she does:

> **ANELE**: I think maybe it's the way we were taught reading at schools.
> **BAM**: Which is how?
>
> **ANELE**: You will remember that we were reading the words, reading the words until you know them, those drilling methods that were used by our teachers.
> (Anele, Interview 1).

This explains not just her limitations as a teacher, but also the fact that she has not moved beyond the point where she was as a student herself. New methodologies emerge and older methodologies are transformed, adding new elements along the way to improve teaching. This participant, on the other hand, is still trapped in the past. As a teacher in the Foundation Phase (Grade 3) Anele appears to be oblivious of the fact that the majority of her learners come to school without the sufficient tools and knowledge they need to prepare them for the 'learning to read' process. As discussed above, this calls for a dedicated support system that will scaffold them as they learn, and the scaffolding interaction cycle as advocated by Rose (2004) is paramount in this regard. To begin the complex task of learning to read as well as to write will depend on the teaching abilities of a qualified teacher who can make use of what learners bring to school: their cultural schemas (Dorr, 2006; Hugo, 2010). Therefore, as a practitioner, Anele has an obligation not only to accommodate the 'social semiotic' of the learners' culture but also to create and maintain the zone where this learning takes place. This situation signals profound implications for teacher development and teacher education.

The teaching method implied in Anele's response, and which she claims to have adopted from her own teachers, is actually the 'look-and-say' approach, otherwise known as the whole-word approach, which is part of the Immersion Theory tradition, as stated earlier. Her own teachers employed this method and complemented it with the more traditional "drilling method". It has been labelled as a 'top-down' process where reading is concept-driven and where meaning comes before everything else. Readers first read words, then sentences and

eventually stories (Hugo, 2010). This is to be contrasted with Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology that is believed to have tools to democratise the classroom instead. Rose's methodology, including such tools as the scaffolding interaction cycle, is introduced to the learning site as a curriculum intervention. Accordingly, the learners' ANA results during the course of the intervention in chapters 6 and 7 will be discussed.

Dumisani, on the other hand, when asked to describe his experiences with learners when he taught them reading, replies: "It is very difficult. It is very difficult, because they are just looking at letters. It's like they are seeing ghosts of words" (Dumisani, Interview 1). Celani, on the same question, echoes Dumisani's perception: "Some of them they cannot even read at all. Yeah, it's very difficult. But some you can see that they are mentally challenged" (Celani, Interview 1). Clearly the expectation of the participants in the above examples is that learners automatically ought to be skilled readers at this level (Grade 6) of development. In their minds (and, perhaps, correctly so), Grade 6 learners should not be looking at letters and "seeing ghosts" or they will be deemed as "mentally challenged". Junior primary should have prepared them sufficiently to be able to learn from reading, they seem to argue. This gives credence to Bernstein's (1990, p.75) argument that "The age by which a child should be able to read is a function of the sequencing rules of the pedagogic practice of the school".

If one moves from the premise that by teaching learners skills of reading and writing from an early age (especially starting at home) one prepares them for future success (Rose, 2005), and it then follows that there is a significant number

of learners who are doomed to fail through no fault of their own. The participants' expectations here are ill-informed. It is almost impossible for learners who come from the community of the study site to learn to engage with reading before schooling, as required. The nature of their socio-economic status is such that no actual reading takes place at home. By the same logic, it is implausible to expect learners in the junior primary in these communities to engage in independent reading as prescribed in the reading development sequence, and for the upper primary learners learning to learn from reading, as expected (Rose, 2005). In this instance, learners are not "mentally challenged" when they appear to be "seeing ghosts of words". They actually require a supportive system along the lines of the scaffolding interaction cycle to teach them reading and writing skills explicitly so that the deficits accrued as a result of their unfavourable backgrounds may be addressed. Dumisani's and Celani's views show that they are themselves nothing more than the casualties in the discourse about the hidden and overt curriculum of education in as much as the learners are themselves the victims of the practitioners' teaching practices.

Having regard for these sequencing rules, these Grade 6 study participants lose sight of the disadvantage that underprivileges their own learners who, because of their circumstances, do not have the home background that affords them the privilege of an introduction to early reading and constant, systematic support like their elite counterparts. Unlike Bongani who is (unwittingly) unambiguous about the 'irrelevance' of the teaching of reading in his content subjects, both Dumisani and Celani blame the learners for their poor reading ability instead, and, by extension, the junior grade teachers like Anele. They do not refer to their

own inabilities to teach reading, or how, in fact, they teach it if they do, taking into account the often dismal background of their learners who come to school without the necessary tools that prepare them to learn to read in the first place. The teaching practices adopted by the participants do not recognise the contextual factors of learners. Their learners do not bring to school, as Rose (2004, p. 93) suggests, the "orientations to written ways of meaning that children from literate families acquire, in up to 1000 hours of parent-child reading … and junior primary activities do not give them this orientation". Unfortunately, they blame the learner instead of exposing them to the tools they require. Crucially, if the murky picture they paint is anything to go by, their learners have no experience of being taught how to read. In fact, how the participants expressed themselves in their responses to the questionnaires and in the interviews underscore how teachers generally and in this school in particular, value the teaching of reading. The issue of the value of reading forms the nexus of the next discussion.

(c) The value of the teaching of reading among teachers

Numerous studies have argued the benefits of reading instruction. Wigfield, Guthrie, Perencevich, Taboada, Klauda, McRae and Barbosa (2008), in particular, show that combining strategy instruction with other reading instruction methods also has value. But despite evidence of the benefits, it seems that teachers seldom teach reading strategies explicitly in many South African schools, thereby depriving learners of the strategies they need to create meaning when they encounter texts (Klapwijk and Van der Walt, 2011, p. 27). One of the most interesting answers to emerge from the interviews was the response to the

question: 'Do you think that teachers, in general, and in this school, in particular, view the teaching of reading as a major component in the learning and teaching process?' Bongani, responded: "No, of course not, because when I came to school and for my eleven years of teaching, I've worked with different people … So I really don't think they value reading that much" (Bongani, Interview 1). Clearly, Bongani's frame of reference is broad and covers a scope of eleven years of association with teachers who simply do not value reading or its teaching. Bongani provides further insight as follows:

> Maybe they lack, I don't know whether I'd say it's motivation in as far as reading is concerned. They don't understand the importance of reading because if they can understand that reading is important and maybe know the impact that reading may have in their teaching, maybe they will recognize it but unfortunately I don't think they do (Bongani, Interview 1).

This is further proof that there is barely any formal reading instruction in this school. For a variety of reasons, practitioners are not "motivated" to teach reading. Part of this can be attributable to the failure to recognise the "impact that [the teaching of] reading may have on their teaching". This observation by Bongani about the correlation between teacher behaviour and strategy impact is critical and has also been recorded in other academic literature. For example, Klapwijk (2012, p. 192) affirms: "Generally, research shows that for teachers to make sustainable changes to their instructional methods new implementations must adhere to specific principles, and importantly, must provide evidence that they produce results". It may very well be that teachers need convincing that adopting the teaching of reading across the curriculum will impact on the learning outcomes as a required motivation. There is a case to be made for the introduction of Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology in the study site. The context of the study site, the background of the learners, the practitioners, the

resourcing and, generally, the overall academic aura of the study site dictates that a change of strategy by practitioners in favour of the one that promises to address the study site's key challenges, need to be adopted. This discussion will be continued in the forthcoming chapters that look into the impact of the curriculum intervention that is focused on the teaching of reading in the research site.

Bongani's colleagues, Dumisani and Celani, both confirmed: "No, I don't think so", when they were asked the same question as Bongani above, about whether or not teachers value the teaching of reading. Dumisani explains:

> Eh, I don't think so because reading is not much done. Even if they do it, I think they rely more on the work schedules and the lesson programmes. They rely more on that. Because if I can say they do reading, then I would see some learners taking books, interested in reading. 'Let me take that book and read, let me take that book and read'. Instead what learners do is take some books and cut off some pictures. They are not interested in reading what the whole content of the book is saying (Dumisani, Interview 1).

It may well be that the teaching of reading "is not much done" and that it shows in the lack of interest associated with reading among learners. However, learners cannot be held as the scapegoats - it is impractical to expect learners to reach an acceptable reading level when in fact that value does not find expression in the practitioners' (teaching) practices. Independent reading is forged after numerous efforts of learning to engage with reading texts – starting in the home, before schooling. Without this, a radical teaching strategy to revolutionise reading among learners and placing it squarely on their learning agenda, across all disciplines, is critical. Any approach that falls short will most certainly prove inimical to the goal of learning from reading that senior primary is expected to

deliver on. The majority of learners from underprivileged communities will continue to lag behind, and practitioners will continue to look on helplessly. Crucially, in the above quotation Dumisani reveals what many teachers (mis)construe to be the basis for the teaching of reading: the reliance "on the work schedules and the lesson programmes". As revealed elsewhere in this study, this refers to the periodic allocations of reading time in prescribed work schedules and lesson programmes, which are provided for in the timetables at South African public schools, often targeting the languages. It has no reference to the teaching of reading across the curriculum. This is unfortunate because successful reading methodologies project reading as an enabler where the teacher utilises the scaffold to propel learners to mastery of key features of texts, and where more intensive analysis of texts affords epistemological access to a greater majority of learners, across the subject spectrum. Learners ought to experience the richness of text through highly sophisticated information, subtle and deeply embedded interactions among ideas or characters and a context dependent register in text, among other things. The practitioners at the research site have not taken advantage of these methodologies, nor have they inspired their learners in ways that will spur them on to success. The end-result of this is a generation of learners who will "take some books and cut off some pictures" because "they are not interested in reading what the whole content of the book is saying". Through all of this, they miss the opportunity to narrow the gap between themselves and their more elite counterparts.

(d) Unwritten 'codes' and myths regarding the teaching of reading

The participants have consistently revealed what could be regarded as unwritten codes and myths related to the teaching of reading in their interviews. The obvious myth discussed in the preceding discussion is the perception that teachers of languages are the only custodians of the teaching of reading. Without reverting to that discussion, it is important to emphasise the role of genre and register in the pedagogical process. Equally so, the participants have a responsibility to acknowledge through their practices that language is an integral part of all written texts, its social context and its function. This permeates across all subject disciplines. For this reason, it becomes important for the learners to be exposed to all those genres from the point of view of the subject concerned. In fact, Yusuf and Enesi (2011) and Chall *et al* (1990)*,* concur with the view that it is critical that such genres be taught by subject specialists themselves. The researcher, for his part, is not aware of any official policies that relegate the teaching of reading only to the teachers of languages. It remains one of the myths in education passed on without any substance, from one generation of teachers to the next. Accordingly, all the participants in this study implied in one way or the other that the teaching of reading is a matter for "language people".

The participants were also asked how many times they taught reading in a weekly cycle. The researcher sought to establish the policy or even the rationale that informed the frequency of reading lessons. Anele teaches it "twice or once a week", Bongani does not teach it at all, Celani states: "It's something I teach once

or twice in a [weekly] cycle … but sometimes". Dumisani's response is more intriguing:

> I would say once or twice because, basically, I look at what am I going to teach that week? Does it have reading more or it doesn't have reading more. If it does have reading more then it means I'll have to teach reading twice or many times a week but if it doesn't require me to do lots of reading then I won't do it (Dumisani, Interview 1).

As is evident from the responses of the practitioners, there is no clear-cut guidance to teachers regarding the teaching of reading. There seems to be no policy and no solid rationale guiding their choices. In fact, there appears to be no accountability related to teaching or not teaching it at all. Dumisani's response reinforces the notion that the teaching of reading is limited to how many times it appears on the timetable in a particular week. There is no indication that it is taught across the curriculum. This is in line with his reference to the "work schedules and lesson programmes" in an earlier discussion. Clearly, Dumisani invokes his proverbial cap as a language teacher – he also teaches IsiZulu – and not his other cap as a content teacher, where he presumably does not teach reading at all. As discussed elsewhere, reading pedagogy is a major part of what Bernstein (1990, 1996, 1999) refers to as the 'visible pedagogy'. It should be perceived as a strategy to achieve epistemological access for learners across the board and, as such, should not be bound by disciplines or time-tabling in schools, as is the case of the study site. The existence of an unwritten code that the teaching of reading is to be limited to the timetabled periods and specific subject areas in the research site is deeply entrenched and is a matter of considerable concern. It offers no solution for the disadvantaged learners who may desire to improve on the fortunes of their birth.

Furthermore, when practitioners were asked if they had ever assessed learners on their reading and comprehension abilities, Anele and Dumisani confirm that they used comprehension passages – spelling and dictation – to assess learners; Celani admitted to not doing it often. These are informal assessment tasks conducted on a random basis to check understanding in language lessons specifically. They do not extend to content subjects. They have no relevance in reading across the curriculum. This reinforces the notion of teacher inability and lack of appreciation and understanding of the underpinnings of genre, and how it should influence pedagogy. Bongani states that "That's when I do [associate myself with reading], because of assessment purposes. Otherwise for extra readings and all, no. My focus is not on that" (Bongani, Interview 1). Bongani clearly refers to (monthly or quarterly) formal assessment tasks that are prescribed for learners and which affect the learners' year mark. They also have no relation to reading across the curriculum. Bongani's attitude against the teaching of reading is exposed as a stereotypical code and myth that likens it to extra reading, which it is not. The teaching of reading has very little to do with "extra reading" but everything to do with ensuring that every lesson affords the learners an opportunity analytically to read texts. However, where there is a lack of policy direction, the situation tends to generate myths that eventually become codified into culture among teachers. The participants did not give the impression that they understood the importance of assessing reading. Seemingly it is done only as a requirement for progression or as some random, prescribed task, which it should not be.

Another myth that is prevalent among these practitioners is that the supply of reading materials, even the most suitable ones, will on its own, improve the teaching of reading at the school. Probed on this question, Anele responded: "Eh, I think if I can have the other graded readers [and], maybe the magazines, newspapers, our reading can be successful" (Anele, Interview 1). The researcher assumes that, given the earlier discussion on the understanding of practitioners on the teaching of reading, Anele requires this material for the 'language' reading lessons in her class. The bias of her being in favour of fictional texts confirms this assumption and demonstrates a further lack of understanding into the fact that her capability as a reading expert is the one element that she needs the most in her classroom. Otherwise, she would have recognised that texts could be drawn from any available book, in any relevant subject, to teach reading regularly – fiction or non-fiction. Dumisani points out that they lack basic resources at the school, and, despite this, are expected to deliver. Dumisani has a point: "The resources must be there" (Dumisani, Interview 1). However, like Anele, the fact that he places the unavailability of resources above his own ability to use the scarce resources effectively, is problematic. If Anele and Dumisani were to demonstrate that they are able to use meaningfully the meagre reading material that they have, and show results, it would justify their call to have substantial stocks made available to them. As matters stand, issues of inability, even by their own standards, cannot be ignored and need urgent attention. However, Dumisani is receptive to these factors:

> **BAM**: Finally, is there anything that I did not ask you about that you'd like to tell me about regarding the teaching of reading?
>
> **DUMISANI**: I would say if there are things that the Department can do in order to assist us as educators on how

> to teach reading, then that would be much appreciated. But if there is none then it means I, as an educator, have to find out some ways on how I can teach reading (Dumisani, Interview 1).

This is a call for help from the participant and a fitting time to implement a curriculum intervention. Dumisani's views echo the "serious help" that all practitioners called for in the discussion of the questionnaire in Part 1. In the next chapter data emerging from the study site during the implementation phase of Rose's *Reading to Learn* curriculum intervention will be analysed. As stated, Rose's methodology is believed to be a formidable teaching strategy that promises to offer practitioners like Dumisani the support required to assist learners in uninspiring contexts and lead them to academic excellence. This methodology was forged in similar struggles in other parts of the world and, accordingly, places the teacher at the strategic centre of the pedagogical discourse and processes as 'The Knowledgeable Other'. All data interacted with thus far in the study site have fallen short in revealing the practitioners as occupying that distinctive position in the pedagogic situation. Dumisani's views and those of his colleagues in earlier discussions bear testimony to this fact. Given this framework regarding the practitioners in the study site, their learners' 2012 ANA results in Grade 3 and 6 Literacy and Numeracy will be examined in Part III of this chapter, a process that preceded the curriculum intervention in 2013 and 2014 at the study site.

PART III

5.4 Pre-Intervention Data on 2012 ANA

This part of the study is a quantitative description of the 2012 ANA results in Grades 3 and 6 at the research site. In effect, ANA results are themselves a quantitative and numerical expression of the teachers' choices, mindsets, unwritten codes and practices as reflected on in the qualitative data above. How learners were able to provide answers to questions set for them as part of these assessments was not only a demonstration of the levels of their mastery of the subject contents in Numeracy (Mathematics) and Literacy (Home Language in Grade 3 and FAL in Grade 6), but also, a manifestation of the role played by their teachers throughout that process, leading towards the assessments themselves. This is regardless of the fact that ANA restricts its focus to only two subjects, when learners are taught four subjects (in the Foundation Phase) and six subjects (in the Intermediate Phase) respectively, "The choice of subjects to prioritise for monitoring has been informed by the recognition world-wide of Literacy and Numeracy as the key foundational skills that predispose learners to effective learning in all fields of knowledge" (DoBE, 2012a, p.4). The underlying premise here is that in order to measure how well learners perform at school, they must be able first to read and comprehend the language of the questions and then to follow specific instructions to reach a correct answer, regardless of the subject content, and the teacher is a pivotal role-player in this process. If it is accepted that Literacy and Numeracy are "key foundational skills that predispose learners to effective learning in all fields of knowledge", then it must equally follow that language teaching, and in particular, the teaching of reading, has a propensity to inform the academic achievements of learners across all subjects

as all "fields of knowledge" are subsumed and represented in Literacy and Numeracy. Informed by this notion, Part III contains a discussion on ANA results viewed against the background of the participants' orientations in their teaching.

From the point of view of data presented and discussed in Part I and II of this chapter, the most pertinent question that arises, therefore, is: 'to what extent are the ANA results, quantitative in nature, a representation of the thoughts and attitudes of practitioners at the research site, as the first key research question requires us to establish?' The expectation is that this data must demonstrate meaningfully the understanding of practitioners and their impact on the learners' achievements at the research site in 2012. However, to place the matter into perspective, it is crucial that the research site's ANA results be located within the broad contexts of the National, Provincial, District and even Quintile 1 scores in ANA 2012 generally. This is critical because the research site forms part of all these establishments. It is a Quintile 1 school at uMgungundlovu District in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Such a characterisation not only gives these results a semblance of comparability, but it also provides a graphic and unambiguous picture regarding the rationale for the study. According to the Department of Basic Education's (DoBE) report on the Annual National Assessments (DoBE, 2012a), the national average pass percentage in Grade 3 and 6 in the South African schools in 2012 is as follows:

SUBJECT	GRADE	Average PASS %	Average 50% Learners
Literacy (Home Language)	3	52	57
Numeracy (Mathematics)	3	41	36
Literacy (FAL)	6	36	24
Numeracy (Mathematics)	6	27	11

Figure 5.1: Representation of national averages of 2012 ANA (DoBE, 2012a)

This national picture is important as a benchmark for the research school. The 2012 national ANA results are not exactly flattering, considering that a sizeable proportion of learners did not even obtain a 50% or more pass mark in their subjects (as shown in the Average 50% Learners category above). The limited nature of the percentage of learners who obtained 50% or more is a serious concern, particularly in Grade 6 Mathematics, where it is an insignificant 11% and in Grade 6 FAL, recording 24%. Figure 5.2 below shows how the provincial average pass percentage compares favourably with the above results. In almost all instances, they (the provincial average percentages achieved by learners) better or equal those of the National average pass percentage. The same principle applies to the District averages in comparison to the Provincial averages. Comparisons among National, Provincial and District averages show an upward trajectory of scores, but when considering the Quintile 1 schools, such a trend deviates marginally lower. However, given the obstacles prevalent in these schools, that trajectory is nonetheless not quite disproportionate, as there is an expectation of a slight decline in Quintile 1 schools compared to other Quintiles. That notwithstanding, the research figures reveal that the research site averages,

which are based on raw scores from learners' answer scripts, differ substantially to the averages mentioned above. The figure below captures these stark comparisons. It has used the DoBE official provincial and district statistics (DoBE, 2012a) where the research school is located, namely KwaZulu-Natal and uMgungundlovu, respectively:

SUBJECT	GRADE	NATIONAL %	PROV %	DISTRICT %	QUINTILE 1%	RESEARCH[8] %
HL[9]	3	52	53.5	54.7	49.2	10
MATH[10]	3	41	42.2	44.2	37.8	18
FAL[11]	6	36	35.3	37.5	33.0	7.3
MATH	6	27	28.1	30.7*	49.6	06

Figure 5.2: National, Provincial, District, Quintile1 and Research Site ANA Pass % Statistics in 2012

Figure 5.2 reveals that, besides being below the national, provincial and district averages, the research school performed below the national average of other Quintile 1 schools as well. Whereas other Quintile 1 schools managed to remain just below the national average of all schools, the research site averages plummeted to below the 20's in all subjects. The reality is that the sample used to arrive at the national average is much greater in order to be able to compare meaningfully with the average of the research site, which has a total of less than 30 learners per class. Therefore, the purpose for flagging these figures is merely to illustrate the stark discrepancy, and nothing more. The comparisons will be

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[8] Research site pass percentage for 2012 is recorded in red.
[9] HL represents Home Language. In reference to research school HL means IsiZulu.
[10] Math and Numeracy can be used interchangeably.
[11] FAL is the First Additional Language; at the research school it is English.

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made between two or more results from the research site itself representing different yearly phases. The discussion now turns to the analysis of the research site ANA results, using the seven levels of achievement in line with the DoBE's Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Here the only focus is on the 2012 ANA of the school in the stated subject areas. In chapters 6 and 7 the same data will be examined against the 2013 and 2014 data, respectively, to determine the impact of the intervention at the research site.

Before one embarks on the analysis using the seven levels of achievement to determine how learners are clustered across all seven levels in different subjects and in different grades, one needs to indicate that these levels represent an officially recognized performance measure by the DoBE. It is used mostly in school reports to show parents how their children have achieved in particular subjects at a given time. Table 5.5 illustrates the distribution of learner achievement across the seven levels of achievements as envisaged.

RATING CODE	PERCENTAGE	DESCRIPTOR
Level 1	0–29	Not achieved
Level 2	30–39	Elementary achievement
Level 3	40–49	Moderate achievement
Level 4	50–59	Adequate achievement
Level 5	60–69	Substantial achievement
Level 6	70–79	Meritorious achievement
Level 7	80–100	Outstanding achievement

Table 5.5: Seven Levels of Achievement (DoBE, 2012a)

Below is a table showing learner performance from the research site distributed across the seven levels of achievement in Literacy and Numeracy, Grades 3 and 6. It indicates how learners scored in different subjects during ANA 2012. Different colours have been used to indicate various levels of performance. For example, green indicates levels of comfortable achievements, purple indicates borderline cases and pink represents a danger zone. At a glance, one is able to make informative readings about the state of performance of learners.

GRADE	SUBJ	L1 0-29	L2 30-39	L3 40-49	L4 50-59	L5 60-69	L6 70-79	L7 80-100
3	HL	9	3	2	2	3	3	0
3	MATH	11	2	2	2	1	2	2
6	FAL	21	2	2	0	1	1	0
6	MATH	28	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5.6: Distribution of learner performance across levels of achievement (Summary of ANA scripts, 2012)

According to Table 5.6 above, the first three levels (levels 1 – 3) represent the number of learners who have not obtained an adequate pass percentage. Only the learners in the green columns managed to obtain acceptable levels, scoring Adequate Achievement and above. Levels 2 and 3 are borderline cases that are likely to reflect in the overall average percentage of passes while, in fact, they are not adequate achievements. That is why it becomes important to base any satisfactory and meaningful achievement on the 50%-plus categories. In Grade 3 HL, for example, a total of eight learners achieved adequately out of a class of twenty-two learners. This accounts for only 36% of learners who passed adequately and above. The worrying trend as illustrated in Table 5.6 is that there

are fewer learners in Levels 4 – 7 than in Levels 1 - 3. The desired scenario is actually the opposite: fewer (or no) learners in Levels 1 – 3 and more (or all) learners in Levels 4 – 7. But in Grade 3 HL there is no learner in Level 7 at all. Similarly, Grade 3 Mathematics has only seven learners who obtained Adequate Achievement and above in a class of twenty-two. That accounts for only 31.8% of the learners. Conversely, 68.2% of learners could not obtain Adequate Achievement in Grade 3 Mathematics. Grade 6 seems dismal by all accounts. In Grade 6 FAL, only two learners managed to obtain Adequate Achievement in a class of twenty-seven. This means that 92.59% of learners failed to achieve an Adequate Achievement pass mark in FAL. In Mathematics, however, all twenty-eight learners could not achieve. This means that 100% of learners could not achieve above Level 1 in Mathematics Grade 6 and remain in the Not Achieved category, despite the fact that the Mathematics practitioner, Bongani, has a university degree in Primary Education specializing in Mathematics Education and General Science.

Because of the nature of the Mathematics results both in Grades 3 and 6, it is a good starting point to discuss these results against the background of the first key research question: 'What is the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic performance in Grade 3 and 6 at this school?'. First of all, the Mathematics practitioners' understanding as reflected in the questionnaire and in the interviews appears to be in keeping with the quantitative data (ANA results) as collected from the research site in 2012. There is sufficient evidence from the data to show that learners are not familiar with the process of reading and intensely engaging with mathematical

texts, as required. This was demonstrated when the learners either did not read instructions or if they did read these, they failed to fully comprehend most of the questions. The thinking held by some of the practitioners, that Mathematics "is numbers" and therefore unrelated to reading may have fuelled this. Questions need to be asked about the practitioners' commitment to providing the linguistic tools required by the learners to read questions intensively, gain cues from them, and answer questions accordingly. Learners were deprived of the opportunity to recognise the social semiotic in mathematical texts and denied exposure to delving into the intricacies of register of texts. By the Mathematics and other practitioners' own admission, content subject teachers, such as those of Mathematics, do not have to teach reading because it is a responsibility "for language people". There is a very specific register in Mathematics which would be imprudent to leave in the hands of the "language people" who are not specialist mathematicians. An example why teachers of Mathematics should teach reading finds expression in the prevalence of word sums[12] in the Mathematics ANA question papers. There is an observable pattern in the ANA results that learners fail these language-based mathematical questions. Language teachers are not equipped to teach word sums, unless they are Mathematics specialists in their own right; this is a genre that is unique to Mathematics and which can only be taught by the Mathematics specialists. It involves actively engaging with text in ways above the capability of the language teachers. Grade 6 learners at the research site struggled to answer these questions, resulting in

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[12] A word sum or word problem is a sum where vocabulary skills are used to answer a question or 'story', usually to address basic operations or similar mathematical concepts.

100% of them only managing a Level 1 of Not Achieved, as indicated in table 5.6 above. They could not read, comprehend, follow instructions and respond as required. The 2012 ANA Grade 6 Mathematics question paper had a total of eight word or related sums totalling seventeen marks and amounting to a 23% mark allocation of the entire paper. Table 5.7 depicts this phenomenon:

Question No.	1.1	12	13	22	23	26	27	29	Total marks	Total marks for the paper	Percentage
Mark allocation per question	1	2	3	2	3	3	1	2	17	75	23%

Table 5.7: Word sums in the 2012 ANA Grade 6 Mathematics Paper (Grade 6 ANA Paper, 2012)

Assuming that learners were familiar with intensive reading, they would have scored 23% of the marks in only eight questions, and then would have gone on to answer other questions to guarantee them an Adequate Achievement and beyond. Grade 3 also had a few of these sums, four to be precise, covering 5% of the Paper. Therefore some of the understanding of practitioners on the role the teaching of reading plays at the school, as gleaned from the data collected, is clearly counterproductive. Explicit teaching of reading, even in Mathematics, is a guaranteed measure to elevate learners to the desired performance trajectories. The starting point is an acknowledgement that Mathematics is a language of numbers with a variety of subtle genres, and that their intensive reading during the instruction phase is vital. It is important to note that this problematic situation is not limited to word sums only in Mathematics, nor is it limited to Mathematics as a discipline. It is inclusive of all other subject disciplines. This is

the case at all levels from junior school through to university. In Grade 6 FAL, for example, the situation is equally bleak:

Question No.	7.1	9.1	9.2	10.1	10.2	12	14.2	Total marks	Total marks for the paper	Percentage
Mark allocation per question	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	8	40	20%
No of learners who 'got' the answer	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN CLASS		28 LEARNERS

Table 5.8: Most poorly answered questions in 2012 ANA Grade 6 FAL (Grade 6 FAL Paper, 2012)

Question 7.1, which all the learners failed to answer, asked the learners to <u>read</u> the information given in paragraph form and to apply that information in a graph. Questions 9.1 and 9.2 were pure grammar questions which none of the learners managed to answer. Questions 12 and 14.2 required learners to change sentences to past tense and fill in blank spaces to complete sentences. Only two out of twenty-eight learners were able to do this grammatical exercise. This is despite the language practitioner, Celani, who in the interview stated that he spends more time on important aspects like "grammar and other things" as the reason why he does not teach reading often. Three learners out of twenty-eight answered questions 10.1 and 10.2. These questions required learners to "use their own words", an exercise that addresses vocabulary, a skill which the teaching of reading strengthens among learners. Notably, the only questions that more learners were able to answer correctly were questions 7.3 and 13 respectively, scoring even higher in the latter. Learners were requested to refer

to a graphic and a written text, respectively, to arrive at the answers. These questions did not impose substantial cognitive demands on them because of the 'trampoline effect' that these questions bear. A graph and written text in this context provide a mechanism for support, a scaffold, in keeping with Vygotsky's ZPD. But Grade 3, although showing a much better average compared to their Grade 6 counterparts, did not fare any better, considering that theirs is a HL compared to FAL in Grade 6. Grade 3 averaged 10% while Grade 6 averaged 7.5%. Only four learners out of twenty-two were able to sequence events in a story in question 4.

Again in question 6, barely five learners could demonstrate the creativity of story-telling required by the question which provided the introductory sentences. These were the two questions where the majority of learners performed poorly in Grade 3 HL. Interestedly, these are the questions with a direct leaning towards the teaching of reading, a task Grade 3 learners are supposed to enjoy and perform well in; story-telling and story-reading are central in the teaching and learning processes at the Foundation Phase where Grade 3 learners are located. However, the data suggest the severity of the problem with which the learners are faced as a result of the practitioners' attitudes, perceptions, pedagogic practices and the general myths that have been codified around the teaching of reading. A major pedagogical reconditioning is required if the practitioners are to play their critical role in the zone as the knowledgeable other. The learners need to be scaffolded, as the data findings show, with serious consideration to what Halliday's (1978) SFL calls "context of culture" and "context of situation". They may have to be more linguistically

explicit in their approach to texts (Halliday), they may have to approach the zone as a social experience (Vygotsky) and ultimately ensure that poor learners are emancipated (Bernstein) and therefore able to enjoy the learning experience. The view is held that the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays at the school in the target grades, as exemplified in the data both qualitative and quantitative, informed the status quo at the school in 2012 and provided the impetus for these poor results in Literacy and Numeracy in Grade 3 and 6 at the research site.

5.5 Conclusion

Chapter 5 is explorative; it presents and evaluates qualitative and quantitative data that was yielded through the responses to questionnaires, interviews and 2012 ANA assessments in order to answer the first key research question of the study. Data generated through these instruments suggests that the academic performance of learners presented in the form of ANA 2012 scripts is informed largely by the practitioners' (mis)understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in Grade 3 and 6 at the school. Practitioners, in their various ways hold distinct views, thoughts and attitudes as measures to influence the outcomes of learners in assessment processes like ANA. But as the evidence emerges, their insight and lack thereof have exposed extensive limitations both in terms of their capabilities as practitioners and in their relationship with other contextual factors attendant in their environment. The chapter further provides for a solid and informative framework that is necessary for the introduction of the curriculum intervention that is proposed for the school.

Chapter 6 frames as its major thrust the curriculum intervention and how it relates to the understanding of practitioners as discussed in chapter 5. Importantly, the chapter will include an examination of the data in order to explain the impact of the intervention in so far as it confirms or transforms the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic performance in Grade 3 and 6 at the research site.

Chapter 6

**How the *Reading to Learn* curriculum intervention transforms and/or
confirms the understanding of the practitioners.**

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 presents a detailed discussion of the data generated through
qualitative and quantitative research methodologies discoursed on in chapter 4.
However, contrary to the discussion in chapter 5 on the data generated in
response to the first critical research question: What is the practitioners'
understanding of the role the teaching of reading plays in learner academic
performance in grade 3 and 6 at the school?, Chapter 6 centres on the data
generated through the second critical research question: Does the intervention
confirm or transform the practitioners' understanding of the role the teaching of
reading plays in Grades 3 and 6 at the school?

As was the case in the previous chapter, the discussion of the research findings in
this chapter draws on the concepts and terminology from the three theories
formulated by Rose to develop his methodology, *Reading to Learn*, as discussed
in chapter 3. It does so by first engaging with data generated through interviews
and the written work of the learners performed during the implementation
phase of Rose's methodology, from February 2013 to September 2014 of the
curriculum intervention. Secondly, such engagement occurred by means of a
detailed discussion of the Grade 3 and Grade 6 2013 ANA results at the study
site, once again as part of the intervention phase. A comparison between the
2012 and 2013 ANA results is undertaken in this chapter to reveal further
imports as yielded by the data findings. The chapter concludes with an analysis

of the impact of the intervention on the teachers' understanding of the role of reading on the learners' broader academic performance in Grades 3 and 6.

PART 1

6.2 Data on the practitioners' understanding of the intervention

The essence of the practitioners' understanding of the role that the teaching of reading plays in the learners' academic performance is captured in their responses to interview question 1, which is: Do you think the *Reading to Learn* methodology played a role in your learners' academic performance? From her Grade 3 (Foundation Phase) perspective, Anele had the following to say in response to the question as given above:

> **ANELE**: As far as I'm concerned and in what I've seen in my class, it is very effective because my learners can read, they can write, they can even act or dramatise what they have been reading in the stories. They can do many things that enable them to express themselves (Anele, Interview 2).

This occurrence is not atypical of a Foundation Phase class in a functioning, properly managed, well-resourced school. Within the context of the school under study, and the perennial challenges it faces (see chapter 4), this is remarkable. This response, furthermore, is in sharp contrast to Anele's responses to interview questions during the pre-intervention phase (see chapter 5). In her earlier interview she expressed her frustration with her learners' performance as well as her own teaching practices. At that time, when she was asked about her ability to teach reading, her response was:

> **ANELE**: No, actually, the way I [teach] reading in my class, I'm not satisfied because I can see there is a problem with my learners; not all of them can read; most of them cannot read. There are few learners who can read properly (Anele, Interview 1: Chapter 5, Section 5.3b).

After the intervention commenced, she seemed to have gained self-confidence and her learners appeared to be responding to her new approach, as is evident in her comment on *Reading to Learn* and its impact:

> **ANELE**: What I can say is that *Reading to Learn* has opened my eyes. I was teaching reading, but I can see now that I was doing nothing. I was just playing with the children. Now I can see what I am doing. And it is very exciting to see that your learners are doing what you need them to do at that particular time (Anele, Interview 2).

This bold statement is the clearest indication that the *Reading to Learn* methodology is enabling her to provide the necessary tools and resources required by her learners in the classroom discourse. The intervention has transformed the understanding of her role from an uncertain and dissatisfied practitioner into a bold and confident one. This transformation is critical in the context of the study because it reinforces the centrality of the role the teaching of reading plays in enhancing learner's academic performance. Such a transformation, furthermore, reveals the extent to which the teaching of reading is a fundamental pedagogic resource that cannot be ignored in formal education. In Bernstein's (1990, p. 53) terms, "beyond the book is the textbook, which is the crucial pedagogic medium and social relation". Anele's Grade 6 colleague, Celani, corroborates her assessment of *Reading to Learn* and comments: "I think yes, it is effective. It gives more chances to children to know how to read and write as well" (Celani, Interview 2). Dumisani's understanding of *Reading to Learn*, however, as much as it concurs with that of his colleagues, adds a dimension that reveals his deep-seated ambivalence of the methodology:

> **DUMISANI**: My take is that it can be effective if you put in the right time because if you apply it, basically, you need to have a lot of time. You can't just say you are doing this now then you break and come back and do that. After you have mastered it,

it can be effective. The first point you have to do you have to master it, after you have mastered it you can try to implement it. And it will depend on the type of learners that you have in order for it to be effective (Dumisani, Interview 2).

These are critical issues mirroring the general attitudes prevailing in education circles the world over, and which *Reading to Learn* is designed to counter. That the intervention's success depends on the applicable complexities of the context, such as "the type of learners that you have in order for it to be effective", to use Dumisani's words, is being challenged by Rose (2004). To critique Dumisani's notions, it may be argued that he does not think beyond the realms of sequencing and pacing of the curriculum. The 'prepare', 'task' and 'elaborate' format (the foundation for the *Reading to Learn* pedagogy), particularly in Detailed Reading as described in the scaffolding interaction cycle, initially takes up too much time for someone who is concerned about 'finishing the syllabus' at a specific point during the year, as implied in Dumisani's understanding above. The irony with the obsession about completing the syllabus at the expense of developing a learner's reading ability is that, even if such a syllabus is completed, it is debatable whether meaningful learning would have taken place. The fact that the *Reading to Learn* stages build a solid basis, initially albeit slowly, in order to accelerate learning later, is not clear to Dumisani during this phase of implementation. His second issue: "it will depend on the type of learners that you have in order for [Rose's methodology] to be effective", reveals that Dumisani has deep reservations about learners who are too disadvantaged to cope with the demands of the methodology in his subject. While Dumisani's concern has merit, it is ignorant of the methodology's core principle and the reason for its development. In Rose's (2005, p.131) words, the methodology "has

been developed in response to current urgent needs, particularly of Indigenous and other marginalized learners, to rapidly improve reading and writing for educational access and success". Thus, the context of his learners should not be a make-or-break factor. In fact, the methodology is intended to alleviate the effects of the context of learners such as his by reshaping the classroom discourse and challenging the distributive rules. Bongani surprisingly expresses approval regarding the methodology:

> **BONGANI**: If we talk about the effectiveness of *Reading to Learn*, yeah it is very effective because it's more learner-centred, but also the teacher has a lot to do. I mean, it involves all the parties that are involved in teaching and learning. So it's a good method of teaching, and it also improves the reading skills of our learners, which is the most important thing (Bongani, Interview 2).

This is a crucial understanding of the *Reading to Learn* methodology, considering the ideological struggle between progressivist and traditional pedagogies. Bongani places Rose's methodology where it belongs - between the progressivist theories that promote 'immersion' and the more traditional approaches where the teacher was believed to be the 'fountain of knowledge'. In this position, it provides a 'third way' and takes advantage of the strengths of the two orientations, in line with one of its founding theories: Vygotsky's ZPD. Importantly too, Bongani identifies the improvement of the "reading skills of our learners" as the cornerstone of Rose's methodology, an objective all learning must aim to achieve. This is important because it underpins the entire *Reading to Learn* methodology, that what we learn, we learn from reading and that what we write is an application of what we have learned from reading (Bernstein, 1990; Rose, 2004). So strong was the belief in Rose's methodology that Bongani, like most content subject teachers, formerly a fervent opponent of the teaching of

reading (see Chapter 5) before the *Reading to Learn* methodology intervention, had gone full circle. Not only did he transform his view about the teaching of reading being the responsibility of the language teachers, he also became a strong advocate for the centrality of the teaching of reading in formal education. During a lengthy interview, he was asked if there was anything he would like to add regarding the *Reading to Learn* intervention implemented at his school. He replied: "… if this programme can be introduced to other schools as well, it works for us and I think it will work for other people as well. Otherwise no, there is nothing else that I want to add" (Bongani, Interview 2). This shows how the intervention has been able to transform the understanding of this particular practitioner's views on the teaching of reading within the schooling context. Bongani, however, was not alone in calling for the extension of the *Reading to Learn* programme to other schools. Dumisani made a similar plea:

> **DUMISANI**: I would ask the Department to make sure that this programme, this methodology, if they could make sure that all schools use it and educators. If we can get support on that because I do understand that there are some things that do have to be tried and tested but trying this methodology now and seeing how it is helping me and my learners, I'd say I'd put a stamp on the Department and say let us try this. I am not shying away from other methodologies that the Department was using, but let's try connecting them with this one, with *Reading to Learn* and see how we move forward, especially in our disadvantaged schools, because the medium of instruction, through *Reading to Learn*, it is made easier. That's how I will add (Dumisani, Interview 2).

Like Bongani, Dumisani is confident that the *Reading to Learn* methodology can help other schools in the same way it was "helping me and my learners", a resounding vote of confidence for the methodology, by all accounts. Of even more importance in the responses of the participants, is the recognition that *Reading to Learn* has something special to offer, "especially in our disadvantaged

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schools". The point of Rose's methodology is to galvanise an educational 'revolution' informed by the reality of poor academic performance in schools located in underprivileged communities, and Dumisani seems to acknowledge its impact here. Bernstein (1990) remarks that underprivileged children are being doubly disadvantaged by the current structure of the educational edifice that privileges the wealthy. Dumisani tacitly confirms that the *Reading to Learn* methodology represents another pedagogic device, this time to correct the untenable discrimination against the underprivileged by disallowing them access to the elaborated code of the vertical discourse, thus limiting them to the restricted code (Bernstein, 1975). To reinforce the notion of poverty and disadvantage, none of the participants could claim the active involvement of the community, especially the parents, in the education of their children, a consequence of this social structure. Even support for *Reading to Learn* is, for these parents, largely irrelevant.

> **CELANI**: Actually I can say, the community that we are working in, they are very poor and I think they are not involved at all. They don't do follow-ups even after school hours with their children. Sometimes they don't come even to our meetings. I don't think they are involved at all (Celani, Interview 2).

Celani's observation is quite prevalent in extremely disadvantaged communities where it is a rarity to find parents who take a keen interest in the education of their children. These communities often have more urgent issues of life and death to deal with. For those reasons, it is unrealistic to expect impoverished communities to provide a meaningful second "site of acquisition" (Bernstein, 1990, p. 78) at home, beyond the normal oral culture and indigenous knowledge systems. It is for this reason that, in such communities, the school remains the only site available for any significant upliftment. It thus remains an unrealistic

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and elitist assumption that the children of the poor must learn from the home environment and Celani's statement is a subtle reference to this phenomenon. *Reading to Learn*, therefore, takes on the challenge to bridge the divide between the learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and the privileged, and to revolutionise how learners from the former are assisted to learn. Anele's response re-enforces this view effectively:

> **ANELE**: When you give them homework or when you give them something to read at home, other parents have [tried to help learners], although most of our children live with grandmothers. So they sometimes find difficulties in helping them. But because we have this *Reading to Learn*, most of the time they are used in (*sic*) reading. There are [only] few children now who have some problems in reading, especially in my class (Anele, Interview 2).

In these environments, some parents either leave (their children in rural areas) for the cities in search of work opportunities or die early for various reasons. Providing tuition at home for their children is almost impossible. Thus, the *Reading to Learn* methodology provides hope for these learners, and Anele's response above affirms this point. This is another compelling representation of how the intervention has helped to shape Anele's thinking. Anele attributes her learners' improvement to Rose's methodology, and so too her colleagues. Bongani was asked if his learners thought they were improving their skills. He stated:

> **BONGANI**: For them, they cannot tell you that they are improving their skills but for me, as an educator, I can see that slowly they are getting there, they are improving. I once spoke to my principal and he also discovered that there is a slight improvement in these learners (Bongani, Interview 2).

This participant, who initially did not support the *Reading to Learn* initiative, believed from what he had observed that *Reading to Learn* improved the

learners' skills, albeit slightly. Of significance, however, is Bongani's observation

that the improvement was happening slowly: "it's a slight improvement". This is

true, because the way that *Reading to Learn* is structured is such that progress is

slow at the beginning, as pointed out earlier. This is important for later when

acceleration begins to take effect and the gaps are eliminated because the basis

has been established. Celani also hints at 'slow improvement' when responding

to the interview question on whether or not learners evince any academic

improvement:

> **CELANI**: Yes, some of them. Not all of them that are
> improving. But some of them you can see that they are coming
> slowly but surely.
> **BAM**: How do you know this? What is the evidence?
> **CELANI**: Their results. What I can say, when it comes to their
> tasks and assessment, you can see there and then if you're
> taking the style of *Reading to Learn* of doing these
> assessments that they are improving here and there (Celani,
> Interview 2).

The observations of Bongani and Celani become even more important when

considering Dumisani's earlier assertion that it takes time for the teacher to

master this methodology, and that it becomes effective only when the teacher

has mastered it. It is interesting that the three Grade 6 practitioners hold the

view that improvements as a result of the *Reading to Learn* methodology are

'slow' for learners. Dumisani concurred with his two colleagues, but provided a

different slant:

> **BAM**: Have learners' reading outcomes improved since the
> school started implementing the *Reading to Learn*
> methodology?
> **DUMISANI**: Some. Some not. Some have improved. Some have
> not improved.
> **BAM**: Their reading outcomes?
> **DUMISANI**: Yes, their reading outcomes, but to those that
> have not improved I'd say basically it is not up to them to
> improve. I would say, their problems are more deeper (*sic*)

than the education system itself or *Reading to Learn* itself
(Dumisani, Interview 2).

In his reference to learners with learning difficulties, Dumisani's conviction that

for learners who have not improved their skills, "their problems are more deeper

(sic) than the education system itself or *Reading to Learn* itself" can be

interpreted in two ways. First, it may be seen as praise for the impact of the

Reading to Learn programme. That is to say, it has the ability to improve any

learner's skills; for those learners who do not show any immediate

improvement, they will improve with time (i.e. the methodology can work for

them too). However, it also may be seen as a resurgence of a deep-seated belief

(understanding) held even before the intervention, regarding learners with weak

reading abilities who are "just looking at letters. It's like they are seeing ghosts of

words" (Dumisani, Interview 1) and to which his counterpart, Celani, suggested

that they were "mentally challenged" (Celani, Interview 1). The "more deeper"

problems may very well be a reference to a common tendency by some teachers

to label learners as having learning barriers, much too soon.

The fact is that during the intervention, the participants are attempting to both

master and apply the methodology simultaneously. Even though they claim

seeing some results, with the exception of Anele, they do not claim full mastery

of the methodology. It may well be that the learners who have not shown any

improvement are unable to do so because they are still in the process of coming

to grips with the new way of reading or that their teachers themselves are still in

the learning phase of the implementation; perhaps when they have mastered it

sufficiently, it will reflect in the learners' abilities. This is a valid assumption

because the *Reading to Learn* methodology has been used successfully even in contexts where learners have particular reading problems. In the disaggregation of the 2013 ANA results later in this chapter, this issue of the improvement of learners' reading skills as a result of the intervention by means of Rose's methodology is further explored.

Another understanding that has been either transformed or confirmed by the intervention at the study site is the manner in which participants explain how their learners respond to the *Reading to Learn* methodology. When Anele was asked if her learners enjoyed the programme, she responded:

> **ANELE**: They enjoy it a lot. This *Reading to Learn* has made me to understand all my learners in the class.
> **BAM**: Do they feel like they are improving their skills?
> **ANELE**: Yes, they are improving and they are very proud. Those who can read are very proud; they even want to help those who are lacking (Anele, Interview 2).

Anele's admission that she "understand[s] all [her] learners in the class" and that "those who can read are proud" are manifest as a result of the reconfiguration of the pedagogic discourse in her class. It is a tacit admission that before the intervention she did not necessarily understand all her learners, and that pride hardly formed part of the discourse semantics. Apart from this, the fact that her learners "even want to help those who are lacking" is very important. It places emphasis on Vygotsky's (1978) conception of 'the more knowledgeable other' in his Social Development Theory. This refers to instances where an adult, a teacher, or even a better-equipped peer, can provide assistance to a (struggling) learner, as exemplified in Anele's response. On the same subject of the learners' response to the methodology, Celani also described how his learners respond as a consequence of the *Reading to Learn* pedagogy in his classroom:

> **BAM**: Do you think your students enjoy the *Reading to Learn* programme?
> **CELANI**: Yes. A lot.
> **BAM**: How do you know that?
> **CELANI**: The way they raise up their hands, the way they want to answer me back, to respond from the text. Yes, I can say, definitely that they do enjoy it.
> **BAM**: Do you think they are improving their skills?
> **CELANI**: In a way, I can say that. The way they are doing, it is clear that this thing is helping them a lot to understand the words, especially the difficult words that they don't understand, words of the similar meanings, all those things like adjectives, yes. That's what I can say. They are improving a lot (Celani, Interview 2).

That learners "are very proud" (Anele, Interview 2) and "they raise up their hands, the way they want to answer … back, to respond from the text" (Celani, Interview 2) can be attributed to the intervention and to Rose's scaffolding interaction cycle, a pedagogic approach he borrowed from Vygotsky (1978). This is where learners who are ordinarily inept, or suffer from a low self-esteem (a typical feature at the study site), suddenly regain their confidence when they realise that they are supported in answering the teacher's questions. The following written work by learners where they had been asked to write factual texts after going through Rose's scaffolding interaction cycle at the study site, is a clear demonstration of the challenges the practitioners have to deal with, but importantly also, of the possibilities of the *Reading to Learn* programme:

Name: Ndumiso Shange
Factual Text

- *Natural resources is the things that are important to the people to survive on land like water, tree, dams etc.*
- *People we need water, tree, dams.*
- *Natural resources can help people to live on land to get vegetable to healty body.*

Figure 6.1: A sample of a Grade 6 learner's written work

Name: Thembani Dlamini
Factual Text

1. *The people need Natural Resources and get resources to survive land like tree, dam, water.*
2. *Natural resources can help people to live land*
3. *The tree give & use Natural resources survive as we need the resources*
4. *A water give Natural resources survive the people*

Figure 6.2: A sample of a Grade 6 learner's written work

Two learners have preferred to write the texts as notes. This is probably a result of the prevalent model of writing that they experience, namely, notes on the board, and their lack of experience in using those notes to write coherent extended text. Some of the learners wrote on a previous text about a healthy diet and combined it with the issue of protecting natural resources, namely, Sthabile Zulu and Samkelisiwe Dlamini.

Name: Sthabile Zulu
Factual Text

As we a Humans we need a healthy food and a healthy body because healthy things is specialy to us. We need to eating a vegetables and fruit and carbohydrates and proteins and dairy. And we need to drink water every day.

these things is help us to stay healthy and strong humans and we need to protet trees because trees because trees is give us air a fresh air. Natural resources is a special we do not abuse natural resources.

A healthy diet is a balanced diet. When you eat the correct amounts of each food group every day, your body will get all the nutrient and energy it need.

Figure 6.3: A sample of a Grade 6 learner's written work

Name: Sthabile Zulu
Factual Text

Natural Resources another time a helping us for get energy and to get food the soil give us some food. To do work the body need helthy food to get energy like fat, carbohydrate, proteins and dairy, vegetables and fruit.

As we a human we need a healthy food and a healthy body because healthy things is specially to us. We need to eating a vegetable and carbohydrate and we need to drink enough water every day. We need to eating with a limit. People need natural resources to " live", we think of animal. Animal need some grass to eat and other thing.

These thing help us to live healthy and stay strong as a humans and we need to protect trees and animals Because we need fresh air. Natural resources is special we may not abuse them.

Figure 6.4: A sample of a Grade 6 learner's written work

This is innovative and that they make these connections must not be dismissed as irrelevant. However, one wonders about the instructions they were given, or whether they made these connections on their own. Generally, besides those who wrote notes, learners were able to write fairly coherent arguments on the issues around the careful management of natural resources. Some were able to write a clear thesis. For example, Sandile Zulu wrote on 'People always need Natural Resources to live', and then supported this thesis:

Name: Sandile Zulu
Factual Text

People always need natural resources to live. We must think of our children because other's natural resources can gone or totally depleted. We must use this natural resources carefully not waste them

The reason for this is that there is only certain amount of oil or gold that exist under ground. Whe we use natural resources we must consider how much we going to use without harming the envarent. While there are other resources that are renewable while means they can grow again. To prevent this happening wemst you use with a scale wich mean we must not wascet them.

Figure 6.5: A sample of a Grade 6 learner's written work

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The second paragraph clearly signals a relationship between the previous paragraph and the second with 'The reason for this …', 'reason', 'this' referring back to the end statement in paragraph 1 'We must use this Natural Resources carefully not waste them'. Conjunctions are also used e.g. 'When'; 'While'. Persuasive modality is used 'always need'; 'must'. It also points to the need to build a variety of resources to express degrees of obligation and certainty. Most of the writers used paragraphing to separate different parts of the argument and support. Cohesion was also evident in the writing of Sandile Zulu, Samkelisiwe Dlamini and Sthabile Zulu, although it is evident that much more regular work needs to be done in the writing of factual texts. It is evident that exposure to the *Reading to Learn* methodology has enabled some learners to write a factual text supporting a thesis, with some understanding of the structure/stages and a developing understanding of paragraphing and cohesion. There are obviously gaps in the understanding of grammar and spelling patterns. These examples again point to the need for regular exposure to the detailed reading and writing cycle of key texts and genres across the curriculum.

These findings reveal the difference that the *Reading to Learn* methodology is making at the study site, in particular how the scaffolding interaction cycle, as informed by this methodology, ensures that the teacher supports all learners to operate at much higher levels than they would normally do independently, by consistently providing cues during the reading process. This is further supported by the teacher's elaborations to deepen the learner's understanding, leading to more challenging tasks, such as these factual texts. This scenario is metaphorically described in the title of this study as the "Trampoline

trajectories", where all the learners, even the weakest, enjoy the rewards of affirmation. These instances build their confidence and become a major source of academic excellence, especially for learners from underprivileged backgrounds, and for whom validation and affirmation is an almost non-existent occurrence. Dumisani makes a similar observation:

> **BAM**: Do you think your learners enjoy the programme?
>
> **DUMISANI**: Of course, they do enjoy the programme, especially when they cut and paste, they do enjoy the programme. And it helps in vocabulary. They do enjoy the programme because for them, I think, because *Reading to Learn* says you lead learners, you do not expect them to know the answer, you lead them towards the answer. So they do enjoy that, for them I think they feel like it's like they are coping, in a way. You lead them to the answer. They do not just find the answer on their own. The teacher leads them to the answer, so I think that is why they enjoy it (Dumisani, Interview 2).

Accordingly, when on the one hand, you have a teacher who is willing to "lead them towards the answer", and you have, on the other hand, all the learners in the class "raise up their hands", and become "proud" of what they can achieve, "feel like they are coping" and "enjoy it", then that is an embodiment of the "zone of proximal development" in action, the Vygotskyan theory, one of the three theories which informs Rose's methodology. From the sentiments expressed by practitioners in Chapter 5, this is a transformation that, arguably, the intervention brought about, and that it was not present during the pre-intervention data generation stage. The end-result is that, like a trampoline, the zone provides a necessary base from which learners are then scaffolded to more complex texts (or genres) within their age or grade level. But, as Anele discovered, sometimes the consequences are even more positive than expected:

ANELE: If you can come to my class, if you can give them any English book they can read, any IsiZulu book they can read, even these Grade 6 readers they read them, Grade 4 Grade 5 readers they are able to read them, although they have those slight mistakes where they need you to correct them, but they are very proud of themselves in reading (Anele, Interview 2).

Evidently the *Reading to Learn* methodology has afforded Anele's learners an opportunity to interact with texts that derive from grades beyond the Foundation Phase, a level at which her learners are supposedly operating. This is a clear 'subversion' of the regulative rules ("who may transmit what to whom and under what conditions"), recontextualising rules (that "pedagogic discourse selects and creates specialized pedagogic subjects through its contexts and contents") and evaluative rules ("the key to pedagogic practice is continuous evaluation [and] evaluation condenses the meaning of the whole device") of the pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 1996, p. 42–50). What Anele reveals in the above extract is an example of accelerated learning once a teacher masters the approach, a pivotal feature of the *Reading to Learn* methodology. This is crucial because it demonstrates the importance of the practitioners' experiences in their interface with this methodology within the context of the key research question being answered in this chapter. Apart from this, there are other experiences where practitioners engaged with the *Reading to Learn* methodology to make for interesting reading.

6.3 Practitioners' experiences of induction into the methodology

Initially, Anele was not merely content with the theory and practice that was mediated by the *Reading to Learn* South Africa (see a discussion on this in Chapter 4 section 4.3) at the research site, she also participated in other network groups on the *Reading to Learn* methodology outside the school setting and was

becoming a role-model for others. She relates some of these occasions with a sense of pride:

> **BAM**: What other professional development or networking support have you engaged in during your implementation of *Reading to Learn*? ...
>
> **ANELE**: For now I have networked with other educators, for example, since we've been having the workshop during the holidays we've have met with lots of educators, some of them do not know about this *Reading to Learn*, they are interested, they wish that you can help them. And I was very proud that I was also the part of this workshop and I presented some lessons to them. It was awesome for me. You find out some other educators take your numbers; they want to contact you if they have some problems when they are doing their planning. It's interesting (Anele, Interview 2).

This appears to have become a personal mission to be an expert in this methodology. Anele attended networking workshops, gave lessons, shared personal contact details with other teachers who might need her support and sacrificed her vacation to attend the workshops. As a result of this level of motivation, Anele's self-confidence was regenerated: her emboldened teaching practices, her keenness to take more risks with her learners and, ultimately, an improvement in the academic performance of her learners.

In the Intermediate Phase (Grade 6), however, it seems as though even the *Reading to Learn* facilitators were still in the 'teaching mode'. They were work-shopping the participants on how the methodology works, even though, according to the original research plan, this was supposed to be the 'during the implementation' phase of the curriculum intervention, a step Anele had long since passed in the Foundation Phase. The researcher engaged Celani on this issue:

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> **BAM**: What criteria do you use in choosing texts for study for the *Reading to Learn* programme? (Silence) You've used the *Learning to Read* programme a number of times, so you obviously choose a text that you use for *Reading to Learn*. What criteria do you use? (Silence) How do you know that this is the text that you must use?
>
> **CELAN**I: In most cases, when they give us practice, they come with their texts?
>
> **BAM**: So they choose the texts for you?
>
> **CELAN**I: Yes.
>
> **BAM**: So you've not chosen the texts for yourself?
>
> **CELANI**: Yes, we have. They then take it away and bring it back having worked on it, analysed it and then expect you to teach it in the exact manner they have broken it down, word for word. Another problem is that they don't give us the free role when you are doing it in class; they just want us to repeat their words.
>
> **BAM**: But you do it even when they are not at the school, I assume?
>
> **CELANI**: But when they come to observe, they prefer that we repeat exactly their words. For me, that is really problematic (Celani, Interview 2).

Celani's response suggests that the facilitators appeared to do most of the work during the implementation phase to assist the Grade 6 practitioners. They were involved in text selection, text preparation, and even in directing the mediation procedure. Celani's understanding is that the *Reading to Learn* facilitators are too intrusive in their support for the practitioners, a sentiment that was not raised by Anele. In the process of mastering the methodology, the Grade 6 practitioners seemingly became frustrated that they had to use the 'exact words' that the facilitators had selected for them as part of the text choice. Dumisani echoed these sentiments as well:

> **DUMISANI**: For me, all I need now is just one revision training and just maybe about four observational lessons, then I will be done with the programme because there were minor things that I saw that they were a negative impact [in his earlier employment of the methodology]. Like, when you [are] about to present … the lesson, some facilitators they want to spoon-feed you on what to say and how to say it. But in some other lessons you do need to have your own way of saying it to learners so that they could understand. But in some other texts they just want you to say exactly as they said it [in their notes] whilst you are teaching different kinds of learners. Some understand, in other words, some do not understand (Dumisani, Interview 2).

I proposed to call this a 'frustration phase'. This phase suggests that a practitioner is in a learning curve and has not fully grasped what he/she is dealing with. From the two evidence samples above, it would seem that the practitioners were still being guided in the use of the *Reading to Learn* methodology. In other words, they had not as yet fully mastered the methodology that they were implementing in their classrooms during this phase. Given these responses, it is clear that this is not their understanding. As far as they are concerned, the facilitators were intrusive. These sentiments, understandably had a direct bearing on the learners' educational outcomes in the assessments, as the ANA results discussed later in this chapter will reveal. Significantly, Rose (2010) asserts that practitioners need a minimal period to master and be able to implement the methodology. Working with teachers from the Australian Aborigine community, who were conducting two or three lessons a week in a year, Rose made improvements of major proportions (Gray, Rose and Cowey, 1998; McRae, Ainsworth, Cumming, Hughes, Mackay, Price, Rowland, Warhurst, Woods, & Zbar, 2000).

The contrasting experiences on induction to Rose's methodology by the Foundation Phase practitioner, on the one hand, and the Intermediate Phase practitioners, on the other, assist the practitioners to formulate certain notions about their own practice. In fact, the impact of the methodology on their two groups of learners, Foundation Phase (Grade 3) and Intermediate Phase (Grade 6), respectively, point to nuanced levels of success. Anele outlines one such experience and its impact:

ANELE: … There are [only] few children now who have some problems in reading, especially in my class because Grade 2 – the children I have now – have been doing Grade 2 and their class teacher was also the part of this *Reading to Learn*. So I find it very easy and interesting (Anele, Interview 2).

The former teacher of Grade 2 (the class Anele inherited as Grade 3) also used the *Reading to Learn* methodology. This makes it "very easy and interesting" for Anele as it ensures continuity. Therefore, Anele's understanding, informed (and confirmed) by the intervention itself, is that continuity across grades and phases is a crucial aspect in the *Reading to Learn* pedagogy, and this is what she intended to extend to the Intermediate Phase. She notes:

… we have a little problem that the educator who was there [in Grade 4] last year is gone, so the one who is there now is just new in this *Reading to Learn*, we are still trying to help her with it. But when they get into Intermediate Phase they continue doing it (Anele, Interview 2).

As shown above, Anele is troubled about the developments in the Intermediate Phase where a Grade 4 teacher was lost to the school. She understood that her efforts in Grade 3 would go to waste if the continuity was not ensured in the Intermediate Phase, hence "we are still trying to help [the new Grade 4 teacher]", as she puts it. But she has gone to extra lengths to equip herself on the methodology, including looking beyond the languages (where she believed the teaching of reading resided 'pre-intervention'). She points out:

ANELE: Yes, we use *Reading to Learn* in all our subjects because I've also attended the workshop for Mathematics and *Reading to Learn*. So I have some ideas on how to implement *Reading to Learn* in Mathematics, Life Skills, English and Home Language (Anele, Interview 2).

It is clear that Anele's grasp of the methodology was improving, and the fact that she applied this methodology across the curriculum could only be ascribed to the

intervention. In a sense, the intervention has transformed Anele's earlier thinking expressed in the previous chapter, that the teaching of reading is a competency for languages. Dumisani, on the other hand, still had some doubts about the fundamental principle governing the implementation of the *Reading to Learn* project. For example, he was still uncertain and debating whether or not *Reading to Learn* is applicable in Economics and Management Sciences (EMS). As much as he was trying he could not apply it satisfactorily in EMS. He states:

> **DUMISANI**: Because the package that *Reading to Learn* comes with, it's sort of different. You have to prepare for the lesson, after you have prepared the lesson, make sure that your preparation goes hand-in-hand with what you are about to teach. You will find that some texts are too difficult and in some texts *Reading to Learn* will work, in some others it won't work. Take, in particular, EMS. For EMS it just deals with facts. It just says: this is this, and this is that. So *Reading to Learn*, in that way, it does not particularly fit in that way with EMS. But, in some other learning areas, it does fit, because the terminology that is used in EMS is 'commercial' in a sense. And you don't find that we have some English explanations that will fit in that, while *Reading to Learn*, when you compare it in other learning areas, it will have some terminology that will fit when you work with it (Dumisani, Interview 2).

It may be argued that Dumisani's view of the *Reading to Learn* methodology is misguided and is the antithesis of all that it stands for: the teaching of reading across the curriculum. Dumisani was clearly still in what can be described as the "frustration mode', testing the methodology and having some success in some areas and not so much in others. It is not atypical during the implementation phase of the intervention for such discrepancies to prevail. It is, furthermore, part of the mastery phase. For example, when the researcher asked him about the criteria he applied in the selection of texts, Dumisani stated:

> **DUMISANI**: That one it is difficult because when you choose a text you have to make sure that the text that you choose goes hand-in-hand with the curriculum.... But so far, at the moment, I am using the methodology in Maths, and I am trying it in EMS because basically

those are the two subjects that I teach in Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase because *I've had this training for Maths which I've seen that after I've used it these kids are responding because there were some things that I was leaving behind because I was thinking that it was not going to fit to them*. After having been trained on how to use the methodology of *Reading to Learn* in Maths, applying it, now I've seen that the kids are responding because what they said there was that whatever they say, you must always write it. Now, in some other texts I would say this and not write it, but now there I will see that no the child has difficulties in that, now that I've started this method of writing and make sure that whatever I write I say it and whatever I say I write. For them there is a linkage that the teacher wrote this, so it means what the teacher wrote is what he said. There is that linkage now (Dumisani, Interview 2).

By Dumisani's own admission, the *Reading to Learn* training he received in Mathematics was already showing results, and hence "these kids are responding". This is a remarkable understanding that the intervention assisted him to arrive at. He also placed the blame on himself by suggesting that, before the training he was "leaving behind" some 'things' "because [he] was thinking that it was not going to fit to them". In effect, his presumptions that certain things were "not going to fit" were still harboured in EMS. They were harboured in Mathematics and were dealt with in the intervention training in the same way that they would be dealt with in EMS training, resulting in learners "responding" in EMS too. The fact of the matter is that these assumptions and presumptions, these understandings, are confirmed or transformed, as the case may be, for Dumisani at least, because of the intervention. These assumptions indicate work-in-progress in terms of Dumisani's grasp of the methodology, and, cumulatively, they impact on the Literacy and Numeracy scores of learners in ANA (see Chapter 5, Part II).

PART II

6.4 During-Intervention Data on 2013 ANA

Part II is a presentation of the quantitative description of the 2013 ANA results, following a discussion on the 'pre-intervention' phase in the previous chapter. It is a portrayal of the intervention phase that took place in 2013 at the research site that will later be followed by the post-intervention phase in chapter 7. It covers the scope of Literacy and Numeracy in both Grade 3 and Grade 6 of the research site. It also reflects on the numerical data to answer how the practitioner's understanding has been confirmed or transformed by the curriculum intervention at the study site in the form of Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology. As demonstrated in chapter 5, the premise is that the academic performance of learners epitomises the understanding of the practitioners who teach them. Numerical data is used in this chapter to depict how the practitioners' understanding has been confirmed or transformed by the intervention at the research site in Mathematics (Grade 3), Home Language (Grade 3), Mathematics (Grade 6) and First Additional Language (FAL) (Grade 6). Therefore, the curriculum intervention is a major factor in the comparison between the achievements of learners in 2012 and 2013. The practitioners are the same as those in 2012, teaching the same subjects that they taught in those years. The difference is in the groups of learners and slight variations in the ANA papers.

Based on the comparisons of the academic performance of learners in the 2012 and 2013 ANA, the emerging results suggests that there has been a marginal improvement at the research site in 2013 since the introduction of the *Reading*

to Learn curriculum intervention. As discussed in Part I of this chapter, these ANA results are a reflection of the practitioners' confirmed or transformed understanding of the role of the teaching of reading in Grade 3 and 6 at this school. The overall pass percentage per subject in ANA over the two successive years in these two Grades is illustrated in Table 6.1 below:

SUBJECT & GRADE	2012 AVERAGE %	2013 AVERAGE %	IMPROVEMENT %
Mathematics Grade 3	18	25	7
Home Language Grade 3	10	23	13
Mathematics Grade 6	6	23	17
First Additional Lang Grade 6	7,3	25,2	17.9

Table 6.1: Before and after intervention comparative ANA scores of learners in 2012 and 2013

As the above table indicates, there has been an improvement in all four subjects since the school implemented the currriculum intervention in 2013. Grade 3 Mathematics improved from an overall pass percentage of 18% to 25%, an increase of 7% during the intervention. Grade 3 Home Language improved from 10% to 23% during the intervention, a significant improvement of 13%. Grade 6 Mathematics increased by a substantial margin of 17% to 23% from 6% in 2012. Grade 6 FAL showed another substantial improvement of 17.9% to 25.2%, up from 7.3% average. Figure 6.6 presents these improvements in a graph:
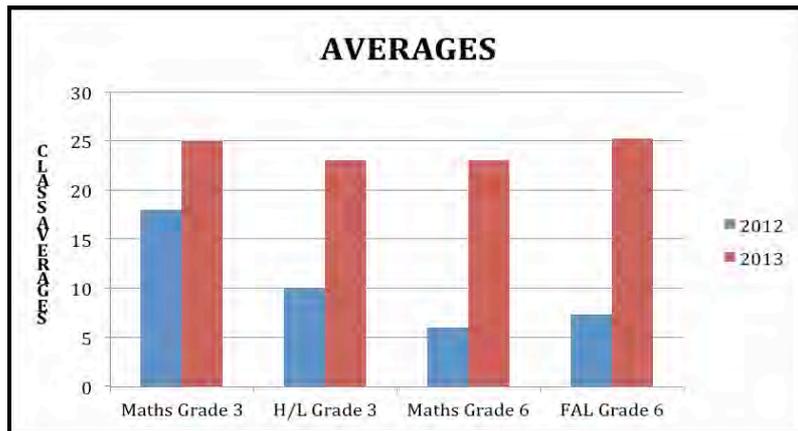
Figure 6.6: Before and after intervention representation of 2012 and 2013 ANA results at the study site.

This graph suggests that the improvements that occurred in the Intermediate Phase (Grade 6) reflect a higher percentage than those that were obtained in the Foundation Phase (Grade 3). This is misleading, however, as it is not accommodative of the relevant context. A comprehensive comparison between Grade 3 and Grade 6 results suggests that there was a marginal shift by a significant number of learners from one low level to the next (low level) in Grade 6. But in terms of a qualitative shift, more learners advanced from lower levels to the higher levels of achievement in Grade 3 compared to Grade 6. In Grade 3, a significant number of learners moved into the 50% range and above, ('Adequate Achievement' up to 'Outstanding Achievement') than in Grade 6. In Grade 6 the improvement is merely attributable to a shift from a 'Not Achieved' to an 'Elementary Achievement' range in modest numbers. Therefore, Grade 3 has achieved a more commendable performance than Grade 6. However, Rose (2004, p.93) explains this:

> Independent reading and writing is fostered in the junior primary by an overt curriculum focus on class and individual story-telling, on letter-sound correspondences and letter formation, on writing stories based on personal experience. However, for a significant proportion of students, these

activities do not provide the independent reading and writing
skills necessary for learning from reading in upper primary.

What the above scenario establishes is the Bernsteinian notion that schooling is itself a 'pedagogic device' to instruct and regulate classroom discourse and consequently, to exclude learners from underprivileged backgrounds. Such a notion is relevant and persists even during this implementation phase of the curriculum intervention at the learning site. This is further underscored by the fact that "after early years, explicit teaching of reading falls away; the focus of teaching is now more on learning the content of the curriculum, and less on the skills needed to read it" (Rose, 2010, p.104). For example, Grade 3 learners are exposed to four subjects where reading forms an integral part: English FAL, IsiZulu HL, Life Skills and then Mathematics. According to the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)* (DoBE, 2012d), in the higher primary schools learners are taught up to six subjects (down from eight subjects in recent years). Most of these subjects are the so-called 'content subjects', tacitly reducing opportunities for the reading skills curriculum. Therefore these Grade 3 and Grade 6 scores must be seen against the background of the odds against which the practitioners operate, especially as they deal with learners from a disadvantaged context. In fact, these results are best understood when analysed according to the seven levels of achievement, showing the actual migration of learners from one level to the next. That way, an attempt to compare the performances of the two grades is likely to present a fair disposition.

Furthermore, the distribution of learners in terms of the seven levels of achievements becomes useful in providing the much-needed context and

explication regarding where the clusters of learners are located within the continuum of performance. Again different colours will be employed to show different levels of achievement. For example, 'Pink' refers to a 'danger zone', 'Purple' means 'borderline' and 'green' indicates '50% and above'. Table 6.2 illustrates the distribution of Grade 3 learners according to levels in Mathematics.

LEVEL	L 1	L 2	L 3	L 4	L 5	L 6	L 7	TOTAL NO. OF
RANGE	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-100	LEARNERS
Grade 3 Mathematics 2012	10	5	2	2	1	2	0	[22]
Grade 3 Mathematics 2013	1	2	3	4	6	8	5	[29]

Table 6.2: Distribution of learners according to levels of achievement (Grade 3 Maths)

As shown in Table 6.2, whereas in 2012 under half (ten) of the twenty-two learners were located in Level 1 ('Not Achieved'), only one learner remained in this category in 2013. In fact, a mere six learners in 2013, as opposed to seventeen in 2012, did not obtain 50% and above. There is a satisfactory spread across the distribution table, with larger numbers of learners: six, eight and five, represented in the 60% to 69%, 70% to 79% and the 80% to 100% categories, respectively. The majority of learners, twenty-three out of a possible twenty-nine received 50% and above pass percentage. Figure 6.7 captures this substantial improvement in graph form:
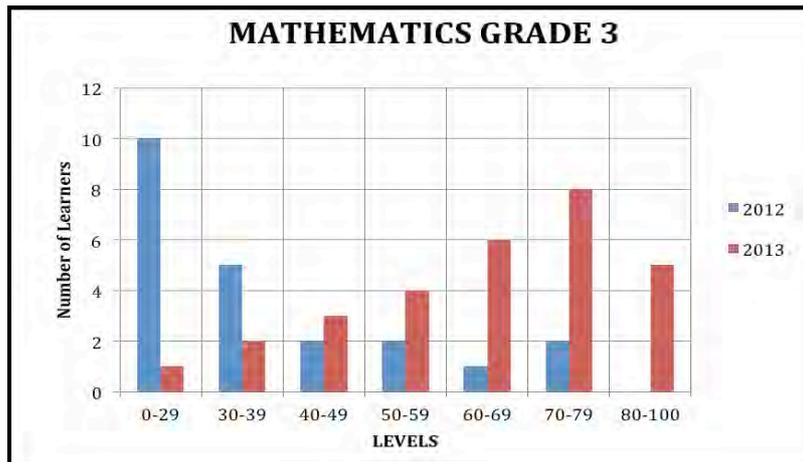
Figure 6.7: Graphic representation of Grade 3 Mathematics according to levels

As Figure 6.7 indicates, the colour 'Red', which represents the performance of learners in 2013, is dominant at higher levels, whereas 'Blue', which represents 2012, is most predominant in lower levels, particularly level one (0 to 29%). Apart from the fact that the Grade 3 (and Grade 6) Mathematics ANA paper is generally language-driven and requires a thorough analytical reading of the language of the questions to arrive at an answer, it also includes 'word problems', as discussed in the previous chapter. In chapter 5 it is argued about the correlation between the 'mathematics' of the word problems and their 'language'. Compared to 2012, in 2013 there seems to be a notable improvement of learner-performance on questions that deal with this specific mathematical genre, since the introduction of the *Reading to Learn* intervention at the school. Table 6.3 illustrates this point:

Question	7a	7b	8a	8b
2012 marks	1	1	1	1
Total marks scored by learners	9/22	1/22	5/22	3/22
Question	24.1	24.2	19	20
2013 marks	1	1	2	1
Total marks scored by learners	24/29	17/29	41/58	1/29
Percentage of improvement	41.8%	54.1%	47.9%	−10.1%

Table 6.3: Comparative analysis of 2012 and 2013 'word problems' in ANA Grade 3

Question 7a (2012) and 24.1 (2013) required the learners to solve similar word problems. Whereas in 2012 at least nine out of twenty-two learners answered the question correctly, in 2013, twenty-four learners out of twenty-nine arrived at the correct answer, a difference of 41.8% in improvement. This trend also continued in questions 7b and 24.2, as well as questions 8a and 19. Questions 8b and 20 are the only exceptions, where results show the opposite of a small margin in favour of 2012. Other than these, in questions 22.1 and 22.2, both word problems, learners received 40 out of 58 possible marks, and 16 out of 29 marks, respectively. This is an indication of how the intervention impacts on the academic achievements of learners during the implementation phase in 2013, in keeping with Anele's understanding (the Grade 3 practitioner) in her second interview, as detailed in this chapter. Grade 3 Home Language also makes for interesting reading. It indicates similar patterns as Grade 3 Mathematics above. Table 6.4 illustrates this as follows:

LEVEL	L 1	L 2	L 3	L 4	L 5	L 6	L 7	TOTAL NO. OF LEARNERS
RANGE	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-100	
Grade 3 HL 2012	8	4	2	2	3	2	1	[22]
Grade 3 HL 2013	7	3	3	2	3	3	9	[30]

Table 6.4: Distribution of learners according to levels of achievement (Grade 3 H/L)

Of the twenty-two learners who wrote Grade 3 HL in ANA in 2012, fourteen received 'Not Achieved' (eight), 'Elementary Achievement' (four) and 'Moderate Achievement' (two), which translates into approximately 64% of learners who did not receive 'Adequate Achievement': an unsatisfactory result. The rest of the learners were spread across the range, with only one learner achieving in the category level 80% - 100% ('Outstanding Achievement'). In 2013 during the

intervention, however, seventeen learners obtained 50% and above, with at least nine learners achieving in the 80% - 100% range. This is a fairly admirable improvement from the 2012 scenario. Unfortunately seven learners remained in level one ('Not Achieved') category. This is a fairly substantial number of learners, regardless of the overall success rate achieved. Figure 6.8 illustrates as follows:
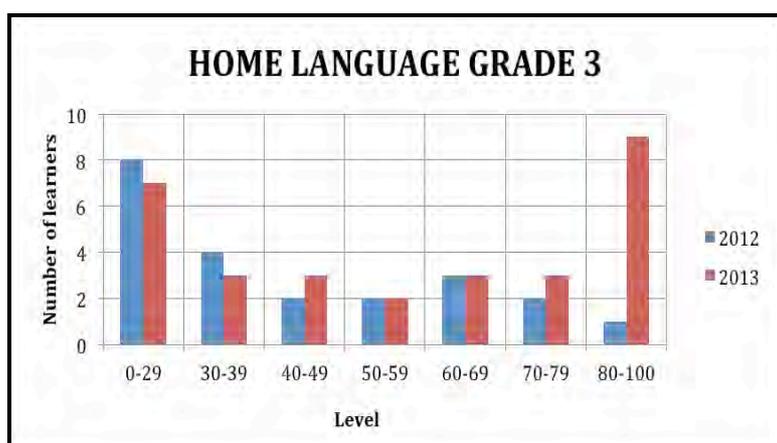
Figure 6.8: Graphic representation of Grade 3 HL according to levels

The Red column in the 80-100% category clearly signifies the extent of the improvement in a category where there was only a single learner in 2012. With the exception of level one, which remains unjustifiably high, other categories also show a fairly satisfactory spread of achievement. A closer look at the questions themselves in Grade 3 HL reveals a continuation of this encouraging trend. For example, question 4 was the worst answered question by the learners. The subject was IsiZulu HL and literally translated, the question required the learners to "Show the sequence of events in the story. Use numbers 1 through to 4 in the boxes provided to show that sequence of events" (Grade 3 ANA Question Paper). This question lends itself well to the teaching of reading (a narrative text) because it requires learners to sequence events in the story they have read.

In 2012, only four learners out of twenty-two were able to answer this question correctly. In 2013, with the intervention on course, twenty-four out of thirty learners answered a similar question, with an improvement of 62% in one calendar year. Again, in 2012 at least twelve of the questions out of twenty were failed by more than half of the learners, with eight questions being passed by between six or less learners; that is: 60% of the questions where more than half of the learners struggled to answer. Table 6.5 below captures a sample of these questions that learners could not answer in 2012:

QUESTIONS IN THE GRADE 3 HL QUESTION PAPER (2012) DIRECTLY TRANSLATED	LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE (CLASS OF 22)
4. Show the sequence of events in the story (this question has just been discussed above) (4marks)	4 learners achieved only 1 mark each
6. Based on the story you have just read, why did Nandi want to hide her diary? (1 mark)	5 learners out of 22 achieved this mark
8.1 Write the following sentence starting with the given word: Learners are sitting quietly in the library. **Yesterday** …. (1 mark)	6 learners could complete the sentence
11. Write the following sentence using the correct punctuation marks: when is your brothers birthday (1 mark)	5 learners could use punctuation marks correctly

Table 6.5: A sample of basic questions that Grade 3 struggled to answer in their own HL in 2012

As illustrated in Table 6.5 these questions required the learners to be adept at reading or at least to display some ability, which most of them were not able to do, unfortunately. However, this scenario changed in 2013. Only six out of twenty-seven questions had more than half of the learners answering incorrectly, which is about 22% of the questions. At the very most, twelve out of thirty learners (40%) failed any question in 2013, at any given point in Grade 3 HL. When we compare that with the eighteen out of twenty-two learners (81%) who failed to answer question 4 on sequencing events in a story in 2012, the difference is clear. This is crucial in the context of the critical research question

that this chapter attempts to answer. It is also in line with the qualitative data that is discussed in Part I of this chapter. Anele, the only Grade 3 practitioner, has been consistent in her adaptability to the *Reading to Learn* methodology throughout the discussion of the intervention in this chapter. Anele is dealing with learners in the 8 – 9 age group. Most of these learners have only attended two years of formal schooling, and, as stated in Part 1, were taken through the *Reading to Learn* methodology in Grade 2 as well. Coming from less literate backgrounds, they do not have any meaningful resources to take part in their classroom discourse, except for the resources offered by their teachers at school. Importantly, they do not have too many habits to unlearn as a result of the many years of the overt curriculum as codified in the contents of the school syllabi. Anele's understanding seemed to confirm both the theory implicit in the intervention and the practice; in the process she appears to transform her 'pre-intervention' sentiments that could be seen as problematic assumptions, and this is reflected in her leaners' academic achievements. She has shown constant enthusiasm towards the intervention programme and the willingness to go the extra mile to prepare herself and others, as the discussion of data reveals. Her Grade 6 Mathematics counterparts could not equal her high standard. The situation is slightly different, as Table 6.6 indicates:

LEVEL	L 1	L 2	L 3	L 4	L 5	L 6	L 7	TOTAL NO OF
RANGE	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-100	LEARNERS
Grade 6 Mathematics 2012	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	[28]
Grade 6 Mathematics 2013	19	6	0	0	0	0	0	[25]

Table 6.6: Distribution of learners according to levels of achievement (Grade 6 Maths)

From Table 6.6, it is clear that the intervention appears to have made some minor impact on the academic performance of learners. A total of twenty-eight learners making up 100% of the class fell into the 'Not Achieved' category (0 to 29%) in 2012. In a 2013 group comprising twenty-five learners, nineteen learners remained in the 'Not Achieved' category; only six learners moved into the category of 'Elementary Achievement'. Whilst this is an improvement from 2012 where every learner failed to achieve, 'Elementary Achievement' is not optimum; these learners remain far removed from at least the 50% category of 'Adequate Achievement'. Grade 6 learners are 12 to 13 years old and have been through formal schooling system for a minimum of five years, excluding the Grade 6 year (of *Reading to Learn* intervention), and possible class retention in some years. They have to contend with five years or more of learning damage to be undone so that learning in new content areas can be optimised. The backlogs are fairly large and much too deep to contemplate. Grade 6 teachers are not as fortunate as their Grade 3 counterparts. This mediocre picture is captured in Figure 6.9:
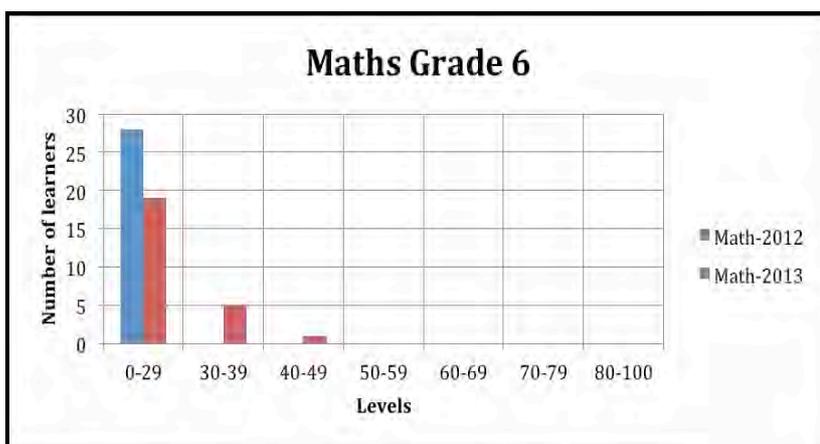
Figure 6.9: Graphic representation of Grade 6 Mathematics according to levels

The drop in the Blue column into a shorter Red column in the category 0-29% is a welcome development, as much as the emergence of a Red column in the 30%-39% and 40%-49% levels. However, the scarcity of learners in 40%-49%, as well as the complete lack of learners from level 50%-59% through to 80%-100%, five categories in all, is disconcerting. It rendered even the minor showing of improvement in the 30%-39% and 40%-49% to be insignificant. A closer look at this 'improvement' reveals an even more unfavourable picture, as exemplified in Table 6.7 below:

2012 Word Problems	Q.12	Q.13	Q.22	Q.23	Q.26	Q.27	Q.29	Total
Total marks scored by all learners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total no. of learners X Marks = Expected Marks per question	(56)	(84)	(56)	(84)	(84)	(28)	(56)	
Mark Allocation out of 75 Marks	2	3	2	3	3	1	2	16
2013 Word Problems	Q.8	Q.11	Q.21	Q.26				
Total marks scored by all learners	2	2	0	0				4
Total no. of learners X Marks = Expected Marks per question	(50)	(75)	(50)	(50)				
Mark Allocation out of 75 marks	2	3	2	2				9

Table 6.7: Illustration of Grade 6 performance on Word Problems in 2012 and 2013

Table 6.7 indicates that there is barely an improvement worthy of note between 2012 and 2013 during the implementation phase of the intervention in terms of the performance of Grade 6 learners in 'word problems' in spite of a noticeable reduction of the number of these sums in the 2013 ANA paper. In 2012, questions 12, 13, 22, 23, 26, 27 and 29 were all 'word sums', totalling 16 out of 75 marks of the paper, a total percentage of 21. Below are some of these questions:

WORD SUMS (QUESTIONS)	YEAR	MARKS	LEARNERS' MARKS
12. A car travels at 100 km per hour. How far will it travel in 45 minutes?	2012	2	NIL
13. Mr Msebenzi buys 480 sweets for R30,00. He repacks the sweets into the packets of 24 each. He sells the packets for R2,50 each. How much profit will he make if he sells all the sweets?	2012	3	NIL
22. Mirriam left Durban at 21: 45 and arrived in Johannesburg at 04: 30 the next day. How long did her journey take?	2012	2	NIL
23. Tamara invited 37 friends to her party. Each friend may drink two glasses of cool drink. If each glass holds 200 ml, how many 2-litre bottles of cool drink should her mother buy?	2012	3	NIL

Table 6.8: A sample of 'word sums' in the 2012 Mathematics ANA Question Paper for Grade 6

As indicated in the above table, none of the learners obtained any in the sample. During the intervention in 2013, questions 8, 11, 21 and 26, 'word problems' altogether weighing 9 out of 75 marks, were again not achieved sufficiently by the learners, even though a minimal improvement was registered.

WORD SUMS (QUESTIONS)	YEAR	MARK	COMBINED LEARNERS' MARKS
8. Susan buys a school bag for R65,81 and a pencil case for R18,23. How much change should she get if she pays with a R100 banknote?	2013	2	2 (50)
11. During a school trip 785 learners were transported in buses. How many buses were used to transport all the learners if each bus could transport a maximum of 65 learners?	2013	3	2 (75)
21. Draw a reduction of the rectangle on the grid so that the size of the new rectangle is a quarter of the size of the original one.	2013	2	0 (50)
26. The grid below shows the sketch of a rectangular garden which must be fenced. The squares on the grid are each 1,5 long. What is the length of the fence around the garden?	2013	2	0 (50)

Table 6.9: A sample of 'word sums' in the 2013 Mathematics ANA Question Paper for Grade 6

Evident in Table 6.9 is that a combined 4 marks was obtained by learners in the four questions on word problems in the 2013 Grade 6 ANA Mathematics Paper. While this is better than a collective zero by the 2012 learners in the word sums (see table 6.8 above), it is too marginal to record as a serious gain. As a class of twenty-five the learners could have collectively achieved maximum scores of 50, 75, 50 and 50 marks respectively in the four word sums above, as shown in

Table 6.9. A combined 2, 2, 0 and 0 is grossly insufficient. It represents an insignificant improvement and confirms the understanding of the practitioners during the implementation phase - that improvement is "slight" and "slow" in Grade 6. It was earlier alluded to the daunting challenge faced by the Grade 6 practitioners in reversing the learning habits of learners that span many years. The whole schooling organisation with the emphasis on content rather than skills, especially at this Intermediate Phase level also contributes to the lethargic movement forward in learner performance during the implementation phase of the intervention at the school.

In Grade 6 FAL the trajectories point in the right direction. The 2013 ANA results show an encouraging picture in the learner-performance compared to 2012. Table 6.10 encapsulates this:

LEVEL	L 1	L 2	L 3	L 4	L 5	L 6	L 7	TOTAL NO. OF
RANGE	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-100	LEARNERS
Grade 6 FAL-2012	22	4	1	1	0	0	0	[28]
Grade 6 FAL-2013	12	4	4	3	1	1	0	[25]

Table 6.10: Distribution of learners according to levels of achievement (Grade 6 FAL)

As shown above, in 2012 there were a total of twenty-eight learners who wrote ANA. Twenty-two of them received a 'Not Achieved' level. That accounts for just over 78.5% of the learners who failed to achieve. Of these twenty-eight learners, only one could achieve a score of 50% and above ('Adequately Achieved'). In 2013, after the intervention, five learners out of twenty-five obtained 50% and above. This is four learners more than the one learner who achieved 50% and

above in 2012. Crucially, that is 20% of learners who scored above 50% in 2013 compared to about 3.5% in 2012. Even more encouraging, at least two of those four learners managed to achieve a 'Substantial Achievement' (1) and a 'Meritorious Achievement' (1), a feat none of the learners could achieve in 2012. Interestingly, both these successful learners have a background of interface with peri-urban and urban areas, respectively, according to their teachers. The 'Substantial Achievement' scorer does not originate from the community surrounding the school. She is originally from a peri-urban district (she also has extensive exposure to urban life), and was only brought into the school community by circumstances beyond her control. The learner who achieved a 'Meritorious Achievement' comes from a more affluent background, compared to other learners in his class. Despite not staying with biological parents, but with a grandparent, there is still a high degree of interest from the family in his education. They visit the school regularly to find out about his progress and where they may assist. He is generally hardworking and more exposed to other attributes of urban lifestyle, including various gadgets and technologies. This is significant because it reinforces the notion that pedagogic discourse at home plays a critical role in offering resources to support learning at school. The two learners thus have a head start in comparison to their classmates. However, the total of twelve learners who could not achieve (0 to 29%) is a matter of concern. Figure 6.10 illustrates this scenario:
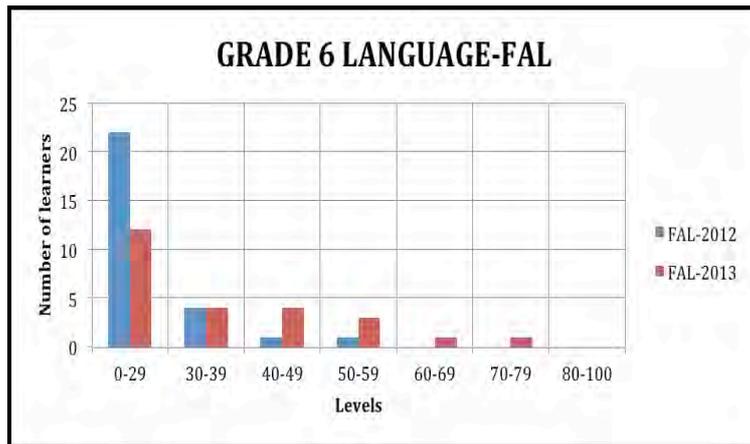
Figure 6.10: Graphic representation of Grade 6 FAL according to levels

Figure 6.10 shows growing patterns of improvement as the Red columns gradually extend across the range of levels. The Blue column in the category 0-29% representing 2012 has almost been halved. The Red columns are starting to supersede the Blue ones in the three categories where the two converge. There are two categories where only 'Red' columns appear at the higher levels ('Substantial Achievement' and 'Meritorious Achievement', respectively), albeit nowhere near sufficient. On looking closer at Grade 6 FAL learner-performance, for example, there is a glimmer of hope. For example, the 2012 Comprehension Passage section (Question 1 to Question 6.2) shows that the learners did not understand the passage. None of the comprehension questions were answered correctly by half of the learners. The 2013 Section A (Comprehension Passage section – Question 1 to question 15), where learners' comprehension of the text is tested, shows that up to seven questions were answered correctly by more than half of the learners. This has a direct link with the reading pedagogy that was introduced at the school as part of the curriculum intervention, and these developments must be viewed within the context of the discussions of data in Part I of this chapter. In analysing these results, it is important to draw on the

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understandings of the three practitioners who teach Grade 6 at the school and how the intervention has been able to confirm or transform their understanding.

Based on the discussion of data on Grade 6 Mathematics and FAL, there is an overriding convergence among the three practitioners, for example, that the impact of the intervention was "slow". This speaks both to practitioners themselves mastering the methodology, as well as their learners adapting to the new order. If anything, results themselves reveal slow improvement in the academic performance of learners in ANA during the intervention. But the results are also a reflection of some of the deep-seated beliefs held by some of the practitioners, and which the *Reading to Learn* pedagogy is yet to transform (as the 'mastery phase' continues) if the trajectory of learner-results is to shift in the desired direction. For example, the notions that any improvement "depends on the learners" and that learners who are unable as yet to demonstrate reading abilities have "more deeper" issues may hamper the rapid improvements among learners. The practitioners' understanding that the facilitators must not guide them by causing them (practitioners) to use "exact words" as part of text selection is spurious, and may undermine their grasp of the methodology. The same may be said about the practitioners' undermining of the very essence of Rose's methodology: teaching reading across the curriculum. Dumisani's ambivalence about the relevance of *Reading to Learn* in teaching EMS, for example, may be contributory to the learners' slow improvement during the intervention. However, his willingness to try a new method and his understanding regarding the teaching of Mathematics (using Rose's methodology) appears to have assisted their performance somewhat. His

understanding that he must "lead learners to the answer", as well as his involvement of learners in "cut and paste" activities, are all in keeping with the ethos of this methodology and must have impacted on learners' results, however slightly in the implementation phase. In a matter of "time" when the practitioners have mastered the approach, learners will "raise their hands" more consistently and enjoy the learning experience. Hopefully, results will also come, a subject to be explored in chapter 7. From that perspective, the intervention appears both to confirm and transform the understanding of the practitioners on the teaching of reading in the identified grades at the school, and the results are the manifestation of that confirmation and/or transformation in the implementation phase of the intervention.

6.5 Conclusion

In chapter 6, the qualitative and quantitative research findings associated with the second critical research question of the study were discussed and evaluated. The curriculum intervention introduced at the research site was foregrounded and a comparative analysis between the research findings of 2012 and 2013, 'pre' and 'during' the implementation of such an intervention respectively, was presented. With the focus firmly on data, various strands of this discussion were consolidated, identifying subtle differences and commonalities between the two stages. Finally, a strong indication was evidenced that the advent of the intervention at the research site either confirmed or transformed the practitioners' understanding on the role the teaching of reading played in Grade 3 and 6 at the school during the intervention, and as a consequence the academic performance of learners had thereby been impacted upon by such

understanding. In the next chapter (chapter 7) data yielded through field observations of the practitioners and interviews of the trainers of the *Reading to Learn* programme at the study site will be analysed and evaluated.

Chapter 7

The impact of the intervention on the practitioners' understanding: 2014 ANA

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter engaged with research findings generated through the qualitative and quantitative research instruments as discussed in chapter 4. At the centre of the engagement was the data generated through interviews with the practitioners and the learners' written work, which occurred during the implementation phase of Rose's methodology over a two-year period of the curriculum intervention at the study site. Also relevant to this engagement is the comparison of the Grade 3 and Grade 6 2012 and 2013 ANA results at the study site, as the during-intervention phase of the inquiry. Data generated mainly in relation to the second critical research question, a question designed to develop ideas around how the intervention at the research site confirmed or transformed practitioners' understandings of the phenomenon under study was discussed. As has been the trend in the previous two chapters, Chapter 7 draws on the theories that inform the *Reading to Learn* methodology to engage with research findings. To this end, various theoretical concepts that are central in this teaching approach will be referred to. Furthermore, the focus in this chapter is on the first and second critical research questions, but these will be answered in relation to the three phases of the study: pre-intervention, during-intervention and post-intervention.

To generate data for these questions, the research instruments used were both quantitative and qualitative data; the 2012, 2013 and 2014 ANA results were

represented numerically, while the *Reading to Learn* trainers' interviews, the learners' written work and lesson observations of practitioners, which occurred to reinforce the post-intervention phase of the study, formed the basis of the qualitative findings. The 2014 ANA results as a culmination of the inquiry as a whole are discussed and the numerical data that spans a three-year period is explored and disaggregated. In the process, aspects of data that reveal reasons for the impact the *Reading to Learn* methodology, implemented as an intervention, had on the practitioners' understanding of the role of teaching reading in academic performance, will be discussed.

7.2 Discussing the ANA Results

Following on the quantitative descriptions of the ANA results for 2012 and 2013 in Chapters 5 and 6 as a 'pre-intervention phase' and a 'during-intervention phase', respectively, chapter 7 contains a presentation, discussion and evaluation of the quantitative research findings of the ANA 2014 results as part of 'post-intervention phase' of the study. While Chapter 6 attempted to effect a comparative analysis limited to 2012 and 2013 ANA results at the study site, this chapter looks into the cumulative impact of these three sets of quantitative findings and their overall implications over a three-year span: before, during and after the intervention. This is over and above the complementary qualitative research data that these chapters also engage with. Two notable incidents occurred at the study site in 2014; the implications of these occurrences will be dealt with individually as part of the discussions in this chapter. Firstly, the practitioner who taught Mathematics and Natural Sciences and Technology in Grade 6 will be discussed. This practitioner also happened to be the leader of the

curriculum programmes at the study site, by virtue of being the site's only HOD (and the intervention being one of such programmes led by him). He left the school on promotion and unfortunately also the *Reading to Learn* intervention programme midway in the process towards the end of 2013. This is crucial in the overall significance of the answers to the critical research questions that this chapter explores, as the ramifications of this move reverberated across almost all facets of the study, simply because of the strategic position he occupied at the school (and consequently also in the intervention). It is equally important to understand the implications of this promotion at the site level. One obvious implication was that the subject allocations had to be reshuffled among the remaining practitioners at the site, and in the process leaving them to their own devices in terms of curriculum delivery, curriculum implementation and curriculum management. The appointment of HODs by the Department of Education is a lengthy and time-consuming exercise; this issue is discussed further on in this chapter.

Secondly, there was another important and this time, positive development at the site in 2014: the school received a new consignment of fiction and non-fiction reading material for learners. This was also important because the lack of reading material was cited as the most common grievance among practitioners during the pre-intervention phase at the study site (see questionnaire and interviews of 2012 in chapter 5), considering that the teaching of reading was central in the study itself. Given these two notable developments at the study site, the 2014 ANA results provided for interesting reading and permutations. Table 7.1 below provides an overview of the averages of raw scores of learners

in literacy and numeracy at the site from 2012 through to 2014, including improvements or declines (where applicable):

SUBJECT & GRADE	2012 AVERAGE %	2013 AVERAGE %	2014 AVERAGE %	2013 IMPR %	2014 IMPR %
Mathematics Grade 3	18	25	16	7	-9
Home Language Grade 3	10	23	28	13	5
Mathematics Grade 6	6	23	39	17	16
First Additional Lang Grade 6	7,3	25,2	22	17.9	-3.2

Table 7.1: Grade 3 and 6 ANA averages at the study site over a 3-year period

As is evident in Table 7.1, there has been a decline in the learners' average performance in Mathematics Grade 3 2014 compared to both 2012 and 2013. The 2014 average is 2% lower than the 2012 average before the intervention and 9% lower than the 2013 average during the intervention. This is highly irregular and not in keeping with the general trends set in 2013 which showed an upward trajectory from 18% to 25% in this subject. These results will be studied later in this chapter and attempts will be made to provide answers to this state of affairs. There has also been a decline in Grade 6 FAL by a marginal 3.2 percentage. In 2013, Grade 6 FAL registered an improvement of 17.9%. This is also disappointing, considering the positive developments of 2013, where the two subjects registered an impressive improvement, compared to 2012 before the intervention at the site. A critical factor that contributed to the intervention to impact on the practitioners' understanding the way it has, and as reflected in the ANA results, are the inconsistencies and intermittent interruptions of the

training itself during the intervention phase, particularly in 2014. It must be noted that during that training Debbie Avery[13] focused more on the Foundation Phase and Mike Hart[14] focused on the Intermediate and Senior Phases. There appears to have been a need for a systematic structuring of the training that did not happen as expected during the course of the intervention. Hart reflects on this sentiment succinctly in his interview:

> Some of the regrets are planning to go for meetings and then the Department calls them or something like that and you can't do it. And you've got to accept that that will happen. But it is something that can impact on the continuity of what you are doing. Also because Debbie and I do work in Kenya, Uganda and places like that, and we go to conferences, so we would be away for a month and that also impacts on the continuity. And that's why we've started to develop a wider group of trainers; people who conduct support just even observing lessons and give them ideas so we have a much wider group of people supporting the process (Hart, Interview).

Clearly from Hart's comments, the training itself could have been more systematic and, in an ideal world, interruptions could have been eliminated or minimised. However, some of the events were beyond the control of the trainers. For example, they could not do the training at certain times "because of industrial unrest" (Avery, Interview) and "of course, holidays … were some of the things that perhaps made it less effective than it could have been" (Avery, Interview). All these things "impact on what you are doing" (Hart, Interview). From the above it is evident that the consequences were dire in some instances. In her interview, Avery recounts some of these consequences and expresses some of her ambivalences on these issues:

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[13] Debbie Avery is a *Reading to Learn* trainer and facilitator. She works for the organisation called *Reading to Learn* South Africa, a South African branch of David Rose's *Reading to Learn* global movement.

[14] Mike Hart is the chairman of *Reading to Learn* South Africa. He also trains and facilitates Rose's methodology.

> I think it was quite hard to spread the training over such a long period of time. My regret is that you found that you have to re-teach so often whereas if we had been able to do a more concentrated training and start practicing instantly I think they may have been able to retain some of that knowledge better. But that said it is showing that a longer period of training, even with having to build in time for a recap, probably leads to more change than doing it all in one go (Debbie, Interview).

To confirm her ambivalence, Avery speaks of her regret as well as being pleased with "more change" in terms of academic performance at the study site. It was "more change" that was obtained in some of the subjects. Grade 3 HL, for example, continued to improve, registering a further 5% improvement in 2014 in addition to the 13% improvement of 2013. But the most striking performance was that of Grade 6 Mathematics; an outstanding 16% rise in 2014, adding to the 17% improvement of 2013. The following graphic representation captures the outstanding overall performance of the learners at the study site:
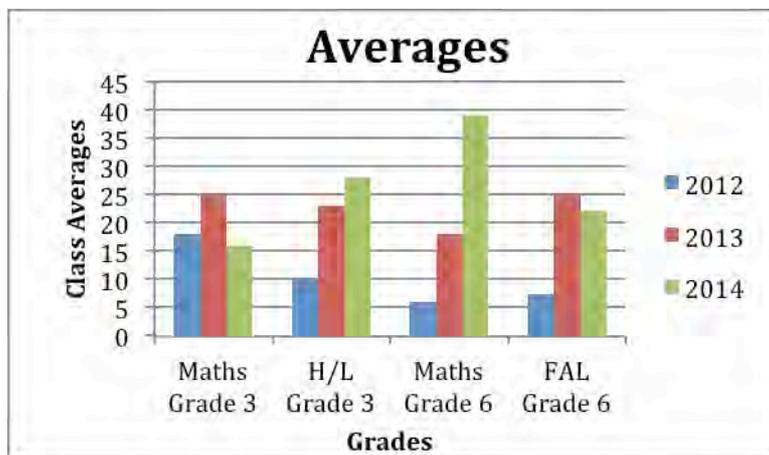

Figure 7.1: A graphic representation of the 2012, 2013 & 2014 ANA average results at study site.

It is clear from Figure 7.1 above that the exceptional improvement occurs in Grade 6 Mathematics, followed by Grade 3 HL. Grade 6 FAL shows a slight decline, which is still an improvement on the average of the 2012 'pre-

intervention'. Maths Grade 3 is a cause for concern. In the discussion on the levels of achievement in Grade 3 Mathematics the chapter offers some insights into this unfortunate situation. A prominent shortcoming which can be attributed to poor levels of improvement in 2014 (as compared to the overwhelming progress in 2013), relates to some of the inconsistencies and irregularities of practitioners in implementing the *Reading to Learn* programme at the study site. In his interview, Hart explains this phenomenon:

> **MH** : But I think at the study site we have not succeeded as well as we could have because this has not been regularly implemented, and I think that's also the problem that we have to persuade subject teachers about how this methodology can integrate the teaching of the content of text for the teaching of how to read those texts, because research shows that right across our schooling kids are learning orally only and not being able to give the independent skills of reading. So it requires a lot more training with them to give them the knowledge that they can confidently then turn that into lesson plans and help students with their writing, which is where they are assessed. That's what I would like to get to with the study site's teachers now. I think I wanna position maybe to actually do this, as we say, do two cycles a term in your different subject areas and that's not what's been happening, not regularly. And it's often that when we come to observe, and then they do it; but it's not part of their curriculum practice (Hart, Interview).

The intervention programme is not intended for trainers or observers. If practitioners do not implement the programme regularly and consistently as envisaged, the results will not be forthcoming. The practitioners' understanding that the intervention may only be implemented consistently when the trainers or observers are visiting the school can be linked to Bongani's departure as well. Bongani would not allow this ill-advised practice at the study site. Such tendencies would only result in lacklustre levels of improvement; they are also a reflection of a reluctance to move away from the rigid confines of the 'finish-the-syllabus-at-all-costs' mentality that Bernstein (1990) alludes to as the real

machinations and hallmarks of the restricted orientations or codes. It portrays practitioners as being ensconced in the comfort zones of their own teaching and learning paradigms. However, as remarkable as the above statistics are, positively or negatively, they unfortunately do not provide a close-up picture of learner performance in these subjects in the selected grades. They do not provide a sense of, for example, the number of learners who achieved 50% and above at the site since the introduction of the intervention. An informed analysis requires a thorough examination of performance levels. To achieve this, the focus now turns to the levels of achievement in Grade 3 Mathematics where there has been a notable decline in overall average performance of learners in 2014. Table 7.2 compares the performance of learners in terms of levels across the three years:

LEVEL	L 1	L 2	L 3	L 4	L 5	L 6	L 7	TOTAL NO. OF LEARNERS
RANGE	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-100	
Grade 3 Mathematics 2012	10	5	2	2	1	2	0	[22]
Grade 3 Mathematics 2013	1	2	3	4	6	8	5	[29]
Grade 3 Mathematics 2014	9	7	2	8	2	2	0	[30]

Table 7.2: Distribution of learners according to levels of achievement (Grade 3 Mathematics)

Only twelve learners out of thirty obtained a 50% and above pass percentage in Grade 3 Mathematics in 2014. This accounts for 40% of the learners achieving a Level 4 of 'Adequate Achievement' and above. The rest of the learners (nine – Not Achieved, seven – Elementary Achievement, and two – Moderate

Achievement) could not perform adequately to pass. This is in stark contrast to the results of 2013 where twenty-three learners, accounting for 79%, achieved 50% and above in the same subject, indicating a decline of approximately 39%. This means that the learners who managed to pass adequately are 39% fewer in 2014, compared to 2013. The 60% of learners who could not obtain 50% and above in Grade 3 Mathematics in 2014 in many ways mimic the pre-intervention results of 2012, where over 77% of learners could not get 50% and above in this subject. Therefore, as worrying as they may be, these figures are still an improvement on those of 2012 before the introduction of the intervention at the school. Of concern are the nine learners out of thirty who did not achieve at all, accounting for 30% of the class. This figure was just over 3% in 2013, having improved from over 45% in 2012 before the intervention. Whilst the 30% 'Not Achieved' of 2014 is an improvement on the 45% of 2012, any decline is disconcerting, particularly after registering impressive figures the previous year. Figure 7.2 represents this displeasing situation in a graphic form:
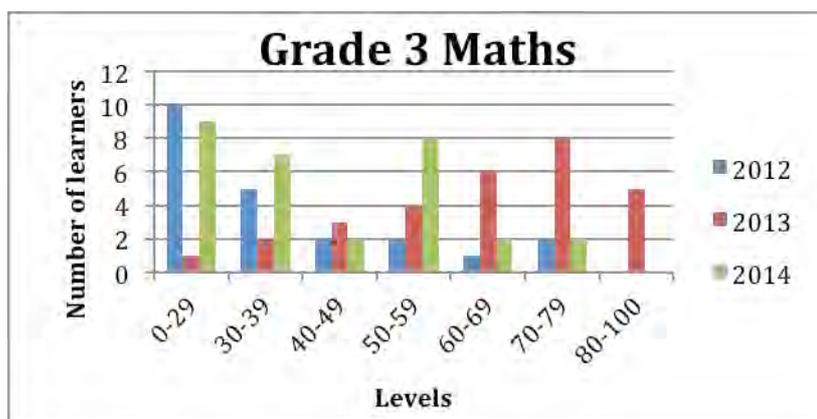

Figure 7.2: A graphic representation of the ANA Grade 3 Mathematics results

As the graph reveals, the ideal situation is to have the Green columns on the right hand side of the graph rather than to the left. Unfortunately, they seem to have retroceded to the left in 2014, after building up towards the right in 2013 (see Red columns in 2013). The Green columns that represent 2014 are more prominent on the left hand side of the graph than where they should be. If anything, they compare favourably with the Blue columns of 2012. The only consolation is that the Green columns in the category 50% and above are much higher than any of the Blue columns of 2012 in that category and others above it. This means that in 2014 there were more learners in the category or level 'Adequate Achievement' and an improvement on the 2012 results before the intervention. These figures must be understood from the point of view that Anele, the Grade 3 practitioner, enjoys positive reviews from the *Reading to Learn* trainers as being consistent in successfully implementing the methodology. Avery describes Anele in glowing terms and insists that: "[Anele] is also very bright and I think she picks things up very very quickly and I think she is very very dedicated to making sure things happened" (Avery, Interview). After observing Anele teaching her Grade 3 class, Hart was also impressed. He hoped to see Anele's learners in Grade 4, a complicated, transitional class in the South African education system context. He states:

> **MH** : Looking and listening to Anele's classroom the other day, I mean, those sort of outcomes, the kids' willingness to actually talk and participate in English even though it wasn't their mother-tongue, stems from the confidence they've got from reading in their mother-tongue. And that's translated there. I'm just hoping I want to see those kids next year in Grade 4 because where the biggest problems are in current Grade 4, are merging (Hart, Interview).

This is important because it reveals a critical issue about Anele and *Reading to Learn*. It reveals her ability to bring out the learner's willingness to actually "talk

and participate in English" and how that derives from her teaching them "reading in their mother-tongue". Later in this section, when Grade 3 HL results are discussed, the learners' written work in English as a First Additional Language (FAL) will also be discussed to demonstrate how these learners, whose language of learning and teaching (LoLT) is IsiZulu in the Foundation Phase, have grown phenomenally in linguistic terms as a result of regular exposure to reading in their mother-tongue. Implicitly, the success that Anele enjoys with the *Reading to Learn* methodology stems from, and is accentuated in, her dealings with narrative texts, which are applicable in Literacy in the Foundation Phase.

In Grade 3 learners are mostly "reading in their mother-tongue". Unfortunately, Mathematics only benefits marginally from narrative texts. For the most part, it is only in instances where she deals with word sums or word problems that narrative texts play a part in Numeracy. In chapters 5 and 6 the number of word sums that had been set for learners in the Mathematics ANA papers for 2012 and 2013 were discussed. The number of these sums were reduced noticeably in 2014 for narrative texts significantly to benefit Anele's learners. The rest of the sums were mathematical concepts that did not rely entirely on narrative texts. Furthermore, while Anele indicated in her second interview that she had attended a *Reading to Learn* workshop for Mathematics, she had not showcased those skills in any observation lessons. It may therefore be concluded that Anele's confidence and interest in the *Reading to Learn* methodology is more prevalent in the narrative-text orientated lessons, and those are mainly in Languages (Literacy) than in Mathematics (Numeracy). Finally, the absence of Bongani in providing pastoral care and urging Anele to apply *Reading to Learn* in

Mathematics more consistently is another compelling factor in this decline in the 2014 Grade 3 Mathematics. In his interview, Hart implies that Bongani's departure was a turning point at the school because he was a "lead teacher who would support other teachers to do things, and he was doing that" (Hart, Interview). Bongani made a profound observation about the role of the School Management Team (SMT) at the study site during his second interview:

> **BAM**: Is the principal and the rest of the SMT supportive of the *Reading to Learn* approach? Do you think this is an important factor in successfully implementing *Reading to Learn* either in your classroom or across the school?
>
> **BONGANI**: Anyway, the SMT has no choice because I'm the part of the SMT and I am involved in the programme. But also, we are building this school. We want to produce wonders for this community. As we have identified this programme as one of the strategies that can be used to improve the product that we will be producing in the long run from the school, the SMT is very supportive. We have engaged all the educators. If we are having the workshop on *Reading to Learn*, everyone must attend. I mean, Debbie can tell you that all the Foundation Phase teachers are attending and all the Intermediate and Senior Phase educators are involved and attending those workshops. So we support that as the SMT.
>
> **BAM**: How important is that, that this thing be supported by both the principal and the rest of the SMT?
>
> **BONGANI**: That one is very important. I mean, for the success of anything in the school the school management team need to support that because at times there are those things that are challenging. So, if educators are not supported by the SMT then they become demoralized and just leave that thing out.

Therefore, his absence in Mathematics as Head of that Department, in particular, appears to have affected the Grade 3 results. The inevitability of teachers to "become demoralized and just leave … things out" when he left the school, as suggested in Bongani's statements above, could have been a matter that affected not just Anele, but other practitioners as well. However, it must be emphasized that these 2014 Grade 3 Mathematics results, after the intervention, are a remarkable improvement from the 2012 results before the intervention, in terms of the quality and number of passes.

The situation in Grade 3 HL, however, is completely different. As Table 7.3 below illustrates, the trajectory of learner performance is clearly pointing in the right direction:

LEVEL	L 1	L 2	L 3	L 4	L 5	L 6	L 7	TOTAL NO. OF LEARNERS
RANGE	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-100	
Grade 3 HL 2012	8	4	2	2	3	2	1	[22]
Grade 3 HL 2013	7	3	3	2	3	3	9	[30]
Grade 3 HL 2014	6	3	1	6	3	8	5	[32]

Table 7.3: Distribution of learners according to levels of achievement (Grade 3 HL)

The table indicates that only ten out of thirty-two learners could not achieve 50% and above; this is 31% of the learners who could not achieve 50%. But it also means that 69% of the learners achieved 'Adequate Achievement' or better, in 2014. In 2013 there were over 43% of learners who were in this unenviable position, and 64% in 2012 before the intervention. The number of the learners who fail to obtain an 'Adequate Achievement' continues to decrease every year in Grade 3 HL. Notably, the number of Levels 6 and 7, Meritorious and Outstanding Levels respectively, have been kept at a respectable 41% in 2014, up from 40% in 2013. This figure was just over 13% in 2012 before the introduction of the intervention at the school. Figure 7.3 illustrates this emergent trend:
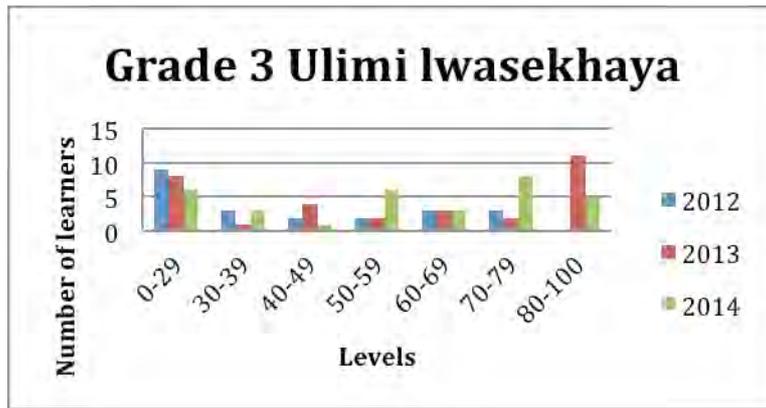
Figure 7.3: Graphic representation of Grade 3 HL according to levels

It is clear from the graph that Anele did not need any encouragement when it came to Literacy. Her passion is evident from the learner achievements. The Green columns representing 2014 passes in the levels are predominant on the right hand side of the graph where the percentages are greater. With the exception of the Red column of 2013 in the 80-100% category, the Green column above the 50% mark makes for an impressive showing. Where there were some loses in the 80-100% category in 2014, there were considerable gains in the 70-79% category in that same year. This is over and above the significant gains made in the 50-59% category in 2014. This numerical data confirms the notion that narrative texts presented as part of the intervention, and often the key texts in the Foundation Phase curriculum, enjoy a more substantial treatment in Grade 3 at the study site. Moreover, they suggest that learners at the study site respond positively to the *Reading to Learn* approach in Literacy, more so than in Numeracy, because of the abundant nature of narrative texts in Literacy in the Foundation Phase. Furthermore, the fact that these statistics are based on the performance of learners in their Home Language (HL), compounded with the recent supply of reading material at the site, account for this improvement.

Hence, Anele's impressive application of this methodology goes beyond the confines of HL. In fact, all indications suggest that she uses the HL experience as a bridge for her learners towards mastering FAL. She has demonstrated this with her class while teaching them FAL (English), also a requirement for learners in Grade 3. Her use of Rose's methodology in her class when teaching Literacy (FAL) has even impacted on the learners' written work. This was clearly discernible from the recently observed lesson, particularly the manner in which the various stages of the *Reading to Learn* cycle culminated with the learners producing written work of a high standard, using Joint Construction and Individual Construction. In an obvious demonstration of the Vygotskian conception of scaffolding, Anele thoroughly prepared learners to write independently, as required. Employing the *Reading to Learn* methodology, she led her learners to write sentences based on another sentence she had extracted from the story she had just taught. She extracted the following sentence from the story:

First Nogwaja took a rope. He swam across the river. He tied one end of a rope to a tree *(*Learners are led by the teacher*).*

First she linked prior knowledge and context, summarized the story, did shared reading with them (looking at pictures and reading to / with class), did sentence-making with them and used spelling activities to practise key words before the learners could attempt new words. Learners then suggested words that could be used to replace the identified words. Thereafter, they constructed their own sentences through a guided process where they filled in the missing words (cloze exercise). After undergoing the entire process together in a Joint Construction

stage, learners replaced those words from their own memory. Resulting from the stages of the *Learning to Read* cycle, the following sentences were constructed by the learners in a thoroughly scaffolded process:

Teacher & Learners: First Nogwaja took a rope. He swam across the river. He tied one end of a rope to a tree *(*Learners are led by the teacher)*.

Learner 1: Secondly Monkey climb (sic) on a tree. He tied a rope to a branch *(*Learners do Joint Reconstruction)*.
Lastly a giant took a rope. He went to the cave. He tied one end of a rope to the log (*Learners do Individual Reconstruction*).

Learner 2: Secondly Monkey climb (sic) on a tree. He tied a rope to a branch *(*Learners do Joint Reconstruction)*.
Lastly a bear took a rope. He went to a mountain. He tied one end of a rope to a tree (*Learners do Individual Reconstruction*).

Learner 3: Secondly Monkey climb (sic) on a tree. He tired (sic) a rope to a branch *(*Learners do Joint Reconstruction)*.
Lastly Lion took a rope. He walked to the hill. He tied one end of a rope to a rock (*Learners do Individual Reconstruction*).

Figure 7.4: Examples of Grade 3 learners' written work: Narrative Texts

As has been demonstrated above, the first sentence was done with the help of the teacher. Learners then assisted one another to write the second sentence starting with 'Secondly'. The sentence starting with 'Lastly' was written by individual learners to demonstrate their individual creativity, without any further help from the practitioner or other learners. The culmination point of the three stages is the writing of a paragraph combining simple sentences from the three stages. Avery comments:

> But for me to see the writing, I've been watching it developing but to see this last time, to see the kind of writing that they are doing independently in first additional language classroom where learners actually hardly hear English outside of school has been quite incredible, and complex sentences which was really an eye-opener for me. I expected Grade 3 to be using very simple, maybe five word sentences, and these children

are using complex sentences, which was really exciting (Avery, Interview).

This is impressive by all measures. The method used by Anele to arrive at this quality of written work by her learners resonates with the Vygotskian ZPD model. Learners find it easier to write their own sentences because the teaching strategy motivates them to be creative in their writing. In addition to enhancing their learning, it may be argued that this resonance impacted directly on the overall learner performance in ANA as well. Table 7.3 illustrates this improvement. This lesson observation on Anele and the eventual product (the learners' written work) are pivotal in that they corroborate the ANA results in Grade 3 HL. All the lessons of the participants were observed to generate data designed to corroborate their interviews, the interviews of the *Reading to Learn* trainers and numerical and other data discussed in this study. The lesson observation process, in particular, focused on the following areas:

- Seating arrangement

- Classroom environment

- Availability and use of reading material

- The nature of interaction between teacher and learners

- The role of reading in the teaching and learning process

Fundamentally, the lesson observation process focused on the implementation of the *Reading to Learn* intervention and how this transformed or confirmed the practitioner's understanding. This involved evaluating the participants' application of the methodology's various stages in their lessons, from Preparing for Reading, Detailed Reading, Sentence Making, Spelling, Sentence Writing, as

well as Joint Construction and Text Patterning, all of which together make up the

Reading to Learn process. In a later interview, Avery remarked:

> **DA:** ... I felt it was a pity that we split the Foundation Phase
> and the rest of the school [between myself and Mike] as early
> as we did because I think those Foundation Phase teachers
> had a lot to offer that perhaps the Intermediate and Senior
> Phase teachers could have benefitted from. But because the
> methodology changes just slightly, we actually split them into
> two groups fairly early, and I think the rest of them would
> have benefitted from the experience of those Foundation
> Phase teachers ... I would have worked with them as one big
> group for considerably longer because the methodology is not
> different enough to not let them have worked together. So I
> would have worked in one big group for a longer period than
> we actually did. We felt it was the right thing to do but I'm not
> sure that it was (Avery, Interview).

This observation is important because the Foundation Phase teachers appear to

have had a better understanding of the methodology, and therefore improved on

their success compared to their Intermediate Phase counterparts (this is apart

from other factors that impact on performance more positively in the lower

grades than in senior grades discussed later). The observation of Anele's lesson

bears testimony to Avery's remark above, which was interesting, considering the

claims she (Anele) made in her interview about the all-round positive impact of

Rose's methodology to the development of reading skills and learners

performance (which was partly confirmed by the 2013 and 2014 ANA results

statistics). Before the intervention, Anele's class performed poorly (see 2012

ANA results statistics in chapter 5) and during her 2012 interview, she was

frustrated at her own inabilities to teach reading. In 2012, learners were seated

in rows facing her and the classroom was cluttered and drab. At the time, she

complained about the lack of reading material and struggled with her teaching

techniques to equip learners to be better readers. As much as she recognized the

importance of teaching reading skills, this seldom took place in her class. This situation resulted in the dismal ANA results of 2012 discussed in chapter 5. After the intervention, the seating arrangement in her class was transformed – learners were seated in groups of five and six, allowing them to interact during the tasks and to work collaboratively, with the more gifted learners assisting those who were struggling. This is in keeping with Anele's assertion in her interview:

> **BAM**: Do they feel like they are improving their skills?
>
> **ANELE**: Yes, they are improving and they are very proud. Those who can read are very proud; they even want to help those who are lacking (Anele, Interview 2).

Peer assistance was made possible, among other things, by the proximity of the learners to one another, brought about by the new seating arrangement. This is in keeping with Rose's (2004) inclination that through his methodology, learners are empowered to take control of their own reading, with guidance. As shown in the above instance, the new seating arrangement facilitates the work of a peer who takes on the role of 'the More Knowledgeable Other' in the classroom (Vygotsky, 1978). But crucially, this is a demonstration of learners' accessing the elaborated codes, in Bernsteinian terms. Even the mostly bare walls that characterized her classroom before the intervention, had been improved with colourful and inviting charts and posters that promoted reading, demonstrating how the *Reading to Learn* approach had transformed her class. The most significant transformation, however, was revealed during her lesson presentation. It was clear that she had planned her lesson to revolve around reading. She provided all learners with copies of the story that was being taught. She also gave each learner an opportunity to read, either individually, with the

teacher, as a small group, or collectively. The learners were equally active, responsive and confident, a point Anele makes consistently in her second interview. Avery, in referring to Anele and her Foundation Phase colleagues, also comments on her remarkable determination to work with *Reading to Learn*:

> **DA:** I found that they are just so involved, so interested, they found it so interesting, they found it something different that they had not done before and they were so committed to actually learning more about the methodology, learning how to work with the different stages of the programme, and I've seen them using it in their classrooms. And that's been amazing (Avery, Interview).

Even during the lesson observation, Anele called upon learners to cut out words from sentence strips while she guided them. She went through all the stages of the *Reading to Learn* methodology, starting with Preparing Before Reading, Detailed Reading, Preparing Before Writing, leading up to the Joint Construction, Individual Construction and Independent Writing (The lesson plan she used in one of the lessons is attached as appendix B and the evidence of learner work produced as independent writing is attached as appendix B1). Even Hart, who was focusing on the Intermediate and Senior Phases, comments on this transfiguration. He concurs: "Yeah, I think it's obvious to me at the Foundation Phase that this is happening. The teachers have taken it on, they are trying, they're experimenting" (Hart, Interview). As prescribed and required in the *Reading to Learn* methodology, Anele acknowledged the importance of the teaching of reading as there was reading done by the practitioner, reading done with the learners, and there was Detailed Reading and Preparing Before Writing, which involved sentence-making, spelling and sentence writing. Anele's new approach to teaching reading represented all facets of the Hallidayan SFL within a Vygotskian ZPD and motivated by the Bernsteinian motive to transform lives

and bring about equity in her class. It is for this reason that Hart notes: "the rewarding aspect to see the gradual, very good take-up in the Foundation Phase" (Hart, Interview). This corroborates Anele's views in her interview about her learners "improving their skills". Avery makes this point about Anele's understanding in her interview:

> **DA:** I think the teacher has got a much more advanced idea of what literacy actually is in an additional language. I think it's given her the confidence. And I think using the Whole Text method has made it really interesting for the learners. And what I've seen, it's given them an 'in' to their workbooks that they didn't have before (Debbie, Interview).

The 'in' to the workbooks refers to the ability to read texts with a fair degree of comprehension that requires painstaking focus on Anele's part. However, her attention to detail is ironically also a problem, as she may be critiqued for taking too long on her introduction, and even longer on other 'peripheral' sections of her lesson. During the observation of her lesson, she spent too much time on linking prior knowledge and context. The criticism by practitioners in their interviews (particularly, Bongani, Celani and Dumisani) that the *Reading to Learn* methodology is time-consuming, was also reinforced by Anele's lesson, which took too long to complete. Learners had to break without the lesson concluding and returned after the break to continue. Rose (2004) acknowledges this conundrum. He suggests elsewhere in this thesis that the speed that learning generates once the learners master the art of learning from reading far outweighs the apparent delays that occur at the introductory stages of the methodology, when it is still new to the teachers and learners. However, all these factors do not detract from the fact that the 2014 ANA results in Grade 3 HL reflect the impact of the *Reading to Learn* pedagogy.

Similarly, the 2014 ANA performance in Grade 6 Mathematics reveals that, in as much as the results are not particularly exceptional, they are nonetheless commendable. As Rose (2004; 2011b) contends, improvements when dealing with texts other than those that are narrative, in mostly underprivileged settings, are painstakingly slow. Table 7.4 illustrates:

LEVEL	L 1	L 2	L 3	L 4	L 5	L 6	L 7	TOTAL NO OF
RANGE	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-100	LEARNERS
Grade 6 Mathematics 2012	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	[28]
Grade 6 Mathematics 2013	19	6	0	0	0	0	0	[25]
Grade 6 Mathematics 2014	13	9	2	1	0	0	0	[25]

Table 7.4: Distribution of learners according to levels of achievement (Grade 6 Maths)

As shown above, the picture reveals that, contrary to the two previous years, at least one learner was able to achieve an 'Adequate Achievement' in 2014. This is an indication of a gradual improvement from 2012 where all twenty-eight learners achieved a 'Not Achieved' rating in Grade 6 Mathematics and in 2013, six learners achieved, translating into a 24% achievement, even though these learners could only manage an 'Elementary Achievement'. However, in 2014, there was an improvement in that out of the twenty-five learners, twelve scored higher than the 'Not Achieved' level and thirteen recorded a 'Not Achieved' level. Of the twelve learners nine achieved 'Elementary Achievement', two obtained a 'Moderate Achievement' and one obtained an 'Adequate Achievement', altogether an improvement on the 2012 and 2013 results. The improvement

might not be as rapid as one would like, but the trends point in the right direction. Figure 7.5 illustrates this progress:
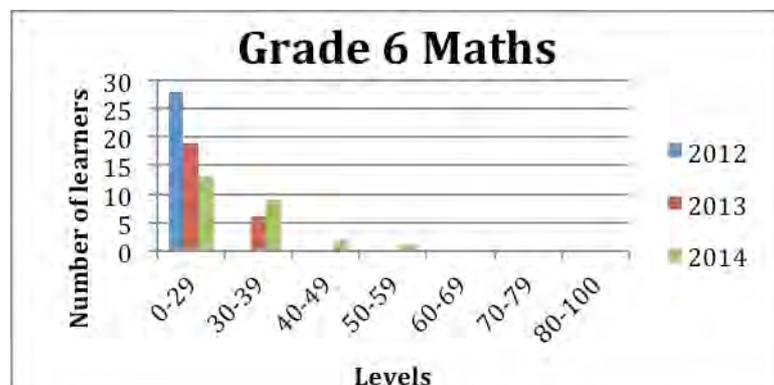
Figure 7.5: Graphic representation of Grade 6 Mathematics according to levels

The above graph illustrates the gradual progress that has been made since 2012. It shows, for example, the single, Blue column of 2012, the same column broken into two Red columns in 2013 and the Green columns extending towards the right hand side in 2014. As clearly shown, the 2014 achievements are not ideal, but it is the better of the three presented in different years. At least the trajectories are pointing towards progress. As Vygotsky's (1978) model of proximal development in social learning predicts, this picture shows that even learners from disadvantaged backgrounds can be scaffolded to read any text and succeed with proper support; however, it is a gradual process. It echoes Bernstein's (1990, p.75) thinking that "children who can meet the requirements of the sequencing rules will eventually have access to the principles of their own discourse". In fact, Rose (2004) admits that even in Australia, where great strides have been made in the implementation of *Reading to Learn* among indigenous communities, such improvements have "not produced the same results for

educational achievements" (Rose, 2004, p.106). This is important because the Grade 6 Mathematics results are in line with this thinking of 'gradualism'. This subject is also the one most affected by the staff changes at the study site: it is in this subject that the qualified Mathematics teacher, Bongani, left the school at the end of 2013, after he had initially been expected to take Grade 6 Mathematics in 2014 for the final phase of the intervention. The unqualified Dumisani, who had been teaching Mathematics to Grade 5 in 2013, was allocated Grade 6 Mathematics in 2014.

However, Bongani was a difficult individual to replace, as not only was he an HOD, he was also the most highly qualified of all the participants and a well-respected and influential personality, both in the community and in the staff room. He was also a committed driver of the *Reading to Learn* methodology and his departure had a direct bearing not only on the 2014 ANA achievements of learners in Mathematics at the site, but also across the subject spectrum. The sudden dip in some of the trajectories of results may be traced back to his departure as the 'manager' of the methodology for all subjects in all grades at site level, including Grade 3 and Grade 6 practitioners. To a certain extent, the drop in Grade 3 Mathematics in 2014 compared to 2013 can be ascribed to his departure, despite Anele being directly responsible for that subject. Bongani was passionate about both Mathematics and the *Reading to Learn* methodology, and this showed in the 2013 ANA results when he was still present. He was keen to have this methodology implemented in Mathematics, a feat Anele could not emulate (if 2014 Grade 3 ANA results in Mathematics are anything to go by) and considering the timing of the decline which coincided with Bongani's departure

from the school. Avery, whose responsibility was mainly with the Foundation Phase, also regretted Bongani's move. She comments that:

> … one of the things that makes the [performance at the school in 2014] less successful than, I think, it could have been is staff changes. You've got somebody so far and then they go, and then you've got a new person to work with" (Avery, Interview).

This was in direct reference to Bongani's leaving and his replacement both as a practitioner and an HOD by other educators (Dumisani and the new HOD, respectively) who were not as capable. As much as there are improvements in Grade 6 Mathematics in 2014, and for which Dumisani deserves credit, judging by the 2013 trajectories and the abilities of Bongani, the momentum of results were significantly compromised when he left the school. There is thus strong evidence to suggest that the learners might have achieved much better had Bongani not left the school. The new HOD did not impress the *Reading to Learn* trainers, as implied in Avery's interview. In that interview, she returns to the subject of Bongani leaving the school and notes:

> But certainly … I think that will have an effect on your Grade 6s that you've got a new teacher who wasn't involved from the beginning, that your key teacher who actually was really really good was only there for last year and it hasn't been carried on onto Grade 6 (Debbie, Interview).

Bongani's departure may, however, not be exaggerated, despite it being one of the distinctive factors in the manner the intervention impacted the practitioners' roles and consequently the learner academic performance at the study site. The study site still registered some improvements without him, and besides, lesson observations on him proved that he was also not infallible. Despite this, however, Hart's remarks about him and his competences are, nonetheless, accurate:

> **MH:** The disappointment was the loss of the Head of
> Department for promotion because that destroyed some of
> the continuity. He was going very well with the methodology. I
> think if he had stayed there we would have had more rewards
> this year than we did ... he was a leader and he was very
> committed and I think he would also have been what we
> would call a lead teacher who would support other teachers to
> do things and he was doing that. So that was a regret (Hart,
> Interview).

The researcher observed Bongani in action in his Grade 6 class on a number of occasions teaching factual texts, where he acquitted himself well. His evaluations were based on the crucial stages of the *Reading to Learn* methodology.

In the first stage, Preparing for Reading, Bongani was exceptional - for example, during a lesson on the Solar System he used the globe and spun it on its axis with the sun shining on it. He was able to give a concrete example and relate it to the learners' own experiences, thereby encouraging participation. His paraphrase of the texts he used was impressive, although he did not emphasize the sequencing of the text enough, a common shortcoming among all of the practitioners at the site. It is important to help ***all*** learners to understand, not only the content of the text, but also the sequence in which it unfolds. Weaker readers struggle to complete these two tasks simultaneously. Fundamental to the ethos of *Reading to Learn,* no one should be left out or left behind. The scaffolding technique that characterizes *the Reading to Learn* methodology is precisely intended for this reason. Bongani also read the text to learners, but spent too much time getting the class to read aloud after he had read the text. This ought to be done in moderation, as there is much repetition in the six-stage cycle of *Reading to Learn*. This echoes the debate exhausted in previous chapters about time-delay versus finishing the syllabus (Rose, 2004). Furthermore, Bongani identified appropriate

elaborations and they were generally well managed, even though he could have supplied more support to learners to aid their understanding. 'Support' is a key word in Genre Theory, to which *Reading to Learn* subscribes, hence the ZPD, the scaffold, the Knowledgeable Other, the "trampoline" and similar terminology that are used consistently in this study. All these activities describe Bongani as a confident and conscientious practitioner hard at work. They are a far cry from the Bongani who initially questioned the need to teach reading; this time he even taught spelling in Science. In conclusion, Bongani showed significant control of all the stages, and with consistent practice he could become a very able and independent *Reading to Learn* practitioner. However, lesson observations and statistics on leaner-performance discussed in this chapter reveal that more could have been achieved, that it was possible to do better. Hart makes this point clearly: "… I think there has been some development; the teachers have reported on that, but I think we are still a long way from where we could get some really different results that we need here" (Hart, Interview). Notably, this "development" that Hart refers to is also exemplified in the writing of the Grade 6 learners where they demonstrate their understanding of the original text about an excursion to Midmar Dam, their experience of the Joint Construction about an excursion to the Royal Show Grounds in Pietermaritzburg, and apply these to their narratives about a visit to Durban's uShaka Marine World and the beach. The following are their narrative texts, attached as appendix B2:

Name: Nkoscy Dlamini

Narrative Text: *A School Trip to Durban*

My name is Nkoscy Dlamini. I'm from Hlela Primary School. I'm doing grade 7. On the 24th of July 2014 we arrived in Durban at 9 am. After three hour in the bus. We were so excited.

After we arrived we so excited. We see the waves and lifesavers. teachers tell us to swim in the pool. And to not go into the sea water.

But Mondi he did not listen to the teachers, he goes to the sea. And the sea water was so cool. We fell so cool when were swim in the pool.

Mondi he face the big wave and he start to be terrified. And he say help!! And Mondi sicked. The lifesave rescure. And Mondi was so sad he take he food and eat. And we feel so happy after the rescure.

Figure 7.6: Example of a learner's narrative text

Name: Ayanda Sithole

Narrative Text: *A school trip to Durban*

My name is Andile my surname is Sithole at Mgolombeni Primary School in Grade 6s. the Mgolombeni trip was go in Durban with bus. In the bus was very nicely. The bus was go in 06 am. After one hour it was very hot. The bus was in Durban in 10 am.

First the the teacher say " Let us go to see the animals" After that the teacher say " Let us go and see a Dolphin". then the teacher say " Let go to see a Fish, Shark and toitose that live in the water" Finally the teacher say " Let us go to swimm in the swimming pool" And the teacher say " Do not swimm in the sea" said teacher.

The bus went to go back. But Hleliswa was not like to go back. And she was not listen the teachers. She went to played marry go round of machines. She could not see the teachers. Then she was lost, and she was scared then she started to cry. Then she started to looking the security guards and she report it.

Figure 7.7: Example of a learner's narrative text

Name: Wandile Cele

Narrative Text: *A school tried of the Durban*

My name Wandile my surname Cele. The grade 7 from Inhlazuka primary arrived at Shakamarine at 9 am. After 1 hour in the bus, they were hot is bus. Mr Ngcongo told the learners not to go near water without his

But Asanda had other ideas! She needed quick swim. Mr ngcongo walked behnd the bus Asanda and had probably gone to have a cigare Ikon in see for

Quickly Asanda slipped off her track suit her swimming costume was under neath her clothes. She rain into the water. It was cool she closed her eyes and swam and flooted on hen back.

When she opened her eyes she saw she was far from them shore she could not see the bottom of the pool she began to panic wer the shaka or snakes in the water? She should and tried to swim but she was swallowed wated. Now she was really scared, would she drawn? She felt something take hold of he no, no! help! Shaka! She yelled.

Figure 7.8: Example of a learner's narrative text

Name: Noxolo Mkhize

Narrative Text: *A school trip to Durban*

My name is Noxolo Mkhize Im from Mgolombeni primary school. I am doing grade six my school name is Mgolombeni primary school on 24 October 2014 we went to the beachin durban

We were traveling with two buses and one kombi It takes us 4 hours to go there. because it a long distance to travel in Durban. were feeling so excited because other learners were singing to show happiness

We were arrived they other learners was so nervouse. because it was the first time to see fish, water and machine and savers people swimming

Our teachers tell us not go too deep on the water and my teacher said only swim the life save tell you and respect the rules.

Lungelo Mkhize did not lesten teachers he swimming too deep he was screaming for help, he cant even stand up he was underwater and the waves phushed him

he was happicked, he can't even talk. After that things has happened. the person who save him teachers and life savers.

After this things happened we were feeling happy at the same time we was so shocked about this problem.

Figure 7.9: Example of a learner's narrative text

My name is Owami. I am in grade 9 at Sisonke primary school we arrived at Shaka Marine at 9h30 am. We were get there by buses and we arrived at Shaka Marine. After two hours in the bus we were very hot and the children were makin a lot of noise in the bus. If felt tired because i was played too much in the bus. Mr Mkhize told the learners not to go near water without his permission. But Owami had other ideas of talking a quick swim. Mr Mkhize walked behind the bus. Owami knew he smoked. He had probably gone to have a cigarette in secret. Quickly Owami slipped of his clothes. He ran into the water and he jumped inside the water. He felt so cool. When he oppened his eyes he saw that he was far from the shore. She could not see the top of the water. He began to panic. Were the sharks in the water? He shouted and tried to swim, but he swallowed water. He was really scared. Would he drawn? He felt something take hold of his hand no, no! help shark he yelled Mr Mkhize was there the shark were going to eat him
He was shaking for the whole day after that.

Figure 7.10: Example of a learner's narrative text

As revealed in Figures 7.6 to 7.10 above, these learners have demonstrated the possibilities of the *Reading to Learn* process in transforming learning outcomes. They have been able to employ the stages (structure) of the narrative genre with *orientations a*bout the excursion, where they went, how long it took and their feelings about the journey and when they finally arrived: *"On the 24ᵗʰ of July 2014 we arrived in Durban at 9 am. After three hour in the bus. We were so excited"* (Figure 7.6, Nkoscy Dlamini). There were *descriptions* of the scene at Durban: *"We were arrived they other learners was so nervouse. because it was the first time to see fish, water and machine and savers people swimming"* (Figure 7.9, Noxolo Mkhize). There was also the setting up of the story and *problem (complication)* to come, with the instructions by teachers about what they should not do:

> First the the teacher say "Let us go to see the animals" After that the teacher say "Let us go and see a Dolphin". then the teacher say "Let go to see a Fish, Shark and toitose that live in the water" Finally the teacher say "Let us go to swimm in the swimming pool" And the teacher say "Do not swimm in the sea" said teacher (Figure 7.7, Ayanda Sithole).

They also describe one learner who disobeys and how this leads to further problems: "Lungelo Mkhize did not lesten teachers he swimming too deep he was screaming for help, he cant even stand up he was underwater and the waves phushed him" (Figure 7.9, Noxolo Mkhize). They were also able to describe feelings and reactions of the learner in trouble: "She could not see the teachers. Then she was lost, and she was scared then she started to cry. Then she started to looking the security guards and she report it" (Figure 7.7, Ayanda Sithole). As can be seen in Nkoscy Dlamini's narrative text: Mondi he face the big wave and he start to be terrified. And he say help!! And Mondi sicked. The lifesave rescure. And Mondi was so sad he take he food and eat. And we feel so happy after the rescure (Figure 7.6, Nkoscy Dlamini). Learners were also able to provide some *resolution to* the problem (the rescue) and how the learners and the rescued learner felt as a result of the experience.

Generally, they were able to manage a logical sequence of events and create fairly coherent texts through repetition of characters names and reference (his, she) so that the reader is able to follow who is being referred to without too much difficulty. Conjunctions are also used to enable the reader to follow the sequence of events (then, after, first, finally, but). Paragraphing was also used, with the exception of Owami Shange (Figure 7.10), to enable the unfolding of the

main events in different paragraphs. Some were also able to use direct speech or attempted it, for example: *"First the the teacher say "Let us go to see the animals" After that the teacher say "Let us go and see a Dolphin"* (Figure 7.7, Ayanda Sithole), clearly representing an attempt at the use of direct speech.

While there are grammatical and spelling problems, these do not hinder the communication of meaning and indicate that these could be rectified with regular practice, focus on the issues in the *Reading to Learn* cycle, diagnostic and formative assessment, and rewriting of drafts. These learners have displayed a confidence and willingness to write extended text in a readable fashion, and a willingness to experiment on the basis of the knowledge about the structure and language patterns of narrative genre. Some learners displayed a minimal understanding of narrative text and the task required of them, but this is indicative of the lack of regular implementation of the *Reading to Learn* cycle. Others virtually copied the original text, while others mixed up the beach excursion with the Royal Show and Midmar Dam excursions. Again, these are inadequacies that only consistent and regular practice of the methodology can alleviate.

Overall, there is significant evidence of progress since the commencement of the intervention at the study site, and the above narrative essays of learners are testimony to this fact. This evidence of the learners' written work as displayed during an observation lesson on Celani, clearly confirms the 'mixed bag' of ANA results in Grade 6 FAL at the study site. With regard to classroom observations, it was interesting to note that, unlike in 2012 before the intervention, in 2013

and 2014 during the intervention at the site, Celani's classroom had transformed somewhat. His learners sat in groups of between five and six and no longer sat in rows facing him. The walls, however, were still relatively bare and there was no sufficient lighting in the room. Celani, however, did have reading material and the grouping of learners allowed for a vibrant interaction in the classroom. Whereas in the past learners seemed intimidated by the presence of an observer in their classroom, his learners were now involved in the lesson, even eager to impress the visitors. He notes in his interview that his learners' participation was reflected in their eagerness 'to put their hands up'. This was evident in the classroom as the learners competed for the attention of the teacher every time he asked a question. This is the very essence of the scaffolding interaction cycle and the affirmation that accompanies this. It provides the learners with confidence and the belief that they are capable and hence they all try to outdo one another whenever a question is asked in the classroom. This confirmed Celani's assertion when he was asked if his learners enjoyed the *Reading to Learn* programme. He stated:

> **CELANI**: The way they raise up their hands, the way they want to answer me back, to respond from the text. Yes, I can say, definitely that they do enjoy it.
> **BAM**: Do they feel like they are improving their skills?
> **CELANI**: In a way, I can say that. The way they are doing it, they can feel that this thing is helping them a lot to understand the words, especially the difficult words that they don't understand, words of the similar meanings, all those things like adjectives, yes. That's what I can say; they are improving a lot (Celani, Interview 2).

The classroom environment had been transformed from this point of view. There was a sense of urgency and vibrancy, but in particular, the extract is a demonstration of the interface between the Hallidayan SFL and Rose's

methodology. In one particular lesson observation, Celani challenged learners to learn certain words in the passage following a detailed Scaffolding Interaction Cycle of prepare, identify and elaborate. Again, all the learners had copies of the passage, which he read out loud. He used a technique where they had to number the sentences so that the learners would always know to which sentences the practitioner was referring. It represented a deconstruction phase of the *Reading to Learn* methodology. He and his class thus followed some of the stages of Rose's methodology. In the first stage of Preparing for Reading, he managed the introduction satisfactorily, drawing on learners' experiences. However, his often loud and overbearing demeanour appeared to be intimidating to some learners. This is in sharp contrast with the ethos of the *Reading to Learn* Scaffolding Interaction Cycle that is based on affirmation. As a result, learners were not entirely free to talk about their visit to the Royal Show grounds in Pietermaritzburg, which was an appropriate way to start this lesson; however, he managed to get the learners interested. It appeared though that in paraphrasing texts, Celani needed to provide the learners with more information about the sequence of the text to help their understanding before reading the text to them. This is a matter of preparation when it is important to identify the stages and phases of text, and this enables the teacher to highlight the sequence. Celani managed the Detailed Reading fairly well, but he was not always able to identify important key words in the narrative texts. Although he was able to use appropriate cues to help learners identify key words, he did not always follow the required pattern of interaction that is crucial for supporting and affirming all learners. For example, he sometimes read a sentence before preparing learners by paraphrasing the sentence before it was read. He also needed to prepare

elaborations more carefully so that learners could understand new, key concepts or literary language. This skill is developed through regular practice of the *Reading to Learn* cycle. The next stage, Sentence Making, was challenging to Celani, despite the improvement in the manner in which he was able to prepare appropriate sentence strips for the learners to work with. He also struggled with providing cues for all the different words and required some help in dividing sentences into word phrasings using the 'WH' questions and synonyms. In Spelling, Celani had been guided beforehand by the *Reading to Learn* trainer on how to conduct the spelling process and how to divide words into syllables, beginning and end-sounds, prefixes and suffixes. It was in reference to instances like these where Hart noted:

> **MH**: I would say one thing that I've realised with the recent experiences with teachers who we might consider weak and with lack of confidence, to actually teach with them rather than say: 'ok, go and do this'. We did a lot of support about helping them with lesson plans, but then we would leave it to them to do it. I just think what we've done recently is where you'd help them at the beginning and then hand over to them in the lesson … And I think the idea of sort of half-halving, and working with them in the process for a couple of lessons would probably boost them and give them more confidence. Because it happened recently with me and I realized that's something we need to add to our training process (Hart, Interview).

Hart conceived the idea of "half-halving" as a training strategy because Celani had struggled even in a previous observation. Momentary interventions by the trainer during the lesson assisted to deal with immediate challenges that presented themselves in the learning environment, but could be potentially embarrassing for the practitioner. Regarding Sentence Writing, Celani was able to do this, even though it was a somewhat mechanical task that arose out of the previous two steps. It was obvious that he still needed to learn to elaborate on

the sentence structure to reinforce the learning that had occurred around sentence structure and spelling. However, as per the standard criticism of this methodology, Celani's lesson was too long-winded. The practitioner struggled to determine how to move swiftly in with the lesson without over-emphasizing the words in sentences. Because the lesson became too lengthy, other stages of the *Reading to Learn* methodology were not attempted. For example, the lesson did not lead to Joint Construction, Individual Construction and Individual Writing.

It must be mentioned that the greater proportion of the problem of incomplete stages of the methodology during instruction derives from the practitioners, possibly due to inexperience and, delivering too much content in a given lesson beyond the allocated time. Where manageable volumes of content are decided upon prior to the lesson delivery, possibilities of the practitioner completing the full cycle of *Reading to Learn* methodology are enhanced. It was obvious that Celani did not practice the *Reading to Learn* process regularly. There was very little evidence, if any, to suggest that his learners were familiar with the process and he himself was still uncertain about how to prepare properly for the effective delivery of the lesson. Consistency is critical if this methodology is to be implemented successfully in a classroom discourse. Celani had every reason to believe that his class had improved. The excitement about learning to read and reading to learn, the active participation in class and the general competitive spirit in his class were not the characteristics of his pre-intervention class. There has indeed been a level of transformation, both in terms of his learners' attitude and his own willingness to deliver a successful lesson based on the *Reading to Learn* approach. In both his 2012 questionnaire and interview, he lamented on

his inability to teach reading and the lack of support provided by the Department of Education in this area. His learners were generally inactive and even defying any probes.   However, this has improved noticeably, even though the ANA results show that the improvement is slow. Overall, though, it explains the reason for the ANA results in Grade 6 FAL being the way they are throughout the three-year phase: before, during and after the intervention.

One of the interesting discoveries in the lesson observations of practitioners during the intervention is the correlation between the patterns observed in Celani's lesson and that of Dumisani's. This is critical because the Grade 6 ANA results in Literacy and Numeracy are informed by a combination of influences of the different subjects that are taught there (often by different practitioners). The performance of the two Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers (Celani and Dumisani) in the lessons observed was not the best it could have been, considering that they have been exposed to Rose's methodology and support on it for close to two years (from 2013 to 2014). The training and the support that they received to practice the approach, and thus to develop their skills through this practice, simply do not match their classroom performance as displayed through lesson observations. This is in stark contrast to the commitment and expertise the Foundation Phase teachers have shown. This is particularly valid in terms of Anele's use of the methodology. Her willingness to use *Reading to Learn* on an on-going basis appears to be the distinction between herself and the two Intermediate Phase teachers. This is so, notwithstanding the reality hinted at earlier in the study, that a Foundation Phase practitioner has much less 'baggage' to deal with, with learners exposed to fewer years of bad habits that the

methodology has to assist them to unlearn. Furthermore, the fact that Anele's learners have limited texts to work with, mostly narrative as opposed to the diversity of texts through which her Grade 6 colleagues have to help their learners, places her at an advantage. But it appears that Celani and Dumisani only prepare and practice lessons on this methodology when a lesson observation was to be conducted. If they use the *Reading to Learn* methodology at all, it probably does not always include Joint Construction. This notion is based on the learners' response to their teaching observed during the lesson observations. This is crucial, particularly because this stage of *Reading to Learn* is vital for the learners' reading development, comprehension and writing ability.

Therefore, it is clear from the above discussion of the research findings that the practitioners' understanding of the phenomenon was hugely transformed by the intervention curriculum. Anele, for one, appeared to be easing through the methodology, being transformed from the practitioner who lacked self-confidence and direction, to almost an expert in *Reading to Learn* methodology. Celani continued to experiment with the methodology with much less success and zeal, compared to Anele. Indications that he and Dumisani were not consistent in practicing the methodology reflected not only in their learners' attitudes but also in their own approaches to the methodology. On the extreme end, Bongani appeared to have gone full circle and, in the process, making observable strides in the methodology.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the 2014 ANA results as the culmination of a quantitative experiment that commenced in 2012 at the study site. It engages with both the quantitative and qualitative findings generated through the ANA documentary evidence, the learners' written work, and interviews of the *Reading to Learn* trainers, as well as some class observations. The chapter centres on the first and the second critical research questions of the study and seeks to probe the impact of the intervention on the learners' academic performance in ANA before, during and after its implementation at the study site, as well as how all that has been informed by the nature of the understanding of practitioners regarding the phenomenon under study as well as the transformation or confirmation of those practitioners' understanding of the phenomenon that the study purports to explore. Therefore, throughout this chapter, the aim was to show the impact of the practitioners' understanding as reflected in the ANA results in different subjects, in the learners written work, in lesson observations and also in the trainers' interviews at the study site. In the process, some of the key issues that impacted on the results in the study were outlined, as well as the reasons for the manner in which the intervention impacted on these results in the ways that it has. Throughout the course of implementation, the theoretical framework of *Reading to Learn* was referred to so as to provide the implications of the different facets of the intervention. Chapter 8 forms the conclusion of the study. The key issues and findings are consolidated in this chapter and presented as recommendations.

Chapter 8

Conclusions and Future Trajectories

8.1 Problem Statement and Objectives

This study addresses rural, disadvantaged primary school education in a South African context. Its purpose is to examine and explore the relationship between the teaching of reading and the improvement of the academic performance of learners in Literacy and Numeracy in specific grades in a rural school. To do this, the study employed the Mixed-Method Research (MMR), in particular, and structured itself around the concurrent MMR - Embedded Design that is primarily suited for quantitative experiments that examine phenomena before, during and after an intervention. In keeping with this Design, qualitative data was also gathered to support and corroborate the quantitative findings of the study that were generated through ANA in the course of the intervention.

In this instance the intervention was based on Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology. It was implemented across the school grades and phases in all the subjects offered at the school. However, for purposes of the study, the focus was on Grade 3 and Grade 6. Since Rose belongs to the subversive branch of the quadrant of Bernstein's typology, the study took on a more interpretivist paradigm and sought to interpret and challenge the status quo in education. To that extent, the study was premised on the linguistic, social and pedagogic theories of Halliday, Vygotsky and Bernstein, respectively. These theories cumulatively inform Rose's methodology, the curriculum intervention in this study. The study thus builds on these theories to examine this correlation

between the teaching of reading and the improvement of learner-academic performance at a selected rural primary school, using the results after the intervention as a measure. This final chapter thus presents a brief analysis of key arguments that evolved in each chapter of the thesis during the exploration of the phenomenon. It furthermore offers a discussion of the implications for the Department of Basic Education in relation to the research findings of the study, before concluding with a brief outline of possibilities for further research.

8.2 Apposite arguments regarding the teaching of reading as a phenomenon

The focus of chapter 1 is on providing the rationale for the study. It outlines the background and context of the study and explains the phenomenon. To that extent, this chapter contains a discussion on literature that foregrounds key challenges in the South African primary education setting and pin them down to poor reading literacy that is endemic in the schools in similar circumstances as the study site. The discussion further suggests, drawing from the said literature, that poor reading literacy underpins the dismal learner academic performance in Literacy and Numeracy as demonstrated in various local and international studies. By introducing issues of 'rurality' and 'disadvantage' as some of the critical factors in understanding the phenomenon and its impact, the researcher is able to put into perspective the teaching of reading as a socio-economic problem.

Chapter 2 engages with scholarship whose focus revolves around the teaching of reading. It draws on global literature and provides an international perspective

before localising the issue and reviewing South African literature on this phenomenon. Clearly evident in this chapter is also how diverse literature confirms that the teaching of reading can be classified into two broad theories: the Immersion Theory and the Direct Instruction Approach. This is important because it provides the prospect of 'testing' a third option, in this case the *Reading to Learn* methodology, the intervention curriculum at the study site. It is argued how this methodology presents different opportunities. Furthermore, a common thread with the previous chapter is established by problematising the issues of 'rurality' and 'disadvantage' and elevating these as focal points and all-important causalities in a discussion of the teaching of reading.

The discourse on the infrastructure for theorizing the research findings when discussing the impact of the intervention at the study site is introduced in chapter 3. It makes available key concepts and theories to better understand the practices and the understanding of the practitioners. It is argued in the chapter how Rose's methodology is a by-product of the theories of Bernstein, Vygotsky and Halliday and how *Reading to Learn* is a social justice project. It is also argued that Bernstein's Theory of Pedagogic Discourse, Vygotsky's Theory of Social Learning and Halliday's SFL are better positioned to subvert the current deadlock in education settings, particularly those that are located in underprivileged communities, where many underprivileged children are subjected to sub-standard conditions of schooling. It further argued that this combination of features (and theories) represented in Rose's *Reading to Learn*, allows this methodology to prevail as a suitable construct, with a noble motive, to assist in reversing the damage that is done in schools in the name of

progressivism, on the one hand, and traditional structuralist approaches, on the other.

To enhance reliability, validity and trustworthiness, the methodological choices made for the study and the rationale for choosing them are scrutinized in Chapter 4. To this end, the mixed method is discussed as an option and the Embedded Exploratory Design as a means to understand the teaching of reading as a phenomenon is considered. The relevance for choosing these options and why they are suitable for the study are also discussed. In line with the conventions of Embedded Designs, the focus remained on the study as a quantitative experiment (ANA 2012, 2013 & 2014) with intermittent engagement with qualitative data generated through the practitioners' trainers' interviews, the learners' written work and lesson observations. These are inclusive of measures such as the ANA question papers, text-based tasks and questionnaires. It is because of these choices that the overarching argument in the chapter is that of fostering triangulation. A pertinent argument that arises in the chapter, furthermore, is the fact that the study as a whole subscribes to the constructivist paradigm, where it seeks to interpret the situation as it obtains in disadvantaged rural primary schools in South Africa, in line with the subversive mission of Rose and his 'social justice project'.

From Chapter 5 to Chapter 8 the study engages with the research findings, drawing on the theories that inform Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology. In particular, Chapter 5 is an exploration of the pre-intervention phase of the study. It engaged with data that was generated through questionnaires, interviews with

the participants and the 2012 ANA before the introduction of the intervention at the study site. Based on the findings, it is argued that the practitioners' understanding of the teaching of reading is characterized and influenced in some cases by mythical beliefs, methodological conundrums and misplaced perceptions. It is further argued that these characteristics and influences result in the practitioners developing a negative attitude towards the teaching of reading, including the pretext for not teaching it.

Chapter 6 examines data during the course of the intervention at the study site. This research not only engages with data generated through participants' second interviews and the learners' written work, but also provides a detailed discussion on the ANA results for Grade 3 and Grade 6 in the form of a comparative analysis of the pre-intervention phase and the 'during intervention' phase. Crucially, the chapter attempts to answer the second critical research question that interrogates whether the intervention confirms or transforms the practitioners' understanding that was discussed in Chapter 5 regarding the teaching of reading. It is argued, for example, that the intervention confirms and transforms some of the fundamental beliefs, perceptions and attitudes held by the practitioners. Importantly, based on data, it is further argued that the academic performance of learners is enhanced as a result of the intervention. It is also argued that the enhancement of performance is much more pronounced in Grade 3 than in Grade 6, where learners (in Grade 6) have to struggle with entrenched bad habits learned over time compared to their Grade 3 schoolmates. In this chapter it is also argued that the slow improvement in Grade 6 may also be attributable to the fact that learners are overwhelmed when exposed to too

many factual texts for which there is hardly any preparation in the Foundation Phase.

Chapter 7 is the culmination of a three-year experiment. It contains a discussion on the data generated through *Reading to Learn* trainers, the learners' written work, lesson observations as well as a comparative analysis of the ANA results over a period of three years: before, during and after the intervention. The discussion in this chapter suggests that, on the whole, the intervention at the study site has contributed significantly in positively impacting on learner performance. The chapter reinforces the notion that there is a gradual improvement of the quantity and quality of results that the learners have continued to enjoy since 2012 before the intervention. Notwithstanding some inadequacies and inaccuracies relating to the implementation of the intervention programme, the training of practitioners and inevitable staff movement, the chapter reveals that the intervention has managed to rise above the challenges, to achieve the kind of impact that transformed the practitioners' understanding and, in some cases, confirmed their understanding, giving rise to this gradual improvement of learner achievement at the school.

8.3 Implications for practice

Given the research findings discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, particularly the convergence that was established in Chapter 7 regarding the understanding of the phenomenon of the teaching of reading by the practitioners, it is clear that this study will have far-reaching implications for the Department of Basic Education in South Africa. The most fundamental finding in this study is that

which concerns the practitioners' understandings of the role that the teaching of reading plays in learners' academic performance in their various subjects.

The study contends that the understandings of the practitioners are often lagging, as opposed to improving the learners' academic performance. Notably, their understanding is often a product of conjecture and perception rather than an understanding based on research or long-standing policies. To this extent, the Department of Basic Education has a responsibility to formulate a policy, based on studies such as this, to influence and align the practitioners' thinking regarding their practice on the teaching of reading, if there is to be any hope of transforming the discourse of academic performance that is currently evidenced in schools, particularly those schools that are located in underprivileged communities. For example, the fact that most practitioners in the study still hold the view that the teaching of reading is the exclusive domain of the language teachers, when in fact most subjects deal with often unique genres that are particular to that subject and whose reading is equally distinctive in line with the make-up of the subject, is hugely problematic. Unless policy dictates that teachers of all subjects ought to teach reading in their respective subjects (and genres), content teachers will continue to relegate that role to the teachers of languages, thereby continuing to compromise the quality of results in local and international assessments. Also, it is perturbing that the teaching of reading is limited to timetabling on specific days of the week, often only linked to languages. This study thus advocates that the teaching of reading should be a continuous process which serves to close or at least lessen the gap created through the non-existence of learning resources in the home, for the majority of

disadvantaged learners; the teaching of reading should not and cannot be limited by time-tabling, subject content or even work schedules. There is also the issue regarding the manner in which reading is taught, which presents another methodological conundrum for many teachers. There are teachers who, even though they acknowledge the value of the teaching of reading in support of academic excellence for their learners, are hardly able to teach reading because they have never been exposed to any development programmes by the Department of Basic Education aimed at enhancing that skill. Consequently, those teachers expect learners automatically to be able to read independently at certain stages, most notably at the end of the junior primary school phase. The study reveals that this practice is unjust, and even more so to the disadvantaged learners, for whom their homes do not provide meaningful resources to assist them to cope with the task of learning from reading. Furthermore, progressive and traditional theories, to which most practitioners subscribe, have shown a number of weaknesses. For this reason, the study proposes a holistic approach to the teaching of reading that is accommodative of the various strands of society, including the underprivileged.

It is also argued that mythical and various other assumptions, and not taking into account the contextual factors of learners, result in practitioners placing the blame on the learners when they fail to meet unrealistic expectations. For example, a widely held belief is that learners will be better readers if the school is supplied with adequate reading material. It is clear from the debate in this study that reading material does not teach reading; teachers do this (and often with minimal available resources). It is the intensity and the rigour with which

this act of teaching is carried out that produce results, and not merely the supply of books on its own.

All these factors necessitate a comprehensive in-service training for teachers to impact their paradigms in respect of the teaching of reading. Such training would have to prioritise practitioners who practice in mostly underprivileged, rural backgrounds, offer a holistic pedagogy and summarily deal with the understandings of practitioners in a comprehensive way, as a fundamental guiding principle in terms of improving the learners' academic performance across the system of education. Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology is a typical example of an approach that promises to achieve this, and the performance of the learners in the Grade 3 and Grade 6 ANA in 2013 and 2014 at the study site, as a result of this curriculum intervention, is a clear example of what is achievable.

8.4 Possibilities for further study

This study sought to establish whether or not there was a correlation between the deliberate teaching of reading, on the one hand, and the improvement of the learner's academic performance in Grade 3 and Grade 6 at the school, on the other. Firstly, as a result of this inquiry, there is a need for further research regarding measures to lay solid bases (or maybe even the gradual introduction of other genres) in the Foundation Phase, to allow for a seamless transition into the Intermediate Phase. As the study reveals, it is in the Intermediate Phase where a variety of factual texts stifle the progress of the learners' acquisition of literacy and *vice versa.* The study has shown that progress gradually slows down

as the learners contend with more genres (and factual texts) in the Intermediate Phase that they had not experienced in the Foundation Phase.

Secondly, the issue of completing the syllabus in time is one that troubles many practitioners. The level of primacy that is placed on this appears to supersede the intrinsic aim of education: to assist learners to learn from reading. The study thus provides an opportunity for further study into the intricacies of learning to read that is counter-balanced with the ability of the practitioner to complete the syllabus, satisfied that the necessary grounding where learners are equipped to learn from reading, is solid.

Thirdly, the study offers an opportunity to investigate the incidence of affirmation of learners and how this boosts their ability to increase competence and improve academic performance, and how all of this relates to the affirmation that the practitioner himself or herself experiences. The *Reading to Learn* methodology, because of the scaffolding interaction cycle, promotes the affirming of learners. However, the extent to which this affirmation, as necessary and useful as it is during the teaching and learning instruction, must correlate with the academic performance of learners in a meaningful way.

Finally, Hart proposes a new "half-halving" (Hart, Interview) approach as a part of lesson observations when training teachers. This is where, when observing a lesson, a trainer can intervene during the course of the practitioner's lesson to resolve an identified problem, for example. On the face of it, it is a useful approach; it is pragmatic and deals with the emerging problem immediately.

However, there are other issues to consider, including the possible humiliation of the teacher, intrusiveness and the morale of the teacher. It would be interesting to examine the impact of this phenomenon arising out of the implementation of the *Reading to Learn* methodology at the study site.

8.5 Final thoughts

The teaching of reading remains one of the most unpopular subjects among some practitioners and a 'bitter-sweet' issue for many more. This is understandable. Many teachers come from the pedagogical edifice that promoted the ethos of the incidental acquisition of reading. Wherever reading was actively practiced, it was a function of language teachers. Explicit teaching of reading across various content areas has never been a stimulating subject in education circles in South Africa, more so among teachers who taught in disadvantaged communities. Teachers were imbued with notions that favoured progressivist theories, and advised to relinquish 'antiquated' traditional practices in which they taught certain words, phrases and sentences by rote. It is in this web of paradoxes that the teaching of reading has become enmeshed.

Therefore, there is a compelling need for the implementation of strategies that will bring about a radical transformation of teachers' perceptions of the centrality of reading within the education enterprise. It begins at the top with the authorities admitting that the current arrangement, where underprivileged children continue to suffer a double dose of disadvantage (Bernstein, 1990), as being both impoverished and illiterate, is unsustainable. They need to make resources available so that reading-orientated pedagogies may flourish and

become the norm, rather than the exception. Teachers themselves need to develop enthusiasm and equip themselves with relevant skills, knowledge and techniques that will assist their learners, especially those who depend on the school as the only site of learning. This will position teachers in ways that will indeed transform learners' lives.   Reading, arguably, is the primary function of schooling. Rose's *Reading to Learn* methodology represents one of the ways such a thinking might be inculcated, and this study clearly exposes this possibility.

8.6 Conclusion

In the aftermath of this study, a myriad of tentative suppositions have arisen as a result of the research findings discussed in its chapters. What appears incontrovertible is the notion that these conclusions are urgent and converge at the nexus of the discourse on academic performance across the education continuum. In keeping with this thinking, resolute inquiry on key aspects of these notions needs to be made with relentless and unremitting fortitude:

- A theorised investigation of the understanding and differential conceptions on the precise nature of reading and its direct correlation with learning;

- Concerted studies designed to subvert the transmission of social order through pedagogy in our centres of acquisition, and to deligitimate social stratification, a rampant feature currently in the classrooms and in society in general;

- Urgent need for a study on 1) workshops conducted for teachers, 2) continuous in-service capacitation based on the life-long learning

principle and 3) concretely theorised interventions rather than those that are based on 'common sense' or 'whims' of individuals; and,

- Research on fresh perspectives on the effects of rurality and language acquisition among learners from underprivileged communities.

Whereas most studies have tended to ascribe the rural learner's underperformance to poor language acquisition in particular, this study has proven that this is a mythical notion. With the assistance of theories such as those of Bernstein, Vygotsky and Halliday, the *Reading to Learn* methodology was able to help learners produce written work of a reasonable standard despite their marginalised backgrounds. From the research findings, it is clear that a critical inhibiting factor in the reading pedagogy is the lack of coherence in terms of the messaging regarding reading itself, as well as what constitutes its teaching among practitioners. Just as the National Development Plan (NDC, 2012) proposes groundbreaking innovations regarding teacher capacitation, among other things, the study itself offered similar consequential in-service training for the participants, with what may certainly be construed as having resulted in compelling outcomes at the end.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

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Appendix E1 (ANELE)

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONS
(The interviewer must 'cross' the chosen answer)

1. What is your Home Language?

English	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu ✗	Other

2. What is the LoLT being used with your learners in your class?

IsiZulu ✗	English	Afrikaans	Other

3. How long have you been in the teaching profession?

A: 3 years or less	B: 4 to 6 years	C: 6 to 9 years ✗	D: 10 years or more

4. How long have you been teaching at the school?

A: 1 year or less	B: 2 to 3 years	C: 3 to 5 years ✗	D: 6 or more years

5. What is your number of years experience of teaching this grade?

A: 1 year or less	B: 2 to 3 years	C: 3 to 5 years ✗	D: 6 or more years

6. What are your teaching qualifications?

A: University Degree	B: Post-graduate Degree	C: College Diploma ✗	D: Still working on it

7. How often do you teach reading to your class in a weekly cycle?

A: once or twice a week ✗	B: sometimes	C: everyday	D: not at all

8. What informs you that you must teach reading on a given day?

A: time-table ✗	B: logic	C: HOD / Principal	D: don't specifically teach reading

9. I have ONE of these items in my class and they make the teaching of reading easy:

A: charts, posters and	B: two of these	C: one of these	D: none of these ✗

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graded readers			

10. On the list of 1 to 6 of the most important things to do with your learners to help them to do well in ANA, and where 1 means most important, and 6 means least important, where would you put the teaching of reading?

A: 1	B: 2	C: 3	D: 4	E: 5	F: 6

11. In the last 10 school days, how many times have you taught your learners to read?

A: None	B: At least once	C: very few times	D: quite a number of times

12. How much help do you think you need in the teaching of reading?

A: a bit of help	B: average help	C: serious help	D: no real help

13. How much of what your learners know can be attributed to reading regularly

A: all of it	B: very little of it	C: none of it	D: I am not sure

14. Do you think learners who read more have a better chance of passing all other subjects?

A: Not really	B: Maybe	C: Of course, yes	D: Not at all

15. Do you think a lot of teachers take reading seriously enough to teach it?

A: Yes	B: No	C: Few of them	D: Many of them

16. How would you describe the efficiency of supply of the reading material in your class?

A: Poor	B: Very good	C: Very poor	D: Fair

17. Have you been trained by the Department (or any other stakeholder) on the teaching of reading?

A: Never	B: Emphatic 'Yes'	C: Only barely	D: Don't remember

18. Have you ever heard of or been involved in a *Reading to Learn* Program?

A: Never	B: Emphatic 'Yes' – been involved	C: Only barely heard of it	D: Yes, but never been involved

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Appendix E1 (BONGANI)

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONS
(The interviewer must 'cross' the chosen answer)

1. What is your Home Language?

English	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu ✗	Other

2. What is the LoLT being used with your learners in your class?

IsiZulu	English ✗	Afrikaans	Other

3. How long have you been in the teaching profession?

A: 3 years or less	B: 4 to 6 years	C: 6 to 9 years	D: 10 years or more ✗

4. How long have you been teaching at the school?

A: 1 year or less	B: 2 to 3 years ✗	C: 3 to 5 years	D: 6 or more years

5. What is your number of years experience of teaching this grade?

A: 1 year or less	B: 2 to 3 years	C: 3 to 5 years	D: 6 or more years ✗

6. What are your teaching qualifications?

A: University Degree ✗	B: Post-graduate Degree	C: College Diploma	D: Still working on it

7. How often do you teach reading to your class in a weekly cycle?

A: once or twice a week	B: sometimes	C: everyday	D: not at all ✗

8. What informs you that you must teach reading on a given day?

A: time-table	B: logic	C: HOD / Principal	D: don't specifically teach reading ✗

9. I have ONE of these items in my class and they make the teaching of reading easy:

A: charts, posters and	B: two of these	C: one of these	D: none of these ✗

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graded readers			

10. On the list of 1 to 6 of the most important things to do with your learners to help them to do well in ANA, and where 1 means most important, and 6 means least important, where would you put the teaching of reading?

A: 1	B: 2	C: 3	D: 4	E: 5	F: 6

11. In the last 10 school days, how many times have you taught your learners to read?

A: None	B: At least once	C: very few times	D: quite a number of times

12. How much help do you think you need in the teaching of reading?

A: a bit of help	B: average help	C: serious help	D: no real help

13. How much of what your learners know can be attributed to reading regularly

A: all of it	B: very little of it	C: none of it	D: I am not sure

14. Do you think learners who read more have a better chance of passing all other subjects?

A: Not really	B: Maybe	C: Of course, yes	D: Not at all

15. Do you think a lot of teachers take reading seriously enough to teach it?

A: Yes	B: No	C: Few of them	D: Many of them

16. How would you describe the efficiency of supply of the reading material in your class?

A: Poor	B: Very good	C: Very poor	D: Fair

17. Have you been trained by the Department (or any other stakeholder) on the teaching of reading?

A: Never	B: Emphatic 'Yes'	C: Only barely	D: Don't remember

18. Have you ever heard of or been involved in a *Reading to Learn* Program?

A: Never	B: Emphatic 'Yes' – been involved	C: Only barely heard of it	D: Yes, but never been involved

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Appendix E1 (DUMISANI)

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONS
(The interviewer must 'cross' the chosen answer)

1. What is your Home Language?

English	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu ✗	Other

2. What is the LoLT being used with your learners in your class?

IsiZulu ✗	English ✗	Afrikaans	Other

3. How long have you been in the teaching profession?

A: 3 years or less ✗	B: 4 to 6 years	C: 6 to 9 years	D: 10 years or more

4. How long have you been teaching at the school?

A: 1 year or less	B: 2 to 3 years ✗	C: 3 to 5 years	D: 6 or more years

5. What is your number of years experience of teaching this grade?

A: 1 year or less	B: 2 to 3 years ✗	C: 3 to 5 years	D: 6 or more years

6. What are your teaching qualifications?

A: University Degree	B: Post-graduate Degree	C: College Diploma	D: Still working on it ✗

7. How often do you teach reading to your class in a weekly cycle?

A: once or twice a week ✗	B: sometimes	C: everyday	D: not at all

8. What informs you that you must teach reading on a given day?

A: time-table	B: logic ✗	C: HOD / Principal	D: don't specifically teach reading

9. I have ONE of these items in my class and they make the teaching of reading easy:

A: charts, posters and	B: two of these	C: one of these ✗	D: none of these

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graded readers			

10. On the list of 1 to 6 of the most important things to do with your learners to help them to do well in ANA, and where 1 means most important, and 6 means least important, where would you put the teaching of reading?

A: 1	B: 2 ✗	C: 3	D: 4	E: 5	F: 6

11. In the last 10 school days, how many times have you taught your learners to read?

A: None ✗	B: At least once	C: very few times	D: quite a number of times

12. How much help do you think you need in the teaching of reading?

A: a bit of help	B: average help	C: serious help ✗	D: no real help

13. How much of what your learners know can be attributed to reading regularly

A: all of it	B: very little of it	C: none of it	D: I am not sure ✗

14. Do you think learners who read more have a better chance of passing all other subjects?

A: Not really	B: Maybe ✗	C: Of course, yes	D: Not at all

15. Do you think a lot of teachers take reading seriously enough to teach it?

A: Yes	B: No ✗	C: Few of them	D: Many of them

16. How would you describe the efficiency of supply of the reading material in your class?

A: Poor ✗	B: Very good	C: Very poor	D: Fair

17. Have you been trained by the Department (or any other stakeholder) on the teaching of reading?

A: Never ✗	B: Emphatic 'Yes'	C: Only barely	D: Don't remember

18. Have you ever heard of or been involved in a *Reading to Learn* Program?

A: Never ✗	B: Emphatic 'Yes' – been involved	C: Only barely heard of it	D: Yes, but never been involved

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Appendix E1 (CELANi)

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONS
(The interviewer must 'cross' the chosen answer)

1. What is your Home Language?

English	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu ✗	Other

2. What is the LoLT being used with your learners in your class?

IsiZulu	English ✗	Afrikaans	Other

3. How long have you been in the teaching profession?

A: 3 years or less	B: 4 to 6 years ✗	C: 6 to 9 years	D: 10 years or more

4. How long have you been teaching at the school?

A: 1 year or less	B: 2 to 3 years	C: 3 to 5 years ✗	D: 6 or more years

5. What is your number of years experience of teaching this grade?

A: 1 year or less	B: 2 to 3 years ✗	C: 3 to 5 years	D: 6 or more years

6. What are your teaching qualifications?

A: University Degree	B: Post-graduate Degree	C: College Diploma	D: Still working on it ✗

7. How often do you teach reading to your class in a weekly cycle?

A: once or twice a week ✗	B: sometimes ✗	C: everyday	D: not at all

8. What informs you that you must teach reading on a given day?

A: time-table	B: logic ✗	C: HOD / Principal	D: don't specifically teach reading

9. I have ONE of these items in my class and they make the teaching of reading easy:

A: charts, posters and	B: two of these	C: one of these	D: none of these ✗

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graded readers			

10. On the list of 1 to 6 of the most important things to do with your learners to help them to do well in ANA, and where 1 means most important, and 6 means least important, where would you put the teaching of reading?

A: 1	B: 2	C: 3	D: 4	E: 5	F: 6

11. In the last 10 school days, how many times have you taught your learners to read?

A: None	B: At least once	C: very few times	D: quite a number of times

12. How much help do you think you need in the teaching of reading?

A: a bit of help	B: average help	C: serious help	D: no real help

13. How much of what your learners know can be attributed to reading regularly

A: all of it	B: very little of it	C: none of it	D: I am not sure

14. Do you think learners who read more have a better chance of passing all other subjects?

A: Not really	B: Maybe	C: Of course, yes	D: Not at all

15. Do you think a lot of teachers take reading seriously enough to teach it?

A: Yes	B: No	C: Few of them	D: Many of them

16. How would you describe the efficiency of supply of the reading material in your class?

A: Poor	B: Very good	C: Very poor	D: Fair

17. Have you been trained by the Department (or any other stakeholder) on the teaching of reading?

A: Never	B: Emphatic 'Yes'	C: Only barely	D: Don't remember

18. Have you ever heard of or been involved in a *Reading to Learn* Program?

A: Never	B: Emphatic 'Yes' – been involved	C: Only barely heard of it	D: Yes, but never been involved

Trampoline Trajectories: A dialectical analysis of a correlation between the teaching of reading and the improvement of Learner-Academic Performance in a rural South African primary school.

Study Participants Interviews 1 (Appendix A1)

Anele Interview 1

BAM: How many teachers teach Grade 3 at the school?

ANELE: Only one. Its me only.

BAM: So it's yourself?

ANELE: Yes

BAM: Okay, so who is responsible for the teaching of reading in Grade 3 at the school?

ANELE: I am because I'm the only teacher.

BAM: Okay, so how often do you teach reading eh to your class in a weekly cycle?

ANELE: Eh I think maybe twice or once a week.

BAM: Okay, can you identify eh the rationale behind the number of times, the frequency of reading lessons in your class? What makes you teach it once in a week or twice in a week? What informs that?

ANELE: We use time-table. We follow the time-table.

BAM: So the time-table tells you that you must teach it once?

ANELE: Yes

BAM: Okay, Can you give me three factors you think are important for the successful teaching of reading? (Silence) What do you consider to be important factors eh for the successful teaching of reading? What must be there and what must be the conditions so that the teaching of reading must be successful?

ANELE: We need to have the materials for reading, like graded readers and other stuff that we can use for reading.

BAM: Mhmm, okay. What else? What do you think about your own capacity as a teacher so that you can teach reading successfully?

ANELE: Eh I think if I can have eh the, if I can have the other graded readers eh like, maybe the magazines, newspapers, our reading can be successful.

BAM: But do you think you are equipped eh to be able to teach reading successfully? (Silence) Have you been trained in any way to teach reading? Do you think that eh you can

be able to teach reading successfully in your class? Or do you think you succeed in teaching reading in your class?

ANELE: No, actually, the way I [teach] reading in my class, I'm not satisfied because I can see there is a problem with my learners; not all of them can read; most of them cannot read. There are few learners who can read properly.

BAM: Okay, so how enabling is your school environment to the effective teaching of reading? So the whole school environment eh does it enable you to be able to teach eh reading successfully?

ANELE: No, no because our learners they, I think if we can have more materials for reading, maybe, like if at home they have, they can have the tv's, dvd's maybe they can be used to reading. Like, when they are able to listen to the stories because if you need them to read the story you must first tell them; you find out that if you want them to read, if you tell them the story they don't listen, 'cause sometimes you told the story you find out the story is boring, even yourself you cannot, you don't have the way to make it funny to them.

BAM: You're saying something about eh them at home – do you think there is any kind of support that your parents get at home in terms of the promotion of reading or, for that matter, the teaching of reading by their parents seeing that these are Grade 3s?

ANELE: No, because if you ask them to bring newspapers they say we don't have newspapers. Sometimes, some of them they don't know even what a newspaper is.

BAM: So, the communities that you are servicing, do you think they can help in any way in your attempt to teach reading successfully?

ANELE: I think they can help only if, if they can also know how important is reading. By now they know nothing about reading, and they don't even have any interest in reading.

BAM: Mhmm. And I suppose they are not a very affluent community as well?

ANELE: Yes

BAM: So they are a poor community. What role does that play, the fact that they are not a very affluent community, the one that you are serving?

ANELE: It plays an important role because if you give a child a homework, you are expecting a parent to help the child to do that homework. Sometimes you find that the child goes with the homework and come back without any help. He or she comes without any homework. You find that she didn't do any homework because there was no one to help her.

BAM: Okay. So how would you describe your experiences with learners in moments where you taught reading?

ANELE: It depends on the stories or on the books that we are reading by that time. (Silence) The stories that they have interest …, that they listen very carefully are these, like fairy tale

stories. Eh, if you just take a piece of newspaper and read it with them they don't show any interest.

BAM: So how do you normally teach reading whenever you teach it?

ANELE: Firstly I take out the words, I read the story for myself.

BAM: Read the story to them?

ANELE: No, I read it before I go to the class. I read the story and take out these few words, new words that they don't know, I take them, then we read them the words before the story, in the class. We read the words until they know them.

BAM: Okay

ANELE: Then when they know the words, that's where I can start reading the story with them. I read for them. They listen, maybe I read two times or three times. After that, then we read together, we read together and we form groups. Those who can read they read together and I help those who are struggling, reading maybe in, say, a group of three or group of four. Then we read together with them. The first group that are able to read they read for themselves. And I go to those who are still struggling. I help them to read, yes, they read until they catch it then they join the first group and [then I] go to the other group.

BAM: Okay. Have you ever assessed your learners on their reading and comprehension abilities? And if you have, what were your impressions?

ANELE: Yes, we assess them by doing the spelling and having the comprehensions. They answer the questions.

BAM: So what were your impressions so far when you do that with them?

ANELE: It doesn't make me excited because I only find out that some of them cannot answer the questions if we are doing the comprehensions. And when we are doing the spelling some of them cannot write the words that we have been doing, we have been reading. It takes too long, it takes very long for them to catch up.

BAM: Okay. Do you think that teachers in general, and in this school, in particular, view reading as a major component in the learning and teaching process? Explain that if you don't mind.

ANELE: No, I don't think all the teachers take reading as a very important aspect because you only find out that maybe in Intermediate [Phase] you find out that there are different teachers for different subjects, only the teacher for language that is responsible for reading. You find out that only the teacher for language who is responsible for reading and others never mind about reading, they just do their work.

BAM: Okay. Why do people think the way they do about the teaching of reading in the school, especially those teachers you have referred to, who are teaching other subjects other than languages?

ANELE: I think maybe it's the way we were taught reading at schools.

BAM: Which is how?

ANELE: You will remember that we were reading the words, reading the words until you know them, those drilling methods that were used by our teachers.

BAM: Was the teaching of reading only restricted to the language areas of learning?

ANELE: As far as I remember, it was only the teachers of language who were using those methods, drilling methods. You find out that today we are dealing with this sound, so we'll read all those words with that sound, maybe like in Zulu if we are doing the words maybe with '*da'* we'll read this *'idada liduda edamini'* ; so I think that is why our reading is at this level.

BAM: And finally, I think I wanted to check the way that we were taught, you were saying something very interesting, the way that we were taught is contributing towards most teachers to not focus on reading but only the language teachers to focus on reading. I think that's the only area that I wanted you to explain a little bit more.

ANELE: Eh, you find that it's language teachers who are only interested in teaching reading because if an NS [Natural Sciences] teacher comes into the class, he just came with his work, they do his work, he can only explain those few words that are difficult for the learners. He cannot say: 'let us read this passage'. He just reads for the learners, reads for the learners and give the learners work.

BAM: Okay. Eh finally, can you tell me anything else about your understanding of the teaching of reading that I did not ask you about?

ANELE: Eh, my understanding about reading …

BAM: …about the teaching of reading …

ANELE: … about the teaching of reading … Teaching of reading is very important. It is very important that you as a teacher you must find the ways how are you going to teach your learners. You must use the interesting ways that can be funny for your learners so that if you teach them by that day they will remember, if you teach them like playing, you teach them as you teach them you play, as you are playing you are teaching them, they will always remember this: our class teacher told us that, our class teacher told us that. They will always remember thing.

BAM: Lastly, why should I, if I were a content subject teacher, why should I teach reading at all and not the language teacher doing that?

ANELE: I think it is also important for you to teach reading 'cause without reading your learners cannot answer even if you come with a question paper, a learner cannot just read a question paper, a learner who cannot read. He needs you to lead him to that question. I think reading is important for all the teachers.

BAM: Thank you very much, Madam. That brings us to the end of our interview.

Dumisani Interview 1

BAM: Okay, Teacher B lets start our interview. So how many teachers teach Grade 6 in the school?

DUMISANI: Three.

BAM: Okay, so which subject do you teach?

DUMISANI: I teach Home Language IsiZulu.

BAM: Okay, eh so the other teachers are obviously teaching other subjects.

DUMISANI: Yes, other subjects.

BAM: So who is responsible for the teaching of reading Grade 6 at the school?

DUMISANI: Basically I would say both Language teachers are responsible for that, so that the other content educators wont have a problem. Basically both Language teachers are involved.

BAM: Okay. So in other words, the Language teachers are teaching reading so that it will be easier for the content subject teachers to be able to do their work?

DUMISANI: Yes

BAM: Okay, eh why don't they teach reading themselves?

DUMISANI: I think they depend more on Language educators. In their minds, that's what and how they feel, that it should be Language teachers. For them I think they think they should take what Language teachers have taught, and start from there. Its not for them to teach A, B, C; for them its to teach D, E, F. G. That's how I understand it. But basically Language teachers must. That's how I feel.

BAM: So, how often do you teach reading eh in your class in a weekly cycle? Is it once a week, twice a week or does it happen differently? How does it happen?

DUMISANI: I would say once or twice because, basically, I look at what am I going to teach that week? Does it have reading more or it doesn't have reading more. If it does have reading more then it means I'll have to teach reading twice or many times a week but if it doesn't require me to do lots of reading then I wont do it.

BAM: So there are many lessons that, in your view, do not need reading at all?

DUMISANI: Some, I'd say. Yes there are.

BAM: Okay. Eh so how do you decide on this frequency of reading. What is the rationale behind the frequency … to say this week I'm going to teach it once? I think you've partly answered it.

DUMISANI: I think basically you look at the work programme, then if in that work programme it does require you to do that then you will do reading, if the work programme doesn't do that then you wont do it. But, you will find a problem that even if the work programme does not tell you, if you can identify that this learner has a difficulty in that, then that is when you will start to realize that maybe I need to focus more on reading because the problem with the learners that I teach, that I've been teaching, is that they were seeing letters and alphabets but not being able to identify the whole word that if it says *ubaba* they just look at alphabets '*u b a b a*' then they write; they cant pronounce it. I think you'd look at that, then if some learners have those difficulties then you'll go about teaching reading. That's how I view it.

BAM: Some things can be very important for the teaching of reading to be done successfully in class. What are some of the important factors for the successful teaching of reading? (silence) If you want your teaching of reading to be successful what should be there, what should be the conditions?

DUMISANI: I think lots of different kinds of reading materials like at home, even before at school, at home they should have newspapers, magazines, like … I'd say the situation for these kids now is different from ours, in that, the way I grew up at home we would have lots of newspapers; even my mother would come with books from work and say 'you read this' and you'd battle with words, battle with words, even then we had television, it was there for us, then you would look and try and pronounce what that other person was saying. In that, you would do it by looking and by hearing then try and do that. For these kids, they can't be able to do that because some don't even have televisions, some parents don't even bother buying some newspapers for them. So basically, the teacher has to do more and even go beyond for these learners. Some, even if you talk using examples they cant just figure out those examples; you have to look for examples that are within their reach, what they can see or what they have seen at home. It's that creativity.

BAM: I think you've touched on my next question slightly. But I was going to ask you about the school environment here. How enabling is it for effective teaching of reading? You've already touched on the 'home' side of things. What about the 'school' itself? Of course, the 'home' may be seen as part of the school, but here at school, management, the provision of resources, the Department, the whole school environment. Is it enabling?

DUMISANI: Its not enabling? Such that some books that you think as an educator that I'll find this book and so find out it's not there. Even on the Department side you would ask the principal: 'did we order this book?' and the principal would say 'yes we did order that book but it hasn't arrived yet'. So you will find that time is going and the year is going, none of the books have arrived at school. At the end of the day you have to submit what work have you done and, in a sense, the Department is failing, you do try as an educator, and at some parts

you do fail as an educator. So I think there needs to be a balance there; the resources must be there. Right now I don't think we have enough resources as yet.

BAM: Well, I think you have talked about occasions where you have taught reading. Describe your experiences with learners in those kinds of moments where you would be teaching reading.

DUMISANI: It is very difficult. It is very difficult because they are just looking at letters. It's like they are seeing ghosts of words.

BAM: And these are Grades 6s?

DUMISANI: These are Grades 6. I'm not talking about Grade R or Grade 1. These are Grade 6s. It's difficult for them to read. It's very difficult, and the way it is so difficult you will find that there is one learner who is so best at it. And for others it is just difficult. They are not even average. It is difficult. And for this one learner who does it best, he does it best.

BAM: Wow. Have you ever assessed your learners on their reading and comprehension abilities?

DUMISANI: Yes, I have tried. I have tried. It is then when I was giving them a comprehension that I realized … no no no no because the clue to the first tip in understanding a comprehension. For me, first I have to read the questions what do they say. If I can read the questions, then I'd know what is happening on the story. At the back of my mind, then I'll know that if I do read one, two, three lines, I'm sure I'll find the answer for question one. That's how I understood the comprehension. But for these learners, question one, they can't understand it; the first line of the comprehension, yes they can read slightly, but in connecting the question and the comprehension, they find it difficult.

BAM: Do you think that teachers in general, and within this school, in particular, view reading as a major component in the teaching and learning process?

DUMISANI: I don't think so.

BAM: Can you explain that?

DUMISANI: Eh, I don't think so because reading is not much done. Even if they do it, I think they rely more on the work schedules and the lesson programmes. They rely more on that. Because if I can say they do reading, then I would see some learners taking books, interested in reading. 'Let me take that book and read, let me take that book and read'. Instead what learners do is take some books and cut off some pictures. They are not interested in reading what the whole content of the book is saying.

BAM: But what about the teachers themselves? Do you think they teach reading?

Because we can assume that learners are doing that because they want pictures but what if they cant read, they have never been taught how to read?

DUMISANI: I think they rely more on work schedules. If the work schedule says they must read then educators will then do reading. But just to say, okay out of the blue … reading, no. I think they rely more on what the Department has brought in the syllabi. If the syllabus says you do reading three times a day, then they will do it three times a day, if it says three times a month then it will be that. I don't think that it is done more frequently than it should be.

BAM: Do you think the teaching of reading is a problem for content subject teachers mainly or it is a problem even for language teachers as well.

DUMISANI: It is a problem for both, both language and content because if it not a problem, then we'd all be doing it, teaching learners to read. So I think it is a problem for both content and language educators. It's a serious problem.

BAM: So it is a common problem here at the school?

DUMISANI: Yes, it's a common problem.

BAM: Why do people think that way? Why do people think the way they do about the teaching of reading here at the school?

DUMISANI: I think the environment basically plays a role. By environment I mean … the literacy of both parents and learners, in general, within the community it does play a role because, I think, if the community would be more involved in the education of their kids, then teachers would also be more involved in that.

BAM: Finally, is there anything that I did not ask you about that you'd like to tell me about regarding the teaching of reading?

DUMISANI: I would say if there are things that the Department can do in order to assist us as educators on how to teach reading, then that would be much appreciated. But if there is none then it means I, as an educator, have to find out some ways on how I can teach reading.

BAM: Is there a relationship, finally, between the performance of learners in ANA and the teaching of reading by the teachers?

DUMISANI: You know, it's interesting enough because the way the questions of ANA are structured, it is in a way that we, as in 'I', was taught back then in the days. And I think for these learners they find it difficult because, in general even before the introduction of ANA, back then we had mental tests, dictations, where an educator would come and say 'today it's spelling, you do this'; for these learners, ANA wants the learners to just do exactly … read the instructions, answer as the instruction says. Then if they can't read the instruction, of course they can't get it. That's why I think there is a relationship reading and ANA.

BAM: Teacher B that brings us to the end of our interview, and thank you very much for participating.

Celani Interview 1

BAM: Teacher C, let us start with our interview. So how many teachers teach Grade 6 in the school?

CELANI: We are three teachers

BAM: So who is responsible for the teaching of reading in Grade 6 at the school?

CELANI: It's me.

BAM: In other words, the responsibility for the teaching of reading is for yourself, and what subject do you teach?

CELANI: English

BAM: So the responsibility of teaching reading in Grade 6 resides with the teacher of English the subject and not other teachers?

CELANI: Yes

BAM: Okay. Can you explain why that is the case? Why are the other teachers not teaching reading as well?

CELANI: There's this belief that [the teaching of] reading is for language teachers only?

BAM: Do you think that that is a correct notion, though, that the teaching of reading should only be carried out by teachers of English?

CELANI: No

BAM: Okay. Alright, let's move on. How often do you teach reading in your class? Do you teach it regularly, or everyday? How often do you teach reading in your class?

CELANI: It's something that I do once or twice in a cycle … but sometimes.

BAM: So it's not something that you do everyday, every week or every time?

CELANI: No

BAM: Now, can you identify the rationale behind the frequency of reading lessons in your class? In other words, you are saying, you teach it once in a while. What informs that? Why do you do it like that?

CELANI: Sometimes, there are these other things that you need to teach when you are a teacher, something like grammar, something like … all other aspects. But to be specific when it comes to reading, reading itself, how to read, it's something that we don't do regularly.

BAM: What are some of the factors, if you can perhaps give me just three factors that you think are important for the successful teaching of reading? Any factors that you think if somebody wants to teach reading effectively those are things that must be considered.

CELANI: I think 'readers'.

BAM: The availability of reading materials.

CELANI: Yes, the availability of readers and some other things that can help learners to read. Those are the things that I think can help.

BAM: How enabling is your school environment to the effective teaching of reading? (Silence) The environment in your school, does it allow you to be able to teach reading effectively?

CELANI: Yes, I can say I don't have a problem with that.

BAM: In other words, you are saying that the school environment allows you to teach reading effectively? You've got suitable materials, you have got support from the parents, they help learners with their work …

CELANI: No, not like that.

BAM: So how enabling is the school environment then? When I say school environment I am talking about everything from the management of the school, the supply of material, from the availability of libraries, from the parental support, the whole school environment. How enabling is it so that you can be able to teach reading effectively?

CELANI: The management of the school don't have a problem when it comes to reading. The problem is we don't have the material to do that and the environment is quite low when it comes to the community and other things that are from the outside. They are very low when it comes to reading. I think the environment is not enabling to teach reading effectively.

BAM: How would you describe your experiences with learners in moments where you taught reading? (Silence) Let's say you have been teaching reading, how would you describe your experiences there in your effort to try and teach reading with your learners?

CELANI: Some of them they cannot even read at all. Yeah, it's very difficult. But some you can see that they are mentally challenged.

BAM: Have you ever assessed your learners on their reading and comprehension abilities?

CELANI: Yes, but not all the time.

BAM: What were your impressions when you assessed them, whenever you tried?

CELANI: Give them some of the books to read.

BAM: No, you are talking about assessment, isn't it? You want to assess their reading abilities and their understanding abilities.

CELANI: Eh giving them topics to right on.

BAM: Okay. So what were your impressions when you did that with them? What did you read into that situation? What sense did you get when you gave them those kinds of assessments?

CELANI: To see if they can read for themselves.

BAM: Yes, but what I'm trying to get at is: you did those things in order to see if they can read for themselves, you assessed them. What was the response?

CELANI: What came from them?

BAM: Yes, what sense did you get from the way that they were responding to those assessments?

CELANI: Some of them wrote things that are not meaningful, some of them do not know how to write at all, and some can write.

BAM: So when you assess them their reading ability you wanted them to put that down in writing.

CELANI: Yes

BAM: Okay. Do you think that teachers in general and within this school in particular view reading as a major component in the teaching and learning process?

CELANI: No, I don't think so. But some of them. Not all of them.

BAM: Can you explain why that is?

CELANI: There's this belief, as I have been saying earlier on, that reading is for language people only, like English and Zulu. Those are the only people that people believe they must teach reading in schools; only language people.

BAM: What if I asked you if all the language teachers viewed reading as a major component in the learning and teaching process? (Silence) You are saying it's the other [content] teachers who do not view reading as important, it's the language teachers that do.

CELANI: Yes

BAM: Now I'm asking: is it true that all language teachers view reading as important to the extent that they even teach it?

CELANI: Not all of them, not all of them but some of them. That's what I think.

BAM: But now, why do people think the way they do about the teaching of reading in this school? (Silence) I'm getting a sense from you that some teachers, especially the content subject teachers, do not take the teaching of reading seriously. That's what I'm getting from you.

CELANI: Yes

BAM: And that only the language teachers do, even there not all of them. Why do you think people think the way that they do about the teaching of reading in the school? (Silence) Why do they think that the teaching of reading is not for science teachers and mathematics teachers, and all of that? And why is it that even some of the language teachers do not teach reading at all? Why is that? What is the reason?

CELANI: They don't take reading as an important thing to teach. The only thing that they are taking seriously is the grammar and other things, but not reading specifically.

BAM: What about teachers of content subjects?

CELANI: I don't know. I don't know. But they don't think the teaching of reading can help them.

BAM: What do you think? (Silence) You've been in the teaching profession for five years now in 2012 if I am not mistaken. What do you think is the reason why the teachers of science, mathematics and other content subjects think they should not be teaching reading?

CELANI: Most teachers want to give information to the learners. They do not want learners to gather information for themselves. So that's their main problem when it comes to this situation. That's what I think.

BAM: Finally, can you tell me anything else about your understanding of the teaching of reading that I did not ask you about?

CELANI: I think reading is important. That's what I can see.

BAM: Are you talking about reading or the teaching of reading?

CELANI: The teaching of reading, I think it is important.

BAM: Well, that brings us to the end of our interview. Thank you so much for your input.

CELANI: Thank you.

Bongani Interview 1

BAM: How many teachers teach Grade 6 at the school here?

BONGANI: We are 3. It's me Teacher D, Teacher B and Teacher C.

BAM: So, which subjects do you teach in Grade 6?

BONGANI: I teach Mathematics, Natural Science & Technology

BAM: So who is responsible for the teaching of reading in Grade 6 at the school?

BONGANI: The people who are teaching reading is Teacher C and Teacher B [both language teachers, English and IsiZulu, respectively]. So it's two of them.

BAM: So you are not teaching reading in Grade 6?

BONGANI: No, I'm not teaching reading in Grade 6.

BAM: Do you think that Mathematics teachers should teach reading at all?

BONGANI: No, not at all. I really don't think they need to teach reading because there's not much of reading in Mathematics. Actually there is not. I mean Maths is numbers. I really do not believe that we must focus on reading because there are language teachers who are doing reading with learners.

BAM: In Mathematics there are sums where the learners are required to read a particular 'story' so that they can be able to come to an answer. So, do you not think then that as a Maths teacher you need to teach these learners how to read those sums?

BONGANI: No, I don't think so because, if one can make an example, if they are given a word sum telling them to find a difference between a price of an apple and a price of an orange, then the moment they are told to find the difference between the two prices they know that they will be doing subtraction. So, Mathematics has got the guiding words. Like when they have to subtract they are asked to find the difference between the numbers, when they have to add they are maybe asked to find a total sum. So all I do is to introduce those terms to them, make them understand how these terms work. Then they will understand that as soon as they see those words, then what to do, which one of the four basic operations are they going to use.

BAM: Okay. So, for language teachers, in your view (who you feel are supposed to be the ones teaching reading) do you have an idea of what are some of the factors that are important for them to teach reading successfully?

BONGANI: Well, when teaching reading I believe they focus on comprehension as well, reading and comprehension. That's the basis, I think. That's the most important factor of reading, because reading without understanding is null and void, I'd say.

BAM: Do you think the environment around the school is important in the teaching of reading? For example, when I talk of the environment I'm talking about the availability of reading material, the support from the Department, the support from the parents in helping the learners at home to read, and all of those. Do you think the whole school environment is important at all for the successful teaching of reading?

BONGANI: Well, yes it is important but unfortunately our environment is not supportive at all. I mean, even their parents are not reading papers of which I think basically that's where learners can find articles to read from papers. If papers are not available at home then there is no support at all. Even Departmental-wise we've been trying to get some assistance in as far as school library organization is concerned, unfortunately we couldn't win. So, the

environment, in as much as it is important but in our case it is not supportive. So reading is not supported at all.

BAM: So your school environment is not enabling for effective teaching of reading?

BONGANI: No, in as much as the language teachers are trying but it's not enabling because the little that they get from the Department. They are trying to buy papers to help but it's not enough. I mean, for one teacher, maybe, the English teacher to come with those English papers, he might end up spending more than he expected or maybe he thought he would spend in buying enough newspapers for his class. Mind you, a language teacher teaches from Grade 4, 5, 6 and 7. So, in organizing reading for all those classes, he might need to spend a lot. So it's quite not easy.

BAM: So in your eleven years experience as a teacher, have you ever taught reading?

BONGANI: Well, yeah. A little bit of it because my focus is in Maths and Science. So a little bit of language because I'm doing IsiZulu in Grade 4 but, I mean, with those, as I've said I'm a Maths and Science person. So, the language, the reading, basically I'm not doing it that much. Yes, I do a very little bit of it.

BAM: Okay. So you've never assessed learners on their reading abilities or comprehension abilities?

BONGANI: That's when I do because of assessment purposes. Otherwise for extra readings and all, no. My focus is not on that.

BAM: Do you think that teachers, in general, and in this school, in particular, view the teaching of reading as a major component in the learning and teaching process?

BONGANI: No, of course not because when I came to school and for my eleven years of teaching, I've worked with different people. So, I'm a reader myself but the people whom I've been working with, they are not reading. Not actually that they are not reading at all, but very little of reading they do. So I really don't think they value reading that much.

BAM: But in the teaching and learning process, is there any reading that is taking place there? Is it a major component of the teaching and learning?

BONGANI: Yeah well, the only time I see these people reading is when they are preparing their lessons. I mean, that's when you'll see that this person is reading different books trying to organize a lesson that they are going to teach. But for any other thing that they have to read for, no they don't. So, reading, for them, is not that much important. And yeah, for teaching and learning, reading as I've said is not that much important for them. But they do read. Because when they are using different books, they have to go through them, they have to read them and understand them, find the information that they need to give to learners.

BAM: It's interesting that people here think like that about the teaching of reading. But why do people think the way they do about the teaching of reading in the school?

BONGANI: Well, a very difficult question to answer. But maybe I'd say it's the way they grew up. I mean, as young as they were in their times, they were not exposed to reading.

BAM: Do you think they were not taught how to read themselves?

BONGANI: They were taught how to read themselves but they were not exposed in reading a lot.

BAM: But why are they not exposing their learners to reading?

BONGANI: Maybe they lack, I don't know whether I'd say it is motivation in as far as reading is concerned. They don't understand the importance of reading because if they can understand that reading is important and maybe know the impact that reading may have in their teaching, maybe they will recognize it but unfortunately I don't think they do.

BAM: Towards the end, I want to check, do you think there is any correlation at all between the teaching of reading on the one hand, and the results of the learners in ANA. (Silence) Is there any relationship between those two?

BONGANI: Well, a little bit of it. I was analyzing our Mathematics papers. I saw that maybe it's time that we start introducing reading as important as it is, because a lot of questions in ANA they need learners to read and understand. So I think if we can go to the office and look at the analysis of ANA results, you'll see that we performed very badly. I think the problem was that our learners don't understand.

BAM: What makes you think that the teaching of reading can remedy that situation?

BONGANI: Well, as I've said, when I was looking at the ANA questions and the way they set their questions when setting ANA, they need a lot of understanding. The learner must read the instruction and understand what is required, and then they'll be able to answer because what I discovered when I was marking my Maths scripts is that the things that I'm sure that they know, things that I've taught them, they couldn't answer when they were given to them. The reason being that they did not understand the instructions. So I think maybe starting from now onwards if I start focusing on reading and maybe introducing reading maybe even in Maths, maybe it will help. Yeah.

BAM: Last question, can you tell me anything else about your understanding of the teaching of reading that I did not ask you about?

BONGANI: No, I don't think there is anything left out. Eh, except maybe the way how am I going to introduce reading in Mathematics because I see it as a need. But that's the question that I haven't answered myself. So yeah. But basically, that's that.

BAM: Thank you very much.

Study Participants Interviews 2 (Appendix A2)

Anele – Interview 2

BAM: Okay, what do you think about the *Reading to Learn* methodology? Is it effective? Why or Why not?

ANELE: As far as I'm concerned and in what I've seen in my class, it is very effective because my learners can read, they can write, they can even act or dramatize what they have been reading in the stories. They can do many things that enable them to express themselves.

BAM: Is the whole school involved in supporting the *Reading to Learn* programme? That is, the principal and other teachers who are not implementing the programme.

ANELE: In our school we are all participating in *Reading to Learn*.

BAM: So what involvement has the community, for example, the parents had in your programming and delivery of Reading to Learn? Do they do follow up with their children at home? Are they ever present in the classroom? Was there consultation on text choice to ensure background knowledge? What would your view be?

ANELE: Some of the parents are very helpful. Some of them they help us. When you give them homework or when you give them something to read at home, other parents have, although most of our children live with grandmothers. So they sometimes find difficulties in helping them. But because we have this Reading to Learn, most of the time they are used in reading; there are those few children now who have some problems in reading, especially in my class because Grade 2 – the children I have now – have been doing Grade 2 and their class teacher was also the part of this *Reading to Learn*. So I find it very easy and interesting.

BAM: How is *Reading to Learn* professional development organized? Is the professional development time-tabled and systematic? Do programme facilitators provide on-going support to the school? Or is there anyone else who is also helping out with *Reading to Learn* other than the programme facilitators from *Reading to Learn* South Africa?

ANELE: For now, we have these books that we were given by the researcher and there are some youth that were organized as Reading Mentors; they are helping us because on our time-table we used to give them time to come in our class and you have a reading time with learners and learners enjoy it. But on my side as a class teacher, I used to do *Reading to Learn* especially when I'm introducing a lesson. For example, in Literacy if you introduce a lesson you must have an extract or a story where all your work will come from for that whole lesson. That is where I use *Reading to Learn*.

BAM: Okay, maybe a follow-up there: these workshops, how are they organized, the ones that are organized by the programme facilitators?

ANELE: The ones that they do here at school?

BAM: Yes

ANELE: They are well organized although most of the time they are out of the province. You find that they are out of the province but most of the time when we need them they are there for us.

BAM: But its not systematic, they come as and when they are able to come to school?

ANELE: Yes. I think maybe it is four times a term, four time in a term, then after that it the observations. They come to observe.

BAM: What is your opinion of the content of these professional development workshops? What do you think about the content of these workshops?

ANELE: I think they are coming with a lot to us as educators. They are also giving us a chance to see what you are doing in a class. You find yourself being proud of your class, that the learners can do what you want them to do at that particular time.

BAM: What is your opinion on their presentation, when they present, how they present these profession development workshops?

ANELE: In my opinion, I see their presentations they are very well because since they started presenting this *Reading to Learn* to us, I try this in my class and it's worked for me.

BAM: Did these professional development workshops help you to develop the knowledge of *Reading to Learn* theory and practice that you need to perform effectively? How could this be improved?

ANELE: In theory, yes, their theory develops us as educators [to teach] effectively. What I think it can be improved, maybe, if it is possible for the facilitators to come maybe two times in a month to workshop us, it will be easy for us to get the theory in the practice.

BAM: What do you think about the professional development and / or support that has been provided to teachers for *Reading to Learn*, generally –not yourself only? Is release time provided for lesson observation and feedback, and planning? How could this support be improved? (Silence) In other words, do they give you enough time for observations, for you to give feedback, for you to plan, all those kinds of things?

ANELE: Yes, they give us enough time because they tell you if they are coming to observe so you can have your proper planning, so that when they come to observe you do what they are expecting you to do.

BAM: What other professional development or networking support have you engaged in during your implementation of *Reading to Learn*? How about other *Reading to Learn* teachers elsewhere?

ANELE: For now I have networked with other educators, for example, since we've been having the workshop during the holidays we've have met with lots of educators, some of

them do not know about this *Reading to Learn*, they are interested, they wish that you can help them. And I was very proud that I was also the part of this workshop and I presented some lessons to them. It was awesome for me. You find out some other educators take your numbers, they want to contact you if they have some problems when they are doing their planning. It's interesting.

BAM: What criteria did you use in choosing texts for study for the *Reading to Learn* programme?

ANELE: I don't have any criteria, if anything that I see it is useful for my learners, I take it. Even if I'm reading a newspaper, find that this can be interesting to my learners, reading a magazine, this can be interesting to my learners, I take them and I try to relate them with my CAPS [curriculum] work.

BAM: Do you think your students enjoy the programme?

ANELE: They enjoy it a lot. This *Reading to Learn* has made me to understand all my learners in the class.

BAM: Do they feel like they are improving their skills?

ANELE: Yes, they are improving and they are very proud. Those who can read are very proud, they even want to help those who are lacking.

BAM: Do they use skills learned even in other subjects as well?

ANELE: Yes, we use *Reading to Learn* in all our subjects because I've also attended the workshop for Mathematics and *Reading to Learn*. So I have some ideas on how to implement *Reading to Learn* in Mathematics, Life Skills, English and Home Language.

BAM: Have your learners' reading outcomes improved since the school started implementing *Reading to Learn* teaching methods? Particular groups of learners, is there any evidence of your answer?

ANELE: Yes, they have improved. The reading outcomes are very well. They have improved a lot, although there are those who are left-overs, I'm trying by all means to help them.

BAM: What is your evidence that they have improved?

ANELE: If you can come to my class, if you can give them any English book they can read, any IsiZulu book they can read, even these Grade 6 readers they read them, Grade 4 Grade 5 readers they are able to read them, although they have those slight mistakes where they need you to correct them but they are very proud of themselves in reading.

BAM: How do you assess learner-progress at the school, normally?

ANELE: I cannot say more about these Intermediate and Senior Phase classes, the class that I know very well are the Grade 4s (who have been in my Grade 3 class), the last I checked they were doing very well.

BAM: But what do you use to assess the progress? To check whether they have moved from point A to point B, what do you use to check whether there has been any progress?

ANELE: When we are having some tasks or maybe after two Fridays in the month we have these reading sessions, each and everyone take any book in these books that we have, she comes forward and read. That is where I can see that she can read. Or if I pick any extract in that book and tell him 'just read for me here' they read. That's where I am able to see that they are able to read because some of them are very good in cramming.

BAM: Does the learners' reading assessment from *Reading to Learn* give you the information you need to plan for follow-up work for individuals needing extra attention?

ANELE: Maybe if there are others some kinds of assessments because this one they are now used to this kind of assessment we are doing.

BAM: *The Reading to Learn* assessment?

ANELE: Yes, They are now used to it, maybe if I can get another way of assessing them, maybe changing this one I've been using now. Maybe it can help me. I'm still trying to think what can I do to assess them because I can see my assessing sometimes it lacks.

BAM: *Reading to Learn* aside, what other assessment measures do you use, and why do you use them?

ANELE: We have the formal tasks that we just do in the class. We have the informal tasks which are the tasks that we just do after we've finished our lesson. And we have the planned formal tests where we tell them that on this date you are going to write some tasks, just go and have a look at your books.

BAM: Do you share assessments of your learners with other staff members as [learners] move on to higher grades? Is the school using the *Reading to Learn* programme to build on skills learned?

ANELE: In my last year's learners, I've checked them in Term 1 how they are doing. I haven't assessed them. I only talked with their educators, they tell me that they are very well and, although we have a little problem that the educator who was there last year is gone, so the one who is here now is just new in this *Reading to Learn*, we are still trying to help her with it. But when they get into Intermediate Phase they continue doing it.

BAM: Is the principal and the SMT supportive of the *Reading to Learn* approach? Do you think this is an important factor in successfully implementing *Reading to Learn* either in your classroom or across the school?

ANELE: Yes, the school and the SMT is very supportive and it is important for us to do it across the school, and to help each other if there is someone who is lacking.

BAM: Why do you think the support of the school principal and the SMT is important?

ANELE: The support of the principal and the SMT will help us to continue to do this thing continuously because if they do not support us you will find that I do it here in Grade 3 and find that if someone feels like not doing it in the other phase, it will be just like we were doing nothing here in the Foundation Phase.

BAM: Will you continue with the *Reading to Learn* methodology even if there is no support through this research? Are you able to do this on your own as a teacher or do you need collegial support?

ANELE: Yes, I can continue even if there is no support, but you can't say you can do this thing on your own because you will find out sometimes that there is a thing that you need to ask from the other educator. I think we need the collegial support.

BAM: … and the professional development from time to time.

ANELE: Yes

BAM: Is there anything else you would like to add?

ANELE: What I can say is that *Reading to Learn* has opened my eyes. I was teaching reading but I can see now that I was doing nothing. I was just playing with children. Now I can see what I am doing. And it is very exciting to see that your learners are doing what you need them to do at that particular time.

BAM: Thank you very much. That is the end of our interview.

ANELE: Thank you.

Celani – Interview 2

BAM: What do you think about the Reading to Learn methodology? Do you find that it is effective? If so, why? If not, why not?

CELANI: I think, yes, it is effective. It gives more chance to children to know how to read and write as well.

BAM: Tell me about the school. Is the whole school involved in supporting the Reading to Learn programme? I'm talking about the principal and other teachers who may not be implementing the programme.

CELANI: Yes, everyone is involved in this programme. The principal and the teachers are trying by all means to implement this programme.

BAM: What involvement has the community e.g. parents had in your programming and delivery of Reading to Learn? Do you think they follow-up with their children at home? Are they ever present in the classroom? Or perhaps, when you are choosing texts, was there any

consultation with them with text choice to ensure background knowledge? What is the involvement of the community?

CELANI: <mark>Actually I can say, the community that we are working in, they are very poor and I think they are not involved at all. They don't do follow-ups even after school hours with their children. Sometimes they don't come even in our meetings. I don't think they are involved at all.</mark>

BAM: Let's talk about the professional development, these workshops that you attend from time to time, these Reading to Learn workshops from Reading to Learn South Africa. How is Reading to Learn professional development for teachers organized? Does it have a timetable, are they systematic or do they happen as and when these people are available?

CELANI: It is timetabled.

BAM: How often do they come here? What is the timetable like?

CELANI: I don't understand that one. Can you repeat that one for me?

BAM: I'm talking about how it is organized. For example, is it once a month, or two times a quarter or its not timetabled at all. They just come when they have to come, they will tell you they are available then they come.

CELANI: The trainers?

BAM: The trainers, yes.

CELANI: When they are available, they used to come here.

BAM: In other words, it's not structured, it is not following any particular system; they just come when they are available?

CELANI: Usually they used to come on Wednesdays and Thursdays of every week. But if there is a circumstance that they shouldn't come, I think, they don't come.

BAM: So, these facilitators do they provide on-going support to the school?

CELANI: Yes, they are.

BAM: Is there anyone else, other than them who provides on-going support to the school on Reading to Learn?

CELANI: No

BAM: What is your opinion of the content of their professional development workshops?

CELANI: I think they are very good at what they do and what they are teaching us. Their content is very good.

BAM: And what is your opinion on their presentation of these professional development workshops? Their style of presentation.

CELANI: <mark>Their presentation style is very good. The only problem we are having is when they are forcing you to say exact words they are saying. They force you to repeat the same words they are saying, you see. That's my problem. That's the only problem I've got when it comes to that on my side.</mark>

BAM: Did the professional development workshops that you are talking about help you to develop the knowledge of Reading to Learn theory and practice that you need to perform effectively?

CELANI: Yes, I improved a lot.

BAM: Why? You are saying that these professional development workshops helped you to develop the knowledge of the theory and practice of Reading to Learn, isn't it?

CELANI: Yes

BAM: It gave you theory and it also gave you practice.

CELANI: Yes

BAM: Why are you saying that?

CELANI: When we are doing this thing, we've got the theory time and the practice time?

BAM: How has it helped you? (Silence) Has it helped you?

CELANI: Yes.

BAM: How do you know that?

CELANI: When we started this programme, I don't know how to explain this, but the …

BAM: Go on, I'm listening. You are saying that these workshops helped you; they gave you the Reading to Learn theory, they gave you the Reading to Learn practice that make you to perform effectively in class. My question is: why do you think it has done that?

CELANI: <mark>I've seen myself performing. I've seen my performance in the class these days when it comes to this programme. It is better than when we were starting it.</mark>

BAM: What do you think about the professional development and / or support that has been provided to teachers for Reading to Learn? Is release time provided for lesson observation, for you to give feedback, for you to plan? Do they give you time to do that?

CELANI: Yes, they gave us time. In most cases, they give us time. Not even in most cases, everytime.

BAM: The question was: what do you think about the professional development provided to you and other teachers for Reading to Learn?

CELANI: I think it's the best, and I think it will help our children a lot because basically this thing is based on reading. It gives our children opportunities to express themselves.

BAM: What other professional development or networking support have you engaged in during your implementation of Reading to Learn? (Silence) Or has it been limited to networking with the facilitators only?

CELANI: At the moment we are networking with only the facilitators.

BAM: What about other teachers?

CELANI: And other teachers in our school, not outside our school.

BAM: What criteria do you use in choosing texts for study for the Reading to Learn programme? (Silence) You've used the Learning to Read programme a number of times, so you obviously choose a text that you use for Reading to Learn. What criteria do you use? How do you know that this is the text that I must use?

CELANI: In most cases, when they give us practice, they come with their texts?

BAM: So they choose the texts for you?

CELANI: Yes.

BAM: So you've not chosen the texts for yourself?

CELANI: Yes, we have. They then take it away and bring it back having worked on it, analyzed it and then expect you to teach it in the exact manner they have broken it down, word for word. Another problem is that they don't give us the free role when you are doing it in class, they just want us to repeat their words.

BAM: But you do it even when they are not at the school, I assume?

CELANI: But when they come to observe, they prefer that we repeat exactly their words. For me, that is really problematic.

BAM: Do you think your students enjoy the Reading to Learn programme?

CELANI: Yes, a lot.

BAM: How do you know that?

CELANI: The way they raise up their hands, the way they want to answer me back, to respond from the text. Yes, I can say, definitely that they do enjoy it.

BAM: Do they feel like they are improving their skills?

CELANI: In a way, I can say that. The way they are doing it, they can feel that this thing is helping them a lot to understand the words, especially the difficult words that they don't understand, words of the similar meanings, all those things like adjectives, yes. That's what I can say, they are improving a lot.

BAM: Have learners' reading outcomes improved since the school started implementing Reading to Learn teaching methods?

CELANI: Yes

BAM: Is it particular groups of learners?

CELANI: Yes, some of them. Not all of them that are improving. But some of them you can see that they are coming slowly but surely.

BAM: How do you know this? What's the evidence?

CELANI: Their results. <mark>What I can say, when it comes to their tasks and assessment, you can see there and then if you're taking the style of Reading to Learn of doing these assessments that they are improving here and there.</mark>

BAM: How do you assess learner-progress at the school? Apart from Reading to Learn, if you are to assess whether learners are progressing, how do you do it?

CELANI: There are formal assessments; there are informal assessments, tasks, tests.

BAM: Does the learners' reading assessment from Reading to Learn, now, give you the information you need to plan for follow-up work for individuals needing extra attention?

CELANI: Can you repeat that one for me?

BAM: Does the learners' reading assessment that comes from Reading to Learn give you the information you need to plan for follow-up work for individuals needing extra attention? (Silence) Let's say, for example, a particular learner has done a reading assessment from Reading to Learn, does that give you enough information for you to be able to say: this one needs extra attention, this one needs more work, this one is fine. Does it?

CELANI: Yes, I can say that. Definitely, you can say that.

BAM: What other assessment measures do you use and why?

CELANI: Excuse me?

BAM: Assessment measures that you use to determine the progress. (Silence) You mentioned formal assessments …

CELANI: Formal, sometimes tasks, even activities, some of the activities are assessments, all those things.

BAM: You are teaching Grade 6, right?

CELANI: Yes. From Grade 4 up to Grade 6.

BAM: Last year you were teaching Grade 6, they are now Grade 7 …

CELANI: Yes.

BAM: Do you share your assessment of learners with other staff members as they move to higher grades? Remember when they were in Grade 6 you assessed them and you were able

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to identify certain things, did you share those assessments of your learners with other teachers?

CELANI: Yes, we've got a committee which does that.

BAM: Is the school using the programme, for example, Reading to Learn, to build on the skills learned so that the learners learn certain skills at Grade 6 and then at Grade 7 they build onto those skills, and in the next grade they build on to those skills? Does the school do that or whatever is learned at that grade is something for that grade, it does not have any bearing on the next grade?

CELANI: We do something like that, to make the connections between the grades. Yes, we do something like that.

BAM: Is the principal and the SMT supportive of the Learning to Read approach?

CELANI: A lot

BAM: Do you think it is an important factor in successfully implementing Reading to Learn?

CELANI: Yes, definitely. I am positive.

BAM: Why is it so?

CELANI: Because if they are giving us the support, that's where we are going to get the strength of doing this thing, and it's gonna be effective. Definitely.

BAM: Will you continue with the Reading to Learn methodology even if there is no support through this research and through the Reading to Learn South Africa team? Do you think you will continue with this programme?

CELANI: By looking at this programme, yes. Definitely, I'll be part of this. I am talking about my side. Yes, yes.

BAM: But are you able to do this on your own or do you think you will need collegial support from your colleagues?

CELANI: You can do it on your own but to meet with other guys is more important as well.

BAM: What about texts? What about the choice of texts? Don't you think you will need help?

CELANI: Definitely you need the help there just because when we are doing this you need to get a variety of different texts from different learning areas.

BAM: What about professional development if you are doing it on your own?

CELANI: Well yes, you need that as well. Definitely I can say that. But it's a good programme and I can go all out by myself.

BAM: Is there anything else you would like to add that we may not have talked about regarding Reading to Learn?

CELANI: What I can say is that this programme is a very good programme and it must be followed by us teachers. Definitely it will help our children a lot. That's what I can add and say.

BAM: Well, that brings us to the end of our interview. Thank you very much.

CELANI: You are welcome.

Dumisani – Interview 2

BAM: What do you think about the Reading to Learn methodology? Do you find that it is effective? If so, why? If you don't think so, why not?

DUMISANI: My take is that it can be effective if you put in the right time because if you apply it, basically, you need to have a lot of time. You can't just say you are doing this now then you break and come back and do that. After you have mastered it, it can be effective. The first point you have to do you have to master it, after you have mastered it you can try to implement it. And it will depend on the type of learners that you have in order for it to be effective.

BAM: Is the whole school involved in supporting the Reading to Learn programme? That means, the principal and even other teachers who are not necessarily implementing it.

DUMISANI: Yes, the whole school is involved, including the principal and I think it depends on your take on it, but for now, from what I've observed as an educator: the whole school are doing it, at different times of course.

BAM: What involvement has the community (if any) e.g. parents had in your programming and delivery of Reading to Learn?

DUMISANI: After explaining the methodology to the parents at parents' meeting, some parents did put more effort in the learners' work. We saw that absenteeism dropped a little because some wanted to know more about what Reading to Learn entails. I think the parents in that way did have support a little bit.

BAM: How is Reading to Learn professional development for yourselves as teachers organized? Is it timetabled? Is it systematic or if happens when the [Reading to Learn South Africa] team is available?

DUMISANI: This year, in particular, I don't think they do have much time because the other facilitator is away. I think this year they are more away than the previous year. In the previous year they were more hands-on maybe three weeks they are not here, and then

they are here for two weeks. Now, it is just random. I don't know whether it's the way they planned or timed it but it's like that.

BAM: What's your opinion on the content of their professional development workshops?

DUMISANI: I wont say it is negative or so, but they do take some books which we use here at school which means it is linked to the syllabus or the curriculum what they are teaching us and the way they are training us as educators.

BAM: What about their presentation of the professional development workshops?

DUMISANI: For me, all I need now is just one revision training and just maybe about four observational lessons, then I will be done with the programme because there were minor things that I saw that there were a negative impact. Like, when you about to present now the lesson, some facilitators they want to spoon-feed you on what to say and how to say it. But in some other lessons you do need to have your own way of saying it to learners so that they could understand. But in some other texts they just want you to say exactly as they said it [in their notes] whilst you are teaching different kinds of learners. Some understand, in other words, some do not understand.

BAM: Still on these workshops, do you think these workshops help you to develop the knowledge of Reading to Learn theory and practice that you need to perform effectively?

DUMISANI: Of course, they do. Of course, they do.

BAM: What makes you feel so confident?

DUMISANI: What makes me feel so confident is that I have practiced it with the learners, we've done some teaching and observation with the learners. Some grasp it, some don't. but those that do grasp the methodology I've managed to track them down and observe them as some are away, they went to study at other schools, some I have observed them and I do ask how are they doing at the school they are at the moment. They say they are performing very well.

BAM: What do you think about the professional development and /or support that has been given to you as teachers for Reading to Learn? Is release time provided for lesson observations, for you to give feedback, for you to plan? Do they give you release time to do those things?

DUMISANI: Although time is limited, we do get that time. Because the package that Reading to Learn comes with, it's sort of different. You have to prepare for the lesson, after you have prepared the lesson make sure that your preparation goes hand-in-hand with what you are about to teach. You will find that some texts are too difficult and in some text Reading to Learn will work, in some others it won't work. Take, in particular, EMS. For EMS it just deals with facts. It just says: this is this, and this is that. So Reading to Learn ,in that way, it does not particularly fit in that way with EMS. But, in some other learning areas, it does fit because the terminology that is used in EMS is 'commercial' in a sense. And you don't find that we have some English explanations that will fit in that, while Reading to Learn, when

you compare it in other learning areas, it will have some terminology that will fit when you work with it.

BAM: Is there a way that that could be improved, do you think?

DUMISANI: If there is, I would be glad if they could start with me, if there is an effective way of doing it.

BAM: What other professional development or networking support have you engaged in during your implementation of Reading to Learn? Are you networking with anyone about Reading to Learn?

DUMISANI: I have started networking with other educators. Like I said in the previous question, like in EMS at the moment, I've tried using it but now I find it difficult so I've tried to network with an teacher from our neighbouring school, not necessarily on Reading to Learn but on how to teach the particular chapter.

BAM: But I'm interested in Reading to Learn. Are there any networks that you have on Reading to Learn?

DUMISANI: No, I haven't started that.

BAM: What about here at school because there is already a community of teachers who are using Reading to Learn?

DUMISANI: Here at school we network about it and we discuss it a lot. They do get involved in class. Like, the principal is involved in Reading to Learn and we do discuss whenever I've had that observation in class or that lesson preparation in class. So we do come and discuss those weaknesses and how to improve them.

BAM: Let's talk about choosing texts. What criteria did you use in choosing texts for study for the Reading to Learn programme?

DUMISANI: That one it is difficult because when you choose a text you have to make sure that the text that you choose goes hand-in-hand with the curriculum, regardless of whether you are going to use the methodology, whatever text that you choose you must make sure that it goes hand-in-hand with the curriculum. That is where in some other times that you will find that you will have difficulty when you try to implement it using Reading to Learn or in some other times you will have a positive answer or positive outcome when you use Reading to Learn just because you have to make sure that whatever text is used is linked to the curriculum. But so far, at the moment, I am using the methodology in Maths, and I am trying it in EMS because basically those are the two subjects that I teach in Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase because I've had this training for Maths which I've seen that after I've used it these kids are responding because there were some things that I was leaving behind because I was thinking that it was not going to fit to them. After having been trained on how to use the methodology of Reading to Learn in Maths, applying it, now I've seen that the kids are responding because what they said there was that whatever they say, you must always write it. Now, in some other texts I would say this and not write it, but now there I

will see that no the child has difficulties in that, now that I've started this method of writing and make sure that whatever I write I say it and whatever I say I write. For them there is a linkage that the teacher wrote this, so it means what the teacher wrote is what he said. There is that linkage now.

BAM: Do you think your students enjoy the programme?

DUMISANI: Of course, they do enjoy the programme, especially when they cut and paste, they do enjoy the programme. And it helps in vocabulary. They do enjoy the programme because for them, I think, because Reading to Learn says you lead learners, you do not expect them to know the answer, you lead them towards the answer. So they do enjoy that, for them I think they feel like it's like they are coping, in a way. You lead them to the answer. They do not just find the answer on their own. The teacher leads them to the answer, so I think that is why they enjoy it.

BAM: Do they feel like they are improving skills?

DUMISANI: When the child gets the results I think that's when they realize that they have done something.

BAM: Do they use skills learned in other subjects? For example, you are teaching them Maths. Do you find that the skills they learn in your subject with them are also transferred and used in other subjects?

DUMISANI: In discussions with educators after lesson to lesson some educator would come and say: 'did you recognize so-and-so that he is starting to perform'? Then if I had noticed that particular learner I'd respond – 'I have seen that' because in some instances there are learners who were having difficulties last year. But now I have seen a dramatic change in them. I think it did help in that way.

BAM: Have learners' reading outcomes improved since the school started implementing Reading to Learn teaching methods?

DUMISANI: Some, some not. Some have improved, some have not improved.

BAM: Their reading outcomes?

DUMISANI: Yes, their reading outcomes but to those that have not improved I'd say basically it is not up to them to improve. I would say, their problems are more deeper than the education system itself, or Reading to Learn itself.

BAM: Is there any evidence? How do you know that there are learners who have improved?

DUMISANI: We do make class activities. Basically, I do give them activities that I will see (hesitation) according to Reading to Learn. I do have activities that I do give out to learners. That's when I observe that this particular learner has improved, this particular learner has not improved.

BAM: I guess the question is, how do you assess learner progress at the school?

DUMISANI: Through giving them homework, class activities and we do tasks that I'll basically see that learners have improved or not.

BAM: Does the learners' reading assessment from Reading to Learn give you enough information that you need to plan for follow-up work for individuals needing extra help or extra attention?

DUMISANI: Yes, it does.

BAM: How so?

DUMISANI: Say that a particular learner has not improved in their reading assessment, then learner B has improved, what I do is, I do take learner B that has improved and put him in front of the class and make him or her explain to them how she or he has managed to pass this particular obstacle that he had and make sure that learner B has an input in assisting me and assisting this learner in coming out of whatever problem that he had. That's how I do it.

BAM: Reading to Learn aside, what other assessment measures do you use and why do you use them?

DUMISANI: I use projects, investigations and use basically those that the Department wants us to use. Because you are given at the start of the year that these are the assessments measures that you are going to use this year. Then I make sure that I implement those, whilst on the other hand I do come up with minor things that can help learners.

BAM: Do you share assessments of your learners with other staff members as they move on to higher grades? Let's say, for example, you are teaching Grade 6 and then the next teacher is teaching Grade 7, you assess this learner at Grade 6 and you identify something about them; that particular assessment that you have made, do you share it with the teacher at Grade 7?

DUMISANI: I do share it because that is how I am able to understand the problem that the other educator had. And that it how I get to make the other educator aware of what the problem that I had with this particular learner. So that we could have basically a connection and a way of connecting our problems and trying to solve them in assisting this learner and in assisting me as an educator on how to teach these learners. Basically, that is how you are able to grow as an educator because if you shield yourself in a particular corner you wont be able to grow. So by coming out of the corner and trying to make sure that the problem that you did encounter you do share it with others. That is how you find your solutions, instead of shielding yourself.

BAM: But in terms of the school now, is the school using the Reading to Learn programme to build on the skills that the learners learnt from one grade to the next?

DUMISANI: Yes, we are using Reading to Learn methodology because the strategies that are being used in each and every learning area, say that we have learners that have difficulties, we do identify educators that are able to help these learners and, at a particular time, say at

13h30 these group of learners go to that particular educator. Then that particular educator tries and mentors these learners. Some do come out well and some just don't.

BAM: Is the principal and the SMT supportive of the Learning to Read approach?

DUMISANI: Yes, it is supportive because they have even put it down in a timetable because last year we were implementing it, it was not put down in a timetable. But we were implementing it, to say, we were using some other periods and say in this period let's use this. But now, we are using Reading to Learn, it is compulsory this year to use Reading to Learn each and every week. If you have not used it in this week you must make sure that in the coming week that follows you use it twice a week so that it can be implemented and it can stick to the learners, even so to you, you can master it in that way.

BAM: Do you think that they are supportive is an important factor in successfully implementing Reading to Learn?

DUMISANI: It is an important factor because if the SMT does not support the programme or does not support educators who are involved in the programme, for sure it will fail. But if the SMT and the principal are supportive of the programme, then for sure there will be no way of hiding there because you know that this is what I'm supposed to do A, B & C.

BAM: Will you continue with the Reading to Learn methodology even if there is no support through the Reading to Learn South Africa programme and University?

DUMISANI: I will continue with the Reading to Learn programme because, for me, as I go through with also my studies, as I'm furthering also my studies, it has helped me a lot. I am able now to study more efficiently and effectively, and I'm also able to work more efficiently and effectively. The methodology, if it passes, I will continue to use it, if it fails I will continue to use it because I've seen some improvements on my side.

BAM: Do you think you will be able to do it on your own as a teacher or do you think you will need collegial support?

DUMISANI: I will need support from colleagues but I'm also sure that I can also do it on my own.

BAM: What about choosing texts?

DUMISANI: Choosing texts, that will be decided by the curriculum because I have to make sure that whatever text that I choose I don't move away from the curriculum.

BAM: What about the professional development, because if you are going it alone and there is no professional development backing you up, you are likely to sink?

DUMISANI: You've got a point there but in some instances I will do need some assistance. But like I said, if in a long run some just don't use the programme I said I will continue using it because I've seen it work.

BAM: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

DUMISANI: I would ask the Department to make sure that this programme, this methodology, if they could make sure that all schools use it and educators. If we can get support on that because I do understand that there are some things that do have to be tried and tested but trying this methodology now and seeing how it is helping me and my learners, I'd say I'd put a stamp on the Department and say let us try this. I am not shying away from other methodologies that the Department was using but let's try connecting them with this one, with Reading to Learn and see how do we move forward, especially in our disadvantaged schools, because the medium of instruction, through Reading to Learn, it is made easier. That's how I will add.

BAM: Thank you very much. That brings us to the end of a very lengthy discussion. Thank you.

DUMISANI: Thank you very much.

Bongani – Interview 2

BAM: What do you think about the Reading to Learn methodology? Is it effective? If it is, why do you think so? If it is not, why not?

BONGANI: If we talk about the effectiveness of Reading to Learn, yeah it is very effective because it's more learner-centred but also the teacher has a lot to do. I mean, it involves all the parties that are involved in teaching and learning. So it's a good method of teaching, and it also improves the reading skills of our learners, which is the most important thing.

BAM: Is the whole school involved in supporting the Reading to Learn programme, including the principal and other teachers who may not be implementing the programme etc.?

BONGANI: Oh yes. I mean the principal is very much interested in it and is very supportive. I mean, the whole staff, even those who are not implementing it but they are more interested in what is happening. They are even trying it in their classes which, in a long run, will be fruitful when learners reach the grades that are implementing it fully.

BAM: What involvement has the community, for example, the parents had in your programming and delivery of Reading to Learn? Do they follow up with the learners at home? Are they ever present in your classrooms? Was there consultation on text choice with them to ensure background knowledge etc.?

BONGANI: It's quite difficult to involve parents in as far as their children's learning is concerned. They don't want to participate actually. But what happens is actually that fortunately we are from the same background as this area, so it helps us to be able to work in this area. But when you talk to them about the learning and the new systems that are introduced they become the part of that and support you. It's just that they don't want to come to the school for whatever activity that their children will be doing. But if call them at times they come. So parents are supportive when you ask for support.

BAM: How is Reading to Learn professional development for teachers organized? Is the professional development timetabled and systematic? Do facilitators provide ongoing support to the school?

BONGANI: Yes. The person that I was working with, Mr Mike Hart, he even told us that whenever we need support, he gave us his number that we can phone him. Their work is well-structured. When they come here they know what exactly to do and they give you a clear picture as to what you have to do and he had observation classes with us. He had demonstrations first and then later had observations. So everything went well, it's just that our learners were new to the system but I saw that when time went by they get used to it even educators too they will get used to it because of the structure that Mr Mike Hart gave us. So it was well-structured.

BAM: What is your opinion of the actual content of these professional development workshops, forget the structure now, let's focus on the content now?

BONGANI: When you talk about the content you refer to?

BAM: What they talk about when they meet with you; the actual content that they discuss with you in terms of the methodology.

BONGANI: Well, actually what I discovered when they we talk of content is that, for a teacher to teach a Reading to Learn lesson you need to be well-prepared; that is one thing that you need to do. Two, you need to have a lot of understanding in as far as topic that you are going to teach is concerned. Basically, I'm not too sure whether I am answering your question correctly but basically what I discovered is that the Reading to Learn programme is more of (hesitation), when you teach Natural Science, you not teaching it alone. You teaching it including Language including all other subjects, so it integrates a lot. I think Reading to Learn is the best.

BAM: I think what I meant actually is, do you find that these professional development workshops, especially the way they have structured their content, are useful?

BONGANI: They are useful, they are useful because as I've mentioned, when teaching you touch a lot of things, which is very fruitful and it enlightens a lot our learners.

BAM: But what is your opinion on the presentation, their presentation style, of these professional development workshops; the way that they present them to you?

BONGANI: It was more practical. You know whatever they did when presenting their lessons to us, it was involving us a lot. It makes us to grab it easy as they present it. We happen to understand step by step of it. So their presentation was good.

BAM: Did the professional development workshops that we are talking about help you to develop the knowledge of Reading to Learn theory and practice that you need to perform effectively?

BONGANI: Oh yes. I understand the Reading to Learn, the methodology, and I also know what to do. But the one challenge that I've seen is the issue of time. I mean, for a Reading to

Learn lesson to take place, it will take you about an hour and a half or two. So when doing those lessons you end up interrupting other periods that are coming after the period that you are having. So that's the only challenge, but otherwise it a good one, it's a good programme.

BAM: How could that be improved, do you think?

BONGANI: Well, that could improve with the arrangements within the school. The school that is implementing must have arrangement in as far as the timetabling is concerned because if you have started with these lesson, you cannot stop because it leads you; you know that you are doing step number one, number two number three, you cannot break. So all we need is as we are doing here: whenever we are having a Reading to Learn lesson we have those internal arrangements on how are we going to structure the timetable for the day. So, I think if Reading to Learn would be implemented on particular days it should be a standardized timetable for the school that on this day our periods run this way because we are having the Reading to Learn lessons.

BAM: What do you think about the professional development and support that have been provided for teachers for Reading to Learn here at the school? Is release time provided, for example, for lesson observations and feedback and planning?

BONGANI: Oh yes. We had time to attend the workshops which were done here in the school, we had time for demonstration lessons, we had time for our lessons – to do Reading to Learn lessons – and our facilitators observed us and gave us feedback. We had time for all that. So, the time was allocated. There was no interruption and the environment in the school was very supportive in as far as the Reading to Learn programme is concerned.

BAM: Do you think this could be improved further?

BONGANI: Well maybe if one could do it more often then one can see if there are gaps that could be filled but as of now there are no improvements that I think we need, unless and or else if we can have people who will be monitoring the programme, who will keep on visiting us, checking our work, giving us some guidelines here and there. Otherwise there are no improvements.

BAM: What other professional development or networking support have you engaged in during your implementation of Reading to Learn? For example, with other teachers elsewhere who are using Reading to Learn.

BONGANI: We happened to meet Nana from Pietermaritzburg and we discussed the methodology because she started implementing a long time ago. So, she spoke to us about the benefits of having this programme in our school. And when she told us about the achievements that she has had, we saw that we need to really work on it because it's all about the children's learning. It gives our learners a lot of mental development.

BAM: Is there any networking that happens within the school?

BONGANI: Of course, yes. For me, as an HOD, I work very closely with the guys that we are working with, and they communicate with each other. And it goes from the Foundation Phase up to Grade 6 and we sometimes extend it to Grade 7, because we have Grade 7 here, so we sometimes extend it to Grade 7 to ensure that there is that link and communication amongst all the people who are implementing the programme.

BAM: What criteria did you use in choosing texts for study for the Reading to Learn programme?

BONGANI: Obviously when preparing the lesson you go through the text, you look at the text, what kind of text is this. You look at genre, if it is a descriptive or whatever. So it depends as to what kind of a text is that. You try to structure it in a way that it will fit and suit the programme.

BAM: Did it relate to the curriculum at all?

BONGANI: Yes, it relates to the curriculum. For example, in Natural Science where my teaching is based, you look at what are we teaching this week, then you look at the different books that will help you to have a successful lesson, because you will find that the way the information I structured in a particular book is different from the other one. So you change the book so that you get what you want. Let us say I want my learners to describe what pollution is. Then, you look at the books and find the book that will help you to make your learners be able to describe, so you look at the descriptive texts that will help your learners to describe.

BAM: And then do you then use that for the Reading to Learn programme?

BONGANI: Yes. Then you use it for the Reading to Learn programme.

BAM: Do you think your learners enjoy the programme?

BONGANI: Well, when we started with it they did not enjoy it; they did not enjoy it. But as time went by … because when we introduced it we introduced it when we were having the demonstration lessons, and it was for the first time for them to be taught by a White man, so that was the problem. But when we started using it they got used to it; they were becoming familiar with it, then they even started to enjoy even when Mike Hart had to teach them. So when they were doing the cutting, the mixing and the reordering of sentences, they enjoyed it, they enjoyed it even though they could not understand, they were able to know that this is sentence number one, number two, number three. And, yeah they enjoyed.

BAM: Do you think they feel like they are improving their skills?

BONGANI: For them, they cannot tell you that they are improving their skills but for me, as an educator, I can see that slowly they are getting there, they are improving. I once spoke to my principal and he also discovered that there is a slight improvement in these learners.

BAM: Do you think that learners use skills learned in your subject where you implement Reading to Learn in other subject areas as well?

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BONGANI: Yeah, your question reminds me of particular case where I went to Grade 6 after English. We taught something, it was the same thing. It's just that it came out in Natural Science and unfortunately when it came out in the English lesson it was different. So they were getting a bit of confusion. 'But Mr X told us this and Mr Y is telling us that now. So which is which'? Then I had to explain that if you are talking about this thing in Natural Science then when it comes to language the language teacher can put it this way. But if you look at it, it means the same thing. They were starting to link the things.

BAM: To link the subject areas?

BONGANI: To link the subject areas.

BAM: Have learners' reading outcomes improved since the school started implementing Reading to Learn teaching methods?

BONGANI: Yes, even though we cannot say reading outcomes have improved because one of the reading outcomes is understanding, so they haven't started to understand English as a language, but when it comes to Zulu – because we are implementing it in English, Zulu and other subjects – so when they are reading Zulu with my Grade 4 I saw that there is improvement when they have to answer the comprehension passage. So they are getting to know what do you read for, you read for understanding. Then when you are asked a question, you will be able to give the precise answer.

BAM: If were to think about it, do you think it's particular groups of learners whose reading ouutcomes have improved or it is none of them?

BONGANI: Our learners, at their cognitive levels, differ. Even in the class, there are those who have not gained anything but there are those who have begun to understand, to gain something out of the programme.

BAM: But how do you assess learner progress at the school?

BONGANI: What do you mean by assessing the learner progress?

BAM: I mean, to assess if they are progressing.

BONGANI: It depends. You see in language you assess different things. You assess their reading, you assess their understanding, you assess their pronunciation, and other subjects you check if they mastered the content or the concepts that you were teaching. So with Reading to Learn, we haven't done any assessment but we have seen that it helps our learners to improve on their subjects. But in terms of assessment in the school, it is based on the content that you are teaching.

BAM: But how? What do you use? Which instruments?

BONGANI: We use the tests, and we use assignments and projects. There is a number of assessment tasks that we use.

BAM: Does the learners' reading assessment from Reading to Learn give you the information you need to plan for follow-up work for individuals needing extra attention?

BONGANI: Yes. If our outcomes are structured in a way that Reading to Learn is structured it helps us because we begin to identify those who need further assistance and we also happen to be able to find the ways to assist them.

BAM: You've mentioned the different measures that you employ to assess learners.

DUMISANI: Those are the things that are in the policy, the CAPS document. But apart from them, if you give them a project it is something that will want them to find some of the information on their own. So it helps them to develop those research skills. The other things like the assignments, where they will have to find the different books that will give them the information based on the their project, it also helps a lot. It helps the teachers to be able to see if the learners are ready to progress to the next grade. It also develops skills for our learners as well.

BAM: Do you share assessments of your learners with other staff members as they move to higher grades. Say, for example, you were teaching Grade 4 Mathematics, when they move to the next grade do you expose the teachers who are taking them there to their assessments?

BONGANI: Yes. For me it's more of that because I an the HOD. I happen to look at all assessments for the whole school. But if I may take an example for Mathematics, it's me and Mr Z who are doing Maths here. I'm doing Maths in Grade 4 and he is doing Maths in Grade 5. I do Maths in Grade 6, he is doing Maths in Grade 7. So what we do is, we look at the assessments and we discuss them. I give him my assessment and ask him to keep a close look at some of them when it comes to specific areas of work where they are not doing well. So that pushes us to share our assessment.

BAM: That strategy, is it the school's way to build on the skills the learners have learned?

BONGANI: Yes, it needs educators to build on the skills that learners have acquired before. It's like laying the bricks, building the house.

BAM: Is the principal and the School Management Team (SMT) supportive of the Reading to Learn approach? Do you think this is an important factor in successfully implementing Reading to Learn either in your classroom or across the school?

BONGANI: Anyway, the SMT has no choice because I'm the part of the SMT and I am involved in the programme. But also, we are building this school. We want to produce wonders for this community. As we have identified this programme as one of the strategies that can be used to improve the product that we will be producing in the long run from the school, the SMT is very supportive. We have engaged all the educators. If we are having the workshop on Reading to Learn, everyone must attend. I mean, Debbie [one of the Reading to Learn SA facilitators] can tell you that all the Foundation Phase teachers are attending and all the Intermediate and Senior Phase educators are involved and attending those workshops. So we support that as the SMT.

BAM: How important is that, that this thing be supported by both the principal and the rest of the SMT?

BONGANI: That one is very important. I mean, for the success of anything in the school the school management team need to support that because at times there are those things that are challenging. So, if educators are not supported by the SMT then they become demoralized and just leave that thing out.

BAM: Will you continue with the Reading to Learn methodology even if there is no support through the Reading to Learn SA programme?

BONGANI: For me, yes because I have had a lot of discussions with Mike and I think I know how to run the programme now. So I would continue using it because I have seen that it helps.

BAM: Are you able to do it on your own as a teacher or do you think you will need collegial support?

BONGANI: I can do it on my own as a teacher but also I would love to have someone who will, at times, come and check my work to see if I am still on the right track. But I do have guides that our facilitator, Mr Mike Hart, has given us.

BAM: What about about texts, if you are doing it on your own? You wont be having people to advise you on the type of text to choose?

BONGANI: The thing is, Mike taught me something that I never new that each and every text that you are teaching it is either a descriptive or any other. So I am now able to choose texts on my own. Unless if there are gaps that need to be filled, I would ask for help if there is something I don't understand. I do have their number. I can always phone.

BAM: Well, is there anything else you would like to add regarding Reading to Learn that we have not, perhaps, talked about, in closing?

BONGANI: I don't think so, except that maybe if this programme can be introduced to other schools as well. It works for us and I think it will work for other people as well. Otherwise, no there is nothing else that I want to add.

BAM: Okay, that brings us to the end of our interview and thank you very much for your time.

BONGANI: Thanks very much.

Appendix B

Observation Lessons

Grade 3 & 6

Appendix B

INSTITUTION: Mqolombeni   DATE: 02/10/14

Observation Schedule

GRADE: 3   TEACHER: Anele

Seating arrangement: LEARNERS WERE SEATED IN GROUPS OF 5/6

Classroom environment: THE CLASSROOM HAS PICTURES ON THE WALL SHOWING DIFFENT EDUCATIONAL SCENARIOS. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT IS QUITE CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING.

Availability and use of Reading Material: THERE IS A READING CORNER AND THERE ARE BOOKS IN THE CLASSROOM. THE TEACHER CHOSE HER STORY AND MADE COPIES FOR ALL THE LEARNERS TO SHARE IN THEIR GROUPS. ALL GROUPS WERE ALLOCATED A SENTENCE STRIP AND A PAIR OF SCISSORS FOR THEM TO DO A CUT AND PASTE.

Interaction between teacher and learners: LESSON WAS A BIT LONG-WINDED ESPECIALLY THE INTRODUCTION. LOTS OF CODE-SWITCHING WAS ALLOWED. THE TEACHER ALSO ASKED THEM QUESTIONS TO TEST VARIOUS THINGS AT VARIOUS STAGES. SHE ALSO READ TO THEM, WITH THEM AND ALLOWED THEM TO READ

Gleaning perceptions on the importance of reading: THE TEACHER HAS SOME 'RULES' FOR READING

Analysis: DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE LESSON IS PROVIDED IN THE READING TO LEARN OBSERVATION SHEET BEARING ALL REL TOPICS AND SUB-TOPICS. IT IS ATTACHED HERETO.

Reading to Learn: Foundation Phase Observation

Date:	2 October 2013	Mentor:	D.Avery
Name:	Anele	School:	Study Site
Grade:	3	Topic:	How giraffe got a long neck

Shared Book Reading Has the teacher: • Provided an overview of the whole story using the pictures? • Related the story to their own experience or shared their feelings about the story? • Given a closer reading of the whole story?	Preparing for reading - background – using pictures and discussion (code switching) Gave overview of story without pics and then recapped with the pics. Read story and the class read with them. Used "reading along"
Recognising Words and Making Sentences a. **Recognising each word in the sentence** Has the teacher: • Used cardboard strips to show the learners how to recognise each word as they read it by pointing to the words and saying them as they read it, two or three times, until the learners are pointing to the words and saying them at the same time?	Read from the board and then from sentence strips. Could have read more times from own strips.
b. **Cutting up word groups** Has the teacher: • Used questions such as Who? What? When? Where? How? Why? to identify word groups that the children then cut out, scramble, and put together in sentences to read again. • Asked them to point to each word group in the sentence before they cut them up? • Asked the learners to say the words as they put them back as a sentence then read the whole sentence?	Good use of position cues. Great use of the isisZulu cue words eg "ubani?" to give clues to the English words. Remember to get them to point to the words before cutting. Nice elaboration of "swim/swam" Don't forget you can use word groups as well as single words.
c. **Making Sentences** Has the teacher: • Given the students more practice by asking them to mix the cards and put them together as sentences until they can do this accurately and read the sentences	This was a hit! Well done, Anele.
d. **Recognising words in and out of the sentence** • Checked they recognise each word in the sentence by pointing to it in the sentence, and then by showing them each word on its own out of the sentence and asking them to read it.	Don't forget to show them some of the words as flashcards, although writing on the board was good.
Spelling and Forming Letters Has the teacher: • Practised spelling by cutting words up into letter patterns, getting learners to write each letter pattern in turn? • followed this by getting learners to write the whole word, then showing them the word, turning it over and asking the children to write it from memory? • Allowed learners to check themselves?	First would have been better broken up into f-irst or fir-st - be careful to make it easy for the learners to remember. They need to write the first part, then the second, then the whole word. You can let them check for themselves to save time.
Sentence Writing Has the teacher: • Helped learners write the whole sentence after they can spell all the main words in the sentence? • Then moved on to the next sentence to do the word recognition and spelling activities?	Very good idea to use the board and 3 teams to do the cloze procedure. This kept the whole class alert and ready to participate.
Rewriting Stories Has the teacher: • Started writing a new story with the class using the same sentence patterns of the shared reading with new characters, events and settings? • Put the shared reading up as a model? • Written each sentence of the shared reading on the board and then asking the children asking children to change characters, settings and events? • Got children to come and write the words they know on the board? • Got children to brainstorm new ideas as the story is developing?	Brainstorm went well and vocab is developing. Make sure you do one reconstruction with the class (joint reconstruction) before letting them do their own individual reconstruction.

General Comments and Action Points (Use back of sheet if necessary)

The introduction could have been done a bit more quickly - this would have meant all the children were involved from the start. I really liked your "reading rules" for shared reading. Use of position cues is coming along. Linking the isiZulu meaning cues with the English cues is a good strategy. Good use of elaborations in the detailed reading section eg "He" means male. The sentence making went well and real reading was taking place in the groups. However, there may have been too many words to maintain interest during the cues. I thought the spelling took too long – make sure you use onset-rhyme correctly for breaking the words up, and let the learners check their own words to save time and keep the class on focus. I was excited to see your writing – the class did very well even though they were tired.

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Appendix B

Observation Schedule

GRADE: __6__   TEACHER: __Celani__

Seating arrangement: THE LEARNERS WERE SEATED IN SMALL GROUPS OF 5/6

Classroom environment: WALLS WERE RELATIVELY BARE. SOME GLOBES HAD FUSED, SO THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT LIGHTING IN THE CLASSROOM

Availability and use of Reading Material: THERE ARE NO BOOKS IN THE CLASSROOM BUT THE TEACHER MADE COPIES OF THE PASSAGE TO BE READ AND STUDIED FOR ALL LEARNERS. HE READ TO THEM. THEY NUMBERED SENTENCES TOGETHER WITH THE TEACHER, AND TOGETHER THEY FOLLOWED SOME OF THE READING TO LEARN STAGES.

Interaction between teacher and learners: LEARNERS DID NOT RESPOND TO THE TEACHER'S INTRODUCTION. THEY WERE SOMEWHAT LERTHAGIC. THEY HAD BEEN ASKED TO RELATE WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE SCHOOL TOUR TO PIETERMARITZBURG. IT WAS A FAIRLY LONG-WINDED LESSON. TEACHER TOOK TOO LONG TO GET TO THE CRUX OF THE MATTER.

Gleaning perceptions on the importance of reading: TEACHER READ TWICE TO THEM. AND ATTEMPTED DETAILED READING

Analysis: AN INBEPTH ANALYSIS IS PROVIDED IN THE NEXT PAGE WHICH CAPTURES THE READING TO LEARN STAGES.

NB – SINCE GRADE 6 IS TAUGH BY ALL THREE INTERMEDIATE PHASE TEACHERS THE CLASSROOM REMAINS THE SAME THROUGHOUT. ONLY NUANCES WILL BE DISCUSSED IN THE READING TO LEARN FORMS OF INDIVIDUAL PRACTITIONERS.

Celani

The Grade 6 English teacher was Celani. He was observed three times.

Reading to Learn: Primary/High School Narrative Texts Observation: Celani

Preparing for Reading Has the teacher: • Prepared the learners for the story by relating the story to their own experience? • Provided background about the story up to the extract? • Provided an overview by summarising the topic and sequence of the text? • Given a closer reading of the extract with the students following?	Celani was able to do this section and draw on learners' experiences to relate to the narrative text they were dealing with. For example, for a story about a school excursion he was able to draw on their experience of going to Royal Show in Pietermaritzburg. His questions were appropriate, but he has a habit of speaking very loudly and intimidating learners. This is contrary to the whole ethos of RtL as it organises interaction to create an affirming process. It does this by preparing learners for everything they are being asked to do. In paraphrasing texts Celani needs to provide the learners with more information about the sequence of the text to help their understanding before he reads the text to them. This is a matter of preparation, when it is important to identify the stages and phases of text which will enable a teacher to highlight the sequence.
Detailed Reading Has the teacher: • Prepared learners for each sentence by paraphrasing and providing meaning and position cues? • Enabled learners to identify and mark key wordings? • Elaborated key meanings by defining new terms, or related issues to their own experience or feelings?	Celani's preparation of this stage has been adequate but is not always able to identify important key wordings for narrative texts. He is able to use appropriate cues to help learners identify key wordings. However, he does not always follow the pattern of interaction that is required (see end of evaluations) which is crucial for supporting and affirming *all* learners. For example he sometimes reads a sentence before preparing students by paraphrasing the sentence before it is read. He also needs to prepare elaborations more carefully so that learners are able to understand new, key concepts or literary language. This skill comes with regular practice of the RtL cycle.
Sentence Making *(Optional for High School)* Has the teacher: • Written a paragraph on cardboard strips, sentence-by-sentence (optional)? • Asked learners to jumble up sentences and put them back in the original order of the paragraph? • Chosen sentence/s and used the same cue questions as in detailed reading to enable learners to cut up sentence wordings? • Asked learners to put the sentence wordings back in the original order? • Reread the text?	Celani has struggled with this task. After showing some improvement with the second round of observations where he was able to prepare appropriate sentence strips for learners to work with, in the last observation these were prepared in a way which was very difficult for the learners to use. He also struggled with providing cues for all the different wordings and still requires some help to divide sentences up into wordings using 'WH' questions and synonyms.
Spelling *(Optional for High School)* Has the teacher: • Used individual words from sentence making to cut off letter and syllable patterns? • Involved to learners in practising pronunciation and spelling by looking, covering , writing, checking, and writing again – first the pattern and then the whole word?	Celani in the last observation did not know how to conduct the spelling process and how to divide words in syllables, beginning and end sounds, prefixes and suffixes. He had to be guided in class before he was able to do this.

Sentence Writing *(Optional for High School)* Has the teacher: • Read sentence strips again? • Removed key words leaving the sentence/paragraph framework and asked students to write the whole sentence/paragraph putting in the missing words?	Celani was able to this, but it is a largely mechanical task that arises out of the previous two steps. What he also needs to do is to elaborate on the sentence structure to reinforce the learning that has occurred around sentence structure and spelling.
Joint Construction & Text Patterning Has the teacher: • Read the text again and reminded learners of the text pattern? • Brainstormed new story elements such as characters, events, reactions? • Involved the whole class in thinking how and what to write following the original story patterns? • Allowed students to take turns to write new sentences on the board? • Helped students use the examples of the original text and the joint construction to write their own story?	Celani had not reached the stage of Joint Construction (JC) in earlier observations but had been left with ideas about how to do this with narratives and it had been demonstrated in his classroom. In the last observation it was obvious that he had not practiced this stage on his own, as he needed guidance through the whole process. However, once he had been guided through the first part of the JC he was able to handle this fairly well. The learners subsequently wrote their own individual constructions examples of which will be provided with this report.

General Comments

Celani has not been very organised in his approach to the training. Despite being supplied with files to store all the handouts, exercises and model lesson plans, there is no evidence that he has stored or filed these. He is thus unlikely to have these resources available when preparing lesson plans and how to deliver them. He has never submitted a complete lesson plan, even after early stages have been worked on with trainers.

It is also obvious that he has not practiced the RtL process regularly, as his learners are not used to it and he is unsure how to prepare properly for effective delivery. The recent process seems to have awakened some commitment in him. End-of-year meetings, in preparation for next year, might firm this commitment up. It will require some further training and regular monitoring for a term.

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Dumisani

Dumisani teaches Mathematics and EMS

Reading to Learn: Primary/High School Factual Texts Observation: Dumisani

Shared Text Reading Has the teacher: • Prepared the learners for the text by relating it to their own experience? • Provided an overview by summarising the topic and sequence of the text? • Elaborated on the text by accessing their own experience/ knowledge; explained new concepts; or shared their feelings/opinions about the text? • Given a closer reading of the whole text with the students following?	Dumisani handled Preparing for Reading satisfactorily. For example, with a text on Advertising, he brought examples of adverts to show the learners which were given to different groups. However, he could have made more of this, getting each group to talk about their adverts and respond to questions that related to the content of the text they were going to work with. In a lesson on 'production' he asked questions about past learning but got too impatient with learners too quickly, and could have related the issue more to their own experience. In paraphrasing the texts Dumisani, while covering the content, did not focus on the sequence of the texts enough. Elaborations were done but he needs to try and make them more personal and concrete, related to learners' own experience.
Detailed Reading Has the teacher: • Prepared learners for each sentence with meaning and position cues? • Enabled learners to identify and mark key wordings? • Elaborated key meanings by defining new terms, or related issues to their own experience or feelings?	With detailed reading Dumisani needs to provide more support around the sentence before reading i.e. needs to provide more support on meaning and, especially sequence, of the sentence before reading it to learners. In terms of preparing Dumisani needs more experience at identifying the key wordings in a factual text which carry the key concepts of the factual text. He often left out key wordings so the notes would not convey the key meanings of the texts. He is able to provide useful cues for learners to identify key wordings e.g. a good synonym for 'always' in the text on production.
Sentence Making *(Optional for High School)* Has the teacher: • Written a paragraph on cardboard strips, sentence-by-sentence? • Asked learners to jumble up sentences and put them back in the original order of the paragraph? • Chosen sentence/s and used the same cue questions as in detailed reading to enable learners to cut up sentence wordings? • Asked learners to put the sentences back in the original order? • Reread the text?	This was adequately done for the advertising text but, disappointingly, was not fully prepared for the lesson on production. He was still busy pasting sentence strips at the start, and then did three different strips for each of the three groups instead of the same sentence for all of the groups. This created the need for adjustments to the process and he had to be assisted to do this. In the end the learners accomplished the tasks. He was able to use most of the relevant cues to help learners identify the key wordings to cut up, jumble and rearrange
Spelling *(Optional for High School)* Has the teacher: • Used individual words from sentence making to cut off letter and syllable patterns? • Involved to learners in practising pronunciation and spelling by looking, covering , writing, checking, and writing again – first the pattern and then the whole word?	Dumisani had to be helped with the spelling procedure and still needs to develop more understanding of English syllable structure, beginning and ending sounds, and suffixes and prefixes. He was able to carry out the spelling tasks after support in the classroom.

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Sentence Writing *(Optional for High School)* Has the teacher: • Read sentence strips again? • Removed key words leaving the sentence/paragraph framework and asked students to write the whole sentence/paragraph putting in the missing words?	This task was accomplished after some initial guidance and the learners were able to do it successfully.
Joint Construction & Text Patterning Has the teacher: • Read the text again and reminded learners of the text pattern? • Involved the whole class in thinking how and what to write following the original text patterns? • Allowed students to take turns to write new sentences on the board? • Helped students use the examples of the original text and the joint construction to write their own text using their notes?	While Dumisani got the students to write notes (key wordings) for each sentence the learners wrote these notes one under each other, instead of across the page with dashes between each wording. This is done to enable the teachers to focus on the unfolding (stages and phases) of the text as a guide for the joint construction of the text. Dumisani had to be supported to do the joint construction which the learners finally accomplished.

General Comments

While Dumisani has a grasp of the basics of the RtL cycle e.g. Preparing for Reading, Detailed Reading and aspects of Sentence Making, Spelling and Writing, it is obvious that he has not practiced these regularly. This is also evident in learners' lack of familiarity with the process. There is a lot more work to be done still to ensure that he is able to the Joint Construction.

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Reading to Learn: Primary/High School Factual Texts Observation: Bongani

Shared Text Reading Has the teacher: • Prepared the learners for the text by relating it to their own experience? • Provided an overview by summarising the topic and sequence of the text? • Elaborated on the text by accessing their own experience/ knowledge; explained new concepts; or shared their feelings/opinions about the text? • Given a closer reading of the whole text with the students following?	He was very good at doing this, for example, in a lesson on the solar system he used a world globe and spun it on its axis with the sun shining on it. So he was able to give a concrete example and relate this to the learners own experience and encourage participation. His paraphrase of the texts he used was good although he did not emphasise the sequencing of the text enough, a common fault with teachers starting with the RtL cycle. This is important to help all learners to understand not only the content of the text but also the sequence in which it unfolds. Weaker readers struggle to do these two tasks at the same time. He reads the texts to students but spent too much time getting the class to read aloud after he had read the text. This must be done in moderation as there is a lot of repetition built into the 6-stage RtL cycle
Detailed Reading Has the teacher: • Prepared learners for each sentence with meaning and position cues? • Enabled learners to identify and mark key wordings? • Elaborated key meanings by defining new terms, or related issues to their own experience or feelings?	Bongani did this section fairly well. He was able to identify key wordings, but sometimes included too many and also left out key wordings. This is usual with teachers starting out with RtL as they need to build their understanding of texts and their language patterns through practice. His cues were good but needs to work on providing more appropriate synonyms for new and difficult words/ concepts. Identified appropriate elaborations and they were generally well handled, though he could supply a bit more support to learners to help their understanding.
Sentence Making *(Optional for High School)* Has the teacher: • Written a paragraph on cardboard strips, sentence-by-sentence? • Asked learners to jumble up sentences and put them back in the original order of the paragraph? • Chosen sentence/s and used the same cue questions as in detailed reading to enable learners to cut up sentence wordings? • Asked learners to put the sentences back in the original order? • Reread the text?	Was able to organise the materials for this and, with some exceptions, provided appropriate cues to help learners identify which wordings to cut out. The rest of the activity went well, with Bongani helping weaker students with the task of putting jumbled sentences together again. He focused on working with one sentence and did not do the paragraph organisation exercise which was appropriate for his classes' levels (Grade 6/7)
Spelling *(Optional for High School)* Has the teacher: • Used individual words from sentence making to cut off letter and syllable patterns? • Involved to learners in practising pronunciation and spelling by looking, covering , writing, checking, and writing again – first the pattern and then the whole word?	This he was able to do this well but Zulu-speaking teachers find difficulty with the English syllable system and the beginning and end sounds of words. This will improve with practice.
Sentence Writing *(Optional for High School)* Has the teacher: • Read sentence strips again? • Removed key words leaving the sentence/paragraph framework and asked students to write the whole	This was well handled. All the moves were done.

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sentence/paragraph putting in the missing words?	
Joint Construction & Text Patterning Has the teacher: • Read the text again and reminded learners of the text pattern? • Involved the whole class in thinking how and what to write following the original text patterns? • Allowed students to take turns to write new sentences on the board? • Helped students use the examples of the original text and the joint construction to write their own text using their notes?	Joint construction was only attempted in the last observation with the text on the solar system. This is a difficult step for subject teachers to do and requires some consistent classroom practice. Bongani managed the beginning stages of this well with some guidance from the observer. Unfortunately I was unable to see the learners writing of their individual construction to see how well they were able to handle this step.

General Comments

Bongani showed significant control of all the stages and with consistent practice could become an able and independent RtL practitioner. He was a big loss to the school as he was committed to RtL and a leader for the other two teachers in the IP/SP phases.

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LESSON PLAN GRADE 6

CAPS   ENGLISH

GENRE   NARRATIVE

TOPIC   THE GRADE 6 TOUR

The grade 6s of Valley Primary arrived at Midmar Dam at 10am. After two hours in the bus, they were hot. Mr Davids gave them their first activity. They each had to draw a big square and list all the plants and insects they could see in it. Mr Davids said: "Do not leave this area. And do not go near the water without me.

But Layla had other ideas! She needed a quick swim. Mr Davids walked behind the bus. Layla knew he smoked. He had probably gone to have a cigarette in secret. Quickly Layla slipped off her tracksuit. Her swimming costume was underneath her clothes. She ran into the water. It was so cool! She closed her eyes and swam and floated on her back.

When she opened her eyes, she saw she was far from the shore. She could not see the bottom of the dam. She began to panic. Were the snakes or crocodiles in the water? She shouted and tried to swim, but she was swallowed water. Now she was really scared. Would she drown? She felt something take hold of her. "No, no! Help! Crocodile!" she yelled.

LESSON PLAN GRADE 6

CAPS   ENGLISH

GENRE   NARRATIVE

TOPIC   THE GRADE 6 TOUR

Who?   From where?   Did what?   Where?   When?   how long?   Where?

1 The grade 6s of Valley Primary arrived at Midmar Dam at 10am. After two hours in the bus, they

How?   Who?   Did what?

were hot. Mr Davids gave them their first activity. They each had to draw a big square and list all the plants and insects they could see in it. Mr Davids said: "Do not leave this area. And do not go near the water without me.

EVENT

   Who?   Elb   do what?   Who?   Did what?   Where?

7 But Layla had other ideas! She needed a quick swim. Mr Davids walked behind the bus. Layla knew

                  Do what? How?   Elb   did what?

he smoked. He had probably gone to have a cigarette in secret. Quickly Layla slipped off her   .

               Where?   Did what? Where?

tracksuit. Her swimming costume was underneath her clothes. She ran into the water. It was so

How?   Did what?   Do what? How?   With what?

cool! She closed her eyes and swam and floated on her back.

PROBLEM

Time   did what?   Did what? Where?

16 When she opened her eyes, she saw she was far from the shore. She could not see the bottom of the dam.

REACTION

              Who?   Who?   Where? Did what? Did what?

18 She began to panic. Were the snakes or crocodiles in the water? She shouted and tried to swim, but

         Did what?   How did she felt?

21 she was swallowed water. Now she was really scared. Would she drown?
EVENT

LESSON PLAN	GRADE 6
CAPS	NATURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
GENRE	DESCRIPTIVE / EXPLAINATIVE
TOPIC	FOOD GROUPS

All animals and people need to eat food. Without food, our bodies would not be able to carry out the processes needed for living. Food gives us energy and, without the right food, our bodies will not work as well as they should. Healthy food helps our bodies to:

- Grow
- Do what we want to do
- Build bones and muscles
- Repair and replace worn-out cells
- Keep all systems working
- Keep us healthy.

Food are grouped according to their functions and the main nutrients that they to our bodies. There are four main food groups:

- Carbohydrates – these are foods that give us energy
- Proteins – these are the food that help repair and grow our body
- Fats and oils – these are the food that help the food to store energy. They also insulate and protect nerves and organs
- Vitamins and minerals – these are foods that help our bodies to work properly. They also build out immune system to protect us from the illness.

Most natural foods contain a mixture of some of these food groups. Processes or manufactured foods have salt, sugar, preservatives, flavouring and colouring added to them.

Stages and phases	LESSON PLAN CAPS GENRE TOPIC	GRADE 6 NATURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DESCRIPTIVE / EXPLAINATIVE FOOD GROUPS
What do people and animals need?	*What? And what? And who?* *Have to do what?* 1. All animals and people need to eat food.	
Why our bodies need food?	*What? What? E To do what? What?/things* *Needed for what?* 2. Without food, our bodies would not be able to carry out the processes needed for living.	
What do we get from food?	*What? Gives us what? Without what? What? Not* *what?* 3. Food gives us energy and, without the right food, our bodies will not work as well as they should.	
Functions of food x6?	*What? Do what? What? To do what? X6* 4. Healthy food helps our bodies to: • Grow • Do what we want to do • Build bones and muscles • Repair and replace worn-out cells • Keep all systems working • Keep us healthy.	
How food is grouped?	*Whata? What? E what? And what?* 5. Foods are grouped according to their functions and the main nutrients that *Where?* they do to our bodies.	

How many main groups of food x4?	6. There are four main food groups:
	• Carbohydrates – these are foods that give us energy
	• Proteins – these are the food that help repair and grow our body
	• Fats and oils – these are the food that help the food to store energy.
	  They also insulate and protect nerves and organs
	• Vitamins and minerals – these are foods that help our bodies to work
	  properly.	

Function of food?	*Do what? What? To do what? From what?* 7. They also build out immune system to protect us from the illness.	

GRADE	ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT AND SCIENCES
NCS	10 OCTOBER 2013
TOPIC:	ADVERTISING
GENRE:	EXPLAINATIVE TEXT LO4 AS 4

Effective advertising creates an awareness of and awakens a need for a product or service being advertised. Once the market research data has been collected and analysed and the decision has been made to continue with providing for the need, it has to be advertised in order to make consumers aware of it.

As you learnt in Grade 6, there are many different mediums for advertising, such television, radio, newspapers, magazines, displays and the internet. Advertisements need to appeal to the customers. Advertisers do this by taking to account who the target market is. They appeal to the needs of the target market, such as the need for belonging, for achievement, a better standard of living (to be stylish).

Advertisements must be eye-catching and well designed. They should provide enough information for consumers to know what is being advertised and why they need to buy it.

Stages and phases	LESSON PLAN
	GRADE _____ ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT AND SCIENCES
	NCS _____ 10 OCTOBER 2013
	GENRE: _____ EXPLAINATIVE TEXT LO4 AS 4
	TOPIC: _____ ADVERTISING
Introduction/explains What advertising is about.	*Welldone what?E/promo Made? compaign* 1.Effective advertising creates an awareness of and *Syn/promoted* awakens a need for a product or service being advertised. *Syn/after this is done. What is? put together?*
Data collection/analysis	2. Once the market research data has been collected and *Broken down/tested* analysed and the decision has been made to continue with *satisfy* providing for the need, it has to be advertised in order to *what/customer?* make consumers aware of it.
Previous knowledge Types of advertising media	3. As you learnt in Grade 6, there are many different *Syn/media? Examples of media? X6* mediums for advertising, such television, radio, newspapers, magazines, displays and the internet.
Advert attraction to consumers/what should it do to someone seeing it first time.	*What? Syn/attract?* 4. Advertisements need to appeal to the customers.
What advertiser should take note of.	*E/ aware* 5. Advertisers do this by taking to account who the *Belongs/for who?* target market is.
3 types of consumer needs that play part in advertising.	6. They appeal to the needs of the target market, such as *Examples of needs to be satisfied? x3* the need for belonging, for achievement, a better standard of living (to be stylish).
The style, look, feel of the advertisement	*Needs to/nomatter what it takes? Syn/attractive/colour/texture* 7. Advertisements must be eye-catching and well designed.
Reasons to pay attention the advert/ the information about a product	8. They should provide enough information for consumers to know what is being advertised and why they need to buy it.

Stages and phases	LESSON PLAN
	GRADE ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT AND SCIENCES
	NCS 10 OCTOBER 2013
	GENRE: EXPLAINATIVE TEXT LO4 AS 4
	TOPIC: ADVERTISING
Introduction/explains What advertising is about.	*What? Welldone what?E/promo Made? compaign* 1.Effective advertising creates an awareness of and *Syn/promoted* awakens a need for a product or service being advertised.
Data collection/analysis	*Syn/after this is done. What is? Which?put together?* 2. Once the market research data has been collected and *Broken down/tested* analysed and the decision has been made to continue with *satisfy* providing for the need, it has to be advertised in order to *what/customer?* make consumers aware of it.
Previous knowledge Types of advertising media	3. As you learnt in Grade 6, there are many different *Sing/plural/media? Examples of media? X6* mediums for advertising, such television, radio, newspapers, magazines, displays and the internet.
Advert attraction to consumers/what should it do to someone seeing it first time.	*What? What?/attract?* 4. Advertisements need to appeal to the customers.
What advertiser should take note of.	*E/ aware* 5. Advertisers do this by taking to account who the *Belongs/for who?* target market is.
3 types of consumer needs that play part in advertising.	6. They appeal to the needs of the target market, such as *Examples of needs to be satisfied? x3* the need for belonging, for achievement, a better standard of living (to be stylish).
The style, look, feel of the advertisement	*nomatter what it takes? Syn/attractive/colour/texture* 7. Advertisements must be eye-catching and well designed.
Reasons to pay attention the advert/ the information about a product	8. They should provide enough information for consumers to know what is being advertised and why they need to buy it.

Unit 3 Advertising

Introduction

Effective advertising creates an awareness of and awakens a need for a product or service being advertised. Once market research data has been collected and analysed and the decision has been made to continue with providing for the need, it has to be advertised in order to make consumers aware of it.

As you learnt in Grade 6, there are many different mediums for advertising, such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, displays and the internet. Advertisements need to appeal to consumers. Advertisers do this by taking into account who the target market is. They appeal to the needs of the target market, such as the need for belonging, for achievement, a better standard of living, to be stylish and so on.

Advertisements must be eye-catching and well designed. They should provide enough information for consumers to know what it is that is being advertised and why they need to buy it.

Langa
Bed & Breakfast

Only R300 per night
Experience township hospitality
Tel: 089 643 2578

Programme of Assessment task: Design posters and leaflets

LO4 AS4

1. Taking all of the above features into account and what you have already learnt about advertising, design a poster which advertises either the bed and breakfast or the tuckshop that you did market research on.

2. Design a smaller leaflet for handing out to people.

Extension

LO4 AS4

Look through magazines and collect five advertisements advertising different products and services. Paste them into your workbook and answer the following questions on each of them.

1. What is the product or service advertised?

2. Who is the target market?

3. Which need will be satisfied by the product or service?

4. What techniques have the advertisers used to appeal to the consumer?

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Foundation Phase Planning Template

Teacher's name: ANELE   Grade: 3   Date: 02-10-2014

Book: HOW GIRAFFE GOT A LONG NECK.   Author: _____

Teaching aids: STORYBOOKLETS, SENTENCE STRIPS, SCISSORS, BOARD.

Preparing for Reading	
Link to prior knowledge and context	WHAT DO WE CALL A PLACE WHERE WE CAN FIND DIFFERENT ANIMALS? CAN YOU MENTION THOSE ANIMALS? WHICH ANIMAL IS A TRICKIEST OR CLEVER AN THE ZOO? WHAT DO WE CALL THE ANIMAL THAT HAS LONG NECK AND BLACK PATCHES?
Summary of the story	LONG AGO A GIRAFFE HAD A SHORT NECK. A GIRAFFE HELPED NOGWAJA AFTER. NOGWAJA HAD BEEN COMPLAINING ABOUT BIEN NOT WELL. SO THE GIRAFFE GAVE NOGWAJA SOME OF HIS FOOD. NOGWAJA PROMISE TO PAY BACK WHEN HE IS BETTER. BUT NOGWAJA DECIDED TO TRICK A GIRAFFE BECAUSE HE WAS LAZY HE COULD NOT GET FOOD FOR GIRAFFE. NOGWAJA SWAM ACROSS THE RIVER AND TOLD THE GIRAFFE THAT HIS FOOD WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER. HE MUST TIE A ROPE AROUND HIS NECK AND PULL SO THAT HE CAN GET HIS FOOD. SO DID. THE GIRAFFE
Shared Book Reading	
Looking at pictures	ASK THE LEARNERS WHAT DO THEY SEE IN THE PICTURE
Read to and with class	EDUCATOR READ FOR LEARNERS AND THEY WILL READ TOGETHER.
Sentence making Selected sentence with cues	AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SENTENCE THERE IS A WORD THAT TELLS US ABOUT STARTING. WHO TO WHO TOOK A ROPE? NOGWAJA TOOK WHAT. WHAT DID NOGWAJA DO? WHERE ABOUT NOGWAJA SWAM? HE SWAM ACROSS WHAT. WHAT DID NOGWAJA AGAIN? HOW MANY ENDS OF THE ROPE HE TIED? WHAT END DID HE TIED? TO WHAT.
Spelling	
Words to be spelt + divisions (spelling to be written on boards)	FIRST FI-RST ROPE RO-PE ACROSS A-CRO-SS RIVER. RI-VER.
Sentence Writing	
Sentence with words to be written from memory	_____ Nogwaja took a _____ the HE SWAM _____ the _____ He tied one end of a _____ to a tree.
Ideas for a joint rewrite of the story	Secondly _____ Monkey took a rope and climb on a tree He tied one end of a rope to a branch.

Reading to Learn: **Foundation Phase Observation**

Date:	2 October 2013	Mentor:	D.Avery
Name:	Anele	School:	Study Site
Grade:	3	Topic:	How giraffe got a long neck

Shared Book Reading Has the teacher: • Provided an overview of the whole story using the pictures? • Related the story to their own experience or shared their feelings about the story? • Given a closer reading of the whole story?	Preparing for reading - background – using pictures and discussion (code switching) Gave overview of story without pics and then recapped with the pics. Read story and the class read with them. Used "reading along"
Recognising Words and Making Sentences a. **Recognising each word in the sentence** Has the teacher: • Used cardboard strips to show the learners how to recognise each word as they read it by pointing to the words and saying them as they read it, two or three times, until the learners are pointing to the words and saying them at the same time?	Read from the board and then from sentence strips. Could have read more times from own strips.
b. **Cutting up word groups** Has the teacher: • Used questions such as Who? What? When? Where? How? Why? to identify word groups that the children then cut out, scramble, and put together in sentences to read again. • Asked them to point to each word group in the sentence before they cut them up? • Asked the learners to say the words as they put them back as a sentence then read the whole sentence?	Good use of position cues. Great use of the isisZulu cue words eg "ubani?" to give clues to the English words. Remember to get them to point to the words before cutting. Nice elaboration of "swim/swam" Don't forget you can use word groups as well as single words.
c. **Making Sentences** Has the teacher: • Given the students more practice by asking them to mix the cards and put them together as sentences until they can do this accurately and read the sentences	This was a hit! Well done, Anele.
d. **Recognising words in and out of the sentence** • Checked they recognise each word in the sentence by pointing to it in the sentence, and then by showing them each word on its own out of the sentence and asking them to read it.	Don't forget to show them some of the words as flashcards, although writing on the board was good.
Spelling and Forming Letters Has the teacher: • Practised spelling by cutting words up into letter patterns, getting learners to write each letter pattern in turn? • followed this by getting learners to write the whole word, then showing them the word, turning it over and asking the children to write it from memory? • Allowed learners to check themselves?	First would have been better broken up into f-irst or fir-st - be careful to make it easy for the learners to remember. They need to write the first part, then the second, then the whole word. You can let them check for themselves to save time.
Sentence Writing Has the teacher: • Helped learners write the whole sentence after they can spell all the main words in the sentence? • Then moved on to the next sentence to do the word recognition and spelling activities?	Very good idea to use the board and 3 teams to do the cloze procedure. This kept the whole class alert and ready to participate.
Rewriting Stories Has the teacher: • Started writing a new story with the class using the same sentence patterns of the shared reading with new characters, events and settings? • Put the shared reading up as a model? • Written each sentence of the shared reading on the board and then asking the children asking children to change characters, settings and events? • Got children to come and write the words they know on the board? • Got children to brainstorm new ideas as the story is developing?	Brainstorm went well and vocab is developing. Make sure you do one reconstruction with the class (joint reconstruction) before letting them do their own individual reconstruction.

General Comments and Action Points (Use back of sheet if necessary)

The introduction could have been done a bit more quickly - this would have meant all the children were involved from the start. I really liked your "reading rules" for shared reading. Use of position cues is coming along. Linking the isiZulu meaning cues with the English cues is a good strategy. Good use of elaborations in the detailed reading section eg "He" means male. The sentence making went well and real reading was taking place in the groups. However, there may have been too many words to maintain interest during the cues. I thought the spelling took too long – make sure you use onset-rhyme correctly for breaking the words up, and let the learners check their own words to save time and keep the class on focus. I was excited to see your writing – the class did very well even though they were tired.

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How Giraffe got a long neck

Long ago, Giraffe did not have a long neck. He had a short neck.

One day, Giraffe walked past Nogwaja.

"Oh, Giraffe! I have hurt myself. I can't get food. Please help me," said Nogwaja.

Giraffe felt sorry for Nogwaja.

"I have got some food," he said. "But you must pay me back when you are better."

"Of course I'll pay you back," said Nogwaja.

Giraffe gave Nogwaja lots of good things to eat.

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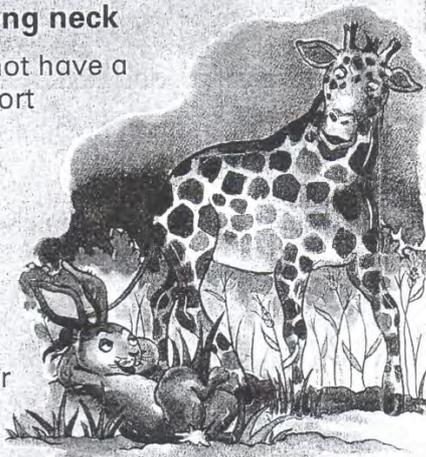
But Nogwaja was lazy. He did not want to pay Giraffe back. He had no food for Giraffe. He played a trick instead.

First, Nogwaja took a rope. He swam across the river. He tied one end of the rope to a tree.

Then he swam back with the other end of the rope. He went to Giraffe.

"I have food for you," he said. "But it is on the other side of the river. Please pull it across the river with this rope."

Nogwaja tied the rope around Giraffe's neck.

"Pull!" he said. Giraffe pulled and pulled. Nothing happened. He pulled again and again.

He pulled so hard that his neck got longer and longer. He pulled so hard that the rope jerked and broke. Giraffe fell on top of Nogwaja. He hurt Nogwaja's paws.
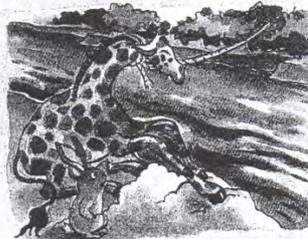
Appendix B 1

Learners' written work

Grade 3

Allbongwe NdAwo   2 october 2014

First Nogwaja took a rope
He   swam   across   the   river
He   tied one end
                   of   a rope   to a tree

Secodly   monkey   climb   on a   tree
He   tired   a rope   to   a   branch

Lastly. Lion   took   a   rope
He   wolked   to   the   hill
He   ~~tire d tid~~   tied   one   end   of   a   rope to a
rock.

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~~Kerst 2014~~ Langani

Uktober 2014

First Noqwaja took a rope
He swam across the river
He tied one and of a rope to a tree

Secondly Monkey climb one a tree
He tied a rope to a branch

Lastly a bear took a rope
He went to a mountain
He tied one end of a rope to a tree

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2   October   2014   March

first nogwaja took a rope
He swam across the river
He tied one and of a rope to a tree

Lastly   thirdly
secondly
monkey
climb
branch

Secondly monkey climb on a tree
He tied a rope to a branch

lastly a giant took a rope
He went to the cave
He tied one end of a rope to the log.

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Appendix B 2

Learners' written work

Grade 6

A school trip to
    Durban
    28 October 2014

NAME   Owami
SURNAME Shange.

My name is Owami. I am in grade 9 At sisonke primary school
We arrived at Shaka Marine. Af: At 9h30 am, we were get there
by buses and we arrived at shaka marine. After two hours in the
bus we were very hot and the children were makin a lot of noise
in the bus. If felt tired because i was played too much in the bus
Mr Mkhize told the leaners not toge near water without his permision
But Owami had other ideas of talking a quick swim. Mr Mkhiz
walked bihind the bus. Owami knew he smoked. He had probably gone t
have a cigaratte in secret. Quickly Owami slipped of his clothes. H
ran into the water and he jumped inside the water. He felt so cool.
When he oppened his eyes he saw that he was far from the shore. Sh
could not see the top of the water. He began to panic. Were the Sharks
in the water? He shouted and tried to swim, but he swallowed water.
He was really scared. would he drawn? He felt something take hel
of his hand no, no! help Shark he yelled. Mr Mkhize was there.
the shark were going to eat him
He was shaking for the whole day after that.

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A School trip to Durban
28 October 2014

My name is Noxolo Mkhize I'm from Mqolombeni primary school. I am doing grade six my school name is mqolombeni primary school on 24 October 2014 we went to the beach in durban

We were traveling with two buses and one kombi It takes us 4 hours to go there. because it a long distance to travel in durban. were feeling so excited because other learners were singing to show happiness

We were arrived they other learners was so nervouse. because it was 1first time to see fish, water and machine and savers people swimming

Our teachers tell us hot go too deep on the water and my teacher said only swim the life save tell you and respect the rules

Lungelo Mkhize did not lesten teachers he swimming too deep he was screaming for help, he con't even stand up he hewas underwater and the waves phushed him

he was happicked, he con't even talk. after that things has happened. the person who save him teachers and life savers.

25 October 2014

A School trip to Durban

My name is Andile my surname is Sithole At Mgolombeni Primary school in Grade 6s. The mgolombeni trip was go in Durban with bus. in the bus was very nicely. The bus was go in ob am. After one hour was very hot. The bus was in Durban in 10 am.

First the the teacher say "Let us go to see the animals" After that the teacher say "Let us go to see a Dolphin". then the teacher say "Let go to see a Fish, Shark and toitoise that live in the water" finally the teacher say "Let us go to swimm in the swimming Pool" And teacher say "Do not swimm in the Sea" Said teacher.

The bus went to go back. But Hlerisisa was not like to go back. And she was not Listen the teachers. She went to Played marry go round of machines. She could not see the teachers. Then she was lost and she was scared then she started to cry. Then she Started to looking the Seavity guards And she Report it.

NAME NkOScy
SURNAME Dlamini

A School trip to
Durban
28 October 2014.

My name is NkOScy Dlamini. I'M from Mlelo Primary school.
Im doing grade 7. On the 2A of July 2014 we wrote to be arri-
d in Durban at 9am. After three hour in the bus. Eh We were
So Excited.

After We arrived was so excibed. We see the
Waves and lifesavers. teachers tell as to swim in th
Pool. And to not go into the sea water.

But Mondi he did not lister to the teachers. He gou
in to the sea. And the sea water was so cool. Th
we fell so cool when was swim in the Pool.

Mondi He face the big wave and he stati to
terrfied. And he say help!! And mondi sicked. The life
Save rescure. And Mondi was so sad he take he
food and eat. And we feel So happy after the
rescure.

NAME WANDILE
SURNAME CELE

A School tried of the Durban
Mgolombeni ep School

My NAME Wandile My Aeme Surname cele.
The grade 7 from Inhlazuka primary et arrived etshakaman
9.am. After 1 hour in the bus, they were hot is bus.
Mr Ngeonga told the learners not to go Near Water without
his

But Asanda had other ideas! She needed a quick swim
mr ngeongo walked behnd the bus esanda and had
probably gone to have a quick look in see for.

Quickly esanda slipped off her treck suit, her
swimming easture was under neath her clothes.
She rain into the water, it was cese cool she closed
her eyes and swam and floated on hen back.

When she opened her eyes she saw she was far
from them shore she could not see the bottom of the
pool she began to penic ware the shaka crackes in the
water? she should and tried to swim but she was swallowed
water. Now she was really scared, would she drown? She
felt something teke hold of he No, no help? shaka! she yell

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Appendix B 3

Learners' written notes as part of Reading to Learn

Grade 6

GRADE ; LESSON PLAN

SUBJECT : EMS THE PRODUCTION PROCESS :READING TO LEARN

GENRE : FACTUAL TEXT

DATE :21-10-2014

What people need for survival?	The Production Process : Sustainable use of Resources
	①Humans will always need natural resources to live, so when we consume resources we should keep in mind the needs of future generations. ②When we use natural resources we must always consider how much of the resources are we going to use without damaging the environment. ③While there are certain resources that are renewable, which means they can grow again like fish in the sea, we still need to be careful not to abuse these resources .
	④There are other natural resources like minerals and oil that can become totally depleted which means they can be finished. ⑤The reason for this is that there is only certain amount of oil or gold that exist under ground. ⑥To prevent this from happening we need to use all resources sparingly which means that we must waste them but use only as much as we need.

1 Humans
2 always
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8 Natural resources
9 always consider
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30 use only as much as we need

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Zulu SANdile
22/10/2014
Reading to learn Activity.

1. There are otherNaturResources like minerals and oil that
can become totally depleturde which meanithey can get
finished !

means
means
finished
finished

People must have Natural Resources, like food, water
to survive so we must thinking about what our children
will need in the future. We have to consider how much of
our Natural "Resoures we consure without harming the Enviro
ment. There are two kind's of Resoures, renewalable resoures
and Resources that can be finished, like cool and gold. To
stop our Natural Resource's being finished we must not
waste them.

1. Humans - always Need -Naturel Resources - live -Consume
-keep in mind -Need -future generations.
2. use - natural Resources - always consider how much -
going to use -without de maging Environment.
3. Cetein Resources -Renewable - careful -abuse Resources.
4. R minerals and oil -totally depleted
5. Raeson - certain dimount - oil or gold - undergrown.
6. prevent -Need to use -sparingly - not waster -use spor.

Lulu Sandila

GRADE : LESSON PLAN

SUBJECT : EMS   THE PRODUCTION PROCESS :READING TO LEARN

GENRE : FACTUAL TEXT

DATE :21-10-2014

What people need for survival?	The Production Process : Sustainable use of Resources
	1Humans will always need natural resources to live, so when we consume resources we should keep in mind the needs of future generations.
	2When we use natural resources we must always consider how much of the resources are we going to use without damaging the environment.
	3While there are certain resources that are renewable, which means they can grow again like fish in the sea, we still need to be careful not to abuse these resources .
	4There are other natural resources like minerals and oil that can become totally depleted which means they can be finished.
	5The reason for this is that there is only certain amount of oil or gold that exist under ground.
	6To prevent this from happening we need to use all resources sparingly which means that we must not waste them but use only as much as we need.

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GRADE : LESSON PLAN

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1. Human
2. always
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6. Consume
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10. always consider
11. how much
12. going to use
13. damaging
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Appendix G

Reading to Learn Trainers' Interviews

Grade 3 & 6

Reading to Learn Facilitators' Interviews (Appendix G)

Interview with Debbie

BAM: Debbie, let's start with our interview. Tell me, how did you come to be involved with the Reading to Learn programme?

DA: When I was teaching, I was teaching at St Nicholas, I was teaching English, I was invited to come to a little workshop that Mike [Hart] was running, it was in 2009 about Reading to Learn. I was invited by somebody from the University and I went along to the workshop. I was so excited that when they offered a training course, I started doing the training course in the end of 2009 beginning of 2010. And I practiced it in my classroom right through 2010. I was trained for the full year. And then in 2011 I did a lot of work in my own classroom with my Grade 8s. So I was actually using it.

BAM: So what are some of the best outcomes of the Reading to Learn programme that you have witnessed since you started being involved with it?

DA: Ok, at High School level I was working with Grade 8s. I found that you had children coming in at widely different ranges of ability. And certainly by the end of Grade 8, having used Reading to Learn at least once a week over that period, except during the exams and that, I found that the gap between the top and the bottom had lessened considerably. But I found that my top students had also increased and their ability to write was enormously improved. So that was my experience in a High School. But I've also seen since I've been training huge gains that are being made with additional language learners in Foundation Phase and also, to a lesser extent, in Intermediate and Senior Phases where using the full text has given those learners a head start into reading which I don't think they would have got if you had started with the word level, just doing sounds and words, because it became very meaningful to them.

BAM: Do you think that those outcomes have been realized at the study site?

DA: I can certainly say in the Foundation Phase. I would see that in Grade 2 and Grade 3, but in particular in Grade 3. I think the teacher has got a much more advanced idea of what literacy actually is in an additional language. I think it's given her the confidence. And I think using the Whole Text method has made it really interesting for the learners. And what I've seen, it's given them an 'in' to their workbooks that they didn't have before.

BAM: Would you describe some of your experiences working at the study site?

DA: Working with the teachers has been amazing, especially the Foundation Phase teachers. I found that they are just so involved, so interested, they found it so interesting, they found it something different that they had not done before and they were so committed to actually learning more about the methodology, learning how to work with the different stages of the programme, and I've seen them using it in their classrooms. And that's been amazing. I also think that the way that they have supported one another has been one of the

great strengths of the programme. Those Foundation Phase teachers work together and support one another, and build on what they know and on what somebody doesn't know they help with, somebody doesn't know how to draw pictures another one draws pictures for them. It's a very very good model of teachers working together.

BAM: The next question might be related to the previous one. What would you consider to be the most rewarding moments of your dealings with the school community, generally and the study participants, in particular?

DA: I just love the way that the children have become so comfortable with having visitors in their classroom. I walk in and they all shout: 'Hello, Aunty Debbie' (chuckling). It's just lovely that we've become sort of family with the children. But for me to see the writing, I've been watching it developing but to see this last time, to see the kind of writing that they are doing independently in first additional language classroom where learners actually hardly hear English outside of school has been quite incredible, and complex sentences which was really an eye-opener for me. I expected Grade 3 to be using very simple, maybe five word sentences, and these children are using complex sentences, which was really exciting. But with the participants, yeah the fact that two of them chose to come for extra training, in their holidays was just the most amazing thing, and they were prepared to pay for the training which, before the training, had all been free. They were actually prepared to pay for extra training, which was just astounding to me.

BAM: Can you share some of regrets or misgivings regarding your experiences at the study site?

DA: I think it was quite hard to spread the training over such a long period of time. My regret is that you found that you have to re-teach so often whereas if we had been able to do a more concentrated training and start practicing instantly I think they may have been able to retain some of that knowledge better. But that said it is showing that a longer period of training, even with having to build in time for a recap, probably leads to more change than doing it all in one go. This one I don't know whether it is pertinent to the study, but I felt it was a pity that we split the Foundation Phase and the rest of the school [between myself and Mike] as early as we did because I think those Foundation Phase teachers had a lot to offer that perhaps the Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers could have benefitted from. But because the methodology changes just slightly, we actually split them into two groups fairly early, and I think the rest of them would have benefitted from the experience of those Foundation Phase teachers.

BAM: So, in other words, what would you have done differently?

DA: I would have worked with them as one big group for considerably longer because the methodology is not different enough to not let them have worked together. So I would have worked in one big group for a longer period than we actually did. We felt it was the right thing to do but I'm not sure that it was.

BAM: How would you sum up the adequacy or inadequacy of the training that you've conducted at the study site?

DA: I think in the Foundation Phase the basics are there. I think we had a fairly comprehensive manual which I think is very useful for them with a step by step: 'do this, then this, then this, then this' which I think is very very good and I think it's very adequate. And around it we also built in a lot of why do we do each step rather than telling them this is what we do. So I think that is very adequate. I do think though that we could have done more of the time in the classrooms with them. I think the demonstration lessons were really useful, and I only did that in Grade 3. I didn't do demonstration lesson anywhere else because our brief was to work with Grade 3. But I think it would have been useful perhaps to work with some of the younger ones as well and give them a bigger picture. And, yeah, the other thing, I think, is that one of the things that makes the training less successful than, I think, it could have been is staff changes. I think those make it very difficult. You've got somebody so far and then they go and then you've got a new person to work with and I think that is just general whenever you work with the programme over a period of time. And we weren't able to do the training at certain times last year because of the industrial unrest which I think did affect our training as well because then the gaps became too long. And of course holidays, everybody forgets everything in the holidays and then you have to start again, including the children. So I think those were some of the things that perhaps made it less effective than it could have been.

BAM: How do you think all that will affect the academic performance of learners in Grade 3 and Grade 6 at the study site?

DA: I think probably less to a lesser extent in Grade 3 because they are only working with one teacher. So, they have a consistency. She was there all the way along. She is also very bright and I think she picks things up very very quickly and I think she is very very dedicated to making sure things happened. But certainly I think in the Grades 4 to 7 I think that will have an effect on your Grade 6s that you've got a new teacher who wasn't involved from the beginning, that your key teacher who actually was really really good was only there for last year and it hasn't been carried on onto Grade 6. And I also think having subject teachers sometimes makes it more difficult for those children to see the links between one subject and the next, which I think does affect the academic results. So, they are not seeing Reading to Learn in English is the same as Reading to Learn in Social Science or whatever because they are used to subjects in compartments.

BAM: Do you think it is possible to isolate the impact of the intervention in this study?

DA: I don't think you can. I think there are other factors as well. So I think factors like staff changes, factors like teachers that are more able and teachers that are less able are always going to have an effect. I don't think you would isolate it even if you had consistently strong teachers working with the subject matter. So I'm not sure that you could say Reading to Learn was the thing that made the difference here, or Reading to Learn did not make the difference because you've got all these other factors around it. I mean children come and go, putting different children in the classes, so there are a lot of different variables. So I think it's difficult to make an absolute statement that you can isolate any improvements or lack of improvements.

BAM: And obviously some of them are not negative. There are others that are positive things that are introduced elsewhere by the Department of Education, for instance.

DA: That's right. The fact that Anele had new books this year, that makes a difference, books in the classroom, you know, make a difference. So even positive and negative add to it. And in our East Africa experience, it was something that was very clear that the minute you added extra books in a classroom the whole literacy level went up even though it had nothing to do with Reading to Learn; it was actually those books that increased the literacy level.

BAM: What are other issues that you would like to raise that I did not ask you about regarding your Reading to Learn intervention at the study site?

DA: One that was completely unplanned was the fact that we started running this trainers' course, training of trainers, and that the teachers opted to come on it. They just got the general invitation and decided to come. And so, that is something we had not planned at all. And I think it made a big difference, certainly to Anele and [her Foundation Phase colleague] because they were getting more background but also developing enormous confidence because the other teachers from the course kept saying: 'you are so fantastic!'. The more that they developed their confidence. And I think confidence and collegiality are two of the things that I think have made a huge difference even though they are the hidden curriculum. They are the soft evidence not hard evidence, and I think it's anecdotal really but that Anele has increased enormously in confidence in the two years that I've known her. I think she was a good teacher, I think she was a confident teacher but now she is a super-confident teacher. She just feels she is doing something really well, and she's determined to work with that. And then the support that they give each other, I think the hidden curriculum that is not written anywhere in Reading to Learn but it actually has made a huge difference; it has welded those four ladies in the Foundation Phase in a very very strong way. And they really do support one another. And the Grade 1 teacher, I think, has struggled quite a lot personally and also she has quite limited levels of education herself, and quite limited English, and the rest just pick her up and carry her along, it's quite amazing to see how they support her. And also the reception class teacher, the Grade R teacher who is studying at the moment, to see how they help her in her classroom with Reading to Learn, but also with her own studies which I think it's a very very impressive thing that's part of the hidden curriculum.

BAM: Well, that brings us to the end of our interview and thank you very much for participating.

Interview with Mike Hart

BAM: Mike, how did you come to be involved with the Reading to Learn programme?

MH: Well, it's quite a long story and that I got involved in the Genre Approach to the teaching of writing through a book I read by Jim Martin who David Rose works with now. And I started using it in terms of working with university students who were battling with

academic literacy. I also used it in some teacher-training Honours courses and I felt that it was an important and powerful methodology. And then I went to Australia in 2002 on a sabbatical tour to look at the implementation of the Genre Approach in Australian schools. So I went from Adelaide, to Melbourne to Canberra to a university in Sydney where I gave a seminar to a group of Systemic Functional Grammar genre people, and David [Rose] happened to be there. And I was telling him about a project that I had been trying to implement in a school out in Pietermaritzburg here, and that it had failed because the English teacher who was supposed to be the Head of Department there was supposed to carry it forward just abandoned it while I was away.

But anyway what I presented to them was what I tried to do with them: a theme around careers which involved them in a whole range of types of writing. And David stood up and said 'you are going about it the wrong way. You are teaching writing without teaching reading, and nobody can write what they can't read'. I was a bit shattered because I was in front of all these top people in my field. Anyway I got talking to him afterwards when we had cocktail party and stuff, and that's when we started our correspondence and our work, and he began sending me material and I started working with this more in my own work and in the teacher-training. I organized to get him out here in 2004. So he came and ran a whole series of workshops here both in Foundation Phase … I had already started with Foundation Phase teachers in the methodology. Nana Mthalane [Reading to Learn trainer and colleague] and Barney Todd in a Grange school. And then I had also started with some secondary school teachers in Pietermaritzburg Girls High School. There was a woman that I had taught at varsity Adrian Watson. So he came and that led to me becoming more and more involved in terms of trying to get the training underway. So that was when I started training individual teachers. I had a group and we used to meet regularly and then I got with Debbie's group, and so it grew from there. I was retired from the university in 2007. In 2008, and 2009 to a certain extent, I had organized a project in Richmond schools through the Media and Education Trust who had funding from the Dutch Government. And I trained there for a year. I learnt a lot about what not to do and what to do. The idea was that the money would carry on and that the Dutch Government changed their policy totally, even though when they came to interview us all the teachers involved said 'no, it's valuable'. Anyway, then I just realized that I wasn't going to be able to do this successfully on my own. So I had already started training later on with Debbie and people like that and from that we formed Reading to Learn South Africa. And so now we've been working with schools and training individual teachers. I've been working training people in tertiary levels so that the academic development at one stage in Pietermaritzburg was run by Reading to Learn-trained academic tutors. So that the sort of history about it.

BAM: Now what are some of the best outcomes of the Reading to Learn programme that you have witnessed since you started getting involved with it?

MH: Well, we've still got to really write-up formally some of our outcomes. The outcomes that I've seen particularly in classes, like watching Debbie's class or watching somebody called Ann Kean who trained this in their classes was that the level of engagement by students, the change that happens in the classroom, patterns of engagement. Whereas when you'd start with the group there would be the 10 / 12 percent of children who put up

their hands, the rest generally shut up. And you can change that more or less in one period sometimes because of the way the interaction happens it supports learners to do everything you are asking them to do. You prepare them for everything so they don't make mistakes. It enables you to affirm them. Once you start the affirmation it changes their attitude because what we having in our schools system and what attracted me to the Genre Approach and to Reading to Learn was about overcoming the inequalities that the schools often seem to create and maintain and often widen. And that up to me was the issue that was happening in education here. So, kids give up on reading and here you are able to work with them to make them believe and help them believe and then able to read, and to respond and to participate. So it changes their attitudes. So those are some of the outcomes. But the other outcomes we've seen is, particularly in the Foundation phase, reports and stuff from teachers, from Debbie at high school and senior primary, is that the kids are willing to read, are beginning to read more effectively and also writing at a higher level than they had ever written before. Because generally, students feel they cannot write extended text and those are the outcomes that have pleased me, is because it is one of the aims of Reading to Learn - is that every bit of text you do ends in writing. And my research in schools in the mid-90s about writing was that kids hardly did any extended writing ever in their school career. And then they arrive at the university and just cant function. So those are the outcomes that I found. I mean we've been seeing at Nana's classrooms there, ANA results, the ability to write extended sentences linked together has increased rapidly. Looking and listening to Anele's classroom the other day, I mean, those sort of outcomes, the kids' willingness to actually talk and participate in English even though it wasn't their mother-tongue, stems from the confidence they've got from reading in their mother-tongue. And that's translated there. I'm just hoping, I want to see those kids next year in Grade 4 because where the biggest problems are in current Grade 4 are merging. But if I can sum up some of the best outcomes, it's heightened involvement, more confidence in their ability to actually deal text to understand how texts work and use that in order to unpack the text and then being able to use that to help with the writing. So those to me are the major outcomes and we are beginning to see I think that the ANA results are showing and we will be very interested in seeing Slanspruit results as well this year. But Nana, for example, reports that her results are absolutely different from the other Grade 3 classes [that are not implementing Reading to learn in her school].

BAM: Do you think that some of those outcomes have been realized at the study site?

MH: Yeah, I think it's obvious to me at the Foundation Phase that this is happening. The teachers have taken it on, they are trying, they experimenting. I think our biggest problem in the schools is the issue that once you get into Intermediate and Senior Phase in the primary school, children are dealing with a range of factual texts: explanations, descriptions, procedure, histories etc in their second language. And nobody actually before has ever taught them how to read those texts, and this is what we are trying to do. Now, the obstacle, I think, is that many of your subject teachers are not sort of language orientated or literacy-orientated and it's quite a lot of complex education about texts that they have to then translate into their lessons. But I think at the study site we have not succeeded as well as we could have because this has not been regularly implemented, and I think that's also the problem that we have to persuade subject teachers about how this methodology can

integrate the teaching of the content of text for the teaching of how to read those texts, because research shows that right across our schooling kids are learning orally only and not being able to give the independent skills of reading. So it requires a lot more training with them to give them the knowledge that they can confidently then turn that into lesson plans and help students with their writing, which is where they are assessed. That's what I would like to get to with the study site's teachers now. I think I wanna position maybe to actually do this, as we say do two cycles a term in your different subject areas and that's not what's been happening, not regularly. And it's often that when we come to observe, and then they do it; but it's not part of their curriculum practice. And I think there has been some development; the teachers have reported on that, but I think we are still a long way from where we could get some really different results that we need here. Yeah, Foundation Phase, I think it's importance of the carry-through from Foundation Phase into Grade 4 and beyond, and to Grade 6.

BAM: How would you describe some of your experiences working at that study site?

MH: A real eye-opener in terms of working at a township school of Zulu teachers and with Zulu kids. I hadn't realized that there would be that massive difference, how big the difference is. Because, working with Grade 4 teachers with the workbooks that the government has supplied they just simply had no entry into those tools. And Grade 4 they are swopping to English and all these new texts and that was a massive learning experience for me that they couldn't understand a simple thing. If I said 'write' they didn't understand what write meant. So there was a huge gap between the text they had to deal with in English and their own English. I think that is partly what we found right through the different Grades we did the demonstrations lessons in, we worked teachers working with. I don't know if you'll agree but rural kids seemed to be much shyer about volunteering information and that sort of thing. You could see it in the body language, the eyes looking somewhere else, which is cultural, I understand that. But it seemed stronger there and so that's an issue you've got to deal with. But I did find with some of the lessons that kids became increasingly keen to come up and write on the board, to do their spelling and that sort of thing, and then from there to start looking at how they would re-write a text. I found that the students were keen to do that. Just this last lesson, we got them up in groups to write words from sentences. Some of them hadn't had a chance and so the teacher said the next group come up. But these kids just stood there: 'no, we're going to wait for our chance to write', which I thought that it's something that is a real confidence booster. You are sitting up there and writing and spelling and kids are helping you and teacher helping you but that was an indication that if you do this systematically and kids get used to the process. And I think that's what has happened as well that they aren't as used to the process as they were in the Senior and Intermediate phase. In the Foundation Phase you could see Anele's class. They knew the process and they were going because it had been done regularly with them. And so, what I'm hoping and hoping for is that if we follow that up into Grade 4 and beyond we will be able to build that in more systematically and change the outcomes of that school more effectively than we are doing at the moment.

BAM: What do you consider to be the most rewarding moments of your dealings with the school community, generally, and the study participants, in particular.

MH: I think it's been the welcome by the principal who's helped us and his facilitators, the teachers have not resisted us coming into the classroom. They've welcomed us. We did a lot of hard work in the afternoons. We did a lot of the training outside of hours and teachers were generally systematic and came and committed to that. So those were the rewarding aspects, and the rewarding aspect to see the gradual very good take-up in the Foundation Phase. That was very rewarding. But still also even in the Immediate and Senior Phase, we are beginning to see people doing at least the first four stages: the preparing for reading, the detailed reading, the intensive strategies around sentences. They were managing those. There are small things they still have to do but, you know, the other crucial thing is getting that joint construction happening because all the research around Reading to Learn shows that if they do that writing it has a huge impact on their reading levels, and their general literacy levels. So yeah, I think it has been rewarding that people have stuck through it and they are not trying to say: 'don't come again' and we get welcomed and I think now recently especially as I was saying with one of the teachers beginning to take this a lot seriously. And I think we've made headway with the other teacher. I think he is far more organized and committed. But the disappointment was the loss of the Head of Department for promotion because that destroyed some of the continuity. He was going very well with the methodology. I think if he had stayed there we would have had more rewards this year than we did.

BAM: Actually, that was going to be my next question if you could share some of your regrets regarding your experiences at the study site?

MH: Regrets, I think, the loss of Bongani because he was a leader and he was very committed and I think he would also have been what we would call a lead teacher who would support other teachers to do things and he was doing that. So that was a regret. Some of the regrets are planning to go for meetings and then the Department calls them or something like that and you can't do it. And you've got to accept that that will happen. But it is something that can impact on the continuity of what you are doing. Also because Debbie and I do work in Kenya, Uganda and places like that, and we go to conferences, so we would be away for a month and that also impacts on the continuity. And that's why we've started to develop a wider group of trainers; people who conduct support just even observing lessons and give them ideas so we have a much wider group of people supporting the process. But I think those are the regrets: the continuity, the change and partly the regret that it hasn't been, in Intermediate and Senior Phase, systematically, repeatedly introduced, which I think if Bongani had stayed, we would have had that more effectively done.

BAM: With that said, how would you sum up the adequacy or inadequacy of the training you conducted at the study site?

MH: I think we've been pretty thorough in terms of the resources we've given, the times we've gone through the process, the model lesson plans we've done, the demonstration lessons. I would say one thing that I've realized with the recent experiences with teachers who we might consider weak and with lack of confidence, to actually teach with them rather than say: 'ok, go and do this'. We did a lot of support about helping them with lesson plans, but then we would leave it to them to do it. I just think what we've done recently is where

you'd help them at the beginning and then hand over to them in the lesson. In one of the schools we're starting it, this is what a teacher has done, she's been trained in Reading to Learn, she is trying to spread it to others. And I think that is another sort of aspect that we need to introduce especially in there. I think those would be some of the inadequacies of our training that we are maybe sometimes assuming that teachers we've done enough. But the whole turning of the training and the lesson plans into actual practice is not always easy, especially if you are not confident. And I think the idea of sort of half-halving, and working with them in the process for a couple of lessons would probably boost them and give them more confidence. Because it happened recently with me and I realized that's something we need to add to our training process. But we do have a systematic training thing that's very detailed. It's got a lot of resources. If they read them and follow them they've got dvd's, they've got all that support but we rest our rest our training on the support after the pre-teaching training. That is what makes the difference. We've got to actually make that more effective than we have at the moment.

BAM: How do you think all that will affect the academic performance of the learners in Grade 3 and Grade 6, in particular, at the study site?

MH: Well, I think it will have some effect now, especially in Grade 3. I think we'll see results. My own feeling is that we wont see that level of result in Grade 6. But I just feel that we've laid a foundation for next year, that if we carry through some things … we've got to train teachers. We've just got to spend next term, beginning of the year, getting them geared so that they do that in Grade 6 repeatedly. But what I like to see is that done across the school because that's when the results come, so that there is a continuity from Grade 4 through to Grade 6 and 7. Grade 4 I think is crucial and that will impact. And if we can get a lot more cross-curricula work with text, we will definitely make a difference in that school.

BAM: Just to check, as an aside, perhaps: Is it possible to isolate the impact of the intervention in the study?

MH: You mean, with other factors that might have contributed?

BAM: Yes

MH: I think it can be done by looking at classes that didn't have it, but that's often cruel. I mean it's happened in Nana Mthalane's Panorama School, the results between one Grade 3 and her Grade 3 were very different. It happened two years ago with her Grade 1 class where the one grade class just left out all the questions about writing a sentence and every kid in her class tried the sentence. So I think it's possible to be able to look at the impact by looking at what they call control classroom and things like that. You can isolate it. My feeling is, in that school particularly, when I deal with … there is a seeming contradiction which I picked up a lot over the last week or before where kids could actually come up on the board and spell pretty well but weren't willing to talk about them or volunteer. So to me there is probably a written oral level or even maybe written reading level, I'm not too sure about their understanding all the time but they will come and write on their own. To me maybe there is a difference that we are not overcoming at the moment with their oral willingness to participate with their writing. That's something we would need to pick up which will be

hard to differentiate that between other factors that make them more confident or competent in the language than Reading to Learn. But I'm pretty sure and I'm very sure because I think the results that have come out of Reading to Learn elsewhere in the world show that it makes a major difference and the difference that I hadn't seen in any research on any other reading programme. So, I think we have shortcomings, and we have problems that we still have to deal with on your side but I think we are in a situation where we can make a much bigger difference, and we'll be able to see that, particularly.

BAM: Are there any other issues that you would like to raise that I did not ask you about regarding your Reading to Learn intervention at the study site?

MH: The other issues to me are, sometimes, I feel that textbooks that kids have to deal with are not suitable, some of them are badly written. But I think that Reading to Learn, if you do it properly, can help them deal with and overcome those problems. I think, as I said, the Grade 4 kids were dealing with text that they just couldn't even get into. So, it was a real problem there. I mean, Reading to Learn bases itself on the fact that you should be dealing with texts that kids have to deal with and you help them to do it. But I think there are occasions where you might start at a lower level and build them up because if you do it systematically you should build up their competence quite quickly. I suppose the other issues we've already talked on: the distance, the number of people we have available which we are doing because, as I said, our focus would be on the support after the basic training, and that's what makes teachers change. And we've come to realize that there is a different way we might need to do support slightly, you know as I say, sharing lessons with the teachers and that sort of thing. The other issue for us is obviously the money to do it. Debbie and I have actually done most of this training for free: own petrol, own material costs etcetera. So, there is an issue which we are looking at this year, it's that we've got to be in a position where even the people we are training to support we are able to pay them. Otherwise, you are not going to get that motivation. Given all that, I feel that Reading to Learn is the cheapest intervention that you'll find, if you were to look at it per child and you look at training. We just feel that it's important that training happens over a year. We can do that systematically and intensely without too many of the other interruptions… I think that is an issue for us as well. And I notice that friends of mine who were involved in the project here were looking at management. It's Performance Solutions Africa. A friend of mine and other people from the Education Department are working for them, their Ed Faculty. They were able to actually get the principals there on a Friday afternoon and on a Saturday once a month, just about once or twice a term. And between that, they had them in clusters, they visited all those clusters to work with the principals and support them; and they had major success that came across there. So, it's a type of model that we've experienced in Kenya and Uganda where departmental officials are trained, principals do some training. So they know what their teachers are doing and they are able to support. The successes that are starting to emerge from there are showing the possibility of doing this on a mass scale. So that issue of payment and systematic commitment of teachers, and being supported by the Department are vital. But we'll see the results. There are a number of other research initiatives that are beginning to happen around Reading to Learn. So hopefully all these together will begin to make an awareness of Reading to Learn and it's possibilities wider. Just put in that we're trying a Reading to Learn Africa conference in Pietermaritzburg this

year. So it will be people from places in South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, some of the top people from Australia and Europe. Just repeat the question again there?

BAM: What other issues that you would like to raise that I did not ask you about regarding your Reading to Learn intervention at the site?

MH: Yeah, I think the issues are really the highlight of how we make this more systematic, where teachers are committed. We're often travelling up there and teachers are there for an afternoon. It's a weekday afternoon. We would probably prefer if it's possible to maybe work in holidays to do the basic training or to divide it something like two or three days in the beginning and the holiday, then we support them through somewhere to the term and then they do a couple more days. And the Australian model would be two days, two or three days at the beginning, sometime before where they were observed and supported in the classroom two more days, two more days, two more days. So it's something like nine days and that carries over a year. And that's something we haven't been able to totally achieve properly because, as I say, the continuity doesn't always happen. At some times teachers are not there, some teachers are not there so you are not teaching all of them, and you've got to catch up with somebody else and very much a problem in that particular school because of distance, and the distance these teachers travel on the daily basis too, some of them. So, those are the sort of constraints and I think if we get something like Department support for that, it can make a whole lot of difference.

BAM: That brings us to the end of our interview, and I would like to thank you very much for taking part.

MH: No problem.

Appendix C

a.   Ethical Clearance Letter

b.   Letter from the Editor

c.   Turnitin Report

6 September 2012

Mr Bheka A Makhathini 921354162
School of Language, Literacies, Media & Drama Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Makhathini

Protocol reference number: HSS/0838/012D
Project title: Trampoline trajectories: A dialectical analysis of the correlation between the teaching of reading and the improvement of Learner-Academic Performance in a rural South African school.

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor Dr E M Mgqwashu
cc Academic leader Dr D Davids
cc School Admin. Mrs S Naicker

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

PhD THESIS : BHEKA A. MAKHATHINI : (Student No 921354162) SCHOOL OF EDUCATION : COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES: UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

TRAMPOLINE TRAJECTORIES: A DIALECTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE TEACHING OF READING AND THE LEARNER - ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN A SOUTH AFRICAN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL.

I certify that I have edited the above thesis. The abstract, acknowledgements, dedication, chapters, conclusion and bibliography were addressed via text marked-up onscreen and verbal discussions. Editorial advice was provided throughout the thesis on the following aspects:

- matters of substance and structure
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- language (including academic language, phrasing, labelling of figures and illustrations.
- font size, matters of clarity, referencing format, verbosity and circumlocution, voice and tone, grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- contextual issues
- presentation of content

Yours faithfully

DR L M LOMBARDOZZI

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Chapter 1

Understanding the Phenomenon and Context

1.1 Introduction

This study aims to explore the phenomenon of the teaching of reading in a rural, disadvantaged South African primary school. Employing a curriculum intervention at this school, it seeks to interrogate implications of the pedagogical practices adopted by teachers when teaching reading, and how such practices impact on the overall academic performance of learners in the subjects taught across the curriculum in Grades 3 and 6. It is important to note at the outset that, for the purposes of this study, various subjects taught at schools are encapsulated under two broad categories, namely Literacy and Numeracy. This subject classification is the benchmark in most international and local assessments to determine the performance of learners. It is envisaged that the

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