



**FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS' PHILOSOPHIES ON LITERACY TEACHING AND
LEARNING IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF FIVE RURAL PRIMARY
SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN CAPE-GEORGE DISTRICT**

by

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ABSTRACT

The aim of study was to explore the relationship between teachers' philosophies and practices in literacy teaching in rural primary schools in South Africa. In this qualitative study, five schools with eight Foundation Phase teachers in a rural area near George in the Western Cape Province of South Africa participated. One-on-one, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were the methods of gleaning data which were analysed and categorised to reveal dominant patterns of thought, behaviour and pedagogy. The data were thematically analysed in order to isolate certain themes which showed what was actually taught in the literacy classroom.

The findings revealed a range of understandings or philosophies of what literacy teaching entails from a highly behaviourist stance to a more constructivist stance. For some teachers, literacy instruction means no more than grammatical and vocabulary exercises, while for other teachers literacy signifies a profound reading of social practice. Congruent with this range of understandings of literacy, teachers' tuition varied from drill work in class, to imaginative and engaging education that drew upon the inner resources of learners' own knowledge. In most cases in this study, those teachers who displayed a limited and unreflective philosophy of learning literacy mirrored their limitations in class; while the teachers with a broader understanding of the ethos, ethics and stipulations of literacy requirements demonstrated, even in trying circumstances, to deliver inspiring and quality literacy instruction. It was important in this study to synthesize a conceptual framework; by drawing upon (i) Vygotsky's pioneering work on mediation pertaining to the teachers' role, (ii) Freire's theory on constructivism emphasising learner centred education, and (iii) drawing upon the literature on the meaning of the term literacy itself in the 21st century.

This study in its contribution sought to determine the existence and use of teachers' philosophies on literacy teaching and learning at rural primary schools. It emphasised the understanding of teachers' philosophies and their beliefs in the teaching of literacy

that contributes to the knowledge of how literacy could be taught more effectively by: (i) identifying ways to make literacy teachers critically aware when teaching literacy; (ii) determining ways for teachers to reflect sufficiently on their own socio-political and economic assumptions when teaching. It sought to make teachers aware that in today's classrooms in South Africa there is a wide diversity of learners, which demands flexibility of literacy instruction.

DECLARATION

I, Mzimkulu Samson Honey Dyasi, declare that the contents of the dissertation/thesis with the title: **Teachers' Philosophies on Literacy Teaching and Learning** represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation/thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Signed



Date

12 January 2021

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The dissertation/thesis may not be published either in part (in scholarly, scientific or technical journals), or as a whole (as a monograph), unless permission has been obtained from the University.

Glossary of Terms

ADS	Attention Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
FAS	Foetal alcohol syndrome
FP	Foundation Phase
FRC	Faculty Research Committee
GTZ	Gessellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit
MKO	More Knowledgeable Other
OBE	Outcomes base education
PIRLS	Progress International Reading Literacy Study
SES	Social-economic status
SGBs	School Governing Bodies
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNESCO	United Nations for Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
ZPD	Zone of proximal development

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my beloved family and my beautiful grandchildren.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation

This thesis functions at two broad levels. The inner segment of the research is a close examination of various schools in a rural area of South Africa, undertaken in order to define and assess teachers' underlying philosophies on how to teach literacy. But this detailed inner examination of a specific, scientifically defined problem cannot be adequately considered *in vacuo*; as if centuries of colonial exploitation and racist oppression had left no mark on the education system in general. Therefore the close scrutiny of teachers' philosophies on how to teach literacy is continually checked and held in balance against the broader historical context which conditions the detailed planning, budgeting and management of schools in South Africa today.

Understanding teachers' philosophies necessitate continual reference to the historical context of education as well as the state of literacy in the country today. Chisholm (2011) maintains that learners from poor rural areas in South Africa are faced with the handicap of poverty and the problem of going to a school that still displays the wounds of "neglect and underfunding under the apartheid dispensation" (Chisholm, 2011:52). Chisholm (2011:52) argues that "what matters in schools are the management of resources, the number of teachers and teacher quality, textbooks, classroom practices, discipline and management assessment and feedback and home background" (Chisholm, 2011:52).

Spaull (2015:34) adds that the powerful 'legacies of apartheid' remain evident in South African education. Spaull (2015:34) points out that poorer learners in South Africa perform inferior than learners that come from higher income homes. Spaull states that for 20 years racial segregation has been eradicated in South Africa, despite that "schools which served predominantly White learners under apartheid remain functional (although now racially mixed), while the vast majority of those which served Black rural/urban learners remain dysfunctional and unable to provide the necessary literacy and numeracy skills to learners". It has been shown that if learners receive poor quality of education

then it “drives an intergenerational cycle of poverty where children inherit the social standing of their parents or caregivers”. This is a tragic set of circumstances because it takes place regardless of their own capabilities or consequence (Spaull, 2015:34).

Sonn (2016:iv) in her research study which was based in a rural education district where “past unequal spatial, educational and social stratifications persist”, argues that although social justice is supposed to be embedded in the South African constitution and various policy documents as an important concept and vision for a democratic South Africa, it is still not a reality. This is despite the fact that South Africa has been a democracy for twenty two years, the South African society still reflects the entrenched racial and class divisions of the past (Sonn, 2016: iv). Sonn (2016) claims that the position taken in her study is that “social justice and social injustice are inextricably linked”.

In tests conducted by Progress International Reading Literacy Study (Howie, PIRLS 2006, 2011 & 2016) it has become evident that South African primary school learners’ literacy skills and abilities are substantially below the norm for their age and grade, both continentally and inter-continentally. The low literacy levels of learners in South Africa is a cause of concern among different stakeholders such as educators and parents: even though “during the past decade, much attention has been given to both the literacy rates in South Africa and how classroom teaching of reading is envisioned and studied” (Condy, Chigona, Chetty and Thornhill, 2010:261). South Africa has continually scored lowest when compared to other countries whose learners have participated in the international assessment of learners’ achievement for PIRLS 2006, 2011 & 2016. Among 40 participating countries, South Africa had a lower rating than all the other countries. Kuwait and Morocco had higher national literacy scores than South Africa (PIRLS 2006). In the PIRLS 2016, South Africa was the lowest-scoring country out of 50.

The WCED Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2006-2016 states that: “Systemic research conducted by, *inter alia*, *Gessellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit*, and the National Department of Education, as well as other indicators including the assessments of Grade 3 learners’ competencies and numeracy as early as 2002, point to the fact that the literacy and numeracy skills of learners in the Western Cape are “far below what is required from them to learn and develop effectively” (WCED, 2006:1). It was mentioned

in the same WCED document of 2006 that: “36% of learners were achieving the reading and numeracy outcomes expected of a Grade 3 learner and that the vast majority of learners in Grade 3 were performing two to three years below expectation” (WCED, 2006:2). Most alarming of the same systemic results was the performance of learners from rural areas which indicated that only 15% performed at the Grade 3 level of literacy.

Reading standards of these young learners were well below the national standards for most Grade 3 learners (WCED, 2006). This predicament has drawn some educational researchers to investigate the root cause of such underperformance in literacy tasks. Poor performance in rural schools is often blamed on logistical problems such as lack of textbooks (Prinsloo, 2014). Gardiner (2008:7) attributes low literacy rates to lack of classrooms and public or school libraries. A variety of these deficiencies “are linked to socio-economic factors, such as poverty and unemployment which have a direct influence upon the quality of education available to young learners. The medium of instruction is blamed as well: most learners in South Africa receive instruction “in their mother tongue at the beginning of their formal schooling and have to switch to a different language of learning and teaching”, most commonly English, in Grade 4 (Prinsloo, 2014; Gardiner, 2008:20).

Lack of parent participation in learners’ education and weak functioning of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) are regarded as contributory factors (Modisaotsile, 2012:1). Other researchers place the blame upon teacher and learner absenteeism. It has been noted that almost 20 per cent of teachers are absent on Mondays and Fridays (Modisaotsoile, 2012:4) and that absenteeism peaks to one-third of staff members at month-end. Richek, Caldwell, Jennings and Lerner (2002:24) state that absence of “learners from school and frequent transfers can be harmful to their progress”: they explain that “some learners are absent from school for weeks at a time, missing critical instruction. Other learners change schools several times during the year; resulting in abrupt changes in instructional approaches and materials” (Richek *et al.*, 2002:24). The PIRLS 2006 analysis “showed little correlation between hours taught and achievement; due to complex factors such as instructional time not spent in effective and productive ways” (Howie *et al.*, 2006).

The fact that there are so many diverse, and at times conflicting, explanations for the low literacy rates in South Africa suggests that there may be something fundamentally flawed with classroom practice. Murphy (2004:25) claims, for instance, that: “low teacher expectations; low teacher efficacy; and poor, inappropriate, and watered-down programmes have all been implicated in literacy failure”. It is facile, however, to raise concerns about the symptoms of dysfunctionality without first pausing to contemplate what may be the root causes of ineffective classroom tuition. Instead of analysing the outward effects of dysfunctional schooling and apportioning blame, this research investigation posits that more essential questions need to be asked. In many cases, teachers bear certain assumptions, prejudices and inherited outlooks concerning literacy teaching which, for this thesis, are termed teachers’ philosophies. The nature of these individual philosophies may substantially affect the efficacy of the tuition in literacy conducted in the classroom. As a result of this supposition, the core question posed by this research project is: ‘What philosophies do primary teachers have about literacy?’ This core question prompts other secondary inquiries such as: *How do teachers of literacy think about their teaching? What guides what they teach and how they teach? What beliefs do they hold about learners and literacy acquisition?*

Close scrutiny of these questions suggests that there could be a link between learners’ performance in academic tasks, teachers’ beliefs and how such beliefs inform the practice of teaching. When a teacher consciously reflects upon the beliefs that inform *why*, *what* and *how* he or she teaches, such self-scrutiny is regarded as valuable self-reflection about the philosophy that underlies daily classroom practice (Cohen, 1999). According to Schönwetter, Sokal, Friesen and Taylor (2002) teachers should be clear about the philosophy that underpins their work. A teacher’s philosophy is described as his or her understanding of how learners learn and how they should be taught. According to a survey by Schönwetter *et al.* (2002:83) in the UK, teachers rarely have the time or opportunity to reflect on what they teach and why they teach it: many have never recognised or been able to formulate consciously and articulate their teaching philosophies and goals. In instances where teachers have been asked to describe their teaching philosophes, descriptions have been “derived indirectly from a larger definition

of teaching". As a result, even though these accounts can be used at a practical level, they are not academically accurate or helpful. This thesis extrapolates the research of Schönwetter *et al.* (2002) by asking whether participating teachers in this study lack well-thought-out or consciously formulated philosophies: more exactly, this research seeks to determine whether the participants from five rural schools in the George district reflect on their daily teaching, and the philosophies which they consciously or unconsciously employ during their reflections.

Teachers' beliefs are regarded as central to the understanding and improvement of educational processes (Moradan & Poursadollah, 2014). Such formally acquired or culturally assimilated beliefs guide teachers in choosing teaching strategies for their everyday tuition. Some teachers might experiment with different methods or simply teach literacy as it was taught to them¹, without ever adapting their methods. Before assuming that logistical, political, historical, racial, economic or language policy issues are the main causes of low literacy rates in South Africa, a lack of self-reflection and lucidity concerning individually held philosophies on teaching practice in the classroom may be the more fundamental reason for low performance in internationally moderated literacy tests such as PIRLS. It is crucial to establish which theories of teaching generally and teaching literacy specifically, teachers draw upon when entering a classroom to teach. If the teacher is clear and focussed about the methodology and underlying philosophy used in the classroom, it is far more likely that a teacher will be able to create a constructivist learning environment in which learners are encouraged to ask questions freely and discuss the implications of texts read in class.

Fisher (2001) indicates that when teachers include the teaching of thinking skills or philosophical discourse into classes, primary school learners can raise their literacy levels. This comes from research done on programmes that promoted and encouraged the use of thinking skills, and showed a positive correlation with academic achievement,

¹ One of the most significant observations of this research was that a particular teacher at a well-funded Quintile 5 declared openly that she taught as she was taught. This example substantiates the central concern of this enquiry: that there are teachers who have no interest in reflecting on their practice as teachers of literacy. This attitude poses a threat to effective classroom tuition which takes place in the pedagogical theatre.

especially the achievement of primary school children where the measure included literacy (McGuinness, 1999 cited in Fisher, 2001:70).

In South Africa in particular the creation of an open and enquiring classroom environment is of significance. During apartheid (1949-1994) behaviourist paradigms were encoded into national educational curricula to enforce propaganda of white supremacy.² Learners and teachers existed in an overtly uncritical environment in which the textbook and rote learning maintained a culture of obedience which was antipathetic to free thought and democratic participation. This thesis seeks to establish whether teachers are fully aware of the importance of new initiatives of Freirean (Freire, 1971; WCED, 2006-2016) priorities or whether strands of behaviourist conformity and memory-learning still exist in the philosophies which they have incorporated into their thinking and pedagogic attitudes.

Philosophical enquiry prompts teachers to reflect upon fundamental or crucial theoretical issues and notions in education by deliberating upon questions such as: Who is being educated? What is knowledge? What is the nature of learning? What is teaching? A teacher's individual philosophy of learning reflects and reveals a teacher's beliefs about *why what* and *how* information is taught, *whom* he or she teaches, and the nature of learning (Cohen, 1999). These teachers' beliefs relate to principles that lie first in the teacher's own life experiences, values, the environment in which this teacher lives, interacts with others and the philosophical approaches that he or she has assimilated (Cohen, 1999).

Fisher (2001:70) argues that a teacher's philosophy of literacy should be a philosophy that includes how ideas will be shared with learners. Fisher speaks of the purpose of philosophy which is to develop a teacher's ability to go further than the facts or "information given and to approach texts, not in terms of their literal meaning only but at an analytic, conceptual level" (Fisher, 2001:70). A teacher must not just teach the mechanics of reading and writing, he or she should enthusiastically encourage learners

² Many of the problems of South African education "have their roots in apartheid. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 set out to ensure that whites received a better education than blacks, who were, according to Hendrik Verwoerd, the future prime minister then in charge of education, to be educated only enough to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. South Africa has one of the world's worst education systems". *The Economist*, January 7 2017.

to think for themselves, “think critically and creatively and to solve problems” (Fisher, 2001:71). This need to interrogate texts is akin to Socratic traditions “of discussion, questioning and experimenting with ideas” (Fisher, 2001:71). “How to encourage independent thinking and co-operative learning are key questions” that all educators should be able to answer. Rather than being “told what to think”, learners should experience “at first hand a community of inquiry”, in which they are exposed to, and allowed to internalise, the skills and habits of higher-order thinking (Fisher 2001:69). Fisher (2013:5) reiterates that the ultimate goal of teaching and learning is helping learners find their own path to meaning through developing young learners’ thinking not through telling them how to think. By doing that learners develop their thinking skills that will help them “get more out of learning, out of life” (Fisher, 2013:5).

Fisher (2001; 2013) argues that we read for thinking: the better the thinking skills, the better the literacy is. The question is: if teachers are required to teach thinking skills, how well are they themselves trained in thinking skills and thinking about what they do? Fisher contends that “one of the best ways teachers can add value to their work in literacy is by incorporating philosophical discussion with children through an approach called ‘stories for thinking’” (Fisher, 2013:2) which outlines what “philosophy for children is and how it can be used for developing the thinking skills that underpin literacy and higher-order reading skills” (Fisher, 2013:2).

1.2 Aim of the research project

This study aims to explore the relationship between teachers’ philosophies and practices in literacy teaching in rural primary schools in South Africa. The study therefore seeks to determine how the underlying philosophies of individual teachers affect classroom tuition: to assess how such philosophies can be honed, and teachers made more conscious through self-reflection in order to make teaching more focussed³, structured and effective.

³ This issue is deliberated in the conclusion.

In this study, research questions are designed to guide the research so that the aim is achieved. This study focuses upon the following two main research questions and sub-questions. From the main research questions, the sub-questions were developed to help align the various variables of the research to the central aim:

1.3 Research questions

1.3.1 Main questions:

1.3.1.1 What are Grade 3 teachers' philosophies on literacy?

1.3.1.2 How do Grade 3 teachers of literacy apply such philosophies in the teaching and learning of literacy at rural primary schools?

1.3.2 Sub-questions

1.3.2.1 What are primary school teachers' philosophies?

1.3.2.2 How do their philosophies influence their practice of literacy teaching?

1.3.2.3 Do teachers' reflections indicate an understanding of the connectedness between learners and learning, the curriculum and literacy competencies?

1.4 Significance of the study

As stated in the foregoing paragraph, this study aims to explore the relationship between teachers' philosophies and practices in literacy teaching in five rural primary schools in South Africa. Understanding the influence of teachers' philosophies and their beliefs in the teaching of literacy contributes to the knowledge of how literacy could be taught more effectively by:

(i) providing teacher's role in enabling literacy development and acquisition which can potentially improve the literacy rate at South African schools; (ii) identifying ways to make literacy teachers critically aware when teaching literacy; (iii) determining ways for teachers to reflect sufficiently on their own socio-political and economic assumptions when teaching.

In today's classrooms in South Africa, there is a wide diversity of learners, which demands flexibility of literacy instruction. If teachers are conscious of their philosophy of practice, they are more likely to be able to strategically adapt their attitudes to suit a diverse group of learners. It is important to remember that education is meant to prepare learners for life outside the classroom. Binkley, Rust and Williams (1996:139) highlight the centrality of being fully literate in the world today. 'Being literate' in this broad sense denotes far more than mastery of the grammar and vocabulary of an individual language: literacy suggests a social functionality and conversance with any system of knowledge. Presently, there is broad consensus that being literate encapsulates: skills, situated practices, a process of learning and engagement with texts. Where skills are concerned, an individual is regarded as literate if he or she possesses a range of skills located in different kinds of literacy such as "computer literacy, digital literacy, information literacy, social literacy, visual literacy, critical literacy, financial literacy, entertainment literacy and health literacy" (Prince, 2013:25). Street (2006:11) claims that the "autonomous model of literacy has been a dominant feature in relation to education and social progress generally" (Street, 2006:12). Binkley *et al.* (1996:139) point out that: "Most national economies are based on the quality of a literate work force. All over the world, from their very inception, schools have been given the task of developing the literacy abilities of their students". As the school population grows and as compulsory schooling has become widespread, the increased necessity for literate functioning has risen exponentially. Computer literacy is in high demand and should be taught as a fundamental skill: such 'literacy' means more than being able to read and write in a certain language. To educators such as Freire, there is a grave difference between knowledge as it is regarded by some, as a package of goods, and knowing which involves the unique and vital construction of knowledge. It may be that literacy is poor in South Africa because teachers are unaware that their training was immersed in patterns of rote learning which, when transferred uncritically to the mixed classrooms of 2018, result in inappropriate exercises of what Freire terms 'banking'; depositing amounts of knowledge in the minds of learners (Freire, 1971:58). If literacy teachers are fixed in their modes of thinking and unable to adjust their literacy teaching to the social and intellectual backgrounds of their learners, learners will not be able to identify with the literacy lessons

and will remain semi-literate: which appears to be what is happening. If, however, teachers are made fully aware of their mode of tuition, and trained to reflect critically upon their own practice, they are more able to recognise the knowledge and skills latent in their learners; using this knowledge as a scaffold for further and more interactive knowledge construction.

1.5 Research design and methodology

1.5.1 Research design

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:31) explain research design as “the plan and structure of an investigation used to obtain evidence to answer certain research questions. The research design describes the procedures for conducting a study; including when, from whom and under what conditions data will be obtained” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:31). The research design should indicate how the research is structured, identify the key variables of the research, and outline clearly how and why the intended data will be collected in the manner described (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:20).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:31), research design is the plan or structure that the researcher uses to investigate and collect evidence to answer the research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:31). The research design should indicate how the research is structured, identify the key variables of the research, and outline clearly how and why the intended data will be collected in the manner described (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:20).

This study aims to determine what philosophies teachers adopt when teaching literacy. This study is designed within a qualitative research paradigm and uses case study design as the main research strategy. A case study may entail studying one case or a collective of cases for “learning more about a little-known or poorly-understood situation” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The significance of how teachers’ philosophies impact on their teaching of literacy has been largely ignored. Such neglect provides an area for urgent research. A case study is regarded as a relevant design because it provides latitude to focus on an individual or group in a school setting who satisfy the characteristics of the

main area of interest; teaching and learning of literacy. Babbie and Mouton (2001:103) state that “a research methodology deals with whom or what is to be studied to collect information; identifying the subjects and how the information will be obtained. In other words, this process encompasses how the researcher collects, analyses and interprets data to achieve the aims of the study”.

1.5.2 Sample and sampling

Sampling involves a selection of “a portion of or units of a population as representative or having particular characteristics of that total population” (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport 2011:223). According to White (2005:114) a researcher makes a selection from the sampling frame to identify the individual issues to be included in the research. Qualitative research sampling is used to deepen understanding about an issue or a relation, complex situation or event. Selection of a single case or cases focuses on the relevance of the case(s) to the research problem (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport 2011:223). In this instance, the case consists of a group of teachers who teach literacy at rural primary schools. The researcher uses a purposive sampling technique to select teachers from a population of ten schools in the George district. Since a particular purpose, teaching literacy in rural primary schools, drives the sample selection, eight teachers were purposively selected from five schools. The eight teachers agreed to participate in the interviews and in classroom observations. All the Foundation Phase grades (R-3) are represented by one or two teachers. These teachers taught between 0-5 up to 11-15 years in Grade 3. Three teachers are from Coloured schools (Quintile 3 which refers to poor schools) where Afrikaans is the medium of instruction or teaching and learning. They teach both Afrikaans and English. Two teachers are from IsiXhosa speaking schools (Quintile 3 as well: poor schools and disadvantaged communities) and three other schools are from the Former Model C schools (Quintile 5: well-funded schools with rich backgrounds or environments) of which one is a White English school with English culture and two White Afrikaans schools with Afrikaans culture. A good example to explain this disparity is that of Sriprakash (2013:326) who states that South Africa, like India, is experiencing “a bifurcation between underfunded fee-free rural schools and English-medium, fee-paying, capitalist, middle-class schools in urban areas”. Sriprakash

(2013:326) expresses concern about “differences between schools in cities and rural areas; in terms of class structures, capitalism and politics in education in modern India”.

1.6 Data collection

Data were obtained obtained using one-on-one semi-structured interviews and classroom observation:

- (i). One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore teachers’ philosophies on literacy teaching and learning. Interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder to ensure that the researcher captured all the participants’ responses.
- (ii). Observations: post-interview observations of the teachers were carried out to crosscheck the extent to which practices reflected opinions shared during interviews.

1.7 Data analysis

Lancaster (2005:57) defines data analysis as “the process of turning data into information that in turn can serve to develop concepts, theories, explanations or understanding”. Analysis of data obtained from teachers interviewed in this study was categorised into themes from respondents’ descriptions of their practices. Meanings “identified were used to develop an overall description” of the situation as portrayed by informants (White, 2005:168).

1.8 Validity and reliability

Maxwell (2005; 2013) cites researcher bias and reactivity as two specific threats to the validity and reliability of a qualitative study. Maxwell refers to factors that sustain rigour in a qualitative study: dependability, credibility, transferability and conformability. These are key factors in ensuring credibility and trustworthiness (Maxwell, 2013). This study’s fieldwork took place over a prolonged period and entailed “persistent observation in the field”: to complement “the validity of findings” and participants’ represented realities (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Ruggiero and Mong (2013) posit that participant

member checking is important to verify researchers' interpretations. Member checking was employed to verify the validity of this researcher's interpretation of the participants' responses. Some critics of interviewing highlight the difference "between what people say and what they do" (Ruggiero & Mong, 2013): this discrepancy is addressed by triangulation for validity and reliability issues. As a descriptive researcher, attention must be paid to the exact words and nuances of the words of each interviewee, and any salient issues that arise from the interview.

To test the instrument and methods once they had been developed, both aspects were pilot-tested with a small sample of three teachers who were not part of the final study sample. The pilot scheme established whether the instruments were appropriate for the study or needed adjustments to help improve and meet their purpose (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001; Nunes, Martins, Zhou Alajamy & Al-Mamari, 2010). This process helped to refine any ambiguous questions.

1.9 Ethical considerations

The ethical guidelines of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) on researching this nature were followed strictly. First, a proposal was submitted to the Faculty Research Committee (FRC) to determine the logic and relevance of the proposed study. Once the FRC approved the study, an application for ethical clearance was sent to the Faculty Ethics Committee which determined whether the study complied with ethical stipulations. Among other considerations, the researcher ensured that the respondents' privacy was not invaded and that no harm was posed to participants and the whole research process. Participants were informed that the research was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. Before participating in interviews, clear and accurate information about the research was given. All participants were required to complete consent forms.

Information provided by participants was not disclosed in any form other than within the context of the research. Participants' identities remained confidential. Permission to make use of a tape recorder was sought from the respondents before the interviews.

Permission for the proposed research study as well as the informed consent of the participants was obtained through the appropriate channels at the WCED. The principal of each school as the manager of the school was asked for permission for the research to be conducted at the school. Parents' permission to observe learners was granted through the school.

1.10 The Research outline

This research study comprises seven chapters:

Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter which sets out a need for this study on teachers' philosophies about literacy teaching and learning in selected rural primary schools. This chapter provides the background, aim of the research, the statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, methodology and design, ethics and exposition of the study. In this chapter the core question posed by this research project is formulated and presented: **'What philosophies do primary school teachers have about literacy?'**

This core question prompts secondary inquiries such as: *How do teachers of literacy think about their teaching? What guides what they teach and how they teach? What beliefs do they hold about learners and literacy acquisition?*

Chapter 2 is a literature review that discusses concepts in the literature which have been identified as relevant to the question of teachers' philosophies on literacy teaching and learning. This literature review attempts to answer the following questions: *(i) What does being literate mean in the 21st century? (ii) How do socio-economic circumstances determine learners' success in achieving literacy? (iii) What is the teacher's role in enabling literacy development and acquisition?*

Chapter 3 is a segment of the literature review that specifically locates the concept of teachers' philosophies in the existing literature: it explores concepts in the literature which have been identified as relevant to the question of teachers' philosophies on literacy teaching and learning. To this end, the following questions shape the review: *(i) What is a personal philosophy on teaching and learning? (ii) What theories best allow for an inquiry into philosophy on literacy teaching and learning?*

Chapter 4 addresses the philosophical frameworks and assumptions that lie behind the methods and attitudes that teachers manifest when teaching literacy and therefore necessitates a review of concepts, assumptions and learning theories. Teachers' philosophies represent answers to questions such as: How do learners learn? What are their unique circumstances? What should be the teacher's role in their learning? These factors help to identify the unique nature of each teacher's philosophy of teaching. This chapter focuses on appropriate academic contexts, such as the Vygotskian concept of mediation about the teachers' roles, Freire's theory on constructivism which emphasises learner-centred education and the literature on the meaning of being literate in the 21st century from the light (perspectives) of various experts in this field.

Chapter 5 describes the research design and methodology employed in the investigation. First, meta-theoretical issues are discussed. Second, various theoretical approaches in research that underpin the study are examined. Third, the research design is mapped out; with a clear outline of the processes of sampling, data collection, and analysis. The chapter concludes with a summary of the core methodology: a qualitative study employing interviews and case studies.

Chapter 6 focuses on the analysis and presentation of results from qualitative data collected for this research investigation. The first part of the chapter outlines a model that represents elements of teachers' philosophies: these findings constitute the greater part of this chapter. Data gleaned from semi-structured, one-on-one interviews and classroom observation (initial findings of their video-taped teaching practices) held with eight Foundation Phase teachers who participated in this study. Interviews were conducted and transcribed. Analysis of classroom observations of the teachers was carried out. Finally, Chapter 7 presents conclusions drawn from the results of qualitative data recorded in chapter 6.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of this research project which broadly looks at the role of teachers' philosophies in influencing literacy teaching in South African classrooms. The background to the study presented in this Introduction highlights the fact that South

African primary school learners' literacy skills and abilities are below the international norm for their age and grade. Ensuing from this reality and concern, this study seeks to capture the philosophies of Foundation Phase teachers concerning their teaching of literacy. The next chapter focuses on unpacking literacy teaching.

CHAPTER 2

LITERACY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE 21st CENTURY

2.1 Introduction

This study is concerned with the relationship between the teachers' philosophies and their literacy teaching and learning in five rural primary schools in the George District of the Western Cape. A concern in this literature review is therefore to determine, list and discuss the latest research trends in the teaching-learning of literacy at the Foundation Phase. Of related interest is the meaning of the term 'literacy' itself in the 21st century. This literature review highlights the impact of socio-economic circumstances upon learners' literacy journeys: their historical backgrounds. The teacher's role, in terms of understanding literacy and awareness of current trends in teaching-learning literacy at the Foundation Phase, is of crucial importance to this thesis. This literature review provides information about publications pertinent to this central aspect of the topic under scrutiny. The ultimate aim of this thesis is to determine the nature, history, formation and effect of participating teachers' philosophies on teaching literacy at the Foundation Phase. Literature germane to this core concern is reviewed in this chapter and related to the sections that deal with teaching-learning literacy and the definitions of literacy itself. This literature review, therefore, explicates the questions: *(i) What does being literate mean in the 21st century?*

(ii) How do socio-economic circumstances determine learners' success in achieving literacy? (iii) What is the teacher's role in enabling literacy development and acquisition?

2.2 Being literate in the 21st century

The idea of what it means to be literate has undergone significant changes over time: from an initial understanding of literacy as no more than the mechanical control of language to an appreciation of literacy as competence in various fields, such as computer literacy or social literacy (UNESCO, 2006). Presently, there is broad consensus

that being literate encapsulates skills, situated practices, a process of learning and engagement with the text.

Where skills are concerned, individuals are regarded as literate if they possess a range of skills which may be located in different kinds of literacy; such as “digital literacy, information literacy, visual literacy, critical literacy, financial literacy, entertainment literacy or health literacy” (Prince, 2013:25).

Traditionally, literacy was “cognitively oriented and described as a set of abilities or skills” inside people’s heads. But the New Literacy Studies (NLS) perceived of literacy from “a socio-cultural viewpoint”. The NLS exponents ascertain that a significant emphasis should be placed upon considering the variety of literacy practices that occur in homes and communities and that these should be appreciated and valued rather than disregarded (Boakye, 2015:134).

Mei-Yun Ko (2013:91) states that “for the past 30 years”, the notion of literacy has gone beyond reading the words to ‘reading the world’ (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987); that is, from “functional literacy that focuses solely on developing learners’ linguistic skills, to critical literacy that aims to give learners a language of critique to achieve equality and social justice or effect social transformation” (Mei-Yun Ko, 2013:91cites Edelsky, 1999; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993; Shor & Freire, 1985).

Schrok (2006:154) argues that “during the 1970s, Paulo Freire’s theory of ‘conscientization’ stated, among other things”, that: liberating mankind could be as a result of more than just arithmetic, writing and reading but rather that of developing a person more fully as reflected in the Persepolis Declaration. Also, Schrok (2006:154) states that during this time developing countries became more interested in social awareness and critical enquiry for social change as did UNESCO and other international organisations. Schrok (2006:159) explains that Freire’s approach to literacy was substantially or significantly acknowledged internationally during that period. Schrok (2006) argues that definitions of literacy moved away from pure technical skills to that of being more encompassing of human resource skills which allowed for the development of political change or the discussion thereof and socio-cultural change. Mbatha (2014:37) cites CookGumperz (1986:17) who supports Schrok by stating that literacies role is not

purely that of the ability to read and understand the printed word but rather to allow for the extension of applying to social circumstances and incorporating historical traditions.

Bloch (cited in Mbatha, 2014:39) explains that learners who are brought up in a world in which literacies are more readily available, such as early language and literacy development opportunities, tend to be more literate themselves. The author claims that the idea of whole language perspective is one that sees young children developing their lives in social, personal and cultural processes through literacy. Nel and Snelgar (2012:3) agree that young learners develop culturally and socially through having literacy opportunities and experiences with more literate elders on an everyday basis.

A common denominator in all the definitions is the implication that the social utilisations of literacy should be emphasized in learning; which means that “learners’ linguistic and social experiences should form part of learning literacy” (Mbatha, 2014:37). Of interest in this thesis is whether teachers who are engaged with developing literate Foundation Phase learners think and act following the functions of literacy stipulated in all these kinds of literature. Teachers’ histories as contained in what Mbatha (2014) describes as “social circumstances and specific historical traditions” to a large extent impact on their understanding of what literacy is and how they translate that understanding into classroom practices (Mbatha, 2014). Furthermore, curriculum changes in South Africa occur in a context that is entrenched in diverse historical imbalances which sees a large population of the current teaching force exposed to at times diluted versions of content and methodologies of teaching which in turn could decrease the learners’ ‘whole language perspective’ opportunities (Mbatha, 2014:37).

For purposes of this research, the discussion includes both traditional and contemporary notions of literacy that entail *reading, writing, speaking and listening* with understanding (Schrock, 2006). Given the multifaceted understandings of literacy, a literacy teacher’s conception of the term ‘literacy’ is expected to reflect a mixture of elements drawn from some, if not all, of the aspects listed above. Literacy denotes and connotes different things to different audiences. Given the fact that this research explores teachers’ philosophies on the teaching of literacy, the main concerns in this review are those of literacy as it relates to *reading, writing, speaking and listening* with understanding.

Additionally, how teaching brings together receptive and active aspects of literacy is suggested and explained in the figure below.

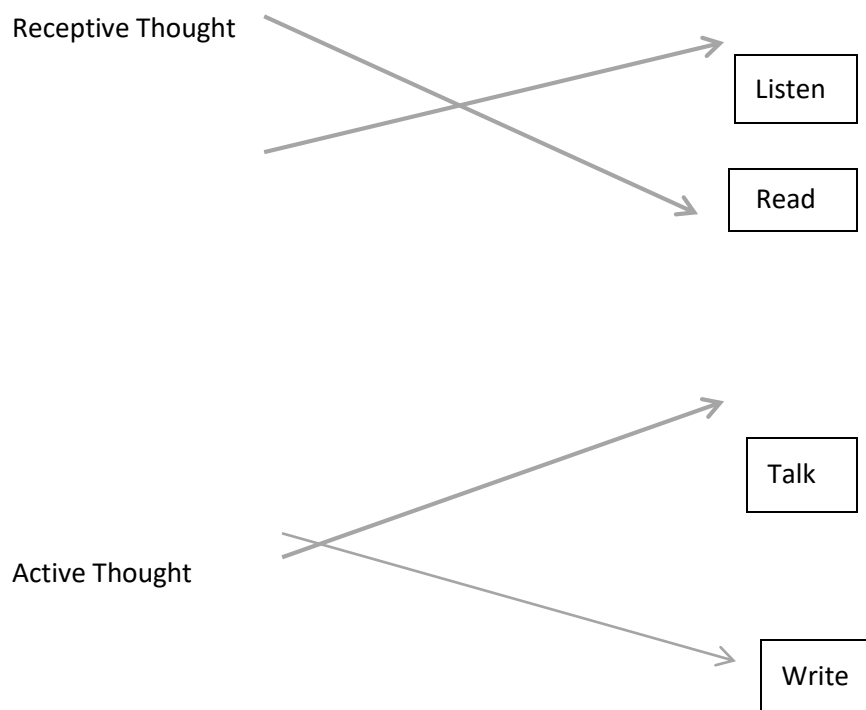


FIGURE 2.1: “Language is thought” (Adapted from Dyasi 1988).

Figure 2.1 distinguishes between a receptive mode of thought and an active one. For any learner of a language, be it a first or second language that is being acquired, there is a constant interplay between passivity and activity. In receptive mode, a learner *listens* and *reads*. The learner observes and quietly assimilates sounds and letters. This absorption of sounds and representative letters is then transformed into active ways when a learner speaks the new language and starts to write it. The subtle interplay between passive and active aspects of language acquisition is a key factor in classroom transmission of linguistic knowledge; especially in the early stages (Dyasi, 1988:5).

2.2.1 The importance of literacy

Literacy is the key issue affecting the ability of primary school learners to grasp and integrate information in content area classrooms. Literacy at Foundation Phase (grades R – 3) is regarded as the cornerstone of academic success in all the ensuing years of study. Wilcox (2007:6) argues that, despite its centrality to learning, many learners lack the knowledge or background information that allows them to make sense of the texts before them. This study lends itself to this debate and is guided by the understanding that teachers are critical stakeholders in literacy development.

According to Hodges, Feng, Kuo, and McTigue (2016:3) teachers attempt to enrich learners' literacy by assisting them to become “consumers” of literature and “producers” of writing. Classroom teachers acknowledge that reading and writing complement each other and embrace the two skills concurrently in instruction (Gao, 2013; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Ulusoy & Dedeoglu, 2011). While the overarching term “literacy” comprises both reading and writing, “theoretical perspectives still treat the two as dichotomies” (Goatley & Hinchman, 2013; Tracey & Morrow, 2012; Unrau & Alvermann, 2013). Cain and Parrila (2014) advocate that there is an oversight in research in that there is a lack of evidence of formal guidelines, theoretical frameworks, and explanations for the use of innovative teaching ideas for practitioners.

These authors assert that because of the intricacy of literacy, one theory is usually inadequate for clarifying the advantages or rewards and procedures as well as strategies or processes of an intervention (Cain & Parilla, 2014:1-4). Cain and Parilla (2014) further argue that although it is comprehensible that researchers may strive to put the theoretical frameworks underlying teaching practices, into words, it stays crucial to express and communicate the compelling theories for instructional practices. Cain and Parilla (2014) contend that teachers may not fully understand how these strategies or practices progressed or evolved without this clear explanation and elaboration. Often they may not be interested in the word “theory or the requirement that they should acknowledge and comprehend theories related to literacy, but this knowledge is mandatory or unavoidable” (Cain & Parilla, 2014:1-4). Amrein-Beardlsey and Haladyna (2012:18) explain that

“theories help people understand phenomena, guide how people react to and make sense of the natural world, and should help frame how people explain and understand phenomena under study” (Amrein-Beardley & Haladyna, 2012:18).

Hodges *et al.*, (2016:1) affirm that “theories assist in moulding teachers’ understanding of pedagogy and content, and formulate why specific interventions are proficient for particular learners” (West, 2013 in Hodges *et al.*, 2016:1). Generally, teachers employ researchbased practices in their classrooms but cannot grasp the theoretical supports of such practices. Once teachers grasp the theories that underlie “instructional practices, they are more likely to be in a position to comprehend the advocated practices to implement and respond to the individual needs and developmental levels of their learners” (Hodges *et al.*, 2016:1).

2.2.2 Types of literacy

Luke (2012:5) differentiates between literacy and critical literacy. The term ‘literacy’, refers “to the reading and writing of texts while critical literacy refers to the use of print and other media of communication to analyse, critique and transform the norms, rule systems and practices” to be found in society. Luke (2012:5) cites Freire (1970) who initiated constructivist and politically egalitarian educational projects in Brazil. Since then, there have been many approaches to critical literacy developed by “feminist, postcolonial, poststructuralist and critical race theorists as well as critical linguistic and cultural studies scholars; there are also several rhetorical and cognitive models”. Schachter and GaliliSchachter (2012:2) maintain that literacy has always been seen as a primary educational goal. They state that:

the concept is now understood as extending beyond proficiency in reading and writing to include a broad range of skills and practices related to comprehension, communication and the ability to use texts in different settings. Cultural literacy’ and ‘critical literacy’ are two conceptual models frequently used to understand the essence of literacy: both are recognised as valid educational goals. Each model prescribes different goals and preferred teaching methods, and spans all disciplines and age groups.

(Schachter & Galili-Schachter, 2012:2).

It is widely understood and accepted by scholars of literacy that educational literacy, “although originally centred upon the basic ability to read and write, now entails much more than a set of linguistic skills” (Kazemek & Rigg, 2002; Mullis, Kennedy, Martin & Sainsbury, 2006; Olson, 2009 in Schachter *et al.*, 2012:11)⁴. A task group of experts from UNESCO defined literacy as:

...the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society.

(UNESCO, 2004:13 cited in Schachter *et al.*, 2012:11).

This multi-pronged view of literacy positions it centrally as one of the key determiners of social development. Mbatha (2014:37) affirms that “Research shows that literacy is the foundation to successful education and a key to social, economic and political freedom”.

2.2.3 Literacy as a social practice

According to Schachter *et al.* (2012:12) in new literacy studies (NLS), theorists have introduced and put forward a theoretical framework that intellectualises literacy as a social practice rather than as a transferable skill. They hold that “reading and writing take place in many different social settings and for many different reasons. Therefore they speak of ‘literacies’ rather than ‘literacy’ because literacies are associated with different aspects of life” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000:8 in Schachter *et al.*, 2012:12).

Norton (cited in De Souza and Adreotti, 2007:6) argues that “literacy is best understood in the context of the school, the community and the larger society” (Fairclough, 1992; Heath, 1983; Kendrick, 2003; New London Group, 1996 in De Souza *et al.*, 2007:6). This point of view has to be understood with reference to the “literacy ecology” of communities; where there is often “inequitable access to social, economic and political power” (Barton, 1994; Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Hornberger, 2003, Kramsch, 2002 cited

⁴ This distinction resonates with differences between behaviourist paradigms and constructivist proposals for learning. This distinction proved decisive in drawing up, and interpreting the results of, interview schedules for this study.

in De Souza and Adreotti, 2007:6). Norton states that “families, communities and schools interact in different ways and, as a result, differ in their literacy practices”. Such differences in literacy practice “provide significant insights into how people learn, teach, negotiate and access literacy both in and outside schools” (De Souza & Adreotti, 2007:6). There is a variety of “methods of communication; of which reading and writing are two. Understanding the spectrum of communicative channels is of importance in the classroom” (De Souza & Adreotti, 2007:6). Literacy as social practice suggests a need for teacher understanding of what and how to teach that is informed by more than one school of thought. If, for example, teachers singularly view literacy as a social practice rather than as a transferable skill, that could be catastrophic in a sense that they might gloss over the skill part that requires of them to teach learners how to read and write. A more nuanced view of literacy as a social practice in terms of how those who are literate tend to think and act is a necessary route.

2.2.4 Methods of communication

Norton (cited in De Souza & Adreotti, 2007:10) states that “classrooms are spaces where learners construct meaning using many different methods; including visual, written, spoken, auditory, and performative texts”. Norton explains that learners employ “these methods of communication to construct their own versions and formulations of them and create their own original methods of communication”. Teachers need to provide young learners:

with an environment in which learners can use recognised methods of communication, shape their own versions of them or even create their own methods altogether. Such accommodation of learners’ communication needs is dependent upon teachers’ own conceptions about teaching literacy

(De Souza & Adreotti, 2007:10).

According to Jones and McCaffery (in De Souza *et al.*, 2007:24) “new literacy studies often adopt an ethnographic approach to literacy in which the focus falls upon how communication, both oral and written, actually takes place within the confines of a specific community”. Learning programmes should be based upon:

What kinds of literacy and numeracy are required in the original community. The methodology of New Literacy Studies emphasises functionality: the practical need for, and use of, literacy and numeracy skills which should suit the social and economic nature of the community in which such skills are required.

(Jones and McCaffery in De Souza *et al.*, 2007:24).

This study takes into account socio-economic conditions in rural South African schools. Being literate within realities of socio-economic conditions in rural South African schools implies that a teacher cannot impose a fixed notion of literacy from outside the teaching environment but has to draw upon, acknowledge and validate the knowledge of rural learners. This platform of knowledge is proximate to learners' experience and social matrices and enables learners to construct their own authentic literacies within their context.

2.3 Socio-economic circumstances of learners in rural schools

The teacher's understanding and role become particularly significant when it is realized that literacy is not a spontaneous activity but one that requires overt, mediational strategies driven by a specific understanding. The majority of South African learners are faced with certain dominant learner circumstances which determine literacy acquisition and development: their historical background. Diverse factors in rural schools affect literacy achievement. Richek *et al.* (2002:23) suggest that "information on educational history, school attendance and instructional methods help teachers to understand a rural learner's challenges and to form a basis for cooperation among all the professionals who are seeking to assist a learner" (Richek *et al.*, 2002:24). This crucial understanding of individual learners' circumstances comprise Vygotsky's notion of mediation.

Wilcox (2013:14) asserts that "despite challenges, young learners' fresh perspectives bring joy to teaching". As a teacher, it is essential to take cognizance of the fact that there will be learners in class who come from diverse backgrounds. There will be those coming from affluent families; others will be from poor homes. Some will be very competent in English; others will be from homes where other "languages or variant dialects of English are spoken. There will also be physical, ethnic, cultural, and cognitive differences" that

will need to be considered (Wilcox, 2013:14) such as: language and poverty concerns which help the teacher to gain a better understanding of the context in which she needs to teach in order to allow for the development of the learner according to their specific needs.

An overriding question in literacy teaching is how, despite a variety of circumstances, teachers can ensure equitable access to being literate. To many, the answer lies in providing opportunities for critical literacy environments.

2.3.1 Critical Literacy for Rural Learners

Critical literacy is described as the active reading of texts “in a manner that promotes a deeper understanding of socially constructed concepts such as power, inequality and injustice in human relationships” (Boghossian, 2012:73-84). In the process “individuals are encouraged to understand and question the attitudes, values, and beliefs of written texts, visual applications, and spoken words” (Boghossian, 2012). According to Sriprakash (2013:326) South Africa, like India, is experiencing “a bifurcation between underfunded fee-free rural schools and English-medium, fee-paying, capitalist, middle-class schools in urban areas”. Sriprakash (2013:326) expresses concern about “divisions between schools in cities and rural areas; in terms of class structures, capitalism and politics in education in modern India”. In both countries,⁵ implementation of Freirean principles has proved more difficult than expected; mostly because of the differences between rural and urban areas. Muller (1998:179) raises questions and is not optimistic regarding the new policy of “invisible pedagogy” which is intended to lead to participatory, constructivist education for all children in South Africa:

Upwardly mobile, lower to middle income families in both countries often regard English-medium schools as preferable. People in the cities in both India and South Africa want their children to be socially mobile and financially successful; therefore they prefer them to be educated in schools where historically colonial languages such as English are used; even if these schools are semi-private and expensive.

(Muller, 1998:179).

⁵ Findings discussed in Chapter 6 point to the division between stable literacy rates at well-funded fee-paying former Model C schools and unstable literacy ratings at Quintile 3 schools. Findings from this research confirm a growing polarity, rather than unity, between poor and affluent classes. See Chapter 6.

Muller (1998:179) finds this ironic and cites the effect of Western materialism. “Meanwhile the gap between fee-free, rural schools and expensive schools in the cities is widening. The quality of the education in rural schools which have few resources is dropping” (Sriprakash, 2013:326).

The widening education gap between prosperous urban and impoverished rural areas means that learners are not receiving equal education. In South Africa, former Model C schools and other semi-government private schools with English as medium of instruction have been allowed to flourish. This was a political compromise made mostly during the negotiations in 1994 to appease white interests. However, it can now be seen that this compromise is causing a radical division between Western capitalist-style schools and struggling rural schools which, because of their large classes and lack of resources, were unable to implement OBE. This is a dangerous educational predicament which can spark unrest in the country. It is these binary realities that further agitate for studies that seek to explore teachers’ thinking and what such thinking reveals in relation to their beliefs about learners, learning, teaching, subjects (literacy in this case) and contexts in which all these occur. “It is encouraging that studies continue to provide evidence that critical literacy can have a large impact upon language acquisition and general academic performance in rural schools and environments where the economic divide is apparent” (Leland, Harste & Huber, 2005:257).

The question then is whether teachers in rural schools think and act with awareness on the impact that the contextual differences make on their teaching of literacy.

2.3.2 Multigrade phenomenon in rural schools

Many rural schools in South Africa often follow a multigrade system which may contribute to low literacy levels in the rural schools. This challenging effect of multigrade system is remarked upon by many teachers interviewed in the thesis. Conditions at school as well as the background or educational history of learners determine the effectiveness of teaching literacy. Multigrade teaching refers to “the teaching of learners of different stages of learning, grades and abilities in the same classroom group” (Thephavongsa, 2018; Little, 1995:1). Teaching a broad range of grade levels in the same classroom is complex and demanding. “One teacher has to juggle several grades with a wide range of

learners' maturity, ability and motivation levels, prepare for differing curricular areas and meet individual student needs" (Little, 2001:490-491). Little (2001:490-491) states that many of the multigrade classes and schools found in rural areas "are poor and that the level of education of household members is low". Little explains that teachers routinely prefer not to be sent to schools in such areas. Teachers and learners in multigrade schools often face yet more problems.

Conditions at school as well as the background or educational history of learners determine the effectiveness of teaching literacy. Literacy is often connected to certain conditions "in the classroom: low teacher expectations, low teacher efficacy, and poor, inappropriate, watered-down programmes" (Murphy, 2004:25). "A lack of books, magazines, television sets and radios adds to the disadvantaged life-world(s) for many learners" (Murphy, 2004 cited UNICEF, 1993b:26). To add to this, most of these schools are plagued by teacher shortages given their location in rural areas which many teachers find undesirable as workplaces. Reluctance to teach in such areas is often contributed to by shortages of support materials for teachers and at times individualised instructional materials for learners (Little, 2001:490-491).

Rural schools often manifest weak literacy levels. Lack of adequate resources and questionable quality of administrative leadership are often cited as the cause (Snow, Burns & Griff, 1991:7). This thesis seeks to establish whether teachers' philosophies may not contribute to this predicament. If teachers have not been trained to reflect upon their teaching of literacy and have not realised the importance of forming a conscious model for their daily tuition, this neglect of self-reflection could be a factor in poor literacy levels at rural schools. The corollary to this factor is that an awareness of teachers' philosophies enables teachers to critically reflect on how to bring about authentic learning given the difficulties that confront learners in rural and poor schools.

2.3.3 Educational history of learners

Learners differ widely in their educational histories in South Africa: largely as an after effect of the drastic inequalities and disparities entrenched on racial lines before liberation in 1994; their historical background. The White Paper on Early Childhood

Education makes clear that for some young learners, Grade 1 may be their family's first experience of formal instruction; especially in rural areas; other learners from privileged socio-economic backgrounds in urban areas enter the grade with all the advantages of pre-primary education (South African Department of Basic Education, 2001). In some instances, "learners have repeated a grade or have received private tutoring; some have been placed in special school programmes" (Richek *et al.*, 2002:24). Poverty has been considered to exercise a major effect upon learning. Teachers need to regard this challenge as an opportunity for devising new and unique solutions for teaching.

Teachers' philosophies are necessarily and demonstrably conditioned by the socio-economic conditions of the learning environment in which they find themselves. Historical socio-economic injustices and disparities affect the way teachers think about learning, literacy and the act of thinking itself (Sonn, 2016). Teachers are continually aware at poor schools of the constraints and debilitating effects of a restricted budget: multi-grade classes, overcrowded classes, lack of resources, poor nutrition, lack of parental support and recreational facilities. Teachers in these circumstances are in danger of adopting negative philosophies. "These inherited injustices, inequalities and contextual factors contribute to the poor performance of learners" (Sonn, 2016). However, "poverty does not always inhibit the outlook, imagination and will of teachers. In many cases innovation, resourcefulness and creativity emerge in the attitudes and response of teachers at poor schools" (Sonn, 2016). Environments or surroundings are therefore a defining criterion in this thesis.

For teachers of literacy, there are important implications that follow from the nature of such diversities in the levels of literacy among primary school Foundation Phase learners. A teacher in a rural primary school in South Africa today may well be faced with a class in which some learners are advanced in their literacy skills, while others are merely at the start. If teachers have an inflexible philosophy toward literacy teaching, it will be challenging to engage with such a variety of levels in the same class. If, however, the teacher sustains and is committed to, a more liberal, Freirean sense of learning and knowledge acquisition, the very variety of learners can constitute an opportunity to unlock the learning potential of all learners. As is the case in much multi-grade teaching, such a

mixed class of FP literacy learners can allow the teacher to form groups of readers; whereby the skills of more advanced readers are shared with and allowed to develop, alongside those less prepared literacy learners. In the interview transcript record, one teacher who divided her class into 3 ability groups stated that: “I had to divide my learners into three groups”. Mudzielwana (2018:124) citing Fountas and Medric (2000) argues that “In shared reading, children participate in reading, learn critical concepts of how print works, get the feel of learning and begin to perceive themselves as readers”. The challenges of such a rich diversity of differently skilled FP learners may be regarded as impossibility, or a new and constructive way of sharing the knowledge resources of all in the classroom, to the benefit of all.

2.3.4 Significance of the background, home circumstances and socio-economic status of the young learner

In South Africa, and especially in the rural areas of the country, socio-economic conditions are generally punishing. Some of the learners in South African rural schools may have illiterate parents. These children may find it difficult to understand what they are reading because they have no literacy support at home. Richek *et al.* (2002:23) state that:

The home exercises a powerful influence upon the development of reading and writing. Parents play a pivotal role in demonstrating or emphasising the importance of literacy, and bringing the children to books. The general home situation can influence the learner’s academic achievement.

(Richek *et al.*, 2002:23).

Teachers should take into account the backgrounds of these learners when introducing them to basic literacy concepts. This sensitivity to the home environments and socioeconomic deprivations of young rural learners is crucial when it comes to content subjects such as Science and Geography. Considerations such as these should be discussed during the training of teachers where student teachers learn from more knowledgeable others.

South African learners live in worlds apart: “the home, the school, the social, and the cultural environments” (Richek *et al.*, 2002:23). The conditions or circumstances of the quintile 3 learner are worlds apart from that of a quintile 5 learner. Richek argues that learners vary dramatically; making the country one of the most socially unequal in the world. The acuity of socio-economic polarities in South Africa makes it impossible to use a single approach to literacy and assessment for all areas: rural, urban, poor and rich. Each socio-environment impacts uniquely on how learners think about literacy and affects their eagerness or compulsion to learn and often determines their access to reading materials. Richek opines that a difficult situation at home may contribute to a learner’s difficulty in making friends and cooperating with teachers at school. The learner’s home life is a decisive element in his or her background. Many parents in rural areas are illiterate; they usually accept the school system uncritically and do not involve themselves with their children’s homework.

Concerning the socio-economic educational status of parents and neighbourhood circumstances, Louw and Louw (2014) claim that children’s educational success from such contexts is further disadvantaged. Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq and Berhanu (2011:2) argue that “the most dominant discussion is that of the socio-economic status (SES) of learners that has an impact on the quality of their academic performance”. These authors aver that “Many scholars argue that a low socio-economic status has adverse effects on the academic achievement of learners because the fundamental requirements of learners stay or remain unfulfilled and hence they do not achieve better academically” (Farooq, *et al.*, 2011:3; cited Adams, 1996). In the US it has been shown that: “The low socio-economic status causes environmental deficiencies which results in low self-esteem of students” (US Department of Education, 2003). Faoqq *et al.* (2011:3) show that “Parental education and family socio-economic status level has positive correlations with the student’s quality of achievement”. It is claimed by Farooq *et al.* (2011:3) that learners from poor rural backgrounds often do not strive for high levels at school because they know that their parents would not be able to afford their education at higher levels of schooling. The SES level results show that the achievement of learners has a negative correlation with SES. They conclude that some of the reasons for this could be that learners who come from homes that are not deprived are better able to communicate

with their parents about their education, their activities, their goals for tertiary education and the problems they experience during the education process. They can also often get help from their parents with the content of the work they are studying. These parents also tend to participate more in school visits and activities (Farooq *et al.*, 2011).

The conclusion from the research report is that;

Children from lower income households are significantly lower on measures of vocabulary and communication skills, knowledge of numbers, copying and symbol use, ability to concentrate and cooperatively play with children from higher income households.

(Ferguson *et al.*, 2007:702).

Ferguson *et al.* (2007) and Farooq *et al.* (2011) describe the important role played by a teacher “through environmentally responsive thoughts and actions; which cannot be emphasised enough” (Farooq *et al.* 2011:4).

The significance of the foregoing arguments and claims about the impact of SES on educational attainment speaks directly to this study. It appears that teachers are centrally placed as the most important factor in addressing poverty of literacy.

2.3.5 Literacy outcomes in poor schools

Mbatha (2014:37) argues that the Foundation Phase is where a “solid foundation of learning should be built” and anchored. The author explains that “research shows that literacy is the foundation to successful education and key to social, economic and political freedom”. Mbatha (2014:37) asserts that the “ages between 18 months to 9 years are the formative years of childhood development where many concepts and skills such as the ability to read, count and write, are developed”. In South African primary schools, systemic evaluation tests are conducted where tests results currently show low levels of literacy and numeracy (Mbatha, 2014:37). Mbatha states that:

In response to the literacy crisis six years ago, the South African Department of Education introduced interventions such as the Foundations for Learning Campaign, the National Reading Strategy (DoE 2008a and 2008b) and Curriculum

Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) to improve the situation of readers' skills and abilities.

(Mbatha, 2014:37).

According to Nkomo and Mbelani (2018:53): some South African researchers indicate poor reading skills and low literacy levels. They argue that these are mainly caused by a lack of exposure to adequate "reading resources in terms of language and genre, lack of reading opportunities and absence of a reading culture which continue to disadvantage poor communities". Nkomo and Mbelani (2018:54) cite Van der Merwe who wrote an article in the 2014 Sunday Times entitled *Mediocrity Masters Wonky Classrooms*, which explained how teaching learners who come from an advantaged background is easier as these learners have a headstart over the less-privileged, especially with factors such as, *wifi availability, well-educated parents, and a balanced diet.* ...

Nkomo and Mbelani (2018:54) argue that "Many South African schools have failed in using literacy to ensure that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sections of the population" (DBE, 2011:4). Nkomo and Mbelani (2018:54) affirm that "the focus on reading is needed for the success of every society and if it is not achieved, educational careers are negatively affected due to inability to comprehend written material". Current "national assessment indicates that 60%" of young learners "from poor households score below a functional, fundamental level in reading at the end of the primary grades" Nkomo and Mbelani (2018:54). Murphy (2004:24) cites Snow *et al.* (1991) who maintain that numerous studies have been carried out "to answer the question of why some" young learners "fail to learn to read and write as well as others of their age". Conclusions from these studies include factors such as: "inappropriate teaching methods, low academic standards of schools attended by learners from poor homes, insufficient language stimulation at home and school and a multiplicity of individual characteristics" (Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman & Hemphill, 1991:2). "Parents with low levels of literacy and those who expect little of their own children's education and a general lack of support for literacy at home, significantly reduce early attainment of literacy skills" (Snow *et al.* 1991:7; Murphy, 2004:25).

In addition to the above general factors which jeopardise literacy, there are threats to health which are associated with families of a low income. It has been observed that “some learners at rural schools suffer from foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) and many other health deficiencies associated with underprivileged homes oppressed under colonial and apartheid regimes” (Olivier, Urban, Chersich, Temmerman & Viljoen, 2013). FAS causes brain damage because mothers imbibe alcohol during pregnancy. These innocent young learners are

Educationally, culturally and existentially handicapped before they begin their schooling. Other learners suffer from Attention Deficiency Syndrome (ADS) and require special treatment. Teachers are not always sufficiently trained to deal with these and other cases of neurological and intelligence disabilities; such as phonological delays.

(Olivier *et al.*, 2013).

Lipka, Lesaux and Siegel (2006:364) maintain that “the majority of the research on literacy disability has focused on children who demonstrate difficulties in the initial stages of literacy acquisition”. These authors claim that “there is general agreement among education researchers that “learners’ literacy deficiencies are found mainly among those who enter school with, among others, such challenges as phonological delays, which are evident in the initial stages of reading acquisition”. In all these testing situations the educative awareness, readiness, training and social sensitivity of the teacher comprise factors of the utmost importance. Each teacher possesses his or her distinctive philosophical, socioeconomic and existential framework: in assessing elements that can raise literacy levels in a country bedevilled by historical deprivation and racist oppression, it is vital to determine the role played by a teacher’s prejudices, educational assumptions and socio-economic conditioning. Literacy acquisition will be discussed in the next section in terms of teachers’ social conditioning and philosophical assumptions.

2.4 Implications for action: A teacher’s role

Moradan and Pourasadollah (2014:1194) advocate that “human beings are by nature reflective beings who can think about their actions and what happens around them”.

Moradan and Pourasadollah (2014:1194) argue that “Human action reflects what human beings think, believe and value. A relation of cause and effect exists between human thought and action, between meditation upon possible action and execution of that action”. This cause and effect relation is of major importance in educational settings where teaching and learning take place. Since teachers play a supervisory and dominant role in classroom practice, their teaching has the greatest effect on how learners learn. “Knowing about the ideologies and methodologies” that teachers hold, whether consciously or unconsciously, and “in general, their beliefs and thinking about teaching”, are vital determinants for robust and authentic learning processes to take place in the classroom (Moradan & Pourasadollah, 2014:1194).

These authors argue that teachers’ beliefs are of particular significance to the understanding and improvement of educational processes. Such formally acquired or culturally assimilated beliefs guide teachers in choosing which teaching strategies they employ in their everyday tuition. The psychological health and ethical solidarity of teachers are determined by a range of formally recognised social and religious mores which shape the “learners’ motivation, learning environment and ability” to achieve (Xu, 2012 cited in Moradan & Pourasadollah, 2014:1195). In this regard, Freeman (2002 cited in Moradan & Pourasadollah, 2014:1195) specifies that “exploring teacher thinking may give rise to many different questions related to the conceptual framework and the appropriate research methodologies to address language teachers’ knowledge base”. I would extend this assumption to teachers’ knowledge base in all subjects including literacy which is the particular focus of this study. Literacy forms the basis of all other learning at school, and in the later life of the child.

2.4.1 Literacy and constructivism

Constructivism is one of the schools of thought from which existing research has interrogated the concept of teachers’ beliefs. Inherent in constructivist thought is the understanding that for learning to take place those it is meant for should play an active role (Shaik, 2016). In line with this thinking, Freire considers learners experiences to be

crucial to “construction of real knowledge: they bring with them opinions about the world, and about life” (Freire & Horton, 1991:57). Literacy may be enhanced by various reading improvement strategies at a technical level yet often in the short-term only. Literacy can be defined “as control of language but the term ‘literacy’ denotes a more significant developmental aspect of education” (Freire & Horton, 1991:57). This is because the learner’s experience is recognised and his or her participation is encouraged in the classroom. The learner shares his or her experiences with the teacher and together they construct “a democratic type of knowledge which is built on the foundation of mutual respect for a variety of histories, gender identities and religious or political convictions” (Freire & Horton 1991:57). For the learner, this is a type of self-discovery, as he or she is free to articulate his or her own social identity; which facilitates growth into responsible adulthood. “Diverse cultural experiences and knowledges are revealed and shared in a classroom. No culture is, or can be, politically neutral” (Gramsci, 1995).

Freire and Horton (1991:57) state that: “Education is the unmasking of apparent neutrality just as literacy in its profound sense is about the ability to read society, relations within it and significant texts or structures of society which reflect the individual and relations between individuals and society”. There are many such meanings to be unravelled and relations can be very complex.

In critical literacy, the individual is encouraged to think critically and independently which in a sense endorses constructivist principles. This is in contrast with transmission pedagogy where the teacher is considered the expert, and the only person who is allowed to interpret the meaning of the text. Freire emphasises that one cannot know something without experiencing it: in his terminology, “knowledge is made from experience” (Freire & Macedo, 1987:87).

Critical interpretation means that the reader is completely involved and associates what he reads with what he has experienced. Rosenblatt (1985 cited in Freire & Macedo, 1987:87), like Freire, insists that the text should be viewed as an experience rather than as “a lesson or object to be studied. She identifies two stances that readers can take during literary studies – an efferent stance” where the reader focuses on what is to be remembered, and “an authentic stance that occurs when the reader’s attention is on the

lived-through experience of the text and thoughts, feelings, images and associations which are evoked as the text is read". In the latter case, the text will become part of the reader's understanding. An authentic "stance ensures that students truly live the literary experience and do not distance themselves from the text" (Rosenblatt, 1985 in Freire & Macedo, 1987:87). This distinction between an efferent and authentic stance is crucial in terms of the teacher's philosophy of teaching literacy. If an educator perpetuates old habits of literacy teaching as a grammatical puzzle this may be classified as a continuation of efferent pedagogy. Such attitudes to teaching literacy are generally negative. If, however, a teacher's philosophy can be identified as authentic, that is the teacher suits and adapts the texts chosen to the interests and reading level of the learner, then literacy teaching is far more likely to be effective and long-standing. In this study, this distinction between efferent and authentic attitudes comprises a useful and reliable means of testing and characterising the teacher's philosophy of literacy instruction.⁶

2.4.2 Pedagogical role

Pedagogical roles have to do with a range of systems and activities that teachers perform to make learning meaningful and effective. Morgan and Chodkiewicz (2009), and Bauman and Wasserman (2010) report upon studies of pre-school interventions to support emergent literacy in low socio-economic status (SES) home environments in Sydney and New York. It is stated that: the aim of these studies was a reminder that the 'subaltern' involves families in developed and developing contexts, and that the main interest in insider perspectives can assist identify the connection between research into 'psycho- and neuro-linguistic' development and young learners' lived experiences in their particular surroundings. Reid, Edwards and Power. (2004:140) state that "a literacy curriculum should be designed after taking into consideration the social circumstances in which the learners grew up and experienced the world".

⁶ In the conclusion to this study this distinction between efferent and authentic attitudes is aligned to CAPS instruction which accelerates literacy acquisition, and retrograde attitudes, or efferent habits, which treat literacy instruction as no more than a set of rules and lists of vocabulary.

Abadzi's (2008:598) orientation to literacy pedagogy is provocative in light of a critical literacy discourse. In her paper, she justifies "recourse to synthetic phonics, drill and speed-reading monitoring by citing findings from the application of neuro-scientific measuring devices that produce brain imaging" (Abadzi, 2008:598). Abadzi's (2008:598) findings lead her to conclude that "in the lower grades fluency in reading is more important than comprehension". She sees "fluency as the decoding of the relation between sounds and symbols". Abadzi states that "learners in Grades 1 to 2 will probably perform better if they have more time if classes are smaller and if teachers are more experienced" (Abadzi, 2008:598). Abadzi proposes that learners should be helped to "decode symbols more efficiently, while critical theorists emphasise that learners should learn to read, write and argue as a way of fulfilling their personal goals" (Abadzi, 2008:598).

August and Shanahan (2010:342) in the report of the National Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth in the United States, indicate that "although second language students are often as good as first language speakers when it comes to word-level skills such as phonological awareness, spelling and decoding, they rarely comprehend meaning as well". This discrepancy indicates that "more attention should be paid to higher-order comprehension skills such as critical literacy when working with second language students".

Rose (2011:94) proposes a "genre-based, three-tier integrated model for teaching language across the curriculum in an interactive social setting". In Rose's model, "comprehension is considered more important than reading". During the first level, the learner is prepared for reading by having them placed in a broad context. The second level requires the teacher to read the text to the learners after which it is analysed with particular reference to the language patterns and the structure to understand what they have read/heard. In the third phase, sentences are chosen from the text and written on pieces of paper. The words are then cut up and the learners are required to make new sentences from these words. Rose (2011:94) claims that "this process helps students to exert control over meanings and complex patterns, as well as spelling and word recognition".

Bajovic and Elliot (2011) are interested in “the explicit teaching of moral reasoning”. They claim that “there is a need to improve learners’ ability to judge everything they read and hear in the media critically”. Bajovic and Elliot (2011) assert that “In the classroom, young learners should be taught about consequences of actions, differences in perspectives, the relation between the common good and the good of others and human rights” (Bajovic & Elliot, 2008:33). All these varieties of pedagogic strategies are examples of some issues teachers could share in their philosophies on how they choose methodologies for teaching literacy.

Mbatha (2014) states that “It is generally agreed that there is a crisis concerning literacy in South African schools”. Mbatha (2014) argues that “In South Africa, literacy education is in crisis as depicted in several systemic evaluation test results”. Wilcox (2007:7) states that educators are not empowered or adequately trained to help learners to “acquire the strategic reading skills they need to cope with the ever-increasing demands of the educational” environment. “Administrators, teachers and parents should make literacy a top priority: reading skills must be incorporated into courses across the curriculum” (Barton, 1997:1).

Wilcox (2013:6-7) cite the example of educators in Australia, New Zealand and the US who embarked on a grassroots attempt to align reading instruction with five principles nearly connected to Cambourne’s (1988) conditions of learning. The five principles are as follows (adapted Wilcox, 2013):

- (i) First, instead of dividing language into separate subjects such as reading, writing, spelling, and handwriting, Cambourne claims that all of the language arts should be taught simultaneously and throughout the school day in all of the subject areas.
- (ii) A second principle was that texts and tasks in literacy learning should be authentic. Instead of using basal reading passages written for instructional purposes, teachers should use literature written for children.

(iii) Third, the role of students as passive learners soaked in what their teachers gave them changed dramatically; Cambourne (1988) saw students as active learners who created understanding and composed their writing.

(iv) Fourth, the view of the teacher's role began to shift from the "sage on the stage" to the "guide on the side." Teachers became facilitators of learning, coaches who supported their students in their learning.

(v) Last, student-centred assessment emerged. Instead of relying on large scale standardized tests, teachers began to use measures that showed how individual students had changed over a brief instructional period (Wilcox, 2013: 6-7).

It is clear from the foregoing arguments and claims that at times advocacy for pedagogical roles can be anticipated that teachers should be at a position to articulate with evidence a justification of whatever choices they make.

2.4.3 Understanding the literacy pedagogical environment

Paran and Williams (2007:5) in their editorial overview of a set of papers on literacy in developing contexts mention "the dilemma experienced by education officials who have to choose between providing primary education in the mother tongue(s) or national, usually colonial, languages", for example, English. They acknowledge that "initially learning to read in the mother tongue is far more rapid than in a foreign language". They present the view that "far from unifying a multilingual citizenry, the use of a non-indigenous language exacerbates differences". They point out that "very little research has been completed by local specialists on learning to read in indigenous languages" (Paran & Williams, 2007:5).

Zhang (2006) reviews several quantitative studies on the "gap between urban and rural" education in the performance of learners in Africa and concludes that:

The reasons for this gap are complicated and exist at many levels. Making more resources available to rural schools can improve educational outcomes: however it is important to improve the processes at school and the support that learners do or do not receive at home.

(Zhang, 2006:602).

Zhang suggests (2006:602) that “an integrated approach should be followed and that all the reasons for the inequality should be considered”.

Shiohata (2010) conducted a case study in urban Senegal and looked at the potentialities and limitations which are the result of different literacy environments. Citing Scribner and Cole (1981), Shiohata points out that “literacy practice is affected by technology, knowledge and skills”. Shiohata (2010) sees literacy “as a set of socially organised practices making use of symbols and technology to produce and spread knowledge” (Shiohata, 2010:244). Of interest is how in this study teachers’ philosophies might also touch on specific environmental issues that influence their decision making when it comes to the teaching-learning of literacy.

2.4.4 Acknowledgement of prior knowledge

Long before learners come to school they “have already developed some understanding of how the world of literacy operates” (Van den Brook, Kendeou, Lousberg & Visser, 2017). Ample opportunities at home and in play environments exist that expose children to different forms of literacy. As part of pedagogy planning, teachers have to take into account the value of prior knowledge to assist learners.

Wilcox (2007:11) explains that “reading was once thought of as a process in which students simply decoded a paragraph: however, reading is now regarded as a dynamic process during which readers work actively to construct meaning” (Wilcox, 2007, Alfaki & Siddiek, 2013; Barton, 1997).

Wilcox (2007:11) argues that readers are unsuccessful if they fail to understand their role as a reader. This can be attributed to their lack of understanding of dynamic relationship between writer and reader which leaves them with an inability to construct meaning in an effective manner, especially in confusing texts. In contrast, Wilcox (2007:11) postulates that a key strategy that effective readers use to make meaning of text is to connect with the writer through mental dialogue or conversation. Strategic readers therefore, show an awareness not only of the purpose of their reading but also the importance of using their prior knowledge to interpret the background information in the text, that enables them to change their reading to help them understand the text better.

In addition, Yang and Quadir (2018) highlight the importance of background knowledge of a reader in all content areas. They suggest that if the teacher initiates a discussion of background knowledge with learners, it will allow the teacher to recognise gaps in knowledge as well as misconceptions and possible prejudices on the part of the learners. These are all factors that can impair the reading skills of the learners and can be eliminated by the effective use of a pre-reading strategy.

The significance of the foregoing arguments and claims about the impact of prior knowledge suggests that teachers should encourage learners to use their prior knowledge when engaging with the text. Teachers as well when introducing a new topic or lesson to their learners should take cognizance of the learners' background or prior knowledge. It is critical and helps learners to reflect on what they already know.

2.4.5 Teaching for Comprehension

“Reading proficiency in the early grades is essential for future success” (Dorn & Jones, 2012:5). According to Dorn and Jones (2012), the urgency is real. Dorn and Jones (2012) argue that “if learners do not become successful readers by the end of third grade, it is difficult for them to catch up with their peers in later years. The relation between early reading proficiency and high school graduation is well documented”.

According to Piper, Schroeder and Trudell (2016), for young learners to become successful readers they need to understand what they are reading. So often, learners are reading fluent or have a good reading rate but are poor at explaining what they have read. To increase reading with understanding, teachers need to know the literacy process. Also, the learners need to be given reading opportunities in which they can practice reading with understanding, writing and constructive reading (Piper, Schroeder & Trudell, 2016).

According to Pickens (2016:70-1), some learners in adolescence experience a decrease in reading rate and understanding as a result of the increased level of expectation as they move higher up the education ladder. The aspects that could influence their progress in reading include an increased vocabulary, an increase in content, levels of motivation and socio-economic aspects.

Wilcox, (2007:12) states that “making use of pre-reading strategies allows the literacy teacher to help learners comprehend the text better”. Wilcox (2007:12) discusses how the vocabulary needs to be clearly explained and explored as words are ‘the building blocks of a concept’ and they need to be made relevant to the learners’ context. This helps in the pre-reading process where the teacher introduces the text to the learner before they read it. Wilcox (2007:12) also states that the meaning of the text can be more clearly explained by showing them pictures or placing them physically within the context. Extra articles and texts can also be given to the learners to make the initial article have more sense. If the extra articles make use of similar vocabulary then reading with understanding increases (Wilcox, 2007 citing Topping & McManus, 2002).

2.4.6 Theories of early literacy

A fundamental aspect of this research project was played by the considerable literature on early literacy. Aspects of phonics, a print-rich environment, positive adult-child relationships, integrated language exploitation and varying the teaching strategies emerge as guiding determinants in dealing with the area of emergent literacy. Perkins (2012:10) emphasizes the centrality of texts in literacy tuition. Neaum (2012:7) emphasizes the positionality of spoken language as the beginning point: “Within the first few years of life human beings move from being able to cry and make involuntary sounds to being able to communicate with others using a complex language system”. Vygotsky believed in the role played by a private speech in cognitive development. It fits with the notion of the ZPD in early literacy. For example, in scaffolding, an adult “uses verbal prompts and structuring to help a child solve a problem” (Woolfolk, 2014:59). Woolfolk further states that this support “can be gradually reduced as the child takes over the guidance, perhaps first by giving the prompts as private speech and finally as inner speech” (Woolfolk, 2014:59). Mbatha (2018:77) mentions that scaffolding is associated with ‘cognitive and social constructivism’.

The author argues that “scaffolding consists of helpful interactions between adults and the child which enable the child to do something beyond his or her independent efforts”. The role models of a child’s earliest and most primary literacy are parents. If parents

read, both for enjoyment and information, and provide plenty of reading material at home, the child will learn to respect and love literacy (Richek *et al.* 2002:24). These authors believe that “parents also stimulate a love of books by reading to their children”. An early home literacy experiences, especially parents’ reading to pre-schoolers is a further relevant home related factor in determining beginning literacy (Badian, 2000:13). Badian further insists that:

the frequency of reading to pre-schoolers seemed to be an important factor. In general, the correlational studies showed that the frequency of reading was associated with growth in language skills (but not in syntactic or phonological structures).

(Badian, 2000:13).

Wray and Medwell (1991) point to the significant role of telling stories: an entire chapter of their work is devoted to the power of stories and storytelling. In an earlier publication (1988) Van der Merwe makes enduring statements about literacy as a building block in the growth of an individual’s identity, self-confidence and curiosity. Van der Merwe raises the issue of play which has resurfaced again and again in successful early literacy programmes. All these aspects are central to estimating the nature and eventual success of early literacy.

Saracho (2017:305) states that even before young children experience formal reading instruction they are able to read. They possess unique backgrounds, experiences, and capabilities. For this reason, young children need to have reading and writing skills that are of interest to them and are developmentally suitable for them, which also embrace the primary grades. Saracho (2004) advocates that Literacy is designed of behaviours that focus on receptive [listening, reading] and expressive language [speaking, writing].

According to Saracho (2017:305) children ages two and three progress (a) from ‘*babbling to creating understandable speech*’ and (b) from ‘*observing print in books and composing scripts in their efforts to writing*’. Most of those children who are between the last part of two years or beginning at the age of three make ‘*reading-like and drawing-like scribbles and identifiable letters or letter-like shapes*’. It is therefore necessary for teachers to present or provide young children with teaching that corresponds with their

developmental level and that '*establishes new competence in both oral and written language*'.

Erickson and Wharton-McDonald (2018:475) argue that the ultimate goal of literacy teachers is to assist young learners develop the '*strategies, skills, habits, and dispositions* of the engaged reader'. They further explain that the learners should not only be capable to read well but also have a desire to read. The two authors talk about *Intrinsic motivation* that refers to behavior motivated by its inherent fulfilments, "without the necessity of some separable consequences" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 233). Teachers should encourage young learners to love to read, to appreciate reading for intrinsic gratification it generates. Learners read less when they have little motivation to read. They pay little time to texts and are steady to develop early skills such as 'decoding and fluency'.

The WCED's strategy with regard to literacy relies upon the belief that explicit teaching of phonics will take place incorporated in a "whole language" approach in which the making of meaning is emphasized, and the constructivist approach is implemented, in which both reading writing are regarded essential co-components of development. In "The Role of Phonics in Reading Instruction", the International Reading Association (IRA) maintains (in WCED, 2006-2016:17) that:

- *The teaching of phonics is an important aspect of beginning reading instruction.*
- *Classroom teachers in the primary grades do value and do teach phonics as a part of their reading programs.*
- *Phonics instruction, to be effective in promoting independence in reading, must be embedded in the context of a total reading/language arts program.*

In WCED (2006-2016:17) Pikulski, IRA President maintains that "Early, systematic, explicit phonics instruction is an essential part, but only part of a balanced, comprehensive reading program," (WCED, 2006-2016:17). He explains that there is no single or one approach to teaching reading and writing is best for every child.

Carbo (WCED, 2006-2016:17) asserts that using a single approach to reading normally doesn't work. Many 'combinations and permutations' are necessary to provide a most favourable learning environment for a whole class of readers. She cites an extensive body of research that supports "the global approach of whole language as a framework for teaching young children and poor readers - but only as a framework". Within that framework, "strategies from different approaches need to be used".

2.4.7 Awareness and understanding of potential difficulties

Arua and Biakolo (2013:75-76) maintain that scholars worldwide concur that "reading and writing are fundamental skills for all school-based learning" (Arua and Biakolo, 2013 citing Bertin & Perlman, 1980; Collins, 1998; Cowley, 2002; Manjula *et al.*, 2009; Pumfrey & Elliot, 1990). This finding suggests that the "writing skills, including its learning and teaching, should be an important aspect of the curriculum of primary schools". There is therefore a "need to recognize learning difficulties, including writing, in the teaching of early literacy. When writing difficulties are not identified early and remediated immediately by teachers, learners may become increasingly frustrated and distressed as they persistently fail" (Manjula *et al.*, 2009:208 cited in Arua and Biakolo, 2013:75-76). Westwood (2008:2) puts this concern more plainly: "The failure to cope with the demands of reading and writing has an extremely detrimental effect on their self-esteem, confidence, attitude, motivation and their ability to learn across the curriculum" (Westwood, 2008:2).

Lerner (2000:442) further states that if written language difficulties are not appropriately grasped and remediated by teachers "they often continue to adversely affect their [pupils'] lives as adults". This implies that "remediating the writing problems of primary school children should be an urgent undertaking" (Lerner, 2000 cited in Arua, Arua & Biakolo, 2013:75-6).

Hodges, Feng, Kuo and McTigue (2016:3) argue that teachers should strive to enrich learners' literacy by helping them "become consumers of literature and producers of writing". Hodges *et al.* (2016) argue that literacy includes "both reading and writing; however, researchers and teachers consistently focus on reading, while leaving writing behind". These authors argue that "teachers are not often given specific training on what

theories to apply to reading, writing and generalized literacy. Classroom teachers recognize that reading and writing complement each other and include the two skills simultaneously in instruction” Hodges *et al.* (2016). While the overarching term ‘literacy’ encompasses “both reading and writing, theoretical perspectives still treat the two as dichotomies” (Hodges *et al.*, 2016:3).

Learners need to develop and expand upon their ideas. As with reading, the development of writing requires teachers to model and build strategies, and provide feedback on various assignments. Teachers need to show learners a procedure that helps them to write successfully (Wilcox, 2007:18). Additionally, learners lack organisational skills that can render their writing coherent. To prevent or ameliorate this problem, Wilcox suggests that teachers should include in their teaching of literacy a range of skills that can help learners to write successfully.

This account of what literacy means and socio-economic factors that determine learning suggest multiple roles that must be played by a teacher: as a facilitator (i.e. the enabling factor); teacher of content (i.e. the instructor); modeller of the form (i.e. teaching how to learn); and guide, role model and mediator (Mosito, 1999). In addition, teacher education should cover the identification of broad and specific barriers to learning that are a possibility at different phases of learning. The five contextual roles and the specialist role should be developed in all initial teacher education programmes and consolidated into subsequent in-service or other qualifications (DoE, 1998a:53 in Mosito 1999). One expects that as part of the sharing of their philosophies, teachers might reflect on how anticipation of possible barriers to learning informs teaching-related decisions.

2.4.8 Adopting a critical discourse stance on one’s practices

Critical discourse analysts regard literacy “as a social practice and its focal point as the analysis of the means of social and political domination and how this is achieved by means of talk and text” (Fairclough, 1989:1). Critical discourse analysis is based upon the idea “that unequal access to linguistic and social resources exists, and that these resources are controlled” by institutions such as schools. Fairclough (1989:1) argues that “some individuals are necessarily dominated by others and that this dominance is achieved through language and literacy. To free citizens from this domination, critical

awareness is essential". Various "common sense' assumptions on power exist", and in the classroom domination and authority are treated as natural and not questioned. Fairclough (1989:26) distinguishes three dimensions of critical discourse analysis (CDA):

- (a) description – concerned with formal properties of text;
- (b) interpretation – concerned with the relation between text and interaction (seeing the text as the product of a process of construction and as a resource in the process of the interpretation); and
- (c) explanation - concerned with the relation between interaction and social context (the social determination of the process of production and interpretation and their social effects).

The work of Fairclough (1989) and that of Bourdieu (1991; 2006) are drafted in terms of power and ideology. Blommaert (2003; 2006) illustrates the "way in which orders of discourse are structured, and how ideologies they represent are decided upon by relations of power which are peculiar to certain social institutions such as schools and society as a whole" (Blommaert, 2006:7). Blommaert et al. (2006:7-8) discuss "peripheral normality" which refers to variations of "what is set up as 'correct' in the classroom, and of teachers' ways with words and objects". This discussion is especially pertinent when teachers in question "work under difficult circumstances, are inexperienced and often are inadequately trained, and have poor language ability". It is contained within the aims of this study that teachers will share some of the dominant discourses that influence their work either positively or negatively.

The construction of meaning can act as a form of social redress which is an essential principle of Freirean pedagogy and germane to the socio-economic polarities of the South African context; improving the quality of learner readership and critical literacy. Critical dialogue helps learners and teachers alike to see literary studies and teaching in a new way. Most importantly, it is in keeping with the aim of the curriculum reconstruction programme; the intention of which is to help learners to be both more creative and more critical thinkers, and eventually valued citizens.

Ennis (1987:10) defines critical thinking, the core of critical literacy, as:

a practical activity during which you reflect deeply and which can lead to new beliefs or to action. Critical thinking helps transform the classroom into a community where individuals inquire and develop reasoning skills, inquiry skills, concept-analysis skills and translation skills.

(Ennis 1987:10).

In advocating critical thinking, Freire celebrates problem-solving education that he opposes to banking education; “which is used too often in the teaching of content subjects”. Banking education was described by Freire as:

the traditional didactic approach of transmission of knowledge; where teachers are seen as individuals in authority who ‘deposit’ knowledge in the students’ minds. During this process of banking, learners are often half-asleep⁷ and entirely uncreative”

(Freire, 1971:58).

Banking education assumes that “students’ viewpoints and voices are of secondary importance and that only the teacher’s opinion counts” (Freire 1971:58). A negative result of banking education is what Freire refers to as “marginalization of learners”. Teachers oblige learners to be “marginalized, on the fringe of, or outside authentic or orthodox reality by requiring learners to repeat what the teachers see as reality; what Freire labels as myths”. Sometimes, “unconsciously, teachers wish to maintain the ideology of their *alma mater*, their social sphere, background culture, religion or habits of thought”. This study assumes coherence with CAPS priorities and ANC ethical attitudes as set out in the Freedom Charter and national Constitution. CAPS incorporates Freirean imperatives of constructivist tuition. In assessing the performance of literacy teachers (Ch 6) and the lessons observed.

Critical thinking complements a constructivist view of teaching and learning. Given the centrality afforded by these two complementary schools of thought, it will be of interest to

⁷ In one of the classes conducted during observation in this study, learners fell asleep because the teacher took complete control of the classroom

establish the extent to which the philosophies of teachers participating in this study are in any way influenced by these views.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter examines the philosophical attitudes and underlying assumptions behind teachers' daily practice as literacy teachers. This literature review sought to explicate such questions as (i) *What does being literate mean in the 21st century?* (ii) *How do socio-economic circumstances affect the quest for literacy?* (iii) *What is the teacher's role in enabling literacy development?* The immediate classroom environment and the historical socio-economic situations were seen as crucial interacting factors in teaching literacy in rural areas.

On the question of what being literate in the 21st century entails, this chapter has made clear that there are traditional and contemporary notions of literacy that speak to the affordance of different meanings of literacy and being literate to different audiences. What has become clear is that literacy can signify different things to different audiences. Given the fact that the present research project explores teachers' philosophies on the teaching of literacy, the main ideas explored in this review deal with literacy as reading, writing, speaking, listening with understanding and participation.

In addressing the second question, of how socio-economic circumstances affect the quest for literacy, the chapter has indicated that the majority of South African learners are faced with certain dominant learner challenges which determine, and compromise, literacy acquisition and development. Diverse negative factors in rural schools can retard literacy achievement: poverty, learner's educational history, school attendance and instructional methods. Many rural schools in South Africa follow a multigrade system which often contributes to low literacy levels in rural schools. A rich philosophy on teaching and learning of literacy can overcome some of these barriers to learning.

On the question of what the teacher's role is in enabling literacy development, the chapter explains that the role of the teacher within a Freirean philosophy of teaching for thinking and participation. In this stance, teaching adopts a variety of roles and methodologies which should enable literacy development and acquisition in a learner rather than a predetermined notion of literacy upon learners. Additionally, this section has suggested that teachers should use a variety of strategies that can be taught to the learners to make the process of reading, writing, listening and thinking more meaningful and successful. When teaching in a content area, teachers should teach learners how to read and write for a variety of purposes; becoming better, rounded readers and writers. All these concepts, ideas and discourses are supported by theories that explain teaching, learning and thinking about literacy. Teachers' philosophies on teaching and learning of literacy are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

TEACHERS' PHILOSOPHIES ON TEACHING AND LEARNING OF LITERACY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter locates the issue of teachers' philosophies within the context of existing literature. Specifically, it explicates concepts in the literature which have been identified as relevant to the question of teachers' philosophies on literacy teaching and learning. First, the chapter proposes a model through which the data can be probed; towards arriving at informed decisions on the participating teachers' philosophies on foundational literacy. Towards this end, the following questions lead the review: *(i) What is a personal philosophy of teaching and learning? (ii) What theories best allow for an inquiry into a philosophy of literacy teaching and learning? (iii) Given these theories, what crucial elements should be contained in teachers' reflection on literacy teaching and learning?*

3.2 Teachers' philosophies

There is a widely-held and long-held view that teachers hold their own personal philosophies: sometimes referred to as beliefs which may, at times cloud or, at other times, inform how they teach and make decisions related to their teaching (Biesta, Priestly & Robinson, 2017, 2015; Becker & Riel, 1998).

At this early stage let me explain that in this study the word 'philosophies' does not denote an elaborately constructed philosophy in the usual sense. Philosophy as it has come to be associated with an individual teacher's practice connotes that teacher's uniquely articulated mode of tuition: an assemblage of training, wisdom gathered from

learners and peer teachers and experience over years. (Further discussion concerning the word philosophy is found in chapter 4 sections 4.1).

According to Schönwetter, Sokal, Friesen and Taylor (2002), the best philosophy is one that is located in some theory about learning, development and the context in which teaching-learning unfolds. It is clear that to these authors a teacher's individually-held philosophy of teaching involves uniquely assimilated internal processes or thinking which allow the teacher to account for *what is taught*, *why it is taught* and *to whom*. By implication, if teachers do not necessarily have well thought-out philosophies on teaching, their teaching practices will not be inconsistent; misaligned to curriculum statements, learners' developmental and contextual realities. In the case of literacy, teachers frequently, either consciously or unconsciously, resort to the methods by which they were taught at teacher training colleges or universities; without reflection upon their daily practice or self-scrutiny of the philosophies that lay beneath the teaching that they received at tertiary level. Often there is little critique of such inherited methods and teachers' philosophies; little that requires them to adapt their dependence upon and use of old methods. Doing the familiar, repeating outdated material and re-inscribing inappropriate teaching philosophies is too often a common feature of literacy teaching practice in South Africa, sometimes resulting in haphazard methodologies (Schönwetter *et al.*, 2002).

Fisher (2001:3) puts forward a different perspective on teachers' philosophies. To Fisher (2001:3), a coherent and accountable teacher's philosophy should include practical ideas to be shared with learners. Fisher (2001:3) also speaks of the purpose of a teacher's philosophy in enabling teachers to go further than the facts or information provided; and participating with teaching-learning texts in terms of their literal meaning as well as their analytic and conceptual meanings. In terms of the classroom reality, such a teacher does not merely teach the mechanics of reading and writing, he or she enthusiastically encourages young learners to think for themselves, to read texts critically and to solve problems imaginatively. In such a classroom, learners are not being told what to think because they are allowed to experience at first hand a community of inquiry: one in which

they are exposed to and enabled to, “internalise the skills and habits of higher-order thinking” (Fisher, 2001:3).

Teaching and directed learning enable teachers to develop the thinking processes of their learners. This is done not by telling the learners what to think, but by leading them to find meaning through their thinking, which in turn will allow them to better utilise learning to get more out of life (Fisher, 2013:5). Fisher (2013, 2001) argues that we need to read for thinking: the better the thinking skills, the better the literacy is. The question is; if teachers are required to teach thinking skills, how well are they trained in thinking skills and thinking about what they do? Fisher argues that to incorporate philosophical discussion in the classroom with learners through the “stories for thinking” approach is an excellent way for teachers to add value to their literacy practice (Fisher, 2013:2).

Teachers’ philosophies are regarded as “a mix of assumptions, prejudices and inherited outlooks concerning the subjects they teach” (Schönwetter *et al.*, 2002; Cohen, 1999). These philosophies can further be likened to a range of a teacher’s beliefs about *why*, *what* and *how* information is taught, *whom* he or she teaches, and their opinion about the nature of learning. Karaata (2011:245) emphasises the importance of teachers’ philosophies upon language instruction in a signal way that touches upon the core of this study’s concern. Tedick and Walker (1994 in Karaata, 2011:245) suggest that whether it is second language teaching or instruction, teacher preparation is crucial to expose/uncover the “conceptions, beliefs, and values that underlie the descriptions and prescriptions, or thoughts that guide teachers’ practices in classrooms” Tedick and Walker (1994 in Karaata, 2011:245). Also, Karaata (2011) explains that when the word belief is associated with teachers, ‘teacher beliefs’ “it refers to teachers’ pedagogic beliefs or those beliefs of teachers that are relevant to their teaching practice” (Karaata, 2011:245).

Karaata’s (2011:245) definition of teachers’ beliefs is functionally close to teachers’ philosophies as defined throughout this thesis: a teacher’s beliefs about why, what and how information is taught, whom he or she teaches, and the nature of learning (Cohen,

1999). These teachers' beliefs relate to principles that lie first in the teacher's own life experiences, values, the environment in which this teacher lives, interacts with others and the philosophical approaches that he or she has assimilated.

The foregoing section foregrounds teachers' awareness of the connection between their beliefs about the subject, learners and methods of teaching the subject as crucial towards having a positive impact on learner achievement. Drawing from these accounts of the role of teaching philosophies, the fundamental architecture of the present study was conceived in accord with the didactic vision of two liberal-minded authors in particular: Schönwetter and Fisher. The proposed model as depicted below presents four elements of 'thinking doing' prerequisites: what teaching philosophies entail and should be taken into consideration by teachers in foundational literacy classrooms.

Moradan and Poursadollah (2014:1194) argue that teachers' philosophies are of particular significance to the understanding and improvement of educational processes. Such formally acquired or culturally assimilated philosophies guide teachers "in choosing which teaching strategies they employ in their everyday tuition; including literacy" which is the particular focus of this study. "Literacy forms the basis of all other learning at school, and in the later life of the child" (Moradan & Poursadollah, 2014:1194). Ngaka and Masaazi (2015) explain that "across the world, literacy is considered to be a human right (UNESCO, 1997, 2006), a lifelong and life-wide intellectual process of gaining meaning from a critical interpretation of written texts".

According to Bakhtin's argument (1981, 1986 cited in Lee & Smagoronsky, 2000:233) teachers' thinking and philosophical assumptions about literacy is influenced more by their own thinking and experiences in and out of the classroom than by what they are taught in teachers' college. Therefore, reflective written texts and the discussions in the classroom about these texts play a key role how teachers conceptualise literacy.

3.2.1 A proposed model and dimensions of teachers' philosophies on foundational literacy

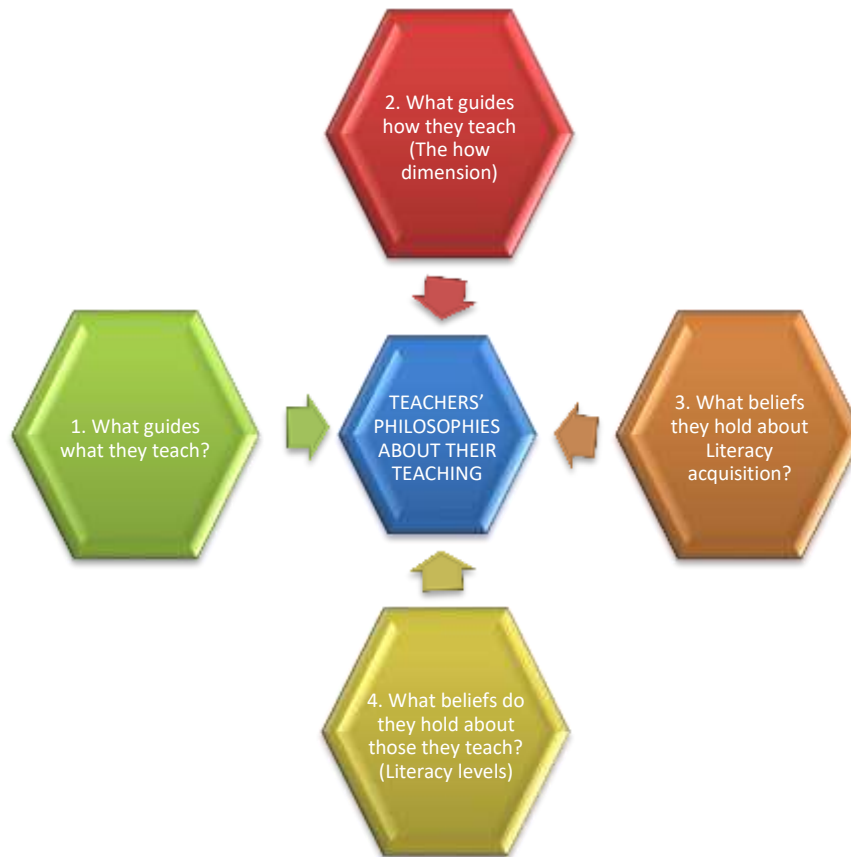


Figure 3.1: A proposed model of probing teachers' philosophies on foundational literacy (Researcher's own model MSH Dyasi).

Figure 3.1 above encapsulates the researcher's interpretation and synthesis of the literature on teachers' philosophies. This model is the researcher's creation and not taken from anywhere. It is a contribution of sorts which I doubt had existed before.

3.2.1.1 The 'what' dimension (the curriculum)

In this dimension, teachers should be knowledgeable and acquainted with the curriculum as 'what' to teach. Department of Education set out clear outlines in the form of curriculum statements that serve as a general guide as to 'what' should be taught. In South Africa, the guidelines are currently in the form of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). In CAPS, the Department of Basic Education has set up a

prescribed curriculum that denotes content in terms of knowledge, concepts and skills that learners should be taught (DoBE, 2011:8). It is reasonable to expect that teachers' beliefs about the subject literacy in this instance may well reveal their particular understandings of the prescribed content. Reid, Edwards and Power (2004:140) state that "a literacy curriculum should be designed after taking into consideration the social circumstances in which the learners grew up and experienced the world".

3.2.1.2 The 'how' dimension: Existing pedagogic knowledge on how to teach literacy

This dimension I have referred to as the "how of teaching". Sturtevant and Linek (2003) explore teachers' teaching beliefs and what guides '*how*' they teach: their methods of decision-making as well as how their beliefs are related to teachers' classroom teaching of literacy. Their exploration reveals many and complex linkages, and disjunctions, between the strands that tie teachers' beliefs to their practices. Sturtevant and Linek (2003) believe that there are various factors that teachers commonly consider to be reliable and proven guides to how they teach: taking into consideration learners' individual needs, barriers to learning and environmental factors.

Considering such a global assessment of pedagogic elements in the classroom is at present broadly defined as inclusive education (White Paper 6). Shaik (2016) believes that "there is a strong link between teachers' personal beliefs and the influence they have on their teaching practice".

Kuzborska (2011:102) explains "the links between teachers' beliefs and practices and research on reading". Kuzborska argues that literacy or language teachers' beliefs and comprehensions of teaching, as well as learning, have a crucial impact or role in "their classroom practices and in their professional growth". Kuzborska cites Harste and Burke (1977) where they state that the theoretical beliefs of teachers influence not only their decision-making process about the practical aspects of classroom instruction such as materials, procedures and classroom interaction patterns, but also about their roles, goals, learners and schools they work in.

In the foregoing chapter it was stated that if literacy teachers are fixed in their modes of thinking and unable to adjust their literacy teaching to the social and intellectual backgrounds of their learners, learners will not be able to identify with the literacy lessons and will remain semi-literate: which appears to be what is happening. If, however, teachers are made fully aware of their mode of tuition and trained to reflect critically upon their practice, they are more able to recognise the knowledge and skills latent in their learners; using this knowledge as a scaffold for further and more interactive knowledge construction.

3.2.1.3 The ‘subject/content acquisition’ dimension

As much as 3.2.1.1 explains that teachers should be knowledgeable and acquainted with the curriculum as ‘*what*’ to teach as set out in the form of curriculum statements that serve as a general guide as to ‘*what*’ should be taught, this section discusses the nature of *subject/content acquisition* in its various forms and in terms of various researchers’ understanding of the term.

Learning of literacy is sometimes termed literacy acquisition because some linguists consider that the development of literacy in a child is a special process. So, for instance, Flowers (2015) states that “teachers’ beliefs about learners’ literacy acquisition are ‘tied’ to the nature and amount of their learners’ involvement in classroom literacy events”. Flowers categorises literacy development into either the readiness domain or the emergent domain. The readiness domain focuses on the development of isolated literacy skills of learners; while the emergent domain focuses on the learners’ practising reading and writing (Flowers, 2015:5).

Any curriculum aims to ensure that learners acquire knowledge and mastery of the subject; learning to apply skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. In this regard, the curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts; while being sensitive to global imperatives (Flowers, 2015:5). As part of the present project, it is of interest to uncover what and how FP teachers of literacy think and believe about content in relation to the curriculum.

However, the content dimension is specifically about the nature and depth of a teacher's knowledge of the appropriate and relevant subject matter; literacy in this case. For example, if a teacher thinks only of literacy as reading and writing, it means related aspects of this subject matter, listening, speaking and thinking, will suffer.

3.2.1.4 The 'who' dimension: learners

Teachers must know *whom* they teach: they need to be aware of the socio-economic, religious, political and cultural conditions in which their learners exist: "Only armed with this knowledge can teachers generate meaningful and sustainable interactions with learners" (Mandernach, in Bart, 2009:6). For example, if teaching Ntobeko Mathematics or Literacy, an educator or teacher must know about Ntobeko's background, family and individual strengths and weaknesses.

Earlier in foregoing chapter it was mentioned that Subban (2006:938) explains that "knowing your learners" assists the teacher to restructure the traditional classroom to include learners of diverse abilities, interests and learning profiles. Present-day learner populations are increasingly diverse academically. In South African schools today there are learners with "disabilities, learners with different language backgrounds, learners with emotional challenges and some gifted learners, who demonstrate this increasing diversity" (Subban, 2006:938). It is important to remember that despite the differences between learners in a classroom, all learners need to feel nurtured, accepted and respected. This can be achieved by being attentive to above mentioned differences as this can empower the teacher to encourage individual learners reach their full potential (Subban, 2006:938). It is of great importance to take into consideration the "huge dissimilarities among learners in a classroom, recognizing each learner's strengths while accommodating their limitations" (Subban, 2006:938). In contemporary classrooms, teachers should "accept and build on the basis that learners are all essentially different" (Subban, 2006:938).

Also, it was explained that not all young learners learn in the same way (Guild, 2001 cited in Subban, 2006:938). Teachers need to be aware of "different learning styles of learners; to use such difference as a meaningful tool to understand diversity and help

with learner development” (Subban, 2006:938). Knowing learners’ learning styles provides teachers with the ability to plan their lessons sufficiently or adequately, “bearing in mind how learners learn best” (Subban, 2006:938). Green (1999), reiterates the importance of both identifying a learner’s learning style and of teaching in order to accommodate the various learning styles of learners in a classroom. Not only does this enable learners to perform better academically but it also enables the teacher to build on an individual learner’s strengths to help him or her become familiar with challenging concepts (Green, 1999 in Subban, 2006:938).

In chapter 2 it was stated that Morrison and Wilcox (2013:14) assert that despite challenges, young learners’ fresh perspectives bring joy to teach. As a teacher, it is essential to take cognizance of the fact that there will be learners in class who come from diverse backgrounds. There will be those from affluent families; others will be from poor homes. Some will be competent in English; others will be from homes where other “languages or variant dialects of English are spoken”. The authors state that “there will also be physical, ethnic, cultural, and cognitive differences” that will need to be considered (Morrison & Wilcox, 2013:14) such as: language and poverty concerns which help the teacher to gain a better understanding of the context in which he or she needs to teach in order to allow for the development of the learner according to their specific needs.

3.3 The significance of Freire’s constructivism and Vygotsky’s theory of mediation in understanding the philosophy of literacy

This section deals with the second question: *What theories best allow for an inquiry into a philosophy of literacy teaching and learning?* Example:

3.3.1 Freire and constructivism

3.3.2 Vygotsky and mediation

3.3.1 Freire and constructivism

Because CAPS and OBE were founded upon overtly constructivist prerogatives Freire occupies a major position and provides the best theory for an inquiry into a philosophy of literacy teaching and learning.

Chetty (2015:1-3) explains that Freirean principles emphasise learner-centered education; specifically, in the field of critical literacy. For teachers who perceive themselves as the medium of knowledge construction by supplying the facts to be learnt without reflection or questioning, Freirean principles may present a challenge and require a mind shift. This mind shift is essential to empower the learner as the centre of knowledge construction. After all, it is only through reflective practice that growth of authentically assimilated knowledge in the individual learner takes place.

The learner shares his or her experiences with the teacher and together they construct “a democratic type of knowledge which is built on the foundation of mutual respect for a variety of histories, gender identities and religious or political convictions”. For the learner, this is a type of self-discovery; he or she articulates his or her own social identity which enables growth into responsible adulthood. In critical literacy, the individual is encouraged to think critically and independently. This attitude is in contrast with transmission pedagogy where the teacher is considered the expert, and the only person who is allowed to interpret the meaning of the text. Freire emphasizes that one cannot know something without experiencing it: in his terminology, “knowledge is made from experience” (Freire & Macedo 1987:87). Freire considers student experiences to be crucial to the construction of real knowledge: “they bring with them opinions about the world, and about life” (Freire & Horton 1991:57). Wilson and Peterson (2006) argue that teachers need a substantial comprehension of the fundamental theories that steer teaching, involving opinions: “about how learners learn, what they should learn, and how teachers can enable” learners to learn. Wilson and Peterson speak about moving from more traditional perceptions of learning and knowledge to understandings that are broader and more nuanced.

The emphasis in constructivist theory is on the activity of both learners and teachers in the school as they construct and reconstruct knowledge. In constructivism, teachers are tasked “to think about knowledge, or more specifically about knowledge-making, as the chief activity of a classroom” (WCED, 2006-2016:6).

3.3.2 Vygotsky and mediation

Vygotsky discusses teaching, not as teaching, but as “mediation”. For example, when alluding to something we might call “the importance of teaching a child”, he speaks of “the importance of mediating a child’s learning experience” (ZPD, Vygotsky, 1978) . The teacher acts as “mediator between the learner’s actual development and the learner’s potential development” (Gouws, Kruger & Burger, 2008:53). The teachers (mediators) “are there to structure activities for the learner or child so that the learner gradually gains control over the activities and the tasks he or she needs to perform” (Gouws *et al.*, 2008:53). The role of the teacher [mediator] is to provide intellectual “Scaffolding” for learners so that they can become independent. Teachers can raise a learner’s or student’s “competence through the zone of proximal development” (ZPD, Vygotsky, 1978) where learning will take place. In this study, the teacher as a mediator and facilitator of learning is regarded as a central figure in accounting for ways in which he or she plays such a role in a classroom environment.

3.4 Crucial elements to be contained in teachers’ reflection about literacy teaching and learning

This section addresses the importance of teachers’ reflection on their practices of literacy teaching and learning. The literature and core concepts of this chapter point towards three central issues: (i) How teachers think about their practice (reflective practice) (ii) How teachers think about what should be taught as far as literacy is concerned, and (iii) How teachers think about who that literacy will be taught to. Such issues are related to larger areas of concern such as cognitive development and the dictates of the curriculum. Reflective teaching drew its theoretical framework from the work of Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983). Dewey defines reflection “as an active and constant process of in-depth thinking and examination of personal philosophies, theoretical bases of practice and the

cause-effect relationship of events to solve problems". According to Schön (1983, 1987), reflective practice refers to "the active process of examining one's own experiences to create learning opportunities".

According to Taole (2015:167) it is crucial for teachers "to critically review or reflect upon how they teach". This self-reflection "ensures that teachers develop proper and efficient teaching strategies and augment their teaching practice". Killen (2007) contends that the "changing demands and responsibilities exerted on teachers necessitate that they must be reflective to respond appropriately to their altering situations". In discussing teacher practices, Braun and Crumpler (2004:61) assert that teachers need to cater for learners' needs regardless of whether it consist of cultural, social, economic or cognitive differences. They also remind us that reflective practice in teaching is important in order to avoid recreating ineffective teaching strategies.

Taole (2015:168) states that "for teachers, reflective teaching means looking at what they do in the classroom, thinking about why they do it, and considering whether or not it works". Jacobs, Vakalisa and Gawe (2011) define reflective teaching as "an approach to teacher education in which teachers and students/learners critically examine their actions and attitudes, and then contemplate how they can improve them". The authors suggest that "Teachers as agents of change are expected to reflect on theory and practice: which ensures that their teaching stays appropriate and relevant to the dynamic nature of knowledge and the dynamic classroom situations in which they find themselves".

Larrivee (2000) describes the process as moving beyond the knowledge of discrete skills to a point where the teacher's skills are not only modified to fit different contexts but also internalised to enable the teacher to invent new strategies to enhance learning for the learners. For this reason, the skill of reflective teaching is an important aspect in the professional development of the teacher (Larrivee 2000 in Taole, 2015:168).

Taole (2015:168) maintains that in the foregoing paragraph with various definitions of reflective practice, a single notion frequently appears denoting that "experience, self-observation and self-evaluation are central to reflective teaching". Jacobs *et al.* (2011:55)

maintain that “reflection means to think deeply, to ponder, or meditate upon something that has happened with the purpose of throwing more light on it”. Taole states that teacher self-reflection and classroom practice or performance can be based, among other things, on the following (Taole, 2015:168):

- Teaching methodologies
- Learner involvement
- Different learning context
- Teachers’ teaching and learning philosophy
- Learners’ abilities
- Learners’ backgrounds

Reflection processes

Taole (2015:169) explains that “reflection is thus an active process that is informed by experience, and a desire and readiness to alter and be transformed”. Several researchers (Liou, 2001; Killen, 2007; Thompson & Thompson, 2008; Yang, 2009 in Taole 2015) view reflection as “a process and not as a once-off event that happens at a particular time”. They maintain that reflection “is an ongoing process that involves thinking and self-evaluation, which can take place before and after teaching” (Taole, 2015:169). The processes of reflection are exhibited in Figure 3.1: to demonstrate the cyclical nature of the process of reflection, which involves self-evaluation, experience, knowledge and change.

REFLECTIVE PROCESSES

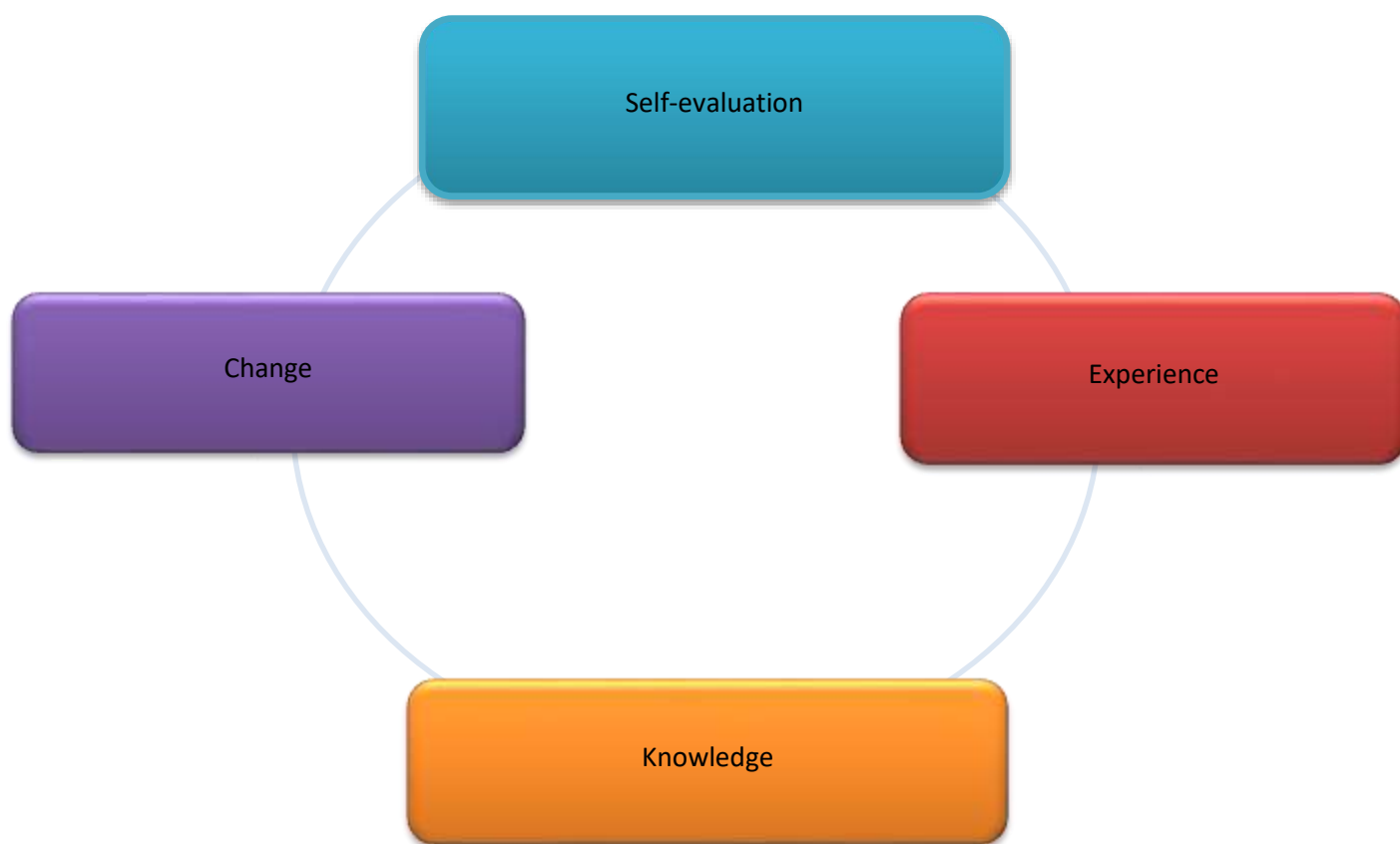


Figure 3.2: Cycle of reflection

Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation entails “thinking about one’s beliefs and philosophy about teaching and learning”. Taole (2015:170) states that teachers can pose themselves the following questions: *What am I doing? Why am I doing it? What do I bring to this learning experience? What teaching method do I have at my disposal? How will I engage my learners in my teaching? Can I change my plan?*

Experience

According to Taole (2015:170) “experience includes thinking and looking at what actually happens during the teaching and learning experience. It entails giving an account of what has transpired and why”. Taole states that the questions that can guide teachers to

explore their experience are as follows: *What happened? Why did it happen? What did it not happen? What did I do and not do? How did I do it? What did my learners do?*

Knowledge

Taole (2015:170) suggests that the experiences that teachers “go through must teach us a thing or two”. Teachers have to pose themselves questions as follows: *What have I gained from this experience?* This process will entail “viewing learner behaviour, individual behaviour and the teaching and learning context in general”. Gholam and Husu (2010) maintain that most of a teacher’s knowledge is gained during engagement or interplay with a multiplicity of processes. Gholam and Husu (2010) aver that for teachers to meet the practical and situational requirements of teaching, teachers will then change or reconstruct that knowledge into feasible knowledge: “In this instance, teachers use their practical knowledge to guide their actions when they encounter the critical question: What should I do in this particular situation?” (Gholam & Husu, 2010 cited in Taole, 2015:170).

Change

Taole (2015:171) argues that “change and improvement in practice should be brought into perspective by reflection”. Teachers could ask themselves the questions to assist teachers “in reflecting on their teaching experiences in an attempt to bring change to the classroom”: *How can I improve my lesson? What can I do differently? Did my learners benefit from this experience? How will the knowledge I gained influence my practice?* *Teaching is a process which needs to be improved continuously to accommodate the fact that knowledge is dynamic. This requires teachers to sharpen their teaching skills and master new content that needs to be taught (Taole, 2015: 170-1).*

Moradan and Pourasadollah (2014:1194) advocate that human beings “are by nature reflective beings who can think about their actions and what happens around them”. Human action reflects human believes values and thinking. Therefore, a cause and effect relation exists between human thought and action, and in turn between meditation upon possible action and execution of that action. In educational settings this cause and effect relation is of major importance for teaching and learning. Since teachers too often play a

mediatory or supervisory and prominent role in classroom practice, their teaching has a fundamental impact on how learners learn.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter locates the issue of teacher philosophies within a wide context of relevant literature. To reiterate specifically, it explicates concepts in the literature which have been identified as relevant to the question of teachers' philosophies on literacy teaching and learning. First, the chapter presents a model of teachers' philosophies on foundational literacy. Towards this end, the following questions lead the review: *(i) What is a personal philosophy of teaching and learning? (ii) What theories best allow for an inquiry into a philosophy of literacy teaching and learning? (iii) Given these theories, what crucial elements should be contained in teachers' reflection on literacy teaching and learning?*

In addressing the first question of what comprises a personal philosophy of teaching and learning, as explained earlier the chapter emphasises that teachers should be clear about the philosophy that underpins their work. A teacher's philosophy is described as his or her understanding of how learners learn and how they should therefore be taught. There is a widely-held and long-held view that teachers acquire their own personal philosophies: sometimes referred to as beliefs which may, at times cloud or, at other times, inform how they teach and make decisions related to their teaching. The best philosophy is the one that is located in theories of learner-centred learning and development. A teacher's individually-held philosophy on teaching involves uniquely assimilated internal processes or thinking which allow the teacher to account for *what is taught, why it is taught* and *to whom*. By implication, if teachers do not necessarily have well thought-out philosophies on teaching, their teaching practices will be inconsistent; misaligned to curriculum statements, and learners' developmental and contextual realities.

On the question of what theories explain a philosophy of literacy teaching and learning, to repeat what has what has been said in the foregoing paragraph, the chapter explains that a teacher's philosophy of literacy teaching and learning is a philosophy that includes how

ideas will be shared with learners. The philosophy should have a purpose: which is to develop a teacher's ability to go further than the facts or information is given and to approach texts, not in terms of their literal meaning only, but at an analytic, conceptual level. In terms of the classroom reality, such a teacher does not merely teach the mechanics of reading and writing, he or she enthusiastically encourages young learners to think for themselves, to read texts critically and to solve problems imaginatively. In such a classroom, learners are not being told what to think because they are allowed to experience at first hand a community of inquiry: one in which they are exposed to, and enabled to, "internalise the skills and habits of higher-order thinking".

In addressing the third question: *(iii) Given these theories, what crucial elements should be contained in teachers' reflection about literacy teaching and learning?* Teachers should reflect on their practices of literacy teaching and learning. They should use their ability to think about their actions and what is happening around them. It is essential for teachers to seriously re-examine or reflect upon how they teach and who they teach. For teachers, reflective teaching means looking at what they do in the classroom, thinking about why they do it, and considering whether or not it works. The process of self-reflection will assist and affirm or ensure that teachers develop appropriate and effective teaching strategies and enhance their teaching practice. Since teachers too often play a mediatory or supervisory and prominent role in classroom practice, their teaching has a fundamental impact on how learners learn. The awareness about the beliefs or philosophies and methodologies that teachers hold, whether consciously or unconsciously, and understanding in general about their beliefs or philosophies and thinking about teaching, are crucial or fundamental resolutions for strong and reliable learning processes to take place in the classroom. The conceptual and theoretical frameworks are discussed in the next chapter to further carve a theoretical space for understanding teachers' philosophies on teaching literacy.

CHAPTER 4

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

To understand the philosophical assumptions and attitudes that lie embedded behind the methods and approaches that teachers employ when teaching literacy, it is necessary to review a variety of concepts, assumptions and theories related to the topic. Teachers' philosophies is a term used to describe an admixture of consciously and sometimes unconsciously assimilated modes of thought and cultural values that shape the tuition of teachers. Contained in these conscious and unconscious modes of thought and cultural values could be beliefs and assumptions that teachers have about literacy teaching, learning and the contexts in which these two occur. The word 'philosophies' does not denote an elaborately constructed philosophy in the usual sense. Philosophy as it has come to be associated with an individual teacher's practice, connotes that teacher's uniquely articulated mode of tuition: an assemblage of training, wisdom gathered from learners and peer teachers and experience over years.

Teachers' philosophy often accounts for, among others, opinions on how a group of learners acquires knowledge. How the teacher prompts stimulates guides and suggests the appetite for learning involves this unique amalgam of experience, training and acquired wisdom. A teacher's own philosophy implies a certain unique way of thinking about teaching. There are many theoretical standpoints from which we can explain the issue under scrutiny. This chapter first, focuses on certain theoretical constructs about the creation of a teacher's notion of tuition: (i) the Vygotskian concept of mediation pertaining to the teachers' role, (ii) Freire and constructivism which emphasises learner-centred education, and (iii) drawing upon the literature on the meaning of being literate in the 21st century from the light (perspectives) of various experts in this field.

To define exactly the parameters of teachers' philosophy as distinct from the more general assumptions about personal knowledge, it was important in this chapter to

synthesize a conceptual framework; by drawing upon Vygotsky's pioneering work on mediation pertaining to the teachers' role, (ii) Freire's theory on constructivism emphasising learner centred education, and (iii) drawing upon the literature on the meaning of the term literacy itself in the 21st century.

4.2 Theories that explain teachers' roles

4.2.1 Vygotsky and Mediation

Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the key role of teachers, adults and competent peers in learners' accomplishment of a specific level of 'cognitive development'. His theory dwells on social interaction for assisting development. Gouws, Kruger and Burger (2008:53) aver that the teacher acts as a mediator by performing "the function of providing intellectual scaffolding" in order to allow learners to become independent (Gouws, Kruger & Burger, 2008:53 cited Louw, Van Eden & Louw, 1998).

According to Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978) the 'more knowledgeable other' (MKO) is the "one who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner", particularly in regard "to a specific task, concept or process". Traditionally, an MKO "is thought of as a teacher or an older adult". An MKO could be a peer, sibling, another young learner or even a computer (Vygotsky, 1978). The key to MKOs is that the MKO must be more knowledgeable than the learner about the topic at hand. The competence of a learner can also be raised through the zone of proximal development by either the teacher or a competent peer (Vygotsky, 1978). Language and speech occupy a special place in Vygotsky's psychological system because they play a double role. Not only are language and speech a psychological tool that enable children to develop more complex cognitive abilities or higher mental functions such as focused attention, deliberate memory, logical thinking, but language and speech also foster cultural development through interaction with other (Vygotsky, 1989: xxix). Mbatha in Mlomo, Desai and September (2018:77) states that in early literacy "one of the constructs associated with cognitive and social constructivism is scaffolding. Scaffolding is a term invented and used by Bruner and adopted by Vygotsky (1978) to explain his idea of social constructivism". Mbatha explains that the intention in scaffolding is that parents should assist their children when they first

begin learning to talk or speak. The parents facilitate this learning process through 'informal formants'. There should be effective interactions between adults and the child. Mbatha cites Al Aila (2015:15) who defines instructional scaffolding as "a process designed to promote a deeper level of learning". It is the support given during the learning process which is tailored to the needs of the learner to help the learner achieves his or her learning goals. Mbatha explains that in the language classroom scaffolding may be facilitated by "reading pictures, reading aloud, shared reading and guided reading". The teacher should always provide assistance or support to learner.

From a Vygotskian perspective, the ideal role of the teacher is to provide scaffolding or collaborative dialogue to assist learners in the tasks within their ZPD. In this study, the teacher as a mediator and facilitator of learning is regarded as a central figure in accounting for ways in which he or she plays such a role in a classroom environment.

A teacher should always guide and support (or scaffold) learners in their literacy development not to act as a player on the stage but should guide on the side. Thompson (2013:248) adds that, according to Vygotsky, a young learner's development within a ZPD involves "social interaction, dialogue and mediated activity between learners and with their teachers" (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Vygotsky & Luria, 1994). Karpov and Hayhood (1998:27) state that "the central concept in Vygotsky's cognitive psychology is mediation" Vygotsky's (1978, 1981, 1983, 1988). Also Wertsch (2007) argues that "mediation is a central theme throughout Vygotsky's writings". This central notion of Vygotsky's is that the entire "human consciousness is linked to utilisation of tools or signs": Wertsch (2007) further elaborates that humans do not act in a "direct and unmediated way" with the physical and social world around us, instead our contact with the world around us is indirect or mediated through signs. Our higher mental processes such as thinking, attention, and problem solving enable us to interact and function efficiently in our world by meeting challenges and solving problems, therefore the notion of mediation is important in understanding the development and utilization of higher mental processes (Wertsch, 2007:178).

Vygotsky's theory of mediation helps teachers to understand the importance of conscious knowledge of their teaching philosophy and the role they play in teaching and learning.

While Vygotsky's theory emphasizes mediation as the key role of teachers, adults and competent peers in learners' accomplishment of a specific level of 'cognitive development', Freire's theory on constructivism is emphasising learner-centred education and is appropriate in this framework for analysis particularly in the current relapse into teacher centred authority models; and enhances Vygotsky's theory on mediation by emphasising learner-centred education. Vygotsky and Freire cohere in terms of social justice and in this way form an appropriate, articulated, tightly knit, carefully constructed and reliable synthesis for a thesis devoted to finding ways of improving the literacy of those millions of our youth who have been left behind.

4.2.2 Freire and constructivism

Freirean inclusiveness is particularly appropriate in the reconstruction of democratic thought and practice in South Africa. The current relapse into teacher-centred authority models could not be more inappropriate, and insensitive to injustices of the past or depredations of the present. In constructivist practice, teachers must respect and adapt to their didactic situation; in other words, the sequencing and spacing of learning material depend on what the learner brings to the process and the socio-economic and cultural conditions of the school in which teachers find themselves. Of relevance to this study is how teachers' reflections and teaching moments reveal a desire to educate in a participatory manner that evokes thinking for learning.

Chetty (2015:1-3) explains that Freirean principles emphasise learner-centred education; specifically in the field of critical literacy. Freire considers student experiences to be crucial to the construction of real knowledge: "they bring with them opinions about the world, and about life" (Freire & Horton 1991:57). Wilson and Peterson (2006) argue that teachers need a substantial comprehension of the fundamental theories that steer teaching, involving opinions: "about how learners learn, what they should learn, and how teachers can enable" learners to learn (Wilson & Peterson, 2006:15). Wilson and Peterson speak about moving from more traditional perceptions of learning and

knowledge to understandings that are broader and more nuanced. Wilson and Peterson (2006) affirm that the most crucial shift in education in the past 20 years in South Africa has been a move away from the perception of the “learner as a sponge, toward an image of learners as active constructors of meaning” (Wilson & Peterson, 2006:15). The perception that learners construct meaning has focussed attention on how learners interpret what they see and experience in the classroom consequently it is important that teachers create opportunities for learners to learn without limiting or suppressing learners’ interpretations (Wilson & Peterson, 2006).

In chapter 3 section 3.3.1 it is explained that according to Freire and Macedo (1987:87) “Literacy may be enhanced by various reading improvement strategies at a technical level yet often in the short-term only”. This occurs when the learner’s experience is recognised and his or her participation is encouraged in the classroom. The learner shares his or her experiences with the teacher and together they construct a democratic type of knowledge which is built on the foundation of mutual respect for a variety of histories, gender identities and religious or political convictions. For the learner, this is a type of self-discovery; he or she articulates his or her own social identity which enables growth into responsible adulthood. In critical literacy, the individual is encouraged to think critically and independently. This attitude is in contrast with transmission pedagogy where the teacher is considered the expert, and the only person who is allowed to interpret the meaning of the text. Freire emphasizes that one cannot know something without experiencing it: in his terminology, “knowledge is made from experience” (Freire & Macedo 1987:87).

The emphasis in constructivist theory is on the activity of both learners and teachers in the school as they construct and reconstruct knowledge. In constructivism, teachers are tasked to conceptualise and practise knowledge making or knowledge creation as the core activity in the classroom.

Having drawn upon Vygotsky’s pioneering work on mediation and Freire’s theory on constructivism emphasising learner-centred education, there is still a need for a perspective that captures what literacy means in the 21st century which fits into this

framework for analysis. The following section below draws upon a variety of theorists on the meaning of the term 'literacy' itself in the 21st century.

4.2.3 The meaning of the term literacy itself in the 21st century

As stated earlier, of related interest is the meaning of the term 'literacy' itself in the 21st century. The teacher's role, in terms of understanding literacy and awareness of current trends in teaching-learning literacy at the Foundation Phase, is of crucial importance to this thesis. The ultimate aim of this thesis is to determine the nature, history, formation and effect of participating teachers' philosophies on teaching literacy at the Foundation Phase. This section, therefore, explicates the question: *What does being literate mean in the 21st century?*

For the purpose of this section some of the literature and ideas from chapter 2 section 2.2 of the literature review are reiterated here and bear repetition. In chapter 2 section 2.2 it is explained that the idea of what it means to be literate has undergone significant changes over time: from an initial understanding of literacy as no more than the mechanical control of language to an appreciation of literacy as competence in various fields, such as computer literacy or social literacy (UNESCO, 2006). Presently, there is broad consensus that being literate encapsulates skills, situated practices, a process of learning and engagement with the text. Where skills are concerned, individuals are regarded as literate if they possess a range of skills which may be located in different kinds of literacy; such as "digital literacy, information literacy, visual literacy, critical literacy, financial literacy, entertainment literacy or health literacy" (Prince, 2013:25).

In chapter 2 it is argued that traditionally, literacy was "cognitively oriented and described as a set of abilities or skills" inside people's heads. But the New Literacy Studies (NLS) perceived of literacy from "a socio-cultural viewpoint". The NLS exponents ascertain that a significant emphasis should be placed upon considering the variety of literacy practices that occur in homes and communities and that these should be appreciated and valued rather than disregarded (Boakye, 2015:134).

Mei-Yun Ko (2013:91) states that "for the past 30 years", the notion of literacy has gone beyond reading the words to 'reading the world' that is, from "functional literacy that

focuses solely on developing learners' linguistic skills, to critical literacy that aims to give learners a language of critique to achieve equality and social justice or effect social transformation" (Mei-Yun Ko, 2013:91 cites Edelsky, 1999).

Schrok (2006:154) argues that "during the 1970s, Paulo Freire's theory of 'conscientization' stated, among other things", that: liberating mankind could be as a result of more than just arithmetic, writing and reading but rather that of developing a person more fully as reflected in the Persepolis Declaration. Also, Schrok (2006:154) states that during this time developing countries became more interested in social awareness and critical enquiry for social change as did UNESCO and other international organisations.

Schrok (2006:159) explains that Freire's approach to literacy was substantially or significantly acknowledged internationally during that period. Schrok (2006) argues that definitions of literacy moved away from pure technical skills to that of being more encompassing of human resource skills which allowed for the development of political change or the discussion thereof and socio-cultural change. Mbatha (2014:37) cites CookGumperz (1986:17) who supports Schrok by stating that literacies role is not purely that of the ability to read and understand the printed word but rather to allow for the extension of applying to social circumstances and incorporating historical traditions.

Bloch (cited in Mbatha, 2014:39) explains that learners who are brought up in a world in which literacies are more readily available, such as early language and literacy development opportunities, tend to be more literate themselves. The author claims that the idea of whole language perspective is one that sees young children developing their lives in social, personal and cultural processes through literacy. Nel and Snelgar (2012:3) agree that young learners develop culturally and socially through having literacy opportunities and experiences with more literate elders on an everyday basis.

A common denominator in all the definitions is the implication that the social utilisations of literacy should be emphasized in learning; which means that "learners' linguistic and social experiences should form part of learning literacy" (Mbatha, 2014:37). Of interest in this thesis is whether teachers who are engaged with developing literate Foundation Phase learners think and act per the functions of literacy stipulated in all the literature.

Teachers' histories as contained in what Mbatha (2014) describes as "social circumstances and specific historical traditions" to a large extent impact on their understanding of what literacy is and how they translate that understanding into classroom practices (Mbatha, 2014). Furthermore, curriculum changes in South Africa occur in a context that is entrenched in diverse historical imbalances which sees a large population of the current teaching force exposed to at times diluted versions of content and methodologies of teaching which in turn could decrease the learners' 'whole language perspective' opportunities (Mbatha, 2014:37).

For purposes of this research project, the discussion includes both traditional and contemporary notions of literacy that entail *reading, writing, speaking and listening* with understanding (Schrock, 2006). Given the multifaceted understandings of literacy, a literacy teacher's conception of the term 'literacy' is expected to reflect a mixture of elements drawn from some, if not all, of the aspects listed above. Given the fact that the present research project explores teachers' philosophies on the teaching of literacy, the main concerns in this project are those of literacy as it relates to *reading, writing, speaking and listening* with understanding.

4.3 Metatheory

The concept 'metatheory' in research is a particular approach in which a set of assumptions are used to generate research questions and guide the development and refinement of theories. These assumptions are background beliefs about the investigation, analysis or description of theory itself (Figueroa, 1994:4). 'Ideology' or 'theoretical presuppositions' are synonyms for metatheory (Figueroa, 1994:4). Bates (2009:1) states that "in most natural sciences there is a single overarching theoretical paradigm which governs the majority of questions posed by a particular researcher regarding a particular phenomenon" Bates (2009:1). Metatheories about "the nature of research and the most appropriate methods for each discipline are embedded in those paradigms" Bates (2009:1). The concept of metatheory has many connotations; some of which overlap with the term "paradigm." Metatheory, however, "is fundamental to any paradigm, and defines what a paradigm is in many senses" (Bate 2009:2). The issue of

metatheory will further be discussed in chapter 5 where the general features of the two major metatheories, namely: positivism and phenomenology are illustrated and discussed.

4.4 Conclusion

The notion of teachers' philosophies examined and compared in this research project foregrounds theories of personal knowledge and practice; as distinct from the aspects of content knowledge which have received more sustained theoretical attention. In the foregoing paragraphs it is already stated that to define exactly the parameters of teachers' philosophy as distinct from the more general assumptions about personal knowledge, it was important in this chapter to synthesize a conceptual framework; by drawing upon Vygotsky's pioneering work on mediation, Freire's idea on constructivism which emphasises learner-centred education and the perspective that captures what literacy means in the 21st century. As stated earlier by synthesizing these theories, this chapter acquires a functional definition of the socio-psychological processes that condition how a teacher or educator constructs a unique habit of tuition and a repertoire of individually developed classroom strategies.

As stated in the foregoing paragraph, Vygotsky and Freire cohere in terms of social justice and in this way form an appropriate, articulated, tightly knit, carefully constructed and reliable synthesis for a thesis devoted to finding ways of improving the literacy of those millions of our youth who have been left behind. This theoretical synthesis of Vygotsky, Freire and the perspective that captures what literacy means in the 21st century enables the formulation of instruments used in the central aspect of the thesis and reported upon in the following two chapters 6 and 7.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

As stated in chapter 1, this study aims to explore the relationship between teachers' philosophies and practices in literacy teaching in rural primary schools in South Africa. This chapter describes the research design and methodology employed in this investigation. First, meta-theoretical issues are discussed. Then, the theoretical approaches to research that underpin the study are examined. Third, the research design is mapped out with a clear outline of the processes of sampling, data collection, and analysis.

5.2 Metatheory

In section 4.3 above it stated that metatheory is concerned with the "investigation, analysis or description of the theory itself and refers to underlying beliefs which produce or generate a particular approach to research" (Figueroa, 1994:4). In this chapter as promised in section 4.3 that the issue of metatheory as well as the general features of the two major metatheories, namely: positivism and phenomenology will be illustrated and discussed in full.

Generally, there are three dominant metatheories within which social research can be located, namely positivism, phenomenology and critical theory (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:20). Historically, the two dominant metatheories have been positivism and phenomenology (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, and 2007:7). In general, each metatheory has "a coexistent or complementary methodological paradigm associated with it; a quantitative approach has been associated more with the positivist approach; a qualitative approach more with phenomenology; and action research with critical theory" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:49). The table below illustrates the general features of the two major metatheories:

Table 5.1: Key Features of the two main paradigms (adapted from Altinay and Paraskevas, 2008).

Key Areas	Positivism	Phenomenology
Basic Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The world is external and objective • The observer is independent • Science is value-free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The world is socially constructed and subjective • The researcher is part of what is observed • Science is driven by human interest
Methods of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on facts • Look for causality and fundamental laws • Reduce phenomena to simple elements • Formulate hypotheses and test them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on meanings • Try to understand what is happening • Look at the totality of each situation • Develop ideas through induction from data
Research design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Structured, formal and specific detailed plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Evolving and flexible
Involvement of the researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher remains distanced from the material being researched • Short-term contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher gets involved with the phenomena being researched • Long-term contact; emphasis on trust and empathy
Preferred methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Operationalization of concepts so that they can be measured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Use of multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena
Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Large samples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Small samples investigated in-depth or overtime
Data collection methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Experiments, surveys, structured interviews and observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Observations, documentations, open-ended and semi-structured interviews

Research instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Questionnaires, scales, test scores and experimentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Researcher
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Provides wide coverage of the range of situations Greater opportunity for the researcher to retain control of the research process □ Clarity about what is to be investigated, therefore data collection can be fast and economical □ Helps to generalise previous research findings and tests previously developed hypotheses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Ability to look at change processes over time A greater understanding of people's meanings Adjustment to new issues and ideas as they emerge □ Contributes to the evolution of new theories □ Provides a way of gathering data which is natural rather than artificial
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Methods tend to be rather inflexible and artificial □ Not effective in understanding processes or the significance that people attach to actions □ Not helpful in generating theories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Data collection takes a great deal of time and resources The difficulty of analysis of data Harder for the researcher to control the research process Reliability problem with findings
(Altinay <i>et al.</i> , 2008:70-71)		

This research comprises a phenomenological study which is best suited to research that seeks to explore and understand peoples' perceptions and experiences of a particular phenomenon (Delpont & Fouche, 2002:268). Teachers' articulations of their teaching often fall within the tradition of phenomenology because the researcher intends to investigate what beliefs, prejudices, political bias and social experience lie behind the practices and thoughts of how these selected teachers teach literacy in Grade 3 classrooms. Fundamental to a phenomenological approach is the belief or principle that individuals are continuously involved in 'making sense of their world' (Babbie & Mouton, 2011:28). As argued by Collis and Hussey (1997:53), "a phenomenological study aims to

understand human behaviour from a respondent's frame of reference". In this instance, the thoughts that teachers share about how they conduct the activity of teaching could be regarded as a significant action in the understanding of their teaching environment as well as in endorsing new strategies that suit their learners in their everyday teaching activities in real school environments. Identifying teachers' beliefs and thinking, referred to as teachers' philosophies in the study, about teaching literacy is central to the research goal of this project.

5.3 Case Study Research Design

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:31) describe research design as the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer the research questions. The design describes procedures for conducting the study; including when and from whom and under what conditions data are obtained (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:20). (Babbie, 2007:112) state that:

A research design involves a set of decisions regarding what topic is to be studied among what population with what research methods for what purpose ...Research design is the process of focusing your perspective for the purposes of a particular study.

(Babbie 2007:112).

This qualitative study identifies analyses and interrogates what philosophical assumptions underlie the teaching and learning of literacy. For this project, a case study design has been implemented. A case study entails studying one case or a collection of cases "for learning more about a little known or poorly understood observational situation or social phenomenon" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The term 'case study' "has to do with the fact that a limited number of units of analysis, often only one, such as an individual, group or an institution, are studied intensively" (Welman & Kruger, 2001:190 in White, 2005:105). White (2005:105) explains that:

The researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon bound by time and activity such as a programme, event, process, institution, social group and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time.

(White, 2005:105).

In this study, I sought to explore the opinions and beliefs of teachers around teaching and learning of literacy. A case study is a relevant design because it provides latitude to focus on an individual or group in a school setting which manifests characteristics of the main interest in teaching and learning of literacy. In this instance, my case study consists of Grade 3 teachers who, by being in the Foundation Phase (FP), teach literacy as a key component of the FP curriculum. This is the same component for which I collected data.

5.4 Sampling

Sampling involves a selection of “a portion or a smaller number of units of a population as representative or having particular characteristics of that total population” (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011:223). According to White (2005:114), a researcher makes a selection from the sampling frame to identify the individuals or “issues to be included in the research”. Qualitative research sampling is used to deepen understanding about an issue or a relation, complex situation or event and not necessarily to be representative. Selection of a case or cases focuses on the relevance of the case(s) to the research problem. In this instance, the case consists of a group of eight selected teachers who teach literacy at five rural primary schools. The researcher uses a purposive sampling technique from a population of five schools in the George district of the Cape Province, South Africa. Teaching literacy in rural primary schools drove the sample selection. Eight teachers recruited from five schools participated in interviews, teaching observations and written reflections. All the Foundation Phase grades (R-3) at the participating schools are represented by two or three teachers. These teachers taught between 0-5 up to 11-15 years in Grade 3. Three teachers are from Coloured schools (Quintile 3 which refers to poor schools) where Afrikaans is the medium of instruction or teaching and learning. They teach both Afrikaans and English. Two teachers are from IsiXhosa speaking schools (Quintile 3) and three other schools are from the Former Model C schools (Quintile 5: well funded and with rich backgrounds or environment) one White English school with English culture and two White Afrikaans schools with Afrikaans culture. A good example to explain this disparity is that of Sriprakash (2013:326) who states that South Africa, like India, is experiencing “a

bifurcation between underfunded fee-free rural schools and English medium, fee-paying, capitalist, middle-class schools in urban areas". Sriprakash (2013:326) expresses concern about "differences between schools in cities and rural areas; in terms of class structures, capitalism and politics in education in modern India".

It should be noted that although this number might appear a small sample, methods of data collection and analysis used generated rich evidence in terms of the research questions.

5.5 Data Collection Methods

Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013:182) emphasize the importance of obtaining reliable data. They further state that "a research study stands or falls by the reliability and verifiability of the data on which it is established or constructed". Since this is a qualitative study, "quality is maintained and established through the researchers' ability to generate understanding and therefore making findings and the process dependable" (Golafshani, 2003:600). Whereas to a quantitative researcher quality "relies heavily on statistical verifiability, qualitative research relies on other strategies to ensure the quality of both the process and product of research". The issues are described in section 5.7 below. An outstanding research design and a fully representative sample are not of themselves adequate to warrant reliable outcomes if the analysis leans towards, or depends upon biased, incomplete or poorly interpreted data. Excellent results of an analysis of a research study "rest on the bedrock of reliable data".

Altinay and Paraskevas (2008:107) advocate that there is "a variety of data collection strategies accessible or at hand for a researcher to use in fulfilling the requirements of his or her research". One technique may be more appropriate for a particular research than another. The appropriateness of various data collection techniques to the aim and objectives of particular research needs to be considered.

Of particular interest in this study was to produce data that could foster an understanding of the phenomenon of teachers' philosophies on the teaching of literacy. Guided reflection

suggested by Kwenda, Adendorff and Mosito (2017) was adopted as a framing strategy during the data collection process. For each method of data collection used, teacher thinking and responses were guided through a series of questions at different schools within the district of the Western Cape at rural schools in George; with special reference to Grade 3 teachers. The data were obtained by using a judicious combination of three main methods: one-on-one semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and a teachers' reflective journal.

5.5.1 One-on-one semi-structured interviews

Palmerino (2006) points to the following qualities of one-on-one interviews in qualitative research: (i) they can dig deep into issues (ii) in-depth one-on-one interviews, administered through various media provide immense value (iii) they can expose the best thinking of every participant or respondent without the withdraws or retracts of group dynamics (iv) good or bad ideas from one participant do not dominate or affect the thoughts of any other participant; this alone enhances the quality of the information acquired and (v) they evoke the whys behind participants' reactions.

One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the socio-political assumptions that lay behind how teachers taught literacy. The questions guiding the interviews were as follows:

Question 1: How long have you been teaching in this grade in particular? Please explain your experiences during this period.

Question 2: What does literacy mean to you?

Question 3: What do you think it means to be a literacy teacher?

Question 4: How do you teach literacy?

Question 5: Explain how you decide on topics and themes for teaching, e.g. reading, writing, speaking and listening?

Question 6: What informs your choice of teaching methods and strategies?

Question 7: What method do you follow as a literacy teacher?

Question 8: How do you incorporate these teaching methods and strategies into your own daily teaching style?

Question 9: How do you describe the literacy level of Grade 3 learners?

Question 10: Do you and other teachers share the teaching roles at the school? Please explain your reason.

Interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder to ensure that the researcher captured all the participants' responses. Participants responded to a set of questions which were purposefully designed, considered and adapted in advance. Using semi-structured interviews strikes a balance between broad research which depends largely upon unstructured interviews and a structured descriptive or interpretive approach. It was of pivotal importance to develop a set of trenchant and probing questions in advance (Bless *et al.*, 2013:113).

5.5.2 Classroom observations

Henning (2008:7) argues that observation should be regarded as collecting or gathering data and involvement in the actions of participants in the research environment and getting to know their ways of doing things differently. Bless *et al.*, (2013:117) explain that juxtaposed or contrasted with other data collection techniques, observation presents rich, comprehensive "context-specific descriptions, which are close to the insider's perspective". Observation complements "other research methods, conducted in parallel, stimulates theoretical development, prompts initiatives for further research, and assists in validating available findings" (Bless *et al.*, 2013).

In this study, classroom observations were recorded and videoed. The main aim was to examine and interrogate alignment between teachers' responses in interviews and what they do as they teach: to cross-check the extent to which their practices reflect opinions shared during interviews. During the observation, the camera followed everything that the teacher and the learners were doing. To make sense of this data, a post video collection

entailed recording on a table shown below the second step of video data collection which enabled the analysis procedure described in section 5.6.5 below.

Table 5.2: Video Data Collection schedule

LESSON FOCUS	Lesson duration	Time chunks	Tallying teacher actions	Tallying learner action

5.6 Procedure

5.6.1 Ethical considerations

Ethics by definition “are generally considered to deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad” (White, 2005:210). The researcher “is responsible for the ethical standards to which the study adheres” (White, 2005:210). Ethical considerations are critical in any research; more so when researchers are “attending to, inquiring into and representing participants’ experiences” (Clandinin *et al.*, 2010:88).

Before commencing with data collection, I strictly followed the ethical guidelines of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). First, a proposal was submitted to the Faculty Research Committee (FRC) to determine the logic and relevance of the proposed study. Once the FRC approved the study, an application for ethical clearance was sent to the Faculty Ethics Committee who determined whether the study complied with ethical stipulations. Among other considerations, the researcher should ensure that the participants’ privacy is not invaded and that no harm is posed to participants; who were informed that the research was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. Before they participated in interviews, clear and accurate information about the research was provided. They were required to complete consent forms.

Once the study was ethically cleared by the university, the next stage of ethical clearance involved seeking permission from the Western Cape Education Department to solicit the participation of schools and teachers in the study. When schools were approached and principals had given permission and identified the relevant sample of teachers in FP, participants were assured that the information provided by them would not be disclosed in any form other than within the context of the research and that their identities would remain confidential. Permission to make use of a tape recorder and video camera was sought from the participants before the interviews and lesson observations, respectively.

An application form to the WCED to research selected public primary schools within the Western Cape is attached as **Annexure A**. An approval letter from the WCED to conduct the research is attached as **Annexure B**. The ethical clearance consent form is attached as **Annexure C**. The consent letter to educators is attached as **Annexure D**. An instrument for one-on-one, semi-structured interviews is attached as **Annexure E**. Classroom observations instrument is attached as **Annexure F**. Teachers' reflective diary guide is attached as **Annexure G**. **Annexure H** reproduces transcripts of interviews.

5.6.2 Setting up and conducting the interviews

Although interviews are a significant part of this research project, they cannot of themselves form the basis for all data: Cohen *et al.* (2007:361) caution us that interviews are data collection exercises as well as "social interpersonal encounters" forming "part of life itself" (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:349). I, therefore, prepared carefully for each one-on-one, semi-structured interview and followed a precise structure to ensure that all logistical and ethical requirements were met.

Once participants had agreed to the interviews, time-tables for interviews were adhered to. I arrived on time at different schools for each one-on-one, semi-structured interview. After the formalities of greeting participants at different schools, I thanked each one for agreeing to be part of the interview process. Participants were requested to feel comfortable and ask questions about the procedure and its purpose. I informed them that

interviews could be seen as conversations about their experiences. I explained the objective of the research, the nature of the interview, and went through the consent letter with each participant. I informed them that interviews would be recorded for each one-on-one interview and that I needed to obtain their informed consent to participate in the interview. Once they agreed and comfortable with the process, they signed the consent form. An audio-recording machine was switched on for each one-on-one interview conducted.

All interviews were conducted in English but some participants switched from English to Afrikaans or isiXhosa; depending upon the language spoken by the interviewee; so I was obliged to pose some of the questions in three languages. I am fluent in all the languages spoken in the Western Cape: English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa and experienced no difficulty with the code-switching entailed.

The order of the questions was followed per the schedule; except when participants preferred to deal with two closely related questions at one time. I probed many of the responses which generated further answers and questions. This process differed from respondent to respondent. Generally, interviews with participants lasted between 35 to 45 minutes; depending on the respondent because some tended to explain at length, while others were brief. Data collection commenced in March 2016 and ended in August 2016.

5.6.3 Data processing and analysis

Keeping in mind that “data analysis of qualitative data takes place simultaneously with data collection, the first step in data analysis is managing data so that can be studied” objectively and studiously (White, 2005:186). Management of data in this study entailed:

- (i) Listening to interviews, watching videos and reading the reflective journals to get a general view of the raw data.
- (ii) Transcribing audio interviews and video data into a readable text.
- (iii) Familiarising myself with the transcriptions and the first interpretation of reflections to identify emerging themes (reading);

- (iv) Examining the emerging themes in-depth to seek understanding of what could be participants philosophies on teaching and learning of literacy in Chapter 6;
- (v) (v) Categorizing further themes that can be probed with the study questions (Classifying in Chapters 6 and 7); “Interpreting and synthesizing organized data into general conclusions or understandings” (interpreting in Chapter 7).

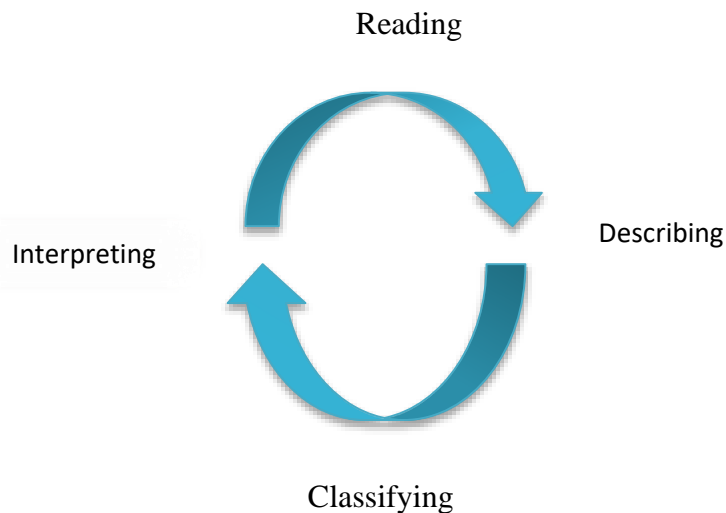


Figure 5.1: The cyclical process of data analysis (adapted from White, 2005)

The cyclical process of data analysis in figure 5.1 focuses on:

- (i) becoming familiar with the data and identifying the main themes in it (**Reading**);
- (ii) examining the data in depth to provide detailed descriptions of the setting, participants and activities (**Describing**);
- (iii) categorizing and coding pieces of data and physically grouping them into themes (**Classification**);
- (iv) interpreting and synthesizing the organized data into general conclusions or understandings (**Interpretation**).

The section that follows records how patterns emerged which were particularly germane to the topic of this investigation. Certain distinct patterns became manifest from the data

and illuminated the research topic in both predictable and unexpected ways (Bless *et al.*, 2013: 167).

Before data are analysed, such information needs to be transformed “into a form appropriate to manipulation and analysis” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:98). After interviews, data were downloaded onto a computer and sent via e-mail to transcribers for transcription. The eight recordings took about three months to be transcribed fully and accurately. Analysis of data from one-on-one, semi-structured interviews was transcribed from taperecordings and then analysed. Each transcription was read from start to finish. At the first level, various themes were highlighted using different colours. These themes were then tabulated for all the transcriptions. Themes were categorised into main themes. I then explored relations and overlapping between themes.

5.6.3.1 Analysis of interviews

In this study, the post-data collection analysis commenced with reading the transcribed responses of the participants across one question and recording them. Transcripts were read to embark on both vertical and horizontal understandings of the data. In chapter 6, the presentation of teachers’ responses went through a series of analyses following Neuman’s paradigm (2014:179) for first- and second-order analysis in Chapter 6. The philosophies of teachers reflected in interviews comprised first-order interpretation (*ibid.*) while the researcher’s perspective of such philosophies may be regarded as second-order interpretation. Third-order interpretation links second-order interpretation to theory and this occurs in the last chapter where the theories about teaching literacy are traced from earlier levels of interpretation; mainly from chapter 6 and the literature review chapters.



Horizontally, the interested was in responses from different participants to the same question. Vertically, the researcher sought to establish cohesiveness in responses to the last question which would give me a sequenced and coherent understanding of teachers’ philosophies. Constant comparative analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) was employed according to the following tables:

Table 5.3: Analysis of the nature of the ten interview questions

Questions	Nature of data question sought	Category in line with the model
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In Table 5.4 below the questions are further probed in terms of the number of times a particular teacher philosophy dimension was explored.

Table 5.4: A summary of interview questions

Analytic Categories 	1. Reflections on <u>what</u> guides what they teach (curriculum)	2. Reflections on <u>how</u> they teach	3. Beliefs they hold about the <u>subject</u> (literacy) (Self in relation to the curriculum)	4. Beliefs they hold about their <u>learners</u>
Interview questions 	1, 2,3,	4, 6,7,8,10	5,	9

5.6.3.2 Second-level analysis: responses to the interview questions

The table below indicates various ways in which interview questions were responded to.

Table 5.5: Initial count of findings per question

Question	Crucial findings	Crucial findings	A probe of findings using the analytic model
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From Table 5.5, it is clear that teachers responded to the interview questions in various ways indicated in chapter 6. New data were produced following the probing of what I call

crucial findings per question using analytic categories from the analysis model. This new data is what I turn to below in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Second reading of findings

What guides what they teach (curriculum)? (1)	What guides <u>how</u> they teach? (2)	What beliefs do they hold about the <u>subject</u> (literacy)? (3)	What beliefs they hold about their <u>learners</u> ? (4)
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In Table 5.6 as stated in the foregoing paragraph the analysis of teachers’ responses went through a series of qualitative analyses following Neuman’s paradigm (2014:179) for first and second order analysis in Chapter six. The philosophies of teachers reflected in interviews comprised first-order interpretation (*ibid.*) while the researcher’s perspective of such philosophies may be regarded as second-order interpretation. Third-order interpretation links second-order interpretation to theory and this occurs in the last chapter where larger theories about teaching literacy are traced from earlier levels of interpretation; mainly from chapter six and the literature review chapters.

First-order interpretation: Interpretations from the point of view of the people being studied.

Second-order interpretation: Qualitative interpretations from the point of view of the researcher who conducted the study.

Third-order interpretation: Qualitative interpretations made by the readers of a research (Neuman: 2014: 179).

In this study, the post-data collection analysis commenced with reading the transcribed responses of the participants across one question and recording the oral reflection. Transcripts were read in order to embark on both vertical and horizontal understandings of the data. Horizontally, I was interested in responses from different participants to the same question. Vertically, I sought to establish cohesiveness in responses to the first to the last question which would give me a logical picture of teachers’ philosophies.

In Table 5.1 to Table 5.6, I have analysed the interviews and generated new data based on the following categories or themes. These themes are dealt with in chapter 6 and the concluding chapter 7.

1. Beliefs that guide what teachers teach
2. Beliefs that guide how teachers teach
3. Beliefs teachers hold about literacy acquisition
4. Beliefs that teachers hold about the learners they teach

5.6.3.3 Analysis of observations

Observations were examined and interrogated to detect such alignment or misalignment between what teachers say and do as they teach. The data were analysed by adapting an analytic model used for making sense of the classroom observations in Mosito (1999) in which guiding questions for video-taped classroom observations were:

- (i) What is the teacher doing?
- (ii) What is the learner doing?

Below is an observation schedule that was used for making sense of the classroom observations found in chapter 6.

Table 5.7: Observation schedule

LESSON FOCUS	Lesson duration	Time chunks	Tallying actions	teacher	Tallying learner action
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5.7 Quality and Trustworthiness of the research process and product

As mentioned earlier, producing reliable data that leads to an understanding of the phenomenon under study is central to qualitative research. In this study, several strategies of quality assurance were implemented. These are the (i) role of the researcher as an instrument, (ii) triangulation (iii) Piloting or testing the instruments and methods (Maxwell, 2013; 2008 & Golafshani, 2003).

5.7.1 The researcher as an instrument of research

Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2003:418) state that during data collection by any of the three primary methods of data collection described above, the notion of the researcher as the instrument of data collection was equally important. Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2003) point out that since the researcher is the person collecting, analysing and interpreting the data, she or he can be the 'Achilles heel' of the research project. Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2003:418) draw upon the work of other researchers such as Lincoln & Guba (1985) concerning strategies to maintain trustworthiness and the credibility of the research study. This interdependence of strategies will be discussed later in this chapter. Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2003) refer to strategies such as triangulation, reflexivity and peer review methods as means to counter the threats posed by the vagaries of researchers themselves.

5.7.2 Credibility and Trustworthiness

Maxwell (2008; 2013) describes researcher bias and reactivity as two specific threats to the validity and reliability of the qualitative study. Maxwell refers to the standards of rigour in a qualitative study: dependability, credibility, transferability and conformability. These are key factors in ensuring credibility and trustworthiness of research projects in this area (Maxwell, 2013 and 2008).

To test the instruments and methods once they had been developed, I pilot-tested the topic with a small sample of three teachers who were not part of the main study sample. The pilot group established whether the instruments were appropriate for the study or needed adjustments to help improve and meet their purpose (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 1998; Nunes, Martins, Zhou, Alajamy & Al-Mamari, 2010). This foundational knowledge helped to refine any ambiguous questions or ambiguities of phrasing in the questions set preliminarily.

According to De Vos *et al.* (2005:331), in qualitative research "the pilot study is usually informal; a few participants possess the same characteristics as those of the main

investigation”. A pilot study is usually conducted tentatively to ascertain trends and the feasibility of the project. The purpose “is to determine whether the relevant data can be obtained from the participants”.

In this study, a pre-interview was conducted with three teachers at rural schools in the Foundation Phase. The pre-interview enabled me to test the interview questions and rephrase questions that were unclear or ineffective. The time spent on the qualitative pilot study enabled me to be aware of the duration for each interview: this information is crucial in scheduling interviews with participants in the formal investigation.

5.7.3 Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the process by which the researcher uses more than one method or technique in the same study; contributing directly to the trustworthiness and credibility of the data as well as insights gained (Collis & Hussey, 1997:78; De Vos, 2002: 341). This use of more than one technique enables the researcher to explore a phenomenon from more than one angle; enhancing the richness of the data (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:141). Lincoln and Guba (1985:283) state that: “No single item of information (unless coming from an elite and unimpeachable source) should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated”.

For several researchers, “triangulation means cross-validity among data sources. The inclusion of multiple sources of data collection in a research project is likely to increase the reliability of the observations” (Mouton, 1998:156). I used triangulation as a means to establish validity and reliability in qualitative research as well as to increase confidence in my findings. In this study, I used data triangulation that was of relevance to the focus of the investigation. According to De Vos (2000:359), triangulation refers to “data sources such as oneself, informants, interviews, observations and documents”. I gathered information through the use of a variety of sources to ensure that a theory is tested in more than one way; as portrayed in **Figure 5.2** below.

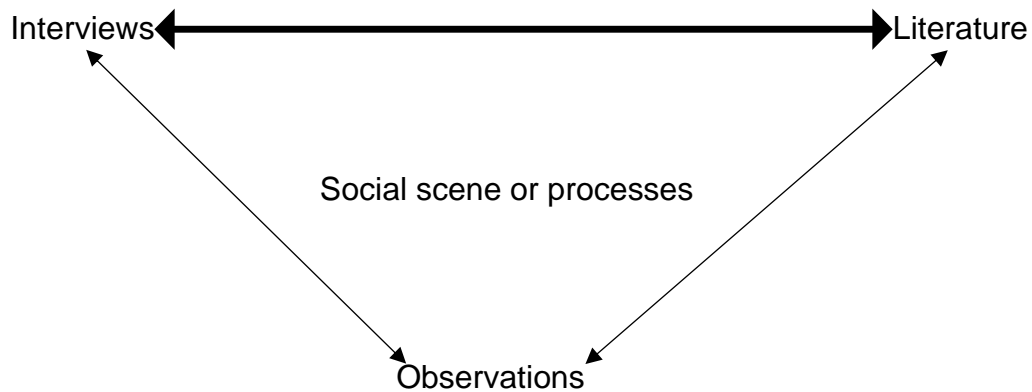


Figure 5.2: Data triangulation in qualitative research (adapted from McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:521).

In this study figure 5.2 indicates that (McMillan and Schumacher (1997) trustworthiness was promoted or effected through two sets of data collected from teachers' interviews, and observations.

In line with the techniques described above, this study complied with the requirements for credibility and trustworthiness; as evidenced by the following activities:

Credibility: Credibility was enhanced through triangulation of data sources. For example, each audio recording was individually transcribed by independent transcription experts. During the process of data analysis, all transcriptions were read and quotations were often cited directly from transcriptions. The reflective journal was used to record teachers' thoughts. Following each lesson, observed, teachers were requested to reflect upon what transpired during the lesson. Before each observation, teachers were requested to provide a short description of what they would be teaching, why they would be teaching it and how it would be taught. During this phase of reflection, the researcher and each teacher went over the questions again; responding to what transpired during a lesson, exactly what they said during the interviews and what they practise in the classroom.

5.8 Conclusion

This particular chapter describes the research design and methodology employed in this investigation. First, meta-theoretical issues, which are central to the research topic of this investigation; are discussed and they are positivism and phenomenology. Second, various theoretical approaches to research that underpin the study are examined. Third, the research design is mapped out with a clear outline of the processes of sampling, data collection and analysis. Fourth, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations as the instrument to collect the data are explained. Finally, the analysis of data is demonstrated.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The aim of chapter 6 and 7 is to seek to answer and address more specifically the main questions that are posed at the beginning of this study. The questions are:

- *What are Grade 3 teachers' philosophies on literacy?*
- *How do Grade 3 teachers of literacy apply such philosophies in the teaching and learning of literacy at rural primary schools?*

The sub-questions in chapter 1 were developed to help align the various variables of the research to the central aim.

This chapter focuses on the presentation of data and findings from qualitative data collected for this research investigation. Data gleaned from semi-structured, one-on-one interviews held with eight Foundation Phase teachers who participated in this study, as well as findings on their video-taped teaching practices. Through interviews, several aspects of the participating experiences of teaching literacy at the Foundation Phase were explored. Classroom observations of the teachers were carried out to cross-check the extent to which their practices reflected opinions shared during interviews: this comparative analysis is presented.

The results are presented in line with the characteristics of teachers' philosophies outlined and contextualised in chapters two and three. Participating teachers' philosophies emerged in terms of four themes below derived from different dimensions of the model that was born out of the review of literature on teachers' philosophies on literacy teaching in Chapter 3. These dimensions represent an explanation of teachers' beliefs on:

- (1) what guides **what** they teach,
- (2) what guides **how** they teach,

- (3) the beliefs they hold **about literacy and teaching of literacy**, and
- (4) on the beliefs they hold **about those they teach (Learners)**.

6.2 Findings

The analysis below sets out findings from the two primary sources of data mentioned above, namely:

- (i) semi-structured, one-on-one interviews, and
- (ii) classroom-video observations

6.2.1 Level 1 analysis: Four dimensions of the model

The proposed model in 6.1 as depicted in chapter 3 section 3.2.1 presents four elements or dimensions of 'thinking-doing' prerequisites. To avoid repetition here the presentation that could have been under each of the following dimensions below are done in section 6.2.2 Level 2 analysis: qualitative reading of ten interview questions (from transcript) and discussion in chapter 7 including literature. I will always refer to section 6.2.2 to avoid unnecessary repetition of excerpts or passages.

6.2.1.1 Dimensions 1 and 2 inclusive: First, in dimension 1 teachers were asked: What guides what they teach? (The answer is in Question 5 of the transcript below. In dimension 2 teachers were asked: What guides how they teach. The answers are in questions 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10. All are presented in section 6.2.2 below and discussed in chapter 7 with literature).

6.2.1.2 Dimensions 3 and 4 inclusive:

First, in dimension 3 teachers were asked: What beliefs they hold about the subject literacy and acquisition? Answers are in questions 2 and 3 in the transcript below. In dimension 4 teachers were asked about the beliefs they hold about those they teach. Question was: How do you describe the literacy level of the grade 3 learners? The answer is in Question 9 in the transcript below.

To get a sense of the views that teachers in this study have about how they teach literacy, the following questions that give access to teachers' philosophies on how they teach were asked (Tables 5.4 questions 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10):

Question 4: How do you teach literacy?

Question 6: What informs your choice of teaching methods and strategies?

Question 7: What method do you follow as a literacy teacher?

Question 8: How do you incorporate these teaching methods and strategies into your own daily teaching style?

Question 10: Do you and other teachers share the teaching roles at the school? Please explain your reason.

These questions are further discussed in the concluding chapter (Chapter 7) in relation to the literature and theory explicated in chapter 2, 3 and 4. Below is the presentation and findings of qualitative reading of ten interview questions (from the transcript).

6.2.2 Level 2 analysis: qualitative reading of interviews (from transcript ANNEXURE H)

Question 1: How long have you been teaching in this grade in particular? Please explain your experiences during this period.

Teachers participating in this investigation taught between 0-5 up to 11-15 years in Grade 3. During the periods in which they taught, Grade 3 teachers indicated diverse experiences based largely upon the kinds of schools (former Model C⁸ or Quintile 3) at which they taught rather than the length of their service in the teaching profession.

Teachers in this category at Quintile 3 schools asserted that the chief difficulty that they encountered during teaching was that of language; and after that, the challenge of mixed cultures. The medium of instruction at these Quintile 3 schools was either isiXhosa or Afrikaans but, in practice, comprises a mixture of amaXhosa and so-called Coloured

⁸ Model C refers to semi-private Whites only government schools pre-1994 in South Africa. The term is still commonly used to describe former whites-only government schools even though this categorisation of schools is no longer applicable.

patois. Some Somalian refugee children were present. So Voice 028 in the interviews stated that:

We have a difficulty in our learners because they are struggling...especially in literacy...because at home they are speaking Afrikaans others and most of them now we have these foreigners ...from Burundi ... they are not used to the language...

They explained that the mixtures of languages and cultures created a substantial difficulty for teachers who attempted to apply their philosophies in improving literacy performance. Some learners were still at grade 1 level generally which means learners who could not read, write and had no vocabulary; while those who were at grade 2 literacy levels were learners who struggled to read, write and had limited vocabulary. The learners at grade 3 level were few and were drawn from comparatively literate homes where they had easy and frequent access to books, social media and the internet.

Other teachers who have taught for 11-15 years in Quintile 3 schools often have learners from other home language backgrounds who were struggling. Teachers have found many of these learners lacking the vocabulary needed to ask questions formulate answers and collaborate freely in class. Such learners often struggled to spell and write. The teachers had to prepare considerably to overcome this problem.

Two teachers from the affluent former Model C schools (Quintile 5) included in this sample, both with 15 years of teaching, explained that learners at their schools were privileged. They stated that the school had all the learning resources, classrooms, apparatus and secondary material they needed as well as well-qualified teachers. Their literacy levels were adequate; yet not better than 15 years previously.

Voice 020 stated that:

um look we're fortunate at this school, our children are very privileged so they come from fairly literate homes where they're exposed to books um on a regular basis but at the same time I still find that there is not enough reading at home I think...Um and nowadays with technology the way it is, they get electronic gadgets for gifts instead of books, as we're used to as

children, we always received books. So yeah I think that all plays a part in general literacy.

Although she taught 2 years at the school (Quintile 5 Ex-Model C school), she had taught for many more years in other counties. Voice 20 stated that: “I still find that there is not enough reading at home. I think”. This teacher claims families are too busy and that there are too many electronic gadgets.

Voice 002 confirmed that she found “things like nursery rhymes don’t get taught to the children anymore at home”.

Voice 002 from Former Model C further stated that:

I’ve taught, I can’t tell you exactly, I would say it’s in excess of 13 years I’ve been in that classroom, uh in grade 3. Uh you want my experience teaching there... specifically with language. [Yes, Literacy specifically]. I would say um, I would say that over the years um, initially I would say there was a very high level of expertise in the language. What we have been finding over the last, I would say four or five years is that um children are, we’re experiencing more children with learning barriers to learning. Um we are finding that we are teaching children who come from other home language backgrounds which is sometimes a problem. Um and so we are having to address more and more um learning barriers with regard to language. Learners lack vocabulary Um things like uh uh vocabulary. A lot of the children don’t have the necessary vocabulary to understand. What I’ve noticed too is that things like nursery rhymes um don’t get taught to the children anymore at home. The parents don’t teach them these things that we grew up with. If you think I’m being teaching for 30 years so I grew up with nursery rhymes you know,

Voice 004 explained she had taught for thirty years. This teacher emphasised the importance of rhyme and stimulation of the auditory sense to make up for a contemporary culture that lacked such factors.

Voice 004 from Former Model C explained that:

If you think I'm being teaching for 30 years so I grew up with nursery rhymes you know, no tv... um yes so things like rhyming becomed very important exercises in the grade 3 class. With the 3rd term now there's more emphasis on poetry but I also emphasize a lot on the rhyming of words. Because a lot of children don't have the auditory perception to pick up rhyming and they find it very difficult to write rhymes. Um so rhyming for me is a very important aspect as is poetry, you know children need to learn to express, some children read very softly so one has to really hone in on audibility when they're reading and fluency.

Voice 31 has similarly been teaching for '+- 20 years' and developed her system of dividing her grade 3 class into ability groupings in the class. She claimed her experience alone enabled her to do this. Her first instinct was to know her learners before she committed to a teaching strategy.

Voice 31 stated that:

My teaching experience is +/- 20 years from now, the whole phase, foundation phase, but in Grade 3 I think I've got +/- 10 years. The first time I came here I taught Grade 3 and I'm still in Grade 3 even right now. The experience I got there is that when I came here in Grade 3, I experienced that the learners, I had to divide my learners into three groups. In my class I had Grade 1,2,3 in the same class, because I found out that they can't write, they can't read, they can't even form some words. So I had to make an intervention that I had to divide them into these groups Grade 1, 2 and 3. I had to go back to Grade 1 work, Grade 2 work until I got to Grade 3 work. It was a very difficult experience, in fact it still do, even right now coz it's still happening.

Question 2: What does literacy mean to you?

There was a wide range of interpretations of what literacy means. Some regarded it as control of a language; while others appreciated that literacy comprises a general ability to read or comprehend phenomena in a social context.

Voice 031:

Literacy means to me that the kids should be able to read, to know what they read, and to understand what they read. And they must be able to write. The three go hand in hand.

Voice 004:

Well it means communication. That for me is the most important thing that a child is able to communicate effectively... give the child tools with which to communicate effectively.

Voice 002:

Well it's understanding, so in terms of English it's understanding anything, it's understanding conversation, it's general vocabulary, you know knowledge of words, it's being able to read obviously...to read and understand...you know literacy affects every subject...

To the teacher, literacy means understanding everything, understanding conversation, to have a general vocabulary, to be able to read, not only to read but also to comprehend what you have read. Literacy is the foundation for everything we do.

Voice 008:

To me all the components that gets put together to make a language um...if it's Afrikaans or either English. It is everything that comes together to give the broader picture of what this subject or language is about.

This teacher regards it in terms of all components of language: Literacy means all components that constitute a language, for example, verbs, adjectives, nouns and pronouns. Reading, writing sentences and pronunciation is necessary for literacy.

Some teachers participating in this investigation asserted that literacy meant the ability to read, speak, write, comprehend, communicate with others and gain vocabulary. One teacher stated that literacy meant encompassing all the grammatical components that constitute a language; such as verbs, adjectives, nouns and pronouns; reading, writing sentences and pronunciation.

Another teacher believed that literacy denoted personal history, upbringing, mathematics, life skills, language, reading, and writing, speaking and understanding.

Question 3: What do you think it means to be a literacy teacher?

Some teachers stated that a literacy teacher is someone who makes learning fun, is creative and passionate about what he or she teaches, and provides learners with tools for mastering all aspects of the language: “reading, writing, understanding and speaking” including helping learners to master different forms of literacy register: academic expression versus social network idiom and other different, useful conventions of writing.

Voice 002 believed that as a literacy teacher:

...Well it's to bring the children to that level of understanding that they need at their age obviously, age appropriate, to be able to grasp anything that they're doing... A literacy teacher has got a very broad range to cover.

Voice 004 ascertained that as a literacy teacher:

I think you should be creative, you should think out of the box, you have to try and spread your wings...you have to try and use every type of media and magazine and book and type of literature that is available to broaden their experience, umm yeah. Yeah and obviously you have to inspire the children.

Voice 006 explained that:

Um you must have a passion... for teaching and then for literacy itself. They don't wanna hear this boring stuff...So you have to make it m entertaining for them so that they can go back and remember what you taught them... So you must be creative and passionate about what you teaching for them to be able to grasp.

Voice 020 explained broadly what it means to be a literacy teacher:

(i) Make learning fun so that learners can understand the language. (ii) Teacher must give learners tools: (a) to master the language and understand they can speak it correctly, (b) he must be able to read and understand what he reads because this opens other doors for him, (c) he must also be able to write it because you must be able to express yourself. In life today with social media, with whatsapp and sms the kids can't write anymore. They write abbreviated language, so you must assist/help them to get their language structure right in order to write something good in Afrikaans or English. He must be able to understand the rules of his language because in the end that is what we are proud of. We are in an Afrikaans school so we are proud of Afrikaans, we must be able to speak it properly. So you must be able to give him that love for his language so that he can apply it correctly because that opens doors. A child that can't read and write, later on won't be able to... won't be able to do maths, they struggle to complete question papers and they must be proud of their language.

Question 4: How do you teach literacy?

As stated in the dimensions above some teachers stated that they taught literacy through reading stories and comprehension. The whole class read with them or they divided a single class into groups with group leaders. They read to the teacher while listening to them: they listened to the teacher reading to them. They demonstrated to learners the correct way of reading with expression, fluency and emphasis on punctuation. One teacher from a Quintile 5 school indicated that she taught the way she was taught then. However, they gave different beliefs or philosophies of how they taught literacy as stated in the dimensions above, for example:

Voice 009 remarked that:

I um for me um I go about the way I was taught at school...like pictures and different colours and um bigger words and then smaller words so that everything doesn't look the same.

Voice 002 said that:

...the children read to me with their group readers, um each child gets a turn to read pages...then we do group reading...um then there is listening to myself reading...

Voice 020 stated that

We...we make it fun for them. We join in on the planning but we have a basic framework and I think that also joins in by the planning...you have listening activities that they are to listen for, or a games...talking activities where you break the language development, their language knowledge and their vocabulary knowledge because a lot of kids vocabulary is very limited.

Voice 004 responded by saying:

How do I teach literacy? Well you know you've got all your aspects of literacy, you got your oral work, you got your phonic work, you got your creative writing, your handwriting, your grammar and um your reading of course. So all these aspects when you look at it as a whole, work together to um give the child all these things that they need...You have to look at the child's strengths and weaknesses and build on the strength and try and build up on the weaknesses.

When it came to comprehension, reading was followed by questions; both closed and open-ended questions and re-telling what they had read; in their own words. This process was followed by creative writing sessions in which learners were requested to write their own stories.

Voice 019 stated that:

Comprehension...I read it with them I ask them to read it so I have the comprehension piece. Then I do the questions with them and if there's for instance...I also want them to understand when you have one word answers and when you have a full sentence...

Voice 031 explained that:

Ok, if I'm going to teach a comprehension, before I'm going to read this comprehension first, and to understand this comprehension first. And I then

took some words that I think are going to be difficult for them, and write them in flashcards. From those words I took out the sounds... From there I read this comprehension and they are going to listen to me and use all the punctuation, reading punctuations everything.

At some Quintile 3 schools teachers first came together as grade teachers and discussed the topics and themes for the week. They screened the learners and grouped them according to their literacy levels: that is, a different group for each different level.

Voice 027 explained that:

We get together as the whole grade teachers. We all use one story.... observe the children before we get together to plan. We have different groups for different levels. We go according to what level they are in. We make the work easier for those in the lower level. We observe them first, and then we divide them and group them.

Question 5: Explain how you decide on topics and themes for teaching, e.g. reading, writing, speaking and listening?

Several teachers stated that CAPS provided topics and themes that a teacher can choose from and several teachers chose a topic and a theme according to the particular environment and the situation in which they existed but they had not truly or even functionally understood the intent of CAPS or the significance of a learner-centred classroom.

Nearly all of the participants in this study maintain that the topics and themes are in the CAPS document provided by the department of education.

Voice 020 explained that:

We use the CAPS documents because it gives us an outline, the grades themes and topics. We use the CAPS document as well as the life orientation documents.

Voice 004 asserted that:

Okay, the CAPS document gives you a very good guideline obviously so we try to stick to that as far as we can. With regard to topics we use our life skills a lot um to integrate our subjects because time constraints are also difficult.

Question 6: What informs your choice of teaching methods and strategies? Many of the teachers interviewed admitted that they taught according to whatever strategy seemed appropriate or pragmatic at the time.

At some schools their methods were determined by the literacy level of learners. They used the method that could best assist learners; whether in Mathematics or any other subject.

Voice 004 said that:

Yes, obviously you have to look at their level of experience, their levels of ability, um what they're learning at the time...Um again you're going to grade your activities according to what the child is able to do...group your learners.

Voice 028 asserted that:

Err...hey there are many methods and it depends on the situation in your class then I can see my kids they don't follow me so I need to change my approach...

Voice 020 explained that:

You work with the whole group but there are times where you have to work in smaller groups. That is when I see how my kids differ for example, we work in smaller groups when we do reading because the one group might be stronger, more advanced than the other group. So the child determines it but also the class or the year group...the other year your kids might differ so much and you have to work in smaller groups and call them to the mat. It depends on the type of kids you have and also the needs of the kids because this group of kids might need more practice. You I think it depends on where

every child is in his development and then we work on the three groups or four groups or two groups.

Voice 002 ascertained that:

Um it can be related to your class, how the learners are learning. You have 30 learners in your class; they each have a different style. Perhaps this year you teach in one way because it benefits the majority of the class, then you might find you have a special needs child who does not understand the way you're teaching. You change your method to suit your child, you change your method um to suit the time you have.

Voice 004 stated that:

...obviously you have to look at their level of experience, their level of ability, um what they're learning at the time. Um and you're going to grade your activities according to what the child is able to do. You know you get some very weak and your learning barriers...Um you have to try and organise your or grade your instructions to suit each level that you are teaching.

Question 7: What method do you follow as a literacy teacher?

As mentioned in the models above some teachers advocated that they first identified their learners' strengths and weaknesses within large groups and then went on to divide them according to their literacy levels; choosing the most appropriate methods and strategies. They monitored the progress of the learners in their workbooks or classwork; analysing them and providing formal assessments tasks; employing different methods and strategies.

Voice 002 ascertained that:

I tend not to use one method. Um I think any good teacher takes the best of everything that they've learnt and we are learning all the time...we now do THRASS so that's very different. Um the THRASS phonics programme looks at sound that you hear and each spelling for that sound.

Voice 028 asserted that:

Err...hey there are many methods and it depends on the situation in your class then I can see my kids they don't follow me so I need to change my approach...

Voice 31 explained that:

There are so many methods, because you can't say I'm using this particular method, because they go hand in hand you know, do you do this and you do that and they all come together to form one thing.

Question 8: How do you incorporate these teaching methods and strategies into your own daily teaching style?

Some teachers affirmed that whatever subject they taught, be it Life Orientation, Mathematics or Language, they embraced shared reading, group reading and questions and answers. With regards to reading, technology and mathematics, they adopted the same methods; bearing in mind learners' individual cognitive and literacy levels. They interchanged these methods; depending on the varying levels of ability exhibited by learners.

Voice 20 affirmed that:

With different subjects, for example with different themes- when we are busy with life orientation you can immediately bring in an oral conversation. So you have to think on your feet. When we are busy with a life orientation oral theme you can quickly bring in mathematics...Or you could bring in language structure. So you have to incorporate the whole time with different areas e.g. talking about fire brigade, you ask about the theme but you can bring in plural – brandweerman [This is Afrikaans] brandweermanne. How many? If one fireman's hosepipe is say 5 meters long – how long will 3 hosepipes be?

Voice 4 stated that:

You have to plan everything; when we do reading and sometimes with phonic work as well we have group work where you group the children according to

ability...that same principle applies to maths as well because your maths groups are also graded according to ability. So you again are going to adjust worksheets and approaches to suit your level of ability.

Question 9: How do you describe the literacy level of Grade 3 learners? The following responses were given:

Literacy levels were good at the former Model C or Quintile 5 schools included in this survey.

Voice 020 affirmed that:

I would say good. It is good at our school because it is systematic from Grade R, Grade 1 Grade 2 so I think our kids English second language, additional language have improved over the past few years.

Voice 020 stated that (Quintile 5):

um look we're fortunate at this school, our children are very privileged so they come from fairly literate homes where they're exposed to books um on a regular basis but at the same time I still find that there is not enough reading at home I think...Um and nowadays with technology the way it is, they get electronic gadgets for gifts instead of books, as we're used to as children, we always received books. So yeah I think that all plays a part in general literacy.

But at Quintile 3 schools many learners were second-language learners of English who found it challenging to read, spell and speak in English which becomes the language of instruction from Grade 4 onwards. Many teachers at Quintile 3 schools with secondlanguage English learners admitted that literacy levels in English at their schools remained low and poor. Most of the learners were on grade 1 level. Those who received some help from home were at grade 2 level. Only those few from homes with educated parents, performed well in the class, as well as those who attended grade R class.

Voice 019 emphasised that:

Very poor. I would say they're more on grade 1 level. A lot of them are on a grade 1 but the ones that have help at home they're on a grade 2 level. I

would say and the ones that have no help they're on grade 1 level. And um there and there you can see one that is standing out. But usually the ones that stand out their parents take them out of this School and take them to a Model C white school.

Question 10: Do you and other teachers share the teaching roles at the school?

Explain your reason.

Significantly for the purposes of this investigation into teaching literacy (one of their beliefs or philosophies) in rural areas, Quintile 3 schools only shared teaching roles and information about lesson plans in a structured manner, even between schools. Teachers at these Quintile 3 schools mentioned class visits and the need to listen to one another when teaching and the importance of demonstrating lessons and teaching strategies to one another. In that way, they learnt from each and every one. One teacher from Quintile 5 school explained that they shared but did not take over the classroom teaching. They shared resources, ideas and worksheets.

Voice 020 from Quintile 3 stated that:

We have regular phase meetings, we have grade meetings and when we do class visits. We visit each other's classes. We do demonstration lessons for each other in our grade or sometimes across the grades and we learn from each other. We also do work sessions and workshop meetings with other schools when the opportunity arises and we have phase meetings.

Voice 002 from Model C stated that:

Um, not so much in the Foundation Phase. Um we collaborate within a grade for instance. Mrs Newges and I do collaborate, if she has something that she finds works very well for her class, she either gives it to me or she'll offer to work with my class or invite my class to her and we have a group discussion.

6.2.2.1 Summary of teachers' philosophies on teaching literacy

Teachers' personal philosophies on the teaching of literacy.

(Question 4: How do you teach literacy?)

Teachers gave a range of different beliefs or personal philosophies of how they taught literacy. The findings are grouped as follows:

Reading stories and comprehension (Grouping of learners)

First, some teachers stated that they taught literacy through reading stories and comprehension. The whole class read with them or they divided a single class into groups with group leaders. They read to the teacher while listening to them: they listened to the teacher reading to them. They demonstrated to learners the correct way of reading with expression, fluency and emphasis on punctuations. One teacher from a Quintile 5 school indicated that she taught the way she was taught then.

Comprehension

Second, when it came to comprehension, reading was followed by questions; both closed and open-ended questions and re-telling what they had read; in their own words. This process was followed by creative writing sessions in which learners were requested to write their own stories.

Meeting of grade teachers

Third, at some Quintile 3 schools teachers first came together as grade teachers and discussed the topics and themes for the week. They screened the learners and grouped them according to their literacy levels: that is, a different group for each different level.

Choice of teaching methods and strategies

Fourth, many of the teachers interviewed admitted that they taught according to whatever strategy seemed appropriate or pragmatic at the time. At some schools their methods were determined by the literacy level of learners. They used the method that could best assist learners; whether in Mathematics or any other subject. Some teachers advocated that they first identified their learners' strengths and weaknesses within large groups and then went on to divide them according to their literacy levels; choosing the most appropriate methods and strategies. They monitored the progress of the learners in their workbooks or classwork; analysing them and providing formal assessments tasks; employing different methods and strategies.

Incorporating and interchanging the teaching methods and strategies into daily teaching style

Sixth, some teachers affirmed that whatever subject they taught, be it Life Orientation, Mathematics or Language, they embraced shared reading, group reading and questions and answers. With regards to reading, technology and mathematics, they adopted the same methods; bearing in mind learners' individual cognitive and literacy levels. They interchanged these methods; depending on the varying levels of ability exhibited by learners.

Sharing of teaching roles

Seventh, only Quintile 3 schools in rural areas shared teaching roles and information about lesson plans in a structured manner, even between schools. Teachers at these Quintile 3 schools mentioned class visits and the need to listen to one another when teaching and the importance of demonstrating lessons and teaching strategies to one another. In that way, they learnt from each and every one. One teacher from Quintile 5 School explained that they shared but did not take over the classroom teaching. They shared resources, ideas and worksheets.

6.2.3 Classroom observation findings

Classroom interactions were captured on video-tape. The main purpose was to provide data that could provide a nuanced understanding of teachers' philosophies concerning literacy teaching in the Foundation Phase. A need for this data was driven by the understanding that what transpired in the classroom would either align with stated objectives of teachers or not. Therefore, the observations were examined and interrogated in search of this alignment, or lack of it. The research sought to detect differences between what teachers said they were going to teach, and what they did as they taught. The data were analysed by adapting the analytic model. The constant comparative analysis mode was used for making sense of interviews.

6.2.4 Schedule for video-data analysis – capturing and translating video into a readable and countable format

In a study of teaching-learning interactions by Mosito (1999), guiding questions for videotaped classroom observations were:

- (i) What is the teacher doing?
- (ii) What is the learner doing?

By adapting a video-data analysis procedure described by Mosito (1999), below are observations captured on a schedule that was used for reading all classroom interactions.

Table 6.4 Lesson observations

LESSON FOCUS	Lesson duration	Time chunks	Tallying teacher actions	Tallying learner action
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<p>Teacher 1-L1-1.3. Drilling letters of the alphabet; the building of words from letters and consonants. (English)</p>	<p>45 minutes.</p>	<p>1.1=5 minutes 1.2= 20 minutes 1.3=20 minutes</p>	<p>1.1 Settling the learners in their places.</p> <p>1. 2-Teacher teaching letters of the alphabet and building words from the letters: and breaking them into consonants playing the piano as she does all this activity. The teacher instructed the learners to sit on the floor and she sat down too. She told the story of a rabbit.</p> <p>1.3 Teacher projected all the letters of the alphabet followed by building words on the screen and drilled them to the learners</p>	<p>1. 1-Some learners moved to sit on the carpet and on top of the desks</p> <p>1.2 learners were singing with the piano the letters of the alphabet, building words and breaking them into consonants. All learners went to sit down as instructed; they recited the story of a rabbit –.</p> <p>1.3 Learners were singing the letters and emphasised the sounds of the words</p>
<p>LESSON FOCUS</p>	<p>Lesson duration</p>	<p>Time chunks</p>	<p>Tallying teacher actions</p>	<p>Tallying learner action</p>

Teacher 2- L2 Teaching of consonants (English)	45 minutes	2.1=5 minutes 2.2= 20 minutes 2.3=20 minutes	2.1- Settling the learners in their places. 2.2- Teaching building of sentences from the words built from the consonants. 2.3-Teacher requested the learners to build sentences of their own from the words.	2.1- Learners settled 2.2 - Listening and looking at the words on the chart. 2.3-Learners responded to the activities individually.
LESSON FOCUS	Lesson duration	Time chunks	Tallying teacher actions	Tallying learner action

<p>Teacher 3-L3.1-3.3 Reading and breaking new words into consonants (Afrikaans)</p>	<p>45 minutes</p>	<p>3.1=5 minutes 3.2=20 minutes 3.3=20 minutes</p>	<p>3.1 -Teacher settled the learners.</p> <p>3.2 - After settling them, she started her lesson seated on a small chair. Instructed the other learners to sit in their desks and do a task in their workbooks. She continued teaching the 9 learners. Teacher teaching reading and breaking words into consonants</p> <p>3.3 -The teacher drilled the words patiently</p> <p>3.4 - Teacher instructed the 9 learners to go back to their desks and gave an activity.</p>	<p>3.1- 9 of the 25 learners in the class were made to sit down on a carpet.</p> <p>3.2 - The rest of the class are sitting in their desks doing a task. The 9 learners were reading aloud, saying the new words while broke them up into consonants.</p> <p>3.3 - Learners said the words and breaking them after the teacher.</p> <p>3.4 - The 9 learners went back to their desks and performed the activity.</p>
<p>LESSON FOCUS</p>	<p>Lesson duration</p>	<p>Time chunks</p>	<p>Tallying teacher actions</p>	<p>Tallying learner action</p>

<p>Teacher 4-L4-4.1-4.4 Teaching reading and introduction of new words (Afrikaans)</p>	<p>45 minutes</p>	<p>4.1=5 minutes 4.2=20 minutes 4.3=20 minutes</p>	<p>4. 1-The teacher arranged the class and instructed all learners to take their reading books and go to sit on a carpet in front of the chalkboard.</p> <p>4.2- The teacher went to sit down on the same carpet; to read about a picnic. The teacher demonstrated to the learners the equipment used for a picnic.</p> <p>4.3- - The teacher continued reading and asking questions and instructed the learners to read.</p>	<p>4. 1- Learners went to sit on the carpet learners sitting listening to the reading.</p> <p>4.2- The learners were excited to use the equipment and they were even eating sandwiches given on plates by the teacher.</p> <p>4.3-Learners read back aloud to the listening teacher</p>
<p>LESSON FOCUS</p>	<p>Lesson duration</p>	<p>Time chunks</p>	<p>Tallying teacher actions</p>	<p>Tallying learner action</p>

<p>Teacher 5-L5: 5.1- 5.4 Teaching new words, consonants and sentence building (Afrikaans)</p>	<p>45 minutes</p>	<p>5.1=5 minutes 5.2=20 minutes 5.3=20 minutes</p>	<p>5.1-Teacher sitting on a chair in front of the class reading to the learners.</p> <p>5.2-Teacher stood up from the chair and wrote new words and broke them into consonants. She invited</p>	<p>5. 1- Learners were seated on the floor listening to the teacher.</p> <p>5.2- Learners responded.</p>
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			<p>the learners to come to the chalkboard and do the same.</p> <p>5.3-The teacher went back to sit on her chair and continued with the story asking questions.</p> <p>Teacher was back on her feet and teaching how to break words into consonants and gave a task to the learners.</p>	<p>5.3- Learners were listening to the story and responded to the questions. The learners sat and did the task given to them.</p>
<p>LESSON FOCUS</p>	<p>Lesson duration</p>	<p>Time chunks</p>	<p>Tallying teacher actions</p>	<p>Tallying learner action</p>

Teacher 6-L6: 6.1-6.2 Story- reading and building words and sentences (English)	45 minutes	6.1=5 minutes 6.2=20 minutes 6.3=20 minutes	6. 1-Teacher settled the learners because they were all moving around. She instructed them to take their books and come to sit in front on the carpet. 6.2- The teacher started her lesson. She flashed four letters of the alphabet to the learners and pinned them on the board to see. She requested them to build four words from the letters. 6.3- Teacher requested the learners to build sentences from the	1-Learners did as instructed by the teacher. 6.2. Individually the learners gave their responses. 6.3. The learners sat and did the task given to them.
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			words. The teacher wrote the sentences on the chalkboard	
LESSON FOCUS	Lesson duration	Time chunks	Tallying teacher actions	Tallying learner action

<p>Teacher 7-L7: 7.1-7.4 Reading a story (IsiXhosa)</p>	<p>45 minutes</p>	<p>7.1=5 minutes 7.2=20 minutes 7.3=20 minutes</p>	<p>7.1-Teacher settled the learners first and then instructed them to look at the story she was to read and point at each line she was reading.</p> <p>7.2-The next was that she would read one line and asked all to read that line after her.</p> <p>7.3-Teacher divided the reading of the story into paragraphs and instructed each group to read a paragraph while all other groups were listening. The teacher asked the learners to answer questions she posed to them individually from the story</p>	<p>7. 1-The learners did as instructed. They sat listening to the teacher.</p> <p>7.2- All Learners did as instructed groups did as instructed.</p> <p>7.3- They read as instructed; reading a paragraph while all others were listening the learners participated in the questions the teacher asked.</p>
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LESSON FOCUS	Lesson duration	Time chunks		Tallying learner action
Teacher 8-L8: 8.18.2 Teaching reading from animal pictures (English)	45 minutes			8.1 - Learners read from from the pictures as the teacher was point. To the figure. 8.2- Learner took part in the whole activity. 8.3- Learners would stand up and go to her/his book.

The schedule allowed the researcher to make sense of the classroom observations and arrange data into sequential categories; namely lesson focus, lesson duration, time chunks. Arranging data into accessible categories was essential to answer the basic questions that shape this research: what is the teacher doing? Tallying the teacher's actions in class with what learners were doing allowed the researcher to collect data from each lesson that could assist in interrogating lessons about how teachers' actions seemed to reveal their philosophies to the subject, literacy and those they were teaching, learners. This schedule registers alignment or misalignment, in varying degrees and ways, between what teachers claimed or intended to do in the classroom, and what they did do; between what they hoped to convey and how learners responded to that intention.

6.2.5 Level 3 of video- data – first imposition of meaning

Lesson 1: 1.1-1.2 English literacy class Former Model C School

TEACHER 1

Pedagogics: The teacher was teaching letters of the alphabet and how to build words from the letters. Learners were required to sing the letters and words built from the letters; accompanied by the piano played by the teacher. The singing and the playing of the piano made learners concentrate on the lesson. The song was based on Big and Small Lollipop. The letters of the alphabet were written on charts and also shown on a video. For example Capital letter L and lower case l were written on the board; alongside were capital letter B and lower case b. Words were then built on to these letters to music. Big L= Big Lollipop followed by a song “Big Lollipop, Big Lollipop, Big Lollipop...”. Lower case l was linked to the words little and lollipop followed by a song “little lollipop, little lollipop, little lollipop...”. Similarly, capital letters M and S were followed by lower case s and m to form the rhyme for Big Mountain and s=small mountain.



Picture 1: Teacher plays the Piano

The teacher 1: showed the learners a picture of a rabbit and she instructed them to read from a picture showing a rabbit. This was followed by questions to which learners responded. She made them all come and sit down in front of her and instructed them to recite sentences about the rabbit. It appeared that in this lesson part of being literate was

understood as knowledge of spelling hence lesson activities were on word building and identification.

In this tidy and spacious classroom of 25 learners, four learners were sitting on the desk while the rest sat on the floor during the lesson. All the learners were actively involved in classroom activities in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. The teacher was teaching letters of the alphabet and how to build words from the letters. Learners were required to sing the letters and words built from the letters. The learners were exposed to a print-rich environment, for example pictures, pamphlets, magazines and books. The teacher kept the learners engaged all the time. This was a very exciting lesson. The teacher succeeded in providing an exemplary learner-centred lesson.

Lesson 2: English literacy Former Model C school

TEACHER 2

Pedagogics: The teacher was solely concerned with teaching letters of the alphabet, and developing new words and sounds from the letters. The learners were doing it through rhymes or singing them. Every letter went with a rhyme or song. The rhymes made learners concentrate on the lesson. First, the teacher introduced the learners to big and small letters of the alphabet, and then constructed words from the letters, for example;

Gg= Goat goat

Hh= Hand hat

li= Ink ink

Jj= Juice jar

In this well organised, spacious and tidy classroom there were 15 learners; four learners as in the previous lesson were sitting on top of the desks and all of the others were sitting on a carpet and actively involved in the classroom activities in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. The teacher was teaching letters of the alphabet, and developing new words and sounds from the letters.

After the building of words from the letters of the alphabet, the learners read a story about a tortoise in their handbooks. The teacher asked questions from the story and wrote the answers that the learners gave on the chalkboard. The learners wrote the sentences from the chalkboard into their workbooks. They were all seated in their desks.

Lesson 3: 3.1 – 3.3 Afrikaans literacy Former Model C school

TEACHER 3

Pedagogics: The teacher divided learners into two groups. One group was sitting at the back of the desks on the floor; the second group was sitting in their desks. The latter group was busy with the task given by the teacher. The teacher was teaching the other group seated on the floor to read words from the handbook. She helped them where they pronounced words wrongly. These words were broken into consonants. Also the teacher was emphasising on phonics/sounds of the words. The learners clapped for each consonant and sound of the word; for example, la/nk, da/de/lik, woor/de, daar/om, han/de, ag/ter, wa/ter and wa/tter (these are Afrikaans words). At the sametime the teacher made them to recognize differences between sounds. The teacher requested the learners to build sentences of their own from the words.

The teacher instructed them to turn to their reading books and tell her what the title of the book was. They gave the title 'Leerboek'. After that, they read a story from the book.

This classroom was well organised according to the literacy levels of the learners. Some of the learners were seated on the carpet while others were in their desks. This was neatly arranged. It was an interesting lesson to listen to. The learners were exposed to a printrich environment, for example pictures, pamphlets, magazines and books. The teacher kept the learners engaged.

Lesson 4: 4.1 – 4.4 Afrikaans literacy Quintile 3 school

TEACHER 4

Pedagogics: The teacher organised the learners to settle down as they were moving around. The teacher had a picnic basket in her hands and showed it to the learners. She took out of the basket all the picnic equipment and demonstrated them individually to the

learners who were quietly seated. She gave plates with sandwiches to the learners to eat as if they were really at a picnic outing.



Picture 2: gave plates with sandwiches to the learners

The learners enjoyed this. This was before the lesson started. Immediately she started her lesson by reading from a book a story about a picnic. After this, they went back to their desks and worked as a group on the task given to them. The teacher was moving around the classroom to make sure that all her learners were participating in the activity as well as assisting where necessary.

After the activity, she flashed new words to them on flashcards. All these words were about a picnic, for example; piekniek, uiteindelik, lieflik, appel, reisdeken, piekniekmantjies, koppies, hoera's, eetgerei and verversings.



Picture 3: Teacher sticks flashcards with new words on the chalkboard. All these words were about a picnic.

The classroom was organised in a way that the teacher had control over all her learners although it was a big class of over 45 learners. The classroom was tidy as if it had a few learners. It was a Quintile 3 school. The atmosphere was relaxed. The teacher managed to attract all her learners to participate in classroom activity. There were pictures on the wall but not as rich as one would expect. I admired the teacher's work and effort she had put into her work. This lesson was admirably interactive. It was a good example of a learner-centred lesson plan and execution.

Lesson 5: 5.1 – 5.4: **Afrikaans** **Quintile 3** **school**

TEACHER 5

Pedagogics: The teacher was sitting on the chair in front of a noisy class. She drew the attention of the learners by telling them that they had a visitor; that was me.



Picture 4: Teacher sitting on the chair reading to the learners while they were listening

She was holding a handbook in her hand and learners were holding their own books. The teacher read to learners while they were listening.

She asked what the title of the story or the book was. The learners responded; the title is “Uiteindelik kom ons daaraan”. She would now and again read and asked them what certain words meant. The learners would respond enthusiastically. She requested the whole class to read back to her and she was listening to them. She would demonstrate how to read some sentences with expressions and exclamations. She gave positive feedback when learners did well. When a learner gave a correct answer, the other learners would clap hands. They were breaking new words from the story into consonants and would as well emphasise on phonics as part of her teaching. For example; ba/ba/pa/dda/tjie (small frog) that changes to be a padda (big frog).



Picture 5: The learner breaking new words from the story into consonants.

The teacher invited the learners to come and write on the chalkboard and break the words into consonants; for example the word babapaddatjie (Afrikaans). She also made them to recognise the different sounds of the words.

It was a big class of over 45 learners. The classroom was organised so that the teacher had control over all her learners although it was a big class. The classroom was tidy as if it had fewer learners. The atmosphere was relaxed and the teacher managed to attract all her learners to participate in the classroom activity. There were pictures on the wall but not as rich as one would expect. I admired the teacher's work and effort, she had put into her work.

Lesson 6: 6.1 – 6.2

English literacy

Quintile 3 school

TEACHER 6

Pedagogics: The teacher first arranged the class and settled the learners. The teacher was standing in front of the class. She instructed the learners to come and sit down on the carpet in front of the chalkboard. She flashed four cards with four letters of the alphabet. The learners read the letters aloud; for example, a m n e. After flashing the cards, she put them up on a chalkboard.



Picture 6: The teacher instructed the learners to come and sit down on the carpet in front of the chalkboard.

She instructed the learners to build words from the letters. The learners were fully engaged. Words that came up were; name, man, me and amen. Each word built she would write on the chalkboard. She instructed the learners to build sentences of their own from each word. She wrote the sentences on the chalkboard as they were saying them. She then read the story 'Mr Mean'. She dramatized the story as she was reading it; reading with passion and expression. Learners were listening with glee on their faces. Thereafter she gave learners an activity to do. The learners responded well, the structure of the class was learner-centred.

Although it was a crowded class of about 45 learners, it was tidy and a relaxing atmosphere because learners were enjoying the lesson. The pictures on the wall were relevant for a grade 3 literacy class.

Lesson 7: 7.1 – 7.3:

Isixhosa literacy

Quintile 3 school

TEACHER 7

Pedagogics: The teacher settled the learners first. Learners were sitting in their groups with their reading books. The teacher instructed them to sit quietly; she then read to them. They used their fingers to point while she was reading. They did as instructed by the teacher. The next instruction was that they should read after her when she finished a sentence. The title of the story was "Izihlangu ezintsha".



Picture 7: The teacher standing in front of the chalkboard reading to the learners.

In this highly structured lesson literacy seemed to have been interpreted as modelling how to read.

The size of the class was about 50 learners. But it was neat and tidy. It had few pictures hanging on the wall and they were relevant to a grade 3 literacy class. The learners were sitting in groups of six. A few of them seemed to be drowsy and bored⁹. It was a Quintile 3 school.



Picture 8: Learners were drowsy and some fell asleep

Lesson 8: 8.1 – 8.2 English literacy Quintile 3 school.

TEACHER 8

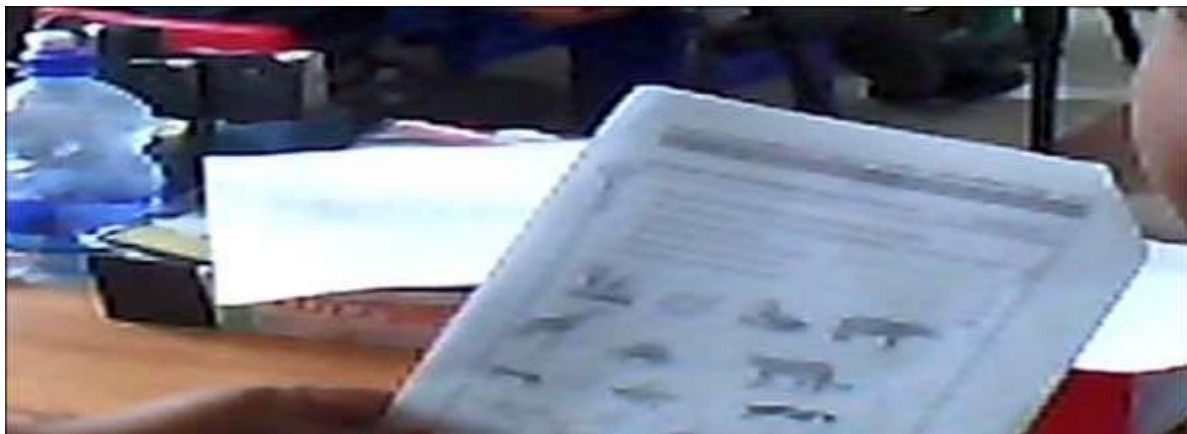
Pedagogics: The teacher settled the class first. She was sitting at her desk and invited learners to come to her desk. Individually they went to her.

⁹ Chapter 2 Freire –banking education- learners are often half-asleep



Picture 9: The teacher seated in her desk holding a book with pictures of animals invited learners individually to come to her.

The teacher was holding a book in her hand from which she asked questions like: “Which animal do you see on the picture? Is it a domestic animal or an animal on a farm or an animal in the wild? The learner would respond as he or she thought or saw. The teacher would ask the class what they thought the correct answer was. Although it was an English lesson, the teacher now and again would switch over to IsiXhosa for the learners to understand her question.



Picture 10: the teacher was holding a book in her hand with pictures of different kinds of animal.

The size of the class was about 50 learners. But it was neat and tidy. It had few pictures hanging on the wall but they were relevant to a grade 3 literacy class. The atmosphere was pleasant although some of the learners at her desk were not relaxed; they seemed to be afraid. This classroom was teacher-centred and little effort was made to interact

with learners or draw upon their knowledge resources as a platform for more orthodox instruction.

These observations helped considerably to address the main two questions of this study “What are Grade 3 teachers’ philosophies on literacy” as well as “How teachers of literacy apply such philosophies in the teaching and learning of literacy at rural primary schools?”

6.3 Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, the foregoing analysis enables us to ask whether the questions set at the beginning of this study have been answered sufficiently. The questions are:

1. What are Grade 3 teachers’ philosophies on literacy?
2. How do teachers of literacy apply such philosophies in the teaching and learning of literacy at rural primary schools?

Drawing on the definition that teachers’ philosophies on teaching literacy are about the assumptions, beliefs and conception teachers have about the subjects to the curriculum, the nature of the subject, learners and relevant teaching methodologies, the conclusion is guided by two considerations. First, what has the findings revealed about the participating teachers’ assumptions about what it means to be literate both as a product and a process? Second, given these assumptions, what has the analysis revealed about the teachers’ beliefs on the best way that literacy should be taught?

6.3.1 Interviews

Being literate: knowledge and knowing

The interviews which served as a tool through which teachers could reflect on their teaching of literacy revealed several conceptions that teachers hold about literacy knowledge and methodologies that should be adopted in assisting learners to gain such

knowledge. On the knowledge side (that which they regard as literacy content) all the teachers rely on the dictates of the CAPS curriculum. Specifically, they mentioned reading, writing, speaking and listening as necessary knowledge to be taught in literacy. When it comes to knowing, the interviews revealed a belief that teaching should be based on a repertoire of methods that include a lot of repetition, drilling, flashcards, playing games, role play of real-life scenarios, listening to the teacher and repeating after him or her.

Teachers' roles in the knowledge and knowing the journey

Some of the interview questions provided opportunities to reflect on how teachers conceive their roles in the teaching-learning of literacy. There was a view that a teacher cannot rely on one method and should therefore incorporate variety. This was linked to the understanding that learners are always at different levels of literacy. It is based on these levels that teachers should then decide on relevant methods for teaching. Amongst specified methods were drilling, creating real-life scenarios and modelling.

6.3.2 Observations

Being literate: knowledge and knowing

Of the eight lessons observed, revolved around the teaching of the alphabet, spelling of words, reading and following teacher instructions. Only one of the eight lessons reflected a multidimensional understanding of what it means to be literate: literacy seemed to be understanding words in a context (a picnic in this case), listening for details and understanding, questioning and contributing opinions and extracting new vocabulary from which the alphabet and spelling can be taught.

Teachers' role in the knowledge and knowing journey

The foregoing paragraph presents very clearly two types of assumptions about roles that should be performed in teaching foundational literacy. On one hand, the majority are teachers who played a dominant role through which they regard themselves as vessels of knowledge which then translates into teacher-centred learning where learners are mostly on the receiving end of whatever teachers are conveying. On the other hand, we see one teacher who creates a teaching-learning scenario where learners are co-creators of knowledge.

In the next chapter, the isolated findings outlined in these conclusions are discussed in relation to the literature and theory explicated in chapters 2-4.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter provides an overview of the argumentative trajectory of the thesis; citing the main research questions in relation to three literature review chapters 2, 3 and 4. The analysis of data from the previous chapter has revealed trends and isolated findings that form the basis of the argument. The key aim of this chapter is to address more specifically the questions that are posed at the beginning of this study. The questions are:

- *What are Grade 3 teachers' philosophies on literacy?*
- *How do Grade 3 teachers of literacy apply such philosophies in the teaching and learning of literacy at rural primary schools?*

As stated in chapter 6 that from these main research questions, sub-questions were developed to help align the various variables of the research to the central aim.

In chapter 6 it is explained that the analysis of teachers' responses went through a series of qualitative analysis following Neuman's paradigm (2014:179) for first and second-order analysis. The qualitative analysis, to arrive at the first understanding of what could be philosophies of teachers was first-order interpretation. Mosito (2005) describes first-order interpretation as a process of scrutinising data to learn its meaning as far as people, events and phenomena being studied are concerned. Therefore, at that stage of analysis, no theory related-meaning was assigned to the data as I stated what the data told me. This was read in terms of how many teachers said or did what without necessarily assigning new meaning to their utterances and actions. The next step of analysis may be regarded as second-order interpretation; where the researcher reconstructed actions and utterances by assigning new meanings to them. Third-order

interpretation links second-order interpretation to the theory which occurs in this last chapter where larger theories about teaching literacy are traced from earlier levels of interpretation; mainly from chapter 6 and the literature review chapters. In this chapter, it is now possible to advance to the third order of interpretation which involves stating more precisely what the philosophies of teachers in this study are within a theoretical landscape, and whether or how they are applied during events of teaching. This process occurs through the re-reading of conclusions arrived at in Chapter 6 through theories and literature.

7.2 Teachers' philosophies on literary teaching

In this thesis as stated earlier teachers' philosophies are used as a construct that informs this study. I deliberately did not include a specific question with the phrase 'what is your teaching philosophy' because there is no guarantee that teachers have come across this construct in their education or work. Arriving at what their philosophies are is the intellectual enterprise of this thesis through different levels of analysis described in chapters 3, 6 and 7. I believe that one does not have to use the word philosophy to arrive at participants' assumptions, beliefs, values and conceptions they hold about their teaching generally and teaching a specific subject. The word philosophy was therefore intentionally avoided in the instrument to allow for the emergence of such philosophies during analysis.

Teachers' philosophies are a mix of assumptions, prejudices and inherited outlooks concerning the subjects they teach (Schönwetter et al., 2002; Cohen, 1999). These perspectives can be likened to a range of teachers' beliefs about *why*, *what* and *how* information is taught, *whom* he or she teaches, and their opinion about the nature of learning. Chapters 6 and 7 have revealed diverse philosophies or beliefs that teachers participating in this study used as a reference point for their work.

The foregoing chapter 3 section 3.2 states that Tedick and Walker (1994 in Karaata, 2011:245) suggest that whether it is second language teaching or instruction, teacher preparation is crucial to expose or uncover the "conceptions, beliefs, and values that underlie the descriptions and prescriptions, or thoughts that guide teachers' practices in

classrooms”. Also, Karaata (2011) explains that when the word belief is associated with teachers, ‘teacher beliefs’ “it refers to teachers’ pedagogic beliefs or those beliefs of teachers that are relevant to their teaching practice” (Karaata, 2011:245).

Karaata’s (2011:245) definition of teachers’ beliefs is functionally close to teachers’ philosophies as defined throughout the thesis: a teacher’s beliefs about *why*, *what* and *how* information is taught, *whom* he or she teaches, and the nature of learning (Cohen, 1999). These teachers’ beliefs relate to principles that lie first in the teacher’s own life experiences, values, the environment in which this teacher lives, interacts with others and the philosophical approaches that he or she has assimilated.

The foregoing section foregrounds teachers’ awareness of the connection between their beliefs about the subject, learners and methods of teaching the subject as crucial towards having a positive impact on learner achievement. Drawing from these accounts of the role of teaching philosophies, the fundamental architecture of the present study was conceived in accord with the didactic vision of two liberal-minded authors in particular: Schönwetter and Fisher. Earlier it was stated that the proposed model as depicted in chapter 3 section 3.2.1 presents four elements or dimensions of ‘thinking-doing’ prerequisites: what teaching philosophies entail and should be taken into consideration by teachers in foundational literacy classrooms. These dimensions are presented in chapter 6 under findings and represent an explanation of teachers’ beliefs. In this chapter they are discussed in relation to the literature and theory explicated in chapters 2, 3 and 4. In chapter 6 they are mentioned as follows:

- (1) what guides **what** they teach,
- (2) what guides **how** they teach,
- (3) the beliefs they hold **about literacy and teaching of literacy**, and
- (4) the beliefs they hold **about those they teach**.

7.2.1 Philosophies about what and how teachers teach literacy (Dimension 1 and 2 inclusive)

The proposed model for analysing teachers' philosophies in chapter 3 has a dimension I have referred to as the "how of teaching." Sturtevant and Linek (2003) state that there are various factors that teachers commonly consider to be reliable and proven guides to how they teach: taking into consideration learners' individual needs, barriers to learning and environmental factors. Considering such a global assessment of pedagogic elements in the classroom is at present broadly defined as inclusive education (White Paper 6). While current research suggests that teaching beliefs play an important role in teachers' work, an apparent disjunction between teachers' individual beliefs, values and wider institutional discourses and cultures, and "a relative lack of a clear and robust professional vision of the purposes of education", indicate that "the promotion of teacher agency relies upon the teaching beliefs that individual teachers bring to their practice and requires collective development and consideration" (Biesta, Priestly & Robinson, 2015). Shaik (2016) believes that "there is a strong link between teachers' personal beliefs and the influence they have on their teaching practice".

In the foregoing chapters it was stated that, if literacy teachers are fixed in their modes of thinking and unable to adjust their literacy teaching to the social and intellectual backgrounds of their learners, learners will not be able to identify with the literacy lessons and will remain semi-literate: which appears to be what is happening. If, however, teachers are made fully aware of their own mode of teaching, and trained to reflect critically upon their own practice, they are more able to recognise the knowledge and skills latent in their learners; using this knowledge as a scaffold for further and more interactive knowledge construction. This would enable the teacher to become a 'reflective practitioner' (Schön, 1983; 1987). In practical terms the teacher has to reflect on before, during and after the literacy lesson on whether their method fully reaches and empowers the learners.

Teacher colleges have subsequently realised that teachers need to learn to become reflective of their own actions and style. A prescriptive transfer of theory alone is not sufficient. This is underscored by the views of Jacobs, Vakalisa and Gawe (2011),

discussed in section 3.4 of the thesis, where teachers are described as “agents of change”.

In order to achieve this and ensure that the challenges that face the learners are addressed teachers the authors reiterate have to reflect on theory and practice. Larrivee (2000) describes the process as moving beyond the knowledge of discrete skills to a point where the teacher’s skills are not only modified to fit different contexts but also internalised to the enable the teacher to invent new strategies to enhance learning for the learners. For this reason, the skill of reflective teaching is an important aspect in the professional development of the teacher (Larrivee 2000 in Taole, 2015:168).

In chapter 6 it is explained that in order to get a sense of the views that teachers in this study have about how they teach literacy, the following questions that give access to teachers’ philosophies on how they teach were asked (Tables 5.4 questions 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10) They are as follows (Refer to **6.2.1 Level 1 analysis: Four dimensions of the model**):

Question 4: How do you teach literacy?

Question 6: What informs your choice of teaching methods and strategies?

Question 7: What method do you follow as a literacy teacher?

Question 8: How do you incorporate these teaching methods and strategies into your own daily teaching style?

Question 10: Do you and other teachers share the teaching roles at the school? Please explain your reason.

The following discussion about teachers’ philosophies covers all the dimensions and the five questions above. The discussion will start with question 4 which is a leading question to the philosophies of teachers in teaching literacy. This will be followed by the next four questions that as well demonstrate teachers’ philosophies of teaching literacy as well.

At the interviews participants (teachers) were asked a question based on how they teach literacy. **Question 4: How do you teach literacy?** Some teachers stated that they taught literacy through reading stories and comprehension. The whole class read with them or they divided a single class into groups with group leaders. They read to the teacher while listening to them: they listened to the teacher reading to them. They assisted those

learners who found it difficult to read and demonstrated to the learners the correct way of reading with expression, fluency and emphasis on punctuation. Mbatha (2018:77) explains that scaffolding in a language classroom may be facilitated by reading pictures, reading aloud, shared reading and guided reading. The teacher should always provide assistance or support to learners.

From a Vygotskian perspective, the ideal role of the teacher is to provide scaffolding or collaborative dialogue to assist learners in the tasks within their ZPD. In this study, the teacher as a mediator and facilitator of learning is regarded as a central figure in accounting for ways in which he or she plays such a role in a classroom environment.

Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the key role of teachers, adults and competent peers in learners' accomplishment of a specific level of 'cognitive development'. His theory dwells on social interaction for assisting development. Gouws, Kruger and Burger (2008:53) aver that "The mediator performs the function of providing intellectual 'scaffolding' for the learners so that they can become independent" (Gouws, Kruger & Burger, 2008:53 cited in Louw, Van Eden & Louw, 1998).

At the interviews as stated in chapter 6 teachers demonstrated a range of approaches, philosophies or strategies they used in teaching literacy. For example, all excerpts are presented in chapter 6 section 6.2.2 and highlighted in blue. They will not be repeated here, instead numbers of voices will be presented. In question 4 (*How do you teach literacy?*) the voices are 020, 002, and 004.

To reiterate here, according to Fisher (2001:3) in terms of the classroom reality, a teacher does not merely teach the mechanics of reading and writing, he or she enthusiastically encourages and assists young learners to think for themselves, to read texts critically and to solve problems imaginatively. In such a classroom, learners are not being told what to think because they are allowed to experience at first hand a community of inquiry: one in which they are exposed to, and enabled to, "internalise the skills and habits of higher-order thinking" (Fisher, 2001:3).

Hodges, Feng, Kuo and McTigue (2016:3) argue that teachers should strive to enrich learners' literacy by helping them "become consumers of literature and producers of writing". Hodges *et al.* (2016) argue that literacy includes "both reading and writing; however, researchers and teachers consistently focus on reading, while leaving writing behind". These authors argue that:

Teachers are not often given specific training on what theories to apply to reading, writing and generalized literacy. Classroom teachers recognize that reading and writing complement each other and include the two skills simultaneously in instruction.

(Hodges *et al.*, 2016:3).

The overarching term 'literacy' encompasses "both reading and writing, theoretical perspectives still treat the two as dichotomies" (Hodges *et al.*, 2016:3).

Some teachers explained that they read comprehension as well, another strategy they chose to teach literacy. The reading of comprehension was followed by questions; both closed and open-ended questions and re-telling what they had read in their own words. This process was followed by creative writing sessions in which learners were required to write their own stories.

In chapter 2 of this thesis, Rose (2011:94) proposes a "genre-based, three-tier integrated model for teaching language across the curriculum in an interactive social setting". In Rose's model, "comprehension is considered more important than reading". During the first level, the learner is prepared for reading by having them placed in a broad context. The second level requires the teacher to read the text to the learners after which it is analysed with particular reference to the language patterns and the structure to understand what they have read and heard. In the third phase, sentences are chosen from the text and written on pieces of paper. The words are then cut up and the learners are required to make new sentences from these words. Rose (2011:94) claims that "this process helps students to exert control over meanings and complex patterns, as well as spelling and word recognition".

One teacher at a former Model C or Quintile 5 school claimed that she continued to teach literacy the way she was taught when she was still a learner. For example, voice 006 remarked as follows:

I um for me um I go about the way I was taught at school...like pictures and different colours and um bigger words and then smaller words so that everything doesn't look the same.

In section 3.4 Killen (2007) contends that the “changing demands and responsibilities exerted on teachers necessitate that they must be reflective to respond appropriately to their altering situations”. Teachers are:

...confronted with learners who have various needs, and their teaching needs to cater for all of them; irrespective of their cognitive, social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Those who do not reflect upon their practices will be likely to teach as they were taught and thus, ineffective teaching strategies will be replicated.

(Braun & Crumpler, 2004:61).

For Taole (2015:167), it is crucial for teachers “to critically review or reflect upon how they teach”. This self-reflection “ensures that teachers develop proper and efficient teaching strategies and augment their teaching practice”.

Further probing about teachers’ philosophies on how they teach literacy continued; the next question was about what informed their choice of methods (**Question 6: What informs your choice of teaching methods and strategies?**). As stated earlier they responded to this question by stating that they were informed by learners’ levels of proficiency. They explained that they first identified their learners’ strengths and weaknesses within large groups and then went on to divide them according to their literacy levels; choosing the most appropriate methods and strategies. For those who have barriers to learning, teachers had to augment their teaching styles and methods of teaching. They had monitored the progress of the learners in their work books or classwork; analysing them and providing formal assessments tasks; employing different

methods and strategies. For example: The excerpts are presented in chapter 6 section 6.2.2 **Question 6** highlighted in blue. (Voice 004).

Voice 004 said that:

Yes, obviously you have to look at their level of experience, their levels of ability, um what they're learning at the time...Um again you're going to grade your activities according to what the child is able to do...group your learners

The teachers then were asked about the method they followed as a literacy teacher: (**Question 7**: What method do you follow as a literacy teacher?). Some teachers stated that there are many methods and they used them all if needed at that time. Many of the teachers interviewed admitted that they taught according to whatever method or strategy seemed appropriate or pragmatic at the time. They used the method that could best assist learners; whether in Mathematics or any other subject. They claimed that they looked at the methods they could employ to help those learners whose levels were low at that time. (For example: The excerpts are presented in chapter 6 section 6.2.2 **Question 7** highlighted in blue. Voices 028, 002, and 031).

The next question was about how they incorporate these teaching methods and strategies into their own daily teaching style. (**Question 8**: **How do you incorporate these teaching methods and strategies into your own daily teaching style?**).

Some teachers affirmed that whatever subject they taught, be it Life Orientation, Mathematics or Language, they embraced shared reading, group reading as well as questions and answers. In their daily teaching some used these methods constantly or consistently. With regards to reading, technology and mathematics, they adopted the same methods; bearing in mind learners' individual cognitive and literacy levels. They interchanged these methods; depending on the varying levels of ability exhibited by learners. (For example: The excerpts are presented in chapter 6 section 6.2.2 **Question 8** highlighted in blue. Voices 020, 004, and 031).

The last question concerning their philosophies of teaching was (**Question 10: Do you and other teachers share the teaching roles at the school? Please explain your reason**).

In the findings Quintile 3 school teachers indicated that they share teaching roles and information about lesson plans in a structured manner, even between schools. Teachers at this Quintile 3 School mentioned class visits and the need to listen to one another when teaching and the importance of demonstrating lessons and teaching strategies to one another. In that way, they learnt from each and every one. One teacher from Quintile 5 school explained that they shared but did not take over the classroom teaching. They shared resources, ideas and worksheets. (For example: The excerpts are presented in chapter 6 section 6.2.2 **Question 10** highlighted in blue. Voices 020, 002, and 027).

This attitude of sharing can be interpreted as a contributory factor to professional development which is crucial to education.

This form of analysis enabled me to address the first two main research questions of the study (1) What are Grade 3 teachers' philosophies on literacy? and (2) How do Grade 3 teachers of literacy apply such philosophies in the teaching and learning of literacy at rural primary schools? All five questions mentioned above are addressing the teachers' philosophies on teaching literacy at rural primary schools and are discussed in relation to the literature and theory above as explicated in chapters 2, 3 and 4.

7.2.2 Philosophies about the curriculum (what guides what they teach?) (Dimension 1)

In the 'what' dimension of the proposed model section 3.2.1.1, it is argued that teachers should be knowledgeable and acquainted with the curriculum as '*what*' to teach. Departments of Education set out clear outlines in the form of curriculum statements that serve as a general guide as to 'what' should be taught. In South Africa, the guidelines are currently in the form of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). In CAPS, the Department of Basic Education has set up a prescribed curriculum that sets out content in terms of knowledge, concepts and skills that learners should be taught

(DoBE, 2011:8). It is reasonable to expect that teachers' beliefs about the subject literacy in this instance may well reveal their particular understandings of the prescribed content. (Mbatha, 2014:37) states that:

In response to the literacy crisis six years ago, the South African Department of Education introduced interventions such as the Foundations for Learning Campaign, the National Reading Strategy (DoE 2008a and 2008b) and Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) to improve the situation of readers' skills and abilities.

(Mbatha, 2014:37).

In this study, the majority of literacy teachers seem to have framed what guides what they teach around CAPS. For instance when participants were asked the following question (Question 5): *Explain how you decide on topics and themes for teaching e.g. reading, writing, speaking and listening?* (For example, the excerpts are presented in chapter 6 section 6.2.2 **Question 5**). Voices 020, 002, and 004.

The majority responded by saying that CAPS provides topics and themes that a teacher can choose from and some teachers chose a topic and a theme according to the particular environment and the situation in which they existed.

Nearly all of the participants in this study maintain that the topics and themes are in the CAPS document provided by the department of education.

The teachers in this study afford the national curriculum the respect it requires as it appears to be a common reference point from which they decide what they teach. As indicated above there are teachers, for example Voice 027, whose influence on what to teach stems from a nuanced understanding of where literacy opportunities come from. The literature on teachers' philosophies makes clear that a good philosophy on teaching is one that is located in some theory about learning, development and the context in which teaching/learning unfolds (Schönwetter *et al.*, 2002). It is clear that to these authors a teacher's individually-held philosophy on teaching involves uniquely assimilated internal processes or thinking which allow the teacher to account for *what is taught, why it is taught and to whom*.

7.2.3 Philosophies about the meaning of literacy

At the interviews when teachers were asked the question (**Question 2**): *What does literacy mean to you?* There was a wide range of interpretations of what literacy means. The following are voices of teachers from transcripts. For example, the excerpts are presented in chapter 6 section 6.2.2 **Question 2**. Voices 002, 004, 009 and 031.

Another teacher believed that literacy denoted personal history, upbringing, mathematics, life skills, language, reading, and writing, speaking and understanding.

In chapter 2 of this thesis, Luke (2012:5) differentiates between literacy and critical literacy. The term 'literacy', refers "to the reading and writing of texts while critical literacy refers to the use of print and other media of communication to analyse, critique and transform the norms, rule systems and practices" to be found in society. Furthermore a task group of experts from UNESCO defined literacy as:

.....the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society.

(UNESCO, 2004:13 cited in Schachter *et al.*, 2012:11).

In chapter 2 it is stated that the notions of literacy entail *reading, writing, speaking and listening* with understanding (Schrock, 2007). Given the multifaceted understandings of literacy, a literacy teacher's conception of the term 'literacy' is expected to reflect a mixture of elements drawn from some, if not all, of the aspects listed above. Literacy denotes, and connotes, different things to different audiences.

Mei-Yun Ko (2013:91) states that "for the past 30 years, the notion of literacy has gone beyond reading the words to 'reading the world'" (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987); that is, from "functional literacy that focuses solely on developing learners' linguistic skills, to critical literacy that aims to give learners a language of critique to achieve equality and social justice or effect social transformation".

In chapter 2 Schrok (2007) argues that definitions of literacy moved away from pure technical skills to that of being more encompassing of human resource skills which allowed for the development of political change or the discussion thereof and socio-cultural change. Mbatha (2014:37) cites Cook-Gumperz (1986:17) who supports Schrok by stating that literacy's role is not purely that of the ability to read and understand the printed word but rather to allow for social circumstances and incorporating historical traditions.

A common denominator in all the definitions is the implication that the social utilisations of literacy should be emphasized in learning; which means that "learners' linguistic and social experiences should form part of learning literacy" (Mbatha, 2014:37). Of interest in this thesis is whether teachers who are engaged with developing literate Foundation Phase learners think and act in accordance with the functions of literacy stipulated in all these literatures. Teachers' histories as contained in what Mbatha (2014) describes as "social circumstances and specific historical traditions" to a large extent impact on their understanding of what literacy is and how they translate that understanding into classroom practices (Mbatha, 2014).

7.3 How teachers of literacy apply such philosophies in the teaching and learning of literacy at rural primary schools' classrooms

This section deals with classroom observations and identifies what the teaching philosophies of the eight selected teachers were, and how they transferred such philosophies to the classroom. After the interviews, the teachers were observed in classroom practice.

In section 5.5.2 under classroom observations, Henning (2008:7) argues that observation should be regarded as collecting or gathering data and involvement in the actions of participants in the research environment and getting to know their ways of doing things differently. Bless *et al.*, (2013:117) explain that juxtaposed or contrasted with other data collection techniques, observation presents rich, comprehensive "context-specific descriptions, which are close to the insider's perspective". Observation complements "other research methods, conducted in parallel, stimulates theoretical development,

prompts initiatives for further research, and assists in validating available findings” (Bless *et al.*, 2013).

It is stated in section 5.5.2 that in this study, classroom observations were recorded and videoed. The main aim was to examine and interrogate alignment between teachers’ responses in interviews and what they actually do as they teach: to cross-check the extent to which their practices reflect opinions shared during interviews. During the observation, the camera followed everything that the teacher and the learners were doing.

This section articulates what philosophies the eight teachers held, and how these teachers seemed to draw from these beliefs and attitudes (or not) when teaching literacy in the classroom. Many applied a number of different strategies to suit the predicament or teaching challenge of the moment. Despite this mixed, essentially pragmatic approach, there remained a resonance between what each teacher set out to teach and actually implemented in the classroom.

7.3.1 Video – classroom - observation

In this section the findings obtained from the classroom observations in section 6.2.3 of the video-data collection are discussed in relation to the literature and theory.

Lesson 1: 1.1-1.2 English literacy class Former Model C School

Teacher 1 from a Former Model C School was teaching letters of the alphabet and how to build words from the letters. Learners were required to sing the letters and words built from the letters; accompanied by the piano played by the teacher in breaking up the words. She used a smart board as well to break up words into consonants; she brought to life the Freirean prerogatives of inclusion, stimulation and construction of knowledge. Since she had a tidy and spacious classroom of 25 learners she managed from the start of the lesson to assist or mediate learners who needed it. In the previous chapters 2, 3 and 4, it was indicated that the teacher’s understanding and role are particularly significant in literacy learning given that it is not a spontaneous activity but one that

requires overt, mediational strategies driven by a specific understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). In section 4.2.1 it is explained that Vygotsky's theory emphasizes mediation. The teacher acts as "mediator between the learner's actual development and the learner's potential development" (Gouws, Kruger & Burger, 2008:53). The teachers "are there to structure activities for the learner [child] so that the learner gradually gains control over the activities and the tasks he or she needs to perform" (Gouws *et al.*, 2008:53). Teacher 1 set out to create lessons that are rich in diverse activities and also with reference to the 4 dimensions articulated beliefs about literacy, learners, curriculum and how she taught literacy that showed the Freirean prerogatives of inclusion, stimulation and construction of knowledge. She used the piano as a strategy to demonstrate how she taught literacy and made it meaningful to her learners.

Lesson 2: 2.1-2.2 English literacy Former Model C school

This lesson of teacher 2 had the same characteristics as lesson 1 above.

Teacher 2 from a Former Model C School was solely concerned with teaching letters of the alphabet, and developing new words and sounds from the letters. The learners were doing it through rhymes or singing them this time. Each and every letter went with a rhyme or song. Learners were fully involved in the classroom activities. They read a story about a tortoise in their handbooks. The teacher kept them engaged and active by asking them questions from the story and wrote the answers that the learners gave on the chalkboard. She made them write down the sentences from the chalkboard into their workbooks.

In this well organised, spacious and tidy classroom there were only 15 learners. It was easy for the teacher to assist or mediate learners during the process of teaching. The teacher all the time during the lesson acted as "mediator between the learner's actual development and the learner's potential development" (Gouws, Kruger & Burger, 2008:53). In section 7.2.1 above according to Freirean priorities, any teaching act that is largely teacher-centred does not lend itself to a constructivist epistemology; whereby knowledge resides within the knower – a learner in this instance – and not the one who facilitates the process of knowing.

Teacher 2 set out to create lessons that are rich in diverse activities and also according to the 4 dimensions articulated beliefs about literacy, learners, curriculum and how she taught literacy. Learners were fully stimulated and involved.

Lesson 3: 3.1 – 3.3 Afrikaans literacy

Former Model C school

Teacher 3 from a Former Model C School divided learners into two groups. One group was sitting at the back of the desks on the floor (carpet); the second group was sitting in their desks. The latter group was busy with the task given by the teacher. The teacher was attending to the other group seated on the floor to read words from the handbook. Painstakingly, she helped them where they pronounced words wrongly. Also she was using teaching aids to assist learners to follow and understand her lesson. The learners clapped hands for each consonant of the word. The teacher requested the learners to build sentences of their own from the words. Learners in their groups were fully involved in every classroom activity and could easily engage with the teacher in their groups.

Subban (2006:938) argues that in every classroom “learners are not the same; the only important thing for them all is a necessity for acceptance, nurturing and respect”. Grouping and paying attention to differences helps “individual learners in experiencing a degree of success, while encouraging them to achieve the wishes and goals they want to pursue as individual” (Subban, 2006:938).

According to Vygotsky, a young learner’s development within a ZPD involves “social interaction, dialogue and mediated activity between learners and with their teachers” (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Vygotsky & Luria, 1994). Of interest is that the learners were exposed to a print-rich environment, for example: pictures, pamphlets, magazines and books. The teacher kept the learners engaged all the time.

Teacher 3 seemed to know and understand her learners’ potentials or cognitive levels hence she managed to divide them into these groups. According to the 4 dimensions in chapter 6, she demonstrated beliefs about learners, what guided her what to teach and how to teach them.

Teacher 4 from a Quintile 3 school was teaching new words. She imaginatively and meticulously set up a picnic lesson which absolutely engaged her learners. The teacher had a picnic basket in her hands and showed it to the learners. She took out of the basket all the picnic equipment and demonstrated them individually to the learners who were quietly seated listening with enthusiasm and smiles over their faces. She gave plates with sandwiches to the learners to eat as if they were really at a picnic outing. She also used flashcards effectively and conscientiously. Learners were fully engaged and asking questions from the teacher as well talking to one another with glee.

The learners enjoyed this and took part in the activities from the beginning of the lesson. This was before the lesson started. She immediately started her lesson by reading from a book a story about a picnic. After the activity, she flashed new words to them on flashcards. All these words were about a picnic, for example; piekniek, uiteindelik, lieflik, appel, reisdeken, piekniekmantjies, koppies, hoera's, eetgerei and verversings. All was about making her learners to understand what a picnic is about.

In chapter 2 section 2.4.8.1 Chetty (2015:1-3) explains that Freirean principles emphasise:

Student-centred education; specifically in the field of critical literacy. The learner is seen as the centre of knowledge construction, not the teacher; someone who was formerly seen as the central dispenser of facts to be learnt by heart without reflection or questioning so that there was little or no real growth of authentically assimilated knowledge in the individual learner.

(Chetty, 2015:1-3).

The current relapse into teacher-centred authority models could not be more inappropriate, and insensitive to injustices of the past or depredations of the present. In constructivist practice, it is essential that teachers respect and adapt to their didactic situation; in other words the sequencing and spacing of learning material depend on what the learner brings to the process, and the socio-economic and cultural conditions of the school in which teachers find themselves.

According to Fisher (2001:3) I repeat here, in terms of the classroom reality, a teacher does not merely teach the mechanics of reading and writing, he or she enthusiastically encourages young learners to think for themselves, to read texts critically and to solve problems imaginatively. In such a classroom, learners are not being told what to think because they are allowed to experience at first hand a community of inquiry: one in which they are exposed to, and enabled to, “internalise the skills and habits of higher order thinking” (Fisher, 2001:3).

Teacher 4 succeeded to create a relaxed and learner-friendly atmosphere. This class exhibited signs of learner involvement and constructivism. The learners enjoyed this lesson. The focus of this lesson implied understanding of literacy as a construction of meaning (what a picnic means in real life) and spelling of words derived from real-life experiences. With reference to the 4 dimensions teacher 4 articulated beliefs about the subject, beliefs she held about learners, what guided what she taught and methods of teaching the subject as crucial towards having a positive impact on learner achievement.

Lesson 5: 5.1 – 5.4: Afrikaans Quintile 3 school

Teacher 5 from a Quintile 3 was sitting on the chair in front of a noisy class.

She was holding a handbook in her hand and learners were holding their own books. The teacher read to learners while they were listening. She requested the whole class to read back to her and she was listening to them. She would demonstrate how to read some sentences with expressions and exclamations. She gave positive feedback when learners did well. When a learner gave a correct answer, the other learners would clap hands for that learner.

The teacher invited the learners to come and write on the chalkboard and break the words into consonants; for example the word babapaddatjie (Afrikaans). In this lesson learners were actively involved in classroom activities and mediated. The teacher mediated the learners since the start of the lesson.

Mbatha (2018:77) explains that in a language classroom scaffolding may be facilitated by reading pictures, reading aloud, shared reading and guided reading. The teacher should

always assist learners. Mudzielwana (2018:124) citing Fountas and Medric (2000) argues that “In shared reading, children participate in reading, learn critical concepts of how print works, get the feel of learning, and begin to perceive themselves as readers”.

Although it was a big class of over 45 to 50 learners, teacher 5 had control over all her learners. The classroom was organised in such a way that the teacher could attend to the slow learners or those who could not grasp well what she was teaching. According to the 4 dimensions, this seemed to indicate that she knew what guided her what to teach, how she taught literacy and the belief she held about her learners.

Lesson 6: 6.1 – 6.2 English literacy Quintile 3 school

Teacher 6 from a Quintile 3 was standing in front of the class. She instructed the learners to come and sit down on the carpet in front of the chalkboard. She flashed four cards with four letters of the alphabet. The learners read the letters aloud; for example, **a m n e**. After flashing the cards, she put them up on a chalkboard.

She instructed the learners to build words from the letters. The learners were fully engaged. Each word built she would write on the chalkboard. She instructed the learners to build sentences of their own from each word. She wrote the sentences on the chalkboard as they were saying them. She then read a story ‘Mr Mean’. She dramatized the story as she was reading it; reading with passion and expression. Learners were listening with glee on their faces. Murray, Shea and Shea (2004:35) state that “When students or learners like what they are doing, they are intrinsically motivated to attend and participate”. Murray, Shea and Shea (2004) argue that many teachers’ literacy instruction is focused upon what will be assessed and disregard what learners really want to achieve or learn. What is of importance to such teachers is to enhance learners’ tests scores, but they fail to broaden learners’ understanding and increase interest in learning: “When the textbook becomes the only source that teachers use, they recognize that this one-size-fits-all curriculum does not really meet learners’ needs” (Murray *et al.*, 2004). Teachers should use strategies that encourage in-depth questioning, rather than finding one right answer: methods or strategies that provide time for learners and teachers to “explore, investigate and delve” into a topic they have chosen (Murray *et al.*, 2004).

What was interesting in this class is that, although teacher 6 did not group the learners, when she asked a question, she managed to pick out those learners who could not follow the lesson. With reference to the 4 dimensions, this seemed to be an indication that she knew her learners; something that had guided her how she was teaching literacy and the curriculum that guided what to teach.

Lesson 7: 7.1 – 7.3:

Isixhosa literacy

Quintile 3 school

Teacher 7 from a Quintile 3 black school instructed learners to sit quietly in their groups with their reading books. The teacher then read to them. They used their fingers to point while she was reading. They did as instructed by the teacher. The next instruction was that they should read after her, when she finished a sentence. The title of the story was “Izihlangu ezintsha”.

Thereafter she asked them questions from the book for the learners to answer. Learners were not practically involved in the entire lesson. Some learners were asleep¹⁰: this show of extreme boredom confirms Freire’s observation about the soporific effects of teachercentred tuition. The process was marred by the large number of learners; over fifty compared to the first three Model C or Quintal 5 classes. Abadzi states that “learners in the Foundation Phase will probably perform better if they have more time, if classes are smaller and if teachers are more experienced” (Abadzi, 2008:598).

In chapter 2 section 2.2.4 Methods of communication, it is indicated that “classrooms are spaces where learners construct meaning using many different methods; including visual, written, spoken, auditory, and performative texts” (cited in De Souza & Adreotti, 2007:10). Norton explains that learners employ “these methods of communication to construct their own versions and formulations of them and create their own original methods of communication”. Teachers need to provide young learners:

with an environment in which learners can use recognised methods of communication, shape their own versions of them or even create their own

¹⁰ This proof of extreme boredom confirms Freire’s observation about the soporific effects of teacher-centred tuition. Cf. Ch. 1 in which Freire’s crucial attitude to constructivism is summarised.

methods altogether. Such accommodation of learners' communication needs is dependent upon teachers' own conceptions about teaching literacy

(De Souza & Adreotti, 2007:10).

Wilson and Peterson (2006) affirm that the most crucial shift in education in the past 20 years in South Africa has been a move away from perception of the "learner as a sponge, toward an image of learners as active constructors of meaning" (Wilson and Peterson, 2006). The perception that:

Learners construct meaning has intensified attention to learners' interpretations of what they see in class. Teachers might generate chances or opportunities for learners to learn: teachers may not suppress learners' interpretation.

(Wilson & Peterson, 2006).

In this class of teacher 7, the process was marred by the large number of learners; over fifty as stated above. Learners were drowsy and some fell asleep. The learners were seated in groups of six. What was interesting, although it was such a big class the teacher could call the learners by their names which would seem that she knew their literacy levels as well. But it was difficult to determine what guided how she was teaching and how she taught.

Lesson 8: 8.1 – 8.2

English literacy

Quintile 3 school.

Teacher 8 from a Quintile 3 sat at her desk and invited learners to come to her; individually they came up. The teacher was holding a book in her hand from which she asked questions like: "which animal do you see on the picture? Is it domestic animal or an animal on a farm or an animal in the wild?" The learner would respond as he or she thought or saw. The teacher would ask the class what they thought the correct answer was. Although it was an English lesson, the teacher now and again would switch over to isiXhosa for the learners to understand her question. The size of the class was about 50 learners. Some of the learners at her desk seemed not relaxed; they seemed to be afraid. Little effort was made to interact with learners or draw upon their own knowledge resources.

Inherent in constructivist thought is the understanding that for learning to take place those it is meant for should play an active role (Shaik, 2016). In line with this thinking, Freire considers learners' experiences to be crucial to "construction of real knowledge: they bring with them opinions about the world, and about life" (Freire & Horton, 1991:57). The learner shares his or her experiences with the teacher and together they construct "a democratic type of knowledge which is built on the foundation of mutual respect for a variety of histories, gender identities and religious or political convictions" (Freire & Horton 1991:57). For the learner, this is a type of self-discovery, as he or she is free to articulate his or her own social identity; which facilitates growth into responsible adulthood. "Diverse cultural experiences and knowledges are revealed and shared in a classroom" (Gramsci, 1995).

In chapter 2 of this thesis Murphy (2004:24) cites Snow *et al.* (1991) who maintain that numerous studies have been carried out "to answer the question of why some" young learners "fail to learn to read and write as well as others of their age". Conclusions from these studies include factors such as:

inappropriate teaching methods, low academic standards of schools attended by learners from poor homes, insufficient language stimulation at home and at school and a multiplicity of individual characteristics.

(Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman & Hemphill, 1991:2).

In teacher 8 class, the process was spoiled by the large number of learners; over fifty as well. The learners were not seated in groups. Among the 4 dimensions the teacher knew what guided her 'what' (curriculum) she taught. But it was difficult to determine what guided how she was teaching and the beliefs she held about her learners.

These observations helped considerably to address the main two questions of this study "What are Grade 3 teachers' philosophies on literacy?" As well as "How do Grade 3 teachers of literacy apply such philosophies in the teaching and learning of literacy at rural primary schools?"

7.4 Limitations

This study was limited in its scope in that one teacher at one of the former Model C schools was not available for interviewing or observation in the classroom. Following each lesson observed, teachers were requested to reflect upon what transpired during the lesson (Reflective Journals). That is, after each observation, teachers were requested to provide a short description of what they taught, why they were teaching it and how it was to be taught. The initial plan was to sit with the teachers post lessons and go through the questions again in order to probe further what actually transpired during a lesson. This plan had to be aborted because all the teachers did not have time to sit for such deliberations. Even though the guiding questions for reflecting were answered, answers given were very short and did not reveal the richness of lessons I had observed.

7.5 Contributions of the study

No other thesis has examined teachers' philosophies with regards to teaching literacy at the Grade 3 level in South Africa. This thesis shows for the first time, and definitively, the difference it would make to literacy teaching nationally, if teachers were made aware of the notion of 'teaching philosophy' and coached to develop individual, conscious understandings of what underlies their classroom practice.

This study in its contribution sought to determine the existence and use of teachers' philosophies on literacy teaching and learning at rural primary schools. It emphasised the understanding of teachers' philosophies and their beliefs in the teaching of literacy that contributes to the knowledge of how literacy could be taught more effectively by: (i) identifying ways to make literacy teachers critically aware when teaching literacy; (ii) determining ways for teachers to reflect sufficiently on their own socio-political and economic assumptions when teaching. It sought to make teachers aware that in today's classrooms in South Africa there is a wide diversity of learners, which demands flexibility of literacy instruction. The study clearly states that if teachers are conscious of their

philosophy of practice, they are more likely to be able to strategically adapt their attitudes to suit a diverse group of learners. The study emphasised salient points such as:

(i) Teachers need to regard literacy less as a set of tools and more as the result of knowledge constructed between learners and teachers.

(ii) It is important to remember that education is meant to prepare learners for life outside the classroom.

(iii) 'Being literate' in this broad sense denotes far more than mastery of the grammar and vocabulary of an individual language: literacy suggests a social functionality and conversance with any system of knowledge.

(iv) If literacy teachers are fixed in their modes of thinking and unable to adjust their literacy teaching to the social and intellectual backgrounds of their learners, learners will not be able to identify with the literacy lessons and will remain semi-literate: which appears to be what is happening.

(v) If, however, teachers are made fully aware of their mode of tuition, and trained to reflect critically upon their own practice, they are more able to recognise the knowledge and skills latent in their learners; using this knowledge as a scaffold for further and more interactive knowledge construction.

Of interest is how in this study teachers' philosophies touched on specific environmental issues that influence their decision-making when it comes to the teaching-learning of literacy.

7.6 Concluding comments

This study provided an overview of the dire predicament of literacy in South African classrooms. It highlighted the fact that South African primary school learners' literacy skills and abilities are below the international norm for their age and grade. Ensuing from this reality and concern, this study sought to capture the philosophies of Foundation Phase teachers concerning their teaching of literacy.

The study examined the philosophical attitudes and underlying assumptions behind teachers' daily practice as literacy teachers. The study sought to explicate such

questions as (i) *What does being literate mean in the 21st century?* (ii) *How do socio-economic circumstances affect the quest for literacy?* (iii) *What is the teacher's role in enabling literacy development?*

On the question of what being literate in the 21st century entails, this study has made clear that there are traditional and contemporary notions of literacy that speak to the affordance of different meanings of literacy and being literate to different audiences. What has become clear is that literacy can signify different things to different audiences. Given the fact that the present research project explores teachers' philosophies of the teaching of literacy, the main ideas explored in this study deal with literacy as reading, writing, speaking, listening with understanding and participation.

This study indicated how socio-economic circumstances affect the quest for literacy, it has indicated that the majority of South African learners are faced with certain dominant learner challenges which determine, and compromise, literacy acquisition and development. Diverse negative factors in rural schools can retard literacy achievement: poverty, learner's educational history, school attendance and instructional methods.

The study explained that it is crucial for teachers to critically review or reflect on how they teach. This will make certain that they develop proper and efficient teaching strategies and augment their teaching practice. The changing demands and responsibilities exerted on teachers necessitate that they must be reflective to respond appropriately to their altering situations. Teachers are confronted with learners who have various needs; and their teaching needs to cater to all of them; irrespective of their cognitive, social, cultural and economic backgrounds.

7.7 Summary of the thesis

This thesis suggests primarily that, after an exhaustive analysis of the teaching of eight primary school literacy teachers, literacy levels could greatly be improved by alerting such teachers across the country to the significance and usefulness of knowing about the phenomenon of teachers' philosophies on literacy. Because the thesis is concerned at heart with the plight of learners in poor areas, I synthesized a theoretical framework

based upon the issue of social justice. Freire takes up a central role in such an investigation: his concern with the oppressed, the importance of critical literacy and acknowledging the learners' own store of knowledge. Vygotsky's emphasis on mediation is helpful here, knowing the conditions, particular talents and family lives even, of individual learner's keys in with the focus of a thesis concerned with social justice; finding ways, affordable and practical strategies, to lift families and communities out of cycles of illiteracy, poverty and depression. Schön plays a crucial role in completing this theoretical framework: his notion of self-reflection is vital to the project which argues centrally that literacy teachers need to take a step back from their daily teaching and reflect on what pedagogy informed their daily work. Between Freire and Vygotsky, a coherent theoretical structure coalesces for the discussion of teachers' improved literacy practice.

This background, the precise mechanism of Neuman's levels of analysis qualitative data and a case study approach allowed the researcher to formulate certain clear conclusions, apart from the core assertion that literacy teachers benefit immediately and observably from a knowledge of their own pedagogy, their distinctive and unique philosophies on literacy.

At some of Quintile 3 schools literacy was taught routinely in a teacher-centred manner but that practice was largely the result of grim necessity: the classes were simply too large to allow for Vygotskian mediation with learners for hard-pressed teachers. At schools with the least infrastructure, however, there was evidence of teachers sharing knowledge, ideas and initiatives which in several cases proved crucial in resolving issues of concern.

Unlike Quintile 5 schools which enjoy so many benefits of good funding, these schools find it easy to allow for Vygotskian mediation with smaller number of learners. Instead of greater equality between schools, the same bifurcation noted in India, between sanctuary schools in rich urban areas and neglected, overcrowded schools in poor areas in the countryside, is increasing. This is a grave injustice to thousands of learners who need to

acquire literacy in an imaginative, lively and critical manner if they mean to break the chains of an oppressive situation.

7.8 Further research

This confined investigation into conditions at rural schools in the FP in an isolated area of the Western Cape suggests a further investigation on the extent to which thinking about ones development and beliefs is a core component in teacher education.

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ANNEXURE A

Directorate: Research

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APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHIN THE WESTERN CAPE

Note

- This application has been designed with students in mind.
- If a question does not apply to you indicate with a N/A
- The information is stored in our database to keep track of all studies that have been conducted on the WCED. It is therefore important to provide as much information as is possible

1 APPLICANT INFORMATION

1.1 Personal Details		
1.1.1	Title (Prof / Dr / Mr/ Mrs/Ms)	Mr
1.1.2	Surname	Dyasi
1.1.3	Name (s)	Mzimkulu
1.1.4	Student Number (If applicable)	215300181

1.2 Contact Details		
1.2.1	Postal Address	P.O.Box 4654 George East 6539
1.2.2	Telephone number	044 8715433
1.2.3	Cell number	0823374722

1.2.4	Fax number	
1.2.5	E-mail Address	samdyasi@gmail.com
1.2.6	Year of registration	2015
1.2.7	Year of completion	2017

2 DETAILS OF THE STUDY

2.1 Details of the degree or project		
2.1.1	Name of the institution	Cape Pensinsula University of Technology
2.1.2	Degree / Qualification registered for	D.Ed
2.1.3	Faculty and Discipline / Area of study	Education
2.1.4	Name of Supervisor / Promoter / Project leader	Dr. Cina Mosito
2.1.5	Telephone number of Supervisor / Promoter	021 6801694 /0732776825
2.1.6	E-mail address of Supervisor / Promoter	mositoC@cput.ac.za

2.1.7	Title of the study
Teachers' philosophies on literacy teaching and learning in rural primary schools.	

2.1.8	What is the research question, aim and objectives of the study
2.1.9	Name (s) of education institutions (schools)

2.1.10	Research period in education institutions (Schools)	
2.1.11	Start date	01 February 2016

ANNEXURE B

Directorate: Research



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wced.wcape.gov.za **REFERENCE:** 20160121-6817

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mr Mzimkulu Dyasi
PO Box 4654
George East
6539

Dear Mr Mzimkulu Dyasi

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: TEACHERS' PHILOSOPHIES ON LITERACY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 February 2016 till 30 September 2016**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

Directorate: Research

DATE: 21 January 2016

ANNEXURE C

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<i>***For office use only</i>	
Date submitted	11 Nov 2015
Meeting date	n/a
Approval	P/Y√/N
Ethical Clearance number	EFEC 5-11/2015

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM

This form is to be completed by students, staff members and other researchers intending to undertake research in the Faculty. It is to be completed for any piece of research the aim of which is to make an original contribution to the public body of knowledge.

Please note:

- Complete the form in MS Word – no handwritten forms will be accepted.
- All attachments are to be included in this document – your email submission should include only **one** MS Word attachment.
- Your surname must appear at the beginning of the file name, e.g. SMITH Ethics application

1 Applicant and project details

Name(s) of applicant(s):	Mzimkulu Sam Honey Dyasi
Project/study Title:	Teachers' philosophies on literacy teaching and learning in rural primary schools
Is this a staff research project, i.e. not for degree purposes?	No
If for degree purposes:	Degree: D Ed Supervisor(s): Dr Cina P Mosito
Funding sources:	Applied for URF

2 Abstract of study

learning. Interviews will be conducted with ten teachers who teach in the Foundation Phase Grade 3. These teachers all teach in the rural areas of the Western Cape. The data will thematically be analysed in order to arrive at themes that inform what the situation is on the ground.

The study is designed within the qualitative research paradigm and uses the **case study design** as the main research strategy. A case study is regarded as a relevant design because it provides latitude to focus on an individual or group in a school setting who satisfy the characteristics of the main interest – teaching and learning of literacy. The researcher aims to explore the teachers' philosophies on literacy teaching and learning in rural primary schools. Participants who are teaching literacy at the Foundation Phase (Grades R – 3) will be approached with the aim of

EFEC Form V3_updated 2015

exploring their opinions and beliefs.

This study intends to ascertain the importance of teachers' philosophies on literacy teaching and learning in the rural primary schools. Knowing teachers' thinking and beliefs in the teaching of literacy will reveal their strengths and challenges in their conceptualisation of literacy teaching. When these are known, policy makers and curriculum advisors will be at a position to target those areas of teacher knowledge and skills which the study might reveal as needing of support.

3 Ethical considerations specific to the intended study/project

Provide explicit and concise answers to the following questions:

3.1 Sampling: How will you recruit participants? Is there any possibility that participants might feel coerced to take part and if so how can you manage this issue?

Principals of 2 schools will be approached for permission to recruit 4 teachers respectively from each school to participate in the study. It will be made clear to the principal and the teachers that participation is voluntary. Teachers will not be coerced in any way.

3.2 How will participants be made aware of what is involved in the research [prior to, during and after data collection]?

A consent form will be developed in which it will be clearly stated what the study entails. Information on the consent form will be read with the teachers prior to them deciding whether to participate in the study.

3.3 How will you ensure that participants really do understand their rights?

As stated above, the consent form will stipulate participants' rights and I will also explain which part in the consent form deals with participants' rights.

3.4 How will you collect data?

The data will be collected in four ways:

- 1. Individual face-to-face interviews**
- 2. The interviews will be followed by observations**
- 3. Focus group interviews**
- 4. Reflective journal.**

Attach your data collection instrument(s) to the end of this document.

3.5 Is there a risk of harm to participants, to the participants' community, to the researcher/s, to the research community or to the University? If so how will these risks be managed?

There is no known risk. If risk and discomfort arise the participants can contact me.

3.6 What plans do you have for managing the confidentiality and anonymity of participants in this study?

I will use pseudonyms. In addition, security measures will be put in place to ensure that no piece of evidence can be linked to an individual and that only the researcher and advisor have access to the data.

3.7 Are there any potential conflicts of interest for you in undertaking this study? **There are no potential conflicts of interest.**

3.8 How will the findings be used on completion of the study?

One journal article will be produced before the final write up of the thesis is completed. This will be followed by a thesis that will be submitted for examination. The outcomes might also be shared with the Western Cape Education Department.

3.9 Does this work raise any other ethical issues and if so, how will you manage these? **The first is access to the data source: permission will be sought out from the relevant authorities (WCED, School management and the teachers). The second one relates to abiding by the principle of doing no harm to participants. The participants will be treated with respect, data will not be doctored in any way as only the scientific methods of collection and analysis will be followed and I will not ruin my reputation as a researcher in any way that could bring the study, participants and the university into disrepute.**

3.10 What training or experience do you bring to the project that will enable you to recognize and manage the potential ethical issues mentioned above?

I hold two Master's degrees for which I have collected data for research purposes. The process exposed me to many experiences such as keeping the confidentiality of the participants – these will enable me to recognize and manage the potential ethical issues.

4 Research Ethics Checklist

4.7 Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?		X
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Ethical considerations:	Yes	No
4.1 Does the study involve participants who are unable to give informed consent? Examples include children, people with learning disabilities, or your own students. Animals?		X
4.2 Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? Examples include students at school, members of self-help groups, residents of nursing homes — anyone who is under the legal care of another. Schools and teachers whose involvement I first have to negotiate through WCED	X	
4.3 Will it be necessary for participants to participate in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time — for example, covert observation of people in non-public places?		X
4.4 Will the study with the research subject involve discussion of sensitive topics? Examples would include questions on sexual activity or drug use.		X
4.5 Will the study involve invasive, intrusive, or potentially harmful procedures of any kind (e.g. drugs, placebos or other substances to be administered to the study participants)?		X
4.6 Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing on sentient subjects?		X

4.8	Does your research involve environmental studies which could be contentious or use materials or processes that could damage the environment? Particularly the outcome of your research?		X
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4 Attachment checklist

Please Tick:

The following documents have to be included at the end of this document:

Attachment	✓
5.1 Consent form	✓
5.2 Data collection instrument(s)	✓
5.3 Other relevant documentation (Please specify)	N/A

Signatures:

Researcher/Applicant:	<input type="text"/>	Supervisor:	<input type="text"/>
Date:	7 October 2015	Date:	7 October 2015

Please note that in signing this form, supervisors are indicating that they are satisfied that the ethical issues raised by this work have been adequately identified and that the proposal includes appropriate plans for their effective management.

Please insert attachments here:

One-on-one semi-structured interview guide for teachers

Question	Notes
1. How long have you been teaching in this grade in particular?	
2. What does literacy mean to you?	
3. Explain to how you decide on topics and themes for teaching, e.g. reading, writing, speaking and listening?	
4. What informs your choice of teaching methods and strategies?	

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Focus Group Interviews with teachers

Question	Notes

Classroom Observation schedule

The classroom observations will be based on video-taping. The main aim is to examine and interrogate alignment between teachers' responses in interviews and what they actually do as they teach.

Teacher actions		What are learners doing?	
Item	How	Item	How

Teacher's Reflective diary guide

Following each lesson observed, teachers will be requested to reflect on what transpired during the lesson. Prior to each observation, teachers will be requested to provide a short description of what they will be teaching, why they will be teaching it and how it will be taught. During the reflection the researcher and the teacher will go over the questions again in terms of responding to what actually transpired during the lesson.

Question	A teacher's response
1. What subject did I teach?	

2. What was the topic for the lesson?	
3. What methods and strategies did I use in delivering the lesson?	
4. What informed my choice and use of the strategies/methods?	

Comments by Education Faculty Ethics Committee:

The Education Faculty Ethics Committee hereby grants this application unconditional clearance which is valid for four years from the date of issue.

Approved: X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Referred back:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved subject to adaptations:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chairperson:				Date: 29 November 2015	

Approval Certificate/Reference: EFEC 5-11/2015

ANNEXURE D

TO EDUCATORS

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

JANUARY 2016

Dear Prof/Dr/Mr/Ms.....

You are hereby invited to participate in a research study on **Teachers' Philosophies on Literacy Teaching and Learning in Rural Primary Schools**. In particular, the overall aim of this research project is to determine how the underlying philosophies of individual teachers affect classroom tuition: to assess how such philosophies can be honed and made more conscious through self-reflection in order to make teaching more focussed, structured and effective. To ask these questions, the project examines teachers' philosophies of teaching and learning of literacy at certain selected rural primary schools.

This research will require about 35 to 45 minutes of your time and will take place at your school on one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, followed by classroom observations and teachers' reflective journals the next day after the one-on-one interviews. The interviews will be conducted on the school premises and will be tape-recorded.

There are no anticipated risks or discomfort related to this research. You may also find interviews to be very enjoyable and rewarding. You will be afforded a chance to use the language of your choice (IsiXhosa, English or Afrikaans) I am fluent in all the three languages.

Several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and identity. Your names will be protected. I will always use words like: Miss/Jevrou/Ma'am. The tapes will be destroyed

once they have been transcribed and typed up. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason.

The results from this study will be presented in writing in a form of a doctoral thesis which will be accessible to the department of education authorities and other professionals to help them better understand the teachers' philosophies on teaching and learning in a rural primary school classroom.

If you require further information about this study or would like to speak to the researcher, please contact Sam Dyasi, at 0823374722 or e-mail: (samdyasi@gmail.com). This study has been approved by the ethics committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology Research Faculty. Your participation is appreciated. Thank you and kind regards

.....

MZIMKULU SAMSO HONEY DYASI

(This section below is for the participants)

I have read and understood the above information regarding this research study on Teachers' Philosophies on Literacy Teaching and Learning in Rural Primary Schools and the consent to participate in this study.

..... (Printed Name)

..... (Signature)

..... (Date)

ANNEXURE E

Questions

- 1. How long have you been teaching in this grade in particular? Please explain your experiences during this period.

- 2. What does literacy mean to you?

- 3. What do you think it means to be a literacy teacher?

4. How do you teach literacy instruction?

5. Explain to how you decide on topics and themes for teaching, e.g. reading, writing, speaking and listening?

6. What informs your choice of teaching methods and strategies?

7. What method do you follow as literacy teacher?

8. How do you incorporate these teaching methods and strategies into your own daily teaching style?

9. How would you describe the literacy level of the grade 3 learners?

Do you and other teachers share the teaching roles at the school? Please explain your reason.

ANNEXURE F

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

LESSON FOCUS	Lesson duration	Time chunks	Tallying teacher actions	Tallying learner action
LESSON FOCUS	Lesson duration	Time chunks	Tallying teacher actions	Tallying learner action
LESSON FOCUS			1	
LESSON FOCUS				
LESSON FOCUS				
LESSON FOCUS				
LESSON FOCUS				

The schedule allowed for making sense of the classroom observations and for examining individual categories; namely lesson focus, lesson duration, time chunks, what is the teacher doing (that is, tallying the teachers actions) and what is the learner doing (that is, tallying the learner’s actions). Further this schedule fits the purpose for

examining alignment or misalignment in varying degrees and ways: between what teachers claimed or intended to do in the classroom and what they actually did do.

ANNEXURE G

TEACHER'S REFLECTIVE DIARY GUIDE

Following each lesson observed, teachers will be requested to reflect on what transpired during the lesson. Prior to each observation, teachers will be requested to provide a short description of what they will be teaching, why they will be teaching it and how it will be taught. During the reflection the researcher and the teacher will go over the questions again in terms of responding to what actually transpired during the lesson.

Question	A teacher's response
1. What subject did I teach?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2. What was the topic for the lesson?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
3. What methods and strategies did I use in delivering the lesson?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

4. What informed my choice and use of the strategies/methods?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
5. How did I incorporate my teaching methods and strategies into my own daily teaching Style?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
6. Has my lesson plan provided activities, methodology, assessment, intervention strategies and resources needed?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
7. Has my lesson plan provided activities, methodology, assessment, intervention strategies and resources needed?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
8. Were activities relevant to the Lesson plan?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
9. In my lesson, did I plan and cater for learners of different home languages?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

	<hr/> <hr/>
10. Did my questions emphasize Higher-order thinking (e.g.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
11. Analysis and problem-solving) and not only memorization and Recall?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

ANNEXURE H

Question 1 comparison

	Question 1: <i>How long have you been teaching in this grade, in particular grade 3? Please explain your experiences during the period you have been teaching.</i>
v20	<p>14 years: 1. Nice grade because kids are older therefore more receptive to what a teacher . 2. Because of their age they also give back 3. A teacher can learn with them as a result</p>
v002	<p>So I'm quite to grade 3 at Holy Cross, this is only my second year. Last year I was off the new</p> <p>I did up to the third term</p> <p>nt syllabus, years at the beginning of you say my experience.</p> <p>With regard to liter we're fortunate at this</p> <p>'s alright, Yes yeah.</p> <p>è I think. Too many famthey come from fairly literatthe language acquisition but at the same time I sti ing with that still with</p> <p>ginning of their life is sc enough yes yes, good,</p> <p>ith children coming from v</p> <p>ot taken to public libraries ed to the vocabulary, they c</p> <p>the way it is,</p> <p>different country Yes.</p> <p>Yes your</p> <p>exposed t receiv</p> <p>deed. The tea</p> <p>ead of books, as we're us Thanks, thanks</p> <p>rk that all plays a part in ger</p> <p>è is two years in grade 3 in taught</p>

ears. She mentions that t
their

school because their learners are privileged. They come from fairly literate homes where they are exposed to books on a regular basis. But at the same time she experienced that there is not enough reading at home. The learners are not exposed to vocabulary.

v004 I've taught, I can't tell you exactly, I would say it's claim in excess of 13 years I've been in that

experience teaching there... specifically with language. I'd say that over the years, there was a very high level of expertise in over the last, I've seen language. What children are, we're experiencing more children with reading. We are finding that we are teaching children who come from different backgrounds and we have to address more and more of those learning barriers with different strategies. We use a lot of vocabulary. Um things like uh uh vocabulary. A lot of which is sometimes a vocabulary that we don't get taught to the children anymore; these things that we grew up with. **Yes.**

nursery rhymes you know, no tv... um yes so things that we used to do is that things like exercises in the grade 3 class. With the 3rd grade we also emphasize a lot on the rhyming of words. Because teaching for 30 years, we emphasize a lot on rhyming and they find it very difficult to write rhyming. An important aspect as is poetry, you know children need to read. There's more emphasis on reading very softly so one has to read with fluency, expression, and understanding. Enough anymore I think. So I try to create, send children to read in that sense, in all those aspects that I've mentioned. We also have an outdoor program like; capital letters, full stops, those things. I think children need to hear those things in on audibly. They just don't know what they are and they need to hear them again and again. **Yes.**

they need to have extension and be exposed to different things. Sometimes problematic in my magazines in my class, I let them read magazines, children like to read. I take them for a forest walk but then they all have to read. In the middle of the river where we end up having our picnic. They have to say this poem. It's just the sound of nature. It's just awesome, it's just a totally unique experience and they love it. I've answered too much. **quite interesting because quite often children who are strong learners they struggle with reading.**

question, sorry. if I go too fast. **Sometimes it becomes a challenge for them. Sometimes it becomes a challenge for them. Sometimes it becomes a challenge for them.**

that initially there was a very high level of expertise with learning barriers. She is teaching learners from different backgrounds which are sometimes a problem. She has to address those learning barriers with regard to language. Learners lack the necessary skills to understand.

Yes, I mean what you mean. It's not fine. It's been thirteen years.

Um this year's my second year. SP: In Grade 3 so yah with the multi grade Grade 3 and 2 together. SP: Um so yah you, before that I taught Grade 7, 6 and 5. SP So only been now my **second year for Grade 3.** **The teacher states that it was her second year in grade 3. She does experience about the grade she has been teaching other grades in the past. She is teaching a multigrade classes and grade is one of the classes in that multigrade class..**

v19	<p>I' . I've been teaching 15 years in grade 3 and during my time the curriculum changed quite a it was very upsetting c t times to see different curriculums, place emphasis in literacy. So um in ny time there was quite a lot of changes, yes, about curriculum has changulum. The teacheras been teaching for 15 years in grade 3. The changes or curricula v something that was really upsetting to her. These g n different things</p>
v27	<p>This is my fourth year teaching Grade 3. The experience that I have is that some of dren work well here are some children who really struggle, but I st leave them. s I can to help them. Dyasi: Thank you, is there g you want add from your experience if you can remember. There are ry n who really str to assist them. We do have interventions after ate them l, so that we c with work. When we are doing the ower the level tion after s compared to the during the day work: The year in r explains tha grade 3 She mentions that there are ere are those 's who are de who struggle.</p>
v28	<p>Teacher: I have been teaching this for 5, my experiences with the grade... grade I think its.. we have a years ners because they are struggling t the end of the day so we find cy because some of them I think ome they are speaking Afrikaans t this foreigners that are in our e foreigners the people that are arners that their parents are from guage that we teach in one of my <i>where they can go and ut our</i></p> <p>: She has been in the grade for five lot of learners in literacy. The reas barriers. . Some of them are fro isiXhosa speaking school. Worst eg, from Burundi. This makes it dif s, its poor. It for us.</p> <p>does experience a problem with her learners are having learner speak Afrikaans and we are of arners are foreign country ,</p>
v31	<p>Miss: My teaching experis +/- 20 years from now, the whole phase, foundation phase, but in Grade 3 I think I've +/- 10 years - first time I came here I taught Grade 3 and I'm still in Grade 3 The experie 10 years I've been in Grade 3 here) divide my learners into three 2,3 in the sa can't even f Grade 1,2,3. I had to go back intervention that I had to divide</p>

to Grade 1 work, Grade 2 work until I got to Grade 3 work. It was a very difficult experience, in fact it still do, even right now coz it's still happening, so I have to group them doing Grade 1 work because I once taught Grade 1, so I've got that experience, so I have to use my experience to get them to be able to write, first of all and also to read and to be able to form some words. And for the Grade 2, I could also do Grade 2 work, it was a very short time for the Grade 3 because now that I have to start from the beginning in the one class from Grade 1,2,3. So Grade 3 work, I didn't do very much of it because it was the time, I was running short of time. So it was the experience I got, because the learners or the teachers, I don't know which one I'm going to say, which one I'll say is wrong or right, I don't know. Because these learners they come to Grade 3, they can't read and they can't write, that's my problem. All these years so you have to do double or triple work all the time and it's really difficult and even those interventions, we try at a dedicated to the taped to sit at the half of the to do some interventions all the time, give them more work, homework, involve parents. But it's not working because, this thing, this department thing that the learners must proceed if they can't fail because of age or whatever or the age in the group. It kills us as teachers. Even also the learners also, because they been affected, because you have to take that learner from Grade 1 not knowing anything so to Grade 2. See because there is a certain number that is supposed to pass, so that child must go to Grade 2. And they don't have any knowledge of Grade 1 work or sometimes they haven't finished even Grade 1 work. And also the teachers always say that they have to go according to the schedule. And to my experience it's that, when you are teaching a child, yes a schedule is there just to guide you, but you have to follow the instincts in the classroom. **She explains that she is 10 years as grade 3 teacher. I found that the learners could read, write and could not even formulate words and write a sentence. But she states that made some interventions.**

ANALYTIC CATEGORY 1 (CRUCIAL FINDING)

1. LENGTH OF SERVICE IN GRADE 3

0-5 year	6-10years	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30
1111 = 4		1111 =4			

Teacher who participated in this have between 0-5 years and 11-15 years in Grade 3

Q2 What does literacy mean to you? When we talk about literacy what comes to your mind?

1. child's experience of his (i) mother tongue/language, (ii) the language of teaching and also the additional language is important to him, (iii) how the child learns to learn in the school's mother

tongue. 2. (i) additionally how he is going find his place in his area or society. (ii) Literacy basically opens up the world for him> He must be able to understand what is happening in his town, he must understand what's happening in his community, so that he must be able to read, must write, he must understand otherwise he will be lost in his own environment, in his own school but also in his country. That is why he has additional language. He must be able to understand it worldwide yes. **(does this teacher regard literacy as an additional language?)(i) Teacher understands literacy as a child's as experience of language for learning purposes (ii) How through language a child begins to understand what is happening around him/her**

Well it's understanding, so in terms of English it's understanding anything, its understanding conversation, it's general vocabulary, you know knowledge of words, it's being able to read obviously – that is number one. Um but not just to read and not know what you're reading, to read and understand and that is again something that we struggle with um and it affects Maths, you know literacy affects every subject obviously because we need to be able to read and understand in any subject. Yes. So literacy is the foundation for everything we do yeah. Thank you so much. Do you want to say more? No. Okay it's alright. Thank you. She maintains that literacy means to her, understanding everything, understanding conversation, to have a general vocabulary, to be able to read, not only to read but also to comprehend what you have read. Literacy is the foundation for everything we do.

Well it means communication. That for me is the most important thing; that a child is able to communicate effectively. So what your aim with literacy is to um, give the child tools with which to communicate effectively and then obviously enrich them by introducing them to experiences like that poem on the rock and introducing them to literature that they wouldn't normally be exposed to. Um and also don't forget the radio and the tv. As much as we moan about the tv there are some very useful um programmes that can promote good language use. So um all the media um are also you know very much part of teaching the child communication skills so... okay. Thanks in deed. According to the teacher literacy means communication. For her a learner whose is communicating effectively is of paramount importance. Enrich the learners by introducing them to experiences like poetry and literature that they would not normally be exposed to.

To me it means all the components that gets put together to make a language um if it's Afrikaans or either English. It is everything that comes together to give the broader picture of what this subject or language is about. Um for me in Afrikaans it would be like your um jou werkwoorde, jou selfstandige naamwoorde, byvoeglike naamwoorde, all the things, all the tools you need to be capable of writing sentences and reading and pronunciation, pronunciation. SP Yes so for it's all those things that come together uh the building blocks basically to be a better um communicator. In today's life when you still younger or even when you grow older um I would like it for my kids to um remember what I taught them in Grade 3 and maybe then Grade 7 teacher asked what is a selfstandige naam word and then they remembered in Grade 3 teacher did this and oh that is what a self standige naamwoord is. That is for me what literacy is. **The teacher says to her literacy are all**

Well it means communication. That for me is the most important thing; that a child is able to communicate effectively. So what your aim with literacy is to um, give the child tools with which to communicate effectively and then obviously enrich them by introducing them to experiences like that poem on the rock and introducing them to literature that they wouldn't normally be exposed to. Um and also don't forget the radio and the tv. As much as we moan about the tv there are some very useful um programmes that can promote good language use. So um all the media um are also you know very much part of teaching the child communication skills so... okay. Thanks in deed. According to the teacher literacy means communication. For her a learner whose is communicating effectively is of paramount importance. Enrich the learners by introducing them to experiences like poetry and literature that they would not normally be exposed to.

the components that constitute a language, for example verbs, adjectives, nouns and pronouns. Reading, writing sentences and pronunciation are necessary in literacy.

It's like every aspect in life, it's about literacy. Everything where we look its literacy, maths literacy, geography's literacy, any subject it's literacy and if we go outside in the world there is literacy. I'm very passionate about literacy .**The teacher believes that everything or aspect of life is literacy to**

her. She states that mathematics, geography and any other subject is literacy. Whatever is outside in the world there is literacy.

Literacy is our language that we use, that we should always use with our children, so that they can know how to read and write it .That's why we must write everyday Dyasi: So that? So that they get used to reading and writing. When we read, we read in groups, and sometimes as individuals, so that each child can learn to stand by themselves, and can read by themselves. **The teacher maintains that literacy is the language we use as a nation. That language should be used by parents when communicating with their children. Learners must know how to read, speak and write.**

Teacher: Literacy means to me that the learner can be able to read, especially we are using our home, our mother tongue in here at Foundation phase isiXhosa so I think they must be able to read their mother tongue and they must be able to explain to.....bakwazi (know) even to construct you know they must not struggle even if we say to them 'can you tell me a story off.....can you re-tell me the story that you have already read to them, I feel they must be able to read me. Sam: You feel like literacy means to you.....reading? Teacher: Yes. Not only reading... you see they must be able to ... even not for reading as I said,

constr

uct.....t**She advocates that learners must be able to read their mother tongue. She**

o be able communicate, communication yes, in writing they must have writing skills.

feels that it should not be reading only but must comprehend what they are learning. They must be able to communicate with other people and be able to write.

All skills

in literacy should be encouraged.

Miss: About literacy, I think it's about knowing how to read, knowing how to write, and how to speak that is all literacy. Because if the child cannot read, and because you must read before you write. She believes the two goes hand in hand. **Dyase:** Yes, ok. Miss: So to me it goes hand in hand. So you must teach the children to read first, to be able to recognise a word and then from recognising the word and to be able to form it and write it down, and understand that word. And then from there that is when he puts those words down he must be able to read them. **Dyasi:** And say them **Miss:** And say them also. So by reading, you are saying it and at the same time you are being able to see. You see this word and you

recognise this word and then you say this word, then you write this word. **To her literacy means to be able to read, write and speak. She believes that if one cannot read he or**

she will not be able to write. The two go hand in hand

Question 3 comparison

	<p>Question 3: <i>What do you think it means to be a literacy teacher?</i> .</p>
<p>VOICE20</p>	<p>(i) make learning fun so that learners can understand the language. (ii) Teacher must give learners tools: (a) to master the language understand they can speak it correctly, (b) he must be able to read and understand what he reads because this opens other doors for him,(c) he must also be able to write it because you must be able to express yourself. In life today with social media, with whatsapp and sms the kids can't write anymore. They write abbreviated language, so you must assist/help them to get their language structure right in order to write something good in Afrikaans or English. He</p>

	<p>must be able to understand the rules of his language because in the end that is what we are proud of. We are in an Afrikaans school so we are proud of Afrikaans, we must be able to speak it properly. So you must be able to give him that love for his language so that he can apply it correctly because that opens doors. A child that can't read and write, later on won't be able to... won't be able to do maths, they struggle to complete question papers and they must be proud of their language. Thank you very much mam.</p> <p>(i) Making learning fun and providing learning tools for mastery of language e.g. understanding, reading, writing and speaking. Understands include helping learners to different forms of literacy register e.g. academic versus social network way of writing used</p>
<p>VOICE 002</p>	<p>Well it's to bring the children to that level of understanding that they need at their age obviously, age appropriate, to be able to grasp anything that they're doing so obviously literacy itself is broken up into reading, writing, um phonics. A literacy teacher has got a very broad range to cover. Yeah yeah. Writing for creative purposes, you know imaginative writing, writing to record as you do for interview purposes. reading out loud, you know that children are fluent and themselves to know</p> <p>when to stop and know how to read with the punctuation and read with understanding. And then reading for pleasure each that as well. Yeah. You've got to teach them example, writing so that, legibly, it's all part of literacy to me. Great</p> <p>recording etc. it to be a literacy teacher is to bring the learners to the level of understanding they need at their appropriate age that enables them to do the thing they are doing. A literacy teacher has got a broad range of purposes, imaginative writing</p>

VOICE 004

Yor that is difficult. I think you have to be creative, you have to think out of the box, you have to try and spread your... like again I've said all those things, you have to use every type of media and magazine and book and type of literature that is available to broaden their experience, um yeah. You just got to... sorry just stay that question again. **What do you think it means to be a literacy teacher?** Yeah and you have to inspire obviously

If you don't inspire the children to want to - what I did this year, in Korea, South Korea, in Seoul and she is doing creative writing as needed poems, children's poems for 8 and 9 year olds – can I needed it as part of her work thing that she had to do and I was do time in my classroom and I got them to write poems abothowed them to her photographed them and sent them off and she printed them profes her feedback. And she brought that back with her when she came c she came and addressed my class and the inspiration that that... t their poems and class that this big professor had looked a were so excited, um t they appreciated their poems and this was such an inspiration that it gc more poems. And one of the boys were writing

Say it. And

one poem after the other and bringing it to me to show me but fact, and not all of them were good but they were at least experimenting with words, and rhyme and subjects you know because it doesn't just have to be an English lesson. You obviously integrate into all your other subjects you know. So yeah life skills were obviously that particular one but it can go into all aspects. Rhyming in maths too you know, learn your tables. **That was great. Thank you. That is wonderful.**

She believes that a literacy teacher has to be creative. Has to think out of the box. You have to spread yourself and use everything like media, magazines, books and type of literature that is available to broaden their experience.

VOICE 009

U you must have a passion for literacy um again overall for teaching and then for language means and what it means to people that are able to speak that language and where it can take you to be able to speak English what countries you can speak t too

English and you won't just be confined to the world. So for me, a literacy teacher the most important other places children will be able to pick it up and enjoy, for what you teaching cause that's the easiest excited about it. is if you rubs off on them and they start getting don't want to go to school. They don't want to hear this boring stuff about the entertaining for them. So you taught them them so that they can go beyond learning something new. So you see it as this boring um oh this is literacy oh what you teaching for them to be able to grasp must look forward to having this lesson and must be creative and passionate about maintains that a literacy teacher must be hey teach. Make it fun for the learners or does that the learners will engage with joy and be able to quickly

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To open up the world for the child. Uh if I look at a child that's in a... teachers have different loves, you love literacy or you love math. The literacy teacher, that read, he can do a lot of things and the maths child can open up the world again. But to be a literacy teacher to me is I, I have to give that child um vocabulary to deal in the outside world. that Today our kids don't have a wide vocabulary. We have to give them that vocabulary. **How do you do** We with all these electronic stuff, there is no vocabulary to talk the children's so... they sit in front of pictures and then they can't talk about what the t

bring it to them and give them the vocabulary to write about these things that they see. **Thank you so much. Okay thank you.**

The teacher ascertains that a literacy teacher has to open the world of the learner. The teacher must help the learner to be able to read. This world that the teacher opens for the learner must enable the learner to do lot of things for him/herself. To do even mathematics,. Give the learner lots of vocabulary to make him or her talk, write and deal with the world outside there.

VOICE
027

. It makes me feel confident because I am using my mother isiXhosa, and tongue

	<p>Miss: When am teaching are Xhosa kids, so this is why I love teaching children interested in their future they can know how to read and write isiXhosa. When do to show that you are a literacy teacher, to keep our books, we are supposed to do actions. Our story, what we are doing, we do actions, we dramatise. We do everything that can help them internalise the lesson.</p> <p>literacy teacher.</p> <p>assets that a teacher must have confidence as must be active. The teacher must make his or her must do everything that can help the learner:</p>
<p>VOICE 028</p>	<p>Teacher: I think it means that at end of the day, I must be proud that because my learners are good in reading they are good in writing they are good in communicating so it means a lot to me when I see that its happening to my learners when they are able to do those things like reading, writing and ... that is the best thing to me t means to be successful in learners to be able to read, speak, and communicate. This to pride. and write.</p>
<p>VOICE 031</p>	<p>Miss: I would say, back then it was very nice to be a literacy teacher. But because of these new developments each and every time, there is this new thing and when you are trying to grab this one and the department changes this to something else, so we get confused. This new change of system from the kids they are given too much right. We are unable to enforce whatever you had. Because sometimes really these kids are coming from other backgrounds different backgrounds and there is no wrong and right. As teachers we have to enforce that to them. So they are using totally different language, very very rude and you have to change them to use this school language. This integration (I'd say integration because there are Coloureds) makes it difficult for them to understand and to speak the real Xhosa, if it's Xhosa you know The language that is written in the books it's not the language that they are using. So it's a totally different thing. The language they are speaking at home, language in the books, the language they are supposed to be using in teaching, so it ends up being chaos. And when you are supposed to change them to say the words they</p>

way it's supposed to be, they get confused because at home they are using this word.

Dyasi: Do you feel demotivated as a teacher

Miss: Yes, at some point you feel that you can't cope anymore, because this situation of this child depends on you and you are trying your level best to change it to be what is needed but you feel that you are failing the child, though you are trying your best.

She feels that you should be happy (nice) One should not be disturbed by these new changes. A literacy teacher must understand that these learners come from different backgrounds and therefore deal with them in the context and environment they come from. The languages which they use are something rude and inappropriate; a literacy teacher must therefore understand and try to support. There is a lot a literacy teacher has to do

Question 4 comparison

	Question 4: <i>How do you teach Literacy instruction?</i>
VOICE 020	<p><i>The fourth question? How do you teach literacy?</i> We... in I think that also joins in by the . We join</p> <p>on the planning but we have a basic framework planning. you have listening activities that they have to listen</p> <p>You work in the framework, talking activities where you break the</p> <p>for, or a game maybe for vocabulary is extended</p> <p>instruction, you have ou use, physical vocabulary</p> <p>language development, the</p> <p>vocabulary knowledge because very limited. You must ensure through the use of the computer different phases. How you learn, their phase and</p> <p>Then um, we basically work iterated these components are very important and parents</p> <p>sounds, they must be able to reproduce because that is the most important thing for me able to apply it in his writing activity after this</p> <p>their phase, grade 2 – ith everyone's handwriting to ensure that the</p> <p>different phases then it much anymore because of today's type an email, text</p> <p>comprehension reading. Do and sms,</p> <p>reading? All tho that is language previously. He must have the Yes it is,</p> <p>to know what a consonant r things and that is how we teach Thank you very n because</p> <p>consonants is, what is diminished and then naturally handwriting</p> <p>They they whatsapp, they don't must be able to write properly struggle with forming the letters</p>

transcription. **Yes.** literacy to additional language.

**Follows an agreed on framework but makes it fun; teaches instructions through a game.
A lot of teaching is done through reading which she consider important for all grades**

Because there are so many facets each um literacy period is broken up into um
different So for reading itself we read , the children read to me
sections. with their
group , um each child gets a turn to read pages . They are
reader um, h
s expected to
o , so if y
o encour other, they help each other
2age you know; wh
each then we

every easy way in following the same path saying anything. My eyes and I **group**
 the children and as a whole or the group reads **there is list**
 construction. U **a teacher is very much, needs to** Um
 ther. Um then **re tell the st**
with the expression, with was the sky and then why do y **they can re t**
 is yo **their**
when it comes to compre
 courage the children to
 reading even tho en obviously that's a cor
 in is thinking of other wor
readin **read so a formal compre**
 g and those kind of open
 teaches e yeah. So I t what they actually read. U
 follow e **do creative writing lessor** **periods into different**
text tha d a lovely story about sor
words ng where they **then from th**
closed! **to them. Der** difficult for so of them t **als** e
 followi who have not been expc
 ng th something that is comple
 childrer **whole class reads with**
 who are **cher while listening to tl**
 lea **cy, with the emphasis** t **they have read in their own wes.** Um for
explain **followed by questions l** em to us
that th **e writing. They have to** **at is quite**
esting. She
open **rrrect way t**
questic **d with**
This

v How do I teach literacy? Well you know you've got all your aspects of literacy, you got your oral
 c work, you got your phonic work, you got your creative writing, your handwriting, your grammar
 I and um you reading off course. So all those aspects when you look at it as a whole,
 c work together to um give the child all the things that they need. Obviously

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Something um and very problematic to a lot of children. So you also look at auditory an phonics is a huge
their strength, so if their vis

ength and not the
auditory you

will hone in more on your reading side of things and get them to look at the visual things to help them. But if the auditory is their strong point then you gonna hone in on activities that will give them more success in that area. You have to look at the child's strengths and weaknesses and build on the strength and try and build up on the weaknesses. **Yeah it is quite interesting. Do you want to say more?** Have you got more?

Teacher explains that she has to know all aspect of literacy first like, oral work, phonic work, creative writing, grammar and reading. They all work together. From there, she looks at the learners' strengths and weaknesses and build up on weaknesses.

<p>VOICE 009</p>	<p>having diiferent um word soorte of goedters wat duermekaar raak nie.</p> <p>Hulle weet dit die dingtjie se maatjie dit is daai dingetjie se maatjie. And with, I Um for me um I go about the way I was taught at school. The things I remember um from literacy like pictures and different colours and um bigger words and then smaller words so that everything doesn't look the same.</p> <p>So the way if I would do something in Afrikaans like um leestekens, punctuation I would do the um comma in one colour and the whole year we would do comma in that one colour. So every time they think about a comma they think oh it's the purple one.</p> <p>So in that way they get associated with different things and they can grasp. This is the group that thing falls under so they don't get um confused about keep going back to selfstandige naamwoorde want for me I love teaching Afrikaans and um selfstandige naamwoord is mos maar iets wat jy kan en aan kan wat like table chair so that is everything.</p> <p>So I draw I put a big poster in the class with big eyes and cartoon hands so now they know everything every time I say wat is 'n self standige naamwoord they see the big eyes and they remember it's something they can see and touch.</p> <p>For me I do practical stuff that they can do with me in the class and then we do it um we write the things cause they must be able to imagine it take part in it and then do it on their own in written so for that's how I teach um literacy</p> <p>The teacher explains that she teaches literacy the way she was taught when she was still a learner. For example, she uses pictures and colours so as to make learner remember every aspect of her teaching. When teaching punctuation marks, she gives each punctuation mark a different colour that represents that particular mark. Everything she does in class is practical and fun. Thereafter she makes them write it in their books. They have to learn to write.</p>
<p>VOICE 019</p>	<p>QUESTION 4 <i>How do you teach Literacy instruction when you teach literacy How do you teach it?</i></p>

4. We take another one now. Thank you very much for that answer. How do you teach Literacy instruction when you teach literacy – how do you instruct it? How do you teach it? The instruction, it's it's very difficult to get them to understand the instruction so if there is instruction I take out certain words, for instance they have to circle a word, then they don't understand circle, they will underline the word. So then circle, then I ask them what's a circle, they make a circle and they know that make a circle in the air for me and then the word that's the answer, they have to go make a circle around it. Or they have to underline it. What's a line? Make a line, even if they have to make it in the air for me before they go and do the instruction. Or give the answer. So that's the instruction because kids don't really listen to instructions. I always tell my parents at parents evening give your children instructions. For instance go put the plate on the table so that they can listen. Tell them this morning to, when you come from school take off the washing. They're grade 3, they big enough to listen and do something. **To teach them reading and...** yes they have to remember because they don't understand instructions and then we have a problem with comprehension writing because they can't... they don't remember what they read.

And how do you teach that comprehension... How do I teach that? **Yeah.** I read it with them and I ask them to read it so I have the comprehension piece. I do it with them like now the first term I do it with them, all of it, from the next term I will let them do it themselves. Then I do the questions with them and if there's for instance a question then I say go back to the reading piece, go and underline that. Now you know or there's one word. I also want them to understand when you have one word answers and when you have a full sentence. For instance how did James feel? Why do you say that? Because they just say sick but they forget there is another part in the question. Why do you say that? Because there is something else that says why he was sick? Because he ate peaches that wasn't ripe enough. So they have to go and... why was James... how did James feel? Sick. So they have to circle sick, that's one. **Okay.** Why do you say that? Because he ate green peaches. That is the other part of the question, the answer.

And then again I also let them number the paragraphs because when we read the question I want them to remember that there's paragraphs and then I also tell them go and look in paragraph 3 for that answer. **Okay okay.** So that they know they don't only have to read it, they have to remember I've seen something in that paragraph, I've seen something in paragraph 4. When they read they know that's paragraph 4, that's paragraph 5. **Thank you so much it was quite nice to listen to that one. It was quite nice.. Yes let's go to another one now.**

The teacher states that she takes out certain words which the learners circle. She first teaches them how a circle looks like. They do the circle in the air first and then go and circle the selected words. She also encourages the parents to assist the learners at home. She mentions that when teaching comprehension, she reads the comprehension to them first and thereafter she would ask the learners to read it back to her. Then she asks them questions from the comprehension, first orally. She also teaches them how to answer a

question that needs only one word answer and those that need a full sentence. Thereafter they write the answers in their books.

Miss: In a week we choose a story that we are going to teach from. And we teach from it that whole week. All the work that we have we take from that story. So that a child can be able to summarise the story. They can know what the story is about. They can fully understand what is talked about in the story. We also take our grammar from the story. The whole week we work with one story so that they can understand everything we did that week.

Dyasi: Is there anything else you want to say. Speak as much as you want, if there is more you want to say.

Miss: On Fridays we test them on the work that we did during the week. We give them grammar work. They make a story, where each person writes their own story as they understood it. Our grammar work is taken out from the same story. **The teacher explains that she selects a story from which the whole week's work will be taken. The learners read the story together with the teacher. They are taught to comprehend and to summaries a story. The grammar is taught VOICE from the story not as a separate unit or component. She makes the learners 027 to write their own stories as they understand them**

Teacher: I think the best thing in literacy is about reading because if the learner can't read then he can't do anything in class because the basic thing is for you to introduce them to reading

Sam: How do you do it?

Teacher: You must have books in your class you know... you must take them to the library because these are young kids they learn by seeing things so your class must be print rich you can't narrate a story to them if you don't have pictures.....so at least it's easy for them to see the interaction because there's a picture I am talking to them about the.... What is this story they like...ingonyama nempuku.....(The lion and the mouse).....so if I am reading or telling them the story on my own without them seeing so...it's not easy for them because they are still young, it's not easy for you to get information from there...

Sam: So they will just sit there?.....Teacher: Yes

She states that she approaches her lesson through reading stories, eg 'the VOICE lion and the mouse'. Have also books in the class for immediate access. She 028 is also taking them to the library to read more about the subject.

Miss: Ok, If I'm going to teach maybe a comprehension, before I'm going to read this comprehension first, and to understand this comprehension first. And then I took some words that I think are going to be difficult for them, and write them in flash VOICE cards. From those words I took out the sounds. And then from there I break the

031 words if they are still in that level of breaking. And then I will form a story so that to

use those words they must be familiar with their ears, use those words whatever I'm saying, even if it's a song whatever. I must use those sounds there, there must be there I will read those sounds they are going to use there that are also the punctuations, reading punctuations and this comprehension and they are going to tell me, because the And after that I will ask them that I will take those words and write understand or that are new to them. Then they board are are kids that are very good, they will those words . And repeatedly sa

Dyasi: You write them on the chalk board

Miss: Yes, those words, their words, I will write them. Because sometimes some They them I don't have in my flash cards. the give me their words. So I've got mine, going to give me their words.

Dyasi: And you write them on the board

write them on the chalk board. So we will say those words, and we will try to words and they will give me some extra sounds. from those sounds. There after that I will take my flash cards and show me now that we're finished word in this flash card. So the one that understood that word and say it. And I will show them all those words, sometimes I ask them, ok come and write it on the board we will build another word there from then I'll ask them to correct her. So they'll come and show after long and take out that one and put the right one, we'll say it all of us in the class orally, "ubuso" or that one. They'll come and see which one to the book now. Those words that are in this

words, at least they have an idea of those words and they were using there, they are going to

the meaning of those words, what does she sometimes she uses a comprehension that she mentions that comprehension she selects words which she reads to the learners. From . From the whole activity she will teach grammar simple things like punctuation will

be emphasized and many others.

5, Explain how do you decide on topics and themes for teaching e.g reading, writing, speaking, listening?

We use the CAPS documents because it gives us an outline, the grades themes and topics doesn't overlap. We use the CAPS document as well as the life orientation documents. When the theme fits in with life orientation, life skills such as - "How to take care about my body", then **VOICE 020** we talk about it, we look for readings on it. When the theme is about abuse of kids then we use readings on that and we have very nice textbooks. We use the CAPS document, the school

purchased

Platinum handbooks with interesting readings and stuff and we also use the WCED's red departmental books which are set out with nice themes. We are very fortunate living in Hartenbos, we are fortunate we are close to the beach/sea, ***I wanted to ask about that***, you can change the syllabus to connect or link things. The Olympic Games will be hosted in 2016, automatically we will bring it in to introduce the children to it. So I don't think we should stick to the syllabus religiously. ***I was worried about that***. You must make room for fun/nice things too, I mean things that might not be in the syllabus but things you want to bring in. Things you see the children enjoy or when there is a need for a certain topic or things you want to talk to the kids about. This year we will definitely do the Olympic Games. A few years ago we did the World Cup soccer as a theme. It has to link in with what is happening in the world because they see it in newspapers and they hear it on the news. We change the theme in that respect. ***That's good. I'm glad to hear this, I was a bit worried that one cannot...*** you can't teach the same things year in and year out, you have to change/renew as things change or happen in your town. Now with draught (water restrictions), ***yes***, you immediately have to bring that into your lesson and readings because that is happening in your town, in our country "the big drought". You use it for reading and also oral topics. You have to constantly look for new things so that you don't do the same things, you must be able to change it. ***Thank you very much, now I'm satisfied.*** Directed by CAPS document on literacy; integrates themes between LO and literacy in order to LO themes as a director or literacy issues (using talking about self e.g. as a way of teaching literacy or reading on abuse); uses other texts recommended by the dept e.g. platinum books; also directed by the environment e.g. living close to the sea provides ample opportunities on what and how to address; also decides depending on what is trending e.g. the Olympic Games and Soccer World Cup in 2010; the drought etc. In short, she varies how teaches in line with available news in reading and oral topics

VOICE 002 Uhm, they are sometimes related to our general themes which are given to us by CAPS, so we use those; for instance we're studying pollution at the moment so we might read a passage on pollution. Um or if one or other of us in the school finds an interesting text, obviously Mrs Knowges and myself work closely together. Um if we find an interesting text it might not necessarily belong to a theme, **okay okay**, and that will lead us down a different path. Um we look for texts that are easy for them to read, that have some extension vocabulary, some new things in them. Um and yeah it might fit in with just something we're discussing at school for instance we're focussing on kindness at the moment as we have to in any school to... overcome bullying issues. We talk about kind speech so we might have a text um that is about kindness and we work through that. Obviously with our core readers we just go through the levels so we're very much... it's very much prescribed then to us as to what the books are about, um yeah. **So it means that you can deviate from the topics of themes they give you.** Yes yes I do feel you need to, um obviously the themes are wonderful in terms of listening and speaking we do a lot of that within the theme. **Okay.** But in terms of reading and comprehension we often move outside of that yeah. **Okay. Super.** Sometimes it is not easy to find a text that is child friendly within the theme. **Oh okay.** So for instance pollution, you find an article on pollution has normally got language that is way outside the realm of a grade 3 learner. **Okay okay.** In order to create your own you sometimes you don't have time to rewrite it in appropriate language for grade 3 so when it comes to comprehension um we usually move outside. **I thought you just have to stick to that. Okay that's fine then. She responds by saying that the topics and themes are**

in the CAPS document given by the department of education. She further says that can change the topics and themes depending on the situation at that moment or given time.

VOICE 004 Okay, the CAPS document gives you a very good guideline obviously so we try to stick to that as far as we can. With regards to topics we use our life skills a lot um to integrate our subjects because time constraints are also difficult. To fit all this in, if you can integrate your subjects it's a lot easier. So we do do that quite a lot but obviously every teacher has their own character and personality. So I put a lot of jokes, I use jokes, you know those knock knock jokes and all those kinds of things, I like humour. So I use humour a lot, um an humorous situations, um fantasy, um but then also you want to do things like invitations and letters and all those formal things that you have to teach them. But we try and relate it to their experience level. If you start using things with snow when it's hot and swimming in summer you know it doesn't relate. So you've got to choose topics that are easy for the children to relate to. if you want a good creative writing piece for instance, don't choose a topic that is out of their field of experience, choose something like um their hockey game and somebody got injured. What happened you know? Most of them play hockey or they've seen their friends play hockey so it's easy for them to work out a story around a hockey game where somebody gets injured and you do get people who help us. And the ambulance comes and you know. And you can give them a word back and they can write something that makes sense. But a child who cannot even begin to imagine an experience cannot write it. **Yes yes.** So the thought process just stops. **Thank you.** She maintains that she is guided by the CAPS document which is provided to all schools by the department of education. They try to stick as much as possible to the CAPS document. They also use the topics from the life skills which seem to cover most of the learning concepts or themes such as reading, writing, speaking and listening.

VOICE 009 Okay for me it's always very difficult to keep them I wouldn't say occupied but interested so you must look for things that they would enjoy that would take that would totally consume them. So if I want to do something about um Vasco Da Gama they don't know who that is so doesn't help me I'm doing all these big lessons and they like No I don't understand what this means. So I did in English now I did superheroes. So all there reading material is about superheroes. All their um speaking activities is about superheroes. So the whole thing is evolving around that specific um thing that I chose and then in two weeks I would I chose feelings. How does stuff make me feel when we happy and sad so they would get reading material about a girl that I fight with her friend and how she handle it and then they must come and do a oral about two a dialogue between two of them of how they would sort it out and stuff. It's things that are in their life at the moment. Things that they can understand and relate to so that's how I go about it cause that's only way you can keep them interested in what your busy trying to teach them and then I also I love what I always want them to write little stories for me even if it norrec. **She explains that she knows her learners and there decides on topics and themes that they will enjoy. Things that they can understand relate to.**

VOICE 019 Our curriculum, the work schedule give us now topics. The work schedule. Yeah. Okay. It gives us the topics like for instance week 1 and 2 it's this topic or week 1 it's only health, week 2 and 3 it's food but my main topic... but my main problem with this curriculum, this now is that it's totally not in our children's uh area. They don't know about a city or something. If I look back I refer now to prior '94 when I had in those standard one, we used to teach the child all about home, my town, the bedroom, the kitchen, the dining room and that was our topics, the garden but now we don't have that kind of topics. It's totally different topics and a lot of our kids can't relate to that topics. You can't change topics... no because with the new assessment they send our assessment papers so what they do is that, that assessment is based on

that topics so if I choose a different topic and my child did now about the bedroom then he won't have a

clue about it. It limits you. And I feel if he learns about the garden or the bedroom he knows the bedroom. Yeah lovely, no it's quite interesting. Also you've already got the themes and the topics from the work schedule. **She states that she decides on what is given by the department of education in the work schedule. Some of the topics and themes do not suit the situation and the level of the learners. They are not supposed to change the topics or themes since the assessment from the department is totally based on those topics and themes.**

VOICE 027 Miss: We get together as the whole Grade. All the work comes from all of us as the Grade. I don't just do my work by myself in my class. We get together and compile our work for the week, starting with the story. We all use one story. As I said earlier, we all use that story for the week. . In that story we get all our work. We get our grammar from it. The child reads the story with understanding, so they can build it themselves and be able to write and summarise it. Our grammar also comes from that. I don't prepare my work alone, we do it together as a Grade. Dyasi: So you observe the children before you get together to plan. Miss: We have different groups for different levels. We go according to what level they are in. We make the work easier for those in the lower level. They don't do work of the same level. We also accommodate the other children as well. Dyasi: All in all you observe them. Miss: We observe them first, then we divide them and group them. Sometimes we see that we can combine them with the other group, so that they can help them, we let our children help each other. We don't let them just sit alone there. We take them sometimes, and combine them, so they can help each other. They enjoy helping each other, because they get to understand better than they understand us.. They really get to understand, and you see that a child is grasping this when they are shown by another child. Dyasi: Yes, I like what you what you are saying. Thank you again. Moving on to the next question. Do you also get your themes like this. mos. Is there another way that you get your themes and topics. Miss: No, we get them like this, we observe them together and we sit together. **The teacher explains that they first come together as grade teachers and discuss the themes and topics for the week. They screen the learners and group them according to their literacy levels, that is, a different group for different level. The workload will be divided according to the levels.**

VOICE 028 Teacher: Besides the fact that I am guided by the planning.... you have to follow your planning because there are guides to... like this term you have to do a certain topic.. Sam: From the department? Teacher: Yes from the department and from us because the department is the guidelines so you need to sit down as a phase or as a school or grades mates partners,... to say ok these are the topics...ok let's take this one for instance... it's not that because we are being guided but those things must be done by the end of the termwe have to have done the guidelines that were given to us.. so you choose the topics that you think ... so this week I think let's talk about transport because yaa you see... and you go on about that. Sam: So you are guided but at the same time you say you must sit down as.....Teacher: Yes because at the end of the day you as a teacher has a final decision because you know the mood in your class; what's going on in your class what's happening in your class then.... Sam: Your children... **Teacher: Yes its depends on you She is being guided by the departments' schedule that has already the prescribed topics and themes. They sit down as a phase and discuss the work for the week. The department gives the guide. As teachers you can change the topic and themes**

VOICE 031 Miss: I think we've got topics, like in our planning or for the term, you know that this time I'm supposed to do this topic.Dyasi: That is from the Department?Miss: YesDyasi: Ok, okMiss: That we are going to do this topic and then you take that topic and you're going to plan from that topic Dyasi: Oh, you plan on.... or maybe you can change whatever Miss: Sometimes you change your topic according to your environment. Maybe in the Department book it says "the zoo" or whatever, but we don't have the zoo.Dyasi: Oh ok, aha! Miss: Then we say, let's talk about HIV instead of zoo. We'll talk about something that is common, something that they can see, like domestic animals like cows, because they see every day, something that they can see. The zoo is far away from us and there is no way we can take them to the zoo. But sometimes we have to do that mind map. So you have to picture it. When they see that picture in the

book let's say a zebra, they don't know a zebra, you have to make them understand that picture, that mind map, that ok a zebra is something like this or a zoo is something like this. Snakes and all those wild animals that you don't see at home you kind of see. So as you know that there are lions, you don't always see them, but they are all there. That's what you see if you go there, because you can't just go and see a cow there, because a cow you see and you know everything. **She explains that the themes and topics are already given by department of education and plan accordingly. She explains that she changes the topics according to the environment the learners are.**

6, What method do you follow as a literacy teacher?

VOICE 020 Stay stay with the basics. (i) When it comes to writing, know you sounds. Can you write your sounds? Can you write words? Words go over to sentences, reading/writing rhythmic. Know your sounds, know your sentences, know your basic rules for reading, stick to the basic stuff, this is my method. When reading for example, start with objective noun words, your objective words they must know, they must know it, they must know their basic objective nouns. They must know their words from the book, you must introduce the book to them, the basic manner, the writer of the book, the illustrator of the book, you must know the words of the book along with the objective noun. Um when it comes to handwriting the basic stuff. Where you start? Where you end? Big motory movements, exercise over and over. Kids cannot just do transcription, you have to practice. Um listen and talk, give them the vocabulary to work out an oral. This is how I work. I am just like an old teacher. **No that's good.** Repeat, repeat, repeat. **Yes drill and drill.** If they don't know it, you don't know your work, go and practice again this afternoon. If you cannot read the words then you won't be able to read your book. If you didn't know your words today go and practice to write it again this afternoon. A lot of the kids doesn't have time to do their homework at home. You have them in the classroom and have to practice with them in class. **Yes it is and sometimes the parents doesn't care.** And they don't always have the opportunity to do their homework because the parents work a full day and many of them are not in an aftercare. So maybe many of them have to do their homework on their own and then they don't always do it. So I believe in practicing it in class, over and over yes. **Thank you. She stays with basics e.g. reading basics e.g. sounds, letters, and basic rules for reading. E.g. in teaching reading, teach them nouns first e.g. name of the book and the author. Handwriting basics e.g. teach motory movements that should be drilled and repeated over and over.**

Everything of her is about endless drill and practice

VOICE 002 I tend not to stick to one particular method. Um I think any good teacher takes the best of everything that they've learnt and we're learning all the time. Um and gaining new knowledge from other teachers from courses that we attend so I think methods have changed over the years. **Yes.** And yeah a little bit of everything I would say. Um for instance in my phonics um we used to do, was it letter land, **yes,** we now do THRASS so that's very different. Um the THRASS phonics programme is, I'm not sure if you're aware of it at all. Um it looks at the sound that you hear and each spelling for that sound so you... **What do you call it?** THRASS (teaching, handwriting, reading and spelling), **okay that's fine.** Um so we use some of that, you know you look at whole sight words, you look at

breaking up into phonics like the grade 1 is taught, you know individual sounds, ba-t (bat). Um yeah a variety of methods and that is just in the phonics area, ***in the phonics area, okay. Do you want to say more?*** No, I don't know if I'm covering your questions ***She explains that she tends not to stick to a particular method. She feels strongly that any good teacher takes the best of everything that they have learnt and they are learning all the time. She takes a little bit of everything. For instance in phonics she uses THRASS that looks at the sound that you hear and each spelling of that sound. A variety of methods she touches on***

VOICE 004 Yes obviously you have to look at their level of experience, their level of ability, um what they're learning at the time. If it's a phonic thing you can do a writing exercise to do with that phonics sound for instance. Um and again you're going to grade your activities according to what the child is able to do. You know you get some very weak and your learning barriers which as I said we are dealing with all the time in our classrooms now. Um you have to try and organise your or grade your instructions to suit each level that you're teaching. ***That's great.*** when we do reading and sometimes with phonic work as well we have group work where you group the children according to ability. So you've got to sit down and look at your groups, you grade your reading?? according to the group, you grade your phonic work according to the group and you could even, sometimes if it is a really bad learning barrier you gonna assess your assessment tasks accordingly. Um and then you would, obviously again if a child is weak you're going to maybe use a different approach to um what you would with a more experienced group. I do more sight words um, drilling with my bottom group and less with my top group because they can answer them like this where as the bottom group struggle. So you have to do more sight word practice with them through games or flash cards or something flashing up on the board. With technology nowadays there is a lot of things that you can do there. A lot of the children don't have the necessary vocabulary to understand. What I've noticed too is that things like nursery rhymes um don't get taught to the children anymore at home. The parents don't teach them these things that we grew up with. ***Yes.*** If you think I'm being teaching for 30 years so I grew up with nursery rhymes you know, no tv... um yes so things like rhyming became very important exercises in the grade 3 class. With the 3rd term now there's more emphasis on poetry but I also emphasize a lot on the rhyming of words. Because a lot of children don't have the auditory perception to pick up rhyming and they find it very difficult to write rhymes. Um so rhyming for me is a very important aspect as is poetry, you know children need to learn to express, some children read very softly so one has to really hone in on audibility when they're reading, fluency, expression, those things are not being emphasised enough anymore I think. So I try to create, send children up to grade 4 who are good readers in that sense, in all those aspects that I've mentioned. The writing also becomes problematic in the sense that grammar rules like; capital letters, full stops, those things. I think it's a universal problem. Some children just don't know what they are and they need to um be taught and you know you have to hone in on

that all the time. **Yes.** And then you get your children who are strong learners who need, they need to have extension and be exposed to different types of reading. I have a lot of magazines in my class, I let them read magazines, children's magazines. I also have

an outing once a year where I take them for a forest walk but then they all have to learn a poem and there is a big rock in the middle of the river where we end up having our lunch and they stand on that rock and they have to say this poem. There is no traffic, there is no, there is nothing, just the sound of nature and them saying their poem. And it's awesome, it's just a totally unique experience and they all remember that when they go up. I've answered too much. ***It's quite interesting because you find that this question, I mean what you are saying... yeah it's quite interesting.*** I'm coming in on your question, sorry. ***No it's fine.*** You must tell me to stop if I go to fast. ***Sometimes it becomes so interesting.*** She ascertains that the crucial thing to do first look at the learners' literacy levels and their abilities. Thereafter you intergrade all the methods available at your disposal. You group your learners accordingly.

VOICE 009 Yes for me it's the method like I just said its being able to do it practically being able to communicate it do it orally um to have a voice um say what you want to say when you understand. Say but no this is I think this would go better. Even its for me is not disrespectful if they don't agree with me or even say this would work better because that means that this child is thinking and making his own thoughts but progressing and then we can discuss it as a class and say okay what do you think then we go a lot of times we go their way because I'm not nine years old anymore. I don't think that way. So for me it's very nice to have their input in my lessons and listen yah but no this is bit boring or no this too extreme let's turn it down a bit so for me it's being too able to communicate um, um doing things practically before you do it as a written assignment because if you don't understand it orally and being able to talk about it you can't do written assignment about it so that is basically give and take a bit.**The teacher states that there is no specific method she uses or follows. She believes that everything she is teaching or doing is all practical, meaning that the learners must be actively involved. Speaking to, is the way of being actively or practically involvement of learners in that particular activity. Learners must communicate.**

VOICE 019 think they limit us a lot in our methods that we teach. I would like to concentrate a lot on my kids vocabulary, a lot on reading and writing and speaking but now it's a lot of writing, it's a lot of this and a lot of paper work so but what I usually do, in the morning as soon as we come in we read the words on the wall, that is part of our vocabulary. That they see when they have to write sentences, there is the word, I know that word. Especially difficult words that they struggle with every day. I'm Afrikaans so they struggle "met winkel" (with shop), en reën en sulke woorde, rain and shop in Afrikaans. So have all that kind of words in front on the board. That they see winkel don't have a "g" in and they can't uh uh differentiate between lank en lang, when to use it and when to write it so I explain it. In Afrikaans there's water en watter so I put it there so that they can see the difference. Yeah. And I say water one t, watter two t's so that they can see it's there every day and we do it every morning. There is a lot of difficult words in Afri... Afrikaans is very complicated. It's quite interesting. I wonder if we should carry on. You were talking about this... when speaking on teaching them speaking, oral. Orally it's a big problem because our kids, I always say they don't talk, it tell my parents sit with your child and question them. What did you do today? I mean I grew up in what... I'm 67... I was born in '67, so I'm not so young but I was told there wasn't tv, there wasn't... I have to listen to the radio stories, I have to, my mother bought me books and took me to the library so I read and I listen to radio and we talk in the house. But now they don't talk, they sit in front of the tv, they have a cellphone, they have computer games and they don't talk. I discovered now in grade 3 they don't form their words correctly, they rarara.... They mumble and is say open your mouth, speak properly. And can they write? And that is why they write the words wrong because they don't pronounce the words properly. Okay

so you're doing more writing as well. I always say if you're not sure say the word out that you can hear the word and hear the sound and then write it. Thank you, you have a very good method there.**The teacher believes that the best approach to literacy teaching is to emphasis on learning vocabulary, reading and writing. Drill the difficult words they struggle to pronounce.**

VOICE 027 Miss: I use sharing, we read together in class, the teacher reads with the children. We sit on the mat. We get up and go sit on the mat. We take our books and I read for my children. They also read in groups. On the following day perhaps the time is short, we end up not having enough time, we continue so that the children can know how to read by themselves and can be confident in reading. Dyasi: Is there anything else you want to add. You share, and what else do you do. Miss: After that I ask each child, maybe in groups to tell me what they heard from the story. I ask them questions and they answer me. Sometimes we do that story and alter it, and dramatise it. This is so that they can understand it and be able to remember it. When we dramatise the story, they tend to remember it more than if we just read it. When you just read it you end up not asking anything, and even on the following day when you ask questions they don't remember well. However when we dramatise it in class they remember who played what role. They are then also able to write the story since they can remember what was done on that day. Dyasi: Oh so you read it, do you have time to write it at the same time? Miss: Yes, we write it, and summarise it. You ask a child to summarise it and follow the way the story goes. **The teacher confirms that she is using shared reading method. She let the learners sit on a carpet. She reads a story to them first and they read back to her. They also read in groups. She asks them questions to ensure that they comprehended the story. They dramatize the story to make fun and to consolidate what has been learnt from the story. Thereafter the learners write and summarize the story**

VOICE 028 Teacher: Err..hey there are many methods and it depends as I was saying previously, it depends on the situation in your class, because I can say I am going to use this method but when I come to my class then I can see my kids they don't follow me so I need to change my approach so that everybody is in the same level; because if I can specify that today I am using this method but then I see that the other group doesn't understand... like saying today we are doing reading.. I like reading, then I decide to do group guided then in that group guided I see that this is not working because I see that this other group doesn't follow... then I have to change my method... that is to say let me change and do the shared reading so that everybody ..You see I am going to read to them so that they are going to listen to me then they are going to re-tell what I am saying to them.....Sam: oh that's why wonderful, you change and interchange it depends on the children..Teacher: yes it depends on the children because its not about me its about them they must understand what I am talking about.Sam: Ok you spoke about shared reading; you talk about group guided Or independent reading... for instance you said there are many methods...; Teacher: Yes if I see that this learner does not understand or she cant read so we have to help that learner so I say class ok lets read altogether read; so I am changing and I shift from the independent reading to shared reading now or group reading. **She ascertains that there are many methods. Therefore she is using any one that will be appropriate for that situation at that time. She alters or adjusts her methods and strategies to suit her learners. Her learners.**

VOICE 031 Miss: There are so many methods, because you can't say I'm using this particular method, because they go hand in hand you know, you do this and you do that and they all come together to form one thing. Dyasi: They are integrated. Miss: Yes, so I can't say specifically I'm using this method. There's no particular method that I can say ok I'm using. Like speaking method or whatever, you can't do that because it's there, everything is there, you use everything, you use every method you can teach a child. Dyasi: Which can suit the child. Miss: Which can suit the child and your topic too also. Yes your child, your topic and that is going to

be ok even

for you, because you can't use a method that you're not comfortable with. **She believes that there are many methods a teacher can use. These methods go hand with one another. A teacher has to use methods that suit the situation. This means a teacher must know her or his learners.,**

7, What informs your choice of teaching methods and strategies?

Most of the time it is classical (*traditional teaching*: cina and sam's interpretation) where you **VOICE 020** work with the whole group but there are times where you have to work in smaller groups. That is when I see how my kids differ for example, we work in smaller groups when we do reading because the one group might be stronger, more advanced than the other group. So the child determines it but also the class or maybe the year group because the one year you might teach classical but this year your kids might differ so much and you have to work in smaller groups and call them to the mat. It depends on the type of kids you have and also the needs of the kids because this group of kids might need more practice. You have to practice, practice, practice. That group can work on their own. I think it depends on where every child is in his development and then we work on the three groups or the four groups or the two groups, yes. *Nice*. But it's not easy because your day is full. *Yes yes and you have to finish your work with the CAPS*. Yes, I like classical because then you work with the whole group and they're all looking at you and you can basically do literacy for an hour/hour and a half and the group looks at you. You are more productive. *Okay*. But when they are in groups and you work with this group, the ones at the desks starts getting naught and fidgety. *Like children*. But you have to, you have to read the kids, *read the kids*, you have to read them yes. *Thank you*. She believes that when she makes them work into smaller groups it then she realises they differ. The reason being that the one group might be stronger or more advanced than the other. She also feels that the type of learners you have might be the determining factor. She believes that a teacher must know his or her kids by studying them whiles engaging with them.

VOICE 002 Lots, lots of things. Um the school where you're working I found in my experience. Like I say at this school we focus on THRASS for phonics. **Yes.** So that is a prescribed method but you can still take from other methods for that. Um it can be related to your class, how the learners are learning. You have 30 learners in your class; they each have a different style. Perhaps this year you teach in one way because it benefits the majority of the class, then you might find you have a special needs child who is not understanding the way you're teaching. You change your method to suit your child, you change your method um to suit the time that you have, you know today my lesson is half an hour. We don't have time for groups, whatever we'll teach, stand up in front, classic lesson. This is how we do it. Tomorrow I have got an hour for my phonics, my literacy or my whatever it is, comprehension. Then I might break up into groups and my children learn to work in groups and some children are at their desks doing something, I will work with them, an individual group going through whatever they need. So it varies based on that as well. ***Okay, thanks indeed for that one.*** **The teacher advocates that her choice of teaching methods and strategies depends entirely on a variety of things. It can be related to her class, how the learners are learning. She cites an example of 30 learners who may have a different style of learning. You will teach in one way because it benefits the majority of the class. Then you**

might find you have a special needs learner who does not understand the way you are teaching. In that situation, as a literacy teacher you then change your method to suit the learner. You also change your method to suit the time that you have. For instance a teacher knows he or she has a thirty minutes lesson you cannot divide you class into groups because there is no time for doing that.

VOICE 004 Again it's a personality thing I think. What makes you feel comfortable, what do you know the best. Um I think as you become more experienced you probably feel freer to experiment with more things. Mrs Davids is very good and so is Mrs Asky, if we want to try something new they're very keen for us to try it and if it doesn't work then you just have to go back to plan B you know. But I think one has to, obviously you're guided by your curriculum, very much, that is obviously your first point of departure but then I think your own personality has to play a part. If you can't um express your uh creative ideas then it becomes a very um... how can I put it, a creative experience all around for everybody. **What about your learners? Don't you also look at your learners?** Yes obviously you have to look at their level of experience, their level of ability, um what they're learning at the time. If it's a phonic thing you can do a writing exercise to do with that phonics sound for instance. Um and again you're going to grade your activities according to what the child is able to do. You know you get some very weak and your learning barriers which as I said we are dealing with all the time in our classrooms now. Um you have to try and organise your or grade your instructions to suit each level that you're teaching. **That's great. She states that she is guided by the curriculum given to the teacher by the department and of course her own feeling and personality. Also is the literacy levels of the learner She states that it is the personal feeling that makes you feel comfortable to make your choose of the teaching method and strategy. What she knows the best. One's experience concerning the learner's level of ability and what they are learning that time.**

VOICE 009 What makes um like I said um things they are busy with in their lives' at the moment. Things that um they take part in on a daily basis or um that interest them cause if you wanna um teach them something different or something that is a bit in a high and difficulty for them to be able to relate to the subject matter. It's much easier for them to grasp the idea or the thing that you trying to teach them. If they able to relate to the theme or the suggestions your saying. So if you put it anything they taught them Math anything if you put it in the context of their lives they much easily for them to grasp it and go from there on and actually perform quite well because they can relate to it and think okay well if I do this at home then I could just do this in this problem or in this story. So they relate to it way better if you take things out of their lives and make it a practical thing for them. A lot of people think um literacy is only a written subject and I disagree it is oral, oral, oral, oral that is the only way children learn is by communicating with each other with you with their parents with people out outside of school. That is how they learn, they learn by interacting and talking about it and reading and learning so for me the written part is also very important but it's for me it's the lesser important one of the group of everything that literacy consists of um so when they I think when they grasp the idea they can write it and so that's what makes me um what informs my choices is I want to make sure that the children that I teach the learners that I teach is can be able to practically relate to what I'm teaching even if they haven't done it before. So that is for me very important. SD You don't want to say more? SP. It like all these things are in head now um what else. There is um I've also asked them things like what do they wanna taught about and they say no don't I don't know why all the time it's dinosaurs. **She explains that her choice of teaching methods and strategies are informed by the things the learners are busy with in their daily life. Things that the learners are interested in**

VOICE 019 I look at my child and I see but like the talking, because you don't talk properly you don't write the words correctly. It's because you don't pay attention that you can't answer the questions. I observe my child. I look at the child and I see but there's something wrong. I'm a lot about, it might be something that happened at home for instance the kids that I have now, I have them from grade 1, I had them in grade 1, 2 and 3, three years with me. So now there is two or three of them that comes in and it's like half past nine in the morning they're tired, they're falling asleep and when I ask the parents... but they don't want to go to bed, they want to watch this and they want to watch that and they can't concentrate. So they do everything wrong, they don't listen to the instructions. So I look at my kids, their body language, how they perform, what they write and then I... then choose maybe your topic. Then I... I differ my strategies and try and do something else. Just by observing them and see how their body language and... and see what they write and stuff like that because they don't go to bed early but the parents allow it. They tell me they don't go to bed early; they don't want to go to bed. And the last one. Thank you for that one.**The teacher explains that she observes her learners as how they talk, how they write words out, for example, correctly or incorrectly, how they respond to questions, how they perform in given activities and even their body languages. Then this leads her to choosing her teaching methods and strategies**

VOICE 027 Miss: I look to see what can help my children in their work, to assist them in understanding. This is why choose this method, and it works for them, it really helps them. Dyasi: You also observe them to choose a strategyMiss: Yes, to see if they are really getting what I am doing with them and if they can do it. Sometimes you change your method, when you see that it's not working in those children then you look for a different method that that will work.**She screens or observes learners during reading time. She notices those who are struggling to read. She also observes whether they follow what she is doing. Then she decides to alter the method and strategy.**

VOICE 028 Teacher: I think It's about the environment as I said because even the strategies the other thing moos you need to attend workshops you need to upgrade yourself, because you can't use old methods because methods are changing everything is becoming new so you need to equip yourself you need to attend to those trainings and workshops so when you come back you are equipped because other people may be using strategies that you are not usingSam: You also mentioned that you look at your children.Teacher: Yes the environment in your class, how do they follow.... That's where you see.....**She maintains that the environment and the situation make her choice of teaching methods and strategies. She advocates that attending workshops can lead also to changing your methods and strategies**

VOICE 031 Miss: Even reading, sometimes you use There are so many methods, remind me of one and therefore she does not use one and specific method instead she changes the method and strategy according to the situation. Dyasi: There's shared reading Miss: Group reading, shared reading, individual reading, paired reading all those methods you know. Because at the end of the day you have to do all of them. Because this group I can do paired reading and from that group that would be group reading. So at the end of the day you are going to do all those methods, more especially in a topic like let's say the zoo. They read that those animals or whatever and story, so it's not individual it's going to be a group reading. Dyasi: So ultimately you use them Miss: You use all of them, ultimately you use all of them Dyasi: Maybe it depends on the group you teach. Miss: The group you teach at that particular moment. I'm teaching this group now so ok, these lead kids can read individually so you put them there. In my class I've got a reading corner so you go and sit there and read for themselves, while I'm busy. Dyasi: In that corner? Miss: Because they are independent readers. In that corner they are reading for enjoyment Dyasi: Oh ok so that's what you do Miss: And then the other group you sit with them. These ones they are still struggling, so I have to be with them. So it's something like that. Dyasi: So you consider even those who are still struggling. Miss: Yes, coz you stay with them until you find out, ok now. And sometimes it's a peer group, you take one of them to help them to monitor them. **She**

states that the observation and the situation inform her on her decision which method or strategy to take. decide on

8. How do you incorporate these teaching methods and strategies into your own daily teaching style?

VOICE 020 With the different subjects, for example with the different themes – when we busy with life orientation you can immediately bring in an oral conversation. So you have to think on your feet. When we are busy with a life orientation oral theme you can quickly bring in mathematics while you are busy. Or you could quickly bring in language structure. So you have to incorporate the whole time, you must incorporate the whole time with the different areas e.g. talking about the fire brigade, you talk about the theme but you can bring in plural – brandweer – brandweer manne. How many? If one fireman's hosepipe is say 5 meters long – how long will 3 hosepipes be? So you have to correlate the whole time between the different subjects because you don't always have the life skills. Now I have to do English, now I have to do maths. So a lot of the stuff is learnt casually. When I look at the question – How do you incorporate these teaching methods? They have to be incorporated the whole time. **The teaching method.** Yes. **You incorporate them into your,** Yes. **What about incorporating them into your daily teaching style?** Yes you have to do constantly, you constantly have to incorporate. **Okay that's alright. That fine. Thank you.** I hope the answer is right. **There is no right or wrong answer.** E.g we're talking about the theme, the life skills theme, um we immediately do the English as well. Do you understand? We talk about first aid and we incorporate English. First Aid – What is First Aid? Then they start speaking English. So you have to incorporate the different learning areas all the time. **You incorporate them.** Yes. **Daily,** Yes. **No that's fine, that's fine.** **She states that whatever subject, being life orientation, mathematics or language she embraces these methods. In her daily teaching she uses these methods constantly or consistently.**

VOICE 002 Uhm... I think you have to practice something in order to become comfortable with it as a teacher, in order to present it with confidence to your class. So whenever I come across a new style, a new method, a strategy, I will try it out and it's often a little bit uncomfortable in the beginning maybe if you've not tried something before. Um and you know then it's a case of do a little bit in the beginning, do a little bit every day or every other day until it becomes comfortable for you, and then you start to incorporate it um as it is like I say I try not to stick to one method because you know today what suits you might not suit me or the children in your class. So you try and change it as much as possible and sometimes I need to remind myself to do that because you do get stuck in a rut, it's good to move a round. That is one of the things that I've liked coming back to grade 3, **yes yes**. I was out of it for a long time and when I was asked to move I thought ooh... I was comfortable in my grade 1, I didn't want to move but now that I have it's good, it's made me do more research again, it's shaken me up a bit and I've had to think on my feet again. **Yeah to do more research**. Yeah. **That's quite interesting. She practices the method into other (subjects) in order to be comfortable with them as a teacher, also to present the lesson with confidence to the class. Whatever method or strategy that is there she incorporates or tries it out in her daily teaching style to suit her and the learners.**

VOICE 004 Um ooh that is a difficult one. How do I incorporate them into my own teaching style. **Yeah**. Um, can you, just give me a starting point. **You have your methods**. Yes. **You talked about integration**, yes yes. Okay so how do I incorporate them? Well obviously it all boils down

to your planning. You have to plan everything; you can't just walk into a classroom and say I'm going to do this today. You've got to sit down and think about your groups because we do have... when we do reading and sometimes with phonic work as well we have group work where you group the children according to ability. So you've got to sit down and look at your groups, you grade your reading?? according to the group, you grade your phonic work according to the group and you could even, sometimes if it is a really bad learning barrier you gonna assess your assessment tasks accordingly. Um and then you would, obviously again if a child is weak you're going to maybe use a different approach to um what you would with a more experienced group. I do more sight words um, drilling with my bottom group and less with my top group because they can answer them like this where as the bottom group struggle. So you have to do more sight word practice with them through games or flash cards or something flashing up on the board. With technology nowadays there is a lot of things that you can do there. **Do you also take their thought into other fields like mathematics?** Yes yeah yeah. Again that same principle applies to maths as well because your maths groups are also graded according to ability. So you again are going to adjust worksheets and approaches to suit your level of ability. **Thank you very much. She states that when planning for teaching she incorporates these methods. With regard to reading, technology and mathematics she uses the same methods having in mind the learners' levels. When she groups her learners she applies the same methods and strategies. She interchanges these methods depending**

to the levels of the learners.

VOICE 009 Um children have said that I'm very lively they sometimes think I'm crazy um I don't think they very far off but um I want things to be entertained I want them to be entertained So if did I would wear a cape and say what am I. So you need to make it interesting, school isn't nice for them at this age they would rather be outside playing so you have to in the class situation you have to make it for them that they would rather be there than playing outside. So do the practical stuff do I've got um one boy in my class at the moment that is with the theme of superheroes he can't stop talking um struggling to get him the work out of him cause he got stop talking about the superheroes that are so awesome. So I would let him talk each period for five minutes and then we done with that now he must work then he gets that out of his system everybody knows he knows the most about superheroes and jealous and everything. He go sit on he reads he does his comprehension tests and his happy he doesn't care and over time his a quite his a bright child so he works quite quickly as well then he says mam can I please have a page I wanna draw you a superheroes then it's okay I'll give you a page. We check the work the work is done correctly then they can draw superheroesSD Now tell me do if you have that uh, uh method of teaching do you finish your work with them?SP Yes I do um. They got so used to my routine that they know okay the first five minutes of the period is like let's talk about let's give them yah let's have a conversation about it debate about it whatever and after those five minutes its working time. Then all of them will sit down they will start listening I give out the work assignment and they will start working SD Your aim is to try and involve themSP Yes I want them to be part of lesson. I just I don't want them to sit there like robots and this like how it's going to happen and then the start they don't learn anything I feel they like parrots. They only taking in what you tell them like yes Polly wants a cracker so they are so at this moment um they were with me Grade 2 as well because I've got the multi grade class so they are used to this method now. So they know walk into the class we do the little fun thing that time work sometimes they work much faster and I don't know why I don't know why. I can do this much work for prepare for them for the day and some days

they done and other days it's like pulling teeth. I don't know why but they children those things happen and they would ask me they come talk orally about something and I would let them because they must be free to be able to express what they feel and

dream. A classroom is there to dream so um they say okay when we done can we do oral assignment then I'm like okay then I'll write on card throw it into a bin and let them draw something. Then they draw a thing then they read okay then they got five minutes to prepare then they come and talk to about the thing that they just had so it's unprepared but it's to get them to be able to communicate easier. To be confident in themselves and what they know so it's you get a lot of interesting stuff you get a lot of interesting stuff. The teacher is of the opinion that the way she approaches literacy, is the same she does with other subjects. **She believes in the active involvement of her learners in whatever lesson. It should be fun by making them to communicate all the time. They must be part of the lesson. They must not be robots at any given time.**

VOICE 019 I try and... I talk as... form my words properly, yeah, so that they can look at me and hear, listen to me so that they can at least have a model, role model. And when we write I tell them come let's read what I read here, is it a proper sentence, yes. Do we speak like this? Yes. So when they write the sentence, read it. Is that prop... Do we speak like that? Okay. And uh I try and bring a book and a different book and encourage them. You model this so that they can see how in your life... yeah and when I, I google something, I tell them it was so interesting, I wanted to come and show you and talk about this and I've listened to this. Like yesterday it was the budget speech and this morning, I don't know whether they watch it or they notice it or... because a lot of them tell me the parents don't, they switch over when there is news on. But this morning, I try and tell them that it influence our money. I just talk about it like randomly that they... from a perspective of your own life yeah. Yeah that they know it's gonna be, it's gonna influence our pockets. Okay. Thank you so much. It is lovely, we are finished. Are we finished? Yeah we are finished. Let me just see. Okay the last one. **She states that she tries to be a model to the learners by trying to teach correctly. Encourages the learners to read a variety of books. Speak correctly all the time. They should use technology by googling information for their daily life. They listen to radio or TV and listen to budget speeches which have impact on everybody's life.**

VOICE 027 Miss: Oh, for instance in Life SkillsDyasi: YesMiss: .Yes, we use Xhosa in Life Skills as well, because there are Xhosa things that need to be read there as well. They have to read that and be able to understand. You ask them questions and they answer, they write down, and read by themselves. So you find that Xhosa and Life Skills are similar because what you do in Xhosa you also do in Life Skills. Dyasi: Those methods you use in LiteracyMiss: Are those same ones you use in Life SkillsDyasi: So all those literacy methods that you are describing sharing, how do you use them, for example sharingMiss: That sharing for instance helps us, because sometimes we run out of time in isiXhosa, and then you say to yourself that you will cover the material in Life Skills, because Life Skills is also in isiXhosa as well. So you continue with those methods in Life Skills.Dyasi: Those same methods and strategies.Miss: Yes those same methods and strategies in Life SkillsDyasi: So that means in your daily life you use those same methods, in your daily teaching life. Miss: Yes those same methods.Dyasi: In your daily teaching life, in any subject. Miss: Even in EnglishDyasi: So you apply literacy methods in your life teaching style in everything you teachMiss: Yes in everything. In all my subjects.Dyasi: Oh ok. We are only left with two questions. I am starting to lose my voice. Miss: Mine goes quite quickly. **She maintains that she incorporate the methods and strategies in all her subjects. She cites life skills as example where she does reading, speaking and writing. She states that since life skills is in isiXhosa, if she did not finish her isiXhosa lesson she can make up in life skills. In facts she uses the methods in all her subjects**

VOICE 028 Teacher: I think each lesson is a reading lesson, because even mathematics as they are counting they have to read because we have number names, if they can't read they won't be able to know those number names to write them, to name them you see; because yes we are using symbols for instance but you need them to know that these number symbols got its number name so like we are using moss isiXhosa here so its like 100 he is going to write 100 as a number symbol but if he can't write when asked that number symbol to write it, u see its going to be 'ikhulu'(hundred), if he can't write he can't know 'ikhulu'(hundred) because there are consonant there 'ikhu' sounds you know that's one of

the things.....Sam: Because they also write you don't let them just to read?Teacher: Yes they also write...that's what I am saying because you have to now write that number symbol, you have to write it in words...Sam: even in comprehension? Teacher: Yes.. We have problem solving sounds... whereby we are going to ask 'Mr Dyasi bought 300 sheep and he loses 10 now how many is he left with? And that is written in words not in number symbol.Sam: Ok Ok and also there is what do you call it... life skills?Teacher: Yes even in life skills for instance we are doing 'isikolo sam' (my school), then they have to count the classes, they have to know who is the principal of the school, all of the things you know who are the teachers.. so its part of literacy because they are now writing constructing sentences... its incorporating now. Teacher: Oh at our school?...We are struggling as I have said before because of so many reasons like learning barrier, language barrier some of them they don't understand isiXhosa so I think that's one of the reasons that make our school to struggle, our level is not at its best but at least we improved this year, because I think of the strategies we are trying to use.Sam: What do you think is the reason not to understand isiXhosa? Is it the environment?.Teacher: its....ntoni na lonto?(err what is it) isiXhosa sengingqi, (Xhosa dialect) Sam: uuuuuuh that's why?.Teacher: Because most of these kids come from the Eastern Cape you know lots of the kids we have got at our school, their parents come from Eastern Cape for instance in Qumbu and Lady Frere they say words differently and here its Afrikaans its mixed with Afrikaans so they have to take that out of them that esona sona isiXhosa (the correct Xhosa) you are supposed to say this and not that, you see in Afrikaans you are saying like imoto(car) lets say we are writing essays you say 'write me 10 sentences about your birthday party' ' you find that ba 'umama waya etown,(my mom went to town) okanye (or) in English wakhwela ekarini,(she got into the car)...kari is Afrikaans moos, so those are the main things.. **She feels that each lesson is a reading lesson and therefore the methods and strategies she uses could be used in teaching mathematics and other subjects. In mathematics there are number names that the learners must read and write. In life skills for example the learners have to read, speak or debate about issues and do lots of writing. So she incorporates these methods and strategies in her daily teaching activities.**

VOICE 031 Miss: I'm being motivated by the kids. I just throw a topic at them (what I'm going to teach), and then I will see their response, then I will take it from there.Dyasi: Mam thank you for that one also. How do you incorporate these teaching methods into your own daily teaching life. You have these methods (you mentioned these methods), now in other things, in your daily teaching life. You don't teach Literacy only.Miss: Yes Life Skills, everything, English. You know a method is a method. If I'm using in Numeracy, it's given because even in Literacy, in Numeracy there's grammar there also you know, that people have to understand what is the meaning of this. There are numbers there, they must know those numbers. They must be able to write those numbers in words, that is Literacy. This means that the method I'm using in Literacy, I'm also using in Numeracy. It's the same method. And then again it depends, what level I'm doing at that particular moment. So there's no way I'm using this method in Numeracy and I'm using that method in Literacy, because Literacy and Grammar go hand in hand. So whatever method I'm using, I'm using to both of them.Dyasi: So you use these methods interchangeably.Miss: Yes Dyasi: I'm glad that you elaborated on this. First when you answered the first question you touched on this thing. I'm glad that you added to this one again. We've got two left. After this one it will be one question left. **She states that the same methods and strategies she uses when teaching literacy are also applied to other subjects she teaches, for example mathematics and numeracy. In these subjects learners also read, write speak just like in literacy.**

9. How do you describe the literacy level of the grade 3 learners?

VOICE 020 I would say good. It is good at our school because it is systematic from Grade R, Grade 1, Grade 2 so I think our kids are good because each grade does their work. But I want

to say I presume that the kids English second language, additional language has improved over the past few years. **Okay.** The media play a very big role. **Yes it does.** It is remarkable that the additional language has become stronger because it's earlier now, with the CAPS they started doing English from Grade 1 and doing more English in Grade 2. By the time they get to us in Grade 3 they have already started with phonics in Grade 1, they started reading books in Grade 1 and Grade 2 which they previously never did. They officially only started reading in grade 3. So the additional language is becoming stronger because they start in earlier grades and the media. Unfortunately a lot of them watch television, their additional language improved over the past few years because they are watching more television. Their understanding of the additional language is also much better and it is good because English is an international language they have to know. **Okay, thank you. The teacher feels strongly that the levels are good. She states that it is systematic from grade 1 to grade 3. She believes that the media plays a crucial role in improving their language.**

VOICE 002 That is a very ambiguous question Mr Ndyasi. Compare it to others based on ANA results and things I would say we're doing well. Compare it to what I remember from 16 years ago from when I started teaching, I would say the literacy is not as good as it was. **Yeah.** I think there are many contextual factors to that, **yeah.** Um times have changed, the system is different, obviously when I taught there, um yeah we're putting a lot of pressure on our children these days. **Yeah.** They don't have enough time to develop their literacy through play, it's very formal, very quickly. Even, I'm coming from a grade 1 teacher, you know we're expecting those children to come so far so fast. I think compared to how you and I were taught where it was reading and writing and arithmetic, three r's and now they do music and they do art and computers and there's life skills and the hours in the day are a bit longer but the literacy periods are shorter.

Now we're teaching two languages, in the future we might have a third language, **third language yes.** Where do you find the time in the day for it? Because that again affects the child, if a child is struggling to learn in one language, to then swop and then teach them to another language, I understand that we need to languages, I don't speak Afrikaans, I'm still learning because I was raised outside of South Africa and I don't speak any of the other South African languages and it's a... it's a disadvantage to me. **Yeah yeah.** So the children need to know those languages but where and when do you start teaching it, that's one of my big bug bears because for instance now my children will learn Afrikaans, thankfully I don't have to teach it, that's three hours in a week of language, of their second language. And now if they come with isiXhosa there will be an hour per week, where am I gonna find that hour. Do I take it away from English teaching and the Afrikaans teachers are feeling the same and I'm sure the isiXhosa teacher feels the same, it's time. The children are not being exposed to it enough, they're under pressure to do so much in so little time and I believe that's affecting the level of literacy that we're finding. **Great, thank you so much.** She affirms that they do well in literacy at the school. However, comparing it with the level sixteen years ago when she started to teach, literacy level is not good as it was. She believes that there are many contextual factors to that. A lot of pressure is put on learners these days. Learners do not have time to develop their literacy through play.

VOICE 004 I think the literacy level is pretty good in our grade 3 level. Obviously again we have our very top groups, we have our learners and again your bottom group is often learners who

are from a different home language. So you often find those are the learners lacking the vocabulary and so on so. Um again there is a spread across the levels and um again it's a case of catering to each level and at their experience level, for instance if a child is a very good reader I would say to the parents, at home don't do the reading homework, expose them, go to the library and take out biographies or non-fiction, if they interested in nature, a little boy wouldn't read in my class and his mother got him a book on wolves and suddenly he was reading in class because he found something that was at his interest level. So um again you have to know your children. You have to know them well otherwise you can't cater for them you know. ***Okay, thank you very much.***She believes that the literacy levels are good although there are those who are really struggling at reading and also Struggling at speaking because they lack vocabulary.

VOICE009 That's tough one. Um I've got a very versatile class in what they are capable of. I've got very strong children and I've got medium children and then the weak, weak children so um because I enjoy um literacy so much. I think they cope better with it but um I still feel children don't read enough and that is where the biggest problem because if you can't read you can't do spelling you can't do your work properly. So I feel there is a lot to be desired about literacy that I want to be able to teach them more things but only there's so much time that is allocated to that subject and um I don't think the parents or definitely not the learners understand the importance of reading. So I would I'm very strict about reading lessons they get a reading lesson every day and then after that week they would read from the first page they started till the last one the end of the week the whole week they would read all those pages. So I don't give new work until I'm sure that ground has been covered so but I just don't think people understand the importance of it um that is quite a bother um cause especially in the English as well the children. The spelling is terrible yah it's like a do a crossword puzzle trying to figure out what the word means but and the only way they how your spelling gets better if you read and your tenses get better if you read. So I don't I think we expect a lot of our Grade 3's um from literacy at the level they are but I don't think they not capable of handling it I just think we need more support from the parents to be more involved in their children's lives and to also make them positive about it. Cause I think a lot of parents had such bad school experiences or and they put that onto their children so the children come to school with a negative vibe and then you take on the half the day to get them positive about it and then he goes home again and then his down again. So I've got one child his name Promise um Afrikaans is his third um language so he struggles with his sentences but he reads so beautifully and his mother doesn't understand a word of Afrikaans. She's only um English and I think they Zulu but um she would take him to the neighbour's house and let him read to the neighbour because the neighbour understands. Afrikaans because she can't help him with Afrikaans and for me that parent needs a medallion cause she's interested in her child's education. She wants him to be capable of doing that so for I would walk miles for a parent like that. That supports the children and goes the extra mile for their child. I would sit days with that child trying to get him to like let's do this let do this I would because I've got the support from the parents because that is a big, big problem that is that we struggling with at the moment. Especially because Grade 3 it's a big jump from Grade 3 to Grade 4. It's a big jump and especially again the reading if they come in Grade 4 they can't do social science because they can't read and that is so for me it's a very, very big problem but I think it's all around. It's a big problem for children so but as for that I think children want to learn about their language they wanna learn about English cause they think they very fancy if they capable speaking English. You get the accents of but they not so I think we expect a lot about our Grade 3's in I think in the third semester they need to know all the verklein woorde Afrikaans and that is a lot is a lot of stuff to get in a Grade 3's child head. So I took mine and divided to the four kwartaale because I can't expect children to do eight um dinges agt verklein woorde in een Kwartal nie. It's too much for them it I would like it if it was more evenly spaced um but

um I think they capable.If we just get I think some where's communication gap between the people that setup the curriculum and the teachers. Like okay thank you for the awesome material but let's just check like the first um so we thinking of doing anything its only revision of the previous year.Why can't we start bringing in Grade 3 work in the first semester cause now you expect the Grade 3 children to do it in three semesters and they can't it's to now they the down pouring the work so you get even if you have a difficult class it's difficult to get through that work.I had a very difficult class last year and it's you have to push them constantly and uh out of the eleven Grade 3's I had last year only six of them could read and they in Grade 3 now they in Grade 4 but they can't read so I think um the assessment needs to be looked at as well um.Assessment like writing and reading only counts five marks in the exam but for me it's one of the basic building blocks to be able to continue in your school education. If you don't have that you can't perform later on so I think that should be need to be looked at but I would I think our children are capable way of more than we give them credit for um they just need people that believe in them and um that's where the teacher comes in but as I say teacher can only do it so far if the parents don't support so...**She maintains that the grade 3 level is not at what should It is low. The levels vary a lot. There are strong learner and many weak. The experience would share is that the learners cannot read, poor in spelling and poor in tenses. There is a lot to be desired. The parents are not involved in their children's education**

VOICE 019 Very poor. I would say they are more on a grade 1 level. A lot of them are on a grade 1 but the ones that have help at home they will... the ones that have help at home they're on a grade 2 level I would say and the ones that have no help they're on a grade 1 level. And um there and there you can see one that is standing out. Okay. But usually the ones that stand out their parents take them out of this school and take them to a model C white schools. Okay. Because that is what happened last year. When they a bit brighter then the parents take them out. Because we don't, we have to cater to the level of the child and sometimes we struggle because they have this new thing, we can't have strong kids in the class and the middle and the poor because it's like, otherwise we uh uh, we label the child as you don't, you're not bright enough. So they mix them. Okay okay. And where we struggle is especially we that come from grade 1, 2 and 3 with them, we take them the whole phase. It's like we lose the brighter child because we have to concentrate on the child that comes from home with no prior knowledge. Shame and how do you do this? How do you up their levels? How do you get them? You don't really get them there because if I think, I had to leave the kids; there was a lot of them that came straight from home that was in my grade 1 class with the ones that came out of a grade R class. Okay. So basically I had to start from scratch with the ones that came from home. So in that process I lost a lot of my grade Rs because they wasn't interested in that kind of work. Okay. Where I could have gone further with them and then I just have to left them in grade 1, the ones that came from home and you know the saddest part is they come from home and they don't know whether they are left handed or right handed. Okay. They don't know how to use a scissor, they don't know this and that so we have to start from scratch. Okay that's quite interesting. You know I have to be a teacher.**She maintains that the level is low and poor. Most of the learners are on grade 1 levels. Those who get a little help from home are on grade 2 level. But those few coming from homes with educated parents, blossom in the class, as well as those who attended a grade R class.**

VOICE 027 Miss: They are trying, some are some who are doing their best and there are some who are of a lower standard, who I don't just leave alone but I also gather. Maybe after school, as school comes out at 13h40, I spend maybe 30 minutes with them working together. Sometimes I take them during the day and let them sit with the other children. If I see that they are not doing well even in writing. I take them to those that are doing well for them to help them, and when they help them you realise that they grasp the work better than when I teach them.. I think it's because they are the same age, I don't know. Dyasi: So you're saying, their level when you compare it Miss: When I compare it to those others Dyasi: Yes, your Grade 3 when you look at them, how is their literacy? Miss: The are doing alright.

As I said earlier, there are some of them that are doing alright. So those ones do well in their work. And then there are others, not doing too good. I mix them with those who are doing well so that they can improve. I don't just leave them as they are. Then on the next day we continue only during intervention time because we need to move on to the next section of work. And then after school in the afternoon I combine them again and we all work together again. **She ascertains that the literacy level is not bad at all. Yes, there are those who are struggling and many who are doing very well. She is satisfied with the level.**

VOICE 028 Teacher: Oh at our school?...We are struggling as I have said before because of so many reasons like learning barrier, language barrier some of them they don't understand isiXhosa so I think that's one of the reasons that make our school to struggle, our level is not at its best but at least we improved this year, because I think of the strategies we are trying to use Sam: What do you think is the reason not to understand isiXhosa? Is it the environment? Teacher: its....ntoni na lonto?(err what is it) isiXhosa sengingqi, (Xhosa dialect) Sam: uuuuuuh that's why? Teacher: Because most of these kids come from the Eastern Cape you know lots of the kids we have got at our school, their parents come from Eastern Cape for instance in Qumbu and Lady Frere they say words differently and here its Afrikaans its mixed with Afrikaans so they have to take that out of them that esona sona isiXhosa (the correct Xhosa) you are supposed to say this and not that, you see in Afrikaans you are saying like imoto(car) lets say we are writing essays you say 'write me 10 sentences about your birthday party' ' you find that ba 'umama waya etown,(my mom went to town) okanye (or) in English wakhwela ekarini,(she got into the car)...kari is Afrikaans moos, so those are the main things.. **The teacher states that the literacy level at the school is not good at all. The reason being learning barriers, especially language barrier. She mentions that the area and the school population is a mixture of isiXhosa and Afrikaans speaking learners. They mix the language when speaking writng What makes the situation even worse are learners that come from Burundi who cannot understand or speak isiXhosa.**

VOICE 031 Miss: You know what Sir; the problem is just that we cannot If the principal or the SMT could be able to identify the strong teachers in the school and knowing very well that these teachers are going to be the pillars of Grade 1 because Grade 1 is the very sensitive class in the Foundation Phase. So if you can get good teachers from the Foundation Phase because if you missed that child in Grade 1, it's going to be very difficult for you to be able to get her in Grade 3 because there's a lot he would have been missing along the way. So I think if we can start from there Grade 1. That is why if you find out that Grade 3 level is not up to standard, we are trying our level best but we still have to start from those classes I told you about because even still now that's what we are doing (how long I've been doing that, but I'm still doing it) even now. From those levels, level 1 level 2 which is Grade 1 work, Grade 2 work and Grade 3 work. So I can't say that the level of Grade 3 work is up to standard no, because we are still struggling, that's what I'm saying, if the school can be able to identify those teachers that are very strong and be honest about it, that can be able to push, so that by the time he reach Grade 2, Grade 1 work is finished, you don't have to go back to Grade 1 work to show the child how to write, where to write. Because it's what we are still doing right even now. In my experience is that, some teachers said, if he can write this word, whatever way he is writing that word, she is ok. I get so frustrated about that, because what I know is that when you are a teacher you teach a child everything and it must be correct from the beginning. If I teach a child to write his or her name like this in lines, so I must teach that child immediately from the beginning you have to write here, after knowing how to write those circles. But the minute you take a book you must be able to show him that you must write here. You teach the child the right thing from the beginning, because if you want to bend him in the middle, it's going to be very difficult. So writing to me it goes hand in hand with reading and speaking. So that's the problem we have at school, they say no if he can write whatever he can write "lona" in any way, he can write in this book, in this whole page "lona", they don't mind. And I really mind because this part I have to use for something else. I have to use this part to write something else, but if he just writes across the book

or big words and small words in Grade 3. He can't do that! He can't write big words and small words in Grade 3. And when I ask them how can this be happening, they just find me as somebody who is impossible. Then you have just a little bit move back and let people do their thing. So I really can't say that, we are still going there. We are really trying, we are still going there. **The teacher asserts that the grade 3 literacy level is not good. The learners are still struggling with speaking, writing and reading.**

10. Do you and other teachers share the teaching roles at the school? Please explain your reason.

VOICE 020 We have regular phase meetings, we have grade meetings and when we do class visits. We visit each others classes. We do demonstration lessons for each other in our own grade or sometimes across the grades and we learn from each other. We also do work sessions and workshop meetings with other schools when the opportunity arises and we have phase meetings. **Great. Do you see it contributing to your literacy? Yes. Okay that's alright.** You learn from each other and off course the students from the teaching colleges visiting us. **O o...**the teaching students, we learn a lot from them because they come with fresh ideas and fresh lessons. So it is nice to see, that keeps you on your toes and you get ideas from them. You have to learn from each other. **Yes yes.** Otherwise you will do the same thing over and over. You must learn from each other, you must do class visits. **I'm very happy mam said that. She confirms that they do share the teaching roles at their school and even with other schools. She mentions a few example, for instance by class visits and listen to one another when teaching and demonstrate lessons to one another. In that way they learn from each and every one of them.**

VOICE 002 Um, not so much in the Foundation Phase. Uhm, we collaborate within a grade for instance. Mrs Newges and I do collaborate, if she has something that she finds works very well for her class, she either gives it to me or she'll offer to work with my class or invite my class to her and we have a group discussion. Um like I said my role as an Afrikaans teacher is 0 because my Afrikaans is so poor that I have an assistant who teaches that for me and I'm in a class with her learning at the same time and assisting you know, I understand enough but my spoken Afrikaans is poor so I listen to reading groups. I can read a grade 3 book, that's in my capabilities and we work together in that role but you know because we are in charge of our class I don't feel that our roles are too different. Um but yeah we work to each other's strengths, we share ideas. I know that some teachers are very good at the dramatic side and they might give us ideas on that yeah. I think if that answers your question, I don't know if that is deep enough. **It is deep enough, thank you very much. I'm really impressed. Thank you so much. She asserts that this sharing of roles is not so much in the foundation phase. They collaborate within a grade. For instance, if one teacher has something that she finds works very well for her class, she either gives it to her or she will offer to work with her class or invite her class to hers and have a group discussion. They work to each other's strengths and share ideas.**

VOICE 004 We don't share teaching roles as such, I mean my colleague doesn't come into my class and teach my class. **Okay.** If that's what you mean. But what we do share is resources and ideas and she is also very much a literacy lady, next door, my colleague so we like poetry and things like that. So we have a very common interest um in the literacy. She will make worksheets and share them with me and vice versa you know. So we, it's very much a

collaborative um exercise for us and um yes I think it works very well. ***Okay thank you so much. Thank you very much.***She explains that they do share but not take over the classroom teaching. They only share resources and ideas. They share as well their worksheets.

VOICE 009 Um I'm the only way that teachers the Grade 3's. Um we only have the one class um uh Miss Anita has the Grade 1's I have the Grade 2's and 3's and so on. I'm the only one that has the Grade 3's but um if I find that a child is really struggling and falling behind um I would at the from 1 – 2 every day they would come to Miss Anita for intervention. Do some extra work again I tell Anita they really struggled today in Afrikaans. They couldn't do the OO sound it just didn't happen. They come to her between 1 – 2 and she goes over it with them. Then my stronger children they can go on with their work and the other one's don't fall behind and feel like oh but I can't do that now that now so what my must I continue doing the other stuff. So we try really hard to be able to between me and Miss Anita to help them. Build them up and try to lay that foundation but yah its only me and then for Anita for the intervention.SD You don't sometimes get a peer learning the children helping SPUm with the multi grade class it is very difficult it is very difficult but um I prefer to every twice a week at least after they did the work I would mark the book in class um now a lot of teachers disagree with me because they say you take away um teaching time from children. I don't because I feel while I am in the class I can and marking that book that child is with me and what he did wrong here I can show him the right way because if I leave it until the next day that child's forgotten all about what sentences he wrote there.SDThey easily forgetSPYes they do so at that moment while it's still fresh in their brain you can rearrange it completely and they understand it different um differently and when you give the assignment again you'd be impressed to see they don't make the same mistake.So I do twice a week I call the children to my desk after they finished working so that I can mark the book and see what they've done and then well also talk about and I will ask. I won't just mark something wrong and go tell them to do it over.I ask them why did you do it like this and they will tell me and normally it will make a lot of sense why they did it that way and they I say okay but look at this don't you think if you write it this way it sounds better or say it out loud to me say read that sentence then they read it then I say okay just say the same sentence to and they change it then I say now which one sounded better, no the one I just said then I'm like but then that what you write you way say it that's the way you write. It doesn't change when it goes on paper because sometimes I don't know why they think that oh it must change when it goes on paper. They understand why they correct their own mistakes and then that's where they learn as well but if I leave it until the next day its gone then like oh no I don't don't remember why I did thatSDSo do you find it works for you?SPYes it doesSDCause this very important if it works that what a teacher must do if it worksSPIt does especially because I think I've got the multi grade class and its a lot of give there take there give there take there because it's so crazy and I'm all over the place I think it works for us the class because um the one day I'll take the Grade 2 books and let them stand by me and go through it and then oh no but we got it now and then the other day I'll take the Grade 3's and then well do so it works for us. The Grade 3's um enjoy it with English a lot because they um they can speak English very nice actually. I'm quite impressed but when it comes to the writing it's a bit scrabble type so um when I call them I ask them read the sentence to me, like I can't, like why not like I don't know what I wrote there I'm like now precisely how am I supposed to know what you wrote there like okay no wait I'll figure this out but then we go from there and they understand.Listen that doesn't even sound right or what those letters shouldn't even be next to each other so its practical I like being practical um yah for them to understand where I come from

why I disagree with why they wrote that not I'm right and your wrong doesn't work. I a child's mind it doesn't work that way, it doesn't. They'll keep doing it that just because you said you're right so I find it works quite well for us yah its very entertaining I don't know what I wrote there precisely SDO kay I think I will enjoy it more when I listen to you teaching them. Yah thank you so much for your time you have given me SPAg it a pleasure SDEspecially in the afternoon,

every teacher wants to go home after schoolSPYou actually made my day today I had a very bad day today, Feeling a lot better nowSDOkay thank you very muchSPA it a big pleasureSDYou have helped me a lot **The teacher claims that she is the only grade 3 teacher at the school since it is a multigrade school. Nevertheless, they share their role or experiences with the other teacher who a very experience teacher who teachers the grades 1one and two. If she struggles with her grade 3 class she goes to this other teacher for assistance**

VOICE 019 have a lot of contact with my grade 3 colleagues. We go to each other, this worked for me – why don't you try this? Okay maybe I can try that and I'm honest, I'm not a maths, I'm more interested in literacy. So where I go it's like I don't know how to do this. Help me with that but with literacy again I also learn from my colleagues. That child that really don't... now I go and ask how can I do that. Maybe he will understand this better and what I do is I go and I buy books and read a lot and try. That is a good thing when one does not know something and you draw it form the teachers. I like the idea you say you meet and you discuss, and you share the ideas. It's good.Do you also maybe to call upon another teacher to teach for you a subject in the class? At this school they're not so keen a lot but by my prior school we used to do it. Okay. That maths teacher came in and she had my class for a 30 minutes and I went to her class. Okay. The one that's stronger in maths, we used to do it but here they're not so keen. Not so keen to do it. So keen to do it. They don't do that at all. Okay. But I would love it. It's good. It's something else for the child, it brighten up and it's somebody else because they come with me from grade 1, they're used to me. I struggle a bit with discipline this year. We know each other so well. Yeah.Thank you so much. It has been a pleasure listening to you. I love it. I can see you have a passion for teaching. I resigned, in 2007 I resigned. Really. And I was only home one year then I came back. Thank you so much. I came back and then I started studying again, now I want to study again. What are you studying? I did my B Ed Honours in Learning Support last year, I finished that and now I'm thinking either full psychology or child psychology....**The teacher states that they share lot as colleagues. They borrow from everyone's strength and assist one another where necessary. They would invite one another to teach something in one's class and class teacher observes.**

VOICE 027 Miss: Very much so, we work together a lot with the other teachers. When you see that you getting confused in something, you get up and go to another teacher and say look man teacher I don't understand this part, can you help me. Can we meet after school and you show me how to teach this part. So there is no problem, we collaborate even with the HOD and my Grade mates. When a person doesn't understand something, they go and ask someone else, so that they are not left behind in their work, thinking that you are doing the right thing or that you are teaching the right thing, to find out that you are not doing the right thing. That's why I have to get up and go to other teachers and ask. I can even go to the Grade 2 teachers and ask them, to find out how this is is done. Sometimes I don't know whether I am doing it right this way. Sometimes you realise that kids are not doing it right in their books . And then you decide I'm going to repeat it, but first I'm going find out how I can do this in a way that the children can understand it.Dyasi: Maybe you ask another teacher to come and teachMiss: Yes I do that. We do that in Grade 3 Dyasi: Thank you very much MissMiss: We also used to do this in Sub A as well. We are used to it.Dyasi: Thank you very much Miss. Thank you for your time. Thank you for all the questions you answered. Thank you very much. Thank you so much. **She agrees that she and other teachers share the teaching roles. They even meet after school and share roles and experiences. If they do not understand something they ask from one another. They even invite one another to come and teach a concept that as a teacher finds it difficult to explain. They collaborate all the time.**

VOICE 028 Teacher: Yes we do, if you know that teacher so and so is good in reading, you know that ubani bani(so and so) is good, so you ask her..'can you come to my classSam: How does she feel about it when you ask her to come...Teacher: if it's a good teacher she will feel happy because you know she is helping because at the end of the day we want the best from our kids, so you she will feel happy..., you ask someone to come....or even someone if they attended a workshop, lets say there is this

workshop 'read and write' then she comes back and give the feedback, Sam: ok ok you share all the time.Sam: Thank you it was nice to be with you miss, and thank you how easy it was...no no I cannot blame you for that many people are afraid of interviews I am one of them because you don't know what is expected from you....but thank you very much miss, this as I said to you is very confidential is for me as a researcher and everything since i didn't even register you name as we are talking because its just for me, but I must extent my thanks for helping me answer these questions; thank you very much.Teacher: Like wise. She fully agrees that they share the teaching roles at the school. They borrow from the expertise of one another. **She states that they do this for the sake of the learner and every teacher is willing to share without any difficulties.**

VOICE 031 Miss: Yes we do. And another thing Sir it's not easy because some teachers know everything. You know what I'm saying. As a result, it's not easy like I used to be this teacher that when it comes to your class and I can see that there's no lines or there's no pictures in your wall, and I would say you can't teach a Grade 1 or Grade 2 class without pictures. Because you have to use pictures when you teach a child, or there must be lines in your chalkboard because they must learn to write in lines when they are writing. So people will take you for granted, so you have to just keep quiet. And then it's like when you are discussing I teach my child this thing like this. Some others they don't want to share, some they do but wein Grade 3 we are free to each other.Dyasi: Oh you share in Grade 3, which is good. Do you find it a good thing to share? Miss: Yes, because sometimes I don't know how to approach a certain thing, then I'll ask ...go to somebody else and say how do you approach this. I know that I can do that, I don't have a problem with that. If I don't know something, I'll go to teacher X and ask her how do you approach this thing. Even if I saw something in her blackboard, I can't just copy that and go and do it in my class without knowing what was that, what was she doing. If I'm interested into it, I have to ask her how do you do it, how do you do this. If it's ok, I'll do it in my class. If I don't feel it's ok, then I won't.Dyasi: Ok, do you go to an extent of asking her also to come and teach it in your class.Miss: Yes I do, sometimes if I see ok but I think as an old teacher (laughs) but if it comes to that push, I don't have a problem Dyasi: Thank you Miss, it was good to be interviewing you, but it's good. Thank you very much for sharing your ideas with me. It was quite a wonderful moment. Thank you, and you can see that you're an experienced teacher. You could come up with many things. Right from the beginning you could go on, you wanted to summarise the whole questions. If I allowed you, you would have finished all these questions (laughs), but thank you so much, thank you for your time, I enjoyed it really. **She explains that at her school as grade teachers they do share the teaching roles. She also mentions that some teachers would not like to share, that makes the situation sometimes difficult.**

