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**EXPLORING THE REDRESS OF READING DIFFICULTIES IN SOUTH AFRICAN
SCHOOLS**

By

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social
Science (Counselling Psychology)**

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DECLARATION

I, **Sithembokuhle Minenhle Sinothando Mashamba**, declare that the dissertation titled: **The redress of reading difficulties in South African schools: A textual analysis** is my work. All the sources that were used or quoted have been acknowledged utilising references.

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ABSTRACT

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (2016) results indicated that South Africa displayed a poor scholastic performance in terms of learners' reading ability. These results may be viewed as a demonstration that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) faces limitations in its efforts to redress the factors that contribute to poor scholastic performance. Consequently, the DBE has a responsibility to strive towards eradicating the reading difficulties experienced by learners in public schools.

This qualitative study utilised secondary data sources to identify factors that exacerbate reading difficulties in public schools in South Africa and to explore the strategies adopted by the DBE to redress reading difficulties. Through thematic analysis, the findings show that although the DBE has developed and implemented strategies and policies to promote reading, there are constraints to the implementation of these policies. The limitations are exacerbated by a lack of parental support, confusion about the curriculum changes, and failure by educators to teach reading skills, particularly in overcrowded classrooms where there are few opportunities for individual attention.

Keywords: *Reading; reading difficulties; redress in education; South African schools*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) stipulate that the primary function of educators in the foundation phase is to afford learners the opportunity to acquire adequate literacy skills, appropriate for their age and grade. However, it has been discovered that in South Africa, learners in the foundation phase often enter the intermediate phase with limited reading skills that do not correspond to their age or grade (DBE, 2011a). Consequently, intermediate phase educators are confronted with the challenge to redress reading difficulties that manifest in the foundation phase. Educators in the intermediate phase complain of limited teaching time and reading resources in overcrowded classes. Currently, various interventions and strategies have been implemented by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in an effort to redress reading difficulties in South African public schools. The campaigns were guided by the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal primary education through the promotion of literacy (Botha et al., 2008). These include participation in the: United Nations (UN) development campaigns during the development of the National Reading Strategy (NSR) (Botha et al., 2008).

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Literacy Decade 2003-2013, and also the Education for All (EFA) campaign, which aimed to increase literacy rates by 50% by the year 2015 (UNESCO/UNICEF, 1999). During the apartheid era, the education system in South Africa was grossly divided along racial lines with a separate system designed to oppress non-Whites by limiting their education especially the African majority. Msila (2007) posited that during the apartheid era, education in South Africa was in strife as it was pervaded by unequal access to schools, where Africans in attended overcrowded public schools, lacked teaching and learning resources, and had no access to funding opportunities. Further, the content of the curriculum for Black Africans was not sufficient for university entrance. The apartheid education system for Africans comprised poorly qualified school personnel, high drop-out rates, and poor results (Botha, 2002). In classrooms, emphasis was placed on rote learning and conducting assessments over comprehension among learners.

Thus, the education system aimed to reinforce the oppression of Africans through inadequate and ill-equipped education to minimise the educated labour force (Pon, 2012). Modisaotsile (2012), argues that this existing legacy of inequality and discrimination hinders progress in the South African education system and is part of the factors that exacerbated reading difficulties in South Africa. Hence, equality and redress for past discrimination and injustices became the main goal for the post-apartheid government and change in the education system was prioritised (Pon, 2012). However, while previously oppressed groups now have the right to access basic education, the education system inherited a considerable socio-economic disadvantage, which predominantly affect schools attended by Africans (Motseke, 1998).

The negative impact and legacy are evident in the current education system. According to Amnesty International South Africa (2019), close to 78% of grades 3 and 4 learners ranging from the age of 10 are having reading difficulties in South Africa, while close to 61% of these learners' struggle with Mathematics. Furthermore, 1.2 million grade 1 to 12 learners who enrolled in school dropped out every year due to poor educational support. From the above statistics, it is evident that there is a need for the DBE to redress reading difficulties affecting South African learners' education and developmental progress. Post-1994, the DBE established three streams of educational plans relating to academic, vocational, and technical development to redress past inequalities in education and particularly the different needs of learners to enhance learning in all schools (DBE, 2017).

In collaboration with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the DBE aims to improve the quality of learning in subjects such as Mathematics, Science, Technology, and African languages (DBE, 2017). To achieve this, the DBE has set targets, which include the provision of resources such as textbooks and workbooks for each learner. The Government's 2014 – 2019 Medium Term Strategic Framework visualised that by 2030, South Africans must access schooling and training of a high quality, prompting huge upgrades in knowledge and skills set after finishing their schooling or training (DBE, 2017).

The above introduction briefly outlined the background to the reading difficulties crisis. However, the DBE has implemented and adopted multiple strategies, yet the reading difficulties crisis seems to exist still (Bantwini, 2011a). Consequently, this study aims to identify the factors that exacerbate reading difficulties in South African schools.

Further, the researcher analyzes the methods/strategies implemented by the DBE in South African schools to redress reading difficulties, as this may provide different perspectives on the topic

1.2 Background of the study

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is guided by the Children's Act of 2005. This document outlines general principles and procedures when working with children. The Act stipulates that every learner in South Africa has the right to education. Despite this, the South African government has trailed behind in the promotion of literacy as various factors exacerbate the reading difficulties experienced by learners in primary schools (Bantwini, 2011a). The phrase "reading difficulties" refers to challenges experienced by learner when reading which emanate from a lack of assistance or inadequate support to acquire reading skills (Landsberget al., 2005, p.8).

The guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through CAPS categorise reading difficulties under learning barriers. In the CAPS policy document, learning barriers are defined as difficulties that emerge within the education system as whole, the learning site (school) or potentially within the learner him/herself which forestall both the system and the learner's needs from being met (DBE, 2011a, p.6).

With regards to teaching reading, educators, schools, and the DoE face an diversity of challenges or barriers. Botha et al. (2008) noted that some of the challenges include a lack of well-resourced libraries and books written in African languages, which debilitates learners from reading and learning in their home languages. Some schools do not have textbooks and reading books that are at the correct grade-level (Botha et al., 2008).

The National Reading Strategy (NRS) was established by the DoE to address South Africa's reading crisis. The primary purpose of the strategy is to promote reading in schools and across the curriculum for enjoyment (Botha et al., 2008). The strategy also aimed to help educators find methods of teaching learners with reading difficulties and involving the community to assist in the process of developing learners' ability to read competently (Botha et al., 2008). The National Reading Strategy (2008) stipulates that only 51% of learners can read at an age-appropriate level, thus the learning outcomes were not met by half of the learners. The NRS regards reading as a vital skill for improving learners' thinking abilities. It asserts that reading

gives learners the ability to explain and understand content read or taught to them. The DoE (2008) acknowledged reading as an essential part of nation-building and is identified as one of the most vital linguistic skills that must be developed in learners, particularly in the foundation phase. Cathleen (2000) noted that one of the ways to encourage reading is through self-selected texts or books according to individual interests to illicit the enjoyment of reading. When the texts or books are chosen for learners for academic purposes, learners may not reach the same level of enjoyment and enjoy the benefits associated with reading. Oberholzer (2005) concurred that the ability to read is vital for learners to understand the content that is taught at school as there is a strong relation between poor reading ability and school failure.

Field et al. (2007) described school failure from a systematic perspective, which views school poor scholastic performance as rooted in the education systems failure to provide fair and inclusive education services which may enhance learning. Whereas from an individualistic viewpoint, school failure is viewed as the learners' failure to obtain adequate skills and knowledge, resulting learning and reading difficulties which may lead to dropping out from school.

Hugo (2010) noted that learners who cannot read are denied the opportunity to obtain important information on cultural, health, social, and political issues that affect them. Baker (2008) believed that the poor results produced by most South African schools are due to the learners' poor reading skills. Hugo (2010) asserted that most educators beyond the foundation phase are not trained to teach basic reading skills to learners. As such, Geske and Ozola (2008) indicated that educators struggle to help learners with reading difficulties, particularly educators who did a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) as the focus is on pedagogical content knowledge and the training ranges from one year (full time) to two years on a part-time basis. Pang et al. (2003), on the other hand, posited that learners present with reading difficulties partly due to the lack of co-operation between parents and educators in the process of developing learner reading ability. Landsberg et al. (2005) concurred that in South Africa, the lack of co-operation between parents and educators contributed to the high rate of learners with reading difficulties.

1.3 Problem statement

Reading difficulties appear to be a concern in South Africa, which needs extensive research. The Public Service Commission (2006) stipulated that in South Africa, the international survey discovered that more than three-quarters of learners aged nine struggled to read for meaning. In 2006, this was just about as high as 91% in Limpopo and 85% in the Eastern Cape and in certain provinces (Public Service Commission, 2006). While the PIRLS revealed that in 2011, 61% of primary school learners could not read at their age-appropriate level in South Africa, and in 2016, 78% of grade 4 learners struggled with reading comprehension in their home languages and any other second language. The concern on reading difficulties in South Africa further increased when the 2014 Annual National Assessment (ANA) revealed a 56% average for grade 3 learners, which showed a need for more reading interventions (DBE, 2014.p,41).

Modisaotsile (2012) reported that many South African educational organisations were complaining that the country's poor scholastic performance, reading abilities, and progress demonstrated by learners raises a concern and request for more interventions aimed at addressing these issues. Furthermore, these organisations are concerned that the current poor results demonstrated by learners under the post-apartheid era resemble the results produced during the apartheid era. Thus, the DBE expected to adopt and develop more strategies/interventions to redress these issues as they perpetuate the adverse outcomes of the apartheid era (Modisaotsile, 2012).

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that exacerbate reading difficulties in South African public schools and scrutinise the methods/strategies adopted by the DBE/DoE to address reading difficulties since 1994. The findings may be used by the DBE/DoE or education-based organisations and other researchers focusing on the reading difficulties crisis in South Africa.

1.5 Objectives of the study

1. To identify factors that exacerbate reading difficulties in South African schools.
2. To analyse the methods/strategies implemented by the DBE/DoE in South African schools to redress reading difficulties.

1.6 Key questions

1. What are the factors that exacerbate reading difficulties within the context of public schools in South Africa?
2. How do the methods or strategies that have been adopted by the DBE/DoE in South African schools mitigate reading difficulties?

1.7 Outline of the dissertation

Chapter One- In this chapter, the researcher presents a brief introduction to the topic and the background of the study. The researcher provides an outline of the problem statement, purpose and objectives of the study, and it is concluded with a presentation of key questions that the study aims to answer.

Chapter Two-The chapter entails the literature review. In this chapter, the researcher explores previous studies related to reading, reading difficulties, how reading difficulties are addressed, and the diversity of factors that exacerbate reading difficulties. Important concepts and keywords are also discussed in the literature review.

Chapter Three-The researcher describes the research methodology. The methods and techniques used to collect and analyse data are detailed in this chapter. The researcher discusses the following: research approach, research design, research paradigm, sampling method, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, trustworthiness (credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability), and lastly reflexivity.

Chapter Four -The chapter entails presentation of findings. This includes the themes emerging from the process of data analysis.

Chapter Five-The researcher concludes with the discussion of the findings, which synthesises the findings of the study with related literature. Recommendations are also located in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The researcher explores reading in the South African context and also the background of reading difficulties, redress strategies, policies, and guidelines adopted and implemented by the DBE/DoE. The chapter is concluded by providing some of the factors identified in literature that possibly impede the success of the implemented strategies.

Randolph (2009) stated that a literature review is an analytical discussion of previously conducted studies pertaining to a specific topic. The purpose of a literature review is to facilitate an in-depth understanding of what other research studies or researchers discovered, and to present the current study researcher's views about the topic. For Boote and Beile (2005), the literature review aids the researcher to identify aspects of the topic that have not been explored in detail, especially in various contexts, which may be significance to the topic. The curricula spider web proposed by van den Akker (2003) will be used as a conceptual framework to structure this discussion. The factors that exacerbate reading difficulties in South African schools will be discussed in relation to each component of the model.

2.2 Reading: An overview

Reading occurs in different stages in a learner's schooling phases: first by finding meaning from a combination of letters that constitute a word then by finding meaning from a combination of words to form a sentence, which enables learners to understand paragraphs. In this sense, reading is a technical process as an individual decodes words to build an understanding of sentences and synthesize meaning. Reading is also a linguistic process since language is used for meaning making (Pang et al., 2003). Word recognition and comprehension refers to a learner's ability to effortlessly identify or recognise written symbols and words accurately. Comprehension refers to understanding text: verbally expressed, written, and visual (Droop & Verhoeven, 1998). Comprehension is considered as an active and complex process which consists of an act whereby the individual extracts and creates meaning from text. It enables readers to gain meaning from text when engaging in activities or reading texts. For Balajthy and Lipa-Wade (2003), the skill of reading is obtainable from a young age (approximately 6 years). Thus, with South African studies showing limitations in many South African foundation phase learner's comprehension skills (DBE, 2019), it is evident that

many learners lack a fundamental skill that may affect their future academic performance. Hence, the DBE is compelled to implement strategies or methods to strengthen learners' comprehension skills required across all subjects. Alexandria and Tankersley (2003) asserted that parents and educators have a huge role to play in developing the skill of reading and understanding.

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) research indicated that learners with guardians who read to them tend to have an improved reading ability (Howie et al., 2017). The research found that learners who have guardians who went to adult reading classes were more motivated to learn and read with/or to their parents. Guardians and the community must therefore, esteem reading and books. At every possible opportunity, they need to read to their children and urge them to read. Where guardians are illiterate, other family members can read to the children (Panget al., 2003). When educators provide learners with reading activities, parents and some educated community members are encouraged to help learners. However, with high illiteracy rates, child neglect, parents and the community tend to lack the capacity to fulfil this role in the South African context (Khoza, 2014). This leads to a possible rise instead of a decline in reading difficulties (DBE, 2020). Furthermore, revealing limitations and a growing need in the DBE's adoption or implementation of strategies or methods that may strengthen cooperation between educators and parents or guardians.

2.3 Reading difficulties

Reading difficulties are often confused with referring solely to reading disabilities. Reading disability refers to trouble with reading words or understanding text that emanates from neurological developmental problems. The learner's ability to read is affected despite their intelligence quotient; opportunity to learn; clear instruction; absence of general health problems, emotional disturbances, or sensory defects (Hugo, 2010). Extant literature places emphasis on learners with reading disabilities. However, the focus of this study is on strategies adopted by the DBE to redress reading difficulties among learners who have not been diagnosed with a learning disability. The reading difficulties, thus emanate from a lack of assistance or inadequate support to acquire reading skills (Landsberg et al., 2005). Some learners grasp the instruction pertaining to reading with ease or without much individual attention from educators. Others may need more assistance from educators as they may find it challenging to read as they were not provided with adequate skills.

Paris (2005) conducted a study on assessment and instruction and found that the learners' knowledge of the alphabetical order, phonemic awareness or the ability to identify sounds in spoken language is a crucial component of reading. Furthermore, fluency, that is the ability to read text coherently and with expression while adopting a fast pace, serves as predicting factors of possible future reading difficulties. Karanja (2015) also conducted a study and found that learners who have difficulties with word substitution, omission, and struggle with pronunciation usually experience reading difficulties. Areas where learners experience difficulties as identified by Peer and Reid (2001) and Walker (2000) include:

- Challenges with skimming through texts whereby learners are not able to read through text quickly to comprehend the content.
- Reading comprehension difficulties, where learners are not able to read a text with understanding, or struggle to understand the vocabulary used in text.

Further, the current study interrogates various approaches that have been implemented by the DBE. This includes a comprehensive analysis of factors that continue to exacerbate reading difficulties in South Africa's public schools. On this point, the OECD (2012) states that learners' academic performance is highly predictor of learner's school dropout, as unsatisfactory results reveal lower preparation for advancement through the educational system. However, learners' academic results are the visible part of a deep-rooted problem since the causes of poor academic results are imbedded in other factors that are more challenging to identify.

2.4 The redress of reading difficulties in South African schools

Iverson (2006) viewed historical injustice as damages or wrongs committed by people, groups, or organisations against others including those who are dead but whose relatives are still alive. Historical injustices often cause damages to a country or people who were victims of oppression. Wyman (2008, p.134) stated that historical injustices are wrong doings that encompasses four characteristics: The injustices or wrong doings were committed or sanctioned many years ago. The injustices or wrong doings were submitted or approved by at least one governing authorities, like a government or association. Numerous people were ill-treated as a result of approval or sanction by the governing parties or association. The

injustices/ wrong doings are infringement of major basic freedoms such as discrimination based on race, religion, or ethnicity. The South African historical injustice which included infringement of quality education gave rise to the legacy of learning and reading inadequacy and difficulties in the South African context (DBE, 2008). As such, the DBE has the responsibility of improving the poor quality of reading, as part of redressing what should have been addressed and prevented since the inception of democracy. In this regard, redress refers to the remedying or revisiting an issue that ought to have been prevented or addressed (Barnes, 2006, p.11). This definition of redress is confirmed by Wyman (2008, p.26) who notes that redress refers to a remedy or fixing of systems to rectify actions or damage caused by something or someone. Address in this study is defined as per Stevenson (2010), who notes that address refers to directing attention to an issue with the aim of not only finding solutions, but also revealing its impact.

In the context of this study, redress is viewed as actions and systems to remedy the injustices posed by the apartheid government towards poor quality of education and educational resources allocated to Africans (Chisholm, 2017, p.10). In other words, the DBE has a duty to correct injustices in general, including ones that occurred long ago (Wyman, 2008, p. 130). In this context, redress programmes are typically initiated by government and outline the administrative and structural criteria to deter the violation of human rights and reduce the effect of the wrong doings (Public Service Commission, 2006). Without redress and rectification, Wyman (2008) argued that unless resources are directed to disadvantaged schools, learners who should receive the benefits of equity in education will instead, experience subsequent discrimination. The beneficiaries include the children of the victims of an unequal education system that denied equal opportunity for learners to succeed. Wyman, (2008, p. 140) further asserts that emphasis should be placed on preventing those same injustices from occurring in the future.

The Public Service Commission (2006) White Paper stipulates that the South African government established the Batho Pele ('Batho Pele' signifies 'people first' in SeSotho) principles to guide a complainant-oriented approach and requires government departments to change and improve public service delivery. The Batho Pele standards advance the guideline of 'putting individuals first' and for the government to be service-oriented. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (announces that If the government does not fulfil the assured standard of service delivery, citizens ought to be offered an expression of remorse, a

full clarification, and a rapid and compelling restorative action; and when grievances are made, citizens ought to get a sensible, positive feedback. To promote service delivery, the DBE demonstrated that resources would be coordinated towards:

Training of staff: Educators complained that they were not given adequate skills to teach reading, especially learners with learning barriers. Therefore, the DBE has facilitated workshops offering the needed skills to educators. These workshops are attended by seniors entrusted to guide and teach these skills. The efficiency of these workshops may be argued as some senior members may not have the skills or adequacy to convey the content to educators (DBE, 2014).

Accessibility of education system such as learners to schools and educators to district officials/subject advisors The DBE Batho Pele principles inform that learners and education professionals have the right to report/complain about issues or challenges. Educators have been complaining about reading resources. However, these matters are still not dealt with in many schools. The Public Service Commission (2006) argued that the DoE does not have clear guidelines and resources of where and how learners and parents should report/complain. The lack of resources and well-organised accessibility to the system is one of the limitations by the DoE (Habibi et al., 2008).

Recording and analysing information to effect curricular change: The DBE is expected to record and keep records of the complains and challenges professionals and citizens report. Nevertheless, the Batho Pele redress action is ineffective due to the lack of facilities handling the grievances brought forward by South African professionals and citizens. Complaints and challenges concerning the reading crisis in South Africa are not dealt with as there are no resources/facilities specially designed or developed to deal with all these cases (DBE, 2019).

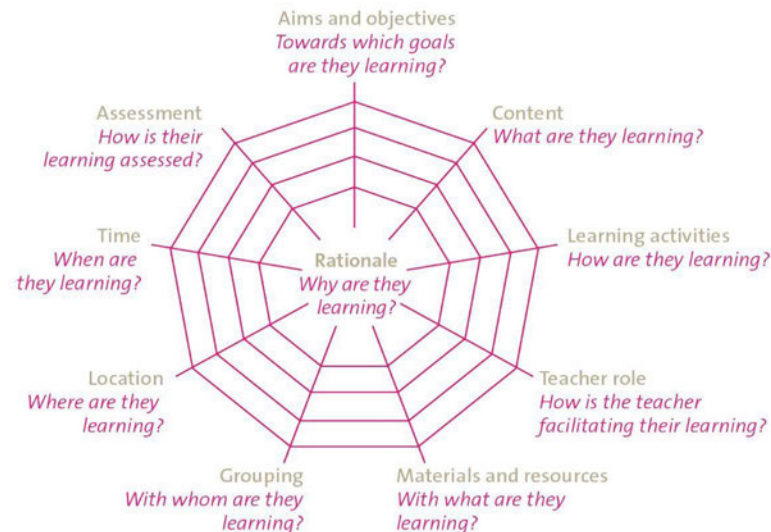
2.5 Conceptual framework

Van den Akker (2003, p. 8) designed a curricular spider web consisting of 10 concepts that serve to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of curricula as demonstrated in figure 1. The factors that exacerbate reading difficulties and some of the strategies that the DBE has implemented to redress the reading difficulties will be conceptualised through the use of the curricular spider web. This framework comprises questions that place emphasis on 10 components of the curriculum to demonstrate the interconnection and relevance of each aspect

in the redress of reading difficulties.

Figure 1

Curricular spider web



The curricular web focuses on the following key aspects as postulated by Van den Akker (2003, 11).

1. Rationale (*reasons for the strategy/method, and policy documents adopted to enhance reading*)
2. Aims and objectives (*goals of the curriculum, strategy/method and policy documents or plans to redress reading difficulties*)
3. Content (*the type of content and the ways in which it is taught*)
4. Learning activities (*facilitation of reading; type of tasks*)
5. Teacher role (*implementation of interventions to redress reading difficulties*)
6. Materials and resources (*selection of teaching*)
7. Grouping (*allocating students to various learning trajectories*)
8. Location (*physical and social characteristics of the learning environment*)
9. Time (*duration of learning/reading tasks*)
10. Assessment (*diagnostic, summative or/and formative assessments*)

The spider web utters the perceptivity of the curriculum and how the placement of its ideas is vital to ensuring the fulfilment of intentions assigned in the policy structure and in the proposed curriculum (Van den Akker,2003).

2.5.1 Rationale

What curricular strategy or method, and policy documents have been adopted to enhance reading?

Shugert (1979) defined rationale as the articulation or explanation of the reasons behind accomplishing a task. Brown (1994) extended this definition by stating that a rationale refers to the explanations or reasons for adopting a particular course of action or beliefs. In this study, the rationale refers to reasons provided by the DBE/DoE for adopting a certain curriculum, strategies, methods, and policies with an aim to address reading difficulties. The curriculum is viewed as a fundamental element of effective schooling and teaching. It is often the entity of reforms, most of which is intended to mandate or improve the curricular standardisation and consistency across provinces, schools, grade levels, and subject areas (DBE, 2019).

Curriculum can therefore be understood as the schools or educators' plan for teaching and learning (Van den Akker, 2009). This plan outlines the methods and strategies that will be used when teaching the desired skills such as reading and writing and the desired values such as honesty and respect. In agreement with this view, McBrien and Brandt (1997) noted that a curriculum is a course of study or a composed plan of action, delineating what students will be taught. Curriculum may also refer to all the subjects offered at a given school. The DBE (2010) views curriculum as the arranged cooperation of learners with instructional content, materials, and resources, and cycles for assessing the fulfilment of instructive targets.

According to DBE (2011a), reading is believed to be a part of nation-building and enhances an individual's confidence and is a tool that can help individuals think critically and creatively to adapt to the evolving and competitive world in modern society where it is required in various spheres of life. The DBE (2011b) also emphasises that reading provides an individual with the ability to learn new information and knowledge that they can use to make decisions that can change their lives for the better and facilitate their life-long learning process. Van den Akker (2003) asserted that the formulation of an effective curriculum encompasses reading as one of the fundamental bases for teaching and learning.

2.5.2 Aims and objectives

What are the aims and objectives of the curriculum, strategy or method and policy documents or plans that have been adopted to address reading difficulties?

Doody and Bailey (2016) stated that an aim refers to the desired outcome upon engaging in a particular course of action. In this study, the aim is to explore the efforts (strategy or method, and policy documents or plan) and reasons that are displayed by the DBE to reduce the high rate of learners who experience reading difficulties. Objectives are generally explicit proclamations of educational goals that portray either broad or explicit results (Doody & Bailey, 2016). In this study, objectives refer to specific outcomes that were set for each initiative to enhance reading ability since the adoption of the OBE.

Redress validates the significance of human dignity and prevent governments and organisations from sabotaging that prerogative. It is a method of advancing distributive equity. In putting forth a stand for compensations, Wyman (2008) stressed the unequal dispersion of resources and opportunities between African Americans and Whites in the United States of America and presents compensation as a method of helping this maldistribution.

In 1997, after the 1994 democratic elections, the DoE took on the task of curriculum reform, which refers to changes made in an attempt to redress and improve the failures of the previous curriculum. The Outcomes Based Education (OBE) is a philosophy upon which curriculum reform is established to redress curricular inequality. Educators were tasked with planning for lessons and teaching learners according to a teaching method they deem fit to achieve the objectives of subject (Jansen, 1998). This view was adopted in alignment with some of the objectives of the OBE which include: (i) ensuring that learners obtain good results; (ii) adopting learner centred methods of teaching. In an effort to meet these objectives, iterations of the OBE philosophy have been introduced; Curriculum 2005 (C2005), Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)/ National Curriculum Statement (NCS), and Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS).

2.5.2.1 Curriculum 2005 (C2005)

In 1998, Curriculum 2005 was introduced (DoE, 2002) and focused mainly on outlining learner performance outcomes. One of its aims was to eradicate illiteracy especially in adults who were deprived of attending school by the apartheid system (Ward et al., 2004). The C2005 comprised

an initiative, which aimed at promoting reading and addressing illiteracy in adults and was part of the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). When the apartheid era ended, many South Africans, especially adults who had to leave school and work as domestic workers, construction workers, and farmworkers, were illiterate (Ward et al., 2004). Botha (2002) noted that the DoE introduced ABET schools with the intent to help adults acquire literacy skills. Educating illiterate adults served as a strategy to redress the ills of the past educational systems. Ward et al. (2004) asserted that these schools were meant to esteem these adults with skills for understanding basic words and texts needed for daily livelihoods. Ward et al. (2004) further noted that the ABET schools also served to encourage learning and to provide a message of timeless and ageless learning or schooling. Botha (2002) noted that the ABET schools served as a strategy implemented by the DoE to redress past historical injustices.

An initiative called the Ithuteng campaign was launched in 1996 (Baatjes, 2003). The campaign aimed at helping learners to improve their reading abilities by ensuring that learners acquire and enhance reading abilities and comprehend at the appropriate grade and age level. In 2000, the Masifunde Sonke campaign came into effect, which was a national reading campaign that aimed at addressing the country's need for easy access to books and library materials in the rural areas and townships (Baatjes, 2004). It was also aimed at increasing opportunities for cross-cultural learning within the South African context. However, the success of the Ithuteng campaign as well as the Masifunde sonke campaign remains elusive (Baatjes, 2004).

The National Library Week was introduced and nationally recognised and promoted by the Library and Information Association of South Africa in 2001 (Baatjes, 2003). As per DoE (2002), the National Library Week still takes place around the 20th of March every year. Libraries countrywide advertise their services more vigorously during this week. The point is to urge library professionals to work more closely with one another and bring awareness of the value of libraries. This campaign was established to encourage libraries to start and lead in being active community partners who facilitate the production of an educated society. As such, schools were urged to partake in different exercises that advance reading and encourage learners to join public libraries.

The C2005 outcome based educational approach was mostly focused on learner's results and tended to neglect the content and methods used to teach learners (DoE, 2002). As much as the curriculum encouraged educators to be independent and showcase their skills and experience, most educators found themselves not knowing what to teach and methods to use in order to

improve the poor results displayed by learners (Botha, 2002).

2.5.2.2 RNCS/NCS

The RNCS and NCS emphasised that the medium of instruction to be adopted when teaching reading and literacy must be the learners' indigenous language (DBE, 2011a). South African learners can learn how to read in their home or indigenous language (DBE, 2011a). The DBE's aim for including indigenous languages was to help learners learn how to read faster and efficiently. The assumption was that by teaching learners how to read in their indigenous language at the foundation phase, this would make it easier for them to learn a second language like English in the intermediate phase (Baatjes, 2003). The DBE expected that this strategy might help learners gain confidence and enjoyment of reading in a language in which they speak and reading what they can relate to outside the classroom (DBE, 2011b). One of the assumptions posed was that using indigenous languages might help learners to think critically and reason abstractly, access new information, and process the information quickly. However, Landsberg et al. (2005) and Howie et al. (2007) discarded this belief, as learners continue to present with reading difficulties.

2.5.3 Content

How will the content that is taught aid in the redress of reading difficulties?

Shulman (2000) noted that content alludes to the comprehension of ideas and information pertaining the subject that is taught. In the current study, content refers to the information and skills that are taught to improve reading ability. The implementation of CAPS prescribes that English serves as the medium of instruction at the beginning of the intermediate phase for second language speakers (Msila, 2007). However, around 81% of the 57.7 million people in South Africa are racially categorised as African and 76% speak an African language that is indigenous and as their first language (Statistics South Africa, 2012, 2018). Howie et al. (2017), noted that over 80% of grade four learners were struggling to make meaning of clearly specified information, activities, or thoughts in tests. This was evident in an internationally benchmarked reading assessment, where learners who took the test failed to make sense of explicitly stated information. Therefore, it is evident that the CAPS implementation has limitations which needs to be redressed by the DBE for better results and eradication of reading difficulties in South Africa.

In the Benchmark Reading Assessment, learners were tested in all 11 official languages and were unable to reach the satisfactory international centre point target of 500 points (Rule & Land, 2017). There was a distinction of 96 points between learners who wrote in Sepedi and those that were writing in English or Afrikaans, favouring the latter (Howie et al., 2017). This distinction in performance is consistent for African learners (all indigenous languages) when viewed in relation to the performance of English or Afrikaans learners (Rule & Land, 2017). Howie et al. (2017, p.18) noted that Eight out of every 10 learners in South Africa cannot read properly. Not in English, not in their home language, not in any language. In this regard, the content in the foundation phase and teaching methods may also account for the reasons that learners are not doing well in their indigenous languages.

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) was conducted in 2016 with the aim to assess reading comprehension and to monitor trends in literacy at five-year intervals. The countries that participate in the PIRLS initiative do so voluntarily. The PIRLS tests taken by the learners from various countries are written in their schools' language of learning and teaching used in the foundation phase (Grades 1 to 3). An international comparative reading assessment by the PIRLS (2016) showed that 78% of Grade 4 learners in South Africa had difficulties reading for meaning. The results also showed children tested in African languages performed poorly. The results revealed that 93% of South African Grade 4 learners tested in Sepedi demonstrated difficulties in reading for meaning. Similarly, having large percentages among Setswana (90%), Tshivenda (89%), isiXhosa (88%), Xitsonga (88%), isiZulu (87%), and isiNdebele (87%). These results were concerning, given that at this stage of the learner's development their ability or skill to locate explicit information and comprehend straightforward inferences about specific events and reasons for actions is vital for them to have the ability to learn other subjects from Grade 4 onward. These proficiency results mirror a connection between language and education that keeps overlapping dimensions of inequality in education practice.

2.5.4 Learning activities

How do the learning activities facilitate the redress of reading difficulties?

Silberman (1996) viewed learning activities as the educators' guided instructional tasks for learners. Claire (2016, p.30) stated that learning activities are characterised as any exercises of an individual composed with the expectation to improve his/her insight, abilities, and skills. The

guidance of reading in the schools tends to mirror the educators' understanding, attitude, and beliefs about reading as the translation of visual symbols and reading aloud (Ramatlapana & Makonye, 2012). Due to overcrowding in classes, reading activities are mainly in the form of the educator reading aloud for the learners, with specific attention to punctuation and fluency, thereafter, the learners also read aloud, either individually or as a class. When there are instructions and comprehension activities, some educators instruct learners to read aloud to the class and then correct them when the need arises (Baatjes, 2004).

The CAPS presents educators with structured weekly schedules (DBE, 2014). Educators also engage learners in activities that promote interaction such as poetry, storytelling, discussions, and role-play (DBE, 2019). According to DBE (2014), CAPS stipulates that learners must further engage in debates, group discussions, listening to comprehension and unprepared speech. Sharlanova (2004) notes that Experiential learning theory endorses learning from experience. Kolbs (1981) believed that learners can transform their experiences into knowledge. Hence, the experiential learning theory stresses how learners can demonstrate their knowledge and skills by applying abstract ideas to new experiences. Kolbs (1981) stated that the four learning styles are (i) diverging (feeling and watching) - learners who learn better from watching and gathering information then use their imagination and emotions to solve problems, (ii) assimilation (watching and feeling)- learner learns best when given rational and brief information with less practical work, (iii) converging (doing and thinking) learners learn more efficiently when they use prior knowledge to solve problems, and (iv) accommodating (doing and feeling)- these learners learn better in a practical experimental environment. These learning styles are in line with the Department of Education's National Reading Strategy and policy documents.

2.5.5 Teacher role

What interventions can be implemented by educators to address reading difficulties?

Bloom (1969), stated that the role of educators is to plan and implement the educational curriculum, execute classroom management strategies, evaluate, or assess learners' development and improvement, make referrals for learners with special needs, and report progress to guardians. Archana and Rani (2017) extended this view by stating that the role of an educator is to plan classroom activities within the stipulated time and covering subject content. In this study, the educator's roles refer to the strategies, activities, and beliefs that

educators can adopt to improve the learners' reading ability.

An educator's role in teaching reading and literacy was not adequately and formally stipulated in the C2005, RNCS/ NCS curriculum. It was difficult for researchers to get uniform results on educators' roles in teaching learners' reading and literacy (Botha, 2002). However, according to Rule and Land (2017), educators typically teach similarly to the way in which they were taught during their schooling. Educators now have access to resources they may use as a guide for teaching reading (DBE, 2014).

According to Mather's (2012) when learners read aloud in class, the educator's role is to correct and reflect on the mistakes the learners make. The DBE (2014) stated that educators have the role of observing and noting effective strategies to educate learners with reading difficulties. It is the educator's part to watch readers diagnostically to be able to identify their strengths and weaknesses and consider strategies they will adopt to teach the learners.

The DBE (2014) encouraged educators to follow reading exercises and guidelines in the CAPS policy documents, conduct a shared reading session, including reading aloud to the learners in class, thereafter allow the class to repeat what was read (DBE, 2019). Furthermore, educators must expand on new ideas and the keywords. Learners may be grouped and engage in group guided reading, where they read the story resoundingly to one another. For formal reading assessments, learners read out loud to the educator. Educators play the role of identifying and using strategies and methods stipulated by policy documents to help learners with reading difficulties or other special needs (DBE, 2019). The CAPS stipulates that learner should be taught how to utilise their knowledge and insight of vocabulary, linguistic structure, and their experiences in using reading strategies to understand text and content (DBE, 2014).

Educators are expected to offer conversation starters in some cases and to encourage the learners to sum up and paraphrase what they read. When learners encounter a new word, the educator must encourage them to pronounce the word and attempt to guess the meaning from the overall context. Educators should advise learners to do pre-reading reviews. Educators can start their lessons with a pre-reading activity before introducing a topic as this can activate learners previously obtained knowledge about the topic (DBE, 2011b). Educators must prompt discussions as a way for learners to prepare themselves to engage with the text or topic that will be introduced to them. Starting with a discussion may activate their critical thinking skills

abilities on the text or topic being discussed (Wright & Brown, 2006). However, Khoza (2014) posited that educators tend to work under a lot of pressure, which makes some of them, especially the experienced ones to resort to their ‘old ways of teaching’, which may not cater for all learners learning styles and needs.

2.5.6 Materials and resources

What materials and resources have been provided by the DBE to redress reading difficulties?

Ball and Cohen (1996) stated that materials offer educators support in organising the content they teach to learners and may instruct them on basic teaching methods. As indicated by Usman (2016), education resources include educators, people in the community, specimens or models, chalk and writing boards, and school libraries. In this study, the focus is on the criteria for selecting teaching aids. From the C2005 until CAPS, textbooks have been the main materials used for reading. Storybooks and novels have also been used, however, not all schools have storybooks and novels to be used in class. As such educators use other materials like newspapers, magazines, and abstracts from textbooks (Khoza, 2014).

The CAPS highlight those materials such as newspapers, novels, textbooks, DVDs and projectors (for watching movie versions of books) may be used to facilitate and promote reading (DBE, 2019). The library is also a resource used by educators to educate learners about the different genres of books (romantic books, fiction books, horror books etc.) and different book categories such as fiction and non-fiction (Baatjes, 2003). In South Africa, the limited number and access to libraries in schools remains a challenge. Existing libraries tend to consist of old books that are not age and grade-appropriate to all learners in schools (DBE, 2011). However, the CAPS read to lead campaign has been finding sponsors and aim to build close to 1000 libraries in South Africa by 2019 (DBE, 2020). However, findings or reports on the progress regarding this matter are not yet available.

2.5.7 Grouping

How can educators allocate learners to various learning trajectories to address reading difficulties?

Zuma (2016) posited that grouping refers to the method used by educators to teach learners or to make learners learn/work together as part of learning process by placing learners in small groups. Dam (1998) proposed that learners be seated in groups of four to six members. This implies that some learners will face each other, and all learners must be able to face the educator. Nunan (1999) concurred that learners situated in groups become skilled at helping others and expressing their suppositions, thoughts, and emotions guided by the educator. The DBE (2011b) shared the same view in stipulating that seating ought to empower the learners to participate in the exercises in a communitarian and cooperative way, however, overcrowding has remained a concern in public schools. Overcrowding is rife in rural and township schools where there is also shortage of educators, hence making grouping methods difficult to be efficiently utilised by educators (Khoza,2014).

Some scholars argue that an overcrowded class negatively affects learners and may contribute to reading difficulties (Botha, 2002; Baatjes, 2003). This is because learners get deprived of the individual relationship with their teachers. Ramatlapana and Makonye (2012) concurred that decreasing the number of students in each class improves learning outcomes. They uphold that a small number of learners in a class offers a more conducive environment to learning. In agreement with this view, Chingos (2013) noted that having fewer learners in each class promotes educator-learner connection, individualised and learner-centric instruction, reduced learner misconduct and educator morale is enhanced.

2.5.8 Location

How does the physical and social characteristics of the learning environment aid in the redress of reading difficulties?

Educators are encouraged by the DBE to have a book corner where reading books can be kept for learners in classroom spaces. The floor, for example, may be used during some reading activities, as it helps entice some learners. As per DBE (2014), when learners are taught reading while sitting on the floor, they often relax. The DBE (2015) added that educators in the foundation phase often make learners sit in a circle on the floor to facilitate group work and participation during reading. It is easier for them to share information with their peers in a discussion manner where they share their views on the stories read to them. Furthermore, as stated by Gee (2005), the classroom floors need to have clean carpets to prevent learners from getting sick and they can have individual copies or share the storybook when reading. The

walls may also be used to stick reading texts that learners can read. Wall displays may encourage learners to read. Some pictures with written texts may be changed occasionally to create excitement and encouragement for learners to read the walls.

However, the South African education system is characterised by deteriorating infrastructure, lack of furniture like classroom desks and chairs, and generally poor educational results, which perpetuates inequality (Khoza, 2014). The Amnesty International report (2019) (reporting the limitations of the DBE regarding the redress of reading difficulties) highlights poor infrastructure in government-funded schools, including sanitation which has led to the deaths of many learners in pit lavatories. The multiple under-resourced South African schools with missing windows and doors prevent learners from producing a well-managed classroom environment, cultivating class interest, and participation.

Conversely, an ill-equipped, under-resourced, and unmanaged classroom environment with a disintegrating infrastructure negatively affects learning and participation in exercises, which causes classroom management challenges (Kayıkçı, 2009; Sasidher et al., 2012). These classroom management problems are increased due to weather challenges, which hinder classroom progress as learners move to other classrooms. Some learners may struggle to concentrate in winter in a cold classroom without windows and doors. Furthermore, furniture arrangement is also vital for learning. Desks can be placed opposite each other for collective learning, while they may be placed looking forward for independent learning (DBE, 2014). However, according to Ramatlapana and Makonye (2012), in some South African under-resourced schools, four or three learners share desks designed for two learners, which hinders educators' ability to use furniture arrangement for independent and shared reading methods. These challenges hinder educators' ability to teach reading, hence exacerbating reading difficulties.

2.5.9 Time

How does the duration of reading tasks aid to address reading difficulties?

Time refers to the duration allocated for different learning areas or subjects (Khoza, 2014). Time allocations as per the CAPS are clearly stipulated: all Grade 1-12 language content must be facilitated over a two-week cycle, which is between 7-12 hours. The higher the grade, the more hours required for language content. In these 7-12 hours, language activities are divided

as follows: (a) 1-2 hours for orals (listening and speaking), (b) 1-5 hours for reading and viewing, and (c) 1-4 hours for writing and presenting work or activities (DBE, 2019).

Several recommendations have been made for reducing transition time and increasing allocated time for instruction within a classroom (Kern & Clemens, 2007; Reith et al., 1981; Wilson & Wesson, 1986). These include beginning the lesson on time, providing warnings about upcoming transitions, and bringing activities to a close before the transition occurs. For example, in a study examining rates of on-task behaviour associated with transition and non-transition times, Arlin (1979) observed that failure to wrap-up a lesson and prepare learners prior to a transition appeared to lead to more disruption and peripheral interjections about previous tasks than in classes with educators who used both strategies. In agreement, the DBE (2014) notes that Signals provided to learners regarding the end of an activity and the beginning of the next increase predictability in the classroom and thereby increase the likelihood that learners will remain engaged. Learners with reading difficulties are said to have a difficulty with word recognition and that they spend a lot of time and energy struggling to recognise words. Thus, they have less time and energy to concentrate on the comprehension of text.

Akin et al. (2016) stated that educators indicate that their schools operate full-day schooling, which contributes to some difficulties. Classroom management becomes very difficult because foundation phase learners are young, it gets harder to maintain their attention during afternoon classes, which has a negative impact on time management. Consequently, there is less time to obtain the objectives of the lesson due to dealing with misbehaviors emanating from a lack of concentration from the learners.

Akin et al. (2016) stated that there is much content to be taught for English and the allocated time is not enough.

To help educators deal with the time management issues, a teacher assistant programme was established. Teacher assistants help educators with their administrative work, classroom management and assistance. However, teaching assistants were hired in special schools (DBE, 2010).

It is only during the COVID-19 pandemic where teacher assistants have been hired in mainstream schools to help educators with the COVID-19 safety protocol and management (DBE, 2020).

2.5.10 Assessment

What diagnostic, summative or/and formative assessments are recommended by the DBE to redress reading difficulties?

According to Lambert and Lines (2013), assessment may be viewed as the process of gathering, interpreting, recording, and utilising data and learners' reactions for educational purposes. Black and William (2014) state that educators use the information procured through assessments to give learners the information they can utilise for learning. This study focusses on:

- Diagnostic assessments (used by educators to identify and address learners with reading difficulties).
- Formative/ ongoing assessments (activities done to track learner scholastic progress throughout each term of the year, e.g., homework or classroom activities).
- Summative assessment (Educators' evaluation of learning at the end of a topic, term or year, e.g., tests or examinations).

Typically, when conducting formative assessment, educators assess learners by instructing them to read to the educator either aloud to the whole class or only to them (Ramatlapana & Makonye, 2012). During this assessment, educators identify learners with reading difficulties and, ideally, find a way to help them individually (DBE, 2011b). Due to overcrowding, educators struggle to offer individual support as the number of learners presenting with reading difficulties is on the rise (Kohler, 2020). However, Baatjes (2003) argued that it is beyond overcrowding.

It is also the lack of training such that educators can identify these types of learners.

According to Rule and Land (2017), most classroom assessments reward reading aloud to test the learner's capacity to decode precisely and fluidly with consideration to the learners' ability to comprehend the content and construction of an abstract representation of its meaning. Ramatlapana and Makonye (2012) warned that oratorical reading, which excludes

comprehension and meaning making, does not empower learners to participate in authentic reading. This is a typical approach of how reading is taught in South African schools. There is very little emphasis on reading comprehension and actually making sense of the written word.

The Annual National Assessments (ANAs) was introduced by the DBE to test the numeracy/Mathematics and literacy/Language skills of learners (DBE, 2014). Multiple countries worldwide use the national yearly standardized testing to assess learners' development and learning achievements. The results are useful for constructing and amending the design and implementation of intervention programmes to improve classroom teaching and learning (Rule & Land, 2017).

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the importance of reading, the factors that exacerbate reading difficulties, and its impact on educators and learners, particularly in the South African context. Although many of the problems that are entrenched in the education system emanated from the apartheid era, the literature has demonstrated that the issue of reading difficulties remains unresolved and mired with many challenges. The abolishment of apartheid gave rise to a new philosophy that aimed to address inequalities perpetuated by an oppressive education system. The OBE philosophy has been facilitated through C2005, RNCS or NCS without much improvement in the number of learners experiencing reading difficulties. Attributing this crisis to one factor presents a narrow view of the problem as various factors discussed in this chapter appear to sustain the status quo.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the different steps of the methodology adopted in this study. The data collection plan, including the research tools, sampling and data analysis are outlined. The role of the researcher in qualitative research is also reflected on. The chapter is concluded with an overview on the trustworthiness of the study. The terms research methods and research methodology are typically used synonymously. However, Goundar (2012) denotes that on the one hand, the word methods refer the research tools and techniques used to collect and analyse the data. On the other hand, methodology refers to a systematic justification for the adopted methods to solve the research problem or reach a conclusion.

3.2 Research approach

According to Creswell (2013), research approaches are procedures and processes that range from broad assumptions to specified data collection, analysis, and interpretation techniques. The aim of this study was to identify factors that exacerbate reading difficulties in public schools in South Africa and analyse and critic strategies/methods adopted by the DBE to redress reading difficulties by analysing and reviewing/interpreting secondary data sources. The study employed a qualitative method, which is described by Creswell and Poth (2018) as a methodology that helps researchers investigate and understand a particular phenomenon by finding knowledge from the sampled source(s). Cohen et al. (2011) added that the qualitative research approach permits the researcher to contribute detailed knowledge and enables the researcher to understand how and why certain phenomena exist in a particular way. Marshall and Rossman (1999) also noted that it is an approach that attempts to help the reader to understand a particular phenomenon or issue in greater detail. Creswell (2008, p.12) explains qualitative research as a type of scholarly research in which the researcher relies on the viewpoints of the interviewees by asking comprehensive questions. Equally, this study entails the researcher relying on the viewpoints of secondary resources and extracting information from secondary data while guided by comprehensive question.

3.3 Research paradigm

Saunders et al. (2009) defined research paradigms as thoughts regarding how information about a phenomenon must be collected, analysed, and interpreted. Babbie (2016) elaborated that a research paradigm is a research worldview comprising values, and a framework, which researchers use to conduct a research study. This study employs the interpretive research paradigm as the focus is on understanding how individuals make meaning of the context in which they work (Babbie, 2016). The interpretive paradigm is used in the current study because it is based on understanding a phenomenon from an individual's perspective, the collaborative exploration among sources or literature, and the history and cultural context of a topic. Scotland (2012) also stated that a paradigm encompasses ontological, and epistemological assumptions. The ontological (nature of truth/ reality) assumptions of the interpretive paradigm are that there are multiple realities. As such, there is no single truth about the phenomenon of interest. In this regard, the researcher sampled various sources in order to present multiple realities about factors that exacerbate reading difficulties. The epistemological assumptions (how we know the truth/reality) of this paradigm are that reality is inter-subjective. In other words, reality may differ from individual to individual as it is subjectively constructed in relation to one's experiences and the social world around them (Creswell, 2013). The researcher engaged in co-construction (intersubjective) of knowledge by interpreting the multiple realities presented by the sources sampled in this study in relation to the methods that have been adopted by the DBE to redress reading difficulties (Creswell, 2014).

3.4 Research design

According to Leeds (1997), a research design is a plan, entailing the overall data collection framework. MacMillan and Schumacher (2001) added that the design is applied when choosing research websites, sources, and data collection processes used to answer the research question(s). They further indicated that an appropriate research design aims to provide credible findings. Similarly, Durrheim (2004) views a research design as a strategic framework used to align research questions and the research strategy implementation. In this study, the exploratory research design was adopted, which according to Creswell and Poth (2018), enables the researcher to discover or provide more knowledge about a problem or phenomena that is not clearly known or understood.

3.4.1 Sampling method

A non-probability sampling method was employed to select sources that best answer the research question. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select sources that were appropriate and in line alignment the research objectives. The researcher analysed various sources until the research question was answered. This included explicit and implicit information from secondary sources. On the one end, explicit information refers to texts' primary meaning when presenting understandable and unambiguous data regarding a particular phenomenon. This information might be in the form of facts such as statistics and the location of the studies conducted. On the other hand, implicit meaning entails the interpretation of hidden or ambiguous data thus different meanings may be drawn from similar information or textual sources (Cassie & David, 2010).

3.4.1.1 Eligibility criteria

Creswell (2014) cautions that the challenge of utilising secondary sources is that the data presented by each source may not be sufficient for all areas of the study. To overcome this challenge, the researcher utilised multiple sources to address each research question. Jacobson et al. (2012) state that using multiple sources helps in ensuring quality and significance of the information or data found to align with the objectives of the study. A total of eleven data sources from the South African context were sampled from DBE policy documents, peer reviewed journal articles and news interviews (national). The following section outlines the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

3.4.1.2 Inclusion criteria

- DBE/DoE policy documents regarding reading, language and curricular developments.
- Sources that discuss factors that exacerbate reading difficulties in South African and/or international context.
- Sources outlining method/strategies adopted to redress reading difficulties.
- Peer reviewed articles that indicate the author, date published, and location.
- Sources from 2008 (introduction of the National Reading Strategy).

3.4.1.3 Exclusion criteria

Sources that focused on learning disabilities (diagnosed developmental delay in the area(s) of speech, language, reading, spelling, writing, and arithmetic will be excluded).

3.4.1.4 Data sources

The demographic information such as age and race of the interviewees and authors is not discussed as this is not an important factor in this study, rather, the experience of the interviewees and the views of the authors was the focal point. In addition, three interviews were interrogated: one was extracted from eNews Channel Africa (eNCA) and two from the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) News:

SABC News (Interview 1)

- One interviewee from an institution of higher education in South Africa
- Topic: SA Grade 4 learners study/Can't read with comprehension.
- Date: 17 December 2017
- Duration: 8 minutes 30 seconds

eNCA (Interview 2)

- Two interviewees from different institutions of higher education in South Africa
- Topic: Reading skills crisis in South Africa.
- Date: 9 June 2019
- Duration: 9 minutes 52 seconds

SABC News (Interview 3)

- One interviewee from the DBE
- Topic: COVID-19 Lockdown /Storm over digital lessons by celebrities
- Date: 13 April 2020
- Duration: 13 minutes 18 seconds

Although there are various DBE/DoE policy documents and reports, data related to the research objectives was obtained from six sources:

- National Reading Strategy (2008)
- Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (2011)
- National guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statement (2011)
- A 25-year review of progress in the basic education sector (2019)
- Protocol document on teaching diagnostic assessments (2011)

- Summary Report: Benchmarking early grade reading skills in Nguni languages (2020).

A total of four peer reviewed articles were utilised:

- Ardington et al. (2020). Benchmarking early grades reading skills in Nguni languages.
- McBride, Sindi-Leigh. (2019). Why are South African learners struggling to read properly?
- Peter Rule (2017). South Africa has a reading crisis: why, and what can be done about it.
- Spaul (2016). The biggest solvable problem in South Africa: Reading.

3.4.2 Data collection

Data collection is the process of gathering, examining, and interpreting data from various related sources. It may be viewed as the process of collecting and measuring data, information, or any other topic of interest in a standardised and established way (Creswell, 2014). This enables the researcher to collect the data to answer the research question and achieve the objectives through a thorough evaluation of the outcomes of the data collected.

To commence the data collection process, the researcher obtained permission to conduct the study from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Mather, 2012). This committee evaluated whether the study adhered to ethical requirements (of a study in which secondary data sources are used). The sources were obtained from YouTube, and database such as GoogleScholar, Sage, University of KwaZulu-Natal library, Sabinet, and EBSCOhost. Reading difficulties, approaches to redressing reading difficulties in South Africa, DBE/DoE policy documents, and reading difficulties in the South African context are the keywords that were used to search for the sources.

Guest et al. (2012), noted that data recording forms are a systematic way of gathering and analysing data to draw out results for pertinent questions and to evaluate the outcomes. Hensing (2015) added that completing a data collection form encourages the researcher to generate relevant data. Two data collection or recording forms were used to gather data for the current research study. The first form entailed the questions asked by the news anchors during the news

interviews. The questions were directed to the interviewees or experts: three education experts from institutions of higher education and one DBE spokesperson. The questions focused on exploring the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PEARLS) study results, factors exacerbating reading difficulties and strategies adopted to redress reading difficulties. This includes lack of parental involvement, lack of resources, curriculum challenges, details and issues around the use of indigenous languages in the foundation phase, and structural challenges such as COVID-19 restrictions in relation to reading (Appendix B).

The second data recording form entailed open-ended question based on the curricular spider web in relation to both research questions. In other words, the questions on the data recording form were answered using data obtained from the textual sources (Appendix A). The data collection process was conducted using the following three steps adapted from (McKee, 2001):

- The search for appropriate secondary data sources such DBE/DoE policy documents, peer reviewed journal articles, and news interviews items (national). The inclusion and exclusion criteria were utilized to select the sample of secondary sources.
- The researcher read each source in relation to the curricular spider web (Appendix B).
- The most suitable sources providing detailed explicit information were selected and the researcher noted all unclear issues regarding each source.

3.4.3 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of evaluating, and displaying data collected from the secondary source in order to extract information that may be used to answer the research questions (Cole, 1988). Qualitative research primarily consists of analysing textual data. Textual data can be interviews transcripts, research records and/or research papers among others. Qualitative textual data may also comprise pictorial representation, video clips (e.g., YouTube video interviews), and other multimedia sources (Wong, 2008). From the textual sources stated above, this study used research papers, policy papers and video clips (YouTube video interviews) which were analysed. The method of analysing qualitative data includes coding or categorising collected data. Wong (2008) added that the method entails making meaning of large volumes of data by decreasing the size of raw data through distinguishing notable patterns, and ultimately extracting meaning from data.

3.4.3.1 Thematic analysis

Two different tables with questions were used to extract data from the secondary sources used in this study. The first table (Appendix A) consisted of questions used to extract data from the video interviews, while the second table (Appendix B) consists of questions used to extract data from peer reviewed articles/papers and policy documents. Thematic analysis was employed in this study to establish patterns that create meaning across a dataset (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thematic Analysis was employed to analyse organizations and present themes in relation to the data. This occurred using a six step analysis as described below:

(i) Familiarisation

The researcher watched the eNCA and SABC News video clips and transcribed the interviews then repeatedly read through the transcripts to relate the interviewees' responses to the research questions. For the journal articles and policy documents, the researcher repeatedly read through the textual sources three times:

1. To determine the quality of data that can be obtained in relation to the study objective.
2. To highlight important parts in each source that can answer the research questions (Appendix A).
3. To note/ transfer the important part extracts onto the data analysis table under the relevant topic (Appendix B). The researcher then read the extracts in relation to each data source.

(ii) Coding

Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that a code is a description, not an interpretation. For both the interview transcripts and the extracts on the data recording form, the researcher highlighted words or phrases that shared a similar meaning in the same colour thus words were colour coded according to their description (Appendix C).

(iii) Searching for themes

This is an iterative process requiring the researcher to move codes back and forth to create several themes and subthemes. This stage entailed sorting the highlighted codes on the interview transcripts into potential themes and sub-themes. Codes identify Patterns in the data while themes on the other hand are more comprehensive and include interpretation of the data.

On the data recording form, the highlighted data was categorised into predefined themes adapted from the curricular spiderweb.

(iv) Reviewing the themes

Refinement of the potential themes and sub-themes. The researcher analysed and filtered the themes classified during stage three. The researcher then began reading through all the codes and phrases to explore if they supported each theme and evaluate if there were contradictions within each theme. Where contradictions were found, the researcher split the theme.

(v) Defining and naming of the themes

The researcher named and described the themes to reflect important information about each theme. In this regard, the researcher sought for theme names that were descriptive and (if possible) engaging. The researcher outlined every theme and explained its value in relation to the research questions.

(vi) The write-up of a report

The researcher ensured that the data was sufficient to produce a report on the findings. Data from the news interviews were used to answer both research questions. However, some key concepts were repeated across the data set. These concepts generated three themes that dominated the discussion on factors that exacerbate reading difficulties.

The DBE/DoE policy documents, and journal articles were analysed according to the 10 elements of the curricular spider web. Not enough data was obtained in the South African context to engage in an exhaustive discussion on each element. As such, curricular elements were clustered together to form themes adapted from the spider web model. These elements are prominent in the report on efforts to redress of reading difficulties in South African public schools.

3.5 Ethical considerations

McFadyen and Rankin (2016) stated that obtaining approval from gatekeepers is necessary as they have authority regarding access to interviewees or settings especially if the research is for academic purposes. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the University of Kwa Zulu-Natal's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Appendix C). In conducting this study, the researcher was bound by the ethical obligation to demonstrate a

respectful interpretation of the sources. According to Tripathy (2013), if the secondary source is unreservedly accessible on the credited Internet websites, books, and newspapers, additional utilisation and analyses are inferred, however, the source must be acknowledged by the researcher. As such, the researcher endeavoured to use secondary sources from credible research websites and all sources are acknowledged in the reference list. The researcher ensured that the information from sources was appropriate and met the inclusion criteria described earlier and is relevant to the objectives of the study.

3.6 Trustworthiness

Guba (1985) indicated that trustworthiness may be viewed as the evidence of transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability in qualitative research. Silverman (2005) concurred that there are criteria for trustworthiness that produce a credible study. They believe that continued engagement with credible sources or data on the topic and continual trustworthiness observation are vital. This is where researchers can gain more knowledge of the context and culture they are studying or investigating. They believe that an external review also forms a study's trustworthiness as it provides the security that a researcher is not merely writing what they subjectively see as fit but from the researcher's viewpoint. In this study, the ethics team served as external reviewers. Creswell (1998) is among the those that identify the four criteria for trustworthiness as credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability.

Credibility-refers to providing believable data. According to Creswell (2014), credibility can be compared to internal validity in quantitative research studies. In this study, credibility was sustained using multiple sources to offer evidence for the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As stated by Wilson (2014), triangulation refers to using multiple research methods and designs to increase credibility. As such, this study used multiple data sources to ensure research credibility: News video clips of interviews with experts on the topic of study, peer reviewed and published research papers on the topic, which are considered credible, verifying, concurring and adding to the data obtained from the interviews, and DBE policy documents providing findings and analysis on campaigns were also used as part of data triangulation. Using the curricular spider web to explore various elements of redress enhanced the credibility of study. The researcher sought data in relation to all 10 elements to minimise bias or overemphasis of one element.

Dependability- refers to the stability of a study's data over time and conditions (Silverman, 2005). The research process and methods were discussed and explained in depth as the researcher described how the data were collected, analysed and reported for each theme, i.e., the meaning of the themes. The research questions were discussed using the literature as evidence to support or oppose the findings of the study.

Confirmability- refers to the level at which the study's findings can be validated by others (Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Confirmability may also be viewed as the likeliness for congruence between two or more independent researchers or individuals about the data's accurateness and relevance (Silverman, 2005). In this study, readers may watch the news interviews and read the textual sources from which the data were obtained.

Transferability-refers to the possibility of the findings of the study to be transferred from one population to another (Braun & Clarke, 2006). South Africa is not the only country with learners presenting with reading difficulties and limited teaching resources. The African continent is marked as having high reading difficulties, and also consists of high levels of unemployment and other socio-economic factors, which exacerbate reading difficulties (Wyman, 2008; Chisholm, 2017). Hence, this study may be transferrable to other countries in the continent, and may be used as a guide to analyse reading challenges in their respective countries and find solutions.

Reflexivity- Seroka (1999) asserted that qualitative research is interactive and may not be value-free, hence the view that transcription and interpretation should be unbiased is not feasible. Parker (1994) argued that subjective people undertake any research or study, thus subjectivity requires acknowledgment. When researchers discuss this subjectivity, they can account for what has directed them to study the topic. The researcher was in an after-school volunteer programme providing additional mathematics and literacy classes for a high school under quantile 1 and a primary school in quantile 2 in Durban. During this period, the researcher observed that there were learners experiencing reading difficulties, thus believed that the DBE/DoE has not fulfilled its promises on addressing reading difficulties in South African public schools.

Furthermore, the researcher observed that educators and the DBE/DoE did not appear to work collaboratively to remedy the situation. Given these experiences, the discussion presented may

be influenced by the researcher's perception of the DBE and thus impact the research study. To minimise researcher bias, the data were presented to the supervisor for discussion and to confirm the findings to avoid discriminating against or stigmatising any group of individuals, organisations or institutions (Patnaik, 2013).

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presented a discussion on the adoption of the qualitative approach, interpretative paradigm, exploratory research design and purposive sampling. The data collection tools were also discussed in relation to thematic analysis in order to answer the research questions. A justification was presented for ethical procedures and the establishment of trustworthiness of the study. The next chapter delineates the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The findings in this chapter were organised as per the research questions which directed this research study. The research questions were aimed at identifying factors that exacerbate reading difficulties in South African schools and analysing the methods/strategies adopted to redress reading difficulties. The findings were obtained using secondary data sources. A total of seven themes were derived from thematic analysis. The findings emanating from document analysis are discussed with reference to the curricular spider web.

4.2 Data sources

A total of three (3) news interviews, six (6) DBE/DoE policy documents and five (5) peer reviewed journal articles were analysed as indicated in the table 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1

News interviews

<i>Source</i>	<i>Synopsis</i>	<i>Interviewees</i>
eNCA (2019, June 9) Reading Skills Crisis in South Africa. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmKDpYhUFL0	This interview focussed on the findings of the PIRLS study as 50% of South African parents do not read to their children.	NB: Interviewer - News anchor XN: Professor in a South African university - Literacy expert - Lecturer in languages JC: Professor in a South African university - Director of the

		Literacy
		Development Research Unit
SABC News (2017, December 17) SA Grade 4 learners Study/Can't Read with comprehension. https://youtu.be/y5CXFhi8QOc .	The interview focussed on the findings of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (2011- 2016).	FB: Interviewer - News anchor MM: Professor in a South African university - Former MEC for Education in Gauteng - Senior Research Associate

<p>SABCNews (2020, 13 April) COVID-19 Lockdown /Storm over digital lessons by celebrities: Elijah Mhlanga. https://youtu.be/tLBescd7SaA.</p>	<p>Celebrities and influencers have been announced as part of a programme called the Stem Lockdown Digital School.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The interview focussed on why celebrities, instead of educators, were reading for learners during the lessons designed to mitigate lost time during the lockdown. 	<p>PN: Interviewer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - News anchor <p>EM: Chief Director and Media Liaison: National and Provincial Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Basic Education
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Table 2

DBE/DoE policy documents

Source	Synopsis
<p>National Reading Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2008 	<p>This policy document was designed by the DoE and stipulates the main goal of the National Reading Strategy which is to improve the reading competence of learners. Its aim is to improve the reading level of all learners in the country, including those who experience barriers to learning. This policy document contains the background of reading difficulties and crisis in South Africa, together with some of the strategies and methods the DoE implemented to redress the reading crisis.</p>

<p>Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statements (2011)</p>	<p>This policy document stipulates the guidelines, parameters and strategies that may be utilised to respond to learner diversity in classrooms. The guidelines were developed to help facilitate and support curriculum diversity in schools.</p>
<p>Protocol document on teaching diagnostic assessments (2011)</p>	<p>The objective of this policy is to guide the implementation of educator development programmes to improve the quality of teaching and learning.</p>
<p>Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements - Grades R to 12</p>	<p>This is a comprehensive Curriculum and Assessment Policy document developed for each subject to replace Subject Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines in Grades R-12.</p>
<p>A 25 Year Review of progress in the basic education sector - 2019</p>	<p>This report stipulates the DBE's Action Plan to 2019. It has 27 goals – 13 which state the educational outcomes to be achieved and 14 which relate to activities that must be done to achieve those outcomes. The report highlights the achievements made by the DBE. The constraints and challenges that the DBE has encountered are also discussed. Furthermore, the report stipulates suggestions about improving the quality of basic education.</p>
<p>Benchmarking early grade reading skills in Nguni languages - 2020</p>	<p>The report explains thresholds and benchmarks in the foundation phase to impart the skill of reading for meaning in Nguni languages.</p> <p>This report is endorsed by the DBE.</p>

Table 3*Journal articles*

Source	Synopsis
Ardington et al. (2020)	This report provides thresholds and benchmarks for foundation grades and learners' vital abilities to read for meaning in Nguni languages in the South African context.
McBride, Sindi-Leigh (2019)	This peer review article highlights the relationship between poor reading skills among South African learners and the need for decolonisation in policy implementation. Decolonisation in this context refers to identifying colonial practices, structures and alliances, and working on challenging those practices.
Peter Rule (2017)	The article discusses the role of learning and explains alternative approaches that educators may adopt.
Spaull (2016)	The article discusses the reading and the reading crisis in the South African context.

4.3. What are the factors that exacerbate reading difficulties within the South African context?

Three themes were identified under this research questions. These are presented in Table 4.

Table 4*Themes generated from the data*

Theme	Exacerbating factor
Story telling versus story reading	The omission of story reading as part of literacy disadvantages learners without reading resources.

The skill of teaching reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educators are not adequately trained to teach reading (especially beyond the foundation phase). - Learners do not recognise letters, sounds, words. - Learners are not able to process text to understand its meaning.
Policy failure	Effective implementation and enforcement of policies remains a challenge.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Storytelling skills versus reading skills

Some interviewees have revealed that there are two types of parents in South Africa: those who have the means to access and read books to their children and those without access to books and only tell stories to their children. This statement was in response to the interviewer's comment on the reading crisis that South Africa faces. One interviewee shared the following:

We are bringing it back home as South Africa marks 25 years of democracy, and strides have been made in many areas, but when it comes to reading skills, the country is facing a crisis. South Africa ranked last out of 50 countries in the 2016 progress in international reading literacy study and it emerged that nearly half of South African parents do not read to their children (XN).

Moreover, the interviewees intimated that literacy encapsulates storytelling which appears to be limited in the South Africa classroom, as reading books or parents reading books to children is deemed more important than storytelling or parents telling stories to their children. One interviewee shared the following:

First of all, I think we need to really think about where people are coming from because we have different societies valuing different skills in literacy. We have English middle-class families that have access to books in their language, and they read to their children. But we have an oral tradition of storytelling, which is a literacy skill that is not finding its way soon enough in schooling, and we must figure out then whether

book reading is more important than storytelling. In my view, there is none that is important than the other, because the stories that we read are the stories that we tell, and then we write as well. So, I think that this binary or the force binary between story reading and storytelling is making a lot of African language speaking parents look like they are not telling stories to their children, look like they are not doing anything about literacy (XN).

The interviewee further highlighted that storytelling is as important as book reading:

We need to think about it whenever we say English-speaking middle-class parents do not tell stories orally to their children, because the way we've defined literacy in the country is that we have four skills that are required for literacy development: speaking, listening, reading and writing; but we tend to focus more on reading skills rather than also on the story telling skills (XN).

The way we define literacy is that it is an ability to read and write. We ignore the story telling aspect that children bring into the classroom (XN).

The interviewer observed that the views above imply that educators might not have a full understanding of literacy in schools. The interviewees concurred with this view and shared the following:

Yes, I believe that there's a lot of emphasis on memory recall when we read stories, with the teachers asking questions about the content in the story, rather than linking the story to the children's personal lives and asking them their opinions (JC).

We need to encourage teachers to offer rich literacy to the children, literacy that include story-telling, art, and performance, so that the children are richer; but the way we are assessing literacy right now privileges the children whose cultures are in book reading (XN).

The interviewees also noted that the differences between private and public schools contribute to the learners' reading difficulties. This is supported by the following responses from the interviews:

There is a big divide between the two, but I think the resources, the class sizes are contributing factors. Many private schools do not follow the CAPS curriculum; they follow their own curriculum, and it gives them time to have these discussions, which is not happening in the mainstream school (XN).

In a mainstream school, teachers are being very limited by the curriculum that is very demanding. There are inspectors or subject advisors who come and check on what they are doing and how they have done these skills in particular days (JC).

The teachers are limited by the curriculum that does not give them much time to allow children to debate and discuss the content and the morals of the story, which I think is a very important skill that needs to be done since we need to encourage children to give their opinions in order to link it to their own lives when evaluating the stories but uhm, this is not being done by most educators (JC).

Furthermore, the interviewees noted an emphasis on written tests rather than the comprehension of the content that is presented orally. One interviewee shared the following:

The teachers are teaching to test, rather than developing these literacy skills or thinking skills, and that is a very big gap in mainstream schools. In the private schools they are doing that; they teach thinking skills and they expect teachers to develop the thinking skills in their children (JC).

DBE (2014) emphasis the importance of the engaging with learners in order to enhance critical thinking skills during lessons. JC continued:

The curriculum is also largely aligned to the skills-based approach of literacy instruction rather than the rich literacy that we think children need, because literacy is narrowly defined in the curriculum. We need

to encourage teachers to offer rich literacy to the children, literacy that includes storytelling, art, and performance, so that the children are richer. The way we are assessing literacy right now only privileges the children whose cultures are in book reading.

The interviewees also emphasised that educators lack training to accomplish the task of teaching reading. This lack of training was also indicated by DBE (2011a) which notes that educators tend to teach as they were taught, mostly rote teaching due to lack of adequate training. JC further postulated:

The teachers were not trained on this. The teachers need to be trained and 'role modelled' on these skills during their teacher training experiences.

We need to change from monolingual orientation to a multilingual orientation in our curriculum. This aligns the curriculum to the needs of bilingual children (JC).

Some interviewees also indicate that, in South Africa, learners in the foundation phase typically learn in a first-language or a language that they are familiar with. Then when they enter the intermediate phase, there is a transition. MM expounded on this issue:

They learn to read in an African language while they learn English as a second language, then generally in grade 4 they make a full transition to English. So, you move from the foundation phase where you've had a single teacher into grade 4, where curriculum is suddenly wider. More teachers usually rely on textbooks, and you learn in English which you have not learned before. So, this tells us that by the time our learners are in grade 4, they need to be able to read to understand English to learn. They however don't yet have sufficient reading for comprehension and its comprehension that is important here.

In response to such views, some interviewees indicated that the DBE has implemented the strategies and initiatives to encourage reading among learners. EM shared the following:

The read to lead campaign, since it was established in 2015, has really been about the sharing of books, exchanging books, establishing book

clubs, making sure that everyone is reading their books and that's all kind of books within South Africa, and that's the whole point of the reading clubs.

The interviewees intimated that when schools in South Africa were closed due to COVID-19 restrictions, families could enjoy storytelling and learners could engage in reading activities, either for enjoyment or a component of the curriculum. The interviewer probed thus:

Social media storm has erupted following reports that certain celebrities will be used to read books for children during the lockdown. Many have been asking why teachers instead of celebrities are not being used to read for children for these extra digital lessons designed to mitigate lost time during the lockdown. Many celebrities and influencers have been announced as part of a programme called the Stem Lockdown Digital School. So, what is the deal with the using celebrities and not teachers whose job it is to teach? (PN)

EM addressed the misunderstanding regarding the initiative on reading implemented by the DBE during COVID-19 restrictions. One interviewee shared the following:

There are two projects that they've started; one is called the digital classroom, where qualified teachers interact with the youth and some of those people are student teachers. Then there is the reading club, where celebrities have been used to read books to the learners who are in grade R to 3.

Further to this, EM emphasised the differences between the two projects:

The difference between the two projects is that one focuses on the actual curriculum and content, and the other is just reading for leisure (EM).

EM also explained why the DBE collaborated with celebrities for the project on reading for leisure and highlighted the importance of reading:

These celebrities aren't teaching but merely reading and this is not an unusual thing. You see it all over the world and some would say that they are great ambassadors in actually creating a reading culture.

EM concluded:

So, we are challenging people to read books as claimed in that poster there as it shows that this is part of the reading club where we invite all people to read. Read with your children, read with your neighbours, read uhhm with everyone that you can read with, whether it is with your video digitally or get together in the room as a family you will have to read a book. This is the time where you should be engaging with the written word.

4.3.2 Theme 2: The skill of teaching reading

The views posed by XN and JC have long been in the forefront of redressing reading difficulties as the DBE, through the National Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statement policy document, highlights. This view is supported by the (DBE, 2011, p.13):

Many educators in South Africa have an under-developed understanding of teaching literacy, reading, and writing. Many teachers simply do not know how to teach reading. Too often, teachers know only one method of teaching reading, which may not suit the learning style of all learners. Educators do not know how to stimulate reading inside, and outside, the classroom. There has been a misunderstanding about the role of the teacher in teaching reading in Curriculum 2005 and in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). For years, many educators believed that they did not have to teach reading, but simply had to facilitate the process; they believed that learners would teach themselves to read. The expectation that educators had to develop their own teaching materials and reading programmes further aggravated the situation for educators; they had no experience in developing materials. In the past, they relied heavily on textbooks even if the educator had only one book in the class. Many Foundation Phase educators have not been explicitly trained to teach reading. That is why they find it difficult to help learners with reading difficulties. Consequently, many educators have resorted to rote teaching as the only option and tend to be satisfied with rote learning by their learners (DBE, 2011, p.13).

In relation to rote learning, the DoE National Reading Strategy document noted lack of enough exposure as one of the challenges which limit learners' comprehension. This is supported by the following excerpt:

Too often, educators use whole class reading from the same book as the only reading experience in the classroom (DoE, 2008, p.27).

Furthermore, the National Reading Strategy document indicated lack of support as another challenge which limits learners' comprehension by the (DoE, 2008, p. 27):

Learners who experience barriers to learning often do not receive the support that they need to become fluent readers. This is despite the policies of Inclusive Education that recognize the special needs of learners in all sectors of education.

Rule expressed that the challenges indicated by the DBE regarding the lack of training among educators to teach reading have not been addressed:

Reading at a rural primary school and an adult centre in the KwaZulu-Natal province showed that the oratorical approach to teaching reading was dominant both in the school and adult classes. Both adults and learners were not learning to read with meaning, and so were not achieving literacy despite attending classes. Our findings confirmed the results of other South African studies (Rule, 2017, p.5).

Moreover, Rule (2017, p.4) explored the reasons why educators use of rote learning:

They teach as they were taught; an indication that oratorical reading is a cycle repeated from one generation to the next unless it is broken.

Rule (2017, p.4). also notes:

Educators told us they assessed pupils' reading ability just as they were assessed by their educators: by having them read aloud. Marks were allocated for individual oral reading performance. This was based not on understanding the passage, but on fluency and pronunciation. There was no written assessment of reading comprehension. Reading was about memorizing sounds and decoding words.

In addition, Rule (2017, p.7) posits:

The problem in learners' performance lies in how reading is taught in most South African schools. Learners are taught to read aloud and pronounce correctly, but not to understand the written word and make sense of it for themselves. Another consequence is that the pleasure and joy of discovery and meaning-making are divorced from school reading (Rule, 2017, p.7).

The news interviewees concurred with these findings. One interviewee shared the following:

At the moment much of the teaching of reading is very sterile. It's separate from making meaning by children and becomes chanting. Many older South Africans will remember from DT and from homeland something called the grade 2 reader and the grade 3 reader in which you would basically memorise the book. You didn't interact with the text.

Children need to read independently with material that is interesting (NM).

McBride (2019, p. 26) also discussed the lack of training to teach reading among educators:

According to Stellenbosch University economist, Nic Spaull, Foundation Phase educators (grades 1-3) do not know how to systematically teach reading; the poorest schools in the country are extremely text-poor and there is wasted learning time during the school day.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Policy failure

Gunn (1984) characterizes policy failure as either non-execution where the policy is not placed into impact as expected or ineffective execution where the policy is enacted. Policy failure tends to be evaluated by looking at the gap between government objectives and results. The focus is on the end goal whereby the policy fails to accomplish the ideal outcomes or results (Frey et al., 1999).

The interviewees from interview 1 pointed out that schools in rural areas have the lowest reading literacy. MM stated:

So, education policies... well there's a range, but if we focus on education policies around reading: what is very good about this report is that it is not just a report card that says we failed. It looks at reading comprehension in relation to the context. So, it looks at how the child is doing in reading in relation to safety and security in school, the availability of books at school, the availability of books at home, how hungry they are, as well as bullying. So, it puts reading in context. There's a variety of issues related to school functioning, school resources and wellbeing, and home life that impact on reading. Now that is important because it helps us to understand where we need to intervene.

When asked to share her thoughts about the finding reflected in the PIRLS, some interviewees expressed their disappointment. One interviewee shared the following:

It always disappoints, and we always hope that we are doing better, but I think it is a very good opportunity for the country to find out what is wrong because our young people deserve better. If we do not get it right by grade 4, it means that we are undermining their ability to achieve their potential, which the country needs because it is our greatest resource going forward (NM).

The interviewees also intimated that resources such as books and libraries are not available in rural areas. One interviewee shared the following:

How do you spend time reading without books? That's one of the biggest challenges.... Now if you want to learn to read, you need to practice reading. You need to have access to books. In the first place, there are not enough books in schools. Also, there're not enough interesting books in African languages and that's the second problem (MM).

MM emphasized:

We have to flood our schools with interesting reading material so that children read for meaning (MM).

Some interviewees also added that reading difficulties also arise when learners read in a language that is not their first-language, or is unfamiliar.

McBride (2019, p.4) confirms this view:

Many children are quickly pushed into learning in a new language (English), and this is a major factor contributing to their low academic success.

4.4 What are the methods and strategies that have been adopted in South African schools to redress reading difficulties?

The South African Department of Education seems to be aware of the literacy crisis this country faces. In response, the DBE has adopted and introduced multiple reading strategies in schools and communities to redress the crisis of reading difficulties since the inception of OBE.

4.4.1 Theme4: Rationale, aims and objectives

Pudi (2006, p.100) notes There seems to have been confusion and limited knowledge or understanding of the strategies adopted by the DoE to revise the OBE curriculum and redress its limitations. One scholar shared the following:

There is a general lack of understanding about the interrelationship between outcomes-based education (OBE), Curriculum 2005 (C2005) and the revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). There is a tendency to perceive the three as different and distinct entities. This stems from the belief that the transformation of education in South Africa followed the pattern of 'from OBE to C2005 to the RNCS', and that this movement or shift is exclusive in the sense that each step in this chain or progression is totally new and independent of the previous one. Based on this, the author is apprehensive as to whether the RNCS will be implemented as envisaged. The fault may lie with the teachers themselves because of acquired prejudices and anxieties, the way the Department of Education (DoE) conducts its advocacy campaigns or the teacher training institutions' curricula (Pudi, 2006, p.100).

Pudi (2006, p.100) explains that the confusion might compound the learners' reading difficulties:

Teachers as an integral part of the process of implementing the curriculum and fostering educational changes need to know and understand this change and be part of it (support it) (2006, p.100).

Ardington et al. (2020, p.6) concur that confusion or educators' lack of knowledge compounds the reading crisis that South Africa is facing:

In early 2019, acknowledging the reading crisis that faces the nation, South African president Cyril Ramaphosa articulated a new and clear expectation for basic education in South Africa: every child should be able to read for meaning by age 10 (the end of the Foundation Phase, grade 3). Yet in moving towards this goal, various intermediate steps need to be established.

The DoE National Reading Strategy document (2008, p.10) proposed that learners exiting the foundation phase should have acquired the skill to read with comprehension:

The desired outcome of the Strategy is that all learners must be able to read basic texts by the end of Grade 3. After that, all learners will develop reading and comprehension skills according to the requirements of each grade level.

Moreover, the DoE National Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statement document explains the strategies adopted to redress the reading difficulties and barriers to learning outcomes of the curriculum:

One of the most significant barriers to learning (reading) was the school curriculum. Barriers to learning arose from the different aspects of the curriculums such as the content, the language, classroom organisation, teaching methodologies, pace of teaching and time available to complete the curriculum, teaching and learning support materials and assessment (DoE, 2001, p.19). In responding to the failures of the past curriculums and diversity of learner needs in the classroom, it is imperative to ensure

differentiation in curriculum delivery to enable access to learning for all learners. All schools are required to offer the same curriculum to learners while simultaneously ensuring variations in mode of delivery and assessment processes to accommodate all learners. Respecting diversity implies a belief that all learners have the potential to learn (DBE, 2011, p.37).

4.4.2 Theme 5: Content, learning activities, materials, and resources

The DBE developed policy documents and adopted certain strategies which outlined the content, learning activities, materials, and resources that educators can use in relation to the rational, objective and aim to redress past curricular limitations. The policy documents and implementations also intend to eliminate confusion and limited knowledge and understanding of the strategies adopted by the DBE. It also serves as a more guided and understandable documentation of the curriculum and DBEs adopted strategies. This is supported by the following excerpts from the DBE National Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statement document:

These guidelines are intended to provide teachers, principals, subject advisors, administrators, school governors and other personnel, parameters and strategies on how to respond to learner diversity in the classrooms through the curriculum. They can be used for school-based teacher development by the Institution Level Support Teams and District Based Support Teams. The guidelines are a critical and integral component of all NCS training initiatives. More specifically, the guidelines have been developed to facilitate and support curriculum differentiation in the classroom (DBE, 2011, p.21).

Despite the Language-in-Education Policy of 1976, it is still the case that most learners in South Africa do not learn in their mother tongue. Most schools have inadequate language policies which do not address the learning needs of the learners. They do not ensure the right of learners especially Foundation Phase learners – to learn in their mother tongue. This is a serious problem. Foundation Phase teachers have

generally not been taught to teach reading in the home language of African learners. There is also the problem that African languages are structured differently from English or Afrikaans (DoE, 2008, p.18).

Educators are encouraged to utilise various teaching methods or strategies to cater to learners' diverse needs. Educators can also modify the format in which the task is presented, for example, the complexity of graphs, diagrams, tables, illustrations, and cartoons. (DBE, 2014, p.16).

In relation to the statements by the DBE, Spaul (2016, p.6) notes that in addition to learners having limited materials and resources, the language used to deliver the content may also compound reading difficulties. This is supported by the following excerpts:

The sobering reality is that because many children are quickly pushed into learning in a new language (English), and this is a major factor contributing to their low academic success. The negative effects of early illiteracy cascade to adversely affect the development of cognitive skills and later educational development.

McBride (2019, p.11) adds that the above-mentioned challenges typically affect learners in disadvantaged schools:

The very high number of learners entering grade 1 with no letter-sound knowledge suggests that the quality of grade R instruction must be evaluated. (Ardington et al., 2020, p. 4).

The scholars proposed the solution to the methods adopted when teaching Nguni languages. This is supported by the following excerpts:

Resolving this would require adaptation of the curriculum which guides Nguni language instruction. Currently the teaching of complex consonant sequences is not included in the grade 1 curriculum. (Ardington et al., 2020, p.5).

In agreement, Ardington et al. (2020, p. 6) state:

Knowledge of complex consonants: Learners also experience significant difficulty in reading complex consonant sequences (examples include hl, dl, kh, tsh, ndl, gcw, ntsw) in grade 1 and 2. These sounds feature regularly in Nguni languages and knowledge of these more complex consonant sequences is necessary to read most grade 1 level texts in these languages. Thus, mastery in reading these is required early on. This may require an adjustment to the Nguni language curriculum, which does not include the teaching of complex consonant sequences in grade 1.

4.4.3 Theme 6: Teacher role, grouping and location

The DoE developed policy documents and adopted certain strategies/methods which outlined the educator's role in relation to the rational, objective and aim to redress past curricular limitations. This is supported by the following excerpt:

The teacher has to actively teach reading, supported by the principal and school management team (SMT) who must create an environment that promotes reading and the teaching of reading (DoE, 2008, p.11).

Furthermore, the document emphasises that the environment must be conducive to learning:

The physical environment includes factors such as classroom spaces, classroom infrastructure, arrangement of furniture, level of noise, class size, classroom displays and resources. It is critical for educators to consider these factors when trying to meet the learning needs of their learners. DBE (2011, p. 6).

The DBE further posits that educators would receive training if they require it such that the above conducive learning environment is realised and outlines some of the activities that educators should engage in when teaching. This is supported by the following excerpts:

In 2011, the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs A Motshekga and the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr B. Nzimande launched the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTEd) to strengthen the progress and address the challenges in improving teacher quality. The key objective of the policy

is to ensure that the quality of teacher development programmes is improved to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning. The National Development Plan stresses the need for teachers to take the initiative to identify the areas in which they need further development. It also emphasizes on the need for teachers to improve their knowledge of the subjects they teach (DBE, 2011, p.20).

Educators Should: (1) Design assessment tasks which would allow for different learning styles or intelligences and allow for group assessment tasks. (2) Pace or scaffold the assessment activities. (3) Allow for tests and assignments to be taken orally as well as in written form. (4) Give multiple-choice options. (5) Provide tasks which require short answers for certain learners. (6) Allow learners extra time to complete the task. (7) Use technology, aids or other special arrangements to undertake assessment tasks. (8) Keep a record of materials and assessment tasks used. (9) Keep teacher's observation books for certain learners who need additional support. (10) Focus only on key concepts for certain learners. (11) Focus on the positive aspects or talents of the learners. (12) Vary assessment activities. (13) Exclude some marks collected early in the semester for a learner who performed poorly at the beginning of the year but subsequently made good progress (DBE, 2014, p.35).

However, some scholars noted significant challenges associated with these intervention strategies in South Africa. They elaborated on the problem encountered as learner's progress to the intermediate phase. This is supported by the following excerpts:

Foundation Phase educators (grades 1-3) do not know how to systematically teach reading (Spaull, 2016, p.27).

Rule (2017, p.7) also asserts:

Educator stands in front of her Grade 4 class. The nine and ten-year olds are crammed together at desks, huddled over shared books. Some are sitting on the floor. Now, class, read from the top of the page, the educator says. They comply in a slow sing-song drawl.

In consideration of the persisting challenges to teaching reading, the DBE 25 Year Review of progress in the basic education sector 2019 document notes the impact that educators have in learners' success to acquire reading skills. This is supported by the following excerpt:

Teachers are the cornerstone of our education system. The successful functioning of schools depends on teachers being trained, recruited, and placed in schools effectively. Policies regulating teacher development, teacher supply and the effective utilisation of teachers are, therefore, central to ensuring improved quality teaching and learning. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) recognise the importance of teacher development and teacher supply and has lent support to this priority area through SDG Target 4.c: By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers (DBE, 2019, p.19).

4.4.4 Theme 7: Time and assessment

The DBE 25 Year Review of progress in the basic education sector 2019 document (year, p 20. 2019) stipulates the time at which various activities and content must be taught. However, according to Howie et al. (2017), the DBE does not stipulate enough time for reading in South Africa. Assessments have a new role and are approached differently in the CAPS policy documents:

To find out about readiness and learner pre-skills: How much prior knowledge or experience do learners have? What level of achievement and readiness do learners have? Are any learners missing the skills or understandings they need to learn this material? Will learners need help to overcome any misconceptions or gaps in knowledge about the topic? (DBE, 2011, p. 34).

Ardington et al. (2020, p. 15) elaborates:

The ANA is now, however, evolving into what is known as the National Assessment Programme (NAP) which is using a sample-based systemic evaluation tool to measure progress and report against indicators

The NAP is comprised of three tiers, namely: (i) The Systemic Assessment, which will be sample-based, and administered in Grades 3, 6 and 9, once every three years - this will provide the Basic Education Sector, especially those involved in planning and evaluation, with valuable data on the health of the system and trends in learner performance; (ii) The Diagnostic Assessment, which will be administered by teachers in the classroom to identify learning gaps, and to plan remedial measures early in the learning process, so as to avoid learning deficits; and (iii) The Summative Assessment, which will be a national examination, administered in selected grades (with an emphasis on Grade 9) and subjects to provide parents and teachers with a national benchmark to measure the performance of their children. It will also be used for promotion/progression purposes (Ardington et al., 2020, p.20).

When considering the three tiers of the NAP, the DoE must consider the constraints that educators are faced with. The Reading Strategy (2008, p.22) noted that overcrowded classrooms pose the diverse challenges for educators. This is supported by the following excerpt:

Learners cannot get individual attention, learners tend to get low reading scores, educators get frustrated and stressed by disruption, lots of marking which hinders their teaching, learners tend to be disturbed and lack concentration as educators may struggle to manage large groups disruption. Educators sometimes do not have sufficient aids for teaching, and in other schools, learners must share textbooks. Educators complain that it usually consumes a lot of the already limited time to calm learners down, make them take their seats, ensure that they all have textbooks to share, and for educators to get time to explain tasks. Thus, making educators not have sufficient time to focus on learners with difficulties, like reading difficulties. Leaving those learners who may need extra help in gaining or maintaining their reading skills often get left behind (The Reading Strategy, 2008, p.22).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented data from secondary sources regarding some of the factors that exacerbate reading difficulties. The findings indicate that South Africa developed and implemented multiple strategies to redress reading difficulties, but the reading difficulties persist among learners. The next chapter presents the discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

A discussion is the segment of a research study in which researchers present their findings that address the study's key questions. This chapter encompasses: interpretations of the findings, ramifications, constraints or limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and conclusion (Allen, 2017). In this study, the findings are discussed in relation to the research questions and extant literature on the redress of reading difficulties in public schools in South Africa.

5.2 Factors that exacerbate reading difficulties within the South African context

The findings revealed that there are many factors that contribute to the manifestation of reading difficulties among South African learners. Besides factors such as poverty, illiterate parents, insufficient resource supply in schools, and educators' limited training, and reading education, factors are identified with inept reading comprehension skills among South African learners. These include the product of home language (HL) and the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in reading, the locus of instructional attention associated with reading such as educators' reading understanding and insights, practices, and reading habits. Given that most of the learners in South Africa complete their education in a language that is not their home language, it is usual to place language as a factor for poor comprehension, particularly in First Additional Language (FAL) reading.

5.2.1 Storytelling versus reading

In South Africa, it appears that there are two types of parents as exemplified in the findings on reading: parents who have the means to access and read books to their children and those without access to books, and only tell stories to their children. Seemingly, reading books or parents reading books to their children is viewed as being more important than telling stories to children. However, storytelling has been a traditional way of many African families to bond the young and the elderly by transmitting teachings from one generation to the next. Some of the stories told are fictional, while others are based on culture, clans, surname history, and other historical or family background (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016).

Desmond (2004) argued that parents and guardians also have a role to play in developing adequate reading skills and highlighted the fundamental responsibility of guardians as the 'key educators' of their children and as admirable readers.

Further mentioned that numerous children at most public schools in South Africa hail from homes with no or few reading materials as parents often state that old newspapers and adverts are the sole materials children can read. Similar findings were found in Rajin's (2013) study on parents' role in teaching their children reading. In the research, one interviewee stated that they often read 'psalm books that they use in the chapel' to their children. This deficiency may be attributed to an absence of books in the home, guardians or parental figures who themselves are ignorant and do not have a culture of reading at home, and the absence of print-rich (lack of libraries) conditions to which these children are exposed. Dieden and Gustafson (2003) investigated the roles of guardians in urban and rural regions. Parents are encouraged to read to their children as it allows them to foster a positive attitude towards reading.

Furthermore, Dieden and Gustafson's (2003) research found that when parents read aloud to their children, it benefits their cognitive development. Parent-child reading was found to be activating parts of the brain associated with narrative understanding and mental imagery. They also argued that learners living in rural regions perform poorly since the guardians are often absent, illiterate, or not readers themselves. According to Taylor et al. (2000), storytelling is part of teaching literacy and is, therefore equally important as reading books to learners.

5.2.2 Language barrier

This study shows that South African learners can begin the foundation phase using a home language, assuming that using one's mother tongue might help learners think critically, reason abstractly, access and process new information quickly. However, Landsberg et al. (2005) and Howie et al. (2007) discarded this assumption, as learners continue experience reading difficulties.

Howie et al. (2008) contends that in South Africa, barriers to reading are generally concealed by poor language proficiency. A related supposition is that when learners experience reading difficulties, then their comprehension problems stem from limited reading proficiency. Pretorius and Machete (2004) stated that poor reading results could not be solely attributed to second language instruction as educators and learners struggle with literacy in African

languages and English. This is confirmed by the South African 2006 and 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study's (PIRLS) results where learners who did the comp tests in their African home language mostly performed poorly (Howie et al. 2008; Howie et al. 2012). In these cases, speaking an African/home language as a LoLT did not improve situation.

In South Africa, the issue is that schools in quintiles 1-3 (under resourced schools) appear to give less time to reading and tend to have fewer books than schools in quintile 4-5 (well-resourced schools) (Bantwini, 2011b). Moreover, Bantwini (2011a), stated that educators acknowledge that many learners in South Africa who have reading difficulties tend to engage in fewer reading exercises or activities in their classes. The current study findings revealed that the challenge stems not only from the educators' limited training but also in the educators' efforts of trying to be good readers and have reading habits from which, learners may learn (Spaull, 2012).

There are four skills of language acquisition embedded in the CAPS, which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing (DBE, 2020). Listening and reading are responsive abilities since learners do not have to deliver language; they receive and understand. Speaking and writing are productive abilities since learners deliver language. Having an adequate English vocabulary means understanding and being able to read the language hence the importance of storytelling and story reading. Listening and speaking are fundamental to learning in all subjects. Learners gather and integrate information, develop knowledge, solve problems, and express thoughts and sentiments (Kaplan's, 2002).

Reading provides learners with additional exposure to learning and understanding other languages. The current study findings uncover that learners' vocabulary advancement is dependent on their reading habits and opportunities. Educators may utilise shared reading to teach learners (Archana & Rani, 2017). They can utilize this strategy if they have sufficient Big Books and substitute with narrating. However, if they do not have Big Books at their learners' grade level, they may use texts from textbooks. The current study discovered that educators may likewise utilise strategies, for example, reading with, and reading to the entire class. Utilise directed group reading and independent or pair reading techniques, and step-by-step get learners to accomplish increasingly more in autonomous reading. Learners should be encouraged to do independent reading in any extra time that they have. However, the DBE

(2019) report expresses that some communities with resources (e.g., libraries in this case) get burnt by community members during strikes; hence learners in rural or township areas continue to lack reading resources. Therefore, it is evident to reveal the importance for parents/guardians to work together with educators and the DBE through safeguarding reading resources available in their communities. Unfortunately, the study findings show a considerable gap in parental-educator cooperation in the South African context, seemingly needing interventions.

5.2.3 Inheritance of teaching habits and policy failure

Educators who were trained between the 1960s and 1990s experienced reading at school in a comparable way; reading was taught utilizing rote learning methodologies (Taylor, 2014). As such, the current study findings show that educators tend to teach similarly, particularly when they are not familiar with the curriculum. Reading was assessed not concerning the comprehension of the text but instead on accuracy and pronunciation. However, assessments based on accuracy and pronunciation seem not to adequately assess and distinguish deficits in reading skills among learners (Mather, 2012). When using these assessment strategies, some educators may not spot reading difficulties among some learners and are therefore not addressed early.

Botha (2002) stated that an educator's role in teaching reading and literacy was not adequately and formally stipulated in the C2005, RNCS, and NCS curricula. It was difficult for researchers to get uniform results on educators' roles in teaching learners' reading and literacy. Spaul (2012) revealed that foundation phase educators (grades 1-3) struggle to teach reading systematically; the poorest schools in the country are incredibly text-poor, and there is wasted learning time during the school day due to issues like overcrowding and sharing of material among learners. However, the findings revealed that the challenge is that intermediate educators complain of limited classroom time, high-class sizes, and limited teaching reading skills and resources. Similarly, Mudzielwana (2014) found that the challenge makes the educator's job stressful. Equally, disruptions, and learner unrest add to educators feeling overwhelmed. These teaching conditions decrease educators' job satisfaction, passion, and drive, thus contributing to ineffective teaching of reading.

5.2.4 Educator training and support

Mather (2012) mentioned that some educators stated that they had not been satisfactorily trained to teach reading at college or university and learned some of what they know was learnt from workshops they attended through word of mouth and were not compulsory. Similarly, Sivnarain's (2013) study on the reading crisis in South Africa, and the current study's findings confirm the claim by educators that they received insufficient training on teaching learners how to read.

5.2.5 District support for educators

The findings of this current study also indicated that educators may feel that the visits from subject advisors may be time-consuming as the superiors can pressure them further and often do not consider their opinions and input in decision-making processes. These visits often cause anxiousness and sometimes decrease some educators' teaching esteem or intrinsic motivation, especially when learners are underperforming. Bantwini (2011a) argued that educator needs are also less studied as studies such as the PIRLS showed that educator instructions and methods impact on learners' literacy performance and in lowering reading difficulties.

5.2.6 Workshops for educators

In 2017, the DBE implemented the Primary Schools Reading Improvement Programme (PSRIP). The PSRIP facilitated three-day workshops in August 2017 for primary school subject advisors from all provinces (DBE, 2019). These workshops aimed to equip subject advisors with skills and activities that educators may use to help learners learn how to read and learn English as a First Additional Language (DBE, 2019). They were also provided with knowledge about the Primary Schools Reading Improvement Programme. The subject advisors provided positive feedback about the workshops and felt knowledgeable enough to convey the information to educators (DBE, 2019). However, Lai (2010) questions the effectiveness of such workshops as educators tend to loath them. Some educators have chronic illnesses, which affects their concentration span as they get tired quickly and feel sleepy during workshops (Czaja & Sharit, 2012).

5.3 Methods and strategies used in South African schools to redress reading difficulties

The findings indicated that the DoE developed policy documents and adopted strategies which outline the content, learning activities, materials, and resources that educators can use, with the aim to redress past curricular limitations. The DBE (2014) stated that the policy documents and implementations also intend to eliminate confusion and limited knowledge and understanding of the strategies adopted by the DoE to revise the OBE curriculum.

5.3.1 Rationale, aims, and objectives

The current study's findings revealed that recognising the reading difficulties crisis across South Africa, President Cyril Ramaphosa spoke of a new and clear expectation for basic education in South Africa in his national address in 2019 (DBE, 2019). The President urged that every learner be equipped to read for meaning by the Foundation Phase. However, since the inception of the OBE, the DBE has implemented various initiatives to redress reading difficulties:

- *National Reading Strategy* (DoE, 2008): This strategy was developed and first introduced in 2008. The principal objective of this strategy is to aid the improvement of learners' reading capability, including learners who experience barriers to learning. The DoE intended for the NRS to be used as a guide when coordinating reading drives across schools in all provinces.
- *Foundations for Learning Campaign*: a four-year educational development programme (2008-2011) planned to work on learners' basic language and mathematical abilities. A definitive objective of the initiative was that all primary schools would be relied upon to increase average learners' achievement in literacy/language and numeracy/Mathematics to no under 50%, demonstrating an improvement of somewhere in the range of 15 and 20% in the four years of the initiative (DoE, 2008). However, due to limited educator curriculum training, there was a mismatch between what the initiative meant to accomplish.
- *Annual National Assessments (ANA)* (DBE, 2015): ANA was introduced in 2011, and the DBE identified this strategy as an essential means for reviewing and improving the level and quality of education, with special attention on the fundamental abilities of literacy and numeracy. The ANA was written by all Grades 1 to 6 and Grade 9 learners in public schools, including special schools and state-

- funded independent primary schools in South Africa. The ANA enables a systemic evaluation of education performance and thereby enhances learner achievement.
- *Rainbow Workbook for learners*: From 2014 to 2019, the DBE has distributed Volume 1 and 2 workbooks for every term to different regions of the country from Grade R to 9. The workbooks were intended to cover many lessons in the eleven official languages, Mathematics and the Language of Learning and Teaching in General Education and Training.
 - *Drop All and Read Campaign* (DBE, 2015): This campaign was developed and first implemented in 2015. The aim was to advance the significance and benefit of reading in schools and communities. The Drop-All-And-Read campaign upholds the Early Grade Reading Assessment implemented in June 2015. This reading initiative aimed to give Grade R and Grade 1 learners reading habits and skills during their first school years. The reading upheaval lines up with the 2015 Nelson Mandela Day sub-topic that focused on the importance of reading and books. The DBE trusted that the Drop-All-And-Read would help learners and adults to rediscover the delights of reading.
 - *Piloting of Early Grade Reading Assessment* (EGRA): The project was implemented in 2015 in Grades 1-3 out of 100 project schools for each region. Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) is an exclusively managed oral assessment that intends to evaluate the foundation literacy abilities of learners in the early grades. The DBE adopted it by observing international guidelines and rules. The EGRA is a diagnostic reading test that is administered orally, each learner in turn. In around 15 minutes, an educator, utilising the four principal assessment parts (acknowledgment of initial sounds, word recognition, passage, and reading), can evaluate the learner's capacity to perform basic pre-reading and reading abilities.
 - *National Reading Coalition* (DBE, 2020): A collaboration with different partners improve the culture of reading among South Africans during the COVID-19 induced lockdown period. The NRC is a drive to the reading revolution. It was set up by the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) and the Department of Basic Education. The alliance is proceeding to drive reading improvement

through social platforms to urge learners and adults to read to comprehend information, read for pleasure, commitment, and cultivate an essential reading culture in the country.

- STEM lockdown digital programme and the reading club. Where, the digital classroom where qualified educators and the youth, and some student educators are used. Moreover, the reading club where celebrities are used to read books to learners who are in grades R to 3. Celebrities and influencers are used to teach learners who were not able to attend classes due to the lockdown regulations (DBE, 2021)

Despite the above-adopted strategies or methods implemented, South Africa still faces reading difficulties crisis. As per the current study's findings, the reason for this is due to some of the underlying issues of the DBE's limitations in service delivery, which needs to be redressed.

5.3.2 Content, learning activities, materials and resources

According to Ramatlapana and Makonye (2012), the DBE provides educators with textbooks to teach reading. They are also expected to provide school storybooks and novels to teach reading. However, Botha (2010) mentioned that many South African schools often complain of the limited supply of these resources, requiring some educators to use other materials like newspapers, magazines, and abstracts from various textbooks. According to the current study's findings, the CAPS policy documents supported these alternative reading materials and included DVDs and projectors (for watching the movie version of books) to facilitate and promote reading (DBE, 2019). Some of the content and information in these magazines may not be appropriate for particular grades making this a challenge for educators. Hence, Bantwini (2011a) pointed out that the DBE has to work on the lack of appropriate reading resources as a considerable and effective means of redressing reading difficulties. These limitations may decrease intrinsic motivation to teach learners effectively, especially with the challenging working conditions that educators face (e.g., violence in schools, disrespect from learners, and disruptive behaviour from learners among others).

Reading resources are important in forming or facilitating specific reading behavioural patterns in learners. When school walls, classes, offices, and educators have colourful or reading aids, it promotes reading behaviour learners can model (Mergel, 2011). The current study findings show that reading resources or aids readily available to learners may help them facilitate their comprehension and construct meaning of what is read independently. These resources are typically not available in under-resourced schools because the DBE may not have provided these resources, or the community has vandalised or stolen the resources as poverty and crime are usually rife in these areas. The findings suggested that the DBE needs to furnish schools with interesting reading material that children can read for meaning. However, it is recommended that educators must strive to develop better skills to teach reading using available resources. Mather (2012) noted that there are various resources that are obtainable on the internet, which educators can utilise to motivate or teach their learners reading. The resources also consist of printable worksheets, reading abstracts, reading certificates that educators can use to motivate and encourage learners, fun reading activities, and visual aids among others. They are printable books available, and educators must ensure that they print books that are age and grade-appropriate to learners. These resources may be beneficial to learners from some urban areas where learners use electronic devices such as tablets instead of textbooks, and some schools received computers as donations. However, this may disadvantage schools that may not have computers and enough resources like paper.

5.3.3 Teacher role, grouping, and location

The findings of the current study highlight that educators are the foundation of the education system. The effective functioning of schools depends on educators being qualified, hired, and located in schools efficiently. These findings are also supported by the DBE (2019) by noting that policies regulating educator development, are necessary to securing and enhancing quality instruction and education.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) identify the effect of educator development and educator supply and has given support to this priority area through SDG which targets that by 2030, there must be a substantial increase in the appointment of qualified educators who will be able to teach learners with reading difficulties efficiently (DBE, 2019). The findings of the current study reiterate that reading involves the learner's feelings, thinking, perceptions, culture, behaviour, and environment. As such, educators play a crucial role in the use of methods that accommodate differences.

Literacies should include storytelling, art, and performance as they are a more engaging teaching methods.

Kolb's learning styles indicates that reading is not all about helping the learners pass or complete activities to go to the next grade. However, it is also about providing learners with knowledge and skills that will be transferred to long term memory, thus facilitating understand of the new information gained in the next grade. In this regard, the findings of the current study demonstrate that South African educators are teaching to test learners rather than teaching to develop literacy skills or critical thinking skills that learners need, which is a considerable gap in mainstream schools. The findings revealed that South African educators emphasize reading aloud, fluency, accuracy, and correct pronunciation. To cater for the diversity of learner needs in classrooms, it is necessary to engage in differentiation (the use of multiple strategies for learners' distinct needs) in curriculum delivery to facilitate equal opportunity to efficient reading and learning to all South African learners. Curriculum differentiation is mostly for learners with reading disabilities and not learners who have difficulties due to not being adequately taught how to read (DBE, 2019). However, it does not appear that the current curriculum specifically provides needed methods to teach learners with reading difficulties.

Furthermore, the findings also show that South African educators are limited by the curriculum that has not given them much time to allow learners to debate and discuss the story content and morals where such materials have been used. This task is considered a vital skill that needs to be developed to encourage learners to give personal meaning to the stories. Alexander (2006) added that educators must be conscious that learners with reading difficulties tend to develop low self-esteem, resulting in withdrawal and limited participation. As such, educators could place learners with reading difficulties with those who have similar or other difficulties. Bantwini (2011b) states that they may also be conscious of which reading aspects, each learner is limited in and more able in, and place learners in groups or with peers to fuse each other's strengths and weaknesses. Thus, educators must be conscious of learners' personalities and characters and strategically place learners in groups where these qualities are enhanced.

It may prove too much for one educator to accommodate all learners in each period, hence the DBE (2020) has introduced educational assistants. The assistants work with the lead educator by providing additional assistance and instruction to learners.

5.3.4 Teacher assistants

Teaching assistants commonly work one-on-one with learners to assist them with knowledge and apply principles taught by subject educators. They also assist the educator with standard administration duties such as taking attendance register, checking schoolwork/homework, and recording grades. Further, they assist educators with planning and set up materials for lessons and make alterations to lessons where needed. This may incorporate reading tests or exercises aloud and giving extra time outside of class for learners to complete assessments. According to DBE (2020), the advantages of schools having teaching assistants is that they help with classroom management, especially in overcrowded classrooms to reduce educator stress and burnout. They attend to learners with reading or any other educational difficulties that require individual special attention. While the educator is teaching, teaching assistants are beneficial in ensuring that the lesson content is adequately understood and exercised by learners. According to Cassim and Moen (2020), educators stated that assistant teachers are very helpful in classroom management, which makes educators' workload and stress levels to decrease. However, not much existing research on how teachers' assistances improve learner's performances is available.

5.235 Time and assessment

The current study findings indicated that CAPS was developed using evidence-based and weekly guidelines to direct educators' lack of familiarity and proficiency in teaching reading and literacy (DBE, 2019). The policy documents provide structure and guidelines used by all public schools, mainly for educators (DBE, 2019). However, these guidelines used to design CAPS do not seem adequate for the South African context. For example, reading is allocated 60 minutes, which may be enough in other Western countries. However, overcrowding, textbook sharing, and disruptive behaviour among South African schools require more time to start the lesson, which is not factored in the curriculum.

5.4 Recommendations

1. Further research may be conducted on storytelling in relation to story reading as components of literacy in schools as some parents tell stories while others read stories to their children.
2. Time related issues for each subject have been observed from previous research and the current study's findings as a fundamental key to granting educators more time to

implement reading strategies effectively.

It may be recommended that additional time be allocated for reading.

3. Based on the findings of the present study, it is recommended that the DBE develops more transparent policies and support programmes for educators to redress the challenge of learners who have reached higher grades without the ability to read or who experience reading difficulties while at school.

5.5 Limitations

Limitation of a specific study concerns potential shortcomings that are generally out of the researcher's control and are firmly connected with the chosen research design or factors like interviewee dropout (Theofanidis et al., 2019). Queirós et al. (2017) states that a study limitation alludes to those qualities or requirements that hinder or impact the researcher's discoveries from research.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the research was limited to the use of secondary sources instead of individual interviews. The use of individual interviews could have provided recent and first-hand information from educators and other DBE professionals on the topic of reading difficulties. There are limited sources on reading difficulties based on research. A vast majority of secondary sources available are on reading disabilities.

5.6 Conclusion

South African educational organisations are complaining that the country's poor scholastic performance, reading abilities, and progress demonstrated by learners is an indication that the DBE lacks in effort to adequately address the various issues emanating from the apartheid era. Thus, the DBE must redress these issues effectively with the help of recommendations from South Africa researchers. The current study delineated factors that exacerbate reading difficulties in public schools in South Africa and analysed strategies adopted by the DBE to redress reading difficulties. Poverty, illiterate guardians, poor service delivery, and educators' insufficient training in reading contribute to ineffectual reading comprehension among South African learners. These involve the outcome of home language and the language of learning and teaching in reading, the locus of instructional application linked with reading such as educators' reading understanding and insight, practices, and reading attitudes. Given that most of the learners in South Africa complete their education in a language that is not their home

language (mostly English), it is common to place language as a factor for poor comprehension, especially in First Additional Language reading. Although the DBE has implemented procedures and policies to better reading among the South African learners, there are constraints to fulfilling these policies to achieve the objectives. Educators' exclusion in policy development poses uncertainty about the curriculum and its reform.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Data recording form

Type of source: _____

Name of source: _____

Date published/retrieved: _____

Location: _____

Author: _____

Curricular spider web model		
	Curricular component	Question
1.	Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What curriculum is implemented? • What is the history of the curriculum/reading?
2.	Aims and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the aim/ objective/ purpose/ function for the curriculum/reading?
3.	Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the definition of reading difficulties that is provided? • What are some of the challenges that educators face with the content presented in the curriculum? • How many learners have difficulties with reading in that year? • What are some of the factors that limit the learners' ability to read well?
4.	Learning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the language of instruction? • Do learners appear to understand the language of instruction? • How do educators introduce the topic of the day? • Who is tasked with reading? (educators? Parents? Individual learners? Groups of learners? Whole class?)
5.	Teacher role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the challenges that educators are faced with in the classroom? • How can educators ascertain whether learners understand what was read? • How can educators assist learners with reading difficulties to accomplish set tasks/activities? • What teaching methods/ strategies/ techniques/ styles are used by the educators to elaborate where learners need assistance to read/pronounce/ understand some words? • How can educators identify a learner presenting with reading difficulty? • What support interventions and/or strategies are provided for educators to equip them with the necessary skills to assist learners with reading difficulties?

6.	Materials & resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the teaching resources used by educators? • Do learners have the appropriate reading materials? • What are some of the reading materials that the learners must possess? • Are the learners using reading materials?
7.	Grouping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the learners learning with? • How are students allocated to various learning trajectories?
8.	Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the learning environment that discussed (physical/social)?
9.	Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When is reading done? • When is reading introduced? • When is reading the most problematic?
10.	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the diagnostic, formative, summative, national and international assessments that are discussed?

Appendix B

Table of analysis

Rationale							
(DBE,2008) 1 In 2001 and 2004, the Department of Education conducted two national systemic evaluations to establish literacy and numeracy levels in primary schools. These surveys showed shockingly low levels of reading ability across the country. Large numbers of our Learners simply do not read. The Department of Education continues to	(DBE,2011). 2.One of the most significant barriers to learning (reading) was the school curriculum. Barriers to learning arose from the different aspects of the curriculums such as the content, the language, classroom organisation, teaching methodologies, pace of teaching and time available to complete the curriculum, teaching and learning support materials and assessment (Department of Education, 2001, p.19). In responding to the failures of the past curriculums and diversity	Sindi-Leigh McBride (2019).	Peter Rule (2017).	Ardington et al. (2020)	: (DBE,2019)	Amnesty International (2019) 8.While South Africa has made progress in providing access to education, it has yet to tackle the deeply entrenched legacy of apartheid, left by Hendrick Verwoerd, that continues to result in massive inequalities in the country's education system, she said. The legacy of racial discrimination in the South African education system, characterised by poor outcomes, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate facilities and learning materials for tens of thousands of students, still looms large 25 years into freedom, the human rights group said in a statement on	: (DBE,2011).

<p>investigate why the levels of reading are so poor, and to find ways to deal with the problem. This National Strategy for Reading is part of its response.</p>	<p>of learner needs in the classroom, it is imperative to ensure differentiation in curriculum delivery to enable access to learning for all learners. All schools are required to offer the same curriculum to learners while simultaneously ensuring variations in mode of delivery and assessment processes to accommodate all learners. Respecting diversity implies a belief that all learners have the potential to learn.</p>					<p>Monday announcing the launch of their #SignTheSmileOff campaign. Many schools serving our poorest communities rely on outdated and poorly maintained infrastructure and a dire lack of teaching resources that provides a wholly inadequate learning space for young people. While South Africa has made progress in providing access to education, it has yet to tackle the deeply entrenched legacy of apartheid, left by Hendrick Verwoerd, that continues to result in massive inequalities in the country's education system.</p>	
<p>Comment:</p>							
<p>Aims and objectives</p>							
<p>(DBE,2008) 1.The main goal of this National Reading Strategy</p>	<p>(DBE,2011). . These guidelines are intended to provide teachers, principals,</p>	<p>Sindi-Leigh McBride (2019).</p>	<p>Peter Rule (2017).</p>	<p>Ardington et al. (2020) 6.In early 2019 South</p>	<p>(DBE,2019) .Teachers are the cornerstone of</p>	<p>Amnesty International (2019)</p>	<p>(DBE,2011). In 2011, the Minister of Basic</p>

<p>is to improve the reading competence of learners. The Strategy aims to improve the reading level of all learners in the country, including those who experience barriers to learning and those learners who are at special schools and youth care centres. The desired outcome of the Strategy is that all learners must be able to read basic texts by the end of Grade 3. After that, all learners will develop reading and comprehension skills according to the requirements</p>	<p>subject advisors, administrators, school governors and other personnel, parameters and strategies on how to respond to learner diversity in the classrooms through the curriculum. They can be used for school-based teacher development by the Institution Level Support Teams and District Based Support Teams. The guidelines are a critical and integral component of all NCS training initiatives. More specifically, the guidelines have been developed to facilitate and support curriculum differentiation in the classroom.</p>			<p>African president Cyril Ramaphosa articulated a new and clear expectation for basic education: every child should be able to read for meaning by age 10 (South African Government, 2019).</p>	<p>our education system. The successful functioning of schools depends on teachers being trained, recruited, and placed in schools effectively. Policies regulating teacher development, teacher supply and the effective utilisation of teachers are, therefore, central to ensuring improved quality teaching and learning. The Sustainable</p>		<p>Education, Mrs A Motshekga and the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr B. Nzimande launched the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED) to strengthen the progress and address the challenges in improving teacher quality. The key objective of the policy is to ensure that the</p>	
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<p>of each grade level.</p>					<p>Development Goals (SDG) recognise the importance of teacher development and teacher supply and has lent support to this priority area through SDG Target 4.c: By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers.</p>		<p>quality of teacher development programmes is improved in order to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning. The National Development Plan stresses the need for teachers to take the initiative to identify the areas in which they need further development. It also emphasizes on the need for teachers to improve their knowledge of</p>
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							the subjects they teach.	
Comment:								
Content								
(DBE,2008) 1.Only 51% of learners were able to read at an age-appropriate level. Thus, for half of the learners, the Learning Outcome was not achieved. This has important implications: • Learners’ language competence affects their performance in all subjects, at all grades. Poor language competence limits conceptual development. • If reading competence is poor, then	(DBE,2011). 2.In this policy document, reading difficulties are classified as learning barriers. Learning barriers are defined as the notion refers to difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site and/or within the learner him/herself which prevent both the system and the learner needs from being met. When, based on objective evaluation made by an educational authority, it is ascertained that teaching and learning are hampered where such needs are not met,	Sindi-Leigh McBride (2019). 4.ight out of every 10 learners in South Africa cannot read properly. Not in English, not in their home language, not in any language. According to the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2016), an international comparative reading assessment: 78% of Grade 4 learners in South Africa cannot read for meaning, and this is significantly worse for children tested in African languages—93% of Grade 4 learners tested in Sepedi could not read for meaning with similarly large percentages among Setswana	Peter Rule (2017). 5. Pronunciation, accuracy and fluency are important in reading. But they have no value without comprehension. Countries around the world are paying <u>increasing attention</u> to reading comprehension, as indicated by improving results in international literacy tests. The problem with the oratorical reading approach is	Ardington et al. (2020)	(DBE,2019)	Amnesty International (2019)	DBE,2011).	

<p>learners' writing competence will be poor, and their comprehension (understanding) levels will equally be poor.</p>	<p>educationally sound measures must be applied.</p> <p>2. Curriculum- Refers to what we teach - what learners are expected to learn, know, understand, and do.</p> <p>2. Because of curriculum demands and time constraints, it is often a challenge for the teachers to select content which is based on: ♣ being meaningful, ♣ learners' needs and interests, ♣ the environment, ♣ more than just learning facts, and ♣ learners' current levels of functioning In curriculum differentiation, teachers are encouraged to modify the content to some extent to help learners reach the attain</p>	<p>(90%), Tshivenda (89%), isiXhosa (88%), Xitsonga (88%), isiZulu (87%) and isiNdebele (87%). At this stage of a child's development, the ability to locate explicit information and make straightforward inferences about events and reasons for actions is considered crucial for learning other subjects from Grade 4 onward.</p> <p>4. According to Stellenbosch University economist <u>Nic Spaull</u>, there are three explanations: Foundation Phase educators (grades 1-3) do not know how to systematically teach reading; the poorest schools in the country are extremely text-poor and there is wasted learning time during the school day. But this becomes more complicated when viewed through the language</p>	<p>evident in the results of the recent Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016 tests. PIRLS' purpose is to assess reading comprehension and to monitor trends in literacy at five-year intervals. Countries participate voluntarily. Learners write the test in the language of learning and teaching used in Grades 1 to 3 in their school.</p>				
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	<p>knowledge, skills and competencies. Before we make decisions on how we are going to teach, and what we need to modify, we first need to identify the content.</p> <p>2. Factors identified that caused reading difficulties were the difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole (e.g. lack of resources), the learning site and/or within the learner him/herself which prevent both the system and the learner needs from being met.</p>	<p>lens: the sobering reality is that because many children are quickly pushed into learning in a new language (English), and this is a major factor contributing to their low academic success. The negative effects of early illiteracy cascade to adversely affect the development of cognitive skills and later educational development.</p>						
<p>Comment:</p>								

Appendix C

News interview questions

Interview 1

1. Now stats SA released a survey this week which found that nearly half of South African parents don't read to or with their children. What do you attribute this culture to?
2. I know you want to separate the story telling from the actual reading as well and some of the story telling would take place in one's mother tongue does it not?
3. Are teachers actually focusing on the wrong things when it comes to literacy skills in schools?
4. Do you see a mark difference between private schools and public schools when it comes to some of the research that is taking place out there and at some of yours that you doing yourselves?
5. What do you think the curriculum and the comments about the curriculum and also what the way forward for you, how can we correct what you feel is wrong with this system?
6. What do you think of uhm those comments there in terms of the language issue as well, and for you professor what do you think is the way forward?

Interview 2

1. We are now having a conversation about this 2011 and 2016 (PEARLS) report, so let me get your views on the report, did it really surprise you?

2. And you were also telling me about the importance of this grade 4 because that's where learners start to do different subjects with different teachers talk to us about that grade the importance of that grade?
3. You make mention of learners in the rural areas and the report really talks about the children of course who live in the rural areas in townships that they have the lowest reading literacy schools. 20 years later into democracy our education policies are they not addressing this sufficiently?
4. Against which countries were we measured with?
5. Do we have the resources though, the books, libraries etc?
6. Is the fact that the teachers themselves do not have adequate skills and the necessary skills so is this contributing?

Interview 3

1. What is the deal with the using celebrities and not teachers whose job is to teach?
2. Do you know how many celebrities have been signed up already that want to be part of this project?
3. What sort of age are you looking at in terms of this reading club and the kinds of books, is it just for enjoyment or is it school related?
4. So how does it work and where do I log onto a page? Will there be a link that will help people with certain books? how does it work?

Appendix D



Mr Sithembokuhle Minenhle Sinothando Mashamba (220058236)
School Of Applied Human Sc
Pietermaritzburg

8 February 2022

Dear Mr Sithembokuhle Minenhle Sinothando Mashamba,

Original application number: 00005507

Project title: The redress of reading difficulties in South African schools: A textual analysis

Amended title: Exploring the redress of reading difficulties in South African schools

Exemption from Ethics Review

In response to your **amendment** application received on 17 December 2021, your school has indicated that the amendment has been granted **EXEMPTION FROM ETHICS REVIEW**.

Any alteration/s to the exempted research protocol, e.g., Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment/modification prior to its implementation. The original exemption number must be cited.

For any changes that could result in potential risk, an ethics application including the proposed amendments must be submitted to the relevant UKZN Research Ethics Committee. The original exemption number must be cited.

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.

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

Yours sincerely,



Prof Johannes John-Langba
Academic Leader Research
School Of Applied Human Sc

UKZN Research Ethics Office
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix E: Turnitin Report

The redress of reading difficulties in South African schools

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Appendix F



Mufasa Research Consultancy

SERVING WITH DISTINCTION

08 August 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Editor's Letter

Exploring the redress of reading difficulties in South African schools

Below is the scope considered during language editing of the above titled MS:

- Grammar check
- Sentence construction
- Spelling check
- Punctuation
- In-text referencing
- Reference checking
- Formatting/document layout

As a professional editor, I pledge that the above aspects of the MS were, to the best of my knowledge, meticulously and correctly done at the time the work was sent to the author. However, I am not responsible for any corrections that were made after the editing process.

Yours faithfully,



Kemist Shumba (PhD)

PhD in Health Promotion: University of KwaZulu-Natal [UKZN]
 Master of Social Science in Health Promotion (*Com laude*): UKZN
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