

**AN EXPLORATION OF FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS'  
KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES OF TEACHING ISIZULU MOTHER  
TONGUE LITERACY IN GRADE 1 CLASSROOMS IN THREE RURAL  
SCHOOLS**

BY

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the academic requirements for the degree of Master of Education (MEd) in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Nonhlanhla Ruth Chonco, declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated is my original work.
- (ii) This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

As the candidate's Supervisor I agree/do not agree to the submission of this thesis.

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Elenor Nunu Msimang.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study is an exploration of foundation phase teachers' knowledge and practices of teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy in Grade 1 classrooms in three rural schools in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The low literacy level of primary school learners is a concern across sub-Saharan Africa (Dubeck, Jukes & Okello, 2012). A research study conducted by the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU, 2012) stresses that teachers in South Africa lack the capacity for teaching reading, writing, and numeracy. It has been established that learners in foundation phase schools are struggling to read in isiZulu mother tongue at the correct level. The 2011 Annual National Assessment (ANA) systemic evaluation literacy reports discovered that learners' performance in almost all grades is below the expected standard. The poor performance of Grade 3 and 6 learners' in reading and writing is associated with the poor teaching of literacy in the foundation phase, as stated in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) reports (Howie et al., 2006; Howie, van Staden, Tshele, Dowse & Zimmerman, 2011). In the current study, the researcher hopes to understand the practices that teachers use when teaching literacy in isiZulu mother tongue, to understand the factors that influence teachers and teachers' knowledge of literacy in teaching isiZulu mother tongue in the foundation phase. The framework in this study is based on teacher knowledge, focusing on subject knowledge, curriculum knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge (PCK). Teacher knowledge is relevant to this study because it explores the type of knowledge teachers need to have for effective teaching and learning.

This is a qualitative case study that is located in the interpretive paradigm. This study adopts the interpretive paradigm so as to obtain individual feedback from the teachers about their daily practices of teaching literacy in real classrooms. Six teachers were purposively selected from three junior primary schools located in Greater Edendale, which is a rural area of the UMgungundlovu District, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Data was generated through semi-structured interviews and through lesson observations. The data were collected and analysed; thematic analysis was used to analyse interviews, and content analysis was used to analyse observed lessons.

The findings revealed that teachers prefer to use the phonic method when teaching Grade 1 learners reading in isiZulu mother tongue. The study also revealed that the overcrowded

classrooms led teachers to implement small group teaching and learning. It was also noted that some teachers did not have sufficient knowledge of teaching isiZulu literacy in the mother tongue, as most teachers were code-switching and code-mixing isiZulu and English words when teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy. It was evident that literacy was not taught systematically, but was modeled on English literacy. The study further revealed that some teachers used integrated methods where they integrated shared reading with phonic activity and integrated phonic methods with play activities. Additionally, the study showed that writing was not taught by the teachers, except as a strategy for consolidation and when the students copied certain sounds from the chalkboard.

It is recommended that teachers in the foundation phase need to be in possession of a distinct body of knowledge that includes subject knowledge, curriculum knowledge and PCK of teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy for effective teaching and learning.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>DEDICATION .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES.....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION .....	1
1.3 LOCATION OF THE STUDY.....	2
1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	2
1.5 RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES .....	3
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	3
1.7 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY .....	3
1.8 KEY CONCEPTS.....	4
1.9 CONCLUSION.....	5
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	6
2.2 COMPONENTS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW .....	6
2.2.1 The Conceptualisation of Literacy.....	6
2.2.2 New Literacy Studies Approach .....	7
2.2.3 The Debate on the Importance of Teaching Literacy in the Mother Tongue.....	8
2.2.4 Empirical Studies Conducted on Teaching of Reading in isiZulu Mother Tongue .	10
2.2.5 Home and School Factors that Affect Teaching and Literacy Learning in the Foundation Phase.....	12
2.2.6 Teaching of Literacy Interventions in South Africa .....	14
2.2.7 Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (MTBBE) .....	15
2.2.8 What is Reading? .....	16
2.2.9 Stages of Reading.....	17
2.2.10 Components of Teaching Reading.....	19

2.2.11 Approaches to Teaching Reading .....	21
2.2.12 Strategies Used by Foundation Phase Teachers in Teaching Reading .....	22
2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....	25
2.3.1 A Vygotskian Socio-Cultural Perspective on Literacy .....	25
2.3.2 Scaffolding .....	27
2.3.3 Emergent Literacy .....	28
2.4 WHAT IS TEACHER KNOWLEDGE? .....	28
2.4.1 Subject Knowledge .....	29
2.4.2 Curriculum Knowledge .....	29
2.4.3 Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) .....	29
2.5 THE CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (CK) AND PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (PCK) NEEDED FOR TEACHING LITERACY IN FOUNDATION PHASE .....	30
2.6 CONCLUSION .....	31
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>32</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION .....	32
3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	32
3.2.1 Research paradigm and research approach .....	32
3.2.2 Research design .....	33
3.3 RESEARCH CONTEXT .....	33
3.4 DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE AND THE SAMPLING METHOD .....	34
3.5 TEACHERS' PROFILES .....	34
3.6 DATA COLLECTION .....	35
3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews .....	35
3.6.2 Lesson observation .....	37
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS .....	38
3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY .....	39
3.9 ETHICAL ISSUES .....	40
3.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE .....	41
3.11 CONCLUSION .....	42

<b>CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>43</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION .....	43
4.2 AN ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS.....	43
4.2.1 Adequacy of Time for teaching isiZulu Literacy in Grade 1 .....	44
4.2.2 Teachers’ Understanding of the Importance of Reading .....	45
4.2.3 The Importance of Teaching Grade 1 Learners Reading in isiZulu.....	46
4.2.4 Methods of Teaching Literacy in isiZulu.....	47
4.2.5 Teaching of Phonics as the Main Focus in Teaching isiZulu Literacy in Grade 1 ..	50
4.2.6 Teachers’ use of the CAPS Document.....	53
4.2.7 Teachers’ use of the Annual Teaching Plans for teaching isiZulu Literacy in the Foundation Phase.....	54
4.2.8 Resources for Teaching isiZulu Literacy .....	55
4.2.9 Teaching of Writing in isiZulu.....	58
4.2.10 Summary of the Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews.....	59
4.3 AN ANALYSIS OF LESSON OBSERVATIONS .....	60
4.3.1 Lesson 1: Shared Reading Lesson Using a Big Book.....	60
4.3.2 Lesson 2: Integrating Shared Reading and Phonics Lessons .....	65
4.3.3 Lesson 3: Phonics (Blending of Morphemes to Make Words) .....	69
4.3.4 Lesson 4: Phonics (Teaching sound –m- through play activity).....	73
4.4 SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS OF LESSON OBSERVATIONS .....	75
4.5 CONCLUSION.....	75
<b>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND         RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>76</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION .....	76
5.1.1 Adequacy of Time for Teaching isiZulu Literacy in Grade 1 .....	76
5.1.2 Teachers’ Understanding of the Importance of Reading .....	77
5.1.3 The Importance of Teaching Grade 1 Learners Reading in isiZulu.....	78
5.1.4 Methods of Teaching Reading in isiZulu.....	79
5.1.5 Teaching of Phonics as the Main Focus in Teaching isiZulu Literacy in Grade 1 ..	80
5.1.6 Teachers’ Use of CAPS Document.....	81
5.1.7 Teachers’ Use of the Annual Teaching Plans for Teaching isiZulu Literacy in the Foundation Phase.....	82

5.1.8 Resources for Teaching isiZulu Literacy .....	82
5.1.9 Teaching of Writing in isiZulu.....	83
5.1.10 Summary of the Analysis.....	84
5.2 CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	85
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	87
5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH .....	88
5.5 CONCLUSION.....	89
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>97</b>
APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE.....	97
APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.....	98
APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORMS .....	99
APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE AND PROTOCOL.....	104
APPENDIX E: TEACHERS’ INTERVIEW SCHEDULE .....	116
APPENDIX F: TEACHERS’ QUESTIONNAIRE .....	118

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Teachers' profiles.....	35
Table 2: Allocated time per school per week .....	44
Table 3: Steps in teaching phonics .....	51

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ANA – Annual National Assessment

ATP – Annual Teaching plans

CAPS – Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

CK – Content Knowledge

DBE – Department of Basic Education

DOE – Department of Education

FAL – First Additional Language

FFL – Foundation for Learning

FLP – Foundation for Learning Campaign

FP – Foundation Phase

HL –Home Language

Ls – Learners

L1 – Learners First Language

L2 – Learners Second Language

LOLT – Language of Learning and Teaching

MBBE – Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education

MT – Mother Tongue

NEEDU – National Education Evaluation and Development Unit

PCK – Pedagogic Content Knowledge

PIRLS – Progress in International Reading Literacy Studies

PRAESA – Project for the study of Alternative Education in South Africa

READ – Read, Educate, Adjust, and Develop

T – Teacher

TK – Teacher Knowledge

UNESCO – United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

US – United States

ZPD – Zone of Proximal Development

# **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study attempts to identify how teachers teach isiZulu literacy in mother tongue in the foundation phase, especially in Grade 1 classrooms. This dissertation is established within the field of literacy development in isiZulu. This study is an exploration of foundation phase teachers' knowledge and practices of teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy in Grade 1 classrooms in three rural schools in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa. The research hopes to identify findings that will concentrate on how teachers teach isiZulu reading in Grade 1 classrooms and also to explore how they work towards providing an understanding of their teaching practices and their experiences.

This chapter considers the background information and the location of the study; it outlines the problem statement, purpose and rationale, objectives of the study and the research questions. It also reflects on an overview of the related literature and the conceptual framework. Research methodology is incorporated, and the outline of the study is provided.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Clay (1996) was the first to use the term emergent literacy. She claims that emergent literacy starts before learners attend school. She argued that for the literacy development of a child to be effective, the emergent literacy approach should be used. Maphumulo (2010) also asserts that emergent literacy is an important skill for every person's development. Acquiring this literacy is crucial for children's educational achievement, and it should be promoted through a wide range of activities and experiences from the early years. It develops gradually through a variety of experiences with reading and writing. When children enter formal schooling, they have different levels of literacy development. Children who have had few or no literacy experiences need to be in a print-saturated environment in which to begin explorations of reading and writing.

South Africa has a language in education policy which promotes multilingualism as a nation-building instrument, the development of all the official languages and respect for all languages used in South Africa. The South African language in education policy promotes additive multilingualism which means that the children's mother tongue should be used for the

acquisition of early literacy. Mother tongue education and literacy in the mother tongue are two sides of the same coin.

### **1.3 LOCATION OF THE STUDY**

This study was conducted in three junior primary schools located in Greater Edendale, which is a rural area of UMgungundlovu District, one of the 12 Districts overseen by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education (KZN DBE).

### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The low literacy level of primary school learners is a concern across sub-Saharan Africa (Dubeck, Jukes & Okello, 2012). These authors highlight that amongst the many reasons associated with literacy challenges in the sub-Saharan region, are poverty, poor health, learners' limited access to print resources, lack of parental involvement, the low quality of teaching, lack of exposure to the language of learning and teaching (LOLT), inadequate coverage of the curriculum and inadequate teacher training. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005), as well as Zimmerman, Botha, Howie and Long (2007) and the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU, 2012) in different research studies, have stressed that teachers in South Africa lack the capacity for teaching reading, writing, and numeracy. It has been established that learners in foundation phase schools are struggling to read in isiZulu mother tongue at the appropriate level.

The 2011 Annual National Assessment (ANA) systemic evaluation literacy reports revealed that learners' performance in almost all grades was below the expected standard. The poor performance of Grade 3 and Grade 6 learners' reading and writing skills is associated with the poor teaching of literacy in the foundation phase (Howie et al., 2006; Howie, van Staden, Tshele, Dowse & Zimmerman, 2011). The high dropout rate of learners in primary schools is also associated with learners' failure to read and write at the appropriate level (DBE, 2011a). The DBE (2011) reported that a survey conducted by National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) in 2007/2008, reveals that the dropout rate of learners in Grade 1 and 3 was 1%, in Grade 2 and 4 was 4% in Grade 5 and 8 was between 2% and 4%. Furthermore, Fleisch et al. (2010) reveal that dropping out of school is not caused by a single event but most of the time

it results from many factors such as the learners' disability, orphanage and living in isolated communities' with high rates of unemployed parents. This makes the learners vulnerable and more likely to drop out of school.

### **1.5 RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES**

The rationale for conducting the study is that there is limited research available on foundation phase studies of teaching the isiZulu mother tongue (as a home language). Nkosi (2011) asserts that if learners become literate in the mother tongue, they can obtain the skills to read in any language. The rationale of the study is also instituted by debates on language policy. A further motivation for the study is based on the limited knowledge about teachers' current literacy instruction practices and their influence on learners' literacy development. NEEDU (2012) suggests that teachers are not well versed in the teaching of literacy in the mother tongue. This study will thus explore the current foundation phase teachers' practices of teaching isiZulu literacy in Grade 1 classrooms and determine the factors that influence teachers when teaching isiZulu literacy. The study will also identify the teachers' knowledge of teaching literacy in isiZulu in the foundation phase.

### **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- i) What are the current practices that teachers use when teaching literacy in isiZulu mother tongue in Grade 1 classrooms?
- ii) What are the factors that influence teachers' practices when they teach literacy in isiZulu mother tongue in Grade 1 classrooms?
- iii) What is the teachers' knowledge of teaching literacy in isiZulu mother tongue in the foundation phase?
- iv) How does the teachers' knowledge and practices of teaching literacy in isiZulu mother tongue in foundation phase relate?

### **1.7 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

In Chapter 1, the study is introduced in depth and the background information of the study is set. The location of the study, problem statement and rationale and objectives of the study are discussed. The research questions, outline of the study and key concepts in literature review

have been explained. Chapter 2 contains the literature review and empirical studies conducted on teaching reading in isiZulu mother tongue, home and school factors that affect teaching and literacy learning in the foundation phase. Teaching of literacy intervention in South Africa, mother tongue-based bilingual education (MBBE), the meaning of reading and stages of reading are also outlined. The components of teaching reading, approaches to teaching reading and the strategies used by foundation phase teachers in teaching reading are discussed in depth.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology, research context, description of the sample and the sampling method. The teachers' profiles, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, reliability and validity are also discussed. Ethical issues, limitations of the study and the researchers' role are explained. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of data that was collected through semi-structured interviews and lesson observations. The analyzed data is used to answer the critical questions asked. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the findings from the data collected. It presents the conclusion and makes recommendations.

The following sub-section includes key terms used in the dissertation.

## **1.8 KEY CONCEPTS**

The following key concepts are defined for ease of understanding.

- **Literacy**

Hugo and Lenyai (2013) assert that literacy is the ability to read, write and also to understand a language.

- **Reading**

NEEDU (2012) highlights that reading is the process where learners learn to engage meaningfully with what they learn in texts. The DoE (2008b) asserts that reading is the ability to decode meaning from the text and also the ability to recognise and say each word separately in a text, using the knowledge of letters and sounds. In this study, meaning and performance is considered as reading.

- **Teacher Knowledge**

Grossman (1990) defined teacher knowledge as an understanding of a subject to be taught or the kind of knowledge that every teacher needs to have, so as to execute their teaching duties effectively.

- **Content Knowledge (CK)**

Shulman (1986) defined CK as an organised knowledge which is in the mind of the teacher and structured according to subjects.

- **Pedagogic Content Knowledge (PCK)**

Shulman (1986) defined PCK as blending of content and pedagogy. PCK is deemed to be more than the knowledge of subject matter, but also the knowledge of teaching the subject matter. Subject matter includes different representations and demonstrations of ideas, topics, explanations and illustrations.

- **Teaching practices**

Teaching practices refer to the application that contains the knowledge, skills, experiences, methods, approaches and strategies used by the teachers in the classroom.

- **Emergent Literacy**

Emergent literacy is regarded as the approach to teaching learners early literacy and recognises that literacy develops from home to school.

- **Scaffolding**

Scaffolding is the process through which a teacher can structure and support learning in a meaningful way.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented the orientation of the study. The next chapter will deal with the literature review that draws attention to the concepts that inform the study. It will also include the conceptual framework, and discuss teacher knowledge and CK which form the knowledge base that is necessary for teaching and learning to take place.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides the literature review pertinent to the study which is drawn from the field of literacy, related to foundation phase teachers' knowledge and their practices of teaching literacy. This study is based on exploring teachers' knowledge and their practices when teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy in Grade 1 classrooms. NEEDU (2012) reported that teaching practices are applications that involve the strategies, knowledge, methods, skills and experiences encountered by teachers in the classroom.

### **2.2 COMPONENTS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review consists of the following topics:

- The conceptualisation of literacy;
- New literacy studies approach;
- The debates on the importance of teaching literacy in the mother tongue;
- Empirical studies conducted on teaching reading in isiZulu mother tongue;
- Home and school factors that affect teaching and literacy learning in the foundation phase;
- Teaching of literacy interventions in South Africa;
- MBBE;
- Understanding what reading is;
- Stages of reading;
- Components of teaching reading;
- Approaches of teaching reading; and
- Strategies used by foundation phase teachers in teaching reading.

#### **2.2.1 The Conceptualisation of Literacy**

Hugo and Lenyai (2013) assert that literacy is the ability to read and write and also to understand a language. The three specific terms linked to the concept of literacy are basic literacy, critical literacy and dynamic literacy. Basic literacy refers to the traditional meaning of the term that is the learning of reading and writing. This is the definition that applies to

teaching literacy in primary schools. Critical literacy is the ability to discuss, interpret, analyze, argue, explain and write, whereas dynamic literacy is the application of basic and critical theory in an everyday situation. Dynamic literacy is associated with forms of literacy that are not strictly focused on schooling. These types of literacy are intertwined. There is no one more important than the other.

Gee (1996) defined literacy as a social and cultural achievement and as a way of participating in social and cultural groups, not as mental achievement. It can be viewed as a bundle of skills that are acquired when learning literacy. Gee (1996) also stressed that this kind of literacy is created from experience as it considers the social context that plays an important role in learning a language, as language development depends on which language is dominant in a particular community. Literacy is the key to communication because communication is the negotiation of meaning between two or more people and from multiple sources of meaning. This also shows that literacy is a means of understanding pressing issues in the lives of people in the community. Learners can relate what they learn to what they have been taught or to their previous experiences (Gee, 1996).

Similarly, Street (1996) also maintained that literacy is the ability to learn, read and write. He conceptualized literacy not simply as a set of neutral, technical skills learned in formal education, but as social practices implicated in power relations that are embedded in practices and in cultural meanings.

Based on the conceptualisation of literacy as a social practice, Vygotsky's (1978) constructivism promotes social and communication skills by creating a classroom environment that emphasizes collaboration and the exchange of ideas. With listening and speaking, teachers have to engage learners by instructing them and teaching them through rhymes, songs and short stories. This is particularly relevant for the foundation phase.

### **2.2.2 New Literacy Studies Approach**

Street (1996) asserted that new literacy entails the recognition of multiple literacies which vary according to time and space. The new literacy studies approach looks at the nature of literacy, not paying much attention to literacy as the technology of mind, but more as a social practice where people participate in the social and cultural groups of the society. Gee (1990)

maintained that the new literacy studies notion opposes the traditional psychological approach to literacy. He highlighted that this approach views literacy as a cognitive phenomenon that defines it in relation to mental processing and mental states. Gee (1990) further stressed that the ability to read and write is regarded as a societal issue. Gee (1990) and Street (1996) also stated that literacy cannot be learned only in a formalized situation, that it is a social practice. Gee (1990) and Street (1996) identified the autonomous and ideological models in describing literacies. The autonomous model assumes that literacy can have an effect on other social and cognitive practices, whereas the ideological model assumes that literacy varies from one context to the other and identifies literacy as a social practice. Gee (1990) and Street (1996) stressed that the way people read depends on how much knowledge they have. They further posited that the ideological model can be associated with knowledge in practice and is also related to power relations, reflecting social power and as general application.

### **2.2.3 The Debate on the Importance of Teaching Literacy in the Mother Tongue**

According to IBIS (2014) a mother tongue is a language one learns first identifies with and/or is identified by others as a native speaker of. It is sometimes also the language that one is most competent in and uses most.

It has been asserted by NEEDU (2012, p.32) that, “it is widely believed that there is a strong association between mother-tongue education and academic achievement. Children learn better in school when they are taught in their home language. When learners do not speak the language of instruction, they find learning difficult, and academic achievement is undermined”. Street (1996) has asserted that if learners learn in their own language (mother tongue), they can catch up faster in other subjects, for example learners participate in social and cultural groups of the society. Proponents of MBBE, e.g. Cummins (1996) and Baker (1996) have argued that mother tongue literacy provides a solid foundation for learning to read in the home language as well as reading in an additional language. They have further argued that a child who can read in his/her language with the existence of other necessary conditions, such as exposure to print in and out of school, will have a better likelihood of successfully managing to read in an additional language. The Project for the study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA, 2010) also highlight that a well developed literacy home is a prerequisite for an additional language. Matjila and Pretorius (2004) have

stressed that learners should be given the opportunity to develop academic language proficiency in their home languages to provide a sound conceptual and linguistic basis for future learning across all content subjects.

Cummins (2005) concurred with Street (1996) when he stressed that using the home language as a resource for reading is advantageous because if learners learn reading skills in their mother tongue, they are more easily able to transfer these skills in learning to read in other languages. He also suggested a few ideas on how teachers can strengthen the use of the mother tongue in learners for example; learners need to be encouraged to do projects in their mother tongue, to read different kinds of books, to do oral presentations in class in their mother tongue and to speak their language more when they are playing. This has been the case with the schools whose LOLT is isiZulu. For example, the medium of instruction is now isiZulu in the foundation phase, and learners are encouraged to read different kinds of books written in isiZulu, depending on their availability. Nevertheless, learners are encouraged to read local isiZulu newspapers so that they can master reading in their mother tongue with a belief that they will easily master reading in English, which is their First Additional Language (FAL). Mbatha (2010) concurs with Cummins (2005) as her study reveals that teaching literacy in isiZulu is a challenge because the appropriate teaching resources are lacking in schools. She recommends that the DoE needs to fix this shortage of resources for the effective teaching of isiZulu literacy.

NEEDU (2012, p.28), in their report, states that, “learners must engage with a wide variety of books and other material. This may seem obvious, but many South African teachers seem unaware of this requirement.” NEEDU (2012, p.78) further states that, “Principals should ensure that readers are procured in greater quantities and effectively deployed in FP language classes. Children should be reading, at least, one book a week throughout the FP, which means that classes should have at least 30–40 different readers available per class.” Howie et al. (2011) reveal negative achievement where schools are not well resourced.

#### **2.2.4 Empirical Studies Conducted on Teaching of Reading in isiZulu Mother Tongue**

IsiZulu Mother Tongue Literacy is the reading and writing which is conducted in isiZulu to isiZulu first language speakers.

Nkosi (2011) conducted a study to explore the teaching of reading in isiZulu home language in the foundation phase of two of the primary schools in Umlazi District. Her findings show that teachers believe that teaching in isiZulu mother tongue is not valued by the parents as the LoLT. As a result, teachers do not encourage children to read and write in isiZulu because they believe learners need English rather than isiZulu. Findings also reveal the lack of resources for teaching reading in isiZulu home language. It was concluded that isiZulu home language learners in these schools were not able to read in isiZulu because the teachers' beliefs in teaching reading in isiZulu were not as strong as their beliefs in teaching reading in English. In other words, reading in isiZulu was not highly regarded by these teachers.

Another local study was conducted by Cofu (2013) where she explored the strategies implemented by three Grade 1 teachers who taught reading in isiZulu Home Language. Her findings were that teachers had difficulties in implementing the recommended reading strategies. It was also noted that teachers struggled with the interpretation of the reading strategies, as included in the CAPS document. She also asserts that it was observed that there are distinct gaps in the teaching of reading in the foundation phase.

In 2008, the National DoE launched the Foundations for Learning Campaign to improve the teaching of literacy in the foundation phase. Mbatha (2011) conducted a study to determine how isiZulu Home Language teachers understood the Foundations for Learning Programme (FLP) of 2008 and how the FLP influenced their use of isiZulu as LOLT literacy skills in foundation phase classrooms. The FLP was launched to respond to a drastic deficiency in reading and writing skills that had been confirmed among South African learners. The findings of the study suggest that some teachers were uncertain about the purpose and goals of the FLP in the teaching of literacy in the mother tongue. Other teachers even thought the FLP was a new curriculum. Their understanding was unrelated to the goals of the FLP. Most teachers could not indicate any benefit from the FLP for teaching literacy in isiZulu. Another problem teachers highlighted regarding the implementation of FLP, was the difficulty of using

it, as it is written in English and not in isiZulu. They also emphasized that it was difficult to teach without appropriate teaching resources. Teachers identified the lack of isiZulu material as a failure of the FLP. Mbatha (2011) recommends that the DoE should write an isiZulu version of the FLP so as to enable teachers to use the programme for improving isiZulu literacy skills amongst learners.

ANA results of 2011 and 2012 (DBE, 2011a; 2012) have revealed that the Grade 3 national average performance in literacy was 35%. This means there is still a problem in teaching reading and writing in foundation phase. Cofu (2013) confirms that it has been observed that there are still gaps in teaching reading in the foundation phase. She states that teachers continue to struggle with the interpretation of the reading methods laid down in the policy framework. Ngema (cited by Cofu, 2013) also recommends that the learners should be taught in their home language in the foundation phase. Her argument focuses on the importance of African Languages as her study seeks to understand whether teachers know the content and practices necessary when teaching reading and writing to foundation phase learners.

Survey conducted by Hadley (2010) from several studies reveals that the teaching of literacy indicates low levels of teacher knowledge of the content, low levels of cognitive demands and teachers' teaching practices that undermine clear and direct instruction. She further stresses that learners are not given enough time to read and there are very few texts in the classroom. In her observation, she notes that teachers are very slow when teaching. The instructional time is also a concern and teachers often teach learners collectively, for the most part, with individual attention lacking. In her findings, it was also discovered learner's errors were ignored by teachers.

Pretorius and Machel (2004) conducted a study in KZN Grade 1 classrooms. In their observations, they noted that the teacher's emphasis was mostly on phonics where they emphasized decoding rather than meaning. They identified that there was a limited emphasis on comprehension and minimal formal teaching of phonics, with no vocabulary and spelling development. They asserted that this decoding related mostly to single words and that comprehension was poor.

Naicker (cited by Nkosi, 2011) alludes to the fact that the learners with reading and writing problems tend to drop out of school because of feeling inferior to their peers. Of concern is that some of these learners end up loitering in the streets without any formal education. Nkosi (2011) further asserts that the learners also experience problems of unemployment because they lack relevant skills and qualifications. Based on the above empirical studies, it is evident that there is limited research on teaching literacy in the isiZulu mother tongue as most researchers pay more attention to English, either as Home Language or as FAL. There are few studies that focus on the teaching of isiZulu as a mother tongue. This is the reason the researcher is interested in investigating further on this topic, as mentioned in the rationale for this study in Chapter 1.

### **2.2.5 Home and School Factors that Affect Teaching and Literacy Learning in the Foundation Phase**

There is a relationship between home and school background in literacy learning because it has an impact on the effective acquisition and development of literacy. Rowe (1995), De Witt (2011) and Killen (2015) identified that there are factors that influence learners' acquisition and development of literacy, and their learning progress.

#### **i) School Factors**

Rowe (1995) stresses that school factors like financial and material resources affect teachers' practices of teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy because schools are not able to purchase enough textbooks for learners. In term of class size, she asserts that it is not easy for teachers to practice effective methods of teaching literacy because the classes are overcrowded. She further mentions that some teachers are not qualified to teach isiZulu mother tongue literacy which also affects their practices. Killen (2015) notes that some of the big problems facing teachers in South Africa are the over-crowded classrooms, lack of basic equipment and rundown buildings. These are the social factors that affect effective teaching and learning in foundation phase.

## **ii) Home Background Factors**

Rowe (1995) further highlights that learners' backgrounds also contribute to the learners' performance at school, such as the availability of books at home and access to the community library. Wessels (2007) concurs with Rowe as he also stresses that if children are lucky to grow up in a reading home with parents who spend time reading books to them, they perform better at school because of their home background. Teachers do not encounter literacy problems amongst these learners.

## **iii) Students' Behaviour Factor**

Rowe (1995) strongly emphasised that some learners' bad behaviour, in the sense that they are disorientated and they need more attention, has an impact on teachers' practices, because they pay attention to the learners' behaviour rather than to teaching. Killen (2015) also comments about learners' bad behaviour. He strongly emphasises that learners need to be responsible for their behaviour for effective teaching and learning to take place.

## **iv) Less effective school**

Rowe (1995) also asserts that if the school lacks strong administrative leadership from the principal, lacks frequent monitoring and does not have a safe and orderly atmosphere which is conducive to teaching and learning, this tends to affect the teachers practices.

De Witt (2011) concurs with Rowe (1995) as he also identifies three factors that affect students' progress as follows:

### **i) Environment**

The environment surrounding the child can influence language acquisition. De Witt (2011) states that the child learns the language that is spoken at home and the surrounding neighbourhood. This relates to Rowe's factor of learners' bad behaviour because teachers find it difficult to teach in an environment where learners are undisciplined and disorientated. Killen (2015) agrees with De Witt (2011) as he also emphasises that teachers must create an environment which is comfortable and safe, both psychologically and physically, for effective teaching and learning to take place. Killen (2015) further stresses that a learning environment is more than just a physical space where learning occurs, but an interaction and relationship

between teachers and learners. Killen (2015, p.72) also notes that “positive classroom environments motivate learners and create conditions in which learners can achieve to their full potential.”

## **ii) Home background**

De Witt (2011) states that children’s language acquisition is influenced by the way in which parents communicate with them. Through language a relationship is established between the parent and the child. He further states that a child who comes from a democratic family tends to begin speaking sooner than the child from a *laissez-faire* family. Wessels (2007) concurred with Rowe (1995) as he also stressed that if children are lucky to grow up in a reading home with parents who spend time reading books to them, they do better at school. Killen (2015, p. 59) concurs with Rowe (1995) as he stresses that “learners from families and communities that value education are more likely to engage in productive learning”.

## **iii) Socio-economic status**

De Witt (2011) further maintains that children with mothers of middle and high socio-economic status understand the underlying principles and meaning of communication better than those of lower socio-economic status. Their mothers assist them with school work and these children receive encouragement from their parents which encourages their creativity and the children tend to exhibit intelligence when doing things.

### **2.2.6 Teaching of Literacy Interventions in South Africa**

South African learners in foundation phase are faced with reading and writing challenges; therefore, South Africa has got a role to play. It is argued that South Africa has intervened in this problem and has introduced different programmes in trying to solve it. It seems that different programmes could hardly resolve the problem. Research conducted by the United Nations Development Program (2007/2008) and Howie et al. (2006, 2011) has highlighted that the level of reading and writing in South Africa is very low compared to South African Democratic Countries (SADC), despite attempts to improve this situation. Nkosi (2011) also asserts that the problem of poor reading among South African learners is still prevalent at all levels of education, despite Government’s interventions in trying to solve this problem.

As previously mentioned, a study conducted by Hoadley (2010) focused on the foundation phase where the teaching of reading was specifically investigated in the South African context. The findings indicated low levels of teacher's CK, low levels of cognitive demands and a lack of clear direction and instruction in teaching practices.

Nkosi (2011) points out that since 1995 the South African Government has been trying to solve the problem of learners who are unable to read, even in secondary schools, by producing or launching different policies and different programmes. These amongst others, have been: the National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996a; the South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996b; Policy of Childhood Development (DoE, 2002); the Adult Basic Education and Training Act No 52 of 2000; the Ready to Learn Campaign; the National Strategy for Reading (2008b); the Readathon Campaign; and the change in the curriculum which is now the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Government's other interventions to improve literacy included the Foundation for Learning campaign introduced in 2008. This was a four-year campaign to create a national focus on improving reading, writing and numeracy for all learners in South Africa (DoE, 2008b).

The other intervention by the National DoE was to introduce Read, Educate, Adjust and Develop (READ) to schools. The DoE funded this pilot project which ran from 2000–2005. Ten schools were identified in each district and teachers attended workshops organized by READ. The facilitators assisted teachers on how to teach reading and writing to learners. Visits were made to these schools for coaching where they monitored the educators while teaching learners reading.

### **2.2.7 Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (MTBBE)**

The DBE Language in Education Policy (1997) states that foundation phase learners from Grade 1 to Grade 3 must be taught two languages: the Home Language, which will also be the LOLT and the FAL. In the recent DBE Language in Education Policy (DBE, 2014), it states that there will now be two additional languages. This Policy is in line to roll down to schools for implementation.

Benson (2004) asserted that MTBBE occurs when learners have educational access to both their mother tongue and their second language. She highlighted that mother tongue bilingual

programmes use the learners' first language, known as L1, to teach the beginners the reading and writing skills, and systematically uses the second language, known as L2, so that learners can gradually transfer the skills from the language they are familiar with to the unfamiliar one. Benson (2004) also stressed that the use of the familiar language to teach learners literacy helps the learners to understand easily the sound symbol or meaning symbol, and further argued that learning how to read is most efficient when learners understand the language.

Mbatha (2010, p.50) states that, "Mother tongue-based bilingual education (MTBBE) is bilingual education based on the mother tongue, with the mother tongue as referring to a child's principal language." Mbatha (2010, p.50) further stresses that "a dual medium curriculum combines teaching in a learner's home language with teaching in an additional language. It contains the pedagogical advantages of home language teaching and learning with maximal opportunities in gaining proficiency in English". She also states that the dual medium approach is one of the teaching approaches based on mother tongue foundations. This type of approach need not be introduced from the first grade of schooling but may be delayed and used after learners have gained confidence and a solid foundation in their mother tongue.

PRAESA (2010) also emphasises that a well-developed home language is a prerequisite for the successful learning of an additional language. It further highlights that in the bilingual learning theory, the home language forms an important base that is necessary for the additional language. When learners have a good understanding of the home language, learning the FAL becomes effective. In most cases, learners who master isiZulu as their home language do not have a problem mastering English as their FAL.

According to PRAESA (2010), this approach has assisted most learners because previously, the only language that was used was Home Language in foundation phase. For example, when learners move into the Intermediate phase, they find it difficult to cope with Grade 4 work where they have to learn all the subjects in English, as the LOLT in this phase is English.

### **2.2.8 What is Reading?**

NEEDU (2012) defines reading as the process where learners learn to engage meaningfully with what they learn. The DoE (2008b) asserted that reading is an ability to gain meaning from the text and also the ability to recognise and say each word separately in a text using the

knowledge of letters and sounds. The DoE (2008b) further stated that reading is a complex process that includes many skills, amongst these are active skills like presumption, guessing, and prediction. The DoE (2008b) emphasised that learners need to read many books in the appropriate language and at the right level so as to develop their reading skills.

Williams (2007) has revealed that reading is the construction of meaning from print with an emphasis on phonemic awareness, vocabulary, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. The cycle of four language skills and the stages of reading should be considered in the development of learners. These are elaborated on below.

### **2.2.9 Stages of Reading**

DoE (2008a) in *The Teacher's Handbook, Teaching Reading in the Early Grades*, this guide stresses that learners go through six literacy stages in the development of reading skills: pre-reader, emergent reader, early reader, developing reader, fluent reader, and independent reader. It further states that the stages of fluent reading and independent reading are too advanced for Grade 1 learners. As such, the first four stages that seem to be relevant for the foundation phase will be explored. Maphumulo (2010) and Cofu (2013) both concur with DoE (2008a) as they also emphasise that teachers need to be aware of these stages so as understand the learners they teach.

#### ***Pre-reader stage***

This handbook points out that during the first stage, learners can hold a book and correctly turn pages. The child can recognize the beginning and the end of the book. They can respond to different stories as they can hold a book in the correct position, interpret pictures whilst pretending to read although they knows some letters and show some interest when they see the print. This is in line with the pre-reading stage in shared reading. It could be at this stage that the teacher mentions to learners the rules of the treatment of books such as, “don’t break the spine of a book” or “wash your hands before reading a book”.

#### ***Emergent reader stage***

For foundation phase learners, emergent literacy is used the most because the learners relate to pictures to tell the stories. The learners know some of the sounds and letters to understand the written word. This stage is when the learners join the teacher when reading familiar books or

text (DoE, 2008a). They can recognize some of the words and are able to read some print. At this stage, they are aware that the print in African and in European languages runs from left to right and also from the top to the bottom (DoE, 2008a).

Blunden-Greeff (2015 p.141) expands on the issue when he claims that, “emergent literacy is when learners learn the language from babyhood. This proves that when learners arrive at school, they already know some of the sounds. They continue learning while playing with friends in the playground and from their families at home”. He further explains that families need to strengthen that foundation by preparing their children to read through talking and playing with them. This emergent literacy background helps learners with reading skills when at school. When at school, the child can then recognize their name and names of others in the class. They begin to read high-frequency words seen in the classroom and at a school, like the labels in the classroom such as ‘chair’, ‘door’, ‘window’ and ‘cupboard’.

### ***Early reader stage***

According Maphumulo (2010), at this stage the learners know most of the sounds and different words. Learners can use pictures to make meaning of a story. In the teachers’ handbook, DoE (2008a) also emphasises that at this stage learners are able to recognise some common words around them as they can read aloud but read word by word as they are still not fluent.

### ***Developing reader stage***

DoE (2008a) states that at this stage the learners use pictures to make meaning. They can also decode words by using the previous knowledge of sentence structure and phonics. They can now combine words into phrases instead of reading word for word. Learners can now retell the beginning, middle and end of the story as they have knowledge of approximately 50 sight words.

However, Maphumulo (2010) states that this stage is too advanced for Grade 1 learners, although the teacher scaffolding approach should be heightened.

These various reading stages will enable the teacher to assist each learner by giving individual attention according to the reading stage of the child. This will enable the teacher to take an informed decision about a particular learner. These guidelines will provide skills to learners

that will be appropriate in their reading. The question which this raises is whether teachers are aware of these stages. This is another contributing factor to the researcher's interest in investigating this phenomenon, as mentioned in Chapter 1.

### **2.2.10 Components of Teaching Reading**

Cofu (2013) cited the CAPS document in emphasising five components of teaching reading. The DoE (2008a) in *The teachers' hand book, Teaching Reading in the Early Grades* also highlighted five. These components are phonemic awareness, word recognition, comprehension, vocabulary and fluency. What this study will later explore is whether these components are being recognized by teachers when teaching isiZulu literacy as mother tongue.

#### **i) Phonemic awareness**

According to Hugo and Lenyai (2013), phonemic awareness is the ability to isolate the different sounds in a language. DoE (2008a) posited that phonemic awareness is the ability to think about and work with individual sounds, and also to notice the sounds in the spoken words. DoE (2008a) noted that before children learn to read some print, they need to be aware of how the sounds in the words work. It further highlighted that learners need to understand that words are made up of speech sounds or phonemes that are the smallest parts of the sound in a spoken word. The DoE (2008a) also stated that phonemic awareness can be developed through the use of songs, rhymes and poems. Furthermore, the DBE (2011b) states that phonemic awareness is when learners in Grade 1 recognize that speech consist of individual sounds that make up words, which in turn make sentences.

Wium, Louw and Ellof (2011) also see phonological awareness as important in teaching literacy. They also maintain, like the DBE, that songs and rhymes need to be included when teaching literacy.

#### **ii) Word recognition**

Word recognition refers to the skills that are needed by the readers to be able to read new words (DoE, 2008a). The DoE (2008a) stresses that phonemic awareness and sight words are the two main elements in word recognition.

Similarly, Cofu (2013) points out that in word recognition learners need to be able to distinguish some individual words that will help them to read unknown words. High frequency words are encouraged where words are spelt as they sound, most especially in isiZulu.

### **iii) Comprehension**

The DBE (2011b) highlights that learners are expected to be able to understand the text as they read whereas Maphumulo (2010) states that comprehension is the ability to understand the message conveyed by the author. She further explains that once the message has been grasped, learners can read with understanding. The CAPS document states that in trying to comprehend, learners are often able to read in their language but unable to understand what they read, which results in what people call ‘barking at print’ as they read without meaning. The document further states that learners lack sufficient vocabulary and grammar to make sense of what they read. It recommends that teachers need to build the learners’ vocabulary and grammar by exposing them to different readings that are at their level and by letting them read more in their own language.

The DoE (2008a) stated that comprehension has to be developed from the beginning. They have asserted that comprehension cannot be left until learners learn by breaking the words into components or until they can read a certain number of sight words. They further highlighted the ways of developing comprehension in learners as activating the learners’ prior knowledge, reading aloud to learners, developing learners’ decoding skills, assisting them to use clues in and around the text, developing fluency, increasing vocabulary, and developing learners’ ability to apply higher order thinking skills like analyzing, evaluating and interpreting.

### **iv) Vocabulary**

Hugo and Lenyai (2013) highlight that vocabulary is the set of words within a particular language, which is familiar to a person. The DoE (2008a) posits that learners need to have knowledge and understanding of different words so as to be able to communicate different ideas. They further explain that engaging learners in reading different material can increase their vocabulary and that knowing many words will help them with fluency as well as with the comprehension of text. The DoE (2008a) argued that some vocabulary can be learned

incidentally, but it strongly emphasized that there is still a need to teach vocabulary in a planned and deliberate way.

**v) Fluency**

Maphumulo (2010) states that fluent reading does not only mean reading with understanding but also means the ability to read the text accurately and smoothly, together with understanding. The DoE (as cited in Cofu, 2013) states that fluency is the skill which involves accuracy in decoding, reading smoothly, comprehending and the ability to read words fast. Cofu (2013) further states that fluency is the indication that shows the reader understands what they read. She also stresses that teachers need to be encouraged to have many reading materials in the classroom which may even include magazines and newspapers. She emphasizes that learners need to have specified time to read on a daily basis and also to read to their families.

### **2.2.11 Approaches to Teaching Reading**

**i) Bottom-up Approach**

Joubert, Bester and Meyer (2008) asserted that the bottom-up approach concentrates on the look-and-say method. The bottom-up model starts with the recognition and the decoding of letters, of clusters of letters into words, to phrases, to sentences, to paragraphs and then to the meaning of the whole text. The assumption is that the meaning is obtained in a step-by-step way. The bottom-up approach follows a linear process.

**ii) Top-Down Approach**

In a top-down approach, Joubert et al. (2008) stated that reading forms a meaningful whole in which the sense and its meaning lie at its foundation. The reading process begins in the mind of the reader, and the reader hypothesizes about the meaning of that particular print being read. In the top-down approach the background knowledge is believed to play a more important role than new words. It is thus believed that teachers need to teach learners the background first, so as to be able to guess the meaning from the printed page, as meaning takes precedence over the structure because it develops the skills and strategies in a meaningful context.

### **iii) Balanced approach to reading**

The US National Reading Panel (2000) conducted extensive research in the year 2000. It was found that the systematic phonic method needs to be integrated with other reading strategies or methods so that balanced reading is created. The report further asserted that the phonic method should not be given more time than other strategies nor must it become the dominant strategy in teaching reading. A balanced approach consists of different teaching strategies, i.e., reading aloud (mini-lesson), guided reading (small group), shared reading (collaboration), independent reading and the phonic method. The integration of these strategies helps to give learners skills and techniques for fluent reading. The teacher needs to decide critically on which approach to use for learners to be able to read and write. S/he also needs to consider the individual needs, as learners are unique in learning ability.

### **2.2.12 Strategies Used by Foundation Phase Teachers in Teaching Reading**

Fleisch (2007) claims that there are eight strategies to teach reading in foundation phase whereas Cofu (2013) stresses only four. In the CAPS document the DBE (2011b) provides nine different strategies to teach reading and writing and the DoE (2008a), highlighted six strategies. Only seven strategies that are suitable to teach learners in Grade 1 will be discussed here, as follows:

#### **i) Reading aloud**

Fleisch (2007) asserts that reading aloud by the teacher to the whole class or sometimes to a small group, has been shown to be one of the major motivators for children to read. Cofu (2013) agrees with Maphumulo (2010) that in reading aloud, the teacher reads the material that is at the learners' level and at the listening comprehension level of the whole class. Fleisch (2007) claims that this strategy develops love for reading and a love for good literature which would motivate learners to read on their own. Reading aloud demonstrates the relationship between the printed word and meaning.

#### **ii) Shared Reading**

Hugo and Lenyai (2013) define shared reading as an activity in which children and a teacher share the reading of an enlarged book. The DoE (2008a) have also highlighted that shared reading is the kind of lesson which takes place in a relaxed learning environment where the

teacher and the learner share a reading task. In this type of reading, the teacher encourages guessing, risk taking and accepting all attempts from the learners.

According to DBE (2011b) in the CAPS document, shared reading is when the teacher reads a big book in bold print with the whole class or with a group so as to give them exposure to a meaningful and supportive context. The DoE (2008a) has highlighted that in shared reading the teacher reads the material to the whole class or to a particular group, and the learners join in reading with the teacher when they can do so.

### **iii) Group Guided Reading**

The DBE (2011b) posit that group guided reading is when learners are placed into groups of 6–10, according to their barriers to reading or according to their reading abilities. This group guided reading is supported by the teacher as they read a reader appropriate to their level. The purpose of group guided reading is for the teacher to give learners individual attention so as to develop comprehension skills.

### **iv) Paired reading**

DoE (2008a) and DBE (2011b) both claim that paired reading is a technique used when teaching learners to read. DBE (2011b), in the CAPS document, emphasised that the text in paired reading should be at a lower level than the one used in shared reading. Contrary to this, Cofu (2013) groups together paired and independent reading. She states that paired reading is when learners are divided into pairs and read aloud to each other. She further stresses that teachers can also pair learners with the same reading ability or they can combine a more fluent reader with a less fluent reader. Learners also need to choose books according to their ability and to their interest. Maphumulo (2010) and Cofu (2013) both maintain that emergent readers are the ones who should be encouraged to read independently.

### **v) Look-and-say method**

The Look-and-say method is one used to teach beginners to read. Maphumulo (2010) explains that a three-pronged approach is used in the look-and-say method; the word, the sentence and the story. The teacher uses flash cards with words, sentence strips, and story cards because this method focuses on the whole and not on a certain part. Learners read the flash cards as a whole and write the words down. The sentence strip is used to read a sentence. The words can

be cut out and pieced together again as this can assist in building up a different sentence. The teacher can also tell a story, and learners can use the sentence strips to build a story.

#### **vi) Phonic Method**

Blunden-Greeff (2015) p. 158 posits that the “phonic approach to reading involves learning the sounds of vowels and consonants, followed by blending, and the construction of phonemic families or phonograms”. The DoE (2008a) states that the phonic method of teaching reading and writing of a language centres around developing learners’ phonemic awareness. The phonic method connects the visual to both the phonological structure and the spoken words. Teachers teach vowels followed by the consonants, and the word can produce a sound which is able to be read. These words can be learned in a composition with double vowels as well as with multi-consonants. These are taught as the children gradually build up reading and writing vocabulary by sounding the words shown.

According to Blunden-Greeff (2015) there are different phonic approaches. For example, one of them is synthetic phonics which is used where every word is examined as an individual sound. The sounds are then blended. The aim of synthetic phonics instruction is that learners identify the sound symbol and blend their phonemes automatically. Synthetic phonics puts accuracy before fluency. The phonic method has strengths and weaknesses. For example, through phonics learners can sound the letters and develop an automatic association of letters with sounds. However, its limitation is that reading fluency and comprehension skills are impaired if too much energy is spent on the sounding of the word (Blunden-Greeff, 2015).

#### **vii) Integrated Approach**

The DBE (2011b) emphasises an integrated approach. This is a teaching approach that is based on the notion of whole language teaching. In the CAPS document, speaking, listening, reading, writing and phonics are seen not as completely separate but as interacting. Language skills are not taught in isolation from each other or in a linear manner. For example, a teacher uses one text to teach different aspects of language such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar and other language structures and conventions. DBE (2011b, p p.16) stresses that, “since there is a limited time available for teaching phonics, teachers are encouraged to integrate phonics teaching into Listening, Speaking and Shared Reading activities”. Killen (2015) also highlights that it is important to integrate language skills

because learners see the whole subject as a set of the same ideas rather than ideas which are isolated. He further warns that integration should be for specific purposes in helping the learners not just to make links that have no substance.

This literature review has helped the researcher in contextualizing the study and in discussing the concepts framing the study, given below. These concepts are relevant to the study because it concentrates on what strategies teachers use when teaching reading in mother tongue and also on teachers' knowledge when teaching reading in isiZulu mother tongue.

## **2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The conceptual framework is based on the socio-cultural framework of literacy which consists of concepts such as scaffolding and emergent literacy. Furthermore, the study utilises teacher knowledge as its conceptual framework.

### **2.3.1 A Vygotskian Socio-Cultural Perspective on Literacy**

Literacy practices are related to social and cultural life and experiences. Literacies develop from past knowledge of texts, including multimedia texts, from knowledge about texts, from cultural knowledge and experiences, from social knowledge and experiences, and from technical knowledge and experiences, all of which come from the social, cultural and fun life-worlds, as well as the school world of pedagogies and disciplines (Anstey & Bull, 2004). Educators should become aware of how their literacy practices influence how they conduct their classes. The classroom is ultimately a social environment and social interactions happen in specific, planned ways where, it is hoped, meanings and understandings are shared. However, these assumptions will advantage some learners and disadvantage others because of the diversity in cultures, languages and learning styles that learners bring with them. Thus, it is also vital for educators to consider embracing multi-literacy for teaching and learning.

The methodology, known as Learning to Read: Reading to Learn, has been developed in response to the crucial needs, particularly of excluded learners, to quickly improve reading for educational access and success (Rose, 2004). The methodology draws on two theoretical traditions: Halliday's model of language as a text in a social context and Vygotsky's model of learning as a social process. Halliday's (1996) model of language as a text in a social context

highlights realisation, where meaning is realised as wording and wording is realised as sounding or lettering. In his theory, Halliday (1996) critiques the structuralist model stating that some literacy approaches insist on learners knowing sounds before they can learn to read.

Social constructivism emphasises that learning takes place in a socio-cultural environment. What is learned, and how the sense of knowledge is made, depends on where and when the learning occurs. Learning takes place through dialogue and is mediated through language and other systems of signs, such as gestures or diagrams (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) claimed that for a learner to learn a skill or a concept, it had to be within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is a premise used to determine what the learners are capable of learning. If the skill or a concept is something that a learner could do or understand with the help of a knowledgeable peer, then that concept or skill is something they could perform on their own after learning it with support. Fundamental to social constructivism is the concept of scaffolding.

The aspects of Vygotsky's theory relevant to this study are that the potential for cognitive development is limited to a ZPD. The ZPD co-exists with scaffolding. However, it is important to note that Vygotsky never used this term in his writing but referred to 'mediation'. This zone is the area of discovery in which the learners requires help and social interaction to develop fully as they are cognitively prepared for such development. A teacher is able to provide learners with scaffolding to support them with the understanding of knowledge domains and the development of complex skills. Emergent literacy and scaffolding supports the intellectual knowledge and skills of learners and facilitates intentional learning.

Vygotsky (1978) believed that everything learners learn is based on two levels:

**i) Social level**

Learners learn through interacting with others which might be other learners or the instructor (interpsychological). Learners learn at home when young, and the adults interact with the child by smiling, talking with the child, playing with the child when young and even when teaching the child something at home. Learners also learn incidentally at home by regular exposure to a word, e.g. "jam". The child can be able to tell that this word is "jam". Learners also play with other children at home, teaching each other different words whilst playing

school. The learners also interact with the world through everyday communication, i.e. when at home, when playing, when at church, at school and within their community.

## **ii) Individual level**

Learners also learn when they are alone (intrapsychological). They can learn when alone at home, school and away from the outside world. Vygotsky (1978, p.57) stated that “intrapsychological applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts”. Intrapsychology can also be through reflection of knowledge like shortening learning material through self study.

Scaffolding and emergent literacy are fundamental concepts that have been utilised to inform the teaching of literacy in isiZulu mother tongue in foundation phase, which is the focus of this study.

### **2.3.2 Scaffolding**

Scaffolding is theorized as an instructional tactic that involves supporting learners by limiting the difficulty of the context, and by gradually removing those limits as learners gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to cope with the full complexity of the context (Young, 1993). Scaffolding is the concept that encourages teacher–student interaction in understanding a text. It is a dual medium approach. Once the student, with the benefit of scaffolding, masters the task, the scaffolding can then be removed and the learner will be able to complete the task again on his/ her own. In considering emergent literacy, foundation phase teachers should utilise the scaffolding approach in their teaching of isiZulu mother tongue. Scaffolding is the process through which a teacher can structure and support learning in a meaningful way.

Axford, Harders and Wise (2009) stated that many people suggest that scaffolding is synonymous with support but they argue that, in the context of teaching and learning, scaffolding is much more than just support. It facilitates the performance of the required task, for example, teachers need to offer support by giving learners tasks that are familiar to their experiences so that learners can learn from their pre-existing knowledge. Axford et al. (2009) recommended the scaffolding literacy approach where the aim is to provide a structure in which the teacher and learners together can access the different cueing systems by using text that will be supportive because it is at the learners’ level. They further asserted that

scaffolding literacy is not a set of separate activities that can be used in isolation from other activities, but allows teachers to move backward in the sequence if they see that their learners are not yet ready to undertake the next activities. Killen (2015) also confirms that scaffolding is when teachers provide learners with enough assistance to complete a given task but gradually decrease the assistance when learners are able to work independently.

### **2.3.3 Emergent Literacy**

Clay (1982) was the first one to use the term emergent literacy. She claimed that emergent literacy starts before learners attend school. She argued that for the literacy development of a child to be effective, the emergent literacy approach should be used. Emergent literacy is regarded as the approach to teaching learners early literacy that recognises that literacy develops from home to school. Emergent literacy is a term used to explain a child's knowledge of reading and writing skills before they learn how to read and write words. Bloch (2005) asserted that emergent literacy sees young children constructing their literacy in a meaningful way as part of social, personal and cultural learning processes. Bloch (2005) further argued that teachers and parents need to develop learners' emergent literacy skills and that emergent literacy is a social model because it takes home and school literacy practices as family literacy. Clay (1982) maintained that emergent literacy is mostly related to the development of imagination in a child from when they are born until they begin schooling. Therefore, foundation phase teachers need to take into consideration the emergent literacy approach in their strategies of teaching isiZulu mother tongue.

## **2.4 WHAT IS TEACHER KNOWLEDGE?**

Grossman (1990) defined teacher knowledge as a subject to be taught or the kind of knowledge that every teacher needs to have so as to execute their teaching duties effectively. Morrow (2007) described teacher knowledge as a distinct qualitative knowledge that is not the same as technical and academic knowledge. Alternatively, Kennedy (2002) highlighted that teacher knowledge is a craft knowledge that is developed through experience. Teacher knowledge is relevant to this study because it explores the type of knowledge teachers need to have for effective teaching and learning.

Shulman (1987) highlighted seven categories of teacher knowledge: content, curriculum, pedagogy, context learning, educational philosophies and PCK. All these are the kinds of knowledge that teachers need to have for effective teaching and learning in the classroom. The framework in this study is based on teacher knowledge, focusing on subject knowledge, curriculum knowledge and PCK.

For teachers to teach effectively, they need to have three different kinds of teacher knowledge (NEEDU, 2012). These are knowledge of the school subjects, knowledge of the official curriculum, which is CAPS, and knowledge of how to teach the subject, which is PCK. These are discussed below:

#### **2.4.1 Subject Knowledge**

Shulman (1986, p.9) describes Subject Knowledge as the "amount and organisation of the knowledge per se in the mind of the teacher". NEEDU (2012) highlights that the first step in developing literacy in Grade 1 is learning to read and write. The foundation phase curriculum can be described as the development of an increasingly complicated literacy skill that provides learners the base for the study of different subjects. NEEDU also asserts that the key to literacy is reading that involves a range of complex language that is underpinned by the awareness of speech, spelling patterns, semantics, syntax and word formation or morphology.

#### **2.4.2 Curriculum Knowledge**

Shulman (1986) refers to curriculum knowledge as the programmes that teachers need to teach. NEEDU (2012) stresses that CAPS is designed to shape school activities, especially in such a way that it offers opportunities for learners to achieve subject knowledge in a controlled manner. NEEDU (2012) argues that the lack of strong teacher subject knowledge poses a threat to strategies set out in the policy document.

#### **2.4.3 Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)**

Shulman (1987) noted that PCK is more than just the knowledge of subject matter. He stressed that it is the knowledge of teaching the subject matter that includes, amongst other things the teaching strategies, topics, demonstrations, illustrations, and the representation of ideas. Shulman (1987) described PCK as the blending of content and pedagogy into an

understanding of how issues, topics, and problems are structured, represented and modified for the various interests and abilities of learners and how they are presented for instruction. He further highlighted that teachers need to have a rich knowledge of the subject and of the PCK of the subjects they teach. Furthermore, Grossman (1990) asserted that the components of PCK are the ability to teach a subject at different age levels, the knowledge of how curriculum materials can be used and the use of instructional methods in explaining a concept for the better understanding of the content.

## **2.5 THE CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (CK) AND PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (PCK) NEEDED FOR TEACHING LITERACY IN FOUNDATION PHASE**

There are five areas of knowledge and skills required to teach literacy in the foundation phase. These are detailed below.

### **i) Perspectives and the Processing continuum:**

Joubert et al. (2008) stressed that foundation phase teachers should apply relevant strategies when planning so that their teaching plan includes the skills and methods that will provide an opportunity for the learners to obtain the outcomes required.

### **ii) Behaviourist perspective of teaching reading, phonological and phonic awareness and writing:**

Two views of teaching reading are behaviourist and psycholinguistic. The behaviourist view is the bottom-up approach where reading proceeds from parts to the whole. Learners first learn sounds, words, sentences and then form a paragraph. According to the behaviorist approach, reading also involves mechanical and technical skills. Learners who succeed best at reading and writing have phonological awareness.

### **iii) Psycholinguistic Perspective:**

The psycholinguistic approach is viewed as a top-down approach to reading. Learners learn to read from a paragraph to sentences, words and then to sounds. This approach is called a holistic method.

**iv) Auditory processing:**

Listening and speaking is the first step required for the acquisition of reading and also, for the gathering of information (Joubert et al., 2008). Learners can listen to the teacher telling the stories and also listen to the questions when asked. Learners can also speak in the classroom by reciting rhymes, singing songs and also when responding to the questions asked by the teachers.

**v) Strategies of teaching reading:**

The six strategies which are relevant to learners in Grade 1 have been discussed in this chapter in 2.2.12. What this study will explore is whether these strategies are being recognized by Grade 1 teachers when teaching reading in isiZulu mother tongue.

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

This literature review outlined the conceptualisation of literacy, the new literacy studies approach, the debate on the importance of teaching literacy in mother tongue and empirical studies conducted on the teaching of reading in isiZulu mother tongue. Home and school factors that affect teaching and literacy learning in the foundation phase were discussed in depth. Teaching of literacy interventions in South Africa and MBBE were discussed. This chapter also unfolded the meaning of reading, stages of reading and the components of teaching reading. Approaches of teaching reading and the strategies used by foundation phase teachers in teaching reading were discussed. Emergent literacy and scaffolding are fundamental conceptual frameworks that have been utilised to inform the teaching of literacy in isiZulu mother tongue in the foundation phase. The conceptual framework, teacher knowledge, CK and PCK has been discussed. A socio-cultural perspective on literacy has been outlined. The following chapter focuses on the research design and methodology.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the research methodology, that is the research paradigm and research approach that were used to generate data. The chapter also explains the research design, the objectives of the study, critical questions, research context, sampling, teachers' profiles, data collection, trustworthiness, credibility, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.2.1 Research paradigm and research approach**

This study is a qualitative case study that is located in the interpretive paradigm. Maree (2014, p.70) argues that, "qualitative research design is a strategy that moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents". Maree (2014) further argues that qualitative research focuses on an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon. It also focuses on the understanding of how people make meaning of a phenomenon in their environment.

Taylor and Medina (2013) explain that when working within the interpretive paradigm, the researcher will look at different places and different aspects so as to understand the phenomenon of his/her study. Within this study, the researcher has attempted to identify methods and strategies used by teachers when teaching literacy and factors that influence their practices and their knowledge of teaching literacy in isiZulu mother tongue in Grade 1 classrooms.

This study has adopted the interpretive paradigm in order to obtain individual perspectives from the teachers about their daily practices of teaching literacy in real classrooms. Taylor and Medina (2013) add that an interpretive paradigm is a humanistic paradigm that is influenced strongly by the field of anthropology that aims to understand the inside of cultures and to build rich, local understandings of teachers' and learners' experiences and the school and classroom culture in the community they serve. Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p.26) emphasize that the purpose of the interpretive paradigm is to, "develop a greater understanding of how people make sense of contexts in which they live".

Maree (2014) highlights that it is a common trend that interpretive researchers start out with the assumption that access to reality is only through social constructions like language and shared meanings. The teaching of early literacy development in African Languages has not been well researched, hence it is important to conduct research that will contribute towards understanding how teachers make sense of this phenomenon in the unique contexts in which they teach. Maree (2014) adds that qualitative research is based on non-probability and purposive sampling rather than on random and probability sampling.

### **3.2.2 Research design**

According to Maree (2014), a research design is a strategy with certain characteristics involving practical social challenges that focus on change, a cyclical process that involves participation and also an interactive form of knowledge development. It also involves the data gathering techniques that will be used, as well as the data analysis to be done.

### **3.2.3 Case study methodology**

This is an exploratory research study which employed a qualitative case study research design focusing on a sample of three schools. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) assert that a case study is a specific instance that is designed to illustrate a general principle that can also establish cause and effect in the study. A case study helps the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The phenomenon of the study is foundation phase teachers' knowledge and practices of teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy instruction in Grade 1 classrooms in three rural schools in one district of KZN. Maree (2014) further states that a case study can also be used to describe a research method or a unit of analysis of that particular organization, depending on the underlying assumptions of the researcher as it can be critical, positivist and interpretive. The case study can also be a bounded system which does not mean that only one site is studied. In this study, the case study comprised of six Grade 1 teachers who were teaching literacy in isiZulu mother tongue.

## **3.3 RESEARCH CONTEXT**

The study was part of a bigger Early Literacy Development in African Languages (ELDAL) research project that was conducted in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal on the teaching of isiXhosa and isiZulu literacy in foundation phase classrooms (Grades 1–3).

One of the three broad aims of the overall ELDAL project was to explore the teachers' practices when teaching literacy in foundation phase classrooms. The second aim was to identify practices of teaching literacy and the instructional challenges that had not been explicitly stated in recent reports on teaching literacy in African languages, namely isiXhosa and isiZulu. The last aim focused on an exploration of foundation phase teachers' knowledge and practices of teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy instruction in Grade 1 classrooms.

### **3.4 DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE AND THE SAMPLING METHOD**

Maree (2014) refers to sampling as the process that is used by the researcher to select a portion of the population for the study. He explains that there are three sampling strategies that are most commonly used by beginners when conducting research: stratified purposive sampling, snowball sampling and criterion sampling. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) assert that purposive sampling is when the researcher makes specific choices about which group to include in the research. They also assert that purposive sampling can also be called criterion sampling because it selects participants that meet certain criteria. Maree (2014) also explains that criterion sampling implies that the researcher decides on the characteristics of the participants to be included in the research that must meet certain criteria which could include gender, location and profession, so as to select the participants who have insights into the research topic.

Six teachers were selected purposely as participants for this study. The researcher chose these teachers as a purposive sample because they were teaching Grade 1 and they were isiZulu mother tongue speakers. This made them relevant for obtaining the required data for the study. The researcher also purposively chose teachers who had at least three years' experience teaching in the foundation phase. Amongst them were a Deputy Principal, a Head of Department, and a senior teacher.

### **3.5 TEACHERS' PROFILES**

Pseudonyms have been used for the schools and the teachers' names. The following table provides an overview of the key information relating to the teachers included in the research sample.

**Table 1: Teachers' profiles**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Experience in Foundation Phase in years (at present school)</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Post level</b>	<b>Learner Enrolment</b>
A	Teacher A	20	PTC, PTD, ABET	Senior teacher	42
A	Teacher B	10	PTD, HDE	Level one	44
B	Teacher C	5	PTD (S), ACE	Deputy Principal	38
B	Teacher D	22	PTC, PTD (J)	Level one	43
C	Teacher E	20	PTD (J), BA,	HOD	44
C	Teacher F	15	PTD(S), ABET	Level one	43

The above information was obtained from the questionnaires that were given to the participants. Each school had a school management team (SMT) member who participated in this research. All the participants taught Grade 1 and their LOLT was isiZulu.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION**

Semi-structured interviews and lesson observations were the data collection methods used in this study. For research question one, observations and interviews were conducted to understand the practices used by the teachers when teaching literacy in isiZulu mother tongue in Grade 1 classrooms. For research question two, semi-structured interviews were used to understand the factors that influenced teachers when teaching literacy in isiZulu mother tongue in Grade 1 classrooms. For research question three, lesson observation and semi-structured interviews were used to understand the teachers' knowledge of teaching literacy in isiZulu mother tongue in the foundation phase. These methods are discussed below.

#### **3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews**

Maree (2014) states that an interview is a two-way conversation. The researcher asks questions and the participant responds. There may be cases where there are follow-up

questions from the researcher for clarity purposes when collecting data using interviews. Cohen et al. (2011) contend that interviews assist the participants to discuss their interpretation of the world and enable participants' freedom of expression. Such freedom of expression should be facilitated and according to Thomas, Nelson, and Silverman (2011), interviews need to be conducted in a suitable place that is free from disturbances.

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005) have noted that in semi-structured interviews, questions are nearly all open-ended. In open-ended questions, the participants are free to voice their beliefs and perceptions or accounts of a particular topic. Furthermore, Maree (2014) argues that mainly semi-structured interviews should be used in research projects so as to gather information coming from different sources. The researcher needs to be attentive all the time when the participants respond so as to identify new emerging lines of inquiry that are related directly to the studied phenomenon. Maree (2014) also states that semi-structured interviews usually require the participants to answer a set of questions that are pre-determined.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews so as to be able to probe during the interview process to seek further clarity, when necessary. According to Cohen et al. (2007) probing enables the interviewer to ask the participant to elaborate and to provide details of clarity regarding their response to a particular question. With the semi-structured interviews, the participants were able to answer the questions easily as they were given the interview schedule three days in advance to look at the questions before sitting for their interview. An audio tape was also used during the interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were with two teachers at the same time in each of the schools. A large amount of data from three schools (six teachers) needed to be collected in a short time period. The researcher chose to interview both teachers at the same time so that the teachers, as participants, could build on each other's comments so as to provide an in-depth view on a particular question. This assisted in discussing and debating responses from the teachers.

The researcher first observed all six teachers separately when teaching reading in isiZulu mother tongue in Grade 1, then conducted the semi-structured interviews. The purpose of conducting the semi-structured interviews after lesson observation was to identify factors that influenced the teachers to teach literacy in the way they taught it and also to gain an

understanding of what the teachers' knowledge was of teaching literacy in isiZulu in Grade 1. During the interview process, there were questions which the participants found unclear, and because the researcher was interacting with them, there was an opportunity to explain further and clarify meaning.

Interviews are not without their disadvantages; they are time-consuming and relatively expensive. Besides having to travel to the participants for interviews, sometimes the teachers would choose to talk about other things, not responding to the questions asked which would be costly in terms of time spent. Kumar (2005) has mentioned another limitation that could affect the quality of data, which is that of the inexperienced interviewer. One of the disadvantages the researcher identified when collecting data was that the participants had already read the questions before coming to the interview. It seemed that the responses they gave were those that they thought were appropriate and had been rehearsed.

The purpose of conducting the semi-structured interviews was to identify the factors that influence teachers to teach literacy the way they teach it and also to gauge their knowledge of teaching literacy in isiZulu in Grade 1. This assisted the researcher in asking questions based on the lessons she observed.

### **3.6.2 Lesson observation**

Lesson observations were used to generate data to answer research questions one and three, namely, "What are the current practices that teachers use when teaching literacy in isiZulu in Grade one classrooms?" and "What is the teachers' pedagogic knowledge of teaching literacy in isiZulu in the foundation phase?" These questions were aimed at identifying teachers' knowledge and practices of curriculum implementation. Cohen et al. (2011) state that observation is a highly flexible form of collecting data as it enables the researcher to gather data on the physical, human, interactional levels and programme settings. It offers the researcher an opportunity to gather live data in a naturally occurring situation so as to understand how teachers use their knowledge to teach reading. The researcher observed how teachers taught Grade 1 reading in isiZulu mother tongue and also video recorded the lessons. Field notes were written on what was observed in the classroom. The researcher used an observation schedule as a guide when collecting data. Cohen et al. (2011) highlight that

observation is more than just looking and noting people, events, settings or anything else being observed. They maintain that it is a powerful research tool that looks at and notes people and events systematically.

Maree (2014) explains that observation is an organised process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants and the occurrences without questioning them, so as to gather the required data. He further explains that observation is used so that the researcher can gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon that is observed. However, he highlights that there are risks in the lesson observations. He states that they are highly selective and subjective by nature, as most researchers seldom observe the whole situation but only focus on a specific event within the whole. He further cautions that the researchers need to be alert to their biases and must be proactive in creating means to deal with these, such as focusing on a specific event within the whole.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data collected from interviews was transcribed and collated so as to get accurate verbatim and important details of the teachers' versions of what happened inside the six Grade 1 classrooms. The teacher's exact words were transcribed. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcripts from the interviews so as to identify similarities and differences. The data was then organized using themes identified in the collected data. Content analysis was used to analyse the observed lessons by looking for the teachers' individual patterns in teaching practices across individuals. The information was coded during the analysis.

In this study, data was analysed inductively. Maree (2014) highlighted that qualitative researchers develop the codes when analysing data and this is called inductive analysis. As mentioned above, this study adopted a qualitative research design to analyse the collected data. According to Cohen et al. (2011), data analysis is a continuous and iterative process where data is managed. They further assert that in qualitative studies, analysis occurs when the researcher organises, explains, describes, interprets, discovers patterns and generates themes of the data she or he had collected. Similarly, Maree (2014 p.99) states that, "qualitative data analysis tends to be an ongoing and iterative process, implying that data

collection, processing, analysis and reporting are intertwined and not merely some successive steps”.

### **3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

Shenton (2004) adopted Lincoln and Guba’s criteria of trustworthiness which states that for a study to be trustworthy, it needs to be credible. Ways of establishing trustworthiness include using different methods when collecting data, to ensure honesty, and also using reflective commentary and member checking after the collection of data. Shenton (2004, p.69) highlighted that, “transferability is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations”. With this study, the comparison of interviews and observation was done so as to increase the trustworthiness of the collected data.

Maree (2014) also proposes that one useful strategy for trustworthiness is to do member checking. This is when the researcher verifies her or his understanding of what she or he has been observing with the participant. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and lesson observations. A member check was conducted by returning to the teachers with the interview transcripts as a means to check with them and verify the reliability and trustworthiness of the data.

For this research to be credible, the interview schedule was piloted on Grade 1 teachers who were not part of the programme, so as to check its credibility. Maree (2014) explains that it is not wise to rely on a single instrument to collect data because it may not provide adequate data to answer the research questions. The researcher, therefore, used the combination of semi-structured interviews and a lesson observation schedule to collect data for the findings to be credible.

Cohen et al. (2011) emphasize that for research to be reliable, it must demonstrate that, if it were to be given to another similar group of participants in a similar context, similar results would be found. Cohen et al. (1994 p.202) argues that for the study to be reliable, it needs to address “stability of observations, parallel forms, and inter-rater reliability”. Joppe (2000, p.1) has highlighted that “the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability, and if the results

of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.”

### **3.9 ETHICAL ISSUES**

Cohen et al. (2011) assert that ethics is a matter of being principled by being sensitive to the rights of other people. The researcher therefore used pseudonyms to protect the identities of the schools and the teachers who took part in the study. By using pseudonyms, it is presumed that the teachers were more likely to speak the truth because they knew that the information could not be traced back to them. The participants were requested to volunteer in the study and it was explained that they could withdraw at any stage. The participants were further assured of confidentiality and privacy, after which the participants signed consent forms agreeing to participate in the study. Another ethical issue to be considered is the issue of power relations and its real impact on autonomy, for example using power to make teachers participate in the study. This ethical issue can be resolved by letting the participants understand that the researcher is looking for information which will only be used for this study.

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) assert that ethics has to do with behaviour that is right or wrong. It is especially important when dealing with research that involves people. Bertram and Christiansen also raise the point that ethics has three principles: autonomy, non-maleficence, and beneficence. These are detailed below.

#### **i) Autonomy**

Autonomy is when the researcher gives respect to all the participants who are involved in the study, which in this case were the principals and teachers who formed part of the research study. Consent letters were given to the principals and teachers requesting permission to conduct the study. The researcher first explained to them exactly what the study was about and also explained her expectations as a researcher. It was indicated that the participation was voluntary, they were not forced to participate in the study, and they could withdraw at any time.

**ii) Non-maleficence**

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), non-maleficence means to do no harm. They maintain that the research must do no harm to the participants or any other people involved in the study. Care was taken not to harm the participants in any way; they were fully informed about their rights as study participants.

**iii) Beneficence**

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state that beneficence means that the study needs to be beneficial. They further state that the study needs to be of benefit either to the participants or learners directly, or to the society at large. The researcher informed the participants that their recommendations would be written in the report that might contribute to future education policy in teaching literacy. It was also explained that the research might contribute to ongoing research on the teaching of literacy in the mother tongue, given South Africa's multilingual language education policy.

**3.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE**

As the researcher is a principal of one of the participating schools, the participants from this school did not feel at ease because they assumed that the study intended to monitor their teaching skills. Participants in neighbouring schools were not comfortable to express themselves fully. The researcher assured them that the information would be treated with confidentiality, that it would not be discussed with their principals and that the findings would not affect them or their job in any way, not even in their IQMS scores.

It is impossible to make a generalisation in a qualitative study because the study only studied six teachers in only three schools within one province of South Africa. The results obtained apply to only these six teachers and three schools and thus cannot be generalised, although it is believed that the collected data was trustworthy. This study, therefore, does not intend to make a generalisation. The findings and analysis of this study will be compared with the findings of other research sites in the overall study.

### **3.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the research methodology design, research context, description of the sample and the sampling method. It further outlined the teachers' profiles, data collection and data analysis. Trustworthiness, reliability and validity were also discussed. Ethical issues, limitations of the study, and the researchers' role were also detailed. In Chapter 4, the analysis of the generated data and findings will be presented.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the findings of the study. Data was gathered through two data collection methods of semi-structured interviews and lesson observations. The chapter is divided into two sections. Section 4.2 deals with the analysis of the data generated by using semi-structured interviews and section 4.3 deals with the data generated from lesson observations. The researcher conducted interviews with six teachers and also observed two lessons taught by each of the six teachers. Firstly, findings from the semi-structured interviews will be integrated with quotations from the data. The analysis of interviews is followed by the analysis of lesson observation. The overall analysis will be generated from observation of a selection of the twelve lessons where the teachers were observed teaching literacy in isiZulu in Grade 1 classrooms. An interpretation and discussions of the findings are conducted in Chapter 5.

### **4.2 AN ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Data generated from semi-structured interviews was useful in identifying the teachers' knowledge and their understandings of how they teach literacy in isiZulu mother tongue, as well as their beliefs regarding why they teach the way they do. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with two teachers in each school. Data was collected and analyzed to determine the showed the teachers' knowledge about the teaching of early literacy in isiZulu home language.

The responses given by the participants are presented in themes. Interviews were transcribed and coded in a table with responses from each participant based on each question asked. After coding and analysing data from the interviews, the following ten themes emerged which are discussed in the sections that follow:

- Adequacy of time for teaching isiZulu literacy;
- Teachers' understanding of the importance of reading;
- The importance of teaching Grade 1 learners reading in isiZulu;
- Methods of teaching literacy in isiZulu;

- Teaching of phonics as the main focus in teaching isiZulu literacy in Grade 1;
- Teachers' use of the CAPS document;
- Teachers' use of annual teaching plans for teaching isiZulu literacy in the foundation phase;
- Resources for teaching isiZulu literacy; and
- Teaching of writing in isiZulu.

#### 4.2.1 Adequacy of Time for teaching isiZulu Literacy in Grade 1

Participants were asked about the time allocated per five day week to teaching isiZulu in Grade 1 classrooms. The question was intended to investigate the adequacy or inadequacy of time allocated for teaching isiZulu in Grade 1 per week.

The responses were as follows:

**Table 2: Allocated time per school per week**

<u>Schools</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Hours of Teaching per Week</u>
School A	Teacher A	7 hours
	Teacher B	7 hours
School B	Teacher C	8 hours
	Teacher D	8 hours
School C	Teacher E	8 hours
	Teacher F	8 hours

Teachers' comments on the adequacy of time were as follows:

All the teachers expressed that the allocated time was inadequate since learners were not at the same level in their literacy development. They stated that some children needed more time.

All the teachers stated that their class sizes were big and therefore, it was difficult for a teacher to have sufficient time to attend to all groups within the allocated time frames.

Two of the teachers interviewed from two separate schools gave the following responses:

**Teacher A:** *Thina sino seven hours ngesonto ukufundisa isiZulu. Kuyinkinga ke lokhu ngoba lesisikhathi asanele nhlobo. Abantwana abafani ekilasini, kukhona abasala ngemuva uma ufundisa abadinga isikhathi esanele.* (We teach isiZulu seven hours a week. This is a problem because there are some learners who get left behind, who need more time.)

**Teacher C:** *U-eight hours awanele ngoba sinama group amaningi ikilasi ngalinye njengoba sibafundisa ngama groups.* (Eight hours is not enough because we have many groups in each class as we teach them in groups.)

All teachers were of the same opinion. Sometimes the teachers were unable to deal with all the groups in one and a half hours per day.

#### **4.2.2 Teachers' Understanding of the Importance of Reading**

The question was asked: "Why is reading important?" This question was aimed at determining the teachers' Content Knowledge (CK) of teaching reading. All teachers responded by stating that reading is important. The following are findings related to the teachers' understanding of the importance of reading:

Teacher B explained that reading is an empowering skill that needs to be developed at an early stage for each learner. She added that reading gives the opportunity to engage with other skills such as creative thinking and writing.

**Teacher B:** *Kubalulekile ukufunda kubantwana ikakhulukazi baqale besebancane bakwazi ukuzifundela izincwadi, bakwazi nokuzakhela izindatshana, bazixoxe futhi bakwazi nokuzibhalela ngoba lokhu abakufundile kuyohlala emqondweni wabo.* (Reading is important even at an early stage because if they can read on their own, they can create their own stories, to tell it and to be able to write it because if they read for themselves the information will stay in their minds for longer.)

Teacher F explained that learners who read gain additional skills such as speaking and writing skills will use these for their whole life. She further mentioned that reading also facilitates learning in higher grades.

**Teacher F:** *Ukufunda kubalulekile kunika nomntwana ithemba uma ekwazi ukuzifundela futhi ekwazi ukukuxoxa aphinde akubhale lokhu akufundile. Uyobe esekwazi nokufunda emazingeni aphezulu, akuqonde nakubuzwayo uma sekuhlolwa.* (Reading is also important because it gives the child hope if s/he can read, tell and write what s/he was reading about. They will be able even to read in higher grades and be able to understand questions asked during examinations.)

Teacher E responded that reading is important to everyone for cognitive development. She added that reading fosters intellectual growth, autonomy, and independence in various learning contexts and in examinations.

**Teacher E:** *Kubalulekile kakhulu ukufunda kuwo wonke umuntu ngoba kwenza ukuthi ukhule engqondweni, ukwazi ukuzimela kukho konke okufundwayo kusize futhi ngisho noma sekuhlolwa kunoma imaphi amazanga....* (Reading is important for cognitive development that will assist in independent reading that will prevent reading problems even during examinations...)

All teachers agreed that reading is important because learners need to master reading so that they can read meaningfully on their own and acquire knowledge independently. Also, reading helps to develop creative writing and creativity in telling their stories. The teachers' responses suggest that reading is self-empowering. Reading also needs to be developed as it is a skill that is needed in all grades, including higher grades. Teacher E added that reading helps with cognitive development.

#### **4.2.3 The Importance of Teaching Grade 1 Learners Reading in isiZulu**

The question asked was: "Why is teaching reading important to learners in Grade 1?" This question sought to identify teachers' understanding of the importance of teaching Grade 1 reading. This was different to the previous question asked: "Why is reading important to everyone?"

Three important reasons were identified by the teachers. Firstly, teaching reading to learners in Grade 1 is important because learners need to be able to identify and read different sounds to be able to read on their own. They attributed the importance of learning reading in Grade 1 to getting to know the meaning of sounds and the language. Secondly, teachers reported that reading assists learners with the basic knowledge of sounds which is the knowledge to make up words that will help them to be literate. Thirdly, the teachers stated that reading is a skill transferrable to other languages.

Two teachers responded in the following manner:

**Teacher A:** *Kubalulekile ukufundisa ukufunda okubhaliwe kumntwana waka Grade 1 ngoba ilapho ethola khona I background yezinhlamvu ezizomsiza ekufundeni nasemazingeni aphezulu nasempilweni yakhe yonke.* (It is important to teach Grade 1 learners reading because it is where they get the meaning of sounds that will help them in higher grades and for their entire life.)

**Teacher C:** *Izinhlamvu zesiZulu nezesiNgisi azifani. Ukubafundisa ukufunda ngolimi lwakhe kuyasiza ukuze azi kabanzi ngokufundwayo esebenzisa ulimi lwakhe, lokhu sekuyoba lula noma esefunda olunye u Limi.* (The Zulu and English sounds are not the same. To teach them to read in isiZulu will help them to know how to read in their own language. This will assist even when reading another language.)

#### **4.2.4 Methods of Teaching Literacy in isiZulu**

The following question was asked: “What strategies do you use when teaching learners in Grade 1 reading?” It was intended to uncover teachers’ Pedagogic Content Knowledge (PCK) of the strategies they use when teaching Grade 1 reading.

Three teaching methods were identified by the teachers: the phonic method, integrated methods and the look-and-say method.

##### **The Phonic method**

All six teachers reported that the phonic method is used first, before any other method, as it is the basis of all methods. The teachers highlighted the process they followed, which consists of

teaching the five vowels in isiZulu (*a, e, i, o, u*) followed by combining vowels with consonants to form syllables such as:

**m + a = ma**                      **b + a = ba**

**m + e = me**                      **n + i = ni**

After the formation of syllables, they combine one syllable with another syllable to form words e.g. ma+ ma = mama, bo + na = bona, etc. For example, Teacher E stated the following:

**Teacher E:** *....siqale sibafundise onkamisa o a, e, i, o, u, bese sibafundisa uhlamvu silushadise nonkamisa njengo –ma- bayobe sebenza amagama amafishane njngo mama, bona, uma sebewazi amagama amafishane sidlulele egameni eligcwele. Sibe sesibafundisa imisho emifishane ezoba nalezizinhlamvu ebesizifunda njengo “umama ubona uMimi”. (...we start by teaching them the vowels a, e, i, o, u. We then teach them the consonant that will combine with the vowel to make syllable, e.g. –ma-, after that we teach them to combine one syllable with another syllable to make a word e.g. –bona-. After that we teach them how to construct a short sentence with the sound, we have been teaching, e.g. “Umama ubona umimi”.*

### **Integrated methods**

Another finding from teachers A and C showed that they integrated shared reading and the phonic method. They highlighted that shared reading, when integrated with the phonic method, exposes learners to words at an early stage. They further stressed that language skills were not taught in isolation as the teacher used one text to teach different aspects of language, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar and other language structures and conventions. Teacher A responded as follows:

**Teacher A:** *Izindlela esizisebenzisayo imvamisa lapha esikoleni i-phonetic method, storytelling, and shared reading. Siyazihlanganisa lezizindlela uma sifundisa. i-phonetic method siqala ngayo kuqala then sizihlanganiseke ngokuqhubeka kwesikhathi. Sihlanganisa i-phonetic method, alphabet method ne shared reading bese sihlanganisa i-storytelling ne phonic method. Ukufundisa ngalezizindlela kuyasiza kakhulu kumntwana ngoba ufunda amagama esasebangeni eliphansi aphinde afunde ukulalela,*

*akhulume, abhale aphinde afunde neminye imithetho yokufunda kanyekanye.* (The methods we use are the phonic method, storytelling and shared reading. We start by using the phonic method first then the integration of phonic and shared reading and the integration of storytelling and phonic methods. To integrate helps learners to learn words at an early stage and teaches learners different skills like listening, speaking, reading, writing and also the language structure in one lesson.)

Another finding was from teachers C and D who were from the same school. They mentioned that they used the phonic method in teaching isiZulu literacy. They added that they also integrated the phonic method with play so as to enhance the lesson and promote learner involvement. They demonstrated that when phonics are integrated with play, learning is improved because play sustains learners' attention span, creates fun and develops their reading skills faster. Teacher C responded as follows:

**Teacher C:** *Siqala sigxile konkamisa nasohlamvini. Uma sebebazi bonke onkamisa, sibe sesiqalake sibafundise ngezihlamvu ezahlukene, sakhe nabo amagama amafishane, kulandele agcwele bese sikwazi ukwenza nemisho emifishane. Siyayisebenzisa nendlela yokufunda sakudlala ikakhulukazi uma sibafundisa ukufunda imisindo. Siyakholelwa ukuthi abantwana abasheshi bakhohlwe abakufunde bedlala.* (In Grade 1, we start by telling them a story, they also tell their stories. In that story, we take a word with the sound I want to introduce that day. We start by teaching the five vowels, when they know the vowels; we teach them sounds. After that, we teach short words and then the full word. We then teach them short sentences. We also integrate the phonic method with the play method as we believe learners do not forget easily when they are taught using the play method.)

### **Look-and-say method**

The following finding was identified by teachers E and F who were from the same school. They stated that they used the phonic method and integrated it with the look-and-say method. They explained that using pictures when teaching enables learners to learn in an enjoyable way as they are guided by a picture that gives them contextual clues. Other literacy skills are utilized, as they predict and associate the word represented by the picture. Teacher F responded as follows:

**Teacher F:** *Onkamisa sibafundisa ngokuqale sibeka isithombe njengesithombe esinomama. Sebeyobuka isithombe bese besho ukuthi babona (umama) esithombeni. Bayobe sebefunda ukubhala umsindo –m- ka mama otholwe esithombeni. Bayobe sebeqhubeka bawushadise nonkamisa njengokuthi –ima-. Babe sebenza amagama agcwele njengo umema kanye nemisho emifishane e.g. Umama umi.* (We teach learners the vowels by showing them a picture. They will be asked what they see in that picture. They will respond that it is *umama*. We will then teach them the sound –*m*. We then teach them how to form a word from the sound –*m*- by prefixing the vowel at the beginning and ending with a vowel at the end of that consonant –*m*- e.g. *ima* or *uma*. They will then be able to write full words e.g. *umama* and short sentences e.g. *Umama umi.*)

All teachers responded that they first use the phonic method when teaching reading in Grade 1. It was noted that the phonic approach to literacy was used predominantly in teaching decoding. It is the initial phase of teaching, as it is regarded by teachers as fundamental in teaching reading through which learners learn sounds using the bottom-up approach. Additionally, the findings indicate that teachers also used a combination of teaching strategies to teach isiZulu. They integrated the phonic method with other methods like shared reading, learning through play where their learning was enhanced, storytelling where learners were developed their listening and speaking skills, and the look-and-say method where learners were encouraged to predict what they could see in the poster.

#### **4.2.5 Teaching of Phonics as the Main Focus in Teaching isiZulu Literacy in Grade 1**

Teachers were asked: “How do you introduce isiZulu sounds to Grade 1 learners”? The researcher sought to understand the teachers’ knowledge of teaching phonics in isiZulu in Grade 1.

The following table shows how teachers teach phonics, with the steps outlined:

**Table 3: Steps in teaching phonics**

<b>Five steps (Teacher A and B)</b>	<b>Four steps (Teacher C and D)</b>	<b>Four steps (Teacher E and F)</b>
They start by teaching learners the letters of the alphabet from a–z as a rhyme.		
Secondly, they teach the five vowels a, e, i, o, u.	They start by teaching the five vowels a, e, i, o, u.	They start by teaching the five vowels a, e, i, o, u.
Thirdly, they teach the consonants starting with m, b, n, l, s, d, f, g that they think are the easiest for learners to learn first.	They then teach the consonants m, b, l, z, w, d.	Then teach consonants starting with m, b, l, n, s, t, which they think are the easiest for learners to learn first.
Fourthly they combine consonants and vowels to make consonants ‘speak’ by forming short words <i>ima-</i> , <i>ema-</i> , etc.	They then teach short words and full words e.g. <i>ema-</i> , <i>oma-</i> , <i>umimi</i> , etc.	They then teach short words and full words in one lesson. e.g. <i>uma</i> , <i>ima</i> , <i>umema</i> , etc.
They then teach full words and short sentences based on the sound/s taught <i>umema</i> , <i>Umama umi</i> .	Then teach them short sentences based on the sound/s taught, e.g. <i>Umama umema uMimi</i> .	Then they teach them short sentences based on the sound taught.

Teacher B responded as follows:

**Teacher B:** *Siqale sibafundise ama letters of the alphabets kusuka ku –a- kuya ku-z-. Sibafundisa njenge rhyme bethi –a- ngakhumbula, -b- ka baba, -c- we cici, -d- we dada etc. Sibe sesilandelisa ke ngonkamisa u a, e, i, o, u. Onkamisa sibabiza ngokhiye abavula imisindo. Sibe sesibafundisa imisindo siqale ngelula abakwazi ukuyifunda ngokushesha njengo m, b, n, l, s, d, f, g, etc. Siwubhala ebhodini umsindo –m-*

*ngaphansi konkamisa. Sesiyobe sesenza ngokuhlanganyela, sifake ukhiye ekuqaleni nasekugcineni komsindo. Uyobe usufundeka loyomsindo njengo –uma-, -ima- njll. Sibe sesibafundisa amagama agcwele kanye nemisho emifishane e.g. Umama umema uMimi. (We start by teaching all the letters of the alphabet from a – z, we teach them as a rhyme e.g. -a-ngakhumbula, -b- ka baba, -c- we cici, -d-we dada, etc. We then teach the five vowels. We call these vowels the keys to open the consonants. We teach them the easy consonants first, e.g., m, b, n, l, s, d, f, g, etc. and we write these consonants under the vowels. We then formulate short words together, e.g. ima-, uma-, and full words, umimi, umema, etc. After that, we teach them to formulate short sentences, e.g. “Umama umi”.)*

The sequences in which sounds are taught differed. Teacher F responded as follows:

**Teacher F:** *Mhhh, (pause) ngiqale ngibafundise onkamisa a, e, i, o, u. Babafunda ebhodini naseshadini baze babazi, bese ngibafundisa izinhlamvu ezahlukenene. Sibafundisa ngokulandelana njengo m, b, l, z, w, d, etc. Uma sebebazi onkamisa, nezinhlamvu, sibe sesenza amagama amafishane ngalo lolohlamvu njengokuthi nje – oma- kanye nagcwele umame. Uma sebekwazi ukuzenzela amagama agcwele, sibe sesibafundisa ukwenza imisho emifishane ngalomsindo njengokuthi nje, “Umama umi”. “Ilapho ke la beqala khona ukufunda.” (...Mhhh, (pause) I start by teaching them the five vowels a, e, i, o, u. They read these vowels until they know them. We write them on the board and the chart. We usually teach one sound per week at the beginning of the year e.g., sound –m-. When they know the vowels and the sound, we then form short words e.g –oma- and full words umame. After they can form their words, we then teach them how to form short sentences, e.g., “Umama umema umimi”. This is how we start teaching them how to read.)*

The teaching of the basic five vowels and consonant sounds was a common pattern followed by all the teachers. They followed specific steps starting with teaching vowels, consonants and blending consonants with vowels.

#### 4.2.6 Teachers' use of the CAPS Document

Teachers were asked the following question: "Do you follow the sequence of activities specified in the CAPS document when teaching literacy in Grade 1?"

All teachers responded by stating that they taught according to the CAPS document. However, some of the teachers stated that they had not read it thoroughly. They complained that there was not enough time to read it thoroughly at work since there were not enough copies for all of them. Teacher F responded as follows:

**Teacher F:** *Inkinga nje ngo CAPS document ukuthi siyawu sherisha. Asinawo ama copies enele for uthisha nothisha. Angikakaze ke ngiyifunde kahle hle, iningi ne paper work eskoleni okumele siyifundile.* (The problem we have been having is that we are sharing the CAPS document. We only have a few copies of it, and this is a big problem because I have not read it quite thoroughly. There is too much paper work at school which we ought to read.)

Another finding was that time allocated by CAPS for teaching isiZulu was insufficient. As a result, some learners went home at the end of the day without having learned any isiZulu. The number of groups in each class was also seen as a challenge. Teacher B stated the problem as follows:

**Teacher B:** *Khona siyazama ukulandela u CAPS document kodwa sinenkinga yokuthi ziningi izingane emakilasini ethu. Njengoba sizifundisa ngama groups nje, kukhona ezigcina zingasifundanga isiZulu ngezinye izinsuku bese isikhathi esinikiwe singahlangani ngenxa yokuba baningi kwabo.* (We try to follow the CAPS document, but the problem is that there are many children, so in a day there is a chance that some will leave school without doing the isiZulu lesson, as prescribed by the CAPS document, as we teach them in different groups and according to their levels.)

Another finding was identified by teacher C. She mentioned that the CAPS document is the foundation of everything she teaches. She responded as follows:

**Teacher C:** *I CAPS document iyasisiza kakhulu, iyona engumgogodla wakho konke esikufundisayo. Silandela yona impela noma ke singenawo enele bonke othisha.* (The CAPS document is helping us a lot; it is the pillar of everything we are teaching although we do not have enough copies for each educator.)

All teachers seemed to be familiar with the CAPS document and used it as a guide for teaching. However, teachers had almost the same problems. They all complained about overcrowded classes that prevented learners from getting adequate tuition for the day, as recommended by the CAPS document.

#### **4.2.7 Teachers' use of the Annual Teaching Plans for teaching isiZulu Literacy in the Foundation Phase**

Teaching plans in the CAPS document give teachers guidelines for the themes, content topics and formal assessments to follow in daily lessons in two-week intervals during the school terms. The subject advisors provide these teaching plans. They have been formulated from the instructions in the CAPS document. The reworked teaching plan helps teachers cover their teaching adequately as the teaching plans in the CAPS document are designed for a 2-week cycle. Teachers claim that some learners need more than two weeks to master certain topics.

The question asked was: "How are the teaching plans helpful in your teaching of isiZulu literacy in the Grade 1 classroom?" Through this question, the researcher wanted to understand how teachers made use of the teaching plans when teaching literacy in isiZulu in the Grade 1 classroom.

All six teachers responded by stating that they were using the teaching plans. However, they identified some challenges in following the teaching plans step-by-step. The following are the findings based on teachers' responses to this question.

All six teachers stated that the teaching plans were of great help as they offered guidelines of what to teach and when to teach. However, they did not follow the teaching plans step-by-step because of the time allocated. They sometimes needed to adjust the lessons according to the learners' pace. Teacher A responded as follows:

**Teacher A:** *Iyangisiza impela I teaching plan ngokungilekelela ukuthi ngifundiseni, nini, nomake ngingayilandeli kahle ngoba izingane phela ezingilidayo hayi yona. Kuba nezingane ezisilelayo, ngeke ke ngizishiye nje zingasizakalile, kumele ngizicathulise nazo. Uma nje kade kuvaliwe, kuba yinkinga ngoba bayakhohlwa, bese kumele ngibuyele emuva kulokho ebesesikufundile. Kunzima ke ukuyilandela step by step I teaching plan. (It helps me a lot as it guides me on what and when to teach but I don't follow it as I am supposed to. It is the children that lead us. Some get left behind because of their level as they are not of the same level. With some, you can continue, but with some, you cannot.)*

All six teachers responded by stating that they teach Grade 1 in groups according to their abilities. For example, teacher F responded as follows:

**Teacher F:** *Yebo, siyazama khona noma kunzima. Ziningi izingane esizifundisayo futhi ke nama group aba maningi ngenxa yobuningi babo. Inkinga yayo nje ukuthi ithatha sengathi izingane zikwi level eyodwa kanti akunjalo. Lokhu kwenza singakwazi ukuyilandela ngendlela efanele. (Yes, we try to follow the teaching plan but the problem is that there are many children, we have many groups and we don't teach them all at the same time. The teaching plan is designed as if learners are taught in one group with the same level of learning and that is not the case. This makes us unable to follow it as we are supposed to.)*

All the teachers seemed to be aware of the content of the teaching plans; however, they stated that they did not follow the plan as they were supposed to. The problems identified were: overcrowding of learners per class, the group teaching and a workload which made it impossible to follow the teaching plan, as required by the DBE.

#### **4.2.8 Resources for Teaching isiZulu Literacy**

The question posed to the teachers was: "What other teaching resources do you use when teaching isiZulu literacy in the Grade 1 classroom?" The aim of this question was to understand the factors that influence teachers when teaching isiZulu literacy and to know the different resources used when teaching literacy. Teachers responded by stating that, they did use different resources, e.g. DoE workbooks, big books, small books/readers, pictures,

magazines and textbooks. However, some challenges were identified with using some of the resources as shown below.

### **DBE workbooks**

All teachers mentioned that they used DBE workbooks as one of the resources when teaching literacy in Grade 1. They identified some challenges they had experienced regarding the workbooks. The challenges included insufficient time for learners to do workbook activities at school, and, as a result, these were given to them as homework.

**Teacher A:** *Enye inkinga ngawo ukuthi asikho kahle isikhathi sokwenza ama activities e workbook eskoleni, noma sibanika as homework, abanye abazali bamane bababhalele nje ikakhulukazi laba abangakakwazi ukuzifundela ngabodwana. (The other problem we have been having is that there is not enough time to do the workbook activities at school, and when you give them as homework, some parents write for them, especially those who cannot read on their own.)*

Another finding, observed by teacher B, was that workbooks were written in a dialect different from the standard isiZulu. Teacher B, in a response regarding the workbooks, commented that:

**Teacher B:** *Siyawasebenzisa impela ama workbooks kodwa enye inkinga yawo ukuthi abuye angeneli zonke izingane. Abuye abhalwe ngolimi oluhlukile olungafani ncamashi nalolu olusethsenziswa kulendawo. Nezinyanga zonyaka kwazona bazibhala ngeSingisi esiyisiZulu njengokuthi uDisemba bangasho ukuthi uZibandlela. (We use learners' workbooks but we sometimes experience problems of shortages. The other challenge we have seen is that they sometimes use language that is not the same as the language used in this area. They also write months of the year by just translating from English to isiZulu like "Disemba" instead of writing it in isiZulu as "uZibandlela".)*

### **Big books**

All six teachers mentioned that they also used big books in the teaching of literacy in Grade 1. They mentioned that the big books were at the appropriate level for the learners and that they had many pictures and less print. Teachers C, D, E, and F identified the shortage of these

books as a problem. As a result, they shared the books with other teachers, and they repeated the stories many times. Teacher C responded as follows:

**Teacher C:** *Sisebenzisa nama big books akwi level yabantwana ukufundisa ukufunda nge shared reading, noma ke enganele siwasherisha nabanye othisha kwa Grade 1 siphinde siyifundise siyiphinde nangaphezu kuka 3 nje ngonyaka. Sikhetha ama big books anezithombe eziningi nombhalo olula ongemuningi futhi. (We also use big books when teaching reading in isiZulu. We choose big books that are at their level, with a bold print, more pictures, and less print. The challenge we have been having is that there are not enough, which results in us sharing with other teachers in Grade 1 and also repeating the same book even more than three times.)*

### **Small reading books**

All teachers stated that they also used small reading books at the end of the second term. These are used when learners can read most of the words on their own. They further stated that they used small books for group guided reading and individual reading. They commented that the small books were similar to the big books they had. They are in a group of six books that can be used by individual learners in a group. Teacher B responded as follows:

**Teacher B:** *Uma sekophela I term yesibili, sebekwazi ukufunda amagama amaningi sisebenzisa ama small books ukwenzisa I group guided reading kanye ne individual reading. Ama small books ahamba nga six. Ayincwadi encane kodwa ethathelwe encwadini enkulu eyi big book. (At the end of the second term when they can read, we then use small books for group guided reading and individual reading. The small books are in groups of six which is the small book version of the big book.)*

### **Pictures and newspapers**

All teachers mentioned that, in addition to the books, they also used pictures from magazines and newspapers when teaching literacy in Grade 1.

They used the look-and-say method when teaching phonics. Below is the response from teacher B:

**Teacher B:** *Sibuye sisebenzise izithombe from ama magazines noma from u newspaper ukufundisa abantwana. Ngingathatha isithombe sikatamatisi, ngibabuze ukuthi babonani, futhi lelogama liqala ngamuphi umsindo.* (We also teach by using pictures from magazines or newspapers where maybe you teach the letter “t”. I show learners the picture of a tomato and ask them what is in the picture. The learners will respond that they see “utamatisi” (tomato). That is when the teacher tells them that this is the sound –t- as in tomatoes “umsindo katamatisi”.)

### **Textbooks**

All teachers reported that they also used textbooks for reading. They all stated that the textbooks are used when learners have mastered the sounds well. They read short stories made of words from the sounds they have learned. The teachers stated that learners read short stories in the textbooks that are based on the sounds learned. This gives them the skills to read independently. Teacher F stated as follows:

**Teacher F:** *Sibe sesibanika incwadi uMasihambisane ukuba bafunde ndatshana enalohlamvu akade belufunda.* (We then give them a short story to read from *uMasihambisane* that is based on those sounds they were learning.)

Teaching resources such as pictures, newspapers, the DBE workbooks, big books, textbooks, were an important factor in teaching literacy in isiZulu. Hence, teachers reported challenges in the shortages of resources.

#### **4.2.9 Teaching of Writing in isiZulu**

Teachers were asked to answer the following: “Explain how you introduce writing to learners in Grade 1.” The aim of this was to understand the teachers’ knowledge of teaching writing, particularly of how they teach learners in Grade 1 to write in isiZulu for the first time. The following are the findings from the teachers’ responses. Teacher F said that they began early during the first week of school to teach learners to write in isiZulu. She further highlighted that they did not want to delay learners. She responded as follows:

**Teacher F:** *Ngiqala ngokubafundisa umsindo –o- (indilinga) okuyiwona esiwubona ulula ukuwufundisa nokuwubhala. Uma sebewufundile, bawubhala emoyeni, ngesandla phezu kwama desk abo, bawubhale phansi, baphinde bawubhale emhlane womunye umfundi.* (I start by teaching them the letter –o (the circle), which we find the easiest to learn first. They write it in the air, on their desks, on the floor and on each other.)

The following is an extract from teacher E:

**Teacher E:** *...mhhhh, mina ngiqala ngokuthi ababhale amagama abo. Bawabhala bewabukela kulawa abhalwe yimi anamathiselwe phambi kwabo.* (Pause, I start by teaching them to write their names. They copy their names from the ones I have written for them and pasted on top of their desks.)

The following is an extract from teacher C's comment:

**Teacher C:** *Ngiqala nje ngibafundise ukubhala kolayini. Ngiqale ngokubhalisa ama patterns, bafunde nokubamba ipeni before ngiye kunkamisa.* (I start by teaching them to write in between the lines by writing patterns and also train them on how to hold a pencil before teaching them to write sounds.)

#### **4.2.10 Summary of the Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews**

The analysis of interview transcripts revealed some common trends in the teaching of isiZulu literacy, in the following areas. The teachers' PCK was valuable for teaching reading and was the same for all teachers. All the teachers emphasized the importance of reading. Reading was taught using integrated methods. All the teachers focused mainly on the teaching of phonics, but various teaching methods were used, including look-and-say, pictures, storytelling, play activities and reading big books.

Teaching resources were limited. For example, the time to teach isiZulu reading was inadequate because, as all the teachers mentioned, learners were at varying ability levels. Teachers strategized their teaching by grouping learners. Limited strategies were used for the teaching of writing such as copying letters and writing personal names by copying from name tags. The handwriting was taught through writing in the air, on the floor and copying patterns

for hand co-ordination. The teachers' implementation of the CAPS curriculum was hindered by limited resources and a limited knowledge of the CAPS curriculum.

### **4.3 AN ANALYSIS OF LESSON OBSERVATIONS**

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, lesson observations were conducted with the six Grade 1 teachers. Each teacher was observed teaching two lessons each, so a total number of twelve lessons were observed. Each lesson lasted for 30–45 minutes. Lesson observations were undertaken to explore the current practices that teachers used when teaching Grade 1 learners literacy in isiZulu in real classrooms. The lessons observed included shared reading, phonics, storytelling and integrated lessons. Integrated lessons included lessons in which other language skills such as listening and speaking were taught. Content analysis was used to analyse the observed lessons by looking for patterns in teaching practices. The information was coded during the analysis.

Selected lessons are analyzed in the next section. The analysis of shared reading lessons is based on teacher's activities before, during and after reading. Guidelines for teaching reading are specified in the CAPS curriculum document and Teachers' Guides for teaching literacy in the foundation phase. Further information is disseminated in teachers' workshops conducted by the DBE.

#### **4.3.1 Lesson 1: Shared Reading Lesson Using a Big Book**

**Title of the big book:** *Umndeni wami*

**Teacher's name:** Teacher B

##### **BEFORE READING**

Teacher B used 'before reading' strategies to introduce the lesson. She checked the learners' prior knowledge of sounds by asking them to read the letters of the alphabet as a rhyme. She also conducted a preview of the big book to enable learners to predict and think about what they would encounter in the reading lesson. All learners sat on the carpet in front of the easel board, and they were able to see the text clearly. The teacher asked questions that linked the story with what learners knew. She also discussed the cover page, title page, the author's name and she did a picture walk of the text.

### Checking learners' prior knowledge

The teacher introduced her lesson by reflecting on learners' prior knowledge. She asked the learners to read the letters of the alphabet on a chart while she pointed at each sound during reading. They read the letters of the alphabet as a rhyme as follows:

*“a-ngakhumbula, b- ka baba, c- we cici, d- we dada”*

This is similar to what teachers of English do when they say ‘a’ for ‘apple’, ‘b’ for baby, ‘c’ for can, ‘d’ for ‘daddy’, etc.

The teacher further asked learners to say a rhyme “*izinyoni ezinhlanu*”. This rhyme was not related to what the teacher taught that day. This is a kind of routine that the teacher used to create interest in the lesson while also developing learners' speaking and listening skills. The teacher explained to the learners that she would first read the book alone and that when she had finished reading, they were to join in by reading with her.

### Previewing and prediction

The teacher conducted the preview of the book by asking learners questions based on the layout of the text. Learners were also asked different questions about the book that allowed them to think more about the content. The teacher used pictures to enable the learners to predict the story. She also allowed learners to make informed guesses based on what they thought would happen in the following pages. The teacher aroused learners' interest in reading by asking different questions about the text. The questions the teacher asked at this stage included the following:

Teacher B (TB): *Ibizwa ngokuthini lencwadi?* (What do we call this book?)

Learners (Ls): *Ibizwa ngokuthi i-Big Book.* (It is a Big Book.)

TB: *Libizwa ngokuthini lelikhasi elingaphandle?* (What do we call this hard page?)

Ls: *Libizwa ngokuthi i-cover page.* (It is the cover page.)

TB: *Ucabanga ukuthi iliphi ikhasi elilandelayo?* (What do you think the next page will be?)

Ls: *Ikhasi elilandelayo i-title page.* (It is the title page.)

TB: *Yini libizwe nge title page?* (Why is this page called a title page?)

Ls: *Ingoba linesihloko sencwadi.* (It is because it has the title of the book.)

TB: *Uma ubuka isithombe kwi cover page, ucabanga ukuthi lencwadi ixoxa ngani?*  
(When looking at the cover page, what do you think the story is about?)

Ls: *Ixoxa ngomndeni.* (It talks about the family.)

TB: *Yini umndeni?* (What is a family?)

Ls: *Umndeni abantu esihlala nabo emakhaya.* (Family are people we live with at our homes.)

TB: *Ubani ongasitshela ngamalunga omndeni wakhe?* (Who can tell us about the members of his or her family?)

Ls: *Umama, ugogo, u aunty, usisi nami.* (My mother, grandmother, aunty, my sister and myself.)

Ls: *Ubaba, umama, ubhuti nami ke.* (My father, mother, brother and myself.)

## **DURING READING**

### **Modelling, prediction and teaching punctuation**

During the reading stage, the teacher first read the book alone to model the process for the learners. Learners sat quietly on the carpet in front of the teacher. They faced the easel board. The teacher used a pointer to point at each word as she read. During this stage, the teacher pointed at the pictures in the book while reading. She asked different questions about the text and the learners' families. While teaching learners how to read, the teacher also taught some conventions of reading such as punctuation. Some of the questions asked were: Why is –u- a capital letter in the word *Umndeni*? Why is there a full stop at the end of each sentence? She asked learners to guess what page came next and what they thought would happen next. The teacher used the learners' knowledge about their families to arouse interest in the reading of the book as they linked the story to their lives. The teacher used facial expressions as she read the text to the learners. She also reminded learners of the functions of using language structure and comprehension by recognizing punctuation marks when reading the text.

The findings in this section revealed that the teacher modeled fluent reading by reading a text to learners. She demonstrated this through left to right progression. She used different strategies when reading the text to learners, such as gestures and emphasizing the punctuation marks. She asked different questions like, "Why is there a full stop? Why is there a capital

letter?” The teacher also used a pointer when reading to the learners as she pointed at each word she read.

### **Scaffolding and reading together with learners**

During this stage, the teacher invited the learners to read the text with her. They all read together while they pointed at each word they read. The teacher asked questions based on the text. She asked learners to predict what would happen on the next page while she was still reading the text with them. These are some of the questions the teacher asked:

TB: *Ingane igqoke izicathulo ezinjani umbala?* (What color is the child’s shoe?)

Ls: *Ingane igqoke izicathulo eziphuzi.* (The child is wearing yellow shoes.)

TB: *Yini enye ephuzi oyibonayo kulesisithombe?* (What is also yellow in this picture?)

Ls: *Izimbali.* (It is the flowers.)

TB: *Uma ucabanga obani laba abasesithombeni?* (Who are the people in this picture?)

Ls: *Ugogo nomkhulu.* (They are grandmother and grandfather.)

TB: *Benzani ogogo nomkhulu?* (What do you think they are doing?)

Ls: *Bamile.* (They are standing.)

In this section, it was observed that the teacher allowed learners to read the text with her. She asked different questions based on the text and encouraged learners to use gestures and facial expressions when reading the text with her. She also encouraged learners to read with expression and intonation.

## **AFTER READING**

### **Comprehension and the use of applied knowledge and consolidation**

After reading the book with the learners, the teacher had flash cards of keywords pasted on the chalkboard. She asked learners to match the words on the flash card to the pictures in the text. Learners were able to take a word on the board and read it, and then the whole class read it and matched it with the picture in the text by pasting that word on top of or next to the picture. Learners took turns to do this.

The teacher then asked the learners questions based on the text. This was done to check their understanding of a story. These are some of the questions the teacher asked:

TB: *Konje besithini isihloko salencwadi?* (What is the title of a book?)

Ls: *Isihloko salendaba sithi “Umndeni wami”.* (The title of the book is “My Family”.)

TB: *Konje ubani obesixoxela indaba?* (Who was telling the story?)

Ls: *Ingane.* (It is the child.)

TB: *Kade emangaki amalunga alomndeni?* (How many are there in this family?)

Ls: *Kade eyisikhombisa.* (There are seven.)

TB: *Iliphi igama esilifunde kangingi endabeni?* (Which is the most read word in the text?)

Ls: *Igama “lona”.* (It’s –lona-.)

TB: *Silifunde kangaki, ake silibaleni.* (Let us all count the word –lona-.)

Ls: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

TB: *Simsebenzisa uma senzani u –lona-?* (Where do we use the word –lona-?)

Ls: *Uma sikhomba.* (We use –lona- when we are pointing something out.)

After reading, the teacher taught learners a rhyme called, “*umama*”(Mother). The rhyme was written on a chart in isiZulu. The teacher read the rhyme, and all learners read with the teacher. The rhyme read as follows:

### ***UMAMA***

*Akekho umuntu ofana nomama,  
Noma ungakhala, noma ungahleka,  
ubaba ngiyamthanda, nogogo ngiyamthanda  
nayudadewethu, naye umfowethu  
Kodwa hayi njengomama!  
Kodwa hayi njengomama!*

### **Writing activity**

In her conclusion, the teacher divided her learners into two groups. One group was asked to draw one person he/she loves in his/her family. The other group had to colour in the worksheet that the teacher provided. This worksheet had pictures of members of the family.

### **Teacher’s conclusion**

In her conclusion, the teacher was able to create a rhyme related to the story they were reading. It talks about “mother” and the text was about “My Family.” She modelled the reading of the poem first. Then she emphasized the punctuation marks and used gestures as she read. Next, she was able to give learners a simple written task to do in different groups.

### **4.3.2 Lesson 2: Integrating Shared Reading and Phonics Lessons**

**Title of the big book:** *Sipenda ngemibala*

**Teacher’s name:** Teacher A

Teacher A and teacher B were both from the same school. They planned their lessons together. Their method of teaching reading, using shared reading, was almost the same. The only differences in their lessons were in the introduction and also that teacher B taught learners a rhyme after her lesson and teacher A integrated shared reading with phonic activities.

#### **BEFORE READING**

Teacher A used different strategies to introduce the shared reading lesson. She checked the learners’ prior knowledge of sounds and letters of the alphabet through the use of rhyme. She also conducted a preview of the big book to enable learners to predict and think about what they would encounter in the reading lesson.

#### **Checking learners’ prior knowledge**

Like Teacher B in lesson 1, teacher A introduced her lesson by reflecting on what the learners had already learned. The teacher asked learners to read the letters of the alphabet on a chart while she pointed at each sound during reading. They read the letters of the alphabet as a rhyme as follows:

*“a-ngakhumbula, b- ka baba, c- we cici, d- we dada” etc.*

The teacher also activated her lesson by asking learners to say a rhyme “*nginengubo yami.*” This rhyme calmed the learners and encouraged them to focus on the lesson.

The teacher explained to the learners that they were about to read a book together. She explained that she would first read the book alone, and then they would join in by reading together with her.

### **Previewing**

The teacher conducted the preview of the book by asking learners questions based on the structure of a book. Learners were questioned about the book. This allowed them to think abstractly about the content of the story. The teacher used pictures to allow learners to make predictions about the story. She also let learners guess what they thought would happen on the next page and what page would be next. Learners' interest in reading was aroused by the teacher when she asked different questions about the text. Some of the questions the teacher asked at this stage included:

TA (Teacher A): *Lencwadi engiyiphethe siyibiza ngokuthini?* (What do we call this book?)

Ls: (Learners): *Lencwadi Ibizwa ngokuthi I Big Book.* (It a Big Book.)

TA: *Zitholakalaphi lezizincwadi?* (Where do we get books?)

Ls: *Zitholakala ema Library.* (We get the books in the library.)

TA: *Libizwa ngokuthini lelikhasi eliqinile, elingaphandle kulencwadi?* (What do we call this hard page?)

Ls: *Libizwa ngokuthi I cover page.* (It is the cover page.)

TA *Ucabanga ukuthi iliphi ikhasi elilandelayo?* (What do you think will be the next page?)

Ls: *Ikhasi elilandelayo I Title page.* (It is the title page.)

TA: *Silibizelani nge Title page?* (Why is this page called a title page?)

Ls: *Ingoba linesihloko sencwadi.* (It is because it has the title of the book.)

TA *Uma ubuka isithombe kwi cover page, ucabanga ukuthi lencwadi ixoxa ngani?* (When looking at the cover page, what do you think the story is about?)

Ls: *Ixoxa ngemibala ehlukeni.* (It talks about different colours.)

Other findings revealed that the teacher asked different questions by linking the story with what learners knew. For example, she asked questions about the colour of their homes, and the

colour of their bags. The teacher also discussed the cover page, title page and she did a picture walk of the text while she paged through the text.

## **DURING READING**

### **Modelling, punctuation, and prediction**

In this section, the teacher modelled the reading of the book. This was done while learners sat quietly on the carpet in front of the teacher. Learners faced the easel board while the teacher used a pointer to point at each word she was reading. During this stage, the teacher also pointed at the pictures in the book while reading.

Some of the punctuation questions asked were as follows:

- i) Why is –S- a capital letter in the word “*Sipenda*”?
- ii) Why is there a full stop at the end of each sentence?
- iii) Why is there an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence?

The teacher also asked learners to make predictions and to use prior knowledge. The teacher used learners’ previous knowledge of colours to link to her story. She also aroused interest in reading the book as she linked the story to their lives.

### **Scaffolding and reading together with learners**

During this stage, the teacher allowed learners to read the text with her. They all read together while the teacher pointed to each word they were reading. The teacher asked different questions based on the text, and she asked learners to predict what would happen on the next page while she read the text with them. These are some of the questions the teacher asked in this section, as well as the learners’ responses:

TA: *Lona upenda ngonjani umbala?* (What colour is this child using?)

Ls: *Ngobomvu.* (She is using red paint.)

TA: *Upenda ngasiphi isandla umfana kulelikhasi?* (Which hand is she using?)

Ls: *Upenda ngesandla sobunxele.* (She is using her left hand.)

TA: *Uma ucabanga, kuzopendwa ngonjani umbala ekhasini elilandelayo?* (Can you guess which colour will be used in the next page?)

Ls: *Ngophuzi* (Yellow.)

Based on this approach it is evident that the teacher allowed learners to read the text with her. She also asked different questions based on the text, while she allowed learners to make predictions about what would happen next, what colour would be used on the next page and what page would be next.

## **AFTER READING**

### **Checking understanding of the text**

After reading the book with learners, the teacher had flash cards of keywords pasted on the chalkboard. She asked learners to match the words on the flash card to the pictures in the text. Learners were able to take a word from the board, read it, let the whole class read it and then match it with the colour in the text by pasting that word next to the picture with a similar colour. For example, *obomvu* was pasted next to the colour red and *ophuzi* was pasted next to the yellow colour yellow.

Some of the words were pasted on the word wall under the correct letter of the alphabet. e.g. *ngombala* was pasted under the alphabet –n-; *sipenda* was pasted under the alphabet –s-, *obomvu* was pasted under the the alphabet –o-, *omhlophe* was pasted under the alphabet –o- and *ophuzi* was also pasted under the alphabet –o-. Learners took turns doing this activity.

The teacher then asked learners questions based on the text. This was done to check their understanding of a story. These are some of the questions the teacher asked:

TB: *Konje besithini isihloko salencwadi?* (What is the title of a book?)

Ls: *Isihloko salencwadi sithi “Sipenda ngemibala”.* (The title of the book is “*Sipenda ngemibala.*”)

TB: *Konje onjani upende okupendwe ngawo okokuqala?* (What is the colour of the paint used first?)

Ls: *Umbala obomvu.* (Red paint.)

TB: *Kupendwe ngonjani umbala ekhasini elilandelayo?* (What is the colour of the paint used in the next page?)

Ls: *Kupendwe ngombala ophuzi.* (They painted with yellow paint.)

TB: *Konje imuphi umbala okupendwe ngawo egcineni?* (Which colour was used last?)

Ls: *Umbala ohlaza njengesibhakabhaka.* (It is the colour blue.)

TB: *Konje yini lena eyayipendwa?* (What was being painted?)

LS: *I-Flag lase South Africa.* (It is a South African flag.)

### **Phonics Activity**

The teacher pasted up a chart with new words from the text. These words had missing vowels. The teacher provided name cards with vowels beneath the chart. She asked learners to place the correct vowels in the gaps. The learners were able to place the missing vowels correctly. The words were as follows, shown as before and after:

1. *Ob-mv- = obomvu*

2. *Sip-nd- = sipenda*

3. *Ngomb-l- = ngombala*

4. *Oph-z- = ophuzi*

### **Writing activity**

The teacher divided her learners into two groups. She asked one group to colour in the South African flag and copy the names of the colours of the flag which she provided, while another group was asked to copy the words with the missing vowels and place the correct vowel in the correct space.

### **Assessment**

The teacher asked learners to match the completed words that were in the strips to the colours in the text. The teacher checked whether learners understood the story by asking questions based on the text, the characters and the sequence of events in the text.

### **4.3.3 Lesson 3: Phonics (Blending of Morphemes to Make Words)**

**Teacher's name: Teacher E**

#### **Introduction**

Teacher E taught the phonics lesson. She taught Grade 1 learners formation of words by blending the morphemes to make words. Learners were allowed to form words with all the sounds they had learned. The teacher introduced the lesson by asking learners to say a rhyme

“*izinyoni ezinhlanu.*” The rhyme was not linked to the lesson she taught that day. This was a routine that the teacher used to check the learners’ prior knowledge.

### **Auditory discrimination and the identification of repeated sounds in sentences**

The teacher placed a chart on the chalkboard with four sentences, and asked the learners to read them. The sentences were as follows:

- i. *ULulu ulele ebaleni.*
- ii. *Ubaba ubona obabe.*
- iii. *Unana ubona inunu.*
- iv. *OCeliwe bacula ecececi.*

The teacher asked learners the following questions based on the above sentences:

TE (Teacher E): *Imuphi umsindo omuningi kumusho wokuqala?* (What sound is most used in the first sentence?)

Ls (Learners) *Umsindo u -l-.* (It is -l-).

TE: *Imuphi umsindo omuningi emushweni wesibili?* (Which sound is most used in the second sentence?)

Ls: *Umsindo -b-.* (It is -b-)

TE: *Imuphi umsindo omuningi emushweni wesithathu?* (Which sound is read the most in the third sentence?)

Ls: *Umsindo -n-.* (It is -n-).

TE: *Imuphi umsindo omuningi emushweni wesine?* (Which sound is read the most in the fourth sentence?)

Ls: *Umsindo -c-.* (It is -c-).

The teacher wrote those sounds on the chalkboard as follows:

<b>l</b>	<b>l</b>	<b>l</b>	<b>l</b>	<b>l</b>
<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>b</b>
<b>n</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>c</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>c</b>

## Blending the sounds with vowels to make syllables

Firstly, learners were asked the following questions:

Teacher E (TE): *Idingani lemisindo ukuze ikhulume?* (The teacher asked learners what these sounds need so as to speak.)

Learners (Ls): *Idinga abantwana ukuze ikhulume.* (These sounds need “children” so as to speak.)

TE: *Ake nibasho labo bantwana?* (Which are those “children” (vowels)?)

Ls: *a, e, i, o, u.* (Learners named all the five vowels.)

The teacher first wrote the five vowels on top then next to the sounds to make syllables as follows:

<b>e</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>i</b>	<b>u</b>	<b>o</b>
<b>le</b>	<b>la</b>	<b>li</b>	<b>lu</b>	<b>lo</b>
<b>be</b>	<b>ba</b>	<b>bi</b>	<b>bu</b>	<b>bo</b>
<b>ne</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>ni</b>	<b>nu</b>	<b>no</b>
<b>ce</b>	<b>ca</b>	<b>ci</b>	<b>cu</b>	<b>co</b>

The findings from this lesson revealed that previous work was used so as to remind learners of the sounds learned previously. This is based on the chart supplied with the four sentences written in different sounds. The teacher also allowed learners to blend the sounds with vowels so as to make the syllables, e.g.

*l + e = le*

*b + i = bi*

*c + a = ca*

They all read the above syllables together. Learners were expected to form different words using all the sounds they had read on the chalkboard.

### **Blending the syllable with another syllable to make a word**

The teacher explained to the learners that they will form words by using the sounds they have learnt before. This is an extract from teacher E:

Teacher E: *Namhlanje sizokwenza amagama ngezinhlamvu zonke esesizifundile. Mina ngizonenzela izibonelo ezimbalwa, bese nani ke nizakhele awenu amagama. Igama lokuqala lithi: a (pointing at -a-) + ba (pointing at -ba-) + (pointing at -ne-) = abane. Elinye igama lithi, a (pointing at -a-) +ba (pointing at -ba-) +cu (pointing at -cu-) +li (pointing at -li-) = abaculi. Elokugcina lithi ba (pointing at -ba-) + ci (pointing at -ci-) +mi (pointing at -mi-) + le (pointing at -le-) = bacimile.* The teacher wrote all these words on the chalkboard. She then asked learners to build their own words. The following is an example of the word building exercise done by the teacher:

$$a + ba + ne = abane$$

$$a + ba + cu + li = abaculi$$

$$ba + ci + mi + le = bacimile$$

### **Learners' participation**

The teacher then asked learners to build words using all the sounds they have learned. These are examples of learner's words:

**Learner 1:** *-i- (pointing at vowel i) + ci (pointing at ci) +ci (pointing at ci) = icici*

**Learner 2:** *-a- (pointing at vowel a) + ba (pointing at ba) + ce (pointing at ce) + li (pointing at li) = abaceli*

**Learner 3:** *-e- (pointing at vowel e) + ba (pointing at ba) + le (pointing at le) + ni (pointing at ni) = ebaleni*

This lesson demonstrated that the teacher first modelled the forming of a few words. She pointed at the vowel and the syllable which she read when forming a word. Learners were also able to form different words on the chalkboard, by pointing at sounds and syllables as they

formed different words. They also wrote the words they formed on the chalkboard. They were able to form words like *icici*, *abaceli*, and *ebaleni*.

Finally, the teacher consolidated her lesson by allowing learners to copy the words they had formulated together into their handwriting exercise books.

#### **4.3.4 Lesson 4: Phonics (Teaching sound –m- through play activity)**

##### **Teacher’s name: Teacher C**

Teacher C explained that the group of six learners had a language barrier because of not speaking much of isiZulu at home, but instead English. Their pre-school background was in English as they were taught in English as Home language. This is the reason they tended to confuse sounds written in isiZulu.

##### **Revision of the vowels**

The teacher asked learners to sit on the carpet in front of the easel board. The teacher began the lesson with the revision of the five vowels. She asked learners to name the five vowels that she wrote on the easel board. They all read the vowels.

##### **Presentation of the sound –m-'**

Below the vowels, the teacher wrote the letter –m-. She asked learners to say the sound of this letter. Two learners raised their hands, and another was able to identify letter –m-. The teacher asked all learners to read –m-. Teacher C told them, “*lona umsindo ka mama.*” The word ‘mama’ or mother in English is a familiar word to young learners.

##### **Blending the consonant “m” with vowels**

The teacher explained to the learners that this sound did not make sense on its own and that they needed to make it ‘speak’. She also asked learners if they were able to make sense or meaning of the sound. One learner responded that u –m- needs “*ukushada*” with a vowel so that it can speak as –ma- (‘m’ needs to “marry” with a vowel so as to make sense). All the learners participated in blending the sound with the vowels, for example,  $m + e = me$ ,  $m + i = mi$ ,  $m + u = mu$ ,  $m + o = mo$ .

### **Using play to teach the blending of consonants with vowels**

Learners were provided with a set of vowel cards similar to playing cards. These were clipped together on a coloured peg. One set of cards had all the vowels and another set of cards had the blends *ma, me, mi, mo, mu*. Each learner had three sets. The teacher asked general questions based on the colour and shape of each card. Learners responded by placing a card on the table. This game was similar to a casino game. All learners enjoyed this, but it was also a learning experience. The teacher ended the game while learners were still excited about showing the cards.

The teacher instructed learners to sit on the carpet for a word game. They were given instructions to make short and long words. Learners were allowed to shout out the answer when they had formed a word. An example of a short word given was *-ima-* followed by a longer word *-umema*. The teacher told the learners that she would tell them which word to make, and they needed to put that word in front of them and shout number one when finished first or two when finished second, etc. The game then started. The teacher told them to form the word *-ima-* with their cards. At first, the teacher had to assist until they were all familiar with the game. The teacher started by asking them to form short words e.g. *-ima-* then fuller words like *-umema*. Different words were formulated while learners learned to read through play.

The teacher taught sounds using play activities. It was noted that the learners enjoyed the game. Based on the observation of this lesson, it was evident that learners can learn a great deal when playing. Learners were able to blend sounds with the vowels to form syllables, e.g.  $m + e = me$ . They were also able to blend syllables to form words, e.g.  $me + ma = mema$ ,  $uma + ma = umama$ , etc.

The researcher observed that learners were given five words as part of a spelling assessment. Eight learners managed to get all words correct while one learner had four correct words. It is, therefore, evident that learners who learn through play, learn more effectively than when the teacher is not using an integrated method. This is evident from the learners' mastery of new words through the spelling assessment.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS OF LESSON OBSERVATIONS**

The analysis of lessons revealed that the teachers taught four types of lessons: phonic lessons, shared reading, reading aloud and look-and-say lessons. Some phonic lessons were taught using play activities and this was done to enhance the lessons and to make learning fun and appealing to learners. Reading aloud was integrated into all lessons observed.

Phonics was the preferred method for most teachers because teachers consider phonics as the basis for teaching reading. All the teachers commonly taught it as an entry point to teaching reading and writing in isiZulu. They therefore used a bottom-up approach.

The teaching of blends was commonly taught within phonics. The blending of sounds with vowels was the teachers' special focus. Teachers who only used the phonics approach their lessons were not exciting enough to learners when compared with those who used other methods such as an integrated approach and shared reading.

Shared reading was taught using big books. Teachers used teaching strategies including activities taught before, during and after reading.

The teachers did not teach writing. This was done only as a strategy for consolidation and the copying of certain sounds from the chalkboard.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the results from the semi-structured interviews and lesson observations. The data from the semi-structured interviews and the lesson observations were analyzed. The findings showed the teachers' PCK and practices used during the teaching of literacy in isiZulu. The teachers' knowledge revealed in the interviews was triangulated with data from the observed lessons. Teaching reading was a focus of their teaching. It was also noted that types of teaching resources available for use and overcrowding of classrooms were strong factors that guided how teachers taught literacy in isiZulu mother tongue.

The following chapter is based on a discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study. This chapter summarises the study by discussing the findings and integrating them with the literature. The findings are discussed and conclusions drawn. Lastly, recommendations are presented.

The following is a list of the different topics that will be discussed in this chapter:

- Adequacy of time for teaching isiZulu literacy in Grade 1;
- Teachers' understandings of the importance of reading;
- The importance of teaching Grade 1 learners reading in isiZulu;
- Methods of teaching reading in isiZulu;
- Teaching of phonics as the main focus in the teaching of isiZulu literacy in Grade 1;
- Teachers' use of the CAPS document;
- Teachers' use of the annual teaching plans for teaching isiZulu literacy in the foundation phase;
- Resources for teaching isiZulu literacy; and
- Teaching of writing in isiZulu.

#### **5.1.1 Adequacy of Time for Teaching isiZulu Literacy in Grade 1**

Four of the teachers indicated that eight hours was allocated per week for teaching isiZulu literacy, and two said they had seven hours for teaching isiZulu literacy. The study revealed that time allocated for teaching isiZulu literacy was inadequate since learners' capabilities of literacy comprehension vary according to their intellectual capacity. The teachers stated that some children needed more time than others. They also stated that class sizes were large, and, therefore, more time was needed because they grouped the children according to their capabilities. The CAPS document explains how the schools can select time allocation for teaching literacy.

According to the DBE (2011b) in the CAPS document, schools need to select one option regarding the allocation of time. In the foundation phase, if the school selects seven hours for teaching isiZulu per week, there should be three hours of English teaching per week. If the school selects eight hours of isiZulu teaching per week, two hours of English teaching should take place per week, which means more time for isiZulu literacy. Donat (2006, p.311) stressed that “teachers faced with limited time often feel pressed, at the very least, to expose children to a curriculum. Perhaps one of the most critical issues facing schools regarding the allocation of time is the indisputable fact that some students need more time to learn than others”. He further argued that various interruptions and non-instructional activities at schools affect the actual instructional time available.

From the lesson observations, it appeared that teachers ignored the timetable stipulated by the DBE (2011b) which states one hour of the school day should be allocated to reading in any language. It was noted that in these schools this amount of reading was not done at all. From the lesson observations, the CAPS document time allocation of seven or eight hours per week is sufficient to teach isiZulu literacy in Grade 1 classrooms. From the discussions held with the teachers, they divulged that they often exercise their discretion in determining the time spent on teaching literacy. Teachers’ discretion is important because teachers understand learners’ learning styles and pace. There are strategies used to address learning problems, such as grouping learners, which allow the teacher to offer tailor-made guidance for learners. Teachers who use their discretion on time spent to teach reading take into account learners’ individual learning differences and respond to their learning needs.

### **5.1.2 Teachers’ Understanding of the Importance of Reading**

It was revealed that the teachers believed that reading is an empowering skill that needs to be developed at an early stage for each learner. They explained that reading is empowering and gives the opportunity to engage with other skills such as creative thinking and writing. The teachers further stated that learners who reads more, gain additional skills such as speaking and writing and will also use these skills for their entire lives and in higher grades. The teachers also responded that reading is important to everyone for cognitive development. They added that reading fosters intellectual growth, autonomy, and independence in various learning contexts and examinations. Similarly, NEEDU (2012) asserts that reading is

important because learners learn to engage meaningfully with what they learn, but this depends on the way reading is taught. They further stress that reading is the most important skill to be learnt in the early grades. NEEDU (2012) emphasizes that Grade 1 learners should be reading independently by the end of the year. It further encourages teachers to pay attention to each learner when reading, giving attention to those learners experiencing difficulties with their reading. According to DBE (2011b); teaching reading is very important to foundation phase learners. It states that reading gives learners increased exposure to the child's home language and the child's second language. It further states that children's vocabulary development is heavily dependent on the amount of reading they do.

One problem noted during lesson observations was that most teachers did not emphasize reading, despite the fact that they found it important. Teachers concentrated on teaching phonics. Reading was barely taught in most of the classrooms observed. Out of twelve lessons observed, only four lessons were on shared reading and eight lessons were on teaching phonics. Teachers should make use of the time stipulated for reading in schools. It is recommended that they can also involve learners' parents to assist by letting their children read at home before bedtime. Schools need to have books to give to learners for them to take home for reading purposes.

### **5.1.3 The Importance of Teaching Grade 1 Learners Reading in isiZulu**

The findings in this section were that firstly, teachers highlighted that teaching reading in isiZulu mother tongue to learners in Grade 1 is important because learners need to be able to read different sounds in their language to be able to read on their own. Teachers attributed the importance of reading to the knowledge of sounds and of the language. Secondly, they stressed that reading in their mother tongue will assist learners with the basic knowledge of sounds, which is the knowledge to make up words that will help them to develop reading skills to be used throughout their lives. Lastly, teachers asserted that it is good for young learners to have reading skills in their home language at an early stage because such skills are transferable to other languages as well. All the participants in this study agreed that reading in isiZulu mother tongue is important. This is in line with the following researchers who support the teachers' beliefs that teaching reading in isiZulu mother tongue is important.

Cummins (2003) argued that teachers need to be proficient speakers of learners' mother tongue to teach learners meaningfully and effectively. Similarly, NEEDU (2012, p.32) states that "It is widely believed that there is a strong association between mother-tongue education and academic achievement. Children learn better in school when they are taught in their home language. When learners do not speak the language of instruction, they find learning difficult, and academic achievement is undermined." This view was reiterated in teachers' interviews and lesson observations. From both interviews and lesson observations, it was noted that teachers mixed isiZulu and English. During lesson observation; the teachers were teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy, but they sometimes code-switched and code-mixed English and isiZulu words in their teaching.

The researcher's opinion is that teachers need to teach pure isiZulu when teaching learners isiZulu literacy. To code-switch and code-mix the language is not advisable as it weakens the language and this will cause learners to be confused and not know how to speak their home language properly. This will result in learners mixing isiZulu and English even when writing class work. Teachers and parents need to encourage learners to read different kinds of isiZulu readers and local newspapers so that they can master isiZulu as their mother tongue.

#### **5.1.4 Methods of Teaching Reading in isiZulu**

The findings in this section were that teachers used only four methods when teaching literacy in Grade 1. Group guided reading and paired reading were not used by all the teachers. They stated that it was too early in Grade 1 to do group guided reading and paired reading – the data was collected early in May.

The DoE (2008a) indicated that there is no single instructional reading strategy that is efficient for all learners. Pretorius and Machel (2004) noted in their study that teacher's emphasis is placed mostly on the sounds where they emphasize decoding over meaning. The researcher also noted that some teachers were still teaching phonics the way they were taught by using the 'old style' of teaching. This concurs with the findings of Pretorius and Machel (2004) where some teachers emphasized the decoding rather than the meaning of the word they were forming when teaching using the phonic method.

The researcher's opinion is that teachers need to teach literacy according to CAPS and according to the teacher's handbook on teaching reading in the early grades. They need to practice different methods when teaching literacy so as to reach out to all learners with different abilities. Further, it was observed that some teachers were using methods recommended for teaching reading in English FAL which proves the lack of methods for teaching isiZulu mother tongue. These methods were in the Handbook for teaching Reading in the Early Grades.

#### **5.1.5 Teaching of Phonics as the Main Focus in Teaching isiZulu Literacy in Grade 1**

In this section the summary of findings discovered were that some teachers started teaching literacy in Grade 1 by teaching the letters of the alphabet from a-z (Alphabet method). They then taught five vowels a, e, i, o, u, followed by the teaching of consonants, starting with m, b, n, l, s, d, f, g, etc. This study revealed that they taught consonants in this order because they believed that the learners learned the sounds faster when they were taught in this order. Two teachers from the same school highlighted that they started by teaching the five vowels, then the consonants m, b, l, z, w, d etc, followed by the blending of syllables. After they had blended the syllables they then taught them to form short words, full words, and thereafter short sentences. The other two teachers also taught the same way as these two teachers, the only difference was in the sequence of sounds as they taught the consonants in the following way: m, b, l, n, s, t. (They also believed that learners learn the sounds faster when in this order.) The study found that all teachers supported the use of phonics. They strongly believed in teaching phonemic awareness in a sequence.

According to Blunden-Greeff (2015) there are different phonic approaches. For example, synthetic phonics is used wherein every word is examined as an individual sound. The sounds are then blended. The aim of synthetic phonics instruction is that learners identify the sound symbol and blend their phonemes automatically. Synthetic phonics puts accuracy before fluency. The phonic method has strengths and weaknesses. For example, through phonics learners can sound the letters and develop an automatic association of letters with sounds. However, its limitation is that reading fluency and comprehension skills are impaired if too much energy is spent on the sounding of the word (Blunden-Greeff, 2015).

From the lesson observation, it was discovered that teachers concentrated more on teaching words without meaning as they only concentrated on learners being able to form words from part to whole. Almost all phonic lessons observed were on the teaching of vowels and blending syllables with other syllables, and not on the meaning of the words they were blending. The challenge is that some teachers were still stuck to the traditional methodologies of teaching phonics. This could not have been discovered if it was not for the lesson observation. Teachers need to read the CAPS document and the teachers' handbook on teaching reading in the early Grades so as to understand different methods of teaching reading. The researchers' opinion is that teachers need to use integrated methods, as these learners are still young, so as to enhance their teaching for effective learning as recommended by the DBE (2011b) in the CAPS document.

#### **5.1.6 Teachers' Use of CAPS Document**

The summary of findings in this section revealed that teachers taught in different groups and according to learners' reading abilities. It was then revealed that time allocated by the DBE (2011b) in the CAPS document for teaching isiZulu was insufficient.

The DBE has provided teachers with policy documents. It was noted that there were not enough for each teacher. The other finding was that some teachers did not familiarize themselves with the policy document as some mentioned that they had never read the document thoroughly.

CAPS highlighted its aims as “to give expression to the knowledge, skills, and values that are worth learning in South African schools and to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives” (DBE, 2011b, p.4).

During the interviews, teachers mentioned that they teach according to the CAPS document although it was noted during lesson observation that some teachers did not follow the guidelines of teaching stipulated by the CAPS document. Each teacher needs to have a CAPS document so as to unpack it in order to understand different ideas and different strategies or methods of teaching literacy. Planning together with other teachers of the same Grade may help as others could be more familiar with the CAPS document and willing to pass on

information. Teachers also need to network with other schools so as to be able to teach according to the policy.

### **5.1.7 Teachers' Use of the Annual Teaching Plans for Teaching isiZulu Literacy in the Foundation Phase**

The findings in this section were that all six teachers responded that they had been using the teaching plans but highlighted some challenges in following the plan as they were supposed to. They mentioned that the teaching plans were of great help as they provide guidelines of what and when to teach. The problem was most especially with the time allocated because they sometimes needed to adjust the lessons according to the learners' pace. Teachers also highlighted that the teaching plans assumed that all teachers teach the same topic to the whole class at the same time. However, they all highlighted that they teach Grade 1 in groups and teach according to learners' abilities.

The CAPS document states that the annual teaching plans are the guidelines for teachers. Teachers need to draw up their teaching plan according to the school's needs (DBE, 2011b, p.23). When discussing the teaching plan with teachers, it was evident that the plan helped them to monitor their work, especially when they should start teaching a particular topic and when they should finish teaching the topic or section.

### **5.1.8 Resources for Teaching isiZulu Literacy**

This study reveals that there are common factors that make it very difficult for the teachers to conduct effective literacy lessons in their classrooms. Teachers encounter many challenges like the lack of resources, large numbers of learners in each class and also the learners' home background.

Mbatha (2010) also reveals in her study that teaching literacy in isiZulu is a challenge because the appropriate teaching resources are lacking at schools. She recommends that the DoE needs to fix this shortage of resources for the effective teaching of isiZulu literacy. Moreover, Cummins (2005) has also claimed that using the home language as a resource for reading is advantageous because if learners acquire reading skills in their mother tongue, they can be easily able to transfer the skills in learning to read in other languages. This will not be possible at all if the teaching resources in isiZulu mother tongue are not available in schools.

It was noted in observed lessons that some learners were sharing books when reading. This is evidence that there is still a shortage of resources of teaching in isiZulu mother tongue. This has a negative effect on learners as they will not be able to take a book home for further reading. Shortages of reading resources like readers, textbooks and also the lack of infrastructure, such as school libraries, classroom corners, and poor working conditions are strongly associated with poor achievement (NEEDU, 2012).

The researcher's opinion is that teachers need to improvise. They can use the local free isiZulu language newspapers in their classrooms and look for simple and easy articles to suit the level of the learners. Old isiZulu magazines can also be of value. Teachers also need to arrange the reading corners per class. They need to have relevant books which are at Grade 1 level so as to encourage learners to read in the classroom.

#### **5.1.9 Teaching of Writing in isiZulu**

The findings revealed that three approaches were highlighted that are used by the teachers to teach early writing in isiZulu. Firstly, some teachers stated that they started by teaching learners to write the vowel – 'O' as they found it the easiest sound to write. The strategy used in teaching included learners using their index fingers to 'write' a circle in the air, on their desks, on the floor, and on each other's backs. Other teachers started by asking learners to copy their first names that were written on the name tags and also pasted on the learners' tables. Lastly, some teachers explained that they started teaching the learners to write patterns. They emphasized that they started by teaching learners to hold their pens and write patterns in between the lines.

It was noted during lesson observation that some teachers did indeed allow learners to practise their writing skills by 'writing' in the air, on their desks, on the floor, and on each other's backs when practising to write different sounds. Learners must be taught to write at an early stage in Grade 1. Parents also need to be encouraged to enrol their children in Grade R because it has been noted by these teachers that learners who have attended Grade R learn to write more quickly than their peers who have not attended Grade R.

### 5.1.10 Summary of the Analysis

The analysis of interview transcripts and observed lessons revealed some common trends in teaching isiZulu literacy in the following areas. The teachers' PCK was not clear enough for teaching reading and was the same with all the teachers. During lesson observation, the researcher identified that some teachers were incompetent in teaching literacy in isiZulu mother tongue.

All teachers emphasized the importance of teaching reading in Grade 1, but they focused mainly on the teaching of phonics. Various other teaching methods were used, including look-and-say, using pictures, storytelling, play activities and shared reading where they were using big book.

Teaching resources were limited. Time was inadequate as all the teachers mentioned that learners were at different ability levels. Teachers strategized their teaching by grouping learners. Limited strategies for the teaching of writing were used such as copying letters and writing personal names by copying from name tags. Handwriting was taught through writing in the air, on the floor and copying patterns for hand co-ordination. The teachers' implementation of the CAPS curriculum was challenged by limited resources and limited knowledge of the CAPS curriculum.

The analysis of lessons revealed that teachers taught, at least four types of lessons that included phonics lessons, shared reading lessons, look-and-say exercises and reading aloud which they all integrated into their lessons. Some phonics lessons were taught using play activities to enhance the lessons and to make learning fun and appealing to learners. Phonics was preferred by all the teachers because it forms the basis of teaching reading. All the teachers commonly taught it as an entry point to teaching reading and writing in isiZulu using a bottom-up approach.

The teaching of blends was commonly taught within phonics. The blending of sounds with vowels was the teachers' special focus. It was commonly known as '*ukushadisa*' (blending) to form syllables e.g. ( $m + e = me$ ), ( $m + i = mi$ ), ( $m + u = mu$ ), ( $m + o = mo$ ), etc. Syllables were also combined to make complete words with the same consonants. Later the teacher

taught learners to combine syllables from different syllables that learners had already learned e.g. *icici, abaceli, ebaleni*.

There were noticeable disadvantages with the extensive focus on just teaching phonics when compared with teachers using integrated methods of phonics and shared reading. Certain learners were not at a competent reading level of isiZulu, e.g. learners in the group with an English background had reading problems. Shared reading was taught using big books. Teachers used teaching strategies consisting of activities taught before, during and after reading. Writing was not taught by the teachers except as a strategy for consolidation and copying of certain sounds from the chalkboard.

## **5.2 CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The findings attempted to answer three research questions below:

- i) What are the current practices that teachers use when teaching literacy in isiZulu in Grade 1 classrooms?**

The findings revealed that teachers used integrated methods of teaching literacy which comprised shared reading and the teaching of phonics. It was identified that teachers favoured using the phonic method when teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy to learners in Grade 1. The six Grade 1 classroom teachers preferred the behaviourist bottom-up approach as they started teaching sounds followed by words, and after that the formation of sentences. This bottom-up approach is criticized by some researchers who prefer a psycholinguistic, top-down approach. The teachers need to decide critically on which approach to use for learners to be able to read and write. They also need to consider individual needs as learners are unique with each learning ability.

In the psycholinguistic approach, teachers start teaching from a paragraph to words then to sounds, and comprehension is taught simultaneously. The psycholinguistic approach was noted when teachers taught reading through shared reading. This lesson illustrated how teachers can teach using a top-down approach. Two teachers in shared reading lessons asked comprehension and grammar questions where the aspect of literacy was enhanced. Nonetheless, it was observed that three out of six teachers were still using the traditional

method of teaching phonics, especially synthetic phonics that involved teaching words from part-to-whole while others taught phonics using play activities.

The teachers predominantly used methods recommended for teaching English. At times this can clash with certain differences in the structure of the language, especially in the teaching of phonics. They need to use approaches that suit mother tongue learning, like focusing on syllables, by blending sounds to make words e.g. *ba-ya-cu-la (bayacula)* rather than blending individual sounds, as seen in FAL, e.g. *c-a-t (cat)*.

**ii) What are the factors that influence teachers to teach reading in Grade 1 classrooms?**

The analysis of the data showed some constraints that teachers faced in their teaching of literacy in isiZulu which influenced their teaching. It was found that overcrowded classrooms led teachers to implement small group learning when teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy in Grade 1 classrooms. This resulted in delaying the progress of learning to read and write isiZulu in Grade 1. Overcrowded classrooms limited the focus on learners with different abilities. Teachers used group guided reading minimally except with the learners that were taken to special remedial classes. These learners were isolated from the rest of the class, and this also had its challenges.

The inadequacy of isiZulu mother tongue teaching resources and time limitations were among the biggest challenges that influenced the teaching of isiZulu mother tongue literacy, particularly reading in Grade 1. In particular, teaching methods books were unavailable to teachers. They relied on the translated English books and the *Handbook of teaching Reading in EFAL*. Teachers also mentioned that the time allocated was insufficient. They also highlighted that these were the factors that contributed to the slow pace of acquisition of literacy in Grade 1. During observation, the researcher identified that some teachers were incompetent in teaching literacy in isiZulu mother tongue. However, the teachers did not mention that they needed any development or workshops to help them improve their teaching of isiZulu.

**iii) What is the teachers' knowledge of teaching literacy in isiZulu in the foundation phase?**

It was found that teachers did not have enough knowledge of teaching isiZulu literacy in the mother tongue for foundation phase. The teachers' PCK was limited mainly to teaching phonics. Some teachers occasionally used an integrated teaching strategy as stipulated in the CAPS document but this was very limited. NEEDU (2012) claims that teachers lack strong subject knowledge for effective teaching and learning. This study is in agreement with the claim made by NEEDU because, out of the six teachers, only two teachers used the big book and taught reading and phonics, punctuation and grammar as part of Language Structure and Conventions. The teachers lacked a distinct body of knowledge comprised of the subject knowledge, curriculum knowledge and PCK of teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy for effective teaching and learning. It is critical that teachers read the CAPS document comprehensively and the teachers' handbook for teaching reading in the early grades, both of which carry essential information on how to teach literacy in this phase.

The teachers in the study used simple and conventional literacy methods of teaching literacy in the mother tongue. They focused on the autonomous view of literacy. The literacies embedded in social practices were not developed. They did not show dynamic new ways of teaching different from what they had used in the past. The teaching of literacy in African languages deserves to be prioritised since it is the basis of literacy acquisition for home language speakers of the African languages. This study highlighted the challenge that teachers of African languages are faced with, that of developing the pedagogic approaches that are appropriate to the African languages.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the current study, the following recommendations are made:

- Teachers should utilize the time allocated for reading, efficiently. They should devote enough time to follow guidelines stipulated by CAPS, which will assist them to improve the learners' reading skills. This requires flexibility in the usage of teaching time to develop the desired appropriate literacy skills.
- The DBE should train teachers to be able to teach literacy in the mother tongue.

- Teachers should always be guided by the CAPS document so that they can teach literacy effectively.
- Foundation phase teachers should also receive ongoing teacher development on teaching literacy in the mother tongue and teachers should also subscribe to professional development forums for further development.
- More copies of the CAPS document should be distributed to all foundation phase schools and the principals should make sure that CAPS is reinforced by close monitoring and continuous support.
- Teachers need to understand all the various methods and strategies of teaching reading stated in the CAPS document, so that learners' reading skills can be thoroughly developed in the foundation phase.
- For effective teaching and learning to take place in the classroom, the subject advisors should offer teachers more support and provide more positive monitoring.
- Teachers in the foundation phase need to be in possession of a distinct body of knowledge comprising subject knowledge, curriculum knowledge and PCK of teaching isiZulu mother tongue literacy for effective teaching and learning.
- It is recommended that teachers use approaches that suit mother tongue, e.g. to focus on syllables by blending sounds to make words rather than blending single sounds only as seen in FAL teaching.

#### **5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study has explored the foundation phase teachers' knowledge and practices of mother tongue literacy in Grade 1 classrooms in three rural schools in UMgungundlovu District. This was a small-scale study that was carried out with a small sample where two types of data collection methods were used: semi-structured interviews and lesson observation. Seeing that there was no departure by the teachers from the traditional approaches to teaching literacy in this context, other approaches to literacy, such as literacy as a 'social practice', were not used. Although reading was taught, it was taught superficially with limited teaching resources. Other factors that impacted somewhat negatively on teaching literacy in isiZulu were that teachers' PCK was also superficial and thus needed to be developed further. However, none of

the teachers mentioned the need for teacher development to help them improve their teaching of literacy in isiZulu.

Further research is recommended on this subject. The following suggestions are made:

- A similar study could be carried out on a larger scale using a variety of methods that might include document analysis and/or other methods, to increase credibility.
- This study has managed to give an understanding of the mother tongue, as one of the African languages, is taught in rural schools. This study was limited to primary schools in a rural area only; it could be expanded to other primary schools in urban areas where isiZulu is taught as a home language, so that conclusions can be drawn from a much broader sample of primary schools around KZN.
- A similar study could be conducted concentrating on Grade R, as most studies done have been from Grade 1. A further study could be conducted to explore the strategies used by Grade R teachers when teaching reading skills in isiZulu mother tongue.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a discussion and interpretation of the findings, conclusions of the study, and recommendations. The chapter concluded by addressing how the study has answered the three research questions. The study revealed that conventional teaching methods and practices were used by the teachers to teach literacy in isiZulu. There was no departure from the traditional approaches to teaching literacy in South Africa. Although scaffolding was used, it was used in the teaching of phonics consisting of teaching vowels, consonants and blends in the conventional sense, based on the autonomous model of literacy. Other approaches to teaching literacy such as literacy as a ‘social practice’ were not used. Although reading was taught, it was taught superficially with limited teaching resources. Other factors that impacted negatively on teaching literacy in isiZulu were that teachers’ PCK was also superficial and thus needed to be developed further. However, there did not seem to be a personal awareness of this as none of the teachers mentioned the need for teacher development to help them improve their teaching of literacy in isiZulu.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



6 May 2015

Mrs Nonhlanhla Ruth Chonco 972159116  
School of Education  
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mrs Chonco

Protocol reference number: HSS/0232/015M

Project title: Teachers An exploration of foundation phase teachers' knowledge and practices of mother tongue literacy in Grade 1 classrooms in 3 rural schools

#### Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 7 April 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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 discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....  
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)  
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Dr Thabile Mbatha  
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele  
Cc School Administrator: Ms T Khumalo/ Ms B Bhengu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3567/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za) / [snymanm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymanm@ukzn.ac.za) / [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)

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## APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



education

Department:  
Education  
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref.:2/4/8/381

Mrs NR Chonco  
PO Box 3095  
PIETERMARITZBURG  
3200

Dear Mrs Chonco

### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“AN EXPLORATION OF FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHER’S KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTISES OF MOTHER TONGUE LITERACY INSTRUCTION WHERE ISIZULU IS USED AS LANGUAGE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN 3 SEMI-RURAL SCHOOLS”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 15 March 2015 to 15 April 2016.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Umgungundlovu District

**Nkosingithi S.P. Sishi, PhD**  
**Head of Department: Education**  
**Date: 31 March 2015**

#### KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...dedicated to service and performance  
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 **beyond the call of duty**  
EMAIL ADDRESS: [kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za](mailto:kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za) / [Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za](mailto:Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za)  
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: [WWW.kzneducation.gov.za](http://WWW.kzneducation.gov.za)

## APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORMS

BISLEY HEIGHTS  
PIETERMARITZBURG  
3201  
09 March 2015

Dear Ma'am

My name is Nonhlanhla Chonco the Principal [REDACTED] in Edendale. My contact details are 0827465302 and my e-mail address is [REDACTED]@hotmail.com

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves the University of Western Cape (UCW), University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and University of Fort Hare (UFH) where they are collaborating on a NRF research project which focuses on early literacy development in African languages (ELDAL) isiZulu in KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of the project is to investigate current isiZulu literacy practices in the FP classrooms in order to determine the kind of practices that foundation phase teachers use when teaching isiZulu in mother tongue.

This study is expected to enrol three schools with six teachers in UMgungundlovu District, which will be two teachers per school. This will involve observing your teaching of isiZulu in your classroom and conducting interviews with you in order to learn from you. I will also analyse the documents you are using. I also request to audio tape you during the interview process and video tape you when you conducting a lesson in class.

This process will run from April to June, including all the processes (classroom observation, interviews and document analysis). There are no risks in doing this study as I will use pseudonyms (false name) instead of your real name and I will sign a confidentiality form as the information gathered will not be shared with anyone without your approval.

This study is voluntary, you are not forced to participate and there won't be any incur penalties or loss of treatment and withdrawal of your benefits when not accepting this request or when withdrawing at any time when you think you are not safe to continue with the study or when I do things which is not what we discussed or agreed upon. There are also no benefits when participating in this study as there won't be any remuneration or reimbursement but the recommendations will be written in a report which might lead to a positive change in the policy document which may not be recent but may be in a long term. All collected data will be written in a report which will be submitted to UKZN, UCW and UFH and the copies will be stored in my supervisors' office for five years where the paper data will be shredded and the audio and video tapes will be incinerated.

Note that this study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSS/0232/015M).

In the event of any questions, problems or concerns, you may contact me at the above contact details or contact the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and their contact details are as follows:

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION  
Research Office, Westville Campus  
Govan Mbeki Building  
Private Bag X54001  
Durban  
4000  
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA  
Tel: 0312604557  
Fax: 0312604609  
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT/DECLARATION

I \_\_\_\_\_ (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand about the study entitled NRF conducted by Mrs Nonhlanhla Chonco . I understand the purpose and procedures of the study and I also understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I confirm that I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and all my questions were answered.

I declare that the participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

In the event of any questions, problems or concerns, I know that I may contact the researcher at the above contact details or contact the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and their contact details are as follows:

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION  
Research Office, Westville Campus  
Govan Mbeki Building  
Private Bag X54001  
Durban  
4000  
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA  
Tel: 0312604557  
Fax: 0312604609  
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby give consent to participate in this research and will abide myself with all of the above.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of participants) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of witness) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Voice recorder consent letter**

**University of KwaZulu-Natal**

**School of Education**

**Teacher's audio-recording Consent Form for Conducting Research**

**Research Topic:** Exploring foundation phase teachers' knowledge and practices of mother tongue literacy in Grade 1 classrooms.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to participate in this study to be conducted by Nonhlanhla Chonco of the University of KwaZulu-Natal on exploring foundation phase teachers' knowledge and practices of mother tongue literacy in Grade 1 classrooms.

I understand that no harm will result from my participation in this study, and that the study is being conducted for purposes of improving the teaching of reading in isiZulu mother tongue. I understand that the material will be used for research purposes only.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I consent to being audio-taped during the interview. I understand that I have a right to listen to the audiotape before transcription so that I can delete or amend any of my remarks. I also understand that I have the right to review the transcripts made of our conversations before these are used for analysis if I so choose. I understand that everything I say will be kept confidential by the interviewer, and my real name will not be used in the transcripts. In addition, any persons I refer to in the interview will be kept confidential.

I understand that my actual words may be used in the research report as quotes, but they will be reported such that my identity is not known. I understand that the results of the study may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal, but my name will remain unknown.

I have voluntarily given my consent to be interviewed and I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher on 0827465302.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Administration: Tel: +27 31 2604557 - Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

**Letter to Principal requesting permission**

**University of KwaZulu-Natal**

**School of Education**

**M.Ed**

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

**Request for permission to conduct research in your school**

My name is Nonhlanhla Chonco. I am a researcher studying Master of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am carrying out a study on exploring foundation phase teachers' knowledge and practices of mother tongue literacy in Grade 1 classrooms.

My research will benefit the institution where it is conducted, as well as the South African educational system in improving the teaching of reading in isiZulu mother tongue literacy.

This is my request for permission to conduct my study at your school. The study will involve direct classroom observations and an interview with teachers teaching Grade 1 isiZulu as Mother tongue. The interview will be audio recorded and the lesson observation will be video recorded.

Giving permission in this study is entirely voluntary, no harm is envisaged, and all information collected from teacher will be treated as confidential and names not known.

My research results will be presented in my research report may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal. In order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, all names I use will be pseudonyms.

I will provide you with a summary of my research results on completion if you would like me to.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

**Name:** Chonco Nonhlanhla Ruth

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number:** **0827465302**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal consent letter**

**University of KwaZulu-Natal**

**School of Education**

**Principal's Informed Consent Form for Conducting Research in Grade 1 isiZulu classroom**

**Research Topic:** Exploring foundation phase teachers' knowledge and practices of mother tongue literacy in Grade 1 classrooms.

I \_\_\_\_\_, the principal of \_\_\_\_\_ give permission to Nonhlanhla Chonco of the University of KwaZulu-Natal to conduct the study on exploring foundation phase teachers' knowledge and practices of mother tongue literacy in Grade 1 classrooms.

I understand that the study will involve interviews and observations. I also understand that no harm will result from my teachers' and my students' participation in this study, and that the study is being conducted for purposes of improving the teaching of reading in isiZulu mother tongue in our schools. This permission is on condition that the material will be used for research purposes only.

This consent does not oblige the teacher to participate and I understand that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that the real name of my school will not be used in the transcripts. I also understand that the names of the participating teachers and those of the people they will refer to in the interview will be kept confidential.

I understand that the results of the study will be presented in the research report, may be presented at a conference and/or published in an academic journal, but the name of my school and that of the teachers will remain unknown.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE AND PROTOCOL

Teacher	Observer
<b>Grade: 1</b>	<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>
Observation focus (strategies, activities, learners actions, learners response, teachers experiences)	
<p>Teaching practices utilised during teaching and experiences encountered.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listening and Speaking               <p><b><i>Phonics</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies letter-sound of most single letters (a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,i,j,k,l,m,n,o,p,q,r,s,t,u,v,w,x,y, z)</li> <li>• Teacher needs to revise the above sounds.</li> <li>• At this stage learners need to know and able to identify vowels a,e,i,o,u.</li> <li>• Teacher add sound like m-a, m-e, m-i, m-o etc</li> <li>• Builds up and breaks down 3 letters using sounds learned (i-m-a, u-m-i, o-m-i.)</li> <li>• At this stage learners are able to read the words uma, imi, omi etc.</li> <li>• Integration of listening and speaking with reading activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Reading               <p><b><i>Shared reading</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the teacher asking learners to make predictions from the title and pictures?</li> <li>• Are learners able to make prediction from the title and pictures?</li> <li>• Are learners listening and comprehension skills being developed?</li> <li>• Do learners talk about the story?</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Group Guided reading</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the teacher introduces group guided reading.</li> <li>• Reads aloud with the teacher in groups and the whole group reads the same story.</li> <li>• Are learners able to read the book on their own?</li> <li>• Reads with increasing fluency and expression.</li> <li>• Shows and understanding of punctuation marks when reading aloud.</li> <li>• Begins to build a sight vocabulary learned from various reading strategies.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner Participation</li> <li>• Learner reactions</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Teacher experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom atmosphere</li> <li>• Work management</li> <li>• Teaching goals</li> <li>• Material used</li> <li>• Students motivation</li> </ul>	ii)
<p><b>Comment on what the researcher has learned. Discuss things that require further engagement. Comment on intervention (where applicable).</b></p>	iii)

3. Would you like to add anything else about reading in isiZulu or about anything in Literacy?

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## CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

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### A. PRE-OBSERVATION DATA

Teacher (Pseudonym): .....Date: .....

School (Pseudonym): .....Duration of the lesson: .....

Grade: .....Number of learners: .....Subject: .....

Content Area: .....Lesson Topic: .....

Purpose/lesson objectives: (What the teacher expects the learners to be able to know, do and the skills to be acquired by the end of the lesson)

.....  
.....  
.....

Placement of lesson within the unit of study: (Note which stage the lesson represents: a new topic / the lesson is part of the consecutive lessons taught under the identified topic)

.....  
.....

Lessons previously taught that have built up to the new lesson:

.....  
.....  
.....

Learning and teaching support materials identified to be used and how they will be used:

.....  
.....

How will learners be assessed for this lesson?

.....  
.....

**B. THE OBSERVATION**

Select one from scale:

0=not observed; 1=minimal; 2 = to some extent; 3= very descriptive of the observation

1. INTRODUCTION OF THE LESSON		COMMENTS TO JUSTIFY RATING
<p><b>1a: Learners are given opportunities to reflect on their own previous learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher starts the lesson with learners reflecting on what they have already learned</li> <li>• Teacher uses questioning to activate learners' prior knowledge</li> <li>• Learners write in their books about their learning</li> <li>• Learners use the chalkboard to demonstrate their understanding of a previous lesson</li> </ul> <p><u>Shared Writing:</u> Before Writing – the teacher brainstorms ideas with learners and encourages them to talk about their experiences</p>		
<p><b>1b: Teacher provides clear learning goals to learners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher explicitly states and discusses the learning goals for the lesson</li> <li>• It is evident that the learners understand their learning goals</li> </ul>		
2. TEACHER INSTRUCTION		COMMENTS TO JUSTIFY RATING
<p><b>2a: Teacher's presentation of new content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson content information is accurate</li> </ul>		

<p><u>Shared Writing:</u> Teacher teaches key skills and concepts in the writing process</p> <p><u>Guided Writing:</u> Teacher integrates language structures and conventions for writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher explanations of new content are clear and easy to follow</li> <li>• Teacher uses modelling approaches</li> </ul> <p><u>Shared Reading:</u> Teacher introduces the text as model reader (e.g. working through the contents and index pages, clarifying key vocabulary, 'picture walk') to the learners</p> <p>The teacher models reading and clarifies problematic areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The explanations include multiple representations and modes (visual, audio, etc.)</li> </ul>		
<p><b>2b: Teacher uses accurate and appropriate language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher uses subject-specific vocabulary appropriate for the level of students</li> <li>• Learners are encouraged to use accurate subject specific vocabulary</li> <li>• Teacher uses learners' languages as resources (where relevant)</li> </ul>		
<p><b>2c: Teacher connects new information with previous knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher explicitly connects the current concepts, procedures and facts with concepts , procedures and facts that students already know (as per Introduction)</li> </ul>		

<p><u>Shared Reading:</u> Teacher asks learners to use the knowledge from the previewing stage to make predictions about the content of the story</p>		
<p><b>2d: Teacher uses a variety of strategies to monitor learners' learning and understanding throughout the lesson</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher uses questioning to elicit students ' current thinking and understanding</li> <li>• Teacher engages learners in carefully designed practice activities with feedback</li> <li>• Teacher adjusts her instruction based on the gathered evidence of learner understanding</li> <li>• Teacher places learners in small groups based on skills or content they need to work on.</li> </ul> <p><u>Guided reading:</u> The teacher gives learners opportunities to work individually in pairs or in groups</p>		
<p><b>2e: Teacher asks questions that require higher level thinking</b></p> <p>Teacher's questions exhibit the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elicit learners' thinking , make them reason publically</li> <li>• Press learners to explain and justify responses</li> <li>• Probe for evidence of understanding</li> </ul>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage learner to learner questions</li> <li>• Provide a wait /processing time</li> <li>• Provide assistance/ scaffolding when learners struggle</li> </ul> <p><u>Reading for Enjoyment</u> Teacher teaches learners to answer a variety of questions e.g. to recall information, to sequence, to identify main ideas and details, etc. in a text</p> <p><u>Shared Writing</u> Shared writing is used as a scaffolding tool to move learners towards independent writing</p>		
<b>3. LEARNER ENGAGEMENT</b>		<b>COMMENTS TO JUSTIFY RATING</b>
<p><b>3a: Learners are behaviourally engaged</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners follow instructions, respond to teacher's questions</li> <li>• Learners are actively engaged in tasks given to them</li> <li>• Learners are not attentive</li> </ul>		
<p><b>3b: Learners appear cognitively engaged</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners ask questions</li> <li>• Learners share their ideas</li> </ul> <p><u>Reading for Enjoyment:</u> Learners are given the opportunity to share the contents of their books in pairs or groups or with the whole class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evident that learners are working/thinking hard on activities</li> <li>• Learner activities are of high cognitive demand</li> </ul>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher does not reduce cognitive demand of a task by doing most of the cognitive work herself/himself and then feeding it to the learners</li> </ul> <p><u>Shared Writing:</u> Teacher composes texts with the learners who contribute thoughts and ideas in the process</p>		
<p><b>3c: Teacher pursues the engagement of <u>all</u> learners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher notices when some learners are not engaged and actively re-engages them with a task or discussion</li> <li>• The teacher pursues cognitive engagement of all learners, giving them all opportunity to participate</li> </ul> <p><u>Shared Reading:</u> The teacher checks learners' attentiveness and keeps them focused on comprehension</p>		
<p><b>3d: The time in class is spent productively on meaningful tasks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher provides clear instructions on what to do</li> <li>• The pace of the lesson is appropriate to accommodate most learners</li> <li>• All tasks and learning &amp; teaching support materials are readily available</li> <li>• Learners who finish their tasks early are provided with additional tasks promptly or know what to do</li> <li>• The teacher is fully prepared for the lesson</li> </ul>		

4. ASSESSING LEARNING		COMMENTS TO JUSTIFY RATING
<p><b>Teacher provides specific feedback to learners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher engages learners in carefully designed practice activities with feedback</li> <li>• Teacher provides an assessment task that is reliable</li> </ul> <p><u>Reading for Enjoyment:</u> Teacher checks that learners are able to make sense of the texts they read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher provides descriptive feedback to learners</li> </ul>		
5. CLASSROOM CULTURE		COMMENTS TO JUSTIFY RATING
<p><b>5a: The classroom exhibits a respectful environment and learner and teacher appear to have a positive relationship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners respect the teacher and other learners</li> <li>• Learners clearly know the classroom rules</li> <li>• Learners talk when appropriate</li> <li>• Learners and teacher engage in positive conversations and there is social peer interaction</li> </ul>		
<p><b>5b: There was encouragement for learners' ideas, questions and contributions, mistakes are viewed as an opportunity to learn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners' ideas are welcomed and solicited by the teacher</li> </ul>		

<p><u>Reading for Enjoyment:</u> The teacher gives learners opportunity to read books of their choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learners are comfortable in asking questions and suggesting ideas</li><li>• Learners' questions are answered or discussed</li></ul>		
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**C. OTHER OBSERVATIONAL DATA**

**Description of the classroom:**

Describe the seating arrangement

.....  
.....  
.....

Describe what is on the walls.....

.....

Language(s) used for wall displays.....

Physical arrangement (note specifically if there are areas for different activities)

.....  
.....

Give an overall general description of the size of the room in relation to the number of learners and the impact thereof

.....  
.....  
.....

**Description of learner characteristics:**

Take note of issues like: Language diversity, gender, notable non-verbal behaviour...

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**D. AFTER CLASSROOM OBSERVATION**

**Post observation interview with teacher:**

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.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**E. REFLECTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

Issues to consider: What did not happen; Alternative ways in which the teacher might have handled the lesson .....

.....  
.....  
.....

## **APPENDIX E: TEACHERS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. Tell me more about your experiences in teaching isiZulu literacy in Grade 1.
2. How many periods of isiZulu do you have per week?
3. Do you think the time allocated for teaching isiZulu per week is enough?
4. In your view, how much time would be needed to teach literacy adequately in the mother tongue?
5. Why is reading important?
6. Tell me more about your learners' abilities in reading isiZulu.
7. What are the strategies you use mostly in teaching reading to your learners?
8. In your view how is reading in isiZulu important to Grade 1 learners?
9. What does reading mean to you as a Grade 1 teacher?
10. Explain how you begin when you teach reading in isiZulu?
11. How do you utilize the learners listening and speaking skills in an isiZulu reading lesson?
12. Please explain how you teach sounds (phonics) in isiZulu?
13. Explain how you teach mono-syllabic sounds, blends, words sentences, and unfamiliar words.
14. Explain how you introduce and teach an isiZulu reading text.
15. When do you introduce writing in isiZulu?
16. Explain how you introduce writing.
17. Further explain how you teach spelling, punctuation and short sentences.
18. Do you follow the sequence of activities specified in the CAPS document?
19. How are the teaching plans helpful in your teaching of isiZulu literacy?
20. How are isiZulu workbooks helpful in your teaching of isiZulu literacy?
21. Which other teaching resources do you use to teach isiZulu literacy?

### **Imibuzo ka Thisha ngesiZulu (Zulu translation)**

1. Ake ungitshela kabanzi ngesipiliyoni sakho ekufundiseni isiZulu ebangeni lokuqala.
2. IsiZulu usifundisa kangaki ngeSonto ebangeni lokuqala?
3. Ucabanga ukuthi sanele yini isikhathi okufundiswa ngaso isi Zulu ngeSonto?
4. Ngokubona kwakho, kungaba isikhathi esingakanani esingenela ukufundisa uLwimi LwesiZulu ngeSonto?
5. Kungani ukufunda okubhaliwe kubalulekile?
6. Ake uchaze kabanzi ngezinga lokufunda okubhaliwe kwabantwana bakho?
7. Iziphi izindlela zokufundisa ukufunda okubhaliwe ojwayele ukuzisebenzisa uma ufundisa ngoLwimi lwesiZulu?
8. Ngokubona kwakho, kubaluleke ngani ukufunda okubhaliwe ngesiZulu kubantwana abafunda ibanga lokuqala?
9. Ngokwakho ukubona njengothisha waka Grade 1, ucabanga ukuthi ukufunda okubhaliwe ngolimi lwesiZulu kubaluleke ngani?
10. Ake uchaze kabanzi ukuthi uqala kanjani ukufundisa ukufunda ezinganeni ezifunda ibanga lokuqala.
11. Ake uchaze kabanzi ukuthi uwasebenzisa kanjani amakhono okulalela nawokukhuluma uma ufundisa ukufunda ngolimi lwesiZulu?
12. Ake uchaze kabanzi ukuthi uyifundisa kanjani imisindo yesiZulu ebangeni likuqala.
13. Ake ungichazele ukuthi uyifundisa kanjani imisindo ehamba ngayodwana, ngamibili, imisho kanye nalawomagama angajwayelekile.
14. Chaza kabanzi ukuthi uyifundisa kanjani indaba kanye nesingeniso sayo.
15. Uqala nini ukufundisa ukubhala ngesiZulu ebangeni lokuqala?
16. Chaza ukuthi ukufundisa kanjani ukubhala ebangeni lokuqala.
17. Chaza kabanzi ukuthi usifundisa kanjani isibizelo, nemisho emifishane.
18. Ngabe uyayilandela yini inqubo yokufundisa ngokwebhuku luka CAPS?
19. Ngabe uhla lokufundisa (teaching plans) luyakusiza ekufundiseni ulimi lwesiZulu?
20. Alusizo kanjani ama “workbooks” esiZulu ekufundiseni kwakho lolulimi?
21. Iziphi ezinye izinsiza ozisebenzisayo ekufundiseni ulimi lwesi Zulu?

## APPENDIX F: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

### Instructions

Please read each statement carefully before responding. Tick the appropriate box **OR** write in the spaces provided as indicated.

Statements/Questions		Responses		Code
<b>School Teachers</b>				
<b>Biography</b>				
1.	What is your gender?	<b>Gender</b>		
		Female		1
		Male		2
2.	What is your age group?	<b>Age group</b>		
		20 - 29		1
		30 - 39		2
		40 - 49		3
		50 - 59		4
		60 +		5
3.	What is your highest academic qualification?	<b>Qualification</b>		
		BA		1
		B.Ed.		2
		<b>B.Ed ( Hons)</b>		3
				4
		MA		5
		M.Ed.		6
				7
				8
Other, specify:		9		
4.	What is your highest professional qualification?	<b>Qualification</b>		
		NPDE		1
		Diploma		2
		Further Diploma in Education		3
		ACE		4
		PGCE		5
		B.Ed.		6
		Other, specify:		9
<b>Language and School Teaching</b>				
5.	What is your Home Language?	<b>Home Language</b>		
		isiXhosa		1
		SeSotho		2
		English		3
		Afrikaans		4
		IsiZulu		5
		Other, specify:		9

6.	What is your ability in other official languages?	<b>Language</b>			
		isiXhosa	Read	Yes	0
				No	1
			Write	Yes	0
				No	1
			Speak	Yes	0
				No	1
		SeSotho	Read	Yes	0
				No	1
			write	Yes	0
				No	1
			Speak	Yes	0
				No	1
		English	Read	Yes	0
				No	1
			Write	Yes	0
				No	1
			Speak	Yes	0
				No	1
		Afrikaans	Read	Yes	0
				No	1
			Write	Yes	0
				No	1
			Speak	Yes	0
				No	1
		IsiZulu	Read	Yes	0
				No	1
			Write	Yes	0
No	1				
Speak	Yes		0		
	No		1		
Other, specify:	Read	Yes	0		
		No	1		
	Write	Yes	0		
		No	1		
	Speak	Yes	0		
		No	1		
7.	Which grade(s) in the Foundation Phase do you currently teach?	<b>Grades</b>			
		Grade R		1	
		Grade 1		2	
		Grade 2		3	
		Grade 3		4	

8.	How many classes do you teach in each grade?  (Please indicate in numbers)	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Number of classes</b>
		Grade R	
		Grade 1	
		Grade 2	
		Grade 3	
9.	How many learners do you have in each grade/class that you teach?  (Please indicate in numbers)	<b>Grades</b>	<b>No. of Learners</b>
		Grade R	
		Grade 1	
		Grade 2	
		Grade 3	
10.	How many learners according to Home Language do you teach in the grade that you teach?  (Please insert Grade(s) next to the respective language)	<b>Home Language</b>	<b>No. of learners</b>
		isiXhosa	
		SeSotho	
		English	
		Afrikaans	
		isiZulu	
		Other, specify:	
11.	What is the dominant language(s) used by learners in the classroom in the respective grade(s)?  (Please insert Grade(s) next to the respective language)	<b>Home Language</b>	<b>Grade(s)</b>
		isiXhosa	
		SeSotho	
		English	
		Afrikaans	
		isiZulu	
		Other, specify:	
12	Which Language(s) of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) do you use in the grade that you teach?  (Please insert Grade(s) next to the respective language)	<b>Home Language</b>	<b>Grade(s)</b>
		isiXhosa	
		SeSotho	
		English	
		Afrikaans	
		isiZulu	
		Other, specify:	

13.	What are the languages of interaction outside of classroom teaching (e.g. break time, playground, etc.)?	<b>Home Language</b>		
		isiXhosa		1
		SeSotho		2
		English		3
		Afrikaans		4
		isiZulu		5
	Other, specify:		9	
<b>Professional Development</b>				
14.	Have you attended any District workshops / courses on CAPS?	Yes		0
		No		1
14a.	If Yes, indicate the topic and the number of days attended in each workshop/ course from 2013 – 2014.	<b>Topic</b>	<b>No. of days</b>	<b>Year</b>
15.	Have you attended any District workshops / courses on Literacy / Language focusing on IsiZulu Home Language?	Yes		0
		No		1
15a.	If Yes, indicate the topic and the number of days attended in each workshop/ course from 2013 – 2014.	<b>Topic</b>	<b>No. of days</b>	<b>Year</b>
16.	Apart from District / workshops, did you attend any other professional development workshops/ courses in Literacy/ Languages in 2013 – 2014 (e.g. READ workshops)?	Yes		0
		No		1

16a.	If Yes, indicate the topic, organisation and the number of days attended in each workshop/ course from 2013 – 2014.	Topic & Organisation	No. of days	Year
<b>Teaching Material</b>				
17.	Have you been supplied with the required number of workbooks for the Languages (isiZulu Home Language) in 2014 & 2015?	Yes		0
		No		1
17a.	If Yes, are the workbooks in the school's LoLT?	Yes		0
		No		1
18.	Do you have copies of the CAPS policy document for isiZulu Home Language?	Yes		0
		No		1
18a.	If No, could you briefly provide the reason?			
19.	Are you supplied with the required number of different Readers in isiZulu?	Yes		0
		No		1
19a.	If Yes, do you have a copy of each for every learner?	Yes		0
		No		1
		No		1
20.	Are you supplied with the required number of Readers in the learners' First Additional Language (FAL)?	Yes		0
		No		1
20a.	If Yes, do you have a copy of each for every learner?	Yes		0
		No		1
21.	Are you supplied with the required number of Big Books in isiZulu?	Yes		0
		No		1
22.	Are you supplied with the required number of Big Books in the learners' First Additional Language (FAL)?	Yes		0
		No		1

23.	Are the Mathematics books in the LoLT?	Yes		0
		No		1
24.	Are the Life Skills books in the LoLT?	Yes		0
		No		1
25.	Are you supplied with the required number of Language posters / charts / word cards in the isiZulu?	Yes		0
		No		1
25a.	If Yes, how useful are these in your classroom?	Excellent		1
		Good		2
		Average		3
		Poor		4
26.	Are you supplied with the required number of Language posters / charts / word cards in the learners' learners' First Additional Language (FAL)?	Yes		0
		No		1
26a.	If Yes, how useful are these in your classroom?	Excellent		1
		Good		2
		Average		3
		Poor		4
<b>Teaching experience</b>				
27.	How many years of teaching experience do you have in schools?	<b>Years</b>		
		None		0
		1-5		1
		6-10		2
		11-15		3
		16-20		4
		21-25		5
		26 +		6
28.	How many years of teaching experience do you have in the Foundation Phase?	<b>Years</b>		
		None		0
		1-5		1
		6-10		2
		11-15		3
		16-20		4
		21-25		5
		26 +		6

