EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF GRADE 4 EDUCATORS WHO TAUGHT READING COMPREHENSION REMOTELY DURING THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

by

LENIQUE KYLÉ RHODA

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education

in the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences

at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Supervisor: Professor Candice Livingston

October 2023

CPUT copyright information

The dissertation may not be published either in part (in scholarly, scientific or technical journals), or as a whole (as a monograph), unless permission has been obtained from the University.

ABSTRACT

Research regarding the effects of the COVID-19 lockdown on teaching and learning is growing, with an intense focus on the mitigation of the losses accrued during the two years most affected by the pandemic. Teaching reading comprehension in the classroom requires that teachers follow a hands-on approach to strategy development, yet teachers were forced to suspend face-to-face instruction and teach reading comprehension remotely during the lockdown. A case study was employed to explore the perceptions of Grade 4 teachers regarding how they taught reading comprehension during the COVID-19 lockdown. This study focused specifically on Grade 4 English and Afrikaans Home Language teachers and aimed to determine the impact of remote teaching on the acquisition of reading comprehension skills and on how educators adapted their methodologies to accomplish teaching reading comprehension remotely. The study is rooted in the theory of Social Justice and is qualitative and interpretivist in nature. The Social Justice lens was employed to determine how teachers ensured that learners had equitable access to quality reading comprehension instruction through the use of opportunities to support learners and to determine if learners' rights to good reading instruction and participation had been compromised. The data was collected in two phases. In the first phase of the data collection, document analyses of WCED English and Afrikaans Home Language lesson plans were conducted. It was found that these lesson plans did not cover all the reading comprehension strategies that should be taught in Grade 4 and that the plans provided insufficient guidance to teachers on how to teach these strategies. In the second phase of data collection, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Grade 4 teachers who had taught reading comprehension remotely during the lockdown. The interviews revealed numerous issues with teaching reading comprehension remotely, related to access to quality teaching and learning resources, parental involvement, socioeconomic status and the lack of training in remote teaching. This study highlights the need for a focused approach and clear guidance to teachers on teaching reading comprehension remotely.

Keywords:

Reading, Reading Comprehension, Remote Teaching, Distance Learning, Social Justice Theory, COVID-19, Grade 4 Language Learning

DECLARATION

I, Lenique Kylé Rhoda, declare that the contents of this dissertation represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation 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:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank:

Our Heavenly Father. Without Him, none of this would be possible.

My parents, Leonard and Charmaine Rhoda; for instilling in me a love for reading and learning. Thank you for your sacrifices and support in helping me to reach my dreams.

Professor Candice Livingston, for agreeing to be my supervisor. Thank you for your guidance, help and time. Your encouragement, input, knowledge and support made a world of difference.

Dr Carike Kriel, for doing the critical reading of my dissertation. Thank you for your meaningful feedback and input.

Nazeem Lowe for the final editing of my dissertation.

My siblings, Shandene, Vernol, Linden and Chandre.

My fiancé, Curtis Francke, for being my biggest cheerleader.

The participants in this study, for their time and willingness.

The financial assistance of CPUT towards this research is acknowledged. Opinions expressed in this dissertation and the conclusions arrived at are those of the author.

DEDICATION

For my parents, Leonard and Charmaine Rhoda.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT i

DECLARATION ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

DEDICATION iv

ABBREVIATIONS/ ACRONYMS 1

CHAPTER 1 2

Introduction to the Study 2

1.1 Introduction and Background 2

1.2 Research Problem 3

1.3 Research Question 3

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Research 4

1.5 Significance and Rationale of the Study 4

1.6 Chapter Outline 5

CHAPTER 2 6

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIAL JUSTICE THEORY 6

2.1 Introduction 6

2.2 Background 6

2.2.1 Platonic Justice 6

2.2.2 Justice according to Thomas Pogge 7

2.2.3 Social justice according to John Rawls 8

2.3 Other Definitions of Social Justice 10

2.4 Social Justice in Education 10

2.5 Types of Justice 14

2.5.1 Distributive justice 14

2.5.2 Relational justice 15

2.6 General Principles of Social Justice 15

2.6.1 Access 16
2.6.2 Equity 16
2.6.3 Equality 16
2.6.4 Participation 16
2.6.5 Rights 17
2.7 Conclusion 17
CHAPTER 3 18
READING, READING COMPREHENSION AND REMOTE TEACHING 18
3.1 Introduction 18
3.2 Reading 18
3.3 How Reading is Taught in the CAPS 19
3.3.1 The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) 19
3.3.2 Home Language and First Additional Language 20
3.3.3 Types of reading according to CAPS 20
3.3.4 Stages of reading 22
3.3.5 Approaches to language teaching 23
3.4 Intensive and Extensive Reading 23
3.4.1 Intensive reading 24
3.4.2 Extensive reading 24
3.5 Definitions of Reading Comprehension 26
3.6 Reading Comprehension Strategies 29
3.6.1 Teaching reading comprehension strategies to learners 29
3.6.2 Definitions of reading comprehension strategies 30
3.6.3 Proficient vs less proficient readers 31
3.6.4 Benefits of teaching reading comprehension strategies 31
3.6.5 When to teach what 32
3.6.6 Phases of teaching reading comprehension strategies 33

3.6.7 Common reading comprehension strategies 33
3.7 Reading Models 39
3.7.1 Bottom-up model 39
3.7.2 Top-down model 40
3.7.3 Interactive model 40
3.8 Teachers' Knowledge of Reading Comprehension 41
3.9 Teaching Remotely 44
3.9.1 Experiences of remote teaching 45
3.9.2 Advantages of remote teaching 47
3.9.3 Limitations of teaching remotely 47
3.10 COVID-19 School Closures and their Impact on Learning 48
3.11 Conclusion 51
CHAPTER 4 52
METHODOLOGY 52
4.1 Introduction 52
4.2 Research Design 52
4.2.1 Research paradigm 52
4.2.2 Qualitative research 52
4.2.3 Case studies 53
4.2.4 Exploratory case studies 54
4.3 Methodology 55
4.3.1 Site selection 55
4.3.2 Participant selection 57
4.3.3 Data collection 59
4.4 Data analysis 67
4.5 Trustworthiness 68
4.6 Researcher's Position 69

4.7 Ethical Considerations 70
4.8 Conclusion 70
CHAPTER 5 72
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA 72
5.1 Introduction 72
5.2 Site and Participant Discussion 72
5.3 Document Analysis 73
5.3.1 Phase One: Document analysis of English lesson plans 73
5.3.2 Phase Two: Document analysis of Afrikaans lesson plans 76
5.3.3 Discussion 80
5.4 Qualitative Analysis – Perceptions of Grade 4 Educators 80
5.4.1 Reading comprehension 81
5.4.2 Teaching reading comprehension face-to-face 82
5.4.3 Teaching reading comprehension strategies remotely 84
5.4.4 Lack of access: effect on reading comprehension skills development 87
5.4.5 Parental involvement 88
5.4.6 Expectations of what a Grade 4 learner should be able to do 90
5.4.7 Challenges faced by educators 92
5.4.8 Advice suggested by participants 93
5.5 Conclusion 96
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 97
6.1 Introduction 97
6.2 Sub-Question 1: Did remote teaching affect the teaching of reading comprehension? 97
6.3 Sub-Question 2: What support was provided by the WCED regarding teaching reading comprehension skills during the COVID-19 lockdown? 97
6.4 Sub-Question 3: What role did parents play in supporting educators during remote teaching? 98

6.5 Sub-Question 4: What challenges did educators face teaching reading comprehension during remote teaching? ... 98
6.6 Answering the Research Question ... 99
6.7 Social Justice Implications of this Study ... 99
6.8 Limitations ... 100
6.9 Recommendations ... 100
6.9.1 Recommendations for schools ... 100
6.9.3 Recommendations for teacher training ... 100
6.9.4 Recommendations for future research ... 101
6.10 Reflection ... 101
6.1 Conclusion ... 102
REFERENCES ... 103
APPENDICES ... 126
APPENDIX A: First letter of permission by the WCED to conduct research ... 126
APPENDIX B: Second letter of permission by the WCED to conduct research ... 127
APPENDIX C: Permission granted by participants ... 128
APPENDIX D: Questions for open-ended interviews with Grade 4 educators ... 129
APPENDIX E: ... 134
Reading comprehension strategies found in the lesson plans ... 134
APPENDIX F: ... 136
Reading comprehension strategies found in the Afrikaans Home Language lesson plans ... 136

ABBREVIATIONS/ ACRONYMS

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ERT	Emergency Remote Teaching
FAL	First Additional Language
HL	Home Language
HT	Afrikaans Huis Taal (Home Language)
NARAP	National Accessible Reading Assessment Projects
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction and Background

The coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) caused a slew of issues worldwide, affecting people from all walks of life. Education has been impacted in a variety of ways, resulting in lost instructional time and a great deal of confusion. Shortly after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic (WHO, 2020), South Africa and many other countries around the world responded quickly and aggressively to contain the virus's spread.

On 15 March 2020, the President of South Africa announced that South Africa would enter a state of almost complete lockdown. Schools were closed as part of a physical distancing policy aimed at slowing transmissions and easing the pressure on health systems (Eyles, Gibbons & Montebruno, 2020: 2; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020: 243). To curb the spread of the disease, more than 100 countries had unscheduled school closures. According to Onyema et al. (2020: 108), more than 1 billion learners missed school as a result of these school closures, forcing learners to adapt to distance learning. In South Africa, schools were closed from 18 March 2020 and started re-opening from 1 June 2020. Schools were again closed from 27 July to 24 August (DBE, 2020a). The amended school calendar, published in the Government Gazette on 11 August 2020 shows that, by 2 August 2020, South African children had lost between 22% and 65% of the 'normal' school days scheduled up to that point (DBE, 2020b: 4). Face-to-face instruction was interrupted and the changes to the context in which learning took place were likely to significantly affect how children perform in school.

Many researchers have already concluded that unscheduled school closures have had detrimental educational consequences. Van Lancker and Parolin (2020: 243) researched COVID-19, school closures and poverty and estimated that school closures during COVID-19 affected the education of 80% of children worldwide. They noted that existing gaps in literacy skills often widen during periods when learners are away from school. Eyles et al. (2020: 2–3) and Onyema et al. (2020: 108) also researched COVID-19 school closures and found that unscheduled school closures and reduced instruction time reduce the academic achievement of learners and thus pose serious concerns. Eyles et al. (2020: 1) state that short-term and long-term educational success will be lowered by school closings. They also add that, due to limited family resources and access to online learning resources to make up for lost class time, children from underprivileged homes were likely to be more negatively impacted by school closures than other learners. While noting that there was little available data on how school closures internationally may impact learning and academic achievement, Kuhfeld et al. (2020: 550) agree that the effects on education, although varying, will be negative.

1.2 Research Problem

Research shows that extended periods away from school harm the academic progress and achievement of children (Quinn & Polikoff, 2017). Research also shows that transitioning from the foundation phase (Grade R–Grade 3) to the intermediate phase (Grade 4–Grade 6) is often difficult and challenging for learners (WCED, 2022). The end of Grade 3 is a crucial transitional developmental stage because, at this stage, learners are expected to have learnt to read 'and are now reading to learn' (Mullis et al., 2012: 25).

Schools were closed for a substantial portion of 2020 from 18 March 2020 with Grade 4 learners only returning to school on 31 July 2020, following the staggered reopening of schools. Although schools were closed under the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, educators were expected to continue teaching.

Limited evidence is available on the effects of the COVID-19 lockdown on the reading comprehension skills of primary school learners. However, existing evidence indicates that the lockdown caused serious disruptions in children's learning. For example, Müller and Goldenberg (2020: 6) found that many children between the ages of 10 and 19 years spent less time on schoolwork during the COVID-19 lockdown than they would have when at school. Further studies by Samuel (2020: 88–102), Spaull and Van der Berg (2020: 1–13) and Smith (2021: 56) agree that the lockdown caused enormous and serious disruptions in children's learning. Models have been developed to understand the influence of the pandemic on educational quality, specifically when applied to South Africa (Gustafsson & Deliwe, 2020: 5). These reports disclose distressing trends. Müller and Goldenberg (2020: 6) found that children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were affected more than their wealthier peers. Onyema et al. (2020: 118) noted worrying consequences, especially for underprivileged learners and those in rural areas. During the lockdown, many parents in lower socioeconomic conditions did not have the skills and resources to effectively assist their children at home and this has likely worsened the inequalities already present before the pandemic (Kuhfeld, 2020: 561; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020: 243).

1.3 Research Question

The main research question in this study was:

What are the perceptions of Language educators regarding the influence of COVID-19 lockdown remote teaching on the development of Grade 4 reading comprehension skills?

To answer the main research question, several sub-questions that align with the study objectives were posed.

Sub-question 1: How did remote teaching affect the teaching of reading comprehension to Grade 4 learners?

Sub-question 2: What support was provided by the WCED regarding the teaching of reading comprehension during COVID-19 lockdown?

Sub-question 3: What role did parents play in supporting educators during remote teaching?

Sub-question 4: What challenges did educators face while teaching reading comprehension during remote teaching?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Research

The study aimed to explore the perceptions of Grade 4 Language educators teaching at no-fee schools in the Cape Winelands regarding the influence of COVID-19 lockdown remote teaching on the development of Grade 4 reading comprehension skills. The objectives of this study were to determine:

- How remote teaching affected the teaching of reading comprehension to Grade 4 learners;
- What support was provided by the WCED regarding the teaching of reading comprehension during COVID-19 lockdown;
- What role parents played in supporting educators during remote teaching; and
- What challenges educators faced while teaching reading comprehension during remote teaching.

1.5 Significance and Rationale of the Study

Schools were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of a physical distancing policy aimed at slowing transmissions and easing the pressure on health systems. This well-intentioned measure significantly impacted the educational experiences of learners and how educators taught in a remote distance learning setting that was new to teachers and learners alike. While the extant research sheds light on the effect of unscheduled school closures and, more specifically, unscheduled school closures related to COVID-19, the studies reveal some gaps in the literature. None of the studies mentioned above focused specifically on the effect of the COVID-19 lockdown on the reading comprehension skills of Grade 4 learners. The 2021 Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) findings, however, reveal that 81% of Grade 4 learners in South Africa were unable to read for meaning. South Africa obtained among the lowest reading scores in the world (DBE, 2023).

Such studies sufficiently indicate the importance of studying the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on Grade 4 learners' reading comprehension, which could aid educators and

education policymakers in planning for and addressing some of the consequences of school closures. This may also assist educators in lesson planning and the filling of potential educational gaps.

This study contributes to the body of research on the impact of remote teaching methodologies and contributes significant insights from teachers who were required to implement the teaching strategies adopted in public schools during the pandemic.

1.6 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 introduces the study and explains the research problem investigated. Chapter 2 explores the theoretical framework that underpins this study, with a specific focus on the social justice theory. A review of the literature on reading comprehension and remote teaching follows in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 discusses the research methodology applied. The analysis and interpretation of data follow in Chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 6 summarises the study's conclusions and suggests reading comprehension strategies to assist educators and parents at quintile 3 and 4 schools, as well as possible directions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIAL JUSTICE THEORY

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the perceptions of language educators regarding the impact that the COVID-19 lockdown had on the reading comprehension skills of Grade 4 learners at two no-fee schools in the Cape Winelands education district. These perceptions do not form within a standardised vision of education. The reality is that, since learners differ economically and socially in South Africa, expecting all children to switch equitably to remote teaching when learners and teachers in poorer schools differ significantly in the social and financial capital they can access reflects a social justice issue. Schulze et al. (2019: 377) states that social justice emphasises non-discrimination and equality. Joseph (2020: 4) agrees and adds that it is "the right or equitable allocation of benefits and burdens in a given society". It is thus important to acknowledge the many needs of learners from a social justice perspective and the relevance of social justice to teaching practice in relation to this study.

This chapter discusses three main theories on social justice and explores the general principles of social justice as they relate to the sphere of education.

2.2 Background

Social justice is not a new notion. Philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato were fascinated with what it entails, it is reflected in the Judeo-Christian biblical tradition and philosophers such as Karl Marx and John Rawls wrote extensively about it (Sabbagh & Schmitt, 2016: 1). The Jesuit Luigi Taparelli wrote about social justice in 1840 and is considered to be one of the earliest modern users of the idea (Chibuikem, 2017: 25). By the 1990s, social justice had become a mainstream notion that dominated many conversations (Khechen, 2013: 2).

This chapter discusses social justice from the perspectives of an ancient philosopher, Plato; a more modern scholar, Thomas Pogge; and finally, the social justice theorist John Rawls.

2.2.1 Platonic Justice

According to Cornford (1970: 2), the earliest attempt to create a workable framework within which man's nature, with its unalterable claims, could experience happiness and well-being is found in Plato's works. Plato argued that to be just is to be in a psychological state that moulds and leads one's behaviours, choices and preferences over a broad spectrum of issues within society (Cooper, 1977: 1). Justice is a characteristic in which people put aside their unreasonable urge to enjoy every pleasure and derive selfish satisfaction from every object

and devote themselves to the performance of a particular role for the greater good (Bhandari, 1998: 44).

Plato, in his dialogue on the concept of justice, establishes a city-state (the Republic). In this ideal city, justice and social justice are attainable. There are three groups (or classes) of people, namely producers, auxiliaries and guardians (Plato, 2015: 8). Each group performs different duties to enhance the well-being of society and each one has a duty to which they are naturally suited, without meddling with others (Chibuikem, 2017: 26).

According to Bhandari (1998: 47), justice in Plato's society can be viewed as a sort of specialisation. Justice, in Plato's view, is fidelity to the order in the soul – the microcosm, which is a microcosmic representation of the order in society – the macrocosm. Therefore, by comprehending the nature of the soul and justice therein, one can better grasp justice in society and have a greater appreciation for it (Chibuikem, 2017: 26). Justice can also be seen as social consciousness since justice appears to be a relationship between the three classes (Chibuikem, 2017: 26). It is "part of human virtue and the bond, which joins man together in society" (Bhandari, 1998: 47).

2.2.2 Justice according to Thomas Pogge

Thomas Pogge (2001: 6–22) provides commentary on what he refers to as global justice. He built on the idea of justice in the national and international spheres. According to him, human moral equality necessitates that each person's interests be given equal weight and regard. His basic premise is that social institutions should be designed to respond to the equally weighted needs and interests of all participants and that, as a result, institutional arrangements should be designed to respond to the equally weighted needs and interests of all human beings on the planet (Pogge, 2001: 17).

According to Thomas Pogge, distributive justice principles apply to the global basic structure or economic order (Midtgaard, 2012: 207–208). Pogge believes all members of this structure, particularly the more privileged, are collectively liable for the inequity which exists (Pogge, 2001: 6). Pogge (2005: 337) also makes a distinction between positive duties and negative duties. Positive duties refer to helping others in need of help when they can do so at a low cost to themselves, while negative duties refer to the duty not to harm (Pogge, 2005: 65). To reach global justice, both these duties should be implemented.

Global injustice occurs when a nation, state or organisation fails to satisfy social or economic human rights on a large scale, notwithstanding the existence of a viable alternative order. According to Pogge, (1989: 9) a conception of justice may influence what we ought to do in at least three different ways: we ought to assist in reforming current social institutions to make

them more just; we ought to lessen and ease the suffering of those who are disadvantaged and deprived by existing unjust institutions; and we ought to accept certain restrictions on our behaviour and policies that foreshadow the ideal of just ground rules that we are striving for. Pogge is therefore interested in the moral assessment of social organisations that are founded on and motivated by justice-related ideals. He thinks that the distribution of rewards and liabilities in society, as well as how people use their rights, are significantly influenced by these social structures (Merle, 2005: 346).

Midtgaard (2012: 207) argues that people cannot be held liable for the distribution of benefits and burdens among individuals at the global level, as suggested by Pogge's ideas. People and governments, on the other hand, should be held accountable for the unfair aspects of existing laws of people or states.

2.2.3 Social justice according to John Rawls

Academics have praised American political philosopher John Rawls for his ground-breaking work in the development of the social justice theory. John Rawls' book, *A Theory of Justice,* was first published in 1971. According to his theory, 'justice' refers to equality and fairness, whereas 'social justice' refers to the administration of justice in a society riven by inequity and injustice (Rawls, 1999). Rawls writes that his understanding of justice as fairness is not based on philosophical assertions. Rather, he emphasises that "justice as fairness is intended as a political conception of justice" (1985: 224–225). He argues for an egalitarian conception of justice, with the primary goal of reducing inequalities. It is also worth noting that justice as fairness isn't meant to be the application of a wide moral concept to society's essential structure, as if this framework was just another case in which that broad moral concept is applied (Rawls, 1985: 224–225). In explaining justice as fairness, Rawls (1985) argues that we can conceive a system that a rational individual would happily inhabit by abstracting from our current conditions. This society is organised around the principles of liberty and equality. He emphasises the greatest degree of liberty, so that everyone has access to it, while equality is only permitted to the extent that it benefits everyone.

Rawls' work is a search for justice principles that, due to their philosophical cogency, can serve as the foundation for a stable society that supports human autonomy and creates conditions for individual self-respect, according to Schaar (1974: 75). Later, Chibuikem (2017: 25) continues by saying that justice is what compels necessitates that sensible, free people to prioritise adopting a neutral stance in order to further their own interests.

According to Chibuikem (2017: 27), the theory is taken as a step forward from utilitarian conceptions of justice such as optimal welfare. Rawls developed a concept of what a just and fair society might entail. He presents a framework for creating a just society and its

fundamental institutions, including political, economic, legal and social institutions. These institutions are crucial to managing the distribution of goods and social burdens among individuals of a community and, as a result, defining their life chances (Sabbagh & Schmitt, 2016: 2). Rawls thus studied justice in terms of maximal equal liberty for all members of society in terms of basic rights and duties, with socioeconomic differences requiring moral justification in terms of equal opportunity and good outcomes for everyone (Meyer & Sanklecha, 2016: 15).

Chibuikem (2017: 28) criticised Rawl's work as being utopic and unrealisable. He argued that justice is not a universal concept as it has no complete definition. It can, therefore, not be achieved solely by any given method or criterion. The concept of social justice is fluid. It can take any shape and form in different instances.

2.2.3.1 Two principles of justice set out by Rawls

The Theory of Justice covers two areas – basic liberties and the distribution of goods. These two areas are directly linked to the principles provided by Rawls (Wenar, 2021). He lays out social justice principles that govern how society should be constructed and maintained as a whole. This is done to serve as a model for how basic institutions should implement the values of liberty and equality and, he provides a point of view from which the two principles can be considered as more suitable to the nature of democratic citizens (Rawls, 1985: 227).

John Rawls' principles are as follows. Firstly, everyone has an equal right to a comprehensive set of equal basic liberties that is compatible with a similar set of rights for everyone. Secondly, "social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all" (Rawls, 1985: 224). Considering the principles, everyone has the same opportunity to improve their skills to pursue their aspirations or goals (Rawls, 1999). The theory is thus about ensuring that all people engage completely in society and that rewards and responsibilities are distributed equally, resulting in equal living and a just social order. In the society envisioned by Rawls, individuals pursue their ideals of life in a fair, cooperative endeavour between free and equal people. He emphasises that the distribution of socioeconomic resources should favour the most vulnerable members of society.

Schenk (1977: 66) critiqued Rawls' theory, arguing that the theory makes no exception for anyone to be disadvantaged, by saying that "there are surely times when justice demands that some be harmed … for the good of the whole". He also opined that Rawls missed the opportunity to better ground his doctrine as he (Schenk) believed that justice does not demand that each private interest be considered (Schenk, 1977: 65). Alleging that Rawls' "derivation

of his principles of justice does not succeed", Choptiany stated that the two principles presented by Rawls were "neither necessary nor sufficient as principles of justice" (1973: 146).

2.3 Other Definitions of Social Justice

According to Gewirtz (2006: 70) and Reisch (2002: 343), different approaches and interpretations of the theory exist due to the complexities and degrees of social justice. Tyler and Smith (1995: 2) stated that most social justice research focused on concerns linked to distribution, while Adams, Bell and Griffin (1997: 5) suggest social justice is both a process and a goal. Social justice involves "having opportunities that shape abilities, to achieve, or strive for outcomes people value" (Deering & Williams, 2019: 153). Social justice propagates "the alleviation of poverty and the diminution of inequality as a matter of justice rather than charity", according to Jackson (2005: 360). In the society described by Jackson (2005), all individuals are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Sabbagh and Schmitt (2016: 3) state that justice can be defined as "a social value that is socially determined". De Klerk and Palmer add that the theory entails justice "that allows individuals to participate as counterparts in social life while disabling inequality" (2020: 830).

The field of social justice has been moulded by a variety of social concerns and while numerous scholars have attempted to define social justice, no single, all-encompassing concept has emerged (Khechen, 2013: 1). Winterbottom and Winterbottom (2017: 756) agree that the concept builds on the universal definition of justice and that it has a variety of interpretations and conceptions linked to it. The above literature illustrates how 'social justice' is a notion that is both culturally ingrained and socially manufactured.

Research suggests that the aim of social justice is for all groups in a society to participate fully and equally in shaping it to satisfy their needs (Adams et al., 1997: 5). Jackson (2005: 358) adds that its purpose is to "redistribute resources to those disadvantaged by the distribution of goods and services in society". This is to improve the well-being of individuals in society through equal access to goods and services. While social justice is a politically charged notion subject to various interpretations, at its core it is about the fair distribution of opportunities and privileges as they apply to individuals within a society.

For this study, social justice is adequately defined as a concept fixed on the principles of "fairness, equality, equity, rights and participation" (Khechen, 2013: 1).

2.4 Social Justice in Education

Since the principles of education and those of social justice are similar, viewing this study through the social justice lens can highlight and draw attention to possible issues that learners

and educators in Quintile 3 and 4 schools might have experienced in terms of the teaching and learning of reading comprehension during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Education policies focus on the importance of fair and quality educational opportunities for all. All learners must be handled fairly and given the chance to achieve their full potential (UNESCO, 2021). That emphasis on equality is rooted in social justice. Looking at education through a social justice lens is about the fair distribution of resources, access to quality education and treating all learners equally so that they feel physically and mentally safe and secure and so that all of them can succeed in their educational journey (Winterbottom & Winterbottom, 2017: 756). For this to happen, individuals must feel linked to others based on respect and confidence (Woods, 2018: 1).

Connecting theory and practice to the moral use of power illustrates why social justice is pertinent in every era as an educational intervention. According to Bogotch (2002: 138), social justice is inextricably linked to “educational theories and practices of professionals, schools, academic disciplines, and government officials”. Drewery (2014: 195) adds that improving learning outcomes for learners falls within a framework of social justice. Winterbottom and Winterbottom (2017: 757) opine that social justice should not be an agenda, but rather a mechanism focused on the appreciation, care, recognition and empathy of educators, staff, learners, families and community. As a result, it is the responsibility of schools, policymakers and educational stakeholders to ensure that policies are fair and that all learners have equal access to opportunities. According to Bogotch (2002: 140), without people taking action, positive practices that support social justice ideas won't happen. Social justice requires deliberate action, the moral application of force and individual efforts. To reduce the disparities in the educational system, stakeholders are consequently required to strive for social justice.

Social justice is a concept that is widely discussed in scholarly and educational policies and public and scholarly debate has focused on concerns relating to equality of educational opportunities (Hill et al., 2012: 239). Within the field of education, Winterbottom and Winterbottom (2017: 756) argue that social justice education should have an unequivocal dedication to behaving in just ways in relation to principles of fairness and equality. Richards et al. (2018: 218) share the sentiment and state that social justice has to do with “equitable education in which children and teachers share ownership of the learning process”. They also argue that all learners, regardless of ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or physical or intellectual ability, should be included (Richards et al., 2018: 219). The goals of social justice in education correlate with the generalised aims of the theory. In education, the goals include more compassion, more justice and more equality (Soken-Huberty, n.d.).

In education, there are two facets to social justice – the degree of equality within the educational system, and social justice in action (how it is taught). According to Drewery (2014: 193), learners with better educational status tend to have better access to socioeconomic opportunities. This statement agrees with a study (not conducted in South Africa) by Yun, Jinhxun and Rongguang (2017: 368) that found that children in public schools face barriers to accessing high-quality educational resources as they are disproportionately concentrated in lower-quality schools. This highlights the reality during the COVID-19 lockdown that learners in lower-quintile schools in South Africa were not generally able to acquire the type of education available to learners at quintile 5 schools and thereby placed at a huge disadvantage. When the educational system fails to provide equal chances and benefits, it has a detrimental cultural and economic impact on society (Soken-Huberty, n.d.).

The second type of social justice in education is evident in the way social justice is taught in schools (social justice in action). A school curriculum is deliberately chosen in a social justice framework to extend learners' worldviews by including new ideas and challenging perspectives. Instead of disregarding concerns like sexism, racism, poverty and abuse, a social justice education framework confronts them and encourages learners to think critically (Soken-Huberty, n.d.). Schools that are committed to social justice in education pay particular attention to the curriculum and how it might be used to broaden the minds of their learners. For this study, the researcher focused specifically on social justice in action and the level of equality within the actual education system (Soken-Huberty, n.d.).

Smith (2021: 72) states that many people believe that education is crucial to lessening social inequality and that education may play a role in fostering social justice. While it's not uncommon for educational scholars and theorists to declare that their work is oriented toward social justice, Sabbagh and Schmitt (2016) add that the explicit treatment of education as a separate field of social justice has garnered very little scholarly attention.

In educational research, distributive justice has been the most widely used term to describe social justice (Hill et al., 2012: 241). In education, social justice refers to addressing challenging social, cultural and economic injustices imposed on individuals because of differences in power, resources and privilege distribution. Educational institutions are seen as a vehicle for achieving social justice. This is supported by UNESCO, which regards the right to education without discrimination and exclusion as a universal right (2019: 28). Education is said to contribute to assigning individuals to academic and social positions that correspond to their aptitudes and motivation, independent of their family's money, history or social affiliation, by offering equitable possibilities (Autin, Batruch & Butera, 2015: 1). However, Badat and Sayed (2014: 127) have argued that social justice for all is severely limited by South Africa's

economic and social conditions, such as the class imbalances and lack of equality, equity and high-quality education. De Klerk and Palmer (2020: 836) agree that limited social justice gains have been made in education in South Africa.

Gollwitzer and Van Prooijen (2016), and Resh and Sabbagh (2016: 348) agree that education is viewed as one of many spheres of justice. Different principles of distribution within each of the spheres of justice determine how societal commodities are dispersed (Gollwitzer & Van Prooijen, 2016).

Resh and Sabbagh (2016: 348) claim that justice plays a vital role within all settings relating to education and identify five sub-spheres in which resources are dispersed and the fairness of the distribution is assessed by the key beneficiaries, mainly learners. They also distinguish diverse classes of resources and their underlying distribution principles. The first sub-sphere is "access to education" (and resource allocation to realise access) (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016: 350). Education requires a variety of resources, including buildings, equipment and teaching materials (physical resources), and human resources, such as administrators, educators and support staff. Resh and Sabbagh (2016: 353) argue that more affluent schools receive a larger share of many types of educational resources. Similar findings by De Clercq (2020: 2) confirm that resources are not evenly distributed among schools, but schools in more affluent areas receive more resources than other schools.

The second sub-sphere is the allocation of learning places (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016: 350). In South Africa's quintile system, public schools are categorised based on a school's socioeconomic position, which is decided by average income, unemployment rates and the general literacy level of the school's surrounding geographic area. Quintile 1 schools are those in the most economically disadvantaged (poorest) geographical areas, whereas Quintile 5 schools are those in the most economically advantaged (wealthiest) geographical areas (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019: 106; WCED, 2013). The lowest-quintile schools receive the most funding per learner and the poorest may be designated no-fee schools (the parents are not charged school fees). Hage, Ring and Lantz (2016: 2795) argue that learners "within communities of colour are often among those most negatively affected by situations of inequality and injustice". In this study, the majority of the learners at the two no-fee schools are poor learners of colour. Arguably, when schools were unexpectedly closed due to the COVID-19 lockdown, poor learners were placed at a disadvantage to learners from wealthier homes who had access to educational resources and who could access online teaching from the comfort of their homes. This is an example of unjust practices that contradict the principles of social justice. Remote learning, therefore, eroded the principle of equal opportunity for all.

The allocation of teaching methods and pedagogy is the third sub-sphere and the fourth sub-sphere is grading. Pedagogical practices refer to the methods that educators use to enable learners to learn. This includes encouraging the acquisition of knowledge as well as intellectual and personal growth (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016: 356). The method of using standardised metrics for various levels of achievement is known as grading in education. Grading inside of classrooms is the most important evaluation method used in schools (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016: 359).

The last sub-sphere identified by Resh and Sabbagh (2016) as relevant to social justice in education is learner-teacher relationships. Educators provide knowledge, grades, attention, learning assistance, compassion and respect. They provide learners with a variety of learning opportunities and social experiences that influence their motivation and academic success. They also offer a wide range of relational stimuli to their learners during the teaching and learning process, including "attention, reaction to non-routine events, encouragement/ disapproval, respect, and affection" (Resh & Sabbagh, 2016: 361).

2.5 Types of Justice

The literature identifies different types of justice, such as *procedural justice*, which is about determining how fairly people are treated; *retributive justice*, which is based on punishment for wrongdoing; *distributive justice*, which simply deals with deciding who gets what (Gewirtz, 2006: 75); and restorative or *relational justice,* "which tries to restore relationships to 'rightness'" (Maiese & Burgess, 2020). This study includes a brief description of distributive justice and relational justice below, which link well with social justice within the sphere of education.

2.5.1 Distributive justice

The notion of distributive justice dates back at least two millennia (Jackson: 2005) and is often used interchangeably with social justice. Distributive justice concerns the debate regarding which frameworks and/or resulting distributions are ethically acceptable. When we think about justice or fairness, we usually think of how to distribute specific rewards or punishments to distinct groups of individuals which demands consideration of how to disperse society's benefits (Cook & Hegtvedt, 1983; Lamont & Favor, 2017). Arneson (2007: 2) adds that it is the responsibility of society to change the way goods and burdens are distributed. Laing, Smith and Todd (2017: 14), however, argue that without a more complete understanding of social existence, a distributional approach to social justice is insufficient.

Distributive justice can be defined as the equitable and fair distribution of social responsibilities and burdens among society's citizens (Drewery 2014: 196; Gollwitzer & Van Prooijen, 2016:

63–64; Hill et al., 2012: 242). According to Kaufman (2012: 842), it is concerned with the equitable allocation of the burdens and benefits of social cooperation among a variety of individuals with competing interests and claims. According to Cohen (1987: 21), four main components make up the definition of distributive justice: certain (1) things are distributed to (2) individuals whose relative shares can be determined by a functional rule (3) and evaluated by a standard (4). The objects can be situations, opportunities, social or material commodities and they can have a positive or negative worth. Distributive justice is relevant to this study because it can also be associated with justice in the provision and distribution of educational opportunities. During the COVID-19 lockdown, many learners were distributively disadvantaged in terms of their access to educational resources.

This view of justice has been critiqued for failing to critically explore oppression and dominance in relationships that work within social structures and institutional contexts (Hill et al., 2012: 242).

2.5.2 Relational justice

Relational justice concerns "relationships which structure society" (Hill et al., 2012: 242). It refers to the relational framework through which social and economic goods and rights are distributed, as well as the norms and processes that control both micro-level connections and the structure of economic, social and political institutions (Hill et al., 2012: 242). Relational justice is a broad phrase that can be applied to a range of forms of justice and draws on a variety of antecedents, but it emphasises the importance of interpersonal connections and the social context in evaluating social justice claims (Laing et al., 2017: 4). Furthermore, relational justice explores how social interactions in schools, such as rules and policies, affect learners' day-to-day experiences and the standard of their education (Walsh et al., 2020: 1588).

2.6 General Principles of Social Justice

There is no consensus on the meaning and scope of the term social justice (Chibuikem, 2017; Miller, 1991). There is also no clear definition of the key principles (Khechen, 2013: 4) since social justice is a loaded and complex concept relevant to many spheres of society. The five principles below, namely *access*, *equity*, *equality*, *participation* and *rights*, are based on the two main principles emphasised by John Rawls (1999) as essential to any discussion of justice: equal basic rights and equal opportunity, both of which must be to the benefit of society's most vulnerable members (Khechen, 2013: 7) Schoolgoing children are the vulnerable members in society relevant to this study whose basic rights must be prioritised.

2.6.1 Access

Access to resources is a fundamental principle of social justice (Rawls, 1999: 53). These resources can be physical or human (Khechen, 2013: 2). During the COVID-19 lockdown, learning was expected to continue at home. Educators were expected to teach remotely, without consideration of whether learners had access to the resources needed for learning to take place. During the lockdown, learners needed reading materials, but they also needed someone who could explicitly teach reading strategies and assist with the day's work. Lack of access is an example of social injustice experienced by many learners at quintile 3 and 4 schools.

2.6.2 Equity

The principle of equity aims to advance justice and equality in society by ensuring that everyone has access to resources and equal opportunity, is based on the principle of need, and stems from the awareness that the concept of fairness as equal distribution is not always achievable, especially considering existing inequities (Khechen, 2013: 5; Rawls, 1999: 53). During the COVID-19 lockdown, the ability of learners to achieve equitable access to teaching and learning resources and or opportunities might have been limited. Some learners may also have needed more support than their peers.

2.6.3 Equality

The concept of equality is commonly linked with fairness concerning access (Khechen, 2013: 5). Fairness, according to Laing et al. (2017: 2), is a term that we use to define, justify and interpret our relationships with one another in our society. This suggests that all people, regardless of their differences, are eligible to benefit from public goods and resources. Access to "a livelihood, capacities, education, information, health services, employment, and job prospects are among them" (Khechen, 2013: 5). Even though educational outcomes are widely viewed as important indicators of a fair education system, substantial discrepancies persist in all countries' educational systems (Laing et al., 2017). Fairness could thus be viewed as a catalyst for change in the direction of greater educational equality.

Laing et al. (2017: 2) note that more research is needed to understand how educational stakeholders conceptualise and practice fairness, as well as how different conceptualisations, views and experiences might be combined to increase educational equity and democratic features.

2.6.4 Participation

Social justice requires that individuals have the opportunity and platforms to participate. The theory focuses on giving a voice to the experiences and challenges of people and confronting

the historical and current oppression experienced by marginalised communities. By opposing discrimination and fighting for everyone's rights, it encourages inclusivity. It offers a framework for examining and resolving social injustices like poverty, inequality and restricted access to resources. Participation entails including people in decisions that affect their lives (Khechen, 2013: 5). This includes decision-making processes about the types of public services required in their communities, as well as the full involvement of people in political and cultural life. The motivation for public participation is twofold: (a) improving distributional outcomes; and (b) promoting democracy. Participation is linked to power, and it is thought that participation shifts existing power connections by strengthening the status of previously weak and excluded groups and individuals.

When schools were closed during the COVID-19 lockdown, learners may not have had the opportunity or platforms to partake in educational activities. The learners and educators also had no say about the type of educational activities that were needed and available in the community. This is an example of social injustice.

2.6.5 Rights

Human rights are essential to all individuals; therefore human rights and social justice are inevitably intertwined, and it's impossible to have one without the other. The right to basic quality education is stipulated in the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and the right to education enjoys extensive protection in international law (UNESCO, 2019: 28). Yet, if some learners were not able to access education during the COVID-19 lockdown, their right to education and social justice was denied.

2.7 Conclusion

According to the literature, despite the lack of a universal definition of social justice, the politically charged term has been interpreted in various ways. The literature reviewed confirmed the relevance of the concept to the subject of this study, as all children have the right to an equitable and just education that accords with educational values, and this right is not superseded by other rights, such as the right of people to be physically and mentally safe and secure. To assist in determining whether the subjects of this study were able to practice these rights under the lockdown restrictions, it was necessary to review the literature on reading, reading comprehension teaching and remote teaching, as explained in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

READING, READING COMPREHENSION AND REMOTE TEACHING

3.1 Introduction

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of Grade 4 Language educators at quintile 3 and quintile 4 schools in the Cape Winelands education district of the Western Cape on teaching reading comprehension remotely during the COVID-19 lockdown. Thus, research literature related to reading, reading comprehension and remote teaching was reviewed. Starting with definitions of reading and a discussion of how reading is taught in the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), various reading comprehension models and teaching strategies are reviewed. The crucial aspect of educators' pedagogical knowledge of reading comprehension is discussed before a discussion on the COVID-19 school closures and their possible effects on the reading comprehension skills of primary school learners.

3.2 Reading

Reading and its importance for success at school and in life has been a topic of discussion and research for many decades (Afflerbach, Pearson & Paris, 2008: 364; Lyon, 1998; Moats, 2005). Lyon (1998) and Leipzig (2001) argue that reading is essential for a child's overall development and can thus be seen as food for the brain. Lyon (1998) adds that if a child does not learn to read, his or her chances of having a satisfying and productive life are diminished, especially in our literacy-driven world. Reading has an impact on all other academic success and is linked to social, emotional, financial and physical health (Moats, 2005). Reading is an important part of early childhood education and learning in general as it broadens knowledge and intellectual development (Moats, 2005).

Many studies have focused on ways of teaching an individual to read. There are many effective ways to approach reading instruction (Elleman & Oslund, 2019: 4). To reduce or lessen reading difficulties, a range of educational strategies are desperately needed (Kendeou, McMaster & Christ, 2016: 63). Different reading theories and models should therefore be used by educators (Forstal, 2019). Reading instruction is highly complex. However, it is also a well-established science with clear, precise and useful instructional methods that all instructors ought to be trained in and encouraged to use.

The National Accessible Reading Assessment Projects (NARAP) in the United States constructed the following three definitions of reading and reading proficiency based on existing research and five national reports: reading is: "decoding and understanding written text"; "decoding and understanding written text for a particular reader purpose"; and "deriving meaning from text" (Cline, Johnstone & King, 2006: 2). According to Armbruster, Lehr &

Osborn (2001: 41) reading is done for the purpose of comprehension, which aligns with the NARAP definitions of reading, while Anastasiou and Griva (2009: 283) assert that the primary purpose of reading is to derive meaning from the text. In a similar vein, Aksan and Kisac (2009: 834), state that "the fundamental of learning is apprehension and the fundamental of apprehension is reading". Cline et al. (2006: 9) found that stakeholders in education strongly prefer reading definitions that focus on text comprehension. Although most participants thought decoding was a crucial aspect of reading, they were hesitant to endorse definitions that were overly predicated on it because reading is such a complicated and nuanced ability (Cline et al., 2006). If a person can recognise words but not their meanings, they are not genuinely reading.

Muchtar (2019: 1) contends that reading is primarily an eye and brain activity, with the eyes capturing the message and the brain deciphering its meaning. He asserts, as does Rumelhart (1985: 719), that reading involves both perceptual and cognitive processes. It appears that as we read, we build an image of the events and the information the text is conveying in our minds. As we read on, this picture develops or changes. Grasping a sentence is easier if the picture is clear.

Reading is a difficult skill to master and individuals do not acquire one reading skill before moving on to the next in a sequential manner. Instead, learners must simultaneously improve in five areas: phonemic awareness, word recognition, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency (Butler et al., 2010: 1; DBE, 2008: 11; Learning Point Associates, 2004: 1).

Learners need to master reading comprehension skills since research shows that these skills provide the foundation for most learning. Reading skills can only be developed through regular reading instruction. These skills include decoding as well as comprehension skills such as "recognizing sequential development, fact versus opinion, and a stated main idea" (Rupley, Blair & Nichols, 2009: 127). However, many children have trouble learning to read (Armbruster et al., 2001; Moats, 2005). Miftah (2013: 21) and Sari, Pratiwi and Theriana (2019: 1) are among the researchers who consider reading to be one of the most difficult subjects in school.

It is evident from the literature that reading must be taught explicitly. It is a skill that allows an individual to understand the meaning of a text.

3.3 How Reading is Taught in the CAPS

3.3.1 The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)

In South Africa, government schools follow the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which came into effect in January 2011. It is a single, comprehensive document that establishes policy in the schooling sector for curriculum and assessment of all

subjects and grades (DBE, 2011a). The CAPS expresses the knowledge, skills and values that should be taught in South African classrooms through Grades R–12. The goal of this curriculum is for learners to acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are relevant to their own lives. In this way, the curriculum encourages knowledge in local contexts while remaining mindful of global imperatives (DBE, 2011a).

De Lange, Winberg and Dippenaar (2020: 8) investigated the CAPS requirements for assessing reading comprehension. The goal of the study was to establish the groundwork for a better policy framework. The study found that there was a lack of a "principled approach" to assessing reading comprehension, which had a cumulative effect throughout the CAPS document, resulting in random, yet extremely prescriptive, criteria.

3.3.2 Home Language and First Additional Language

Learners' first or native language is called their home language in South Africa. Many South African schools, however, do not teach the home languages of some or all of the enrolled learners, instead opting for one or two languages at the Home Language level (Hugo & Nieman, 2010: 60). As a result, the terms Home Language and First Additional Language refer to the competency levels at which the language is offered rather than the learner's native (home) language or acquired language (as in the case of the additional languages). Any reference to Home Language in the CAPS document and this study should thus be understood to relate to the competency level rather than the language itself (DBE, 2011a: 8].

The language curriculum for Home Language (HL) and First Additional Language (FAL) is divided into sections based on the following skills: Listening and Speaking; Reading and Viewing; Writing and Presenting; and Language Structures and Conventions. The curriculum for the Intermediate Phase, Grades 4–6, explicitly states that 12 hours per two-week cycle should be set aside for HL. Within this cycle, five hours are to be used specifically for reading and viewing (DBE, 2011a: 14). For FAL, 10 hours per two-week cycle are set aside, with five of these specifically for reading and viewing (DBE, 2011b: 15).

3.3.3 Types of reading according to CAPS

According to the CAPS, reading can be taught to learners by employing shared reading, reading with and reading to the whole class, guided group reading, paired reading and independent reading. Educators should use these methods and gradually get learners to do more independent reading (DBE, 2011a: 13).

The entire class is seated at their desks when reading aloud, and the teacher's role is crucial (Funda Wande Reading Academy: 10). Learners gain a lot from reading aloud because it simulates real reading and takes into account how most people learn to read – by being read

to, reading along with an adult, and then reading on their own (De Silva & Hill, 2013: 96). An advantage of shared reading, according to Moore et al. (2016: 21), is that it gives learners the chance to read the lines, hear the lines and talk about the story. These learning situations allow learners to form personal connections with the text and share their thoughts and understandings with their peers.

Shared reading involves the entire class or a small number of learners. The educator reads an enlarged text that is above the level at which the learners can read on their own (DBE, 2011a: 110). As the educator reads, the learners follow. Initially, much of the reading may be done by the educator. As the learners become more familiar with the text, they will be able to exert more influence over it, especially during repetitive passages or when rhyme and rhythm are present (De Silva & Hill, 2013: 74).

Reading with and to the class is also suggested in the CAPS (DBE, 2011a: 10). Reading aloud in the CAPS refers to the teacher reading aloud to learners, typically for enjoyment but also to get them acquainted with a text before they are expected to read it on their own. According to Hemerick (1999: 33), reading aloud to and with learners can change their views toward reading and will encourage them to go and get books of their own. Reading with and reading to the class is also suggested until learners can confidently read independently (DBE, 2011a: 109).

Group-guided reading is an instructional method in which an educator works with a small group of learners who share a similar reading ability and can read texts at roughly the same level (DBE, 2011a: 108). The text is challenging and provides possibilities for problem-solving, yet is also simple enough for the learners to read fluently. Guided reading teaches the strategies and lets the learners practice them (Iaquinta, 2006: 414). Guided reading aims to teach learners reading skills that they can apply when reading unfamiliar texts independently (DBE, 2011a: 10). It is used to teach learners how to employ reading strategies while independently reading for meaning (Fountas & Pinnel, 2012: 268).

In paired reading, learners are placed in pairs to encourage each other through the oral reading of the connected text (DBE, 2011a: 10; Nes, 2003: 1) It entails matching a more capable reader, who acts as a supporter, with a less capable reader to provide support and practice in reading related content (Topping, 2014: 59). The guidance and encouragement of a more skilled reader, according to Meisinger et al. (2004: 112), not only makes it simpler to read higher-level materials but also enables participant modelling and reinforcement of reading behaviour. Paired reading aims to help learners acquire fluent reading abilities (Lee & Szczerbinski, 2021: 2; Meisinger et al., 2004: 113; Nes, 2013).

Independent reading describes the process of learners reading on their own (DBE, 2011a: 10). According to the CAPS, independent reading provides learners with opportunities to practice reading and encourages reading for enjoyment (DBE, 2011a: 17, 108). Furthermore, active problem-solving and higher-order cognitive processes are boosted by independent reading, which can improve learners' reading ability (Manurung, Pardede & Purba, 2020: 50). These processes enable learners to comprehend increasingly difficult texts as they progress.

3.3.4 Stages of reading

The reading process, according to the CAPS, consists of three stages: pre-reading, during reading and after reading (DBE, 2011a: 10; Toprak & Almacioğlu, 2009: 23). A variety of reading comprehension strategies should be used in the three phases to aid in the development of a learner's reading comprehension skills. Toprak and Almacioğlu (2009: 23) emphasise that each of these stages has a vital part to play and that they're all essential components of a reading activity, therefore, knowing the stages of the reading process and the strategies that are relevant to each stage, as well as putting these into practice in the classroom, are critical components of teaching reading.

3.3.4.1 Pre-reading

During pre-reading educators should use reading comprehension strategies such as activating prior knowledge, making predictions about the text and discussing the source of the text and the author before learners begin to read the text (DBE, 2011a: 10; Miftah, 2013: 25). Alemi and Ebadi (2010: 569) assert that employing pre-reading strategies can improve comprehension. Additional advantages include preparing learners for upcoming concepts, making reading easier, connecting new ideas to learners' prior knowledge, and eventually, making reading a more pleasant experience. Toprak and Almacioğlu concur and add that by employing pre-reading strategies, learners' interest is piqued, which helps them to approach the text in a more "meaningful and purposeful" manner (2009: 23). They add that the pre-reading stage also helps learners to define selection criteria for the main theme of a story.

3.3.4.2 During reading

During the second stage, teachers should take breaks from reading to talk about what they have read and to give the concepts time to sink in (DBE, 2011a). During this phase, learners can also draw a comparison between their initial predictions and what they had read and try to visualise what they have read. Unknown words should be explained within the context of the reading piece (DBE 2011a: 11; Miftah, 2013: 25–26). During the reading phase, educators are also encouraged to stop occasionally to narrate what they are thinking and what they are doing as they read, as this is an effective way of modelling a reading strategy (Bishop, Reyes & Pflaum, 2006: 67, 69).

3.3.4.3 After reading

The after reading stage is the last of the three stages of reading (Toprak & Almacioğlu, 2009: 23). During this phase, learners are expected to reflect on the text, recall specific information from the text, draw conclusions and write a summary that aids in highlighting the main ideas (Saricoban, 2002: 5). The learners should also be encouraged to think about what they have read (DBE, 2011a: 11).

3.3.5 Approaches to language teaching

The CAPS for English Home Language (HL) and Afrikaans Huistaal (HT) teaching and learning in the Intermediate Phase prescribes the text-based approach in conjunction with the communicative approach and is intended to develop competent speakers, readers, writers and viewers of texts (DBE, 2011a: 12; DBE, 2011b: 12). Both the text-based and communicative approaches rely on the usage and production of texts regularly (DBE, 2011a: 12). A text-based approach investigates how texts function. The goal of a text-based strategy is to teach learners to understand what they're reading and to become capable, self-assured and critical text readers, writers and viewers. It entails paying attention to, reading, viewing and analysing texts to gain a better understanding of how they are created and what impact they have. Learners develop the ability to analyse texts through critical interaction. The text-based approach also entails the creation of different types of texts for various purposes and audiences. This approach is structured around texts and vocabulary items, with grammar taking a back seat.

A communicative approach to language teaching argues that a learner should be exposed to the target language extensively and have numerous opportunities to practice or generate it via speaking for social or practical goals. Language acquisition should be carried over into the classroom, where literacy skills such as reading, viewing, writing and presenting should be acquired through frequent reading and writing activities (DBE, 2011a: 12–13).

While the section above focuses on approaches in terms of teaching language, the section that follows discusses types of reading.

3.4 Intensive and Extensive Reading

Researchers differentiate between two types of reading – intensive and extensive reading, which can boost comprehension and speed up the ability to understand language if utilised correctly (Muchtar, 2019: 2). Each of these types has advantages for promoting reading skills. Carrell and Carson (1997: 56) argued that it is important for educators to include the instruction and practice of both kinds of reading. Miftah (2013: 25) and Mart (2015: 89) agree that they are best used in conjunction since they are complementary – one type of reading assists the other and reading progress is significantly better when they are used together.

3.4.1 Intensive reading

Intensive reading is the most widely used approach for learning or improving reading skills (Muchtar, 2019: 3). According to Muchtar (2019: 3), this type of reading demands that individuals read every word, even the ones they don't know and then try to comprehend what is being read. Bamford and Day state that intensive reading is linked with the instruction of reading "in terms of its component skills" (2015: 1). The primary objective of intensive reading is to read as accurately as possible and to respond to text-related inquiries (Bamford & Day, 2015: 1; Muchtar, 2019: 3). Savaş (2009: 65) states that intensive reading aims to help learners to create a detailed meaning of words, develop reading skills and enhance knowledge of grammar. Bamford and Day (2015:1) agree and state that texts are explored in depth to introduce and practice reading skills, such as identifying a text's main idea and guessing the meaning of unfamiliar terms.

With intensive reading, the teacher usually selects the reading material (Muchtar, 2019: 6). Van der Walt, Evans and Kilfoil (2009: 157) add that non-fiction texts are generally selected. The length of texts used is quite short, readers read at a slower pace and it is recommended that they frequently consult a dictionary to determine the meaning of all the words they do not understand (Muchtar, 2019: 3). This type of reading instruction typically occurs during group guided reading and has several advantages. According to Carrel and Carson (1997: 47), it has been proven that intensive reading, with a focus on strategy education, has a good influence on reading. Learners' achievement improves when guided reading is used in the language classroom. Learners can efficiently master the language by doing a detailed examination of the reading contents (Mart, 2015: 85). Having a deep comprehension of language contents is, therefore, a benefit of intensive reading (Mart, 2015: 85).

A critique of this type of reading is that it may not instil a passion for reading in all learners, as the skill needs frequent repetition and learners might become bored with the texts selected for them (Muchtar, 2019: 4). Furthermore, according to Muchtar (2019: 4) and Bamford and Day (2015: 1), not enough time is dedicated to reading, since so much focus is placed on syntax. Muchtar (2019: 4) adds that a further drawback is poor reading achievement and Bamford and Day (2015: 1) state that individuals don't read very much during intensive reading. This view accords with other research that suggests that learners will not become fluent readers until they read in large quantities. The conclusion reached by Muchtar (2019: 4) is that intensive reading fails to support the expected goal, which is to read as accurately as possible.

3.4.2 Extensive reading

The main objective of extensive reading is to read fluently, obtain knowledge and enjoy the process. It is reading for comprehension of the content. As far back as 1997, Carrell and

Carson (1997: 50) claimed that extensive reading entails reading vast amounts of material quickly or reading longer passages for general comprehension, with an emphasis on the content rather than the language. Reading starts with simpler alphabetic abilities and moves towards a "sophisticated set of processes that characterise skilled reading comprehension" (Zare & Othman, 2013: 187). Individuals must first master basic reading skills before they can be expected to read. However, just because an individual can successfully decode a text, does not mean that they have comprehension skills. While fluency and correct pronunciation are important, they should not receive more emphasis than understanding what has been read (Caccamise & Snyder, 2005: 6). Bamford and Day (2015: 1), Muchtar (2019: 3) and Savaş (2009: 69) also emphasise that the focus should be on fully comprehending a text, rather than the meaning of individual words or phrases. With extensive reading, the reader has the option of choosing which text they want to engage in, but texts are generally quite long. Reading speed is quick and dictionary use is minimal since learners are encouraged to guess the meaning from the context (Bamford & Day, 2015: 1; Muchtar, 2019: 3; Savaş, 2009: 70). This style of reading is extremely personalised, with a focus on quiet reading (Van der Walt et al., 2009: 157). The bulk of reading is done for fun, and the genres differ depending on the reader's interests (Jacobs & Farrell, 2012: 2). Extensive reading can be used to produce a satisfying output in learning since it gives a learner practice in applying the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing (Muchtar, 2019: 3). Extensive reading is referred to as a language development strategy by Savaş (2009: 69). Carrel and Carson (1997: 51), Mart (2015: 86) and Muchtar (2019: 3) all agree that it should be viewed as a supplementary form of reading and not as a replacement for intensive reading. They also agree that this type of reading is thought to compensate for the weaknesses seen in intensive reading by focusing on reading for pleasure, an element which is “psychologically very instrumental in the success of learning” (Muchtar, 2019: 5).

Extensive reading has long been thought to be a good approach to improving language skills (Mart, 2015: 86). With extensive reading, learners are encouraged to read a wide variety of literature, which provides them with comprehensive exposure to the language (Muchtar, 2019: 5). Extensive reading has a significant role to play in the learning of English (Carrel & Carson, 1997: 51; Mart, 2015: 86; Muchtar, 2019: 2). Since a perfect command of the language cannot be obtained without comprehension of the text (Mart, 2015: 86), there must always be a place for intensive reading. It may be inferred that this also applies to Afrikaans reading. Furthermore, since extensive reading emphasises that learners read for pleasure, it also encourages them to take responsibility for their learning as they can choose reading materials that suit their interests (Muchtar, 2019: 3; Savaş, 2009: 70). These advantages may also lead

to an increased motivation to read and improved self-esteem if reading becomes less challenging.

The reviewed research shows that intensive and extensive reading differ in a variety of ways when it comes to reading activities, such as the main goals of reading, the focus on the reading text, sources and types of reading, the number of reading texts, reading pace and reading style. Simply put, extensive reading aims at fluency while intensive reading aims at accuracy (Carrel & Carson,1997: 50; Mart, 2015: 84–86; Muchtar, 2019: 3).

Intensive reading positively influences reading development, but children should also practice extensive reading to organise, coordinate and apply intensively acquired strategies across larger texts and multiple reading sources (Carrel & Carson, 1997: 50). Mart found that using both types leads to considerable "proficiency gains in [the] language learning process" (2015: 85). A well-balanced language programme should incorporate both intensive and extensive reading to yield the intended results and enhance the likelihood of success. In Mart's study, learning efficiency was improved, learners' curiosity was piqued and purposeful and positive attitudes were established in the direction of language learning (Mart, 2015: 85, 89). Learners who did a lot of reading became more aware of how language items worked.

3.5 Definitions of Reading Comprehension

The importance of reading comprehension has been highlighted by many researchers (Duke & Pearson, 2009: 107). Reading comprehension is not only important for success at school but also launches the foundation for a significant amount of learning in our literacy-driven environment (Navarrete, 2019: 108). According to Kendeou et al. (2016: 63), basic reading skills are required for mastering deeper comprehension and other 21st-century skills. Several factors can influence a learner's reading comprehension skills. These skills can be attributed to behavioural, cognitive, biological or environmental factors (Woolley, 2011: 15). For this research study, the researcher only focused on environmental factors since, due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the learning environment changed from traditional schooling to remote learning.

Reading comprehension is a prerequisite for learning from the text in a meaningful way (Kirby, 2007: 1). Reading comprehension is a continuous "cognitive and constructive process", involving an array of cognitive skills and processes (Woolley, 2011: 33). Castles, Rastle and Nation (2018: 7) add that "reading is to understand what has been read". However, the process of comprehension involves complicated and nuanced processes, and comprehension problems occur when learners lack the abilities and knowledge to make sense of what they are reading (Moore et al., 2016: 20).

Reading comprehension is influenced by all aspects of the reading process (Miftah, 2013: 23). It is a learnt ability that necessitates regular practice and instruction (Moore et al., 2016: 20). Having well-developed reading comprehension skills creates the opportunity for learners to continually develop their skills in their other learning areas (Mantra, Widiastuti & Pramawati, 2020: 10). Our mental abilities are boosted when we apply our understanding to text (Kirby, 2007: 1). Besides comprehension skills, academic knowledge and problem-solving skills are also reinforced by reading (Gökhan, 2017: 484). While there are many different interpretations of comprehension, they share the view that learners must be active readers who process what they read, form a mental image, summarise and draw conclusions (Moore et al., 2006: 21).

Spörer, Brunstein and Kieschke (2009: 272) state that reading comprehension is a common educational goal for all learners, while Forstall (2019) opines that reading sets the foundation for academic success. According to Perfetti, Landi and Oakhill (2005: 245), the inability to acquire strong reading comprehension abilities is a major roadblock to educational success. Children with reading difficulties may find it challenging to meet the reading requirements of their subject matter classes, where obtaining knowledge from informational text sources is frequently required (Swanson et al., 2017: 12). This puts them at risk of poor academic performance. There is a clear link between people learning to read early and easily and scholastic performance later in life, according to Butler et al. (2010: 1) who emphasise the importance of reading in early childhood education.

Perfetti et al. (2005: 228) define reading comprehension as the ability to "build a mental representation of a text message". Fisher, Frey and Lapp (2011: 231) contend that comprehension occurs when a reader interacts with text and develops meaning. To Kendeou et al. (2016: 63), comprehension requires the "identification and use of meaning in both its explicit and implicit forms" while Navarrete (2019: 108) defines comprehension as the "end product or outcome of all reading acts".

Reading comprehension stretches beyond the ability to identify and fluently replicate a string of typed or written words (Perfetti et al., 2005: 227; Serafini, 2013: 190). Perfetti et al. (2005: 228) state that comprehension is impossible without the recognition of words and the retrieval of their meanings. However, assuming that a learner understands what is written on a page because they can decode the words is inaccurate (Serafini, 2013: 190). Reading isn't about how much of a predetermined amount of meaning a child can acquire and retell or rewrite after the reading activity (Serafini, 2013: 190). A reader's recognition of printed words must be accurate and automatic to support comprehension (Moats, 2005). Word recognition isn't enough; one also needs to look at those words and figure out what they mean. Furthermore,

according to Navarrete (2019: 112), reading comprehension is not simply a case of learning a set of strategies and becoming an expert reader.

Elbro and Buch-Iversen (2013: 438) and Kendeou et al. (2016: 62) describe comprehension as being a multidimensional process and they focus on the cognitive aspect of reading comprehension. Duke and Pearson (2009: 116) describe comprehension as having several component processes, such as prior knowledge, context, the structure of the text and the reading process. They also add that reading comprehension is not only complex but also "consuming and continuous" (2009: 116). Similarly, Elleman and Oslund (2019: 4) refer to comprehension as being a multidimensional activity that is difficult to teach, measure and research. It necessitates the coordination of several linguistic and cognitive processes, including the ability to interpret words, working memory, inference creation, comprehension monitoring, vocabulary and prior knowledge (Elleman & Oslund, 2019). Thus, reading comprehension necessitates the development of several cognitive skills, including the recognition, identification and understanding of words. Learners need to master early literacy skills for reading comprehension to take place.

Anders (2002) states that a definition of reading comprehension cannot be linear since reading comprehension is a complex process that involves the reader's previous and current cognitive, social and linguistic experiences. According to Anders (2002), the majority of reading comprehension research and practice focuses on internal processes, with little emphasis dedicated to external processes and the relationship between internal and external processes. Comprehension includes motivational aspects that are influenced by the social and cultural surroundings (Anders, 2002). Navarrete (2019: 109) shares this socio-cultural opinion. He states that the ability to recall a text and parts of a text, and answer questions about a text, varies from one reader to the next, as well as different texts and contexts. How successful a learner's comprehension will be cannot be predicted without considering those three things.

According to Serafini (2013: 189), a lot of the research that has been done on reading comprehension and effective strategies focuses on the "cognitive operations that readers employ". He claims that focusing only on the cognitive aspects of reading comprehension is myopic as it does not effectively address the social and cultural aspects of reading. Children come from different backgrounds with varying knowledge, experiences and skills – thus their prior knowledge might differ greatly. This is a social justice issue that needs to be considered.

Serafini's (2013: 199) definition of reading comprehension concedes the influence and significance that a reader's sociocultural environment has on the reading process, which aligns with the above views of Anders (2002) and Navarrete (2019: 111). He also contends that a definition of reading comprehension must take historical, political and pragmatic

considerations into account because they affect the reading process. He characterises reading comprehension as the result of a circular, socially based process that entails navigating textual materials like written language, images and design elements, developing meanings in conversation with texts, articulating one's thoughts and meanings within a community of readers and questioning the meanings generated. Learners will thus experience texts based on their lived realities. If the concept of reading comprehension is broadened, as suggested by Serafini (2013: 199), the educational approaches and assessments used to evaluate whether a reader has understood what they have read will also need to be expanded. Considering the historical and political background of South Africa and the diverse environments, a single text could mean a variety of different things to learners from different backgrounds. Serafini's view is relevant to this study.

Reading comprehension is rated as one of the most difficult human activities to master and many factors contribute to challenges with reading comprehension (Forstall, 2019; Kendeou et al., 2016: 66). If the foundation for early literacy skills is not laid, learners usually experience ongoing difficulties with reading comprehension. Navarrete (2019: 108) also adds "insufficiency of teachers in terms of pedagogical knowledge" as a factor contributing to challenges in reading comprehension. This aspect is discussed below.

Finally, the following definition of reading comprehension provided by Serafini (2013: 199) will be used to define reading comprehension:

> Reading comprehension should be seen as … an opening up of possible meanings that are generated and negotiated in light of the immediate context (physical and social classroom environment) and the more extensive political, cultural, historical and social contexts. It is more important to investigate the various responses readers construct in their transactions with texts than to determine whether they were able to identify a predetermined interpretation or answer to a teacher's multiple-choice question focused on the literal elements of the text.

This definition links well with the social justice theory and supports the social justice principles of participation and equality. Learners read specific texts in unique circumstances, contributing their own historical, cultural, and political experiences to the reading process and these interpretations should be valued and respected.

3.6 Reading Comprehension Strategies

3.6.1 Teaching reading comprehension strategies to learners

There has been a lot of research on reading comprehension and reading comprehension strategies. There is also extensive data from classrooms aimed at identifying effective reading

comprehension strategies and instructional components that produce the best reading outcomes (Reyes & Bishop, 2019: 11). Among others, Duke and Pearson (2009: 118), Butler et al. (2010: 7) and Elleman and Oslund (2019: 3–9) emphasise the importance of teaching reading comprehension strategies to learners to develop their reading comprehension skills.

Duke and Pearson (2009: 113) suggest that an early and persistent focus on building strategies is required to improve reading comprehension across all grades. This sentiment is shared by Phillips et al. (2012: 4) who state that the three crucial criteria of good reading comprehension instruction are teaching strategies to children early, explicitly and sequentially. Reading comprehension strategies must not only be taught across all grades but across all subjects and classes (Klapwijk, 2015: 3).

While Dymock (2005: 177) and Rupley et al. (2009: 125) claim that the value of direct or explicit instruction on learner learning has been shown in some key studies, a study conducted by Purcell-Gates, Duke and Martineau (2007: 30) reports that learners whose educators used more explicit methods of teaching did not progress at a faster rate than those whose educators used less explicit teaching methods. Explicit teaching refers to when educators explain, model and scaffold children's development of reading strategies (Phillips et al., 2012: 4). It entails providing learners with new information through meaningful teacher-learner interactions and teacher-guided learner learning. The teacher is in charge of the teaching-learning process in this technique and explicit explanations, modelling or demonstrating and guided practice are at the heart of the direct instruction method (Rupley et al., 2009: 125).

3.6.2 Definitions of reading comprehension strategies

Afflerbach et al. (2008: 370) contend that the way an individual defines reading comprehension strategies is determined by their understanding of what reading comprehension strategies are; this understanding will determine how they teach reading comprehension strategies that are best suited to developing reading comprehension skills. The way reading comprehension strategies are conceptualised and defined has important implications for teaching and learning and, therefore, for this study.

Pani (2004: 355) defines reading comprehension strategies as "the mental operations involved when readers approach a text effectively to make sense of what they read". Similarly, Klapwijk (2015:1) states that reading comprehension strategies are the "actions skilled users perform to ensure that they understand what they read". Phillips et al. (2012: 3) define reading comprehension strategies as the methods, procedures or processes for improving reading performance. The reader's awareness of comprehension challenges and subsequent choice of the best solutions to address these are the forces driving understanding. For instance, proficient readers may halt, reread difficult paragraphs and attempt to decipher the meaning

of any unknown terms before continuing. How readers approach a task, the textual signals they pay attention to, how they interpret what they read and what they do when they don't comprehend are all indicated by their reading strategies (Fu, 2016: 671). These strategies range from basic 'fix-up' techniques like simply rereading challenging passages and assuming a word meaning that isn't clear from the context, to more thorough methods.

3.6.3 Proficient vs less proficient readers

Noticeable differences have been reported between learners with good and poor reading comprehension skills. Pearson and Gallagher (1983: 324) found that several behaviours associated with strategy use and monitoring distinguished experienced from inexperienced, as well as good from bad, readers. In more recent years, Dymock (2005: 177), Duke and Pearson (2009: 117), Serafini (2013: 199), Küçükoğlu (2013: 709) and Klapwijk (2015: 1) reported similar findings. According to these researchers, skilled readers use several strategies simultaneously. Individuals with good reading comprehension skills are active text processors who can make connections between a text and their existing knowledge and experiences and who set reading objectives or goals for themselves. Furthermore, individuals with good reading comprehension skills focus on literary features and structures and pose questions about the text as they read. Proficient readers also concentrate on vocabulary and possess the ability to express and negotiate meaning. De Koning and Van der Schoot (2013: 262) add the ability to visualise text content as a key feature distinguishing proficient readers from less proficient readers, since learners who are unable to construct visual mental images struggle to understand what they are reading. Another difference between proficient and less proficient readers, according to Catts, Adlof and Weismer (2006: 268) and Duke and Pearson (2009: 107), is that receptive vocabulary and semantic processing are impaired in learners with poor reading comprehension skills. These learners also have trouble interpreting phrases grammatically, have problems understanding oral language and have a hard time making inferences. Learners with reading poor comprehension skills cannot recognise and apply the meaning of texts in both explicit and implicit forms and therefore are unable to deduce and apply the text's overall meaning (Kendeou et al., 2016: 62).

3.6.4 Benefits of teaching reading comprehension strategies

Considering the differences between proficient and less proficient readers and the myriad benefits linked to teaching and using reading comprehension strategies, many strategies have been recommended to assist in the development of reading comprehension (Catts et al., 2006: 291; Forstal, 2019; Gersten et al., 2001: 307). Learners can be taught strategies that enable them to process texts more actively and profoundly, leading to a greater understanding of them (De Koning & Van der Schoot, 2013: 263). Reading comprehension strategies are

important because, without them, learners have few alternatives for increasing their reading competence (Phillips et al., 2012: 4). The use of reading comprehension methods allows learners to consider their thought processes and put into practice appropriate reading comprehension strategies (McKeown, Beck & Blake, 2009: 245). The use of strategies is an essential element in teaching children to effectively comprehend text (Ness, 2016: 282). Employing reading comprehension strategies helps a reader to develop a more meaningful reading experience (Forstal, 2019). Additionally, reading comprehension strategies appear to close the gap for learners whose decoding and comprehension abilities differ (Klapwijk, 2015: 2). De Koning and Van der Schoot (2013: 263) add that because readers use reading comprehension strategies to construct coherent mental representations and explanations of situations portrayed in a text, such strategies play an important role in comprehension. On the other hand, while Pearson and Gallagher (1983: 336) agree that teaching reading strategies can advance progress in reading comprehension, they question whether explicit training to improve comprehension strategies is necessary, arguing that children become better at reading the longer they stay in school, even if no instruction is provided. Their research thus suggests that more practice leads to better results. Other scholars are not persuaded by this view.

De Koning and Van der Schoot (2013: 262), for example, contend that not teaching reading comprehension strategies can lead to some learners not developing the necessary strategies or engaging in strategic processes when presented with texts. Perfetti et al. (2005: 244) firmly state that the failure to establish high-level reading comprehension strategies is a major roadblock to educational success since many learners will struggle if they don't use good reading comprehension strategies, and a large majority of them will fall behind in school if they don't learn how to read grade level content.

Scholars agree that all learning is linked to reading comprehension. Many 'survival skills' in the modern world are linked to reading comprehension since you need to read and understand to be able to efficiently use a computer, fill in a form, read labels, or access the full functionality of a mobile phone (De Koning & Van der Schoot, 2013: 261). Thus, an individual will struggle throughout their academic journey if they do not have a solid foundation of knowing how and when to use reading comprehension strategies (Küçükoğlu, 2013: 710). In sum, the literature review indicates that learners not only benefit from reading comprehension strategies but must be explicitly taught these for them to derive full benefits.

3.6.5 When to teach what

Many scholars, including Duke and Pearson (2009: 107), Butler et al. (2010: 7) and Forstall (2019), indicate that a lot of research has been done on the most effective reading

comprehension strategies. Of these, no strategy is necessarily more effective than another and all strategies aid in teaching developing readers (Duke & Pearson, 2009: 108). Even the use of a single strategy can improve reading comprehension (Duke & Pearson, 2009: 108). However, Phillips et al. (2012: 4) and McKeown et al. (2009: 246) suggest that, for children to become independent in their use of texts, a combination of these strategies should be employed and taught while interacting with a range of texts over a long period. While the effectiveness of a strategy is not limited to a particular age group, strategies should be taught from a young age (Duke & Pearson, 2009: 107; Phillips et al., 2012: 3). According to the CAPS (DBE, 2012: 10; Forstal, 2019), reading comprehension strategies can be used before reading, during reading and after reading.

While research generally signals the importance of teaching and using strategies, Elleman and Oslund (2019: 7) note that little is known about when to teach certain strategies in development or how much time to spend on teaching a specific strategy.

3.6.6 Phases of teaching reading comprehension strategies

Duke and Pearson (2009: 108) suggest five phases of successfully teaching reading comprehension strategies. Educators must first explain a strategy before instructing learners on when and how to apply it. Second, the strategy must be modelled. When a teacher takes on all or nearly all of the responsibility for completing a task, they are modelling how a strategy should be applied (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983: 337). During the third phase, according to Duke and Pearson (2009: 108), the strategy must be implemented collaboratively. Fourth, following the completion of the aforementioned phases, the strategy must be practised under supervision while gradually releasing responsibility. To ensure that learners understand and use reading skills, the teacher must give them thorough feedback (Gersten et al., 2001: 307). This is comparable to guided reading, given that guided reading attempts to teach the skills and give the learners opportunities to practice them (Iaquinta, 2006: 414). Fifth, the learner should be encouraged to use the strategy independently. When a learner assumes all or most of the responsibilities, he/she is putting that strategy into practice (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983: 336). As strategies are explicitly modelled, learners are expected to assume more responsibility by using the strategies independently.

3.6.7 Common reading comprehension strategies

According to the literature, the nine strategies discussed below play a prominent role in developing reading comprehension. While comprehension strategies do not develop in a linear order they are discussed below in the sequence that they are to be taught, according to Küçükoğlu (2013: 710–711).

1. Activating and using background knowledge

The reader's background knowledge is what he or she gives to the reading experience. Each reader's perspective and reading of the material have the potential to be unique (Moreillon, 2007: 19). The main purpose of this strategy is to elicit as much knowledge about a given topic as possible from learners through a discussion. To account for the linguistic and cultural differences present in a class, it is advised that no information be ignored or banned (Klapwijk, 2015: 5). Because we connect new information with existing knowledge before we integrate and organise the new information, understanding the role of background knowledge in comprehension is crucial. The best way to learn new information is to connect it to what you already know (Klapwijk, 2015: 5). Learners are given crucial support for comprehension by activating or increasing pre-existing knowledge (Moreillon, 2007: 20).

Background knowledge has been studied in terms of how it works and how it might be improved. The majority of studies on the impacts of background knowledge found that improving background knowledge can improve a learner's comprehension (Gersten et al., 2001: 279; Moreillon, 2007: 21). According to Moreillon (2007: 25), making text-to-self, text-to-text and text-to-world connections before, during and after reading can help to teach this method.

Educators can assist learners to create their own strategies for analysing their background knowledge by openly modelling and practising prior knowledge assessment before they embark on new learning adventures. They can assist learners to understand what they already know and whether they need to brush up on their background knowledge. Educators should offer learners time to gain prior knowledge if they determine that they require it before encountering a topic. They can also give learners background information to demonstrate how important these understandings are for reading comprehension. This technique offers learners both the reason and the experience of using background information to enhance effective reading when it is explicitly taught (Moreillon, 2007: 25).

2. Text structure

This refers to how the information in a text is organised (Dymock, 2005: 178). A text is either classified as having a narrative (stories) or expository (texts which inform or explain) text structure (Gersten et al., 2001: 281). The effectiveness of teaching learners to organise their understanding and recall of main points through the structure of both narrative and expository texts has been studied by many researchers (Butler et al., 2010: 3; Duke & Pearson, 2002: 111; Gersten et al., 2001: 290). Most of the research on this strategy focused on the structural characteristics of text organisation rather than the content of the ideas (Duke & Pearson, 2002: 111). They argue that it is the structure rather than the content that would transfer to new texts

that learners encounter on their own. Learners' capacity to recognise the text structure is part of establishing the first foundation for making meaning once they've been exposed to and used a variety of text structures (Carrell, 1985: 727; Klapwijk, 2015: 2). Purcell-Gates et al. (2007: 41) add that explicitly teaching text structure can help learners to not only identify and understand structures but also to compose a variety of texts. The structure of a text mirrors the functions of a text and, as the functions of texts alter, their forms shift as well (Purcell-Gates et al., 2007: 13). Learners must learn to recognise the differences between narrative and expository text structures. This helps with their understanding of a text. When they read, they have preconceived notions about how a story will evolve or how an informative text will be structured. Learners who are familiar with text structures are more likely to raise pertinent questions about the information they are reading as they read it, according to Gersten et al. (2001: 281). Furthermore, Dymock (2005: 177) claims that reading comprehension improves when learners are taught the structure of expository texts.

3. Generating and asking questions

This strategy can be used before, during and after reading. According to Duke and Pearson (2009: 113), asking learners questions about their reading has a longer and more widespread tradition than any other comprehension practice. A learner answers questions posed by their educator and then receives immediate feedback. Learners can also ask themselves questions about different parts of the text to construct meaning, improve understanding, discover solutions, solve issues and find new information (Duke & Pearson, 2009: 113). This strategy also gives learners practice in distinguishing between questions that are true, inferred or based on prior knowledge (Küçükoğlu, 2013: 711). According to the Edinburgh Literacy Hub (2014: 8), creating questions can be a tough and time-consuming process but when learners are instructed to think of a question before reading, they read with more awareness and purpose. Furthermore, questioning allows for a more extensive understanding of the material and helps to tie the other comprehension processes together (Stebick & Dain, 2007: 10).

4. Making inferences

Implicit information must be inferred to create a coherent representation of a story (Strasser & Del Río, 2014: 170). This strategy refers to the ability to incorporate information not expressly stated into, within or across texts. Making an inference involves using what you know and your own experiences and then making a good guess about something unknown (‘reading between the lines’). Making inferences before, during and after reading is an active part of the meaning-making process for readers (Elleman & Oslund, 2019: 5; Küçükoğlu, 2013: 712). According to Moreillon (2007: 76), inferences require readers to think beyond the text's literal meaning and interpret the text using words and images, as well as their past knowledge and experience. Elbro and Buch-Iversen (2013: 435) and Willingham (2017: 1) agree that creating inferences

requires having a large amount of prior knowledge stored in long-term memory. Some inferences are straightforward, while others necessitate retrieving data from long-term memory (Willingham, 2017: 1).

Inferring is regarded as one of the most difficult cognitive tasks (Phillips et al., 2012: 1). Across developmental stages, the capacity to infer is thought to be a unique predictor of reading comprehension, since making inferences is an important thinking and comprehension skill whereby learners must work out parts of a story that are not clearly stated. Learners may miss important information if they do not know how to infer appropriately (Elleman & Oslund, 2019: 5).

In most cases, making inferences is taught in conjunction with another strategy, such as imagery, question generating or prediction (Elbro & Buch-Iversen, 2013: 436). Furthermore, inferences are situational since the conclusion drawn depends on the text's content. Rather, learners are taught to look for and use cues, and elaborate on what they've read by making inferences (Willingham, 2017: 1). Educators can help learners practice this strategy by using visual organisers that require them to write down what they're thinking (Moreillon, 2007: 79).

Even when other skills, like decoding, vocabulary, awareness of text structure, comprehension monitoring, and verbal IQ skills and information, are controlled, the ability to make inferences aids in reading comprehension (Elbro & Buch-Iversen, 2013: 436). Reading comprehension problems can be avoided or improved when inferential strategies are used (Kendeou et al., 2016: 63).

5. Predicting

Predictions are "educated guesses about what will happen next based on what is known from reading the text; prediction can also involve readers' background knowledge" (Moreillon, 2007: 76). Learners say what they believe will happen next in a text. This can be done by using clues, such as the images or title of a text (Saricoban, 2002: 1). Prediction requires learners to think about the reading piece before they even read it. By predicting, learners develop their comprehension skills through thinking about the story. For prediction to be most effective, it is important that an individual compares their prediction with the actual outcome (Küçükoğlu, 2013: 711).

6. Summarising

When learners summarise, they explain the main ideas of a text in a few concise sentences. Summarising can be done both orally and in writing. Summarising shows that the learner understood the main ideas of the story (Duke & Pearson, 2009: 113). agrees and adds that

Regardless of grade level, learners must be explicitly taught to summarise, beginning with short, uncomplicated exercises and progressing to full-length texts (Klapwijk, 2015: 7).

Teaching this strategy can be thought of as serving two purposes: improving learners' capacity to summarise information and improving their comprehension and recollection of text (Duke & Pearson, 2009: 113).

7. Visualising

Visualising is the act of creating nonverbal representations of items or events that aren't physically present but are described in a text (De Koning & Van der Schoot, 2013: 267). Visualising is "the process of forming internal pictures of objects or events not present to the eye that can affect later recall or comprehension" (Algozzine & Douville, 2004: 36). These representations can be internal or external (De Koning & Van der Schoot, 2013: 262). The mental depiction of textual information is referred to as internal visualisation. This process cannot be physically observed because it occurs inside people's brains (De Koning & Van der Schoot, 2013: 267). External visualising, on the other hand, refers to readily available nonverbal representations of textual information, such as paintings or sculptures. Internal and external visualisation techniques are related and do not work alone. Visualising the events portrayed in a text is critical for developing a rich and cohesive visuospatial mental model as it helps learners to 'see' how the events in the text are connected and to think about the story as a whole, rather than separate sections. It also helps to give meaning to the words on the page – by turning the words into a mental scene or image. For a thorough understanding of the situation described in a text, it is necessary to visualise the text content (De Koning & Van der Schoot, 2013: 267). When readers are given visualisation instructions that focus on the construction process, that is, taught how to build a mental image while reading, the likelihood of constructing an accurate mental representation of the events contained in a book increases. It appears to be critical to lead readers through this process, for example, through the use of prompts, to arrive at an accurate nonverbal representation of the text (De Koning & Van der Schoot, 2013: 269).

Although visualising is an important strategy that helps to develop reading comprehension skills, strategies to encourage readers to visualise text material receive little attention (Ainsworth, Prain & Tytler (2011: 1096; De Koning & Van der Schoot, 2013: 261). De Koning and Van der Schoot (2013: 263) also note that when teachers use guided imagery in the classroom, they frequently place little or no emphasis on assisting learners to create their own mental images. Instead, they model their ideas for the learners to observe.

8. Comprehension monitoring

Zargar, Adams and Connor (2019: 511), define comprehension monitoring as “the metacognitive process of evaluating and regulating comprehension”. Elleman and Oslund (2019: 6) and Oakhill, Hart and Samols (2005: 680) also describe comprehension monitoring as a metacognitive and essential skill needed for competent reading. According to Martinez (2006: 699), metacognition is defined as the process of thinking about and exercising active control over one's thoughts. It refers to thinking about and directing one's reading in the context of reading (Strasser & Del Río, 2014: 171). According to Phillips et al. (2012: 5), there are two ways to characterise metacognition's function in reading comprehension. Readers rely on the author's text organisation (headings, paragraph length, major ideas and summaries) to acquire a sense of how to understand the text at the macro-level (text organisation), while at the micro-level (sentence level), readers try to understand individual words and concept units in context, as well as make meaning of phrases and sentences, to connect text information with relevant background knowledge. Readers must pay attention to and examine their interpretations to make sense of these connections. According to Zargar et al. (2019: 1), if there is a break in comprehension due to an “inconsistency either at the word-level or at the sentence-level”, a reader may detect the misunderstanding and then take steps to adjust their understanding. Zargar et al. (2019: 3) also add that because comprehension monitoring is a metacognitive activity that is developmentally sensitive, it may differ for learners of various ages.

Oakhill et al. (2005: 658) and Butler et al. (2010: 15) define comprehension monitoring as the process by which a person assesses how well he or she understands the material. This agrees with Zargar et al. (2019: 3) who define it as “processing that involves evaluation and regulation of comprehension while reading”.

Comprehension monitoring contributes “to and results from a reader’s text representation” and is seen as an important source of comprehension development (Perfetti et al., 2005: 232). Because readers who strive for consistency in their interpretation of a text must be able to keep track of their understanding, comprehension monitoring is an important strategy to learn. Monitoring helps the reader to check his understanding and make necessary corrections (Elleman & Oslund, 2019: 6; Perfetti et al., 2005: 234). When adjusting for word reading and vocabulary skills, comprehension monitoring is found to be strongly associated with effective reading comprehension and can explain distinctive diversity in reading comprehension ability (Zargar et al., 2019: 2).

9. Connections

When learners make connections they compare the text with their own lives or with another text. They think about how something in the story compares to something in their own lives or

make connections by thinking about what they would have done if they had been in the story (Moreillon, 2007: 25) Learners can be asked to connect the character's feelings and actions to those of characters in other stories they have read. Learners can thus activate prior knowledge and connect ideas in literature with their own experiences by forming connections (Küçükoğlu, 2013: 711).

3.7 Reading Models

Reading is an important skill for learners to have. Within an academic context, it is of utmost importance that educators know the different approaches they can use while teaching reading comprehension. The bottom-up, top-down and interactive reading models are commonly used to explain the reading process (Suraprajit, 2019: 455). These models aim to clarify and predict reading behaviour and they serve as the foundation for reading education.

3.7.1 Bottom-up model

The bottom-up model was designed by Gough in 1972 (Fatemi, Vahedi & Seyyedrezaie, 2014: 686). It entails gradual mastery of the reading components essential for learners to become literate (Barnett, 1989: 14). The bottom-up model is a detailed account of how a reader processes material, from the moment they first see the printed words until they extract meaning from them (Liu, 2010: 154). Readers start by deciphering the letters, words and grammatical elements of a written piece before attempting to determine its meaning (Suraprajit, 2019: 455). According to this model, comprehension is mostly text-driven as the focus is primarily on textual decoding (Cruz, 2012: 6; Grabe, 1991: 383).

In bottom-up reading models, reading proceeds from the part to the whole (Fatemi et al., 2014: 686). Beginning with the printed text (at the bottom), the reader constructs meaning from the letters, words, phrases and sentences contained therein before interpreting the text in a series of linear, discrete phases. The incoming data from the text must be received before the higher-level mental stages of comprehension modify and recode the information (Suraprajit, 2019: 455). Bottom-up models analyse reading as a process in which little pieces of text are absorbed, evaluated and gradually added to the following chunks until they become meaningful, using an information-processing approach to comprehension (Barnett, 1989: 14).

This model has advantages and disadvantages. Abu Baha (2017: 45) states that the model works well in early childhood, particularly for children who are still learning to read. It works because the focus is on the letters, their knowledge of forms and reading particular words. Liu (2010: 154) contends that the bottom-up model is flawed in that processing is perceived as just going one way, implying that no higher-level input ever alters or changes lower-level analyses, even though readers can sometimes accurately identify a word only by using higher-

level semantic and syntactic processing. According to Fatemi et al. (2014: 687), employing a bottom-up strategy is ineffective when learners have advanced language skills since they can automatically comprehend graphical data. It overlooks the reader's expectations, experiences and attitudes and is indifferent to context because it only promotes remembering (Abu Baha, 2017: 45).

3.7.2 Top-down model

Goodman conceived the idea for the model (Cruz, 2012: 5; Grabe, 1991). His definition was a rebuttal of the view that reading is a sequential process involving the accurate identification of letters, words, spelling patterns and big linguistic units. According to this model, individuals do not read every word in a text. Reading for meaning is given more weight than reading each word correctly. For understanding to occur, a learner does not need to know the meaning or pronunciation of every word (Grabe, 1991: 390; Liu, 2010: 154). Instead, we use our vocabulary and prior knowledge to make educated guesses at unfamiliar words and reading proceeds from the whole to the part (Abu Baha, 2017: 45; Grabe, 1991: 390). The goal is to get learners to become active readers by focusing on their engagement with content (Fatemi et al., 2014: 686). As a result, decoding letters, parsing syntax and semantics are not used to aid reading (Cruz, 2012: 5). According to this perspective, excellent readers rely on context cues, while poor readers rely on letter and word recognition. Reading is thus seen as a predictive process.

Cruz (2012: 6), however, contends that language comprehension is insufficient since learners who are considered competent speakers may struggle to comprehend texts that are longer than individual clauses. The approach can also not work on its own, since learners need to have some knowledge of phonics, spelling and the alphabet before they can be expected to engage with a text. Furthermore, top-down reading models appear to be ineffective for learners at the primary level since top-down processing requires knowledge of at least 5 000 words (Fatemi et al., 2014: 687). Abu Baha (2017: 45) adds that cross-cultural identifications may play a significant influence in text recognition, since some cultures may lack information on specific issues, making it harder for readers to understand what the topic is about.

3.7.3 Interactive model

The interactive model was designed by Rumelhart (1977). The usefulness of the interactive reading model in blended and remote learning has been extensively acknowledged (Bahari, Zhang & Ardasheva, 2021: 1). The model utilises a combination of the bottom-up and top-down approaches to give reading more meaning, and readers are thought to be more engaged in the reading process (Abu Baha, 2017: 45; Bahari et al., 2021: 1). Interactive reading models theorise an interaction between the reader and the written material (Abu Baha, 2017: 45;

Barnett, 1989: 23). The phrase "interactive model" can either be used to refer to how the reader and the text interact as a whole, wherein the reader fundamentally reconstructs the text's information using a combination of past knowledge and knowledge learned from the text, or "interactive model" can refer to the interaction of many component skills that may be active at the same time, wherein the interplay of different cognitive skills results in fluent reading comprehension (Grabe, 1991: 384).

Like top-down models, the model is reader-driven (McRae, 2012: 20). It represents reading as cyclical rather than linear, with the reader's mental activity (such as processing visual, syntactic, lexical, semantic and pragmatic information) having an equal and simultaneous influence on understanding. Like top-down models, the reader makes assumptions about the text's content based on expectations and prior knowledge, but the reader is still dependent on the text itself, unlike in bottom-up models. Text sampling happens concurrently with higher-level decoding and recording. Additionally, the brain collects features from words or graphemes and transmit them to the brain when they are given to the visual system (Cruz, 2012: 6). The brain uses both higher and lower-level processes to jointly determine what a word is. Competent and ineffective readers may alternate between bottom-up and top-down reading strategies at various points throughout the reading process, depending on the demands and challenges of the moment (Fu, 2016: 672).

Reading is an exceptionally vital skill and educators should understand how to teach reading in ways that best encourage the development of reading comprehension skills.

3.8 Teachers' Knowledge of Reading Comprehension

Educators should provide specific teaching in reading comprehension methods because they are beneficial to everyone, but they are especially important for beginning readers and struggling readers (Serafini, 2013: 195). Teaching reading comprehension strategies allows educators to focus on comprehension rather than processing abilities when teaching reading (Klapwijk, 2015: 7). Navarrete (2019: 108), Küçükoğlu (2013: 710) and Serafini (2013: 199) suggest that educators should have knowledge of what the various strategies entail and how to best teach them. Knowing different strategies would enable them to employ the strategies that will be most beneficial to learners and most suitable for the type of text being used (Duke & Pearson, 2009: 107).

Educators play a very important role in the development of learners' reading comprehension and are expected to address reading strategies in their teaching practice. However, even though the importance of strategies is highlighted in theories and models related to reading comprehension, Küçükoğlu (2013: 709) contends that many educators do not have a strong framework with which to teach reading comprehension. Algozzine and Douville (2004: 36)

report that educators fail to use strategies as important learning tools in the classroom. Similarly, Fisher et al. (2011: 233) and De Koning and Van der Schoot (2013: 262) found that many educators are either unsure of how to teach reading comprehension strategies or do not have a specific teaching plan or strategies to help learners improve their reading comprehension. Another reason why educators do not teach reading comprehension strategies is that comprehension is not viewed as part of the reading process, especially in subjects that are not languages (Klapwijk, 2015: 3, 7). Even in a face-to-face teaching environment, educators rarely explicitly teach reading strategies (Klapwijk and Van der Walt (2011: 36). This deprives learners of the strategies they need to think about the process of producing meaning when they encounter texts. Klapwijk and Van der Walt (2011) also mentioned that there appeared to be little, if any, formal comprehension education in schools, because educators found comprehension instruction difficult and time-consuming, and weren't necessarily confident that specific approaches worked. Teaching reading comprehension appears to be an issue even when there is no lockdown or remote teaching.

According to Navarrete (2019: 108), one of the factors contributing to difficulties with reading comprehension is teachers' lack of pedagogical knowledge (educators' specialised knowledge for building effective teaching and learning environments for all learners). Both Sari et al. (2019: 1) and Moats (2005) noted that many educators did not have a strong basis in teaching reading comprehension strategies and Moats (2005) added that common classroom procedures frequently departed significantly from the best techniques for teaching reading.

Educators must integrate subject matter knowledge and pedagogy to engage in the primary responsibilities of teaching and effectively instructing every learner (Ball, 2000: 241). Nurie (2017: 108–109) conducted research into educators' present approaches to teaching reading, as well as how they handle and organise reading comprehension. All the educators in that study used comparable methods to teach reading comprehension but the study also found that educators do not pay attention to the material and do not generate meaning from the content in the text. Shulman's (1987: 9) research stressed the importance of investigating educators' knowledge of subject matter content and pedagogy. The link between content and pedagogy is considered crucial in determining an educator's knowledge base in a range of teaching and learning environments. Shulman (1986: 9) describes the knowledge base for educators as consisting of three spheres, namely content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge.

Knowledge about the content of the subject that needs to be taught is referred to as *content knowledge*. In terms of content knowledge, it appears that a profound understanding of the fundamental concepts in their fields is more important for educators than a large collection of

facts about the subject. Because they have a thorough understanding of fundamental concepts and how they are related and arranged, educators can use their subject area expertise to educate (Ball, 2000: 243). Educators must have a deep understanding of reading and language processes, according to Carlisle et al. (2009: 457). They, however, add that their content knowledge of reading may be unrelated to the strategies they employ in reading education. A test of content knowledge will thus not reveal whether educators can model and teach that knowledge effectively in their classrooms. Educators require more than just a thorough understanding of their subject (Ball, Thames & Phelps, 2008: 391; Bertram, 2011: 6). Simply knowing a subject well is arguably insufficient for teaching.

Pedagogical knowledge refers to an educator's understanding of various teaching strategies, classroom practices and assessment procedures (Bertram, 2011: 6). Guerriero (2014: 5) states that the understanding of learners, learning and goals/assessment methods feeds pedagogical knowledge. She also adds that there are a myriad of sources that contribute to pedagogical knowledge.

According to Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987: 60), a teacher's *pedagogical content knowledge* refers to his ability to translate the topic information he has into pedagogically strong yet adaptable forms for learners of various abilities and backgrounds. Knowing how to teach reading comprehension strategies can thus be classified as part of a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge. Pedagogical content knowledge functions at an intersection between pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge. Rowan et al. (2001: 2) describe pedagogical content knowledge as a type of practical knowledge that educators utilise to guide their conduct in highly contextualised classroom situations, and they consider it an important component of the teaching knowledge base. Likewise, Ball et al. (2008: 389) describe pedagogical content knowledge as being a special domain of teacher knowledge. Within this domain, they highlight two subdomains: knowledge of content and learners, and knowledge of content and instruction. This type of knowledge complements but differs from a teacher's subject matter knowledge or understanding of general pedagogical concepts (Bertram, 2011: 6). Bertram (2011: 7) asserts that educators must have both pedagogical knowledge and a thorough understanding of their subject's curriculum. He states that teachers must also understand how learners acquire knowledge of a particular subject and how the context in which they teach influences the teaching and learning of that subject. This can be linked to the social justice theory. The appeal of the concept of pedagogical content knowledge is that it connects content knowledge with teaching methodology.

One criticism of pedagogical content knowledge is that it lacks a definition and empirical grounding, thus restricting its applicability (Ball et al., 2008: 389). Bertram (2011: 4) considers

that the phrase is debatable, as no consensus exists as to what it exactly signifies. Furthermore, researchers have not established and tested measures of pedagogical content knowledge, which could likely represent how content knowledge about reading is used in instruction (Carlisle et al., 2009: 457).

Since reading is such a complex skill, language educators must have content knowledge and sufficient pedagogical knowledge to teach reading comprehension to benefit all learners within the given educational environment. Xu (2015: 155) supports this, stating: “Knowledge of how to teach reading strategies in general can be classified as part of teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge”.

It is suggested that educators teach reading comprehension methodically to help learners develop strategies to improve their reading comprehension (Nurie, 2017: 132). Firstly, educators should pay attention to explicit strategy instruction, as well as demonstrations of how strategies can unlock the text (Irvine-Niakaris & Kiely, 2014: 369). Secondly, it is of utmost importance that educators understand the reading process so that they can adequately organise pre-reading, during reading and post-reading strategies (Irvine-Niakaris & Kiely, 2014: 369). According to Xu (2015: 171), educators can improve their formal pedagogical content knowledge of reading strategy instruction by acquiring the expertise conveyed in literature. Shulman (2000: 132) states that knowing whether learners grasp a text requires some type of dialogue, exchange, conversation or alternating argument. Learners must be enabled to express themselves more specifically about a topic so that they and the teacher can see what they already know.

Learners are expected to expand their reading comprehension and awareness of comprehension but will respond to texts in various ways due to a variety of factors that influence their comprehension, including poorly developed reading skills, their culture and surroundings. In sum, what the literature indicates for this study, is that educators must possess content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge to effectively teach reading comprehension skills.

3.9 Teaching Remotely

The South African government, like others, implemented restrictions to reduce the number of people congregating in public places as the COVID-19 pandemic progressed (Kuhfeld, 2020: 549). Schools were closed abruptly and educators quickly had to find alternative means of teaching to access learners. While the leaders of public and private educational institutions put in place alternative methods for learners and educators to continue with their lessons (Gacs, Goertler & Spasova, 2020: 2), the reality is that educators' lesson plans were disrupted, and their knowledge and skills of information and communications technology were tested as

they were forced to shift education online due to the pandemic (Gacs et al., 2020: 1; Gao & Zhang, 2020: 1).

The advancement of technology, particularly in the realm of education and learning (Gao & Zhang, 2020: 1), enabled remote teaching via online learning to become the most common mode of instruction around the world since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, temporarily supplanting traditional educational methods (Ezra et al., 2021: 7658; Kamal et al., 2021: 7308).

3.9.1 Experiences of remote teaching

According to Amin and Sundari (2020: 363), when teachers and learners switch from offline, face-to-face sessions in the classroom to a digital or virtual teaching system using online platforms or applications, this is known as remote teaching. Leaving aside earlier, paper-based mailing systems, remote teaching is usually done using "computer technology tools to enhance learning and teaching, often through the use of internet technology that delivers information and improves knowledge and performance" (Ezra et al., 2021: 7658).

The topic of remote teaching and learning has been researched extensively but the implementation of quarantine measures saw a surge in interest in distance learning methodologies (Kamal et al., 2021: 7307) and the unplanned and fast transition to a new kind of education referred to as Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) (Ezra et al., 2021: 7658) or crisis-prompted remote teaching (Gacs et al., 2020: 1). While normal online teaching was planned from the beginning with participants who chose to learn online from educators who chose to teach online, ERT was a transient emergency shift in educational delivery that occurred unexpectedly (Amin & Sundari, 2020: 363), offered as an alternative solution to traditional educational techniques due to a crisis (Erarslan, 2021: 350). During the COVID-19 lockdown, remote language instruction was used as a means of attempting to control learning loss (WCED, 2023). The use of ERT was expected to cease in favour of face-to-face, online or blended education after the crisis had passed.

Although traditional face-to-face language instruction has historically been the standard, online learning has quickly gained popularity in education, prompting educators to challenge long-held views about the teaching and learning process (Arrieta-Castillo et al., 2016: 82). Research also shows that the use of technology in language classes is not new, but its use has expanded with the advancement of technology itself. Today's learners are surrounded by technology. Thus, the presence of technology in education cannot be taken for granted (Ningtyas, 2015: 16). People are no longer completely reliant on paper-based resources because of technological advancements and internet access (Darko-Adjei, 2019: 2).

The availability of technology, the elements of reading instruction that need to be strengthened, supporting instruction for learners who are below grade level, and information provided to parents to aid learners in learning are all things that must be taken into account when choosing technology to teach a language (Ningtyas, 2015: 19). Various aspects of teaching remotely have been studied. The study conducted by Ezra et al. (2021: 7658) sought to increase knowledge about specific challenging factors in remote teaching through online learning. Their study found that there was decreased educational equity due to the shift from face-to-face teaching to online teaching. This can be linked to social justice since educational equity was impacted and equity is one of the principles of the social justice theory. A study conducted by Kamal et al. (2021: 7317) examined how the training process, cognitive capacities and academic achievement changed during the pandemic. They found that learners did worse in online learning during the pandemic than they did in distance learning outside of the pandemic, yet distance learning was still successful.

Studies which specifically looked at teaching and learning a language via remote teaching found that learning a language through distance is becoming increasingly widespread (Bosmans & Hurd, 2016: 287). Gao and Zhang (2020: 1) also claim that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a boom in online education, including language instruction. According to Gacs et al. (2020: 2), online language instruction is just as effective as face-to-face instruction. Moser, Wei and Brenner (2020: 3) posit that online language learners do at least as well as their face-to-face counterparts. When online language teaching is carefully organised, there are various advantages and challenges compared to face-to-face language teaching.

Ningtyas (2015: 21), explored the relevance of reading strategy and reading engagement, as well as the use of technology in teaching reading and how to teach reading using a technology-based strategy (an app) as a tool to support language development. During 2014–2015, the University of the West Indies Saint Augustine decided to start teaching a two-hour programme online. They discovered that both learners and educators preferred online classes to face-to-face instruction. They also discovered that learners were more engaged in active learning. The data gathered by Arrieta-Castillo et al. (2016: 82) reveals that using online platforms to teach languages proved efficient for improving academic quality. Furthermore, at a teaching and learning level, the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. Darko-Adjei (2019: 15, 18) studied the use and effects of smartphones as a learning tool in distance education at the University of Ghana. He found that distance learners find it easier to use a smartphone in their learning activities and that cellphones play an important part in their academic activities. According to Ningtyas (2015: 21), in using technology to improve comprehension the important thing is that learners need to be familiar with the features of the device and how to use it. He argues that technology innovation has the potential to combine certain technological devices

with reading strategies to increase learner engagement, which will lead to better comprehension.

Erarslan (2021: 348) examined and synthesised evidence in terms of English language teaching and learning around the world between March 2020 and February 2021, the pandemic's first year. The findings indicated issues with the availability of necessary infrastructure (internet connections, computer or smartphone devices), educational planning, management, guidance and competence in the use of educational technologies. The data also revealed that due to pedagogical variables such as a lack of preparation, planning, educational policies for emergency situations, and educators' limited technological and pedagogical subject understanding, online English instruction did not produce the desired effects in the period (Erarslan, 2021: 358–359).

3.9.2 Advantages of remote teaching

There are advantages of remote teaching and learning for both educators and learners. According to Arrieta-Castillo et al. (2016: 82), the range of activities allowed by remote learning has encouraged more contact among learners, as well as the development of technological literacy and written communication. Additionally, they claim that in online learning environments, learners can collaborate, communicate in actual settings, negotiate meaning and create their own learning methodologies. Other advantages of remote teaching include flexible learning time and space since learners have more free time and the option to take more frequent breaks; a more favourable learning environment for those who prefer to be at home as opposed to an educational institution; and the elimination of time spent driving to and from school (Shim & Lee, 2020: 3). Cardullo et al. (2021: 40) add that educators and learners can work at their own pace, giving them more time for practice and less time for planning. Using a smartphone to improve comprehension can also help raise reluctant readers' interest and increase their engagement (Ningtyas, 2015: 17).

The advantages of remote teaching for educators are that the "role of teachers changes from being a transmitter of knowledge to a mediator", educators may keep track of each learner's activity and educators can be in contact with learners on a regular and equitable basis (Arrieta-Castillo et al., 2016: 85). This increases the quantity and quality of teacher-learner interactions compared to face-to-face contact (Arrieta-Castillo et al., 2016: 85). From the above it is clear that a huge advantage of remote teaching centres around flexibility. is however not without its limitations. The limitations of remote teaching are discussed below.

3.9.3 Limitations of teaching remotely

According to Cardullo et al. (2021: 41), remote teaching is inherently unfair since it doesn't address how all learners can access technology, the internet, and information and skills

equally, which can lead to worse gaps in instruction for learners who are at risk. Ezra et al. (2021: 7660) also highlight issues with educational equity and online learning challenges. Socioeconomic position, speaking a primary language other than the one used in instruction, and being a working parent or learner are issues related to educational equity. These findings are significant for this study since these are all social justice issues according to social justice theory. Cardullo et al. (2021: 42) also mention that not all educators believe remote learning environments provide the best learning settings, a view that found some resonance in the current study (see Chapter 5).

Another drawback of remote teaching and learning was found when many learners who used their cellphones for educational purposes were diverted by other apps (Darko-Adjei, 2019: 12; Shim & Lee, 2020: 6). According to Darko-Adjei (2019: 29), the phone's screen and key size can make it difficult to learn compared to laptop and desktop screens. Darko-Adjei (2019: 29), Ezra et al. (2021: 7660) and Cardullo et al. (2021: 42) identify additional technological limitations that affect the effectiveness of electronic learning systems, including learners' unreliable internet connections, sluggish software and frozen cellphones. The cost of airtime and data in South Africa may be similarly viewed as obstacles for poorer learners. Ezra et al. (2021: 7659) note further concerns about a range of learner learning styles, systems' adaptability to learning academic needs and a lack of technical proficiency among learners and/or educators. When teaching remotely, the teacher could overlook some of the learners' demands because they can't always see or hear them. Lack of effective communication between the teacher and the learners is a frequent problem (Ezra et al., 7659; Kamal et al., 2021: 7311).

3.10 COVID-19 School Closures and their Impact on Learning

COVID-19 is an infectious, highly contagious disease that affects the respiratory system and can cause severe illness and death. It is primarily transmitted by "droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected individual coughs or sneezes" (WHO, 2020). On 15 March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa stated that South Africa would be placed on near-complete lockdown. The DBE, which is responsible for the administration of all public schools, announced at the beginning of the national lockdown that:

> In accordance with the pronouncement by the President on 15 March 2020, schools will be closed from 18 March and will reopen on 14 April 2020. This decision has been informed by the warnings provided by the National Institute of Communicable Diseases and World Health Organization who has *[sic]* highlighted the alarming increase of infections within the country over a three-day period … Provincial Education Departments, districts and schools are advised to take advantage of this time and are encouraged to utilise the time effectively by ensuring that learners participate in established stimulating programmes such as the

> Read to Lead programme, maths buddies, constructive holiday assignments, etc. through the supervision and guidance of parents and the broader community whilst learners are at home. This will be supported through the provisioning of workbooks, worksheets, readers, etc. (DBE, 2020a).

After the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019, schools were closed with little initially available data on how school closures might affect learning (Kuhfeld et al., 2020: 549). It has since emerged that these closures wreaked havoc on educational institutions around the world. UNESCO (2021a) figures reveal that over 1,6 billion learners in over 190 countries were out of school at the height of the crisis. Schools were closed as part of a physical distancing strategy aimed at limiting the spread of disease and easing the strain on health institutions (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020: 243) but this precipitated the worst global education disruption in history (UNESCO, 2022). The COVID-19-related school closures have even been labelled as a generational catastrophe (Shepherd & Mohohlwane, 2021: 37).

Before the pandemic, school closures due to summer vacation, natural disasters, political crisis events and absence have been thoroughly examined in the literature that shows that school closures negatively impact learner attainment, particularly among younger learners and learners from low-income families (Kuhfeld et al., 2020: 550–552). According to Sabates, Carter and Stern (2021: 1), there is an urgent need to provide evidence of the learning losses expected because of school closures during the pandemic. While researchers agree that the harm associated with the COVID-19 school closures must be profound, the effects of school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic are still being studied empirically (Conto et al., 2020: 8). Despite this, Soudien, Reddy and Harvey (2022: 316) have argued that the extent of learning losses cannot be stated.

People in all areas bore severe social and economic consequences because of the school closures (Shepherd & Mohohlwane, 2021: 5, UNESCO, 2021b; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020: 243). The impact on the most vulnerable learners and their families was extremely harsh since they were most likely to not have access to support at home and resources necessary to aid learning (Sabates et al., 2021: 1; Shepherd & Mohohlwane, 2021: 1; UNESCO, 2022). The unplanned school closures have widened education disparities, caused existing gaps in literacy skills to increase and exacerbated an educational crisis that already existed in many countries.

The connection between school attendance/absence and fundamental knowledge needs to be measured to comprehend the probable impact of widespread school closures brought on by COVID-19. First, learning is a cumulative process and fundamental learning skills are essential for developing children's capacity for lifetime learning and increasing their chances

of future success. Second, learning is essential to reducing the developmental deficits experienced by younger children, especially those from impoverished homes. Third, core competencies are challenging to regain, and young learners who fall behind are the hardest to reintegrate into educational settings, especially those who frequently prioritise high achievers while ignoring those who are at risk (Conto et al., 2020: 9).

The length of school closures varied from none in a few countries to more than a year in others (UNESCO, 2022). Van Lancker and Parolin (2020: 243) researched COVID-19, school closures and poverty and estimated that school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the education of 80% of children worldwide. They contend that existing gaps in literacy skills frequently widened when learners were absent from school. Eyles et al. (2020: 1–8) analysed the effect of the COVID-19 lockdown on children's education, while Onyema et al. (2020) investigated the impact of COVID-19 school closures. Both studies reveal that unscheduled school closures and reduced instruction time reduced learners' academic achievement, raising serious concerns. According to Eyles et al. (2020: 1), "school closures will reduce educational achievement, both in the short and long term".

In South Africa, the total duration of school closures is estimated to be around 41+ weeks. Given that we have a structurally fragile education system, school closures have had a significant detrimental impact on South Africa (Shepherd & Mohohlwane, 2021: 5; Soudien et al., 2022: 313). This conclusion is supported by UNESCO which determined that arithmetic and reading skills in South Africa deteriorated significantly since the pandemic outbreak (UNESCO, 2021a). According to Shepherd and Mohohlwane (2021: 3), between March 2020 and June 2021, most primary school learners in South Africa lost from 70% to 100% of a full year of learning, due to the unscheduled school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, learners lost 54% of their learning time due to rotational attendance, intermittent school cancellations, and days off for specific grades, according to UNICEF (2021). South African learners' social capital and resources vary widely, as do their learning opportunities at home. While there were learning deficits for all learners throughout this time, many children from low-income families experienced zero learning because they lacked access to educational resources (Soudien et al., 2022: 313). This is a social justice issue of crisis proportions for many schoolgoing children. While the research on the impact of COVID-19-related school closures is ongoing, among the research gaps is the lack of studies specifically focused on the effect of the COVID-19 lockdown on Grade 4 learners' reading comprehension skills.

The early evidence of the extent and depth of learning losses in South Africa and improvement in the efficacy of the healthcare measures taken to combat the pandemic, South Africa began

reopening schools in stages from July 2020. It was expected that the subjects and materials presented should be carefully prepared and strengthened, and for the next five years, regular measuring and monitoring of changes in learning losses, catch-up or gains would be devised and prioritised (Shepherd & Mohohlwane, 2021: 38). Furthermore, UNESCO (2022) suggested that prioritising education as a public benefit was critical to avoiding generational disaster and ensuring a long-term recovery. UNESCO also suggested that education systems must transform to become more resilient, equitable and inclusive, leveraging technology to benefit all learners and building on the innovations and partnerships catalysed by the pandemic. In an attempt to address the learning gaps created by the COVID-19 lockdown, the WCED implemented the Back on Track learning losses recovery programme (WCED, 2023), which included the schools included in this study.

3.11 Conclusion

Having thoroughly reviewed the literature on reading, reading comprehension, remote teaching and COVID-19 school closures in this chapter, the methodology used in this exploratory case study will be discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The methodology selected for this exploratory case study on the perceptions of Language educators regarding the influence of COVID-19 lockdown remote teaching on the development of Grade 4 reading comprehension skills is described in this chapter in the following sequence of components: research design, methodology (site selection, participant selection, data collection), data analysis, trustworthiness, the researcher's position and ethical considerations.

4.2 Research Design

4.2.1 Research paradigm

This study was qualitative and employed an interpretivist paradigm as the lens through which to view the data. As opposed to the positivistic belief, interpretive researchers assert that reality is socially constructed by humans and can be changed and understood subjectively (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 17; Rahman, 2017: 102). The primary goals of an interpretive approach are to comprehend and account for the significance of human experiences and behaviours and to gain an in-depth understanding (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 17; Fossey et al., 2002: 720). An interpretivist design was considered most suitable for this study.

4.2.2 Qualitative research

The term *qualitative research* refers to a wide range of research methodologies used to describe and comprehend people's experiences, behaviours, relationships and social contexts without using statistical methods or quantification (Fossey et al., 2002: 717; Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014: 174). Qualitative research aims to gain a better understanding of the situation under investigation, from the viewpoint of the participants (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017: 8). Qualitative research is used to investigate and clarify rather than prove a cause-and-effect relationship (Farrelly, 2013: 93).

A benefit of using qualitative research approaches and methods is that it is adaptable because it promotes spontaneity and adaptation in the relationship between the researcher and the responder (Farrelly, 2013: 94). Since the researcher can ask open-ended questions, a lot of information might be revealed. A complete account of participants' thoughts, ideas, and experiences as well as an interpretation of their behaviour can be produced with the qualitative research approach. It is also cost-effective to conduct because qualitative research only needs a small sample size (Rahman, 2017: 104).

On the other hand, numerous challenges can arise when performing qualitative research (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007: 327). Some of these include the use of researcher self-disclosure, hearing untold tales, experiencing feelings of shame and vulnerability, ending the research relationship and researcher exhaustion. Qualitative research also has the drawback of depending on the researcher's knowledge; if the researcher doesn't have the appropriate knowledge, they will find it difficult to formulate the right queries or analyse the responses (Farrelly, 2013: 94). In addition, researchers may add their own biases into the data collecting and analysis process, which can result in study bias (Rahman, 2017: 104). Finally, the results cannot be generalised due to the small sample size, the method is time-consuming due to the lengthy data processing process and data interpretation and analysis may be more complex or challenging than in quantitative research, since it deals with human experiences that can be subjective.

After weighing its possible advantages and disadvantages, qualitative research was chosen as an appropriate methodology for this study because it will examine the individual experiences of educators within their contexts and does not require quantifiable results.

4.2.3 Case studies

Case studies are frequently employed in the social sciences and have been especially helpful in subjects that focus on practice, like education (Starman, 2013: 29). Inductive research into previously unexplained phenomena is done using case studies. It entails a "rigorous description of the case within its larger context in an attempt to comprehend the nature of the case" (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014: 179). Case studies, according to Hancock and Algozzine (2017: 24), differ from other approaches, such as narrative studies, in that they focus on in-depth analysis and explanations of a single unit or system that is constrained by space and time. Therefore, when a holistic, in-depth inquiry is required, a case study is a suitable methodology since it is designed to bring out the subtleties from the perspective of the participants by combining numerous sources of data (Tellis, 1997: 2). According to Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013: 3), using a case study design within an educational context helps to improve our “understanding of contexts, communities and individuals.”

Among numerous advantages, data analysis in case studies is commonly conducted in the context of the activity itself (Starman, 2013: 36; Zainal, 2007: 4). Zainal adds that case studies often yield extensive qualitative narratives that aid the investigation to describe data in a real-world setting and to explain the intricacies of real-world circumstances that may not be captured by experimental or survey research (Zainal, 2007: 4).

Case studies have also been criticised frequently for their lack of rigour. Because case studies usually involve a small number of people, they allow little basis for scientific generalisation

(Starman, 2013: 38). They have also been criticised for being too long, difficult to execute and generating a large amount of documentation (Zainal, 2007: 5).

4.2.4 Exploratory case studies

An exploratory case study was chosen because its characteristics are relevant to the objectives of the research presented in this study (Starman, 2013: 42). The study aimed to explore the perspective of educators and to provide a comprehensive picture of the contexts within which educators were expected to teach, i.e. what it was like for educators at quintile 3 and 4 schools to teach reading comprehension during the lockdown. Because numerous sources of evidence were employed to gather data, it was possible to present a comprehensive picture.

Exploratory case studies are used to explore situations and describe a phenomenon in the real-life context in which it has occurred (Zainal, 2007: 3). Employing an exploratory case study is helpful and effective for determining what is common and/or distinct across situations that share important criteria. Although all the participants in this study are educators at quintile 3 and 4 schools, their experiences of teaching reading comprehension may have differed.

According to Davis (2014: 12), the purpose of exploratory research is to acquire new knowledge about a subject that has not previously been studied. To date, no study has investigated the perspectives of South African Grade 4 language educators on how they taught reading comprehension during the COVID-19 lockdown. Thus, the study could also serve as a practical introduction to more specialised research.

According to Zainal (2007: 5), exploratory case studies are suited to look at any anomaly in the data that piques the researcher's interest. In this case, the phenomenon of interest is the perspectives of Grade 4 language educators regarding their individual experiences of teaching reading comprehension remotely during the COVID-19 lockdown.

An advantage of an exploratory case study is that due to its broad concept, it gives the researcher a lot of leeway and liberty when it comes to research design and data collecting, if they meet the required scientific requirements for validity and reliability (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010: 3). According to Mills et al. (2010: 4), the main reason for the controversy caused by exploratory case study is its intuitive approach: since the process is subjective, certain researchers might focus more on a particular factor than another. What is deemed relevant by one, will not necessarily be so for a different researcher.

4.3 Methodology

4.3.1 Site selection

In terms of time, mobility, skills and resources, the researcher should choose a site that is accessible. Two public primary schools in the Cape Winelands of the Western Cape were selected for their accessibility as the researcher works in the same education district in which the schools are located.

The schools share the following similarities:

- the schools are situated in residential areas;
- the learners live in the neighbouring communities, where the unemployment rate is extremely high, or are from the local townships (historically poor, black urban communities). Both schools thus have a high percentage of learners from previously disadvantaged backgrounds and presently poor families with similar socioeconomic status;
- the learners benefit from their schools' participation in the NSNP, the DBE's school nutrition programme, which provides nutritious meals from Monday to Friday;
- both schools have English Home Language as well as Afrikaans Home language classes.

Public schools in South Africa are classified into five quintiles, based on socioeconomic factors (the DBE used income, literacy and unemployment levels in the neighbourhood as indices). Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools are generally in poor communities and parents are exempt from paying school fees (no-fee schools). Quintiles 4 and 5 schools, generally located in better-off communities, are allowed to request parents to pay school fees (individuals' parents can apply for exemption). Schools receive government funding according to their quintile ranking and the number of enrolled, learners with all schools having their basic costs completely subsidised, including permanent staff on their establishment and funds for stationery, textbooks, utilities and maintenance (Dass & Rinquest, 2017: 146; WCED, 2013). Although lower quintile schools receive more funding per learner, funding only covers basic costs. Fee-paying schools tend to be able to afford extra staff employed by their governing bodies (SGBs) and paid for through parents' school fees. They also, mostly for historical reasons, offer better facilities.

On 30 December 2022, a newspaper reported that the WCED was considering allowing certain quintile 4 and 5 schools in the Western Cape to become no-fee schools (Ntseku, 2022). Along with the 248 Quintile 4–5 schools that were already no-fee schools, a total of 161 schools would be given this chance (Ntseku, 2022). These cases appear to be schools that

service poor learners but are located in wealthier areas and, therefore were misclassified. In general, schools find it challenging to change their classification, even though the DBE's Norms and Standards policy permits reassignment to a different quintile (Dass & Rinquest, 2017: 146). One of the schools in this study, Site B, may have been mistakenly categorised as quintile 4 since learners at the school are not required to pay school fees.

Site A:

Site A is a quintile 3 school established in 1955. It currently has 33 educators and 873 learners. It caters for learners from Grade R to Grade 7, with three classes per grade. One class per grade is an English Home Language class and the other two are Afrikaans Home Language classes.

Site A is enclosed with 1,8m-high wire fencing. There are two pedestrian gates and three gates for vehicles to enter. All the gates are manually operated. There is no security staff on site. The original classrooms are built from wood. The administrative block and the classrooms were built later of bricks. The administration block has three offices, one each for the principal, deputy principal and secretary. The photocopy room is situated next to the principal's office. The administrative block also features a staffroom, kitchenette, sickbay, two storerooms and two bathrooms for male and female educators. There are 26 classrooms in total and an under-resourced library that learners hardly ever visit. There is also a computer laboratory, which Grades 3–6 learners visit twice a week. The school has four ablution facilities for learners, each having at least five toilets, basins and urinals; one set is located close to the foundation phase classrooms and the other set is located near the intermediate and senior phase classrooms. The kitchen used to prepare food for the feeding scheme and the adjourning hall where learners eat are also built from wood. There is a small storeroom where utensils, pots and food are locked away after school.

The school has one netball court and one rugby field also used for soccer and hockey. In front of the office is a rose and succulent garden. Most of the premises are either tarred or paved.

Site B:

Site B is a quintile 4 school established in 1986. It has 1 125 learners and 33 educators. There are 32 classrooms in total. There are three Grade R classes, all of which are Afrikaans Home Language. From Grade 1 to 3, there are three classes per grade. From Grade 4 to 7 there are five classes per grade, of which three are Afrikaans Home Language and two are English Home Language.

There are two pedestrian gates and two gates for vehicles to enter. All the gates are manual. There is a security guard on site who controls access to the school premises. The premises are enclosed with 2m-high wire fencing.

The double-storey main structure is built of bricks, except for the Grade R classes which were built with drywall partitioning. The school has a library with outdated books. Larners never visit the library; instead, it is used as a cafeteria. The school also has a computer laboratory, which learners do not use as only 10 of the 30 computers are in working condition.

The facilities and space allocation in the administration block of Site B are identical to those of Site A. The school also has four ablution facilities for learners: one set for Grade R and foundation phase learners and the other set for the rest of the learners.

The school has a netball court and a rugby field. They also recently erected a jungle gym for the Grade R learners. Most of the premises are either tarred or paved.

4.3.2 Participant selection

Trobia (2008: 2) defines sampling as the process of choosing a certain number of cases – individuals, homes, businesses, etc. – from a population of interest, and Pascoe (2014: 135) defines a sample of a study as a "subset of the population that is assumed to be representative of the population" (Pascoe, 2014: 135). Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2015: 1) similarly define the sample as a “portion of a population”.

Nonprobability sampling does not use known non-zero selection probabilities. To determine which items should be included in the sample, subjective methods are applied (Trobia, 2008: 3). Non-probability sampling, according to Pascoe (2014: 135) and Etikan et al. (2015: 1), can be implemented in exploratory and qualitative studies since the results of a study do not need to be generalised to a larger population. I used convenience and purposive sampling.

Convenience Sampling

When a sample is made up of "elements that we know or can get fast and easy access to,” it is referred to as convenience sampling (Pascoe, 2014: 142). The researcher can use "cases, incidents, circumstances, or informants that are near at hand" while using this sampling process (Battaglia, 2008a: 2). Convenience sampling is the least rigorous technique, which involves selecting the most accessible subjects (Etikan et al., 2015: 2).

Convenience sampling is the least costly for the researcher in terms of time, effort and money (Etikan et al., 2015: 2). Andrade (2020: 1) also adds that if the findings of a convenience sample study are reliable, it can have a high level of internal validity. According to Marshall (1996), the disadvantages of this sort of sampling include the possibility of poor data quality

and a lack of intellectual credibility. External validity will be limited in a study based on a convenience sample (Andrade, 2020: 3). It has several limitations because of the subjective nature of sample selection (prone to bias) and is not a good representative of the population (Etikan et al., 2015: 2).

This sampling technique was convenient since the sites and participants were located close together and accessible to the researcher. While conceding that employing this method makes it impossible to measure or control bias and that the conclusions drawn from the data cannot be applied generally, including to metropolitan schools, private schools and schools in different regions of South Africa, the study's conclusions can be applied to the educators at the two schools and somewhat generalisable to Language educators at other quintile 3 and 4 schools in the region.

Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling is defined as the deliberate selection of a participant based on a set of criteria (Pascoe, 2014: 142). This form of sampling is done with a specific goal in mind since the researcher determines what information is required and then sets out to discover people who can and will supply it based on their knowledge or experience (Punch, 2009: 162).

Purposive sampling is based on the idea of focusing on individuals with specific characteristics who will be better equipped to assist with the research (Etikan et al., 2015: 3; Pascoe, 2014: 142; Punch, 2009: 162). Purposive sampling is used in qualitative research to select the most information-rich cases, to make the most use of available resources. This entails identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who are knowledgeable and skilled in a topic of interest (Pascoe, 2014: 142).

An advantage of purposive sampling is that it allows researchers to focus on a subset of the population of interest (Andrade, 2020: 2). Purposive sampling can provide researchers with the justification to make generalisations from the sample that is being studied (Sharma, 2017: 751). A disadvantage of purposive sampling is that a different researcher might produce different sampling elements from the target population in terms of essential characteristics and common elements to include in the study (Battaglia, 2008b: 2). Furthermore, the more purposive the sample, the more limited the external validity will be (Andrade, 2020: 3).

Criterion sampling was used whereby the participants were deliberately sampled based on a list of criteria, to precisely meet the exploratory case study's requirements. “In criterion sampling, individuals, groups, or settings are selected that meet criteria” (Omona, 2013: 180). Using criterion sampling allowed the researcher to extract more data from a smaller number of samples, saving time and resources. The criteria or parameters employed were:

- Participants had to be Grade 4 educators who taught remotely during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- They specifically taught reading comprehension.
- They taught at a quintile 3 or 4 school.

This study had a total of four participants, two from each school. Both the educators at Site A taught Afrikaans Home Language (the author of the study is the third Grade 4 educator at the school). At Site B, one educator taught English Home Language and the other educator taught Afrikaans Home Language. Site B has three other Grade 4 educators – one declined to participate in the study and the other two did not teach Grade 4 during the lockdown.

These teachers were purposively chosen for the study because they could offer insightful commentary. They can comment on their experience of teaching reading comprehension during the COVID-19 lockdown, learners' current reading comprehension abilities, how remote teaching affected the teaching of reading comprehension to Grade 4 learners, what support the WCED provided regarding the teaching of reading comprehension during the COVID-19 lockdown, the role parents played and, finally, what difficulties teachers encountered when instructing reading comprehension via remote teaching. Through using purposive sampling, the findings relevant for subpopulations, that is, Grade 4 Language educators at quintile 3 and 4 schools, can also be identified.

The researcher also had purposeful in-depth discussions with her supervisor, a specialist in reading comprehension, which resulted in agreement on the codes that would be used for the analysis of the data.

4.3.3 Data collection

Data collection methods for a qualitative case study include interviews, findings, notes, previous records and the usage of audio-visual content (Bowen, 2009: 28; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 135). The planned research entailed the examination of data through document analysis and conducting open-ended face-to-face interviews with Grade 4 Language educators.

4.3.3.1 Document analysis

Document analysis, along with interviews and observations, is one of the most common types of data sources for interpretation and analysis in case study research. A systematic technique for assessing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic content, is characterised as document analysis (Bowen, 2009: 27). Document analysis refers to a variety of textual analytic approaches of texts as sources or study objects (Karppinen & Moe, 2012: 14). Finding and gaining access to documents, collecting data from them, organising the data and then analysing the data are all part of the process of document analysis (Altheide & Schneider,

2011: 2; Bowen, 2009: 27). The researcher's engagement and involvement with documents chosen for their relevance to a study topic is important to qualitative document analysis. To extract meaning, gain insight and generate empirical knowledge, the process necessitates the examination and interpretation of data.

Documents are considered to be significant social products or cultural objects with their own set of implications that are worthwhile investigating since they are objective sources that can reveal the author's goals and intentions (Karppinen & Moe, 2012: 3). Advertisements, agendas, meeting minutes, books, diaries and newspapers are just a few examples of the types of documents that can be accessed as sources of information (Bowen, 2009: 28).

The advantages of document analysis include:

- time-saving, because document analysis involves data selection rather than data gathering;
- there is no need to request permission to access papers in the public domain;
- compared to other data collection techniques, it is more economical and cost-effective;
- there is a lack of intrusiveness and reactivity because existing articles are not subject to the research process;
- they are suitable for repeated evaluations because the researcher's presence has no impact on the research;
- records offer thorough coverage, encompassing a variety of precise times, events and settings.

However, documents should be used with care (Mathison, 2011: 3). Documents may not be clear enough or may lack sufficient detail (Bowen, 2009: 32). Further, they must be read critically since documents can be deliberatively produced to deceive; for instance, to misrepresent the success or results of a programme.

The key documents analysed in this study were the Grade 4 English Home Language and Afrikaans Home Language lesson plans that were made available by the WCED during the COVID-19 lockdown. The WCED made lesson plans available on its e-portal for Grade 1 to Grade 12 for each of the prescribed subjects (WCED, 2023). The Language lesson plans for Grade 4 each stretched over either a one or two-week period. They focused on the four language skills: listening and speaking; reading and viewing; writing and presenting; and language structures and conventions (WCED, 2023). Each lesson plan focused on a different type of text as prescribed by the Annual Teaching Plans, per grade. These included fables, short stories, information texts or poems. The sections pertaining to reading and viewing were specifically analysed since the focus of the study was on the reading comprehension of Grade

4 learners. According to the CAPS (DBE, 2011a: 11), under the section Reading and Viewing, learners are expected to examine supporting details while skimming for essential points, draw conclusions, infer, review, take notes, clarify and explain the author's point of view. The lesson plans were made available by the WCED shortly after schools in the Western Cape closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic on 18 March 2020. The initial goal of the lesson plans was to provide learning materials to assist learners in continuing their education at home. Learners could use these to study at home with the support of others or through self-directed learning. Educators could use the plans to improve their remote teaching and learning techniques (WCED, 2023).

The lesson plans all followed a similar format. Each had three columns: the first column focused on skills that were to be taught; the second column focused on the teaching methodologies; and the third column had alternative resources that could be used. The first section was directed at the educator, the second section explained what was to be done if learners were receiving support from someone else, and the third section was directed at the learner to explain how they were to go about completing the prescribed section.

The excerpts below are based on the section for reading and viewing a fable. It was provded for English Home Language, in the lesson plan of week 5 on the WCED e-portal (WCED, 2023).

Table 4.1 Excerpt from lesson plan directed at educators

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES: Reading & Viewing:	• Pre-reading: allow learners to predict the text. • Model the reading of the text – discuss vocabulary. • Show how learners can relate or connect with the text. • Discuss the features of a fable again.	Worksheets provided. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruX6oQeLC3M https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeJxXeG-bLI https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeJxXeG-bLI https://www.k12reader.com/worksheet/regular-and-irregular-verbs/view/ https://www.literacyideas.com/latest/2016/8/24/free-fable-planning-tool

Table 4.2 Excerpt from lesson plan directed at parents/ other supporters of the learner

PARENT ACTIVITIES:	Same as for the teacher. Help your child with the cutting of the fable. Have a conversation about the theme – avoid forced lectures. Share thoughts. Show that you are also making connections to the text i.e. relate the text to your own life experiences. Offer support and guidance.	Access to websites such as: Vodacom e-school Magazines Newspapers Dictionary DBE Workbook

Table 4.3 Excerpt from lesson plan directed at learners

LEARNER ACTIVITIES	1. Make predictions about the text by looking at the title and the pictures. 2. Skim for words about the text and underline them. 3. Scan for words that you do not know and circle them. 4. Search the text for specific details. Can you connect with parts of the story?	

As suggested by Altheide and Schneider (2011: 15) and Bowen (2009: 32), after searching for and gaining access to the relevant documents and collecting the necessary data from them, the researcher organised the data into predetermined tables. The data was analysed by counting how many times each reading comprehension strategy or instruction was mentioned.

Two tables were created for the document analysis data collection sheets. One contains the data from the English Home Language lesson plans (Appendix E). This lists the nine reading comprehension strategies in the sequence that they are to be taught, according to the literature. The table also references the instructions given to educators on how to teach particular activities. The second table was compiled for the data from the Afrikaans Home Language lesson plans (Appendix F). This table also lists the nine reading comprehension strategies (for Afrikaans HL) as well as the instructions to educators on how to teach specific activities. Two tables had to be created because the lesson plans were not identical for the two languages.

The document analysis provided information about the environment in which research participants functioned and highlighted what was expected from educators who taught remotely. This information assisted the development of the interview questions by illuminating what was expected of educators teaching reading comprehension during the COVID-19 lockdown and helped to guide probing their perceptions and circumstances as part of the investigation. In addition, the lesson plans contained further study data and their examination aided the purpose of confirming conclusions or corroborating information from other sources.

4.3.3.2 Interviews

Interviews are considered the most popular and oldest form of data collection. The aim of conducting interviews is to discover people's perspectives, experiences and ideas about specific topics. Interviewing entails paying close attention to what respondents have to say to learn more about a study (Rossetto, 2014: 483). Interviews are social interactions, which involve a respondent answering a researcher's questions one-on-one (Gill et al., 2008: 291; O'Rourke, 2011: 2). They are usually applied in descriptive and exploratory studies. According to Rossetto (2014: 483), respondents and qualitative research interviewers are more equal participants who contribute to the shared construction of meaning in an intersubjective narrative experience.

While interviews have benefits, disadvantages have been noted, one of which is that respondents are frequently not given enough time to deliver thoughtful responses. They must respond right away, which may or may not be convenient or reliable. Privacy concerns are also a key worry. Respondents must be able to trust the interviewer to give confidential information (Dialsingh: 2011: 2). Another disadvantage, according to Dialsingh (2011: 2) and Farrelly (2013: 95), is that persons being interviewed may be biased. Furthermore, the process is time-consuming, can be costly and the results cannot be applied to the full population due to the limited sample size (Farrelly, 2013: 95).

Interviews can be classified as structured, semi-structured or unstructured (Gill et al., 2008: 291). For this study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, which are centred around the concept of prompting. Semi-structured interviews consist of a series of basic questions that help outline the areas to be investigated, but also allow the interviewer or interviewee to deviate to pursue an idea or response in greater depth (Dialsingh, 2011: 1; Gill et al., 2008: 291).

A major benefit of a face-to-face interview is the presence of the interviewer, which makes it easier for the respondent to explain responses or ask for clarification on any questions asked (Dialsingh, 2011: 2). The open-ended technique also allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that is valuable to participants but may not have been considered relevant by

the researcher earlier. Therefore, if the interviewer needs additional information about a particular response, he or she can probe (Dialsingh, 2011: 2; Gill et al., 2008: 294). Additionally, reasonably high response rates and a near-absence of item non-response are notable advantages. Opdenakker (2006: 3) states that the interviewer has a variety of options for creating a pleasant interview setting, which may help the respondents relax. Rossetto (2014: 486) observed that researchers make a difference by doing translational research and providing guidance, counsel or interventions. These viewpoints are concerned with research content and outcomes, as well as how what is learned from research might lead to societal, institutional, relational and personal transformation.

Approval to conduct the research was sought from the WCED (Appendix A). After permission was received the researcher scheduled two separate meetings with the principals of the two sites to explain the study and its objectives. Informed consent forms were left with the principals and collected a week later. Once the principals had granted permission informed consent forms were sent to a total of four Grade 4 Language educators who taught during the lockdown. Before the interviews took place, participants were informed about the study details and given assurance about ethical principles, such as anonymity and confidentiality. This gave respondents some idea of what to expect from the interview, increased the likelihood of honesty and contributed to the integrity of the informed consent process (Gill et al., 2008: 292). Due to time constraints, the researcher sought permission from the WCED to extend the time granted in which to conduct research (Appendix B).

Open-ended interview questions based on the type of interview chosen and their relevance to the study's research questions were included in the protocol and submitted to the researcher's supervisor for evaluation and were approved after minor changes in language and wording.

After speaking to the principals at each site, the researcher engaged individually with each of the four Grade 4 educators to exchange contact details and agree on suitable dates to conduct the interviews. Before conducting the interviews, a pilot interview was conducted with a teacher from a different quintile 3 school who had taught English Home Language remotely to Grade 4 students during the COVID-19 lockdown. The interview was conducted in English. Conducting the pilot interview allowed a final check to determine if the interview questions were clearly phrased and understood or how they could be improved.

4.3.3.2.1 Pilot interview

A feasibility study that comprises scaled-down versions of the intended study, trials of the proposed methodology or minute replicas of the anticipated research is referred to as a pilot study (Kim, 2010: 191). It is a small-scale, comprehensive survey or pre-test for a specific research tool, such as a questionnaire or interview guide (Janghorban, Roudsari & Taghipour,

2014: 5).) Pilot studies are carried out to allow researchers to test their proposed data gathering and analysis methods in a controlled setting (Doody & Doody, 2015: 1074; Harvey, 2012–23). Pilot interviews are therefore meant to help with the design of the future study.

There are two types of pilot interviews, according to Harvey (2012–23). The first is referred to as "exploratory" and is a preliminary examination to determine whether the inquiry's aim is adequately covered by the scheduled interview process and question schedule. This may be better termed a 'pre-pilot'. The complete pilot is a small-scale implementation of the entire study plan, including data collection, analysis and an outline report. The objective is to assess if the full-scale research proposal will indeed examine the intended topic. At this stage, problems with question wording, the interview technique, coding, data analysis and the matching of intentions with the available data are solved before considerable resources are invested in the exploratory case study.

The key advantage of performing a pilot study is that it gives researchers the chance to modify and revise the main study (Kim, 2010: 205). Furthermore, methodological rigour is ensured through a well-conducted pilot study with specific goals and objectives inside a formal framework, which can result in higher-quality research and scientifically legitimate work (Doody & Doody, 2015: 1074). This small-scale pilot interview was conducted as a prelude to the larger study to see whether the interview questions were appropriate for gathering data on the setting this study hoped to explore. Importantly, the pilot study enabled the researcher to practice the interviewing methods as well as make necessary adjustments.

The pilot interview was undertaken with a 30-year-old female language educator employed at a quintile 3 school. The interviewee was selected based on purposive and criterion sampling as well as her willingness to participate and her teaching and experiences were assumed to be comparable to those of other educators likely to be interviewed. The pilot interview consisted of nine subsections and 49 questions in total. Probing questions were utilised to where the participant's opinions needed further explanation. It was crucial to allow the participant's voice to be heard through in-depth interviewing because the exploratory case study is focused on investigating experiences. An in-depth, semi-structured interview and a reflective journal, which allowed for reflection on the pilot experience, were employed as the data collection methods in this pilot. The 65-minute interview took place at a location of the participant's choosing.

Table 4.4 Participant's demographic details

Participant number	Age	Gender	Education	Years in education

00	30	Female	Bachelor in Education	9 years

The pilot interview showed that it was essentially impossible to predict with any degree of accuracy how the participant would respond to the questions. There were times when the responses were appropriate to later questions, or a further development of the former discussion's point. In other words, the interview integrated a novel method of inquiry with the following results and insights:

- A first-hand and subjective retelling of the participant's experience and how she navigated the process of teaching reading comprehension remotely.
- The interview provided information about how events were connected. An example of this is that the participant was not in contact with the learners for the duration of the lockdown; she contacted the parents via WhatsApp and they were expected to relay the work to their children.
- The researcher was able to enhance interviewing techniques.
- Participants should be given more time before answering the next question.
- The interviewer should listen more and not comment on each statement made by the participant, unless clarification or more information is needed.
- The interviewer should be guided by the participant's responses rather than just the interview guide's questions.

Aside from improving interview techniques, conducting a pilot interview also allowed the researcher to add additional investigation in important areas:

- The interview alerted the researcher to possible variations in the construction and meaning of some concepts. For example, the participant used the terms 'reading' and 'reading comprehension' interchangeably. A question was then added to the interview design to reflect the interviewees' understanding of the difference between reading and reading comprehension.
- Although the purpose of the pilot interview was not to identify themes, it helped to focus on the areas of interest that were raised, including parental involvement and access.

The main study's interview questions were only slightly altered to avoid ambiguity and ensure that the questions were all clear. Similar questions were grouped and questions that seemed unclear were rephrased based on the pilot interview's results so that participants could better relate their own experiences.

4.3.3.2.2 Interview programme

The interviews were conducted in either English or Afrikaans, depending on the preference of the participants. The interviews were conducted at the two research sites, after school hours on days which were mutually convenient and in spaces that were free from distractions. Each interview took between 45 and 60 minutes. A schedule of interviews (depicted below) was developed to accommodate the participants in the study, whose participation was confirmed before appointments were set up for the interviews.

Table 4.5 Interview programme with participants

Participant	Date	Time
001	15 August 2022	16:00
002	16 August 2022	14:00
003	18 August 2022	14:00
004	5 September 2022	14:00

Interview procedure

Participants were assured before each interview that all information would be treated in complete confidence and that their privacy would not be compromised. Each participant agreed in writing to the study's use of the data they provided during the interview.

4.4 Data analysis

Reading multiple transcripts in search of similarities and differences, identifying themes and constructing categories are all part of qualitative data analysis (Wong, 2008: 14). Data can be analysed manually or with the aid of software created specifically for the analysis of qualitative data and each method has advantages and disadvantages. The researcher used an inductive approach and completed the coding manually as described by Saldana (2013). Ngulube (2015: 6) defines coding as the approach of constant comparison analysis. In qualitative data analysis, coding is crucial for identifying categories. This technique aids in the further abstraction of data for researchers (Ngulube, 2015: 6). Codes were assigned to the interview transcripts and the data collection sheets utilised for the analysis of the lesson plans. The coding process was recursive as, during the analysis, codes were frequently reviewed and refined in a backwards and forwards approach (Saldana, 2013: 8).

During the data-gathering phase, the researcher recorded her reflections and experiences before beginning the coding procedure. These are referred to as memos (Ngulube, 2015: 9). During the data analysis phase, the researcher maintained a journal to record reflections on

data processing, codes and their definitions, and the links between codes, categories and themes. The data analysis started once all the data had been obtained.

The study is exploratory. As it was an open-ended inquiry exploring language educators' perspectives, the researcher used attribute, emotion and narrative coding methodologies (Rogers & Goodrick, 2010: 439; Saldana, 2013: 65). Since attribute coding records crucial details about the data and participant demographics, it was important to employ it (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019: 265). This type of coding was also appropriate because the study included a variety of data-gathering methods and involved numerous participants and sites (Saldana, 2013: 69–70). Emotive coding was also suitable since the study is qualitative, and this form of coding names any feelings that participants may have had (Saldana, 2013: 105). Narrative coding was suitable for examining intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and activities (Saldana, 2013: 265).

According to Saldana (2013), coding analysis may be divided into three stages: first-cycle coding, after-first-cycle coding and second-cycle coding. Only the first two stages were employed for this study. "Processes that occur during the initial coding of data are referred to as first-cycle approaches" (Saldana, 2013: 58). During the first cycle of coding, the researcher identified codes and began coding by reading through the lesson plans and highlighting any reading comprehension strategies that were mentioned. Then the data was organised, codes categorised and themes generated based on the correlation between codes, code frequencies and any underlying meaning across codes after the first-cycle coding. 'After-first-cycle coding' encompassed double-checking the codes to ensure that no code had been duplicated or omitted.

4.4.1 Procedure to analyse interview data

The guidelines provided by Saldana (2013) were used for analysing the interview data. All interviews were audio-recorded. When all the interviews with the Grade 4 educators were completed, the audio data was transcribed verbatim, to protect against bias. The texts were then compared with the audio versions to ensure an accurate record of what was said. Then the researcher read through all the transcriptions to identify codes. The codes were then sorted and categorised to develop themes and patterns were highlighted and identified.

4.5 Trustworthiness

The four relevant criteria for trustworthiness are confirmability, dependability, transferability and credibility. To ensure confirmability a researcher must take steps to demonstrate that conclusions are based on evidence rather than the researcher's biases (Shenton, 2004: 64). This was achieved by sending the transcribed interviews to the participants to confirm that

their interviews were accurately transcribed. To account for the limited external validity participants had the opportunity to review transcriptions and deductions and actual excerpts from the interviews in the study were included to aid verification of what was said.

Meeting the dependability requirement in qualitative research is difficult, but requires that researchers endeavour to make the study reproducible for future researchers (Shenton, 2004: 71). The degree to which research techniques are recorded, allowing others outside the research to follow, evaluate and criticise the research process, is referred to as dependability (Moon et al., 2016: 16). In pursuit of dependability the researcher preserved thorough information on data gathering techniques, data collection devices, the sites and the sample, meticulously documented all data and saved all transcriptions for future reference. In addition:

- Verification of the transcriptions of the interviews can be produced.
- In-depth discussions with an expert in the field of reading comprehension resulted in agreement on the codes that would be used for the analysis of the data.

Transferability has to do with the study's overarching theoretical goal and interest as well as the study's findings being analytically generalisable (Gammelgaard, 2017: 911). The reader can assess whether the current environment is comparable to another situation and whether the methodology used in this study can be applied to other settings by reading the detailed information provided about the fieldwork's context.

To ensure a study's credibility, researchers must demonstrate that they are portraying an accurate picture of the phenomenon studied (Shenton, 2004: 64). Triangulation of data collection was used to establish credibility through using open-ended face-to-face interviews, document analysis and keeping a reflective journal. The study’s progress was rigorously monitored through meetings with the supervisor. All the data was meticulously documented. Further, since all the educators interviewed had between 5 and 30 years of classroom experience, it was reasonable to presume that they would provide valuable information about reading comprehension skills and strategies. Sincere participation was ensured through the voluntary nature of participation. Finally, credibility was aided by the researcher’s expertise and training as a language educator and the supervisor’s knowledge as a specialist in reading comprehension.

4.6 Researcher’s Position

I have been teaching Grade 4 learners at a quintile 3 school for the past six years, the same school identified as Site A. I've witnessed first-hand how poverty and a lack of educational resources affect learners and their families. I have also seen that many learners have low academic accomplishment in reading comprehension. Being at this particular school has

encouraged me to think more objectively about the various aspects of social status and how they affect education. It has also motivated me to look for new teaching methods and increase my ability to teach reading comprehension skills to all learners.

The COVID-19 lockdown has had an impact on all aspects of society and taught me to be more empathetic to others. As an educator, I believe that conducting a study in this understudied area of teaching reading comprehension under the lockdown is critical and thus selected this topic for both professional and personal reasons. I have had the opportunity to work with other Grade 4 Language educators. I hope that by contributing to research in this field, I will be able to assist fellow language educators in improving reading comprehension abilities and in improving the lives of the learners whom we have been entrusted to teach.

As a researcher, I acquired as much information as possible to broaden my perspectives and present a complete picture of the phenomenon under inquiry. As an interviewer during this study, I consciously refrained from imposing my opinions on participants and scrupulously did not express my thoughts on any topic connected to the research project. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that I have had to check my biases regarding the influence that lockdown might have had on teaching reading comprehension, based on my own experiences of the situation.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is defined as "moral or professional rule of conduct that establishes the baseline for your attitudes and behaviours" (Louw, 2014: 262). I obtained formal ethical clearance from the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in August 2021 after submitting my research proposal and the ethics application forms. Thereafter permission was obtained from the WCED to conduct the research. In May 2022, I sought permission from the principals of the two schools and, after obtaining their informed consent, approached the Grade 4 Language educators at the two schools.

Participants were informed in writing about the study, its goals and how the research would be carried out. All participants were requested to give their written consent and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage was confirmed. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by not naming the schools, educators or any related entity. All the documentation related to or produced in the study is secured in a locked safe at the researcher’s house.

4.8 Conclusion

The methodology employed in this exploratory case study was thoroughly described in this chapter. Each decision that informed the research design was informed by the aims and objectives of the study and supported by the extant theoretical literature. Having explained the

processes involved in collecting and analysing the data, the next chapter will discuss the interpretation of the data obtained.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the document analysis and the interviews with the four participants. It includes a discussion of the sites and participants, the results of the analysis of the two lesson plan documents, the qualitative analysis of the educator interviews and the presentation and discussion of recommendations from the participant educators for key educational stakeholders.

5.2 Site and Participant Discussion

The sites of study were two public primary schools in the Cape Winelands education district in the Western Cape. One, referred to as Site A, is a quintile 3 school and the second, referred to as Site B is a quintile 4 school. Despite the quintile classification suggesting that these should be better-resourced schools, both schools are under-resourced. Each of the four educators who took part in this study as participants is described below. All taught Grade 4 remotely during the COVID-19 lockdown and are Language educators.

Participant 1: Participant 1 is a 30-year-old female educator. She has four years of experience teaching Grade 4 learners, although she currently teaches Grade 7. She earned her teaching qualification from the University of the Western Cape in 2016. She has not received any additional training in reading or reading comprehension instruction, but has participated in several WCED-hosted workshops.

Participant 2: Participant 2 is a 40-year-old female. She graduated from Cape Peninsula University of Technology with a teaching qualification in 2006. She is currently an Afrikaans Home Language educator who has been teaching Grade 4 since 2007. She has also taught other grades, English Home Language and English as a Foreign Language. Although the participant has attended several workshops on group guided reading, group reading and reading comprehension, she has had no post-university training in the subject.

Participant 3: The third participant is a 64-year-old female teacher. She entered Athlone Teachers Training College in 1976 and graduated with a certificate in primary school teaching. Thereafter she received her teaching diploma at CPUT and went on to earn her Advanced Certificate in Education. Although she is a foundation phase educator, she has spent the last 14 years teaching Grade 4. She has approximately 30 years of teaching experience. She has been awarded several certificates for teaching reading comprehension in Afrikaans.

Participant 4: Participant 4 is a 57-year-old female. She has been teaching Grade 4 for around 24 years and is one of the senior educators at the school. In 1986, she graduated from Athlone College with a teaching diploma. She obtained a higher diploma in education (remedial teaching) from CPUT in 1997 and an Advanced Certificate in Education (Natural Sciences and Technology) from the University of Cape Town in 2013. Over the years, the teacher has participated in workshops that were focused exclusively on reading comprehension strategies.

5.3 Document Analysis

5.3.1 Phase One: Document analysis of English lesson plans

The researcher read through the six sets of English Home Language lesson plans that were prescribed for use during the COVID-19 lockdown to familiarise herself with the content and reread the documents, this time highlighting any reading comprehension strategies and instructions to educators on how to teach reading comprehension strategies (Altheide & Schneider, 2011: 23).

Counting is an important aspect of analysis (Saldana, 2013: 39). Therefore, a count was made of exactly how many times each strategy or instruction for educators was mentioned and the data was recorded in the table appended as Appendix E. According to Ngulube (2015: 6), this approach of constant comparison analysis is referred to as coding. In qualitative data analysis, coding is crucial for identifying categories.

It should be noted that the English HL lesson plans for some weeks were grouped together, while others were kept separate. Weeks 1 & 2 and weeks 3 & 4 were grouped together, but weeks 5, 6, 7 and 8 were all separate. The information in Appendix E was tabulated according to how the lesson plans were set out. Appendix E contains the codes for reading comprehension strategies mentioned in the English HL lesson plans as well as the instructions provided to educators in the lesson plans. The different strategies related to and important for the development of reading comprehension are: Activating and using background knowledge, Text structure, Generating and asking questions, Making inferences, Predicting, Summarising, Visualising, Comprehension monitoring and Connections (Klapwijk, 2015: 2; Küçükoğlu, 2013: 71; Navarrete, 2019: 112; Serafini, 2013: 189). In the lesson plans, because Skimming, Scanning and Vocabulary are also referenced as reading comprehension strategies, these were added to the document analysis.

Data collected from the English HL lesson plans as well as the analysis thereof are discussed below, in the order of the frequency that the reading comprehension strategies were mentioned.

Predicting

Predicting was mentioned the most, a total of 10 times. Despite this, there were only two instructions provided to educators on how they should teach the strategy. These instructions were given in weeks 5 and 6, respectively, where the instruction states that educators must "Allow learners to predict the text" (week 5, page 2; week 6, page 2) (WCED, 2020). While the instructions seem vague, the lesson plans themselves provide slightly more information as to how the strategy can be taught. These include statements such as: "predicting from title and pictures (weeks 1 & 2, page 12)", "Make predictions by using contextual clues to find the meaning in the text" (weeks 3 & 4, page 3), and "Prediction based on visual and textual clues" (week 5, page 1). The suggestions provided in the lesson plans correlate with suggestions on how to teach the strategy found in the reviewed literature. For example, Küçükoğlu (2013: 710) asserts that a person should compare their predictions with the actual result for prediction to be most effective. However, this recommendation is not included in the lesson plans.

Skimming

Skimming was mentioned five times. Only one instruction was given regarding skimming, in week 7 (page 2). What is interesting is that no explanation is given of what skimming is or how specifically it can be taught. There appears to be an assumption that all educators would know how to teach this strategy.

Making inferences

Inferences were explicitly mentioned four times, twice in weeks 1 & 2 (page 12), once in week 7 (page 2) and once in week 8 (page 2). Making inferences is often taught in conjunction with another reading comprehension strategy and the ability to make inferences is important for the development of reading comprehension skills. It is however interesting to note that the strategy is only mentioned as a stand-alone strategy and not in conjunction with any other reading comprehension strategies. Once more, what inferences are and the specifics of how to teach them are not provided. It seems the plans assume that all educators should be familiar with the strategy's components and teaching methods.

Scanning

Scanning was mentioned thrice. One instruction was given for scanning, in week 7 (page 2). Again, neither the definition of sc]anning nor the specifics of how to teach it are provided, implying a presumption that all educators are adept at imparting this reading comprehension strategy.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary was mentioned twice. Two instructions were given in week 5, page 2 and week 6, page 2).

Generating and asking questions

Generating and asking questions was mentioned once. In weeks 1 & 2 (page 3), one instruction is given for generating and asking questions: “Ask the following questions orally and discuss where applicable”. The questions that educators should ask the learners to determine their understanding of the text were:

1. Why did Love choose to stay on the island?
2. What was contained in Richness’ boat?
3. Why did Sadness want to be alone?
4. Do you also feel like that when you are feeling sad?
5. Describe Happiness.
6. What do you think made Happiness happy?
7. Where did the voice come from?
8. What do you think the voice sounded like?
9. Why do you think Knowledge is an elder?
10. What kind of figurative impression is created in the story? (WCED, 2020: 3).

While there were higher and lower-order questions, no opportunity was provided for learners to generate and ask themselves questions about different parts of the text. According to Duke and Pearson (2009: 111), to construct meaning, improve understanding, discover solutions, solve issues and find new information, readers must ask themselves questions about the text. Questioning allows for a more extensive understanding of the material and helps to tie the other comprehension processes together (Stebick & Dain, 2007: 10).

Modelling

Interestingly, modelling is mentioned because modelling is a teaching strategy and not a reading comprehension strategy. Modelling is an essential teaching strategy that should be applied to all comprehension strategies. A teacher should model how to use the strategies before the learners are expected to use them.

Strategies not explicitly mentioned

None of the remaining strategies mentioned in the literature as also important for the development of reading comprehension skills are mentioned in the English HL lesson plans, being: Activating and using background knowledge, Text structure, Summarising, Visualising, Comprehension monitoring and Connections. While the strategies aren't referenced in the

lesson plans explicitly, two of the reading comprehension strategies are alluded to in the instructions provided. These were "Show how learners can relate or connect with the text" (week 5, page 2), which has to do with forming connections, and "Discuss the features of a fable again" (week 5, page 2), which has to do with text structure.

The English HL lesson plans used for document analysis cover only a few weeks and not an entire year's work. However, certain reading comprehension strategies were emphasised in these lesson plans more than others. Six of the 12 reading comprehension strategies were mentioned in the English HL lesson plans, in the following order of frequency: Predicting (10 times), Skimming (5), Making inferences (4), Scanning (3), Vocabulary (2) and Generating and asking questions (1).

There is no consistent synergy between the reading comprehension strategies mentioned, how to teach them and the instructions provided for educators. Furthermore, more instructions were given to educators in some weeks than in others while the instructions for week 5 are identical to those provided for week 6, and for week 7 are identical to week 8. Some instructions were also very vague and seemingly relied on educators to know how to teach reading comprehension strategies without guidance.

5.3.2 Phase Two: Document analysis of Afrikaans lesson plans

Phase Two, the analysis of the Afrikaans Home Language lesson plans, followed the same process as for Phase One and generated the codes and data for the Afrikaans HL lesson plans depicted in the table appended as Appendix F.

Again, as with the English HL lesson plans, the lesson plans in some weeks were grouped together, while others were kept separate. Weeks 1, 2, 3, and 4 were kept separate, weeks 5 and 6, as well as weeks 7 and 8, were respectively combined. Accordingly, there were six sets of Afrikaans HL lesson plans to analyse. The table presents the data recorded in accordance with how the lesson plans were produced.

The data collected from the Afrikaans HL lesson plans as well as the analysis thereof are discussed below. Again, certain reading comprehension strategies were mentioned more than others. As with the English HL lesson plans, Scanning (*soeklees*), Skimming (*vluglees*) and Vocabulary (*woordeskat*) were mentioned as well as Attentive reading (*Aandagtige lees*), which was not mentioned in the English HL plans. Scanning is mentioned the most (six times), followed by Skimming (four times), Vocabulary (twice) and Attentive reading (twice). The reading comprehension strategies are discussed below, from highest to lowest frequency.

Predicting (*Voorspelling*)

As with the English lesson plans, predicting is mentioned most frequently, a total of eleven times throughout the lesson plans. Despite this, only one instruction is provided (in week 2, page 1), about how educators should teach the strategy, namely that educators must allow learners to predict what the text will be about (WCED, 2020). No explanation is offered for what predicting means. While the instruction seems vague, the lesson plans provide slightly more information regarding the strategy and how it can be taught, including statements such as "*Voorspelling. Wat dink jy gaan in hierdie storie gebeur?*"[1] (week 4, page 1) and "*Voorspel waaroor die gediggie gaan*"[2] (week 2, page 1).

Scanning (*Soeklees*)

This strategy was mentioned six times without any definition given of what the strategy is. Some guidance is provided in week 4 (page 1), where the lesson plan states "*soeklees, spesifieke inligting*"[3], implying that learners must scan by looking for specific information. An instruction is given once: "*Laat leerders soeklees vir antwoorde en afleidings maak*[4] (week 2 page 1).

Skimming (*Vluglees*)

Skimming was mentioned four times. No definition or description of the reading comprehension strategy is given. There are also no instructions to educators about how to implement or teach the strategy.

Making inferences (*Maak afleidings*)

Inferences were mentioned a total of three times. No definition or description of the strategy is given. One instruction is given: "*Laat leerders soeklees vir antwoorde en afleidings maak*"[5] (week 2, page 1).

Vocabulary (*Woordeskat*)

Vocabulary was mentioned a total of three times. Two instructions are given, one in week 4 (page 1), where educators are instructed to explain the definition of the word "hoogmoedig"[6] and one in weeks 7 and 8 (page 2), where educators are asked to discuss new words with the learners.

---

[1] Prediction. What do you think will happen in the story?

[2] Predict what the poem will be about.

[3] Scanning, specific information.

[4] Allow learners to scan and make inferences.

[5] Allow learners to scan and make inferences.

[6] haughty

Activating and using background knowledge (*Aktiveer voorkennis*)

Activating and using background knowledge is mentioned twice. Four instructions are provided for this reading comprehension strategy. In each instance, educators are instructed to review learners' background knowledge.

Summarising (*Opsomming*)

One instruction is given regarding the strategy of summarising. The teacher is instructed to help learners identify the main and supporting ideas in the text (weeks 7 and 8, page 2). No description or definition of the strategy is provided, and no guidance or instruction is given about how educators can explicitly teach the strategy.

Attentive reading (*Aandagtige lees*)

Attentive reading is not mentioned in the English lesson plans. It is mentioned twice in the Afrikaans HL lesson plans. No description or definition of the strategy is provided, and no guidance is given about how educators can teach the strategy.

Visualising (*visualiseer*)

Visualising is mentioned once. No description or definition of the strategy is provided, and no guidance is given on teaching the strategy. One instruction is given for educators to encourage learners to visualise while they read (week 2, page 1).

Text structure (*teksstruktuur*)

Text structure is mentioned once with no definition or description of the strategy given. The lesson plan simply states, "*Gebruik teksstruktuur*"[7]. Again, this may indicate the assumption that educators would know exactly what to do. Two instructions were given related to text structure. In week 4 (page 1), educators are instructed to review the characteristics of a fable and in weeks 7 and 8 (page 2), they are instructed to discuss the order of the instructions with the learners. These instructions provide insufficient guidance.

Generating and asking questions (*Vra vrae*)

This reading comprehension strategy is mentioned once. Learners were expected to answer the following questions based on the provided text:

1. Wie is die hoof karakter in die teks?[8]

2. Watter produk word hier verkoop?[9]

---

[7] Use text structure.

[8] Who is the main character in the text?

[9] What product is being sold?

3. Wie is die ander karakters in die teks?[10]

4. Wat is die groot probleem in die storie?[11]

5. Hoekom heers daar so baie komplikasies in die verkoop van kos aan die ander karakters?[12]

6. Hoekom voel die leser jammer vir die hoof karakter?[13]

7. Hoe los sy aan die einde die probleem op?[14] (WCED, 2020: 3)

Four instructions are given on generating and asking questions:

- "Nadat jy die strofe gelees het, vra mondelings vrae".[15]
- "Vra vrae binne leerders se ervaringsveld om as aanknopingspunt vir die teks te dien"[16] (week 2, page 1)
- "Vra vrae binne leerders se ervaringsveld om as aanknopingspunt vir die teks te dien."[17] (week 2, page 3)
- "Onderwyser lei die gesprek deur spesifieke vrae te vra aan leerders."[18] (week 4, page 1)

No opportunity is, however, provided for learners to generate and ask themselves questions about different parts of the text.

Comprehension monitoring (*Begripsmonitering*)

Nothing concerning comprehension monitoring is mentioned, as in the English lesson plans. Furthermore, the approach is not included in the instructions.

Connections (*Konneksies*)

As with the English lesson plans, connections are not mentioned. There are also no instructions provided related to the strategy.

[10] Who are the other characters in the text?

[11] What is the great difficulty in the story?

[12] Why are there so many complications with the sale of food to other characters?

[13] Why does the reader feel sorry for the main character?

[14] How does she solve the problem in the end?

[15] After you have read the stanzas, ask [the learners] questions orally.

[16]Ask questions within learners' field of experience to serve as a connecting point for the text.

[17] Ask questions within learners' field of experience to serve as a starting point for the text.

[18] Teacher guides the discussion by asking learners specific questions.

5.3.3 Discussion

It is intriguing that the lesson plans lack descriptions of the reading comprehension strategies and offer very little guidance on how the strategies must be taught, especially given that both experienced and novice educators probably lack experience in teaching remotely. Very little guidance and support were given to educators. No instructions were given to educators for weeks 1 and 3 of the English and Afrikaans lesson plans. The WCED seemed to assume that all educators would be adept at imparting these reading comprehension strategies. This is worrisome because many teachers struggle to teach learners to read because of a lack of the necessary training and strategic preparation in their classrooms (Fu, 2016: 670). Navarrete (2019: 108) adds that the "insufficiency of educators in terms of pedagogical knowledge" is a factor that contributes to challenges in reading comprehension. Learners are, therefore, placed at a major disadvantage if educators do not know how to teach the prescribed reading comprehension strategies.

It was noted that the English and Afrikaans lesson plans were not identical, with the lesson plans provided for Afrikaans HL being a lot more detailed.

5.4 Qualitative Analysis – Perceptions of Grade 4 Educators

To be able to explore the perceptions of educators who taught reading comprehension remotely during the COVID-19 lockdown and to answer the research questions, four Grade 4 Language educators were interviewed. The following section reports on the findings from the interviews through the lens of the themes developed in the analysis. The responses of the participants were recorded in the transcripts along with the research number of each participant (e.g. P01), the time stamps for the transcriptions (e.g. 09:38) and the line numbers from the transcript (e.g. L175-178). These are reproduced below. In the excerpts below, where participants responded in Afrikaans, the translations are provided in English.

A crucial point to consider throughout the presentation of the data from the interviews related to reading comprehension is that very little reading was done by the participants *with* learners. None of the participants was in direct contact with their learners and two participants could not teach reading at all during the lockdown:

(P01, 09:38) L175–178: "*Ons het geen lees onderrig gedurende die inperking nie*." (We did not teach reading during the lockdown.)

(P03, 23:06) L361: "*nee, nee ek kon nie"* (No, no I could not)

The two other participants tried to support reading and sent sight words and reading pieces to the parents via WhatsApp, since educators were not in direct contact with their learners. Parents then had to assist learners:

(P04, 10:20) L157–160: “I sent them very simple stories.”

(P02, 20:37) L199–206: “I sent them words…after that I would also send them every week, I would send them a new text, and then answer some questions.”

Educators did not teach reading; they sent texts to learners’ homes for them to read. Considering the complexity of reading, it is concerning that parents were expected to assume such a big responsibility.

5.4.1 Reading comprehension

Educator’s understanding of the concept of reading comprehension was measured against the following definition provided by Serafini (2013: 199):

> Reading comprehension should be seen as … an opening up of possible meanings that are generated and negotiated in light of the immediate context (physical and social classroom environment) and the more extensive political, cultural, historical and social contexts. It is more important to investigate the various responses readers construct in their transactions with texts than to determine whether they were able to identify a predetermined interpretation or answer to a teacher’s multiple-choice question focused on the literal elements of the text.

This definition was used since its notions of contexts and constructed meaning link well with the social justice theory that underpins this study. In society, the meanings of what is just are generated and negotiated in the light of people’s contexts. Understanding the world we live in requires reading comprehension and social justice issues are often expressed through language. A person can better understand the context of a situation when they can read and comprehend texts. A person who can read well is better able to understand their rights, spot potential injustices in their surroundings and demand change.

Participants were asked to define reading comprehension to determine how the educators understood the concept:

(P01, 10:02) L180–182: “Basically, *verstaan wat jy lees…So, as die kind dit verstaan, dan sal hy makliker die teks implementeer*.” (Basically, understand what you read…So, if the child understands it, then he will more easily implement the text.)

(P02, 21:48) L210: “Understanding what you’ve read, and maybe being able to relay that information.”

(P03, 21:50) L344: “*om te kan verstaan*” (to be able to understand)

The participants' explanations of reading comprehension show an understanding of one aspect of Serafini's definition, namely that readers must understand what they read to construct meaning.

5.4.2 Teaching reading comprehension face-to-face

Before determining how the participants attempted to teach reading comprehension remotely, the researcher wanted to know how they taught reading comprehension in the classroom, before the COVID-19 lockdown. Research shows that the three crucial criteria of good reading comprehension instruction are teaching strategies to children early, explicitly and sequentially (Phillips et al., 2012: 4). If teachers begin early and use the effective strategies identified by a large body of research, they can teach the majority of learners to read (Moats, 2005). After asking participants how they usually taught reading comprehension the following subthemes were found in what educators would focus on and teach when teaching reading comprehension face-to-face: background (activation of prior knowledge and recognising text structure), vocabulary, prediction, shared and individual reading. While they may have used these strategies when teaching reading comprehension the participants didn't all follow the same order of teaching reading comprehension. It is noteworthy that the educators placed a lot of emphasis on developing vocabulary.

Background (activation of prior knowledge and text features)

When teaching in person, two of the participants indicated that they started with what the learners knew about the topic and then moved on to pictures. This can be seen in the quotes below:

(P01, 16:58) L297: "Ok. *So, ek sal begin met wat is die agtergrond*" (Okay, so I will begin with what the background is)

(P01, 17:04) L298: "Wys vir hulle prentjies dalk" (Perhaps show them pictures)

(P02, 19:30) L188: "Once we've done that, we look at the pictures."

Prediction

Participants also indicated that they allow learners to use prediction strategies in the classroom.

(P01, 17:21) L299: "*Wat hulle dink in die storie gaan gebeur*" (What they think will happen in the story)

(P02, 19:40) L188: "Try to guess what is the story about."

Vocabulary

The reading comprehension strategies that the participants mostly focus on in the classroom are vocabulary development and using the dictionary. They noted:

(P01, 17:38) L301: "*hulle haal vir my die moeilike woordjies uit, ons kyk na die betekenis*" (They take the difficult words from the story, we look at their meaning)

(P01, 11:40) L211: "*So, my eerste punt is altyd: verstaan gou eers die woorde en dan kan ons eers die ding lees.*" (So, my first point is always: first understand the words and then we can read the thing.)

(P02, 19:16) L186–196: "Usually I, what I do is I, we scan for words that are difficult…so then we take those words and look at their meaning."

(P02, 32:52) L386: "I focus on the words first".

(P04, 15:45) L230: "A few difficult words that's in there, I'll tell them use a dictionary."

Paired and individual reading

The participants also employ shared and individual reading strategies, where learners read out loud in the classroom.

(P01, 17:49) L303: "*En dan gaan ons paarlees, en dan individuele lees.*" (And then we do pair reading, and then individual reading.)

(P01, 20:05) L194: "That is them reading along with me aloud…I would identify certain readers to read."

Based on educators' responses on how they usually taught reading comprehension, educators were asked whether they felt that it was necessary for reading comprehension to be taught face-to-face. All the participants agreed that it was essential and they gave the following reasons to justify their responses:

(P01, 16:26) L285–290: "*Want jy kyk dan hoe die kind reageer in die klas. En hoe die kind vir jou 'n beter antwoord kan gee*." (Because you then see how the child reacts in class. And how the child can give you a better answer.)

(P01, 25:30) L428–429: "*Hoe kan ek 'n kind leer lees as ek nie ees die kind by my het nie?*" (How can I teach a child to read if I don't even have the child with me?)

(P03, 27:47) L439–443: "ja*, definitief…So is baie belangrik dat jy vir hulle kan help of kan rigting gee*" (yes, definitely…So, it is very important that you can help them or give them direction)

(P02, 32:15) L308–311: “I feel it is necessary for someone to physically be there, especially with Grade 4, to physically be there to ensure that they are paying attention to what is being said, what is being instructed and that they follow through on the instructions and do what is expected from them.”

(P04, 19:45) L286: “I think it's the best way for Grade 4.”

Educators had to change their teaching methodology during the time that they were teaching remotely. All educators agreed that teaching reading comprehension face-to-face was the best approach. It also seems that they make reading very interactive, accommodating a variety of learning needs.

5.4.3 Teaching reading comprehension strategies remotely

The conceptualisation and definition of reading comprehension strategies have significant ramifications for teaching and learning (Afflerbach et al., 2008: 364). Accordingly, how someone defines reading comprehension strategies depends on how well they grasp what these are. How well they understand reading comprehension strategies also influences how they teach the reading comprehension strategies that are most effective for improving reading comprehension skills.

An early and persistent focus on building strategies is required to improve reading comprehension across all grades (Butler et al., 2010: 7; Duke & Pearson, 2009: 113; Elleman & Oslund, 2019: 3; Reyes & Bishop, 2019: 3). The lesson plans provided by the WCED during the COVID-19 lockdown also emphasised that educators should have used reading comprehension strategies to teach reading. When asked which reading comprehension strategies they were able to use during the remote lockdown teaching situation participants stated:

(P03, 23:40) L369: “*…ek kon nie eintlik ek dink nie ek kon een van die strategieë [use].*” (…I couldn't actually I don’t think I could use one of the strategies”)

(P03, 41:34) L621: “*Jy kon nie eintlik enige strategieë met hulle gedoen het nie*.” (You couldn't actually do any strategies with them.)

(P02, 22:56) L223: “I couldn’t really use anything.”

(P04, 13:49) L198: “No, I haven’t really. I couldn’t. Because I didn’t, I wasn’t in contact with them.”

(P01, 12:04) L216: “*Nee*. Very honest, I didn’t. *Ons kon nie*.” (No. Very honest, I didn’t. We couldn’t.)

(P02, 21:57) L213–214: “I could not teach that because I feel I have to be physically with them to be able to explain certain things.”

None of the participants were able to teach or implement reading comprehension strategies because they were not in direct contact with their learners, because of remote teaching. Even in the classroom, in-person educators rarely explicitly teach reading strategies, depriving learners of the strategies they need to think about the process of producing meaning when they encounter texts (Klapwijk & Van der Walt, 2011: 25). Significantly, the WCED expected educators to implement these strategies, without considering the unique contexts, challenges and requirements of remote teaching.

5.4.3.1 Lack of strategies employed to teach reading comprehension remotely

Since education was expected to continue remotely and the WCED made lesson plans available, participants were asked how they tried to teach reading comprehension during the COVID-19 lockdown period. It would appear that the educators did not teach reading comprehension due to lack of contact with the learners:

(P01, 22:11) L379–386: “*Ons het glad nie die kinders bereik nie. Ons het glad nie eintlik met hulle gepraat nie. Soos daar was geen kommunikasie vir weke, maande* on end” (We did not reach the children at all. We didn't actually talk to them at all. Like there was no communication for weeks, months on end)

Modelling

As mentioned, Duke and Pearson (2009: 108) suggested that there are five phases of successfully teaching reading comprehension strategies, the second of which is referred to as modelling. This is when a teacher assumes all or most of the responsibility for completing a task by modelling or demonstrating how a strategy should be used (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983: 337). The WCED lesson plans mention that educators must model reading comprehension strategies. It was clear from the participants’ responses that they were unable to do so because they were not in direct contact with their learners nor using technology (videos, the internet) to attempt to get around the access problem:

(P01, 12:24) L221: “*Glad nie*” (Not at all)

(P02, 26:04) L253: “No, no, I did not make any videos or anything to send them.”

(P02, 26:20) L258: “I couldn't enforce the other strategies, enforce modelling the other strategies.”

(P04, 14:29) L209: “Not really. Yah. No, I’d rather say no.”

Issues related to communication with learners

One participant had 30 learners in her class but could only communicate with five of the 30. She then went to learners' homes to deliver work packs that they could use while at home.

(P01, 03:59) L74–80: "*Want, ons, ek het glad nie kontak gehad met my kinders nie. Kon glad nie kontak hê met my kinders nie*." (Because, we, I had no contact with my children at all. Couldn't have contact with my children at all.)

The frequency of contact with the parents varied. One participant said that she was in contact weekly, while another educator said that she was in contact daily, since parents had questions regarding schoolwork every day. A third had no contact.

(P01, 13:59) L244: "*Seker een keer per week*" (Probably once a week)

(P03, 26:07) L405: "*Uh ek was amper elke dag want daar was elke dag vrae*" (Uh I was almost every day because there were questions every day)

(P04, 12:51) L186–188: "No, I just sent the comprehension, with their answers. And then I have highlighted some words, where they could find their answers and some explanations of the words at the bottom of the bigger words. Then I would write it down underneath."

Reliance on WhatsApp for communication

The participants all used WhatsApp as a means of communication during the COVID-19 lockdown. They would send work to parents in a class group and parents would then have to relay the information to their children. The participants did not have any actual contact with their learners.

(P03, 20:17) L324–325: "*Ek het baie stukkies vir hulle op WhatsApp. Ek is mos nou nie by hulle nie*." (I sent many pieces via WhatsApp since I wasn't with them.)

(P02, 27:30) L268–274: "I wasn't in contact with them at all. I was in contact with parents via the WhatsApp group."

(P04, 18:56) L273–275: "With the parent, yes. I didn't call them or anything. But yeah, I via WhatsApp and I emailed them some activities and I put some stuff on Facebook with some short stories and so."

The arrangement was heavily reliant on trust as participants depended on the parents to relay the messages to the learners:

(P03, 12:42) L206–208: "*Maar soos ek sê ek het met die ouers gekommunikeer en dan moes hulle dit vir die kinders gaan verduidelik*." (But as I say I communicated with the parents and then they had to explain it to the children.)

(P03: 30:56) L474: "*Want jy het nie kinders gesien nie, ek meen die kinders was nie daar nie die ouers het eintlik vir die kind gaan sê wat juffrou sê*" (Because you didn't see children, I mean the children weren't there the parents actually went to tell the child what the teacher said)

5.4.4 Lack of access: effect on reading comprehension skills development

The participants were asked whether they thought that the time away from school during the COVID-19 lockdown affected the development of learners' reading comprehension skills. Three of the four participants' felt that it had had negative effects. The reasons are discussed below.

5.4.4.1 Access to the teacher

The participants were frustrated by not being able to assist learners. Two of the educators felt that their learners were all required to complete the work but did not have equal access to them as their educators. The others, to different degrees, felt learners had more equitable access.

(P02, 55:27) L560: "Children would not have had access to me because we weren't allowed to move around."

(P01, 19:49) L339–340: "*Definitief, omdat hulle nie by die skool was nie. Ek was nie daar om te kon help nie.*" (Definitely, because they weren't at school. I wasn't there to be able to help.)

Unlike the above participants, one participant could not say with certainty but hoped that all of her learners had equal access to her as the educator. The other was certain that all learners had equal access to her as their educator during the time that they were teaching remotely.

5.4.4.2 Access to computers

In each of the classes, the majority of the learners did not have access to a computer during the COVID-19 lockdown. Since the lack of access to this technology was caused by economic status, it is a clear social justice issue.

(P02, 11:38) L115: "Some of them did, but a very small percentage of them."

(P01, 04:38) L87: "*Soos ek sê, die meerderheid. Niemand*." (As I say, the majority. Nobody.)

(P03, 10:18) L166: "*Meestal nie*" (Mostly not)

(P04, 05:13) L92–93: "Let me say a quarter of them."

5.4.4.3 Access to the Internet

The participants confirmed that for economic reasons, the majority of the learners did not have access to the internet as can be seen from the educators' responses below:

(P01, 04:46) L90: "*Nee, glad nie*" (No, not at all)

(P02, 12:23) L122: "Just a few"

(P03,10:41) L173: "*Die meerderheid nie*" (The majority didn't).

(P04, 05:29) L96–97: "I am not sure if they had Wi-Fi or any data because the parents was also not working."

5.4.4.4 Access to teaching and learning materials

Teaching and learning materials are resources such as textbooks, computers, visual aids and online activities that help learners learn in and beyond the classroom. Access to these materials is essential for providing quality education. Having access to materials encourages critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills and is the key to having a successful educational experience (Yara & Otieno, 2010: 126). When asked whether learners had access to these educators, participants responded as follows:

(P01, 06:40) L124: "*Baie van hulle het mos nou nie selfoon gehad nie, geen tegnologie*" (Many of them did not have a cellphone, no technology)

(P02, 49:55) L508: "They don't have access."

(P03, 11:24) L185: "*Baie kinders het nie bronne by die huis nie*." (Many children don't have resources at home.)

(P04, 35:14) L478: "There's most of them that they don't have kind of stuff. And I don't think the libraries were open and so they couldn't even go there."

5.4.5 Parental involvement

Learner success is the primary justification for parents to be involved (Anderson, 2000: 61). Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002: 446) found that the development of early literacy abilities was linked to parental involvement in teaching children to read and write words. Furthermore, Hawes and Plourde (2005: 47) found a slightly positive correlation between reading proficiency and parental involvement in middle school learners. In line with the literature, all the participants agreed that parental involvement was important and necessary.

(P01, 06:34) L122: "*Definitief*" (Definitely)

(P03, 13:45) L225–227: "*As die ouer nie kontak met my gehad het nie dan het die kind ook nie*" (If the parent didn't have contact with me then neither did the child)

Even though all the educators relied on parents to assist their children, especially during the lockdown, they observed that the majority of the parents offered very little or no assistance.

(P04, 06:32) L108–109: “It was necessary, but I don't think the parents really paid attention.”

(P01, 07:16) L135–138: “*Die ouers was glad nie betrokke nie*.” (The parents were not involved at all.)

(P01, 14:50) L260–264: “*Baie van die ouers het geïgnoreer*.” (Many of the parents ignored.)

(P02, 28:00) L273: “Most made no effort.”

(P02, 44:00) L446–447: “I had to rely on parents doing this. And they didn’t come to the party.”

(P03, 45:10) L671–672: “*Baie ouers het nie eers probeer nie*” (Many parents did not even try)

All of the reasons given by the participants for why parents were not involved in assisting with teaching reading or reading comprehension remotely relate to social justice issues, including parents being at work or a guardian being unable to help.

(P01, 07:17) L135–138: *“Ma werk…Ouma is daar. Ouma kan nie help nie*” (Mother works…Grandma is there. Grandma can't help)

(P02, 15:47) L153–157: “Most did not play a role.”

(P03, 15:07) L245: “*Daar is baie ouers wat in die middae nie eers by die huis is nie*.” (There are many parents who are not even at home in the afternoon.)

A few parents actively assisted and their involvement and the importance of parental involvement were evident in the progress that the learners made when they returned to school after the unscheduled school closures.

(P02, 14:18) L141–150: “If I can compare the learners who had parents helping them to the learners who didn't have parents helping them, the learners who had parents helping them they passed, the others didn't pass.”

Some of the ways that parents who were involved helped were indicated by a participant as follows:

(P02, 17:20) L171–178: “The few parents who were involved would actively message me regarding the work asking questions asking how to do certain activities.”

(P02, 17:246) L174: “They printed the worksheets, they phoned, if they didn't understand something, they, uhm they went on the internet to get more activities.”

The educators were asked to describe the socioeconomic conditions of the learners that they were teaching. While some learners had working parents, the majority of the learners came

from very poor socioeconomic conditions and lived in rural areas where unemployment was high.

Rural areas

(P01, 03:07) L58: "*Baie van die kinders bly in* rural *areas*" (Many of the learners live in rural areas)

(P01, 05:37) L107–115: "*Baie van hulle bly in minderbevoorregte omgewing*" (Many of them live in less privileged areas)

Single-parent households

(P01, 06:00) L113: "Pa is glad nie daar nie." (Dad is not there at all.)

P02, 12:43) L127–130: "Some of them came from single-parent homes."

Poverty

(P01, 06:04) L113 : "*Ek kan onthou ons het baie kospakkies gaan uitdeel*" (I can remember we went to hand out many food parcels)

(P04, 04:04) L76–77: "We as a school went to take food, donate food, going around to the farms and so."

(P02, 49:50) L507: "Because let's face it, our parents are poor."

Unemployment

(P01, (04:46) L90–91: "*Net een uit die 30 kinders se ma is by die werk*" (Only one of the 30 learners' moms are at work)

(P01, 05:40) L109: "*Ma en Pa hulle werk verloor*" (Mom and Dad lost their jobs)

Many of the learners come from poor families. Their poor socioeconomic conditions that worsened due to the COVID-19 lockdown had an impact on the learners' educational experience during the time that the schools were closed. Parents lost their jobs; many learners lived in single-parent households or in homes where there was only one breadwinner. Furthermore, many learners lived far from their school and could not access the NSNP feeding scheme, which led to educators driving to the outlying homes to deliver food hampers.

5.4.6 Expectations of what a Grade 4 learner should be able to do

Participants all agree that learners should be able to read and comprehend texts on their own. Their expectations were somewhat surprising, considering that learners were away from school for a lengthy time in which many did not have access to teaching and learning materials and educators were not able to teach learners the crucial skills and strategies.

(P01, 21:20) L362–365: "*In die begin moet hulle soos klankies en woordjies, moet hulle al kan herken en verstaan. Ten minste paragrafies kan lees. En dan ook kan lees met begrip, ten minste.*" (In the beginning, they must be able to recognise and understand sounds and words. Can read paragraphs at least. And then also be able to read with understanding, at least.)

(P04, 25:37) L354–357: "I think I should give them a comprehension without reading or explaining the questions."

(P02, 41:00) L408–412: "They should be able to comprehend um, any text that is on their level."

(P03, 36:36) L545: "*Hulle moet mos al uh individueel op hulle eie 'n leesstuk kan lees en vrae beantwoord*." (They must be able to read a passage and answer questions on their own.)

The expectations that the educators had of their Grade 4 learners tie in with the definitions they provided for reading comprehension wherein they agreed that learners should be able to work independently and understand what they have read. Interestingly, these expectations were in place even after the participants had admitted that they could not teach reading strategies effectively during the lockdown.

Expectations aside, it was clear that remote teaching had impacted learners' level of reading comprehension and the educators had struggled to catch up when school returned to normal:

(P02, 35:00) L346–348: "Definitely because when they came back in the fourth term, we had to try and cram two terms of reading strategies, reading comprehension, all of that, into getting them some sort of um reading, um, level for them to be able to go to Grade 5."

Participant 3, however, felt that certain learners might have benefited from the time they spent at home. As can be seen from the quotations below, her somewhat dissenting opinion contrasted with those of the other three participants:

(P03, 31:39) L479–489: "*Kinders het baie gelees*" (Children read a lot)

(P03, 32:08) L488–489: "*Almal hulle 2020 se leerders in my klas het baie goed gedoen toe hulle teruggekom het*" (All the 2020's learners in my class did very well when they came back)

The other participants agreed that the lockdown had a negative effect on the reading comprehension skills of learners as educators were not physically present to teach and parents could or would not support their children. Furthermore, when learners returned to school, educators felt as though they had to cram work while also struggling to get learners back into some sort of routine.

5.4.7 Challenges faced by educators

The participants faced several challenges while teaching remotely, with regard to teaching methodology, their emotional state and teaching materials (specifically, related to the lesson plans provided by the WCED).

5.4.7.1 Teaching methodology

Participants were asked to consider whether they had to adapt their teaching methodologies for reading comprehension during the time that they taught remotely. All of the participants experienced difficulties in adapting their teaching methodology, illustrated by the response below, principally because they were not in direct contact with their learners and attempting to work through caregivers as intermediaries:

(P01, 19:07) L328–332: "*Jy moet nou via WhatsApp vir die kind dit lees en via WhatsApp vragies vra. So, in pleks daarvan dat ek dit sou lees vir haar het ek vir Mamma gevra om dit te doen, vir Mamma gevra om vragies te vra. So, dis moeilik*. (You must now read it to the child via WhatsApp and ask questions via WhatsApp. So, instead of me reading it to her, I asked Mom to do it, asked Mom to ask questions. So, it's hard.)

5.4.7.2 Educator competence

When the schools closed, educators were still expected to teach. When asked whether they felt competent in teaching reading comprehension remotely, unsurprisingly, they agreed that they did not.

(P01, 03:49) L70–75: "*Glad nie*" (Not at all)

(P02, 07:58) L82: "It was very difficult."

Besides having to change their methods of teaching, the lack of contact with their learners was a recurrent refrain throughout the interviews.

5.4.7.3 Emotions of educators

The following rather personal sub-themes surfaced in the interviews: uncertainty, mental health, lack of contact and despondency. Below is a selection of the views expressed that illustrate that the COVID-19 lockdown had a significant impact on the emotions of teachers.

Uncertainty

(P02, 03:36) L47: "We started out not knowing what to expect."

(P02, 04:42) L57: "Some people were thrown up out of the depths and down into the deep end and they didn't know what to expect."

Fear

(P02, 06:18) L69: "Personally, I felt uhm scared"

(P02, 03:36) L49–50: "Most of the teachers were very fearful"

Mental health

(P01, 03:00) L55: "*Ek dink ek was meer angstig.*" (I think I was more anxious.)

(P01, 03:47) L68: "*Ek dink ek was vir 'n tyd, vir die eerste paar weke bietjie depressief.*" (I think that for a while, for the first few weeks I was a little depressed.)

Lack of contact

(P01, 03:05) L55: "*Omdat jy glad nie by die kinders kon uitkom nie*" (Because you could not reach the children)

(P03, 40:43) L605: "*Jou kontaktyd was die grootste uitdaging*" (Your contact time was the biggest challenge)

Despondency

(P01, 14:17) L252: "*Ek was net 'n bietjie afgesit*" (I was just a bit down)

(P04, 21:10) L312: "I don't think they [learners] took school seriously anymore"

5.4.7.4 Lesson plans provided by the WCED

As mentioned, the WCED provided lesson plans for educators to use during the time that they were teaching remotely. These lesson plans were made available on the WCED's internet portal. Since the educators at both schools used the lesson plans provided they were asked how successful or challenging it had been to implement the lesson plans.

(P01, 23:31) L401: "*Ek dink nie dit was baie suksesvol nie*" (I don't think that it was very successful)

(P02, 42:45) L490: "It made things a little bit difficult."

(P03, 25:59) L360–361: "No. After a while we could see the standard was too high and we just gave our own."

(P04, 38:26): L576. "*Ek is nie 'n voorstander van 'n lesplan nie, want vir my is 'n lesplan 'n klug.*" (I am not a supporter of a lesson plan, because to me a lesson plan is a travesty.)

5.4.8 Recommendations suggested by participants

The last theme I identified was advice (in essence, comments by the participants that amount to recommendations if remote teaching had to be implemented again) that could be divided

into four subthemes of advice: for the DBE, for the school where they taught, for fellow educators, and parents.

Advice for the DBE

The participants indicated that workbooks and lesson plans related to remote teaching should have clear instructions and that texts should be at the learners' level. They also complained about the amount of administration that came with remote teaching.

(P01, 01:52) L485–494: "*Uhm, uitdruklike instruksies*" (Uhm, clear instructions)

(P01, 02:06) L485 "*tekste stuur wat op die kind se vlak is en ook, ek dink ook minder inhoud*" (send texts that are at the child's level and also, I think also less content)

(P01, 02:30) L494): "*sorg net dat daar meer tyd is vir vaslegging*" *(make sure there is more time for consolidation)*

(P02, 53:03) L536–542: "Don't just snow us under with a lot of admin."

(P02, 53:29) L602: "Streamline what you want the teachers to do, and then give the teacher some space to show some innovation."

(P03, 46:36) 698–702: "*My voorstel vir hulle is die admin wat hulle aan die onderwysers so afdwing, is baie onnnodig is onnodig*" (My suggestion to them is that the admin that they impose on the teachers is very unnecessary, it's unnecessary)

(P04, 30:09) L415–417: "They can't send one lesson plan and all the schools must do the same thing."

The participants in this study felt that the lesson plans provided by the WCED were not effective, especially considering the different educational contexts.

Advice for schools

Participants' advice for the schools where they teach included:

(P04, 34:16) L462: "So if you if it happens again each grade must just go back to the previous grade and get some work from them."

(P02, 49:35) L505–506: "As an educator community, mm-hmm, have to look at creating videos and creating content for our children and space for them to be able to access this."

(P02, 53:49) L545–552: "Have resources available."

(P02, 58:45) L597–601: "I feel we really should learn from this to be better prepared."

Advice for educators

Participants' advice for fellow educators preparing for remote teaching included collecting and making resources such as texts and videos.

(P03, 44:55) L666: "*Soveel as moontlik bronne bymekaar maak om vir die kinders saam huis toe te stuur*" (Collect as many resources as possible to send home with the children)

(P01, 00:28) L464: "*Hulle kan dalk meer moeite doen, soos vooraf videos maak*" (They can perhaps make more effort, like making videos beforehand)

(P01, 00:38) L467: "*verskillende tekste stuur; lees die teks vir die kind, moedig die kind aan om dit self te lees, hardop te lees veral; vra vir mamma om dan die kind aan te moedig om te lees.*" (send different texts, read the text for the child, encourage the child to read by themselves, read aloud; ask mom to encourage the child to read.)

Advice for parents

Finally, participants' advice for parents included reading more to their children, collecting resources in their own homes and becoming more involved with their children's schooling.

(P01, 01:13) L475–479: "*Lees, definitief vir jou kind. Uhm, as jou kind nie kan lees nie, help vir haar, moedig die kind aan, uhm klankies uhm as die kind winkel toe gaan of woordjies sien laat die kind uitspel en klank, uhm ja en ma moet permanent aanmoedig*." (Read, definitely to your child. Uhm, if your child can't read, help her, encourage the child, uhm sounds uhm if the child goes to the store or sees words let the child spell and sound, uhm yes and mother must constantly encourage.)

(P02, 50:27) L513–523: "The parents should start investing now in getting this to their children…getting technology…get these resources in your house. Get them there now while you can, you don't know what's going to happen. Don't just expect everything to happen at school."

(P03, 48:27) L727–731: "*Wees meer betrokke met jou by jou kinders se werk en stel jou kinders eerste*" (Be more involved with your children's work and put your children first)

(P04, 29:07) L402–409: "Parents, there's lots of stuff. Sites that the children can go on…Uhm then just google any stories…They can read it. They can listen to it also. And then perhaps if the parents could just find some questions on their own just to ask."

The participants, responses not only emphasise the importance of parental involvement but also that parents and teachers are co-responsible for ensuring that learners succeed in reading. They also highlighted the importance of being prepared before a future crisis event such as a lockdown.

5.5 Conclusion

The discussion of the results of the data analysis in this chapter shows that the interviews provided the educators with a platform to freely express their thoughts on the challenges they experienced while teaching remotely during the COVID-19 lockdown. There was a degree of correlation between the educator's perceptions and the literature reviewed for this study. The similarities were most noticeable in terms of parental involvement since the literature shows a positive correlation between parental support and the academic success of learners. While the reviewed literature indicated that remote learning should not influence academic and reading comprehension abilities, the reality of teaching and accessing resources in a community characterised by poverty, lack of technology and rural distance meant that the enforced remote teaching that took place during the COVID-19 lockdown seemed to cause a gap in reading comprehension skills and consequently had a negative effect on the educational development of learners, and specifically the reading comprehension of Grade 4 learners in the two Cape Winelands schools.

The document analysis showed that there were flaws in the lesson plans, particularly the lack of descriptions of the reading comprehension strategies and guidance on how to teach them, and the interviews with the educators confirmed that they had not been able to use them effectively. It also appeared that the WCED had not considered the obstacles to implementation that would be experienced in communities deprived of socioeconomic resources and access to technology. Chapter 6 takes up these themes and key findings in bringing the study to a close.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This study took the form of an exploratory case study that used document analysis and interviews to investigate Language educators' perceptions of how the COVID-19 lockdown and remote teaching had influenced the reading comprehension of Grade 4 learners at two schools in the Cape Winelands education district of the Western Cape. The chapter summarises the results and findings of the study to address the main research question before concluding by commenting on the limitations and recommendations emanating from this study. Since the main question was investigated in terms of several sub-questions the findings will be discussed below in relation to each sub-question in turn.

6.2 Sub-Question 1: How did remote teaching affect the teaching of reading comprehension to Grade 4 learners?

It is clear from the interview data that the participants in this study felt that remote teaching negatively affected the teaching of reading comprehension to Grade 4 learners. Participants indicated that there are very clear expectations of Grade 4 learners concerning their level of reading comprehension by the end of Grade 4 and that Grade 4 learners who were taught remotely during 2020 may have had losses related to their reading comprehension levels. The main reasons given for this were that it had been next to impossible to teach reading comprehension strategies remotely and learners' access to the teachers was severely limited. Participants were not able to model strategies and they had problems communicating with learners. Remote learning was severely impacted by the absence of online classes as an alternative to face-to-face instruction and the participants had to communicate with learners through parents via WhatsApp. The push to catch up once learners went back to school was hard and had a further negative effect on their teaching.

6.3 Sub-Question 2: What support was provided by the WCED regarding the teaching of reading comprehension during COVID-19 lockdown?

To answer this question, the researcher thoroughly analysed the reading comprehension lesson plans for Grade 4 English and Afrikaans Home Language that the WCED had sent to the schools. The lesson plans covered several weeks of work. In the English lesson plans, of the 12 possible reading comprehension strategies mentioned in the literature, only six were mentioned. Several important strategies for teaching reading comprehension, like activating background knowledge, summarising and visualising were not mentioned at all. There was no consistent synergy between the reading comprehension strategies mentioned, no guidance for the learner and few instructions provided for educators. Such instructions as there were were vague or sparse in detail and seemed to assume that educators would know how to

teach reading comprehension strategies in the radically different environment of remote teaching. The Afrikaans lesson plans showed the same trends of a lack of description of the reading comprehension strategies and very little guidance on how to teach them. While the scope was similar, the lesson plans supplied for Afrikaans Home Language were far more comprehensive than those for English.

The interviews revealed that the participants in this study did not find the lesson plans helpful for remote teaching and had received no training support from the WCED on how to implement remote teaching methodologies. The WCED was also ultimately responsible for the lack of provisioning of computer and internet resources at the schools for both teachers and learners.

6.4 Sub-Question 3: What role did parents play in supporting educators during remote teaching?

The participants in this study stated that parents did not play a significant role in supporting educators who tried to teach reading comprehension remotely. The participants in this study had had very little contact with parents and many parents had simply ignored the messages that were sent to them. Although this study did not set out to prove correlations between the socioeconomic conditions of the learners and learners' acquisition of reading comprehension strategies, the participants highlighted that many of their learners suffered the consequences of living in poverty. High joblessness, single-parent households and even hunger were exacerbated by COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. The quintile 3 and 4 designations of the sampled schools masked their serious lack of resources, particularly their lack of access to computer and internet technology. Learners had an even more severe lack of technological resources at home, which meant that the teachers could not even work with parents to help the learners access reading resources online.

6.5 Sub-Question 4: What challenges did educators face while teaching reading comprehension during remote teaching?

The participants in this study experienced many challenges related to teaching reading comprehension remotely. Educators were required to adapt their teaching methodologies to teaching reading comprehension remotely and many found it impossible to do so, especially in the absence of training in remote teaching methodology. The closure of schools also isolated teachers individually, cutting them off from the support network of their teaching peers. Furthermore, participants struggled with their emotions during this time and were uncertain and often despondent, which led to some experiencing mental health issues like anxiety.

6.6 Answering the Research Question

The results of the document analysis and interviews conducted as consolidated through the answers to the sub-questions above, enable the study to finally answer the main research question: The perception of Grade 4 Language educators in this study is that remote teaching harmed the development of Grade 4 learners' reading comprehension skills. In reaching this conclusion it became clear that there remains a need for serious reflection on the social justice implications for the education system and the society as a whole, which continue to be relevant despite the passing of the pandemic crisis.

6.7 Social Justice Implications of this Study

During the COVID-19 lockdown, the ability of learners to achieve equitable access to teaching and learning resources and/ or opportunities was limited by their socioeconomic status. This study shows that it proved impossible for reading comprehension to be taught remotely to Grade 4 learners in a vulnerable community whose basic rights were compromised by poverty.

The study also showed that reading comprehension skills are key to improving future education outcomes in South Africa, across subjects and grades. Good reading ability is fundamental to all forms of study and skills acquisition, and essential for building socioeconomic capital and society through technology adoption. Access to resources is a fundamental principle of social justice (Rawls, 1999: 53). This study highlighted the lack of access to technology and resources experienced by teachers, their schools and their learners concerning remote teaching. Learners who did not have access to face-to-face teaching also lacked sufficient access to computers, mobile devices or the Internet, simply because their caregivers could not afford them. Even where learning materials were provided, they were difficult to access without consistent parental support, which was not always forthcoming in an environment characterised by high unemployment and single-parent homes. Although not a focus of the study, the teachers indicated that job losses and lack of access to the school nutrition programme exacerbated hunger among learners and their families. It is a safe assumption that the learning ability of those experiencing food insecurity had to have been impacted.

Further, social justice requires that individuals have the opportunity and platforms to participate. It is clear that during the COVID-19 lockdown, schools were closed, learners were limited in the opportunities provided to improve their reading comprehension skills and had lost access to their schools and teachers, the only platforms through which they could partake in educational activities.

6.8 Limitations

The limitations of the study were:

- Not all the Grade 4 teachers of the schools participated in the study.
- Only two schools among the quintile 3 and 4 schools in the district formed part of this study.
- Its scope was limited as it involved only one quintile 3 and and one quintile 4 school in a specific location. The sample size in terms of individual participants was also small. However, this scope was acceptable, given that the study's goals were exploratory.

6.9 Recommendations

6.9.1 Recommendations for schools

This study offers insights into the challenges related to teaching reading comprehension remotely. Schools should strive to put plans in place to ensure that educators are prepared for remote teaching situations that may occur in the future. These plans could include:

- Training sessions on how to teach reading comprehension remotely.
- Videos that explain the content in a learner-friendly manner.
- Grade-specific databases where learners can access learning materials.

6.9.2 Recommendations for the WCED

This study indicates that the lesson plans provided by the WCED were not easy to implement remotely.

- Training programmes should be developed to upskill educators in how to teach remotely and to deepen their understanding of what reading comprehension skill acquisition strategies entail.
- Resources should be more detailed and refer to the teaching of reading comprehension more explicitly.
- Resources should be workshopped with under-resourced schools and educators to ensure their practicability.

6.9.3 Recommendations for teacher training

Further to the above, whether or not lockdowns or other crises disrupt face-to-face schooling in future, higher education institutions that train school educators must liaise with the WCED on developing teachers' capacity for remote teaching, including the teaching of reading comprehension. From the participants' responses, it also seems that more training, for teachers, in the understanding of reading comprehension must be investigated. A further aspect that may be incorporated into teacher training is training in working with parents to

improve their ability to supervise learners in the home. The study shows that this is especially needed where parents lack education or access to learning resources. While technology should not be neglected, the study revealed a greater current need for more accessible materials in the absence of computers and digital devices, especially given that the cost of internet access remains too high for many parents.

6.9.4 Recommendations for future research

According to the participants in this study, there were many learning losses. It may be useful to do a quantitative study to measure these losses statistically.

This study only had four participants from a single grade. A wider study including more educators and grades would enable a wider range of perceptions to be investigated.

A study of the same period could be conducted with quintile 1,2, and 5 school educators in the Cape Winelands education district to explore the perceptions of educators who taught learners at more economically disadvantaged schools and affluent schools.

6.10 Reflection

I've been working with Grade 4 learners in a non-fee school for the past seven years. Quintile 3 and 4 schools are presumed to have adequate resources, but I have personally witnessed how poverty and a lack of resources negatively affect learners and their families regularly. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, I saw learners struggle with reading comprehension, and when they returned after the lockdown, the problem seemed to have worsened tremendously. Being at this particular school made me think more critically about the many dimensions of social justice and how they impact education. It also motivated me to look for innovative teaching strategies that would benefit every learner. Every part of society was impacted by the lockdown, which made me aware of the need to be more sympathetic to those around me. The choice of subject for this exploratory case study was made for both professional and personal reasons.

I had an opportunity to interact with other educators while completing my research. I was able to acquire insight into the perspectives of the teachers who taught reading comprehension remotely during the COVID-19 lockdown and make comparisons to my own experience. We had similar sentiments. First of all, all of them found it frustrating that we were expected to keep teaching even when the world was gripped by a terrible pandemic. It was also a massive challenge as the majority of learners did not have access to materials that might have aided in their learning. The government kept making expectations during this time without really providing much support for what educators were expected to achieve. Even though they offered lesson plans, they weren't sufficiently thorough, and it seemed like they overlooked

the extreme inequality in the country as a whole. As a result, expecting remote teaching to be a success for everyone was an unreal expectation.

Despite the heartbreak of the pandemic, it was strangely comforting to be reminded during this study that other educators survived degrees of frustration and emotionally trying times similar to my own. Like them, the COVID-19 lockdown refocused my awareness of the social justice problems that exist in our educational system and communities.

Reviewing the literature helped me grasp that reading comprehension is an integrated process including the flexible and explicit application of several strategies. It compelled me to reflect on my teaching methods and what I needed to work on and I began actively introducing reading comprehension strategies to my learners.

6.1 Conclusion

The learning losses caused by the COVID-19 lockdown have not been fully quantified, let alone mitigated. Dealing with and eradicating the effects of the pandemic's disruption of the school system requires the joint efforts of HEIs, educators, school management teams, district personnel, community members, the DBE and the government. At the least, the experience should have persuaded the education authorities of the need for policy development on managing education outcomes in a crisis and policy and programmes to cover remote teaching and learning. Perhaps less obviously, the same joint approach should be taken to deal with the greater crisis, the lack of social justice impacting our children's progress in education and thereby impeding the economic progress and enjoyment of life of the overwhelming majority of South Africans who remain mired in poverty.

REFERENCES

Abu Baha, O. 2017. Reading models: A review of the current literature. *International Journal of English, Literature and Social Science (IJELS), 2*(3): 44–49. doi:10.24001/ijels.2.3.6

Adams, M., Bell, L.A., Griffin, P. (Eds.). 1997. *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook*. New York: Routledge.

Afflerbach, P., Pearson, D. & Paris, S. 2008. Clarifying differences between reading skills and reading strategies. *The Reading Teacher, 61*(5): 364–373. doi:10.1598/RT.61.5.1 [8 March 2021].

Ainsworth, S., Prain, V. & Tytler, R. 2011. Drawing to learn in science. *Science, 333*: 1096–1097. doi:10.1126/science.1204153

Aksan, N. & Kisac, B. 2009. A descriptive study: Reading comprehension and cognitive awareness skills. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 1*(1): 834–837. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2009.01.149

Alemi, M. & Ebadi, S. 2010. The effects of pre-reading activities on ESP reading comprehension. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 1*(5): 569–577. doi:10.4304/jltr.1.5.569-577

Algozzine, B. & Douville, P. 2004. Use mental imagery across the curriculum. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 49*(1): 36–39. doi:10.3200/PSFL.49.1.36

Altheide, D.L. & Schneider, C. 2011. *Qualitative media analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Amin, F.M. & Sundari, H. 2020. EFL learners' preferences on digital platforms during emergency remote teaching: Video conference, LMS, or messenger application? *Studies in English Language and Education, 7*(2): 362–378. doi:10.24815/siele.v7i2.16929

Anastasiou, D. & Griva, E. 2009. Awareness of reading strategy use and reading comprehension among poor and good readers. *Elementary Education Online, 8*(20): 283–297. http://ilkogretim-online.org.tr/

Anders, D.L. 2002. Toward an understanding of the development of reading comprehension instruction across grade levels. In Roller, C.M. (Ed.). *Comprehensive reading instruction across the grade levels: A collection of papers from the Reading Research 2001 Conference*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Anderson, S.A. 2000. How parental involvement makes a difference in reading achievement. *Reading Improvement*, *37*(2): 61–86. link.gale.com/apps/doc/A63500391/AONE?u=anon~99d73e37&sid=googleScholar&xid=6901de26 [Accessed 5 September 2023].

Andrade, C. 2020. The inconvenient truth about convenience and purposive samples*. Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine, 025371762097700.* doi:10.1177/0253717620977000

Armbruster, B.B., Lehr. F. & Osborn, J.M. 2001. *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read.* Jessup, M D: Education Publishing Centre.

Arneson, R.J. 2007. Does social justice matter? Brian Barry's applied political philosophy. Ethics, 117(3):391–412. doi:10.1086/511732

Arrieta-Castillo, C., Roberts, N., Palma Rojas, P.A. & Corredor Sánchez, S.M. 2016. Foreign language teaching and learning in a reading comprehension and writing online module: A higher education analysis. *International Journal of Educational Excellence, 2*(1): 81–100. doi:10.18562/IJEE.2015.0015

Autin, F., Batruch, A. & Butera, F. 2015. Social justice in education: How the function of selection in educational institutions predicts support for (non)egalitarian assessment practices. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *6*:1–13. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00707

Badat, S. & Sayed, Y. 2014. Post-1994 South African education: The challenge of social justice. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 652*(1): 127–148.

Bahari, A., Zhang, X. & Ardasheva, Y. 2021. Establishing a computer-assisted interactive reading model. *Computers & Education,172*: 1–15. doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2021.104261

Ball, D.L. 2000. Bridging practices*. Journal of Teacher Education, 51*(3): 241–247. doi:10.1177/0022487100051003013

Ball, D.L., Thames, M.H. & Phelps, G. 2008. Content knowledge for teaching: What makes it special? *Journal of Teacher Education, 59*(5): 389–407. doi:10.1177/0022487108324554

Bamford, J. & Day, R.R. 2015. Extensive reading: What is it? Why bother? *The Language Teacher*. https://jalt-publications.org/old_tlt/files/97/may/extensive.html. [25 April 2022].

Barnett, M.A. 1989. *More than meets the eye: Foreign language reading. Language and education: Theory and practice.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.

Battaglia, M.P. 2008a. Convenience sampling. In Lavrakas, P.J. (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of survey research methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Battaglia, M.P. 2008b. Purposive sampling. In Lavrakas, P.J. (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of survey research methods.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Bertram, C. 2011. What does research say about teacher learning and teacher knowledge?: Implications for professional development in South Africa. *Journal of Education*, 52(5)

Bhandari, D.R. 1998. Plato's concept of justice: An analysis. *The Paideia Archive: Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy*. Vol. 3: 44–47. doi:10.5840/wcp20-paideia1998341

Bishop, P.A., Reyes, C. & Pflaum, S.W. 2006. Read smarter, not harder: Global reading comprehension strategies. *The Reading Teacher, 60*(1): 66–69. doi:10.1598/rt.60.1.7

Bogotch, I.E. 2002. Educational leadership and social justice: Practice into theory. *Journal of School Leadership, 12*(2): 138–156. https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460201200203

Bosmans, D. & Hurd, S. 2016. Phonological attainment and foreign language anxiety in distance language learning: A quantitative approach. *Distance Education, 37*(3): 287–301. doi:10.1080/01587919.2016.1233049

Bowen, G.A. 2009. Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal, 9*(2): 27–40. doi:10.3316/QRJ0902027

Butler, S., Urrutia, K., Buenger, A. & Hunt, M. 2010. *A review of the current research on comprehension instruction. A research synthesis.* National Reading Technical Assistance Center.

Caccamise, D. & Snyder, L. 2005. Theory and pedagogical practices of text comprehension. *Topics in Language Disorders, 25*(1): 5–20.

Cardullo, V., Wang, C., Burton, M. & Dong, J. 2021. K-12 teachers' remote teaching self-efficacy during the pandemic. *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning,14*(1): 32–45. doi:10.1108/JRIT-10-2020-00

Carlisle, J.F., Correnti, R., Phelps, G. & Zeng, J. 2009. Exploration of the contribution of teacher's knowledge about reading to the learners' improvement in reading. *Reading and Writing, 22*(4): 457–486. doi:10.1007/s11145-009-9165-y

Carrell, P.L. 1985. Facilitating ESL reading by teaching text structure. *TESOL Quarterly, 19*(4): 727–752. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3586673

Carrell, P.L. & Carson, J.G. 1997. Extensive and intensive reading in an EAP setting. *English for Specific Purposes*, *16*(1): 47–60. doi:10.1016/S0889-4906(96)00031-2 [8 March 2021].

Castles, A., Rastle, K. & Nation, K. 2018. Ending the reading wars: Reading acquisition from novice to expert. *Psychological science in the public interest: A journal of the American Psychological Society,19*(1): 5–51. doi:10.1177/1529100618772271 [11 March 2021].

Catts, H.W., Adlof, S.M. & Weismer, S.E. 2006. Language deficits in poor comprehenders: A case for the simple view of reading. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 49*(2): 278–293. doi:10.1044/1092-4388(2006/023) [1 August 2021].

Chibuikem, O.N. 2017. An insight into the notion of social justice following Plato and Rawls. *International Journal of Advances in Philosophy, 1*(2): 25–30. doi:10.5923/j.ap.20170102.02 [1 August 2021].

Child, T.L. 2020. Pandemic school closures: Risks and opportunities. T*he Lancet. Child & Adolescent Health*, *4*(5): 34. doi:10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30105-X [8 April 2021].

Choptiany, L. 1973. A critique of John Rawls's principles of justice. *Ethics, 83*(2): 146–150. doi:10.1086/291872

Cline, F., Johnstone, C. & King, T. 2006. *Focus group reactions to three definitions of reading (as originally developed in support of NARAP goal 1).* Minneapolis, MN: National Accessible Reading Assessment Projects.

Cohen, R.L. 1987. Distributive justice: Theory and research. *Social Justice Research, 1*(1): 19–40. doi:10.1007/BF01049382 [29 July 2021].

Conto, C.A., Akseer, S., Dreesen, T., Kamei, A., Mizunoya, S. & Rigole, A. 2020. COVID-19: Effects of school closures on foundational skills and promising practices for monitoring and mitigating learning loss. *Office of Research – Innocenti Working Paper WP 202013*. https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/COVID-19_Effects_of_School_Closures_on_Foundational_Skills_and_Promising_Practices_for_Monitoring_and_Mitigating_Learning_Loss.pdf

Cook, K.S. & Hegtvedt, K.A. 1983. Distributive justice, equity, and equality. *Annual Review of Sociology, 9*(1): 217–241. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2946064

Cooper, J. 1977. The psychology of justice in Plato. *American Philosophical Quarterly, 14*(2): 151–157. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20009662 [7 August 2021].

Cornford, F.M. 1970. *The Republic by Plato*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cruz, R.I.S. 2012. Models of reading comprehension and their related pedagogical practices: A discussion of the evidence and a proposal. *MEXTESOL Journal, 36*(2): 1–6.

Darko-Adjei, N. 2019. The use and effect of smartphones in learners' learning activities: Evidence from the University of Ghana, Legon. *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-Journal), Article No. 2851. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/2851

Dass, S. & Rinquest, A. 2022. School fees. In Veriava, F. (Ed.). *Basic Education Rights Handbook.* Johannesburg: Section27.

Davis, C. 2014. What is research? In Du Plooy-Cilliers. F., Davis, C. & Bezuidenhout, R.M. (Eds.). *Research Matters*. Cape Town: Juta.

De Clercq, F.D. 2020. The persistence of South African educational inequalities: The need for understanding and relying on analytical frameworks. *Education as Change, 24*(1): 1–22. doi:10.25159/1947-9417/7234

Deering, K. & Williams, J. 2019. Social justice, capabilities and learning support provided by lecturers: A phenomenological-hermeneutic study. *Nurse Education in Practice*, *37*: 153–158. doi:10.1016/j.nepr.2018.08.014 [17 March 2021].

De Klerk, E.D. & Palmer, J.M. 2020. Exploring transformative social justice teaching: A South African education policy perspective. *Issues in Educational Research, 30*(3): 828–844. http://www.iier.org.au/iier30/de-klerk.pdf

De Koning, B.B. & Van der Schoot, M. 2013. Becoming part of the story! Refueling the interest in visualization strategies for reading comprehension. *Education Psychology Review, 25*(2): 261–287. doi:10.1007/s10648-013-9222-6

De Lange, M.M., Winberg, C. & Dippenaar, H. 2020. Why the English Home Language Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement will not improve learners' reading comprehension. *Reading & Writing, 11*(1). doi:10.4102/rw.v11i1.260 [5 January 2022].

Department of Basic Education (DBE). 2008. *Teaching reading in the early grades: A teacher's handbook*. Pretoria: DBE.

Department of Basic Education (DBE). 2011. *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. Grades 4–6. English Home language*. Pretoria: DBE.

Department of Basic Education (DBE). 2011. *Kurrikulum- en Assesseringsbeleidsverklaring. Graad 4–6. Afrikaans Eerste Addisionele Taal*. Pretoria: DBE.

Department of Basic Education (DBE). 2020a. Containment/ management of COVID-19 for schools and school communities. Circular No. 1 of 2020. https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/Guidelines%20for%20Child

care%20Facilities%20and%20Schools%20-%2011%20March%202020.pdf?ver=2020-03-12-100451-990 [11 March 2021].

Department of Basic Education (DBE). 2020b. Containment/management of COVID-19 for schools and school communities. *Circular no.3 of 2020*. https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/Circular%20on%20change%20of%20school%20dates%20COVID-19.pdf?ver=2020-03-16-132144-460

Department of Basic Education (DBE). 2023. *PIRLS 2021: South African Preliminary Highlights Report.* Pretoria: (DBE).

De Silva, C. & Hill, M. 2013. Higher order reading skills and reader response theory: strategies for the classroom. *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research, 1*(2): 87–108. doi:10.31686/ijier.vol1.iss2.105 [8 March 2021].

Dialsingh, I. 2011. Face-to-face interviewing. In Lavrakas, P.J. (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of survey research methods.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dickson-Swift, V., James, E.L., Kippen, S. & Liamputtong, P. 2007. Doing sensitive research: What challenges do qualitative researchers face? *Qualitative Research, 7*(3): 327–353. doi:10.1177/1468794107078515

Doody, O. & Doody, C.M. 2015. Conducting a pilot study: Case study of a novice researcher. Nati*onal Library of Medicine, 24*(21):1074–1078. doi:10.12968/bjon.2015.24.21.1074. PMID: 26618678.

Drewery, W. 2014. Restorative practice in New Zealand schools: Social development through relational justice. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 48*(2): 191–203. doi:10.1080/00131857.2014.989951

Duke, N. & Pearson, P.D. 2002. Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. In Farstrup, A. & Samuels, S.J. (Eds.). *What research has to say about reading instruction*. 3rd ed. Newark, DE: International Reading Association: 205–242.

Duke, N.K. & Pearson, P.D. 2009. Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. *Journal of Education,189*(1): 107–122. doi:10.1177/0022057409189001-208 [9 March 2021].

Du Plooy-Cilliers, F. 2014. Research paradigms and traditions. In Du Plooy-Cilliers. F., Davis, C. & Bezuidenhout, R.M. (Eds.). *Research Matters*. Cape Town: Juta.

Du Plooy-Cilliers. F., Davis, C. & Bezuidenhout, R.M. (Eds.). *Research Matters*. Cape Town: Juta.

Dymock, S. 2005. Teaching expository text structure awareness. *The Reading Teacher, 59*(2): 177–181. doi:10.1598/rt.59.2.7

Edinburgh Literacy Hub. 2014. Teachers' guide to reading comprehension strategies: P5–S3. https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/Literacy/LIT13_TeachingReadingComprehensionFINALDRAFT.pdf [9 September 2021].

Elbro, C. & Buch-Iversen, I. 2013. Activation of background knowledge for inference making: Effects on reading comprehension. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 17*(6): 435–452. doi:10.1080/10888438.2013.774005

Elleman, A.M. & Oslund, E.L. 2019. Reading comprehension research: Implications for practice and policy. *Policy Insights from the Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, *6*(1): 3–11. doi:10.1177/2372732218816339

Erarslan, A. 2021. English language teaching and learning during COVID-19: A global perspective on the first year. *Journal of Educational Technology & Online Learning, 4*(2): 349–367. doi:10.31681/jetol.907757

Etikan, I., Musa, S.A. & Alkassim, R.S. 2015. Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics, 5*(1): 1–4. doi:10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11

Eyles, A., Gibbons, S. & Montebruno, P. 2020. COVID-19 school shutdowns: What will they do to our children's education? CEP COVID-19 analysis. *Center for Economic Performance Paper No 001*. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/104675/3/Eyles_covid_19_school_shutdowns_published.pdf

Ezra, O., Cohen, A., Bronshtein, A., Gabbay, H. & Baruth, O. 2021. Equity factors during the COVID-19 pandemic: Difficulties in emergency remote teaching (ERT) through online learning. *Education and Information Technologies, 26*(1): 7657–7681. doi:10.1007/s10639-021-10632-x

Farr, R. & Conner, J. 2010. Using think-alouds to improve reading comprehension. https://www.readingrockets.org/article/using-think-alouds-improve-reading-comprehension [13 September 2021].

Farrelly, P. 2013. Choosing the right method for a qualitative study. *British Journal of School Nursing*, *8*(2): 93–95. doi:10.12968/bjsn.2013.8.2.93 [17 April 2021].

Fatemi, A.Z., Vahedi, V.S. & Seyyedrezaie, Z.S. 2014. The effects of top-down/bottom-up processing and field-dependent/field-independent cognitive style on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 4*(4): 686–693. doi:10.4304/tpls.4.4.686-693

Fisher, D., Frey, N. & Lapp, D. 2011. Coaching middle-level teachers to think aloud improves comprehension instruction and learner reading achievement. *The Teacher Educator, 46*(3): 231–243. doi:10.1080/08878730.2011.580043 [14 September 2021].

Forstall, M. 2019. Bottom-up theories of the reading process. The Classroom. https://www.theclassroom.com/bottom-up-theories-reading-process-15252.html [20 August 2021].

Fossey, E., Harvey, C., McDermott, F. & Davidson, L. 2002. Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 36*(6): 717–732. doi:10.1046/j.1440-1614.2002.01100.x

Fountas, I.C. & Pinnel, G.S. 2012. Guided reading: The romance and the reality*. The Reading Teacher, 66*(4): 268–284.doi:10.1002/trtr.01123

Fu, B. 2016. Interactive reading model and college English reading. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research.* doi:10.2991/icemaess-15.2016.143

Funda Wande Reading Academy. 2022. Gradual release model of teaching reading: Five CAPS reading activities. *Funda Wande Reading Academy booklet 3*. https://fundawande.org/img/cms/resources/FW_ReadingAcademy2020_Booklet3_v5_GENERIC.pdf

Gacs, A., Goertler, S. & Spasova, S. 2020. Planned online language education versus crisis-prompted online language teaching: Lessons for the future. *Foreign Language Annals, 53*(2): 380–392. doi:10.1111/flan.12460

Gammelgaard, B. 2017*.* Editorial: The qualitative case study*. The International Journal of Logistics Management, 28*(4): 910–913. doi:10.1108/IJLM-09-2017-0231 [20 March 2021].

Gao, L.X. & Zhang, L.J. 2020. Teacher learning in difficult times: Examining foreign language teachers' cognitions about online teaching to tide over COVID-19. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*: 1–15. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2020.549653

Gersten, R., Fuchs, L.S., Williams, J.P. & Baker, S. 2001. Teaching reading comprehension strategies to learners with learning disabilities: A review of research. *Review of Educational Research, 71*(2): 279–320. doi:10.3102/00346543071002279

Gewirtz, S. 2006. Towards a contextualized analysis of social justice in education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 38*(1): 69–81. doi:10.1111/j.1469-5812.2006.00175.x

Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E. & Chadwick, B. 2008. Methods of data collection in qualitative research: Interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal, 204*(6): 291–295. doi:10.1038/bdj.2008.192

Gökhan, A. 2017. Basic concepts of reading instruction. *International Journal of Languages, Education and Teaching, 5*(4): 484–503. doi:10.18298/ijlet.2390

Gollwitzer, M. & Van Prooijen, J.W. 2016. Psychology of justice. In Sabbagh, C. & Schmitt, M. (Eds.). *Handbook of social justice Theory and research*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer: 61–81.

Grabe, W. 1991. Current development in second language reading research. *TESOL Quarterly, 25*(3): 375–406. doi:10.2307/3586977

Gudmundsdottir, S. & Shulman, L. 1987. Pedagogical content knowledge in social studies. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 31*(2):59–70. doi:10.1080/0031383870310201

Guerriero, S. 2014. Teachers' pedagogical knowledge and the teaching profession. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 2*(1): 1–7.

Guest, G., MacQueen, K.M. & Namey, E.E. 2012. *Applied thematic analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Gustafsson, M. & Deliwe, C. 2020. How is the COVID-19 pandemic affecting educational quality in South Africa? Evidence to date and future risks. *Working Papers 23/2020*, Department of Economics, Stellenbosch University.

Hage, S.M., Ring, E.E. & Lantz, M.M. 2011. Social justice theory. In Levesque, R.J.R. (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of Adolescence*. New York: Springer: 2794–2801.

Hamilton, L. & Corbett-Whittier, C. 2013. *Defining case study in education research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hancock, D.R. & Algozzine, R. 2017. *Doing case study research : A practical guide for beginning researchers*. 3rd ed. New York: Teachers College Press.

Harvey, L. 2012–23. Social research glossary. Quality Research International. http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/

Hawes, C.A. & Plourde, L.A. 2005. Parental involvement and its influence on the reading achievement of 6th grade students. *Reading Improvement, 42*(1): 47–57.

Hemerick, K.A. 1999. The effects of reading aloud in motivating and enhancing learners' desire to read independently. Institution of Education Sciences. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED427308.pdf

Hill, L.S., Baxen, J., Craig, A.T. & Namakula, H. 2012. Citizenship, social justice, and evolving conceptions of access to education in South Africa: Implications for research. *Review of Research in Education, 36*(1): 239–260. doi:10.2307/41349030

Hugo, A.J. & Nieman, M. 2010. Using English as a second language as the language of instruction: Concerns and needs of primary school teachers in South Africa. *Journal for Language Teaching, 44*(1): 59–66. doi:10.4314/jlt.v44i1.71781

Iaquinta, A. 2006. Guided reading: A research-based response to the challenges of early reading instruction. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 33*(6): 413–417. doi:10.1007/s10643-006-0074-2

Irvine-Niakaris, C. & Kiely, R. 2014. Reading comprehension in test preparation classes: An analysis of teacher's pedagogical content knowledge in TESOL. *Tesol Quarterly, 49*(2). doi:10.1002/tesq.189

Jackson, B. 2005. The conceptual history of social justice. *Political Studies Review, 3*(3): 356–373. doi:10.1111/j.1478-9299.2005.00028.x

Jacobs, G. & Farrell, T. 2012. *Teachers sourcebook for extensive reading*. Charlotte, N.C: Information Age Pub.

Janghorban, R, Roudsari, R.L. & Taghipour, A. 2014. Pilot study in qualitative research: The roles and values. *Hayat, 19*(4): 1–5. http://hayat.tums.ac.ir/article-1-666-en.html

Joseph, R. 2020. Toward a pragmatic understanding of Rawls' Social Justice Theory in social work: A critical evaluation. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work, 5*(1). doi:10.1007/s41134-020-00127-z [21 March 2021].

Kamal, M., Zubanova, S., Isaeva, A. & Movchun, V. 2021. Distance learning impact on the English language teaching during COVID-19. *Education and Information Technologies, 26*(3): 7307–7319. doi:10.1007/s10639-021-10588-y

Karppinen, K. & Moe, H. 2012. What we talk about when we talk about document analysis. In Just, N. & Puppis, M. (Eds.). *Trends in communication policy research: New theories, methods, and subjects*. Bristol: Intellect.

Kaufman, A. 2012. Theories of distributive justice. In Chadwick, R. (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of applied ethics*. San Diego: Academic Press: 842–850.

Kendeou, P., McMaster, K.L. & Christ, T.J. 2016. Reading comprehension: Core components and processes. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 3*(1): 62–69. doi:10.1177/2372732215624707

Khechen, M. 2013. Social justice: Concepts, principles, tools and challenges. United Nations Digital Library System. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3894953?ln=en

Kim, Y. 2010. The pilot study in qualitative inquiry. Identifying issues and learning lessons for culturally competent research. *Qualitative Social Work, 10*(2): 190–206. doi:10.1177/1473325010362001

Kirby, J. 2007. Reading comprehension: Its nature and development. Canadian Language & Literacy research network. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.605.9849&rep=rep1&type=pdf [8 April 2021].

Klapwijk, N. 2015. EMC2 = Comprehension: A reading strategy instruction framework for all teachers. *South African Journal of Education, 35*(1): 1–10. doi:10.15700/201503062348

Klapwijk, N. & Van der Walt, C. 2011. Measuring reading strategy knowledge transfer: Motivation for teachers to implement reading strategy instruction. *Per Linguam, 27*(2): 25–40. doi:10.5785/27-2-106 [6 December 2021].

Küçükoğlu, H. 2013. Improving reading skills through effective reading strategies. *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences, 70*: 709–714. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.113

Kuhfeld, M., Soland, J., Tarasawa, B., Johnson, A., Ruzek, E. & Liu, J. 2020. Projecting the potential impact of COVID-19 school closures on academic achievement. *Educational Researcher*, *49*(8): 549–565. doi:10.3102/0013189X20965918

Laing, K., Smith, L.M. & Todd, L. 2017. Using the concept of relational justice to apply fairness in schools. *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives, 18*(1): 128–142. https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/index.php/IEJ [9 August 2021].

Lamont, J. & Favor, C. 2017. Distributive justice. In Zalta, E.N. (Ed.). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* https://www.plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/justice-distributive [31 July 2021].

Learning Point Associates. 2004. *A closer look at the five essential components of effective reading instruction: A review of scientifically based reading research for teachers.* Naperville, Il: Learning Point Associates.

Lee, L. & Szczerbinski, M. 2021. Paired reading as a method of reading intervention in Irish primary schools: An evaluation. *Irish Educational Studies, 40*(3): 589–610. doi:10.1080/03323315.2021.1927797

Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2005. *Practical research: Planning and design*. NJ: Prentice Hall.

Leipzig, D.H. 2001. About reading: An introduction. https://www.readingrockets.org/article/about-reading-introduction [19 August 2021].

Liebig, S. & Sauer, C. 2016. Sociology of justice. In Sabbagh, C. & Schmitt, M.(Eds.). *Handbook of social justice theory and research*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer: 37–54.

Linneberg, M. & Korsgaard, S. 2019. Coding qualitative data: A synthesis guiding the novice. *Qualitative Research Journal, 19*(3): 259–270. doi:10.1108/QRJ-12-2018-0012 [2 August 2023].

Liu, F. 2010. A short analysis of the nature of reading. *English Language Teaching, 3*(3):152–157. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1081770.pdf [8 April 2021].

Louw, M. 2014. Ethics in research. In Du Plooy-Cilliers, D., Davis, C. & Bezuidenhout, R.M. (Eds.). *Research Matters*. Cape Town: Juta.

Lyon, G.R. 1998. Why reading is not a natural process. *Educational Leadership, 55*(6): 14–18. https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/why-reading-is-not-a-natural-process [20 August 2021].

Maiese, M. & Burgess, H. 2020. Types of justice. https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/types_of_justice#narrow-body [9 August 2021].

Mantra, I., Widiastuti, I. & Pramawati, A. 2020. Micro and macro skills of reading comprehension acquired by EFL learners. *International Journal of Linguistics and Discourse Analytics, 1*(2): 10–16. doi:10.52232/ijolida.v1i2.15

Manurung, A.M., Pardede, H. & Purba, C.N. 2020. The effect of using Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) method to the learners' ability in reading report text at the eleven grade of SMA Negeri 2 Pematangsiantar. *Journal of English Teaching as a Foreign Language, 6*(2): 39–63.

Marshall, M.N. 1996. Sampling in qualitative research. *Family Practice, 13*(6): 522–525. doi:10.1093/fampra/13.6.522

Mart, C.T. 2015. Combining extensive and intensive reading to reinforce language learning. *Journal of Educational and Instructional Studies in the World, 5*(4): 85–90. http://eprints.tiu.edu.iq/981/1/combiningextensiveandintensivereading.pdf

Martinez, M. E. 2006. What is Metacognition? *Phi Delta Kappan*, *87*(9): 696-699. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170608700916

Mathison, S. 2011. Document analysis. In Mathison, S. (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of evaluation*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

McKeown, M.G., Beck, I.L. & Blake, R.G.K. 2009. Rethinking reading comprehension instruction: A comparison of instruction for strategies and content approaches. *Reading Research Quarterly, 44*(3): 218–253. doi:10.1598/RRQ.44.3.1 [20 November 2021].

McRae, S. 2012. Utilizing the interactive reading model in a Continuing Education Course. MA TESOL Collection, 540. https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/ipp_collection/540

Meisinger, E., Schwanenflugel, P., Bradley, B. & Stahl, S. 2004. Interaction quality during partner reading. *Journal of Literacy Research. 36*(2): 111–140. doi:10.1207/s15548430jlr3602_1

Merle, J.C. 2005. Can global distributive justice be minimalist and consensual? Reflections on Thomas Pogge's global tax on natural resources. In Follesdal, A. & Pogge, T. (Eds.). *Real world justice: Grounds, principles, human rights, and social institutions.* Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Meyer, L.H. & Sanklecha, P. 2016. Philosophy of justice: Extending liberal justice in space and time. In Sabbagh, C. & Schmitt, M. (Eds.). *Handbook of social justice theory and research*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer: 15–32.

Meyers, K. & Thomasson, M.A. 2021. Can pandemics affect educational attainment? Evidence from the polio epidemic of 1916. *Cliometrica, 15*(2): 231–265.

Midtgaard, S.F. 2012. On Thomas Pogge's theory of global justice: Why we are not collectively responsible for the global distribution of benefits and burdens between individuals. *SATS, 13*(2): 207–222. doi:10.1515/sats-2012-0012

Miftah, M.Z. 2013. Implementation of intensive-extensive reading strategy to improve reading comprehension. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, *3*: 21–29. doi:10.23971/jefl.v3i1.59 [9 March 2021].

Miller, D. 1991. Recent theories of social justice. *British Journal of Political Science, 21*: 371–391. doi:10.1017/S0007123400006207 [27 July 2021].

Mills, A.J., Durepos, G. & Wiebe, E. (Eds.). 2010. *Encyclopedia of case study research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Moats, L.C. 2005. How spelling supports reading: And why it is more regular and predictable than you might think. *American Educator, 6*: 12–22. https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/Moats.pdf

Moon, K., Brewer, T.D., Januchowski-Hartley, S.R., Adams, V.M. & Blackman, D.A. 2016. A guideline to improve qualitative social science publishing in ecology and conservation journals. *Ecology and Society, 21*(3): 17. doi:10.5751/ES-08663-210317

Moore, J.J., McClelland, S.S., Alef, E.C. & Vogel, E.D. 2016. The simplicity and complexity of reading comprehension. *International Journal of Business and Social Science, 7*(6): 20–23. https://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_7_No_6_June_2016/3.pdf

Moreillon, J. 2007. *Collaborative strategies for teaching reading comprehension maximizing your impact*. Chicago: American Library Association.

Moser, M., Wei, T. & Brenner, D. 2020. Remote teaching during COVID-19: Implications from a national survey of language educators. *System, 97*(4). doi:10.1016/j.system.2020.102431

Muchtar, N. 2019. Intensive and extensive reading in improving teaching reading comprehension. *Lingua Pedagogia Journal of English Teaching Studies,1*(2): 1–13. doi:10.21831/lingped.v1i2.18687

Müller, L.M & Goldenberg, G. 2021. *Education in times of crisis: The potential implications of school closures for teachers and learners*. London: Chartered College of Teaching.

Mullis, I.V.S., Martin, M.O., Foy, P. & Drucker, K.T. 2012. *PIRLS 2011 International results in reading.* USA: TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Centre. https://timssandpirls.bc.edu/pirls2011/downloads/p11_ir_fullbook.pdf

Navarrete, J.C. 2019. Reading comprehension: Theories and strategies toward an effective reading instruction. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *10*(13): 108–114. doi:10.7176/jep%2F10-13-12

Nes, S.L. 2003. Using paired reading to enhance the fluency skills of less-skilled readers. *Reading Improvement, 40*(4). Gale Academic OneFile. link.gale.com/apps/doc/A112585050/AONE?u=googlescholar&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=cbfc766f [Accessed 6 January 2022].

Ness, M. 2016. Learning from K-5 teachers who think aloud. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 30*(3): 282–292. doi:10.1080/02568543.2016.1178671 [14 September 2021].

Ngulube, P. 2015. Qualitative data analysis and interpretation: Systematic search for meaning. In Mathipa, E.R. & Gumbo, M.T. (Eds.). *Addressing research challenges: Making headway for developing researchers*. Midrand: Mosala-MASEDI Publishers: 131–156.

Ningtyas, U.K. 2015. The use of Simplemind app in teaching reading. *Journal of English Literacy Education, 2*(2): 16–25. doi:10.36706/jele.v2i2.2304

Ntseku, M. 2022. WCED to increase non-paying fee schools while pricier schools are increasing fees next year. *IOL Online*. 30 December 2022. https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/wced-to-increase-non-paying-fee-schools-while-pricier-schools-are-increasing-fees-next-year-431585df-d386-44db-a87f-1da7a4dbcb5f [3 August 2023].

Nurie, Y. 2017. Pedagogical practices in teaching reading comprehension: A case study of three EFL teachers in a secondary school in Ethiopia. *PASAA*, *54*: 108–140. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1171213.pdf

Oakhill, J., Harrt, J. & Samols, D. 2005. Levels of comprehension monitoring and working memory in good and poor comprehenders. *Reading and Writing, 18*(7): 657–686. doi:10.1007/s11145-005-3355-z

Ogbonnaya, U. & Awuah, F.K. 2019. Quintile ranking of schools in South Africa and learners' achievement in probability. *Statistics Education Research Journal, 18*(1): 106–119. doi:10.52041/serj.v18i1.153

Omona, J. 2013. Sampling in qualitative research: Improving the quality of research outcomes in higher education. *Makerere Journal of Higher Education, 4*(2):169–185. doi:10.4314/majohe.v4i2.4 [17 April 2021].

Onyema, E.M., Eucheria, N.C., Obafemi, F.A., Sen, S., Atonye, F.G., Sharma, A. & Alsayed, A.O. 2020. Impact of coronavirus pandemic on education. *Journal of Education and Practice, 11*(3): 108–121. doi:10.7176/JEP/11-13-12

Opdenakker, R. 2006. Advantages and disadvantages of four interview techniques in qualitative research. *Forum Qualitative Social Research, 7*(4). doi:10.17169/fqs-7.4.175 [17 April 2021].

O'Rourke, D. 2008. *Encyclopedia of survey research methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Pani, S. 2004. Reading strategy instruction through mental modelling. *ELT Journal, 58*(4): 355–362. doi:10.1093/elt/58.4.355 [13 September 2021].

Pascoe, G. 2014. Sampling. In Du Plooy-Cilliers, F., Davis, C. & Bezuidenhout, R.M. (Eds.). *Research Matters*. Cape Town: Juta.

Pearson, P.D. & Gallagher, M.C. 1983. The instruction of reading comprehension. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 8*(3): 317–344. doi:10.1016/0361-476X(83)90019-X

Perfetti, C.A., Landi, N. & Oakhill, J. 2005. The acquisition of reading comprehension skill. In Snowling, M.J. & Hulme, C. (Eds.). *The science of reading: A handbook.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing: 227–247.

Phillips, L., Norris, S.P., Hayward, D. & Vavra, K.L. 2012. Reading comprehension instruction. *Encyclopedia of Language and Literacy Development*: 1–12. London, ON: Western University. http://www.literacyencyclopedia.ca/topic.php?topId=232

Plato. 2015. *The republic*. Minneapolis, MN: First Avenue Editions.

Pogge, T. 1989. *Realizing Rawls*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Pogge, T. 2001. Priorities of global justice. *Metaphilosophy, 32*(1-2): 6–24. doi:10.1111/1467-9973.00172 [8 August 2021].

Pogge, T. 2005. Real world justice. *The Journal of Ethics, 9*(1): 29–53. doi:10.1007/s10892-004-3313-z [8 August 2021].

Punch, K.F. 2009. *Introduction to research methods in education*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Purcell-Gates, V., Duke, N.K. & Martineau, J.A. 2007. Learning to read and write genre-specific text: Roles of authentic experience and explicit teaching. *Reading Research Quarterly, 42*(1): 8–45. doi:10.1598/RRQ.42.1.1 [30 November 2021].

Quinn, D.M. & Polikoff, M. 2017. Summer learning loss: What is it, and what can we do about it? *Evidence Speaks newsletter*, 14 September 2017. Brookings Institute. https://www.brookings.edu/research/summer-learning-loss-what-is-it-and-what-can-we-do-about-it/34T [26 April 2021].

Rahman, M.S. 2017. The advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in language “testing and assessment” research: A literature review. *Journal of Education and Learning, 6*(1):102–108. doi:10.5539/jel.v6n1p102

Rawls, J. 1985. Justice as fairness: Political not metaphysical. *Philosophy & Public Affairs, 14*(3): 223–251. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2265349 [22 July 2021].

Rawls, J. 1999. *A theory of justice*. Rev. ed. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press.

Reisch, M. 2002. Defining social justice in a socially unjust world. *Families in Society, 83*(4): 343–354. doi:10.1606/1044-3894.17

Republic of South Africa. 1996. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. https://www.agsa.co.za/Portals/0/Legislation/Constitution_of_the_Republic_of_South_Africa%2C_1996.pdf

Resh, N. & Sabbagh, C. 2016. Justice and education. In Sabbagh, C. & Schmitt, M. (Eds.). *Handbook of social justice theory and research*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer: 349–369.

Reyes, C.C. & Bishop, P.A. 2019. What visualising strategic reading means for young adolescents. *Journal of Visual Literacy, 38*(4): 385–397. doi:10.1080/1051144X.2019.1611700 [27 November 2021].

Richards, K.A.R., Graber, K.C. & Woods, A.M. 2018. Using theory to guide research: Applications of constructivist and social justice theories. *Kinesiology Review*, *7*(3): 218–225. doi:10.1123/kr.2018-0018 [10 March 2021].

Rogers, P.J. & Goodrick, D. 2010. Qualitative data analysis. In Wholey, J.S., Hatry, H.P. & Newcomer, K.E. (Eds.). *Handbook of practical program evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: 429–453.

Rossetto, K.R. 2014. Qualitative research interviews. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 31*(4): 482–489. doi:10.1177/0265407514522892

Rowan, B., Schilling, S.G., Ball, D.L. & Miller, R. 2001. Measuring teacher's pedagogical content knowledge in surveys: An exploratory study. *Study of instructional improvement, final report*. University of Michigan. https://sii.soe.umich.edu/documents/pck%20final%20report%20revised%20BR100901.pdf

Rule, P. & Land, S. 2017. Finding the plot in South African reading education. *Reading & Writing, 8*(1): 2308–1422.

Rumelhart, D.E. 1985. Toward an interactive model of reading. In Singer, H. & Ruddell, R. (Eds.). *Theoretical models and processes of reading.* 3rd ed. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Rupley, W.H., Blair, T.R. & Nichols, W.D. 2009. Effective reading instruction for struggling readers: The role of direct/explicit teaching. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 25*(2-3): 125–138. doi:10.1080/10573560802683523 [27 November 2021].

Sabates, R., Carter, E. & Stern, J.M.B. 2021. Using educational transitions to estimate learning loss due to COVID-19 school closures: The case of complementary basic education in Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Development 82*(2020): 102377. doi:10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102377

Sabbagh, C. & Schmitt, M. 2016. Past, present, and future of social justice theory and research. In Sabbagh, C. & Schmitt, M. (Eds.). *Handbook of social justice theory and research*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer: 1–11.

Saldana, J. 2013. *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. 2nd ed. London: Sage

Samuel, A.I. 2020. Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Nigerian education system: Impacts, management, responses, and way forward. *Education Journal, 3*(4): 88–102. doi:10.31058/j.edu.2020.34009

Sari, D.K., Pratiwi, E. & Theriana, A. 2019. Effective reading strategies for skills*. Esteem Journal of English Education Study Programme, 2*(2):1–9. doi:10.31851/esteem.v1i2.2429 [9 March 2021].

Saricoban, A. 2002. Reading strategies of successful readers through the three phase approach. *The Reading Matrix, 2*(3): 1–16.

Savaş, B. 2009. An application of extensive reading to English for academic purposes programs at tertiary level for functional academic literacy: A Turkish case-study. *ASp. la revue du GERAS, 55*: 65–84. doi: 10.4000/asp.254

Schaar, J.H. 1974. Reflections on Rawls' theory of justice. *Social Theory and Practice, 3*(1): 75–100. doi:10.5840/soctheorpract19743112

Schenk, R. 1977. The two principles of justice in John Rawls' A Theory of Justice. *Angelicum, 54*(1): 55–66.

Schulze, J., Winter, L., Woods, K. & Tyldsley, K. 2019. An international social justice agenda in school psychology? Exploring educational psychologists' social justice interest and practice in England. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 29*(4): 377–400. doi:10.1080/10474412.2018.1531765

Sénéchal, M. & LeFevre, J.A. 2002. Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five-year longitudinal study. *Child Development*, *73*(2): 445–460. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.00417

Serafini, F. 2013. Rethinking reading comprehension: Definitions, instructional practices, and assessment. In Williams, E. (Ed.). *Critical issues in literacy pedagogy: Notes from the trenches*. Illinois: Illinois State University Press: 189–202.

Sharma, G. 2017. Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International Journal of Applied Research, 3*(7): 749–752.

Shenton. A.K. 2004. Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information, 22*: 63–75.

Shepherd, D. & Mohohlwane, N. 2021. The impact of COVID-19 in education – more than a year of disruption. *NIDS-CRAM Working Paper 11*. Cape Town: National Income Dynamics Study – Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey. https://cramsurvey.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/11.-Shepherd-D-_-Mohohlwane-N.-2021.-Changes-in-education-A-reflection-on-COVID-19-effects-over-a-year.pdf

Shim, T.E. & Lee, S.Y. 2020. College students' experience of emergency remote teaching due to COVID-19. *Children and Youth Services Review, 119*: 105578. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105578 10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105578

Shulman, L.S. 1986. Those who understand knowledge in teaching. *Educational Researcher, 15*(2): 4–14.

Shulman, L.S. 1987. Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the New Reform. *Harvard Educational Review, 57*(1): 1–23. doi:10.17763/haer.57.1.j463w79r56

Shulman, L.S. 2000. Teacher development. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 21*(1): 129–135. doi:10.1016/s0193-3973(99)00057-x

Smith, W.C. 2021. Consequences of school closure on access to education: Lessons from the 2013–2016 Ebola pandemic. *International Review of Education, 67*: 53–78. doi:10.1007/s11159-021-09900-2

Spaull, N. & Van der Berg, S. 2020. Counting the cost: COVID-19 school closures in South Africa and its impact on children. *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 10*(1): 1–13. doi:10.4102/sajce.v10i1.924

Soken-Huberty, E. n.d. What is social justice in education? *Human rights careers*. https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/what-is-social-justice-in-education/ [9 August 2021].

Soudien, C., Reddy, V. & Harvey, J. 2022. The impact of COVID-19 on a fragile education system: The case of South Africa. In Reimers, F.M. (Ed.). *Primary and secondary education during Covid-19: Disruptions to educational opportunity during a pandemic*. New York: Springer: 303–325.

Republic of South Africa. 2020. Amended 2020 school calendar for public schools. *Government Gazette, 43609*, 11 August 2020.

Spörer, N., Brunstein, J.C. & Kieschke, U. 2009. Improving learners' reading comprehension skills: Effects of strategy instruction and reciprocal teaching. *Learning and Instruction*, *19*(3): 272–286. doi:10.1016/j.learninstruc.2008.05.003

Starman, A.B. 2013. The case study as a type of qualitative research. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies, 1*: 28–43. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265682891

Stebick, D.M. & Dain, J.M. 2007. *Comprehension strategies for your K-6 literacy classroom: Thinking before, during, and after reading*. ProQuest Ebook Central. Sage. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cput/detail.action?docID=1994102

Strasser, K. & Del Río, F. 2014. The role of comprehension monitoring, theory of mind, and vocabulary depth in predicting story comprehension and recall of kindergarten children. *Reading Research Quarterly, 49*(2): 169–187. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43497628 [27 November 2021].

Strydom, A. & Bezuidenhout, R.M. 2014. Qualitative data collection. In Du Plooy-Cilliers, F., Davis, C. & Bezuidenhout, R.M. (Eds.). *Research Matters*. Cape Town: Juta: 173–194.

Suraprajit, P. 2019. Bottom-up vs top-down model: The perception of reading strategies among Thai university learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *10*(3): 454–460. doi:10.17507/jltr.1003.07

Swanson, E., Wanzek, J., Vaughn, S., Fall, A.M., Roberts, G., Hall, C. & Miller, V.L. 2017. Middle school reading comprehension and content learning intervention for below-average readers. *Reading and Writing Quarterly, 33*(1): 37–53. doi:10.1080/10573569.2015.1072068

Tellis, W.M. 1997. Application of a case study methodology. *The Qualitative Report*, *3*(3): 1–19. doi:10.46743/2160-3715/1997.2015

Topping, K.J. 2014. Paired reading and related methods for improving fluency. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education, 7*(1): 57–70. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1053797.pdf

Toprak, E.L. & Almacıoğlu, G. 2009. Three reading phases and their applications in the teaching of English as a foreign language in reading classes with young learners. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 5*(1): 21–35. https://www.jlls.org/index.php/jlls/article/view/71/71

Trobia, A. (Ed.). 2008. *Encyclopedia of survey research methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Tyler, T.R. & Smith, H.J. 1995. Social justice and social movements*. Institute for Research on Labor and Employment working paper*, UC Berkeley. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/54d3j035

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2019. *Right to education handbook*. Paris: UNESCO. doi:10.54675/ZMNJ2648

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2020. COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response. https://en.unesco.org/news/COVID-19-educational-disruption-and-response [20 March 2021]

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2021a. Learning losses from COVID-19 school closures could impoverish a whole generation. https://en.unesco.org/news/learning-losses-COVID-19-school-closures-could-impoverish-whole-generation [20 February 2022].

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2021b. Adverse consequences of school closures. https://en.unesco.org/COVID-19/educationresponse/consequences [20 February 2022].

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2022. Education: From disruption to recovery. https://en.unesco.org/COVID-19/educationresponse [20 February 2022].

UNICEF. 2021. Learners in South Africa up to one school year behind where they should be. https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/learners-south-africa-one-school-year-behind-where-they-should-be

United Nations Organization (UNO). 2006. The International Forum for Social Development Social Justice in an open world. The role of the United Nations.

United Nations Organization (UNO). 2018. Sustainable Development Goal 4. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4 [3 August 2021].

Van der Walt, C., Kilfoil, W.R. & Evans, R. 2009. *Learn 2 teach: English language teaching in a multilingual context.* 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Van Lancker, W. & Parolin, Z. 2020. COVID-19, school closures, and child poverty: A social crisis in the making. *The Lancet, 5*(5): 243–244. doi:10.1016/S2468-2667(20)30084-0

Walsh, Z., Böhme, J., Lavelle, B.D. & Wamsler, C. 2020. Transformative education: Towards a relational, justice-oriented approach to sustainability. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, *21*(7): 1587–1606. doi:10.1108/IJSHE-05-2020-0176

Wenar, L. 2021. John Rawls. In Zalta, E.N. (Ed.). *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy.* Summer 2021 ed. [Online]. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2021/entries/rawls/ [7 August 2023].

Western Cape Education Department (WCED). 2013. Background to the national quintile system. https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/comms/press/2013/74_14oct.html

Western Cape Education Department (WCED). 2020. Intermediate phase lesson plans. https://wcedeportal.co.za/teacher_categories_page/67161/Intermediate/56446/56541/English%20Home%20Language%20%3A%20Grade%204/Lessons?shs_term_node_tid_depth=103186

Western Cape Education Department (WCED). 2022. Bridging strategy for learners from Grade 3 to Grade 4. *Curriculum GET Minute: 0010/2022*. https://wcedeportal.co.za/eresource/195691 [1 August 2023].

Western Cape Education Department (WCED). 2023. Back on track: Learning losses recovery programme. https://wcedeportal.co.za/back-on-track-learning-losses-recovery-programme [1 August 2023].

Willingham, D. 2017. What happens when you teach children to make inferences while reading? *Science and education blog*. http://www.danielwillingham.com/daniel-willingham-science-and-education-blog/what-happens-when-you-teach-children-to-make-inferences-while-reading

Winterbottom, C. & Winterbottom, S.S. 2017. Social justice: A case-study examining the influence of primary headteachers in two Manchester schools. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *45*(6): 755–768. doi:10.1007/s10643-016-0823-9

Wong, L. 2008. Data analysis in qualitative research: A brief guide to using NVivo. *Malaysian Family Physician, 3*(1): 14–20. https://www.e-mfp.org/old/2008v3n1/pdf/NVivo_in_Qualitative_Research.pdf

Woods, A. 2018. Social justice. In Frey, B.B. (Ed.). *The Sage encyclopedia of educational research, measurement, and evaluation.* Thousand Oaks: Sage. doi:10.4135/9781506326139

Woolley, G. 2011. *Reading comprehension*. Dordrecht: Springer.

World Health Organization. 2020. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1 [15 March 2021].

Xu, C. 2015. Exploring ESL/ EFL Teacher's pedagogical content knowledge on reading strategy instruction. *English Language Teaching, 8*(11): 155–175. doi:10.5539/elt.v8n11p155

Yun, L., Jingxun, Z. & Rongguang, Z. 2017. An examination of distributive and relational justice in the issue of education fairness for urban migrant workers' children. *Chinese Education & Society, 50*(4): 368–392. doi:10.1080/10611932.2017.1382135 [9 August 2021].

Yara, P.O. & Otieno, K.O. 2010. Teaching/Learning resources and academic performance in mathematics in secondary schools in Bondo District of Kenya. *Asian Social Science, 6*(12): 126–132. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v6n12p126

Zainal, Z. 2007. Case study as a research method. *Jurnal Kemanusiaan, 9*: 1–6. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/41822817

Zare, P. & Othman, M. 2013. The relationship between reading comprehension and reading strategy use among Malaysian ESL learners. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 3*(13): 187–192. https://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_13_July_2013/22.pdf

Zargar, E., Adams, A.M. & Connor, C.M. 2019. The relations between children's comprehension monitoring and their reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge: An eye-movement study. *Reading and Writing, 33*(3): 511–545. doi:10.1007/s11145-019-09966-3

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: First letter of permission by the WCED to conduct research

Directorate: Research

meshack.kanzi@westerncape.gov.za
Tel: +27 021 467 2350
Fax: 086 590 2282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20211028-7231
ENQUIRIES: Mr M Kanzi

Ms Lenique Rhoda
8 Sonop Street
Newton
Wellington
7655

Dear Ms Lenique Rhoda,

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE PERCEPTIONS OF GRADE 4 LANGUAGE TEACHERS REGARDING TEACHING DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWN.

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 **02 November 2021 till 31 May 2022**.
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 Mr M Kanzi 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,
Meshack Kanzi
Directorate: Research
DATE: 2 November 2021

Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001
tel: +27 21 467 9272 fax: 0865902282
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22
www.westerncape.gov.za

APPENDIX B: Second letter of permission by the WCED to conduct research

Directorate: Research

meshack.kanzi@westerncape.gov.za
Tel: +27 021 467 2350
Fax: 086 590 2282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20211028-7231
ENQUIRIES: Mr M Kanzi

Ms Lenique Rhoda
8 Sonop Street
Newton
Wellington
7655

Dear Lenique Rhoda,

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE PERCEPTIONS OF GRADE 4 LANGUAGE TEACHERS REGARDING TEACHING DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWN.

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 **27 June 2022 till 30 September 2022.**
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 Mr M Kanzi 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,
Meshack Kanzi
Directorate: Research
DATE: 27 June 2022

1 North Wharf Square, 2 Lower Loop Street,
Foreshore, Cape Town 8001
tel: +27 21 467 2531

Private Bag X 9114, Cape Town, 8000
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47
wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za

APPENDIX C: Permission granted by participants

PERMISSION GRANTED BY PARTICIPANTS

Consent to participate in research

I hereby declare myself prepared to participate in a study conducted by Ms. L.K Rhoda

I understand that all information will be treated as strictly confidential and that my name

will not be used in any way, but that I am only part of the target group.

Signed at …………………………………... on this ………… day of ________ 2022.

Signature: ………………………

Undertaking by researcher

I, Lenique Kyle' Rhoda, hereby declare that:

I will at all times have the respondent's interests at heart, I will protect the identity of

the respondent and will act with respect towards the respondent. I shall

not disclose the participant's identity and will only use the information provided as part of the study.

Signed at …………………………….. on this ………… day of ____________ 2022.

Signature of researcher: ………………………………………

APPENDIX D: Questions for open-ended interviews with Grade 4 educators

BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONS / BIOGRAFIESE VRAE

1. What is your age? / Wat is jou ouderdom?

2. What is your gender? / Wat is jou geslag?

3. What is your ethnicity? / Wat is jou etniesiteid?

4. When and where did you complete your teaching qualification? / wanneer en waar het jy jou onderwys kwalifikasie voltooi?

5. What, if any, additional training, post-tertiary education, have you received in teaching reading comprehension? / Watter, indien enige, bykomende opleiding, na tersiêre onderwys, het jy ontvang in die onderrig van leesbegrip?

6. How long have you been teaching Grade 4?/ Hoe lank onderrig u Graad 4?

7. Are you an English or Afrikaans Home Language educator? / Is u ‘n Engelse of Afrikaans huistaal onderwyser?

8. Could you tell me some more about yourself? / Kan jy vir my meer oor jouself vertel?

GENERAL QUESTIONS / ALGEMENE VRAE

9. How did lockdown affect you as an educator? / Hoe het die inperking jou as opvoeder geraak?

10. How did lockdown affect you personally?/ Hoe het lockdown jou persoonlik geraak?

11. Did you feel competent in being able to teach reading comprehension? Why? / Het jy bekwaam gevoel om leesbegrip te onderrig? Hoekom?

HOME LIFE OF THE LEARNER / HUISLEWE VAN DIE LEERDER

12. Did your learners have access to a computer during the lockdown? / Het u leerders toegang tot 'n rekenaar gehad tydens die inperking?

13. Did your learners have access to the internet during lockdown? / Het u leerders toegang tot die internet gehad tydens die inperking?

14. Could you describe the socioeconomic conditions of the learners in your class? / Kan jy die sosio-ekonomiese toestande van die leerders in jou klas beskryf?

15. Was parental involvement necessary during remote teaching? / Was ouerbetrokkenheid nodig tydens afstandsonderrig?

16. How did parental involvement play a role during remote teaching? / Hoe het ouerbetrokkenheid 'n rol gespeel tydens afstandsonderrig?

17. Was this different from what they would have done under normal circumstances? Please elaborate./ Was dit anders as wat hulle onder normale omstandighede sou gedoen het? Brei asseblief uit.

18. What type of parental involvement did you see? / Watter tipe ouerbetrokkenheid het jy gesien?

READING STRATEGIES / LEES STRATEGIËE

19. How would you define reading strategies? / Hoe sal jy lees strategiëe definieer?

20. How did you teach reading during lockdown?/ Hoe het jy tydens die inperking lees geonderrig?

21. How would you define reading comprehension? / Hoe sal jy lees begrip definieer?

22. How did you teach reading comprehension during the lockdown?/ Hoe het jy lees begrip tydens die inperking onderrig?

23. Which reading comprehension strategies were you able to use? / Watter leesbegripstrategieë kon jy gebruik?

24. How did you decide on which strategy to use? / Hoe het jy besluit oor watter strategie om te gebruik?

25. Were you able to use other strategies? / Kon jy ander strategieë gebruik?

26. Did the way in which you taught allow you to model the use of strategies?/ Het die manier waarop jy onderrig het jou toegelaat om die gebruik van strategieë te modelleer?

27. Which reading comprehension strategy did you rely on the most? Why? / Op watter leesbegripstrategie het jy die meeste staatgemaak? Hoekom?

28. How did you model reading comprehension strategies during lockdown and remote teaching?/ Hoe het jy leesbegripstrategieë gemodelleer tydens inperking en afstandsonderrig?

TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION?

29. During the COVID-19 lockdown, how often were you in contact with the learners in your class? / Hoe gereeld was jy tydens COVID-19 inperking in kontak met die leerders in jou klas?

30. Do you think that you were in contact often enough? Please elaborate. / Dink jy dat jy gereeld genoeg in kontak was? Brei asseblief uit.

31. How were you in contact with them? Please elaborate/ Hoe was jy in kontak met hulle? Brei asseblief uit.

32. What reading intervention, if any, did you do during lockdown? / Watter leesintervensie, indien enige, het jy tydens inperking gedoen?

33. Do you think that face-to-face instruction is necessary for successful teaching of reading comprehension? Why? / Dink jy dat aangesig-tot-aangesig onderrig nodig is vir suksesvolle onderrig van leesbegrip? Hoekom?

34. How do you normally teach reading comprehension? / Hoe ondderig u gewoontlik lees begrip?

35. How was reading comprehension taught during lockdown? / Hoe het u tydens die inperking lees begrip onderrig?

36. Did you have to adapt your teaching methodologies for reading during lockdown? Please elaborate. / Moes jy jou onderrigmetodologieë vir lees tydens die inperking aanpas? Brei asseblief uit.

37. In your opinion, did the lockdown have an effect on the development of reading comprehension skills of learners? Please elaborate. / Na jou mening, het die inperking 'n effek gehad op die ontwikkelling van leesbegripsvaardighede van leerders? Brei asseblief uit.

38. Which other factors could have influenced the attainment of reading comprehension skills of learners? / Watter ander faktore kon die ontwikkeling van leesbegripsvaardighede van leerders beïnvloed het?

39. How would you describe the literacy levels of the current Grade 4s? / Hoe sou jy die geletterdheidsvlakke van die huidige Graad 4's beskryf?

40. In terms of reading comprehension strategies, what do you think that a Grade 4 learner should be able to do? / Wat dink jy moet 'n Graad 4-leerder kan doen in terme van leesbegripstrategieë?

41. How successful or challenging was it to use the lesson plans provided by the WCED to teach reading comprehension? / Hoe suksesvol of uitdagend was dit om die lesplanne wat deur die WKOD verskaf is te gebruik om leesbegrip te onderrig?

CHALLENGES / UITDAGINGS

42. What were challenges that you experienced in teaching reading comprehension, during lockdown? Why? / Wat was uitdagings wat jy ervaar het in die onderrig van leesbegrip, tydens die inperking? Hoekom?

43. Which strategies were the most difficult to implement? Why? / Watter strategieë was die moeilikste om te implementeer? Hoekom?

44. How did factors outside the classroom impact the reading comprehension skills? / Hoe het faktore buite die klaskamer die leesbegripsvaardighede beïnvloed?

BENEFITS / VOORDELE

45. Were there any benefits that you experienced to teaching reading comprehension during lockdown? / Was daar enige voordele wat jy ervaar het om leesbegrip tydens inperking te onderrig?

MOVING FORWARD/ DIE PAD VOORENTOE

46. Do you have any suggestions for fellow teachers, specifically regarding reading comprehension, if lockdown happens again? / Het jy enige voorstelle vir mede-onderwysers, spesifiek met betrekking tot leesbegrip, as ‘n inperking weer plaasvind?

47. Do you have any suggestions for parents if lockdown happens again? / Het jy enige voorstelle vir ouers as ‘n inperking weer plaasvind?

48. Do you have any suggestions regarding the workpacks / lesson plans provided by the department? / Het u enige voorstelle rakende die lesplanne wat deur die departement verskaf was?

49. Any suggestions for the school should lockown happen again?/ Enige voorstelle vir die skool indien ‘n inperking weer gebeur?

SOCIAL JUSTICE / SOSIALE GEREGTIGHEID

50. In your opinion, did all learners in your class have equal access to you as their educator, during the lockdown? Elaborate. / Na jou mening, het alle leerders in jou klas gelyke toegang tot jou as hul opvoeder gehad tydens die inperking? Brei uit.

51. In your opinion, were all learners able to participate in lessons? Please elaborate./ Na jou mening, kon alle leerders aan lesse deelneem? Brei asseblief uit.

52. In your opinion, did all learners in your class have equal access to teaching and learning resources? Elaborate./ Na jou mening, het alle leerders in jou klas gelyke toegang tot onderrig- en leerhulpbronne gehad? Brei uit.

53. Would you say that the right to education was affected by the lockdown? Please elaborate. / Sou jy sê dat die reg op onderwys deur die inperking geraak is? Brei asseblief uit.

APPENDIX E:

Reading comprehension strategies found in the lesson plans

(All data taken from WCED, 2020)

Reading comprehension strategy	ALL 8 WEEKS	Comments in English Home Language lesson plans	Reference	Instructions which were provided for educators in the lesson plans	Reference
1. Activating and using background knowledge	0				
2. Text structure	0			Discuss the features of a fable again	Week 5 Week 6
3. Generating and asking questions	1	Ask the following questions	Week 1 & 2; 7	Ask the following questions orally and discuss where applicable”	Week 1 & 2
4. Making inferences	4	Infers reasons for actions in the story	Week 1 & 2; 12		
		Make inferences	Week 1 & 2; 12		
		Makes […] inferences	Week 7; 2	Let learners make inferences about the text by reading the text and saying what they think without the information being stated explicitly” Guide them in making inferences by using contextual clues.	Week 7; 2
		Make inferences	Week 8; 2		
5. Predicting	10	Predicting from title and pictures	Week 1 & 2; 12		
		Makes predictions	Week 1 & 2; 12		

		Predict from the title and pictures what the article is about	Week 3 & 4; 3		
		Make predictions by using contextual clues to find the meaning in the text	Week 3 & 4; 3		
		Predicting from title and pictures	Week 3 & 4; 9		
		Makes predictions	Week 3 & 4; 9		
		Prediction based on visual and textual clues.	Week 5; 1	Allow learners to predict the text	Week 5
		Predict the text	Week 6; 2	Allow learners to predict the text	Week 6
		Predicting from title and pictures	Week 7; 1		
		Uses reading strategies: prediction	Week 7; 1		
6. Summarising	0				
7. Visualising	0				
8. Comprehension monitoring	0				
9. Connections	0			Show how learners can relate or connect with the text	Week 5 Week 6
10. Skim		Skim the article for a general idea	Week 3 & 4; 3		
		Skims for general idea	Week 3 & 4; 9		
		Uses reading strategies skimming …	Week 5; 9		
		Skim for words about the text and underline them	Week 7; 2	Let learners skim for words about the text and underline them	Week 7
	5	Skim for words about the text and underline them	Week 8; 2		
11. Scan	3	Uses reading strategies skimming and scanning	Week 5; 1		
		Scan for words that they don't know and circle them	Week 7; 2	Let learners scan for words that they do not know and circle them	Week 7
	3	Scan for words that they don't know and circle them"	Week 8; 2		
Vocabulary	2	Discuss vocabulary	Week 5; 2	Model the reading of the text – discuss vocabulary	Week 5;

APPENDIX F:

Reading comprehension strategies found in the Afrikaans Home Language lesson plans

(WCED, 2020)

Reading comprehension strategy	ALL 8 WEEKS	Comments in Afrikaans Home Language lesson plans	Reference	Instructions which were provided for educators in the lesson plans	Reference
1. Activating and using background knowledge	2	Hersien leerders se voorkennis. [*Activate background knowledge*].	Week 2; 1	"Hersien leerders se voorkennis." [Review learners' background knowledge].	Week 2; 1
		Aktiveer voorafkennis. Vra vrae binne leerders se ervaringsveld om as aanknopingspunt vir die teks te dien. [*Activate background knowledge. Ask questions within the learners' field of experience to serve as a connecting point for the text.]*	Week 2; 3	Vra vrae binne leerders se ervaringsveld om as aanknopingspunt vir die teks te dien. [*Ask questions within the learners' field of experience to serve as a connecting point for the text.]* Aktiveer voorafkennis. [Activate prior knowledge]. Hersien vorige dag se les. [Revise previous days' lesson] Hersien vorige dag se les om seker te maak of hy/sy die teks verstaan het	Week 2; 3 Week 4; 1 Week 4; 1 Week 2; 1
2. Text structure	1	Gebruik teksstruktuur [Use text structure].	Week 7 & 8; 11	Hersien die kenmerke van 'n fabel. [Review the characteristics of a fable]. Onderwyser bespreek die volgorde van die instruksies met die leerders. / *Teacher discusses the order of the instructions with the learners.*	Week 4; 1 Week 7 & 8; 2
3. Generating and asking questions	1	Vra mondelingse vrae [*Ask questions verbally*]	Week 2; 1	Nadat jy die strofe gelees het, vra mondelings vrae. Vra vrae binne leerders se ervaringsveld om as aanknopingspunt vir die teks te dien." [Ask questions within learners' field of experience to serve as a connecting point for the text.] Vra vrae binne leerders se ervaringsveld om as aanknopingspunt vir die teks te dien." [Ask questions	Week 2; 1 Week 2; 3 Week 4; 1

				within learners' field of experience to serve as a starting point for the text.] Onderwyser lei die gesprek deur spesifieke vrae te vra aan leerders." [Teacher guides the discussion by asking learners specific questions.]	Week 5 & 6; 2
4. Making inferences	3	Laat leerders soeklees vir antwoorde en afleidings maak [*Allow learners to scan and make inferences*].	Week 2; 1	Laat leerders soeklees vir antwoorde en afleidings maak [*Allow learners to scan and make inferences*].	Week 2; 1
		Maak afleidings t.o.v karakters, ruimte, milieu en boodskap. [Make inferences about characters, setting, background and message].	Week 4;1		
		Maak afleidings. Teks-tot-self, teks-tot-teks, teks-tot-wereld, teks- tot- media. [Make inferences. Text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world, text-to-media].	Week 4; 1		
5. Predicting	11	Voorspelling wat op die titel en prente gebasseer is. [*Predictions based on the title and pictures*	Week 1; 8	Laat leerders voorspel waaroor die gediggie gaan. *[Allow learners to predict what the text will be about]*	Week 2; 1
		Voorspel waaroor die gediggie gaan. [*Predict what the poem will be about*].	Week 2; 1		
		Kyk na die prente en voorspel. *[Look at the pictures and make a prediction*]	Week 2; 4		
		Voorspel na aanleiding van die titel en prente. [*Prediction based on the title and pictures*].	Week 3; 2		
		Voorspelling gebasseer op die titel en prente [*Prediction based on the title and pictures*].	Week 3; 7		
		Voorspelling. Wat dink jy gaan in hierdie storie gebeur. [*Prediction. What do you think will happen in the story*].	Week 4; 1		
		Voorspel inhoud. [*Predict the content*].			

		Doen voorspellings wat op die titel en prente/ visueleteks gebaseer is. [*Make predictions that are based on the title and pictures/ visual text*].	Week 5& 6; 2		
		Voorspelling wat op die titel en prente/ visuele gebasseer is. [*Predictions based on the title and pictures/ visuals*].	Week 5 & 6; 8		
		Voorspelling wat op die titel en prente gebasseer is. [Predictions based on the title and pictures].	Week 8; 11		
		Voorspelling wat op die titel en prente gebasseer is. [Predictions based on the title and pictures].	Week 8; 11		
6. Summarising	2	Leerders hervertel die inligting van die teks as 'n opsomming. [*Learners retell the information of the text as a summary].*	Week 7 & 8; 2	Onderwyser help leerders om die hoof en ondersteunende idees in die teks te identifiseer. / *Teacher helps learners to identify the main and supporting ideas in the text.*	Week 7 & 8; 2
		Som inligting op. [Summarise the information].	Week 7 & 8, 11		
7. Visualising	1	Moedig leerders aan om te visualiseer dit wat jy lees. [*Encourage learners to visualise while you read*].	Week 2; 1	Moedig leerders aan om te visualiseer dit wat jy lees. [*Encourage learners to visualise while you read*].	Week 2; 1
8. Comprehension monitoring	0				
9. Connections	0				
Skim	4	Vluglees [*Skim*].	Week 4; 1		
		Vluglees, algemene idee. [*Skim, general idea*]	Week 4; 1		
		Gebruik leesstrategieë soos vluglees. [*Use reading strategies like skimming*].	Week 5 & 6; 2		
		Gebruik leesstrategieë soos vluglees. [*Use reading strategies like skimming*].	Week 5 & 6; 8		

Scan	6	Pre-lees eers die teks en dan soeklees vir die antwoorde in die teks. [*First pre-read the text and then scan for the answers in the text*].	Week 1; 3	Laat leerders soeklees vir antwoorde en afleidings maak. *[Allow learners to scan and make inferences*].	Week 2; 1
		Laat leerders soeklees vir antwoorde en afleidings maak. *[Allow learners to scan and make inferences*].	Week 2; 1		
		Soeklees. [*Scan*]	Week 4; 1		
		Soeklees. Spesifieke inligting. [*Scan, specific information*]	Week 4; 1		
		Gebruik leesstrategieë soos soeklees. [*Use reading strategies like scanning*]	Week 5 & 6; 2		
		Gebruik leesstrategieë soos soeklees" [*Use reading strategies like scanning*]	Week 5 & 6; 8		
Vocabulary	3	Werk met woorde en ontwikkel woordeskat." [*Work with words and develop vocabulary*].	Week 2; 4	Onderwyser bespreek nuwe woorde. / *Teacher discusses new words*	Week 7 & 8; 2
		Bespreek nuwe woordeskat" [*Discuss new vocabulary*].	Week 2; 4	Verduidelik die betekenis van die woord, hoogmoedig.[Explain the meaning of the word 'haughty']	Week 4; 1
		Werk met woorde en ontwikkel woordeskat. Onderwyser/Leerder identifiseer nuwe uitdagende woorde en onderstreep/skryf. [Work with words and develop vocabulary. Educator/ learner identifies new challenging words and develops vocabulary]	Week 2; 4		
Intensive reading	**2**	**Lees strategieë: Aandagtige lees" [*Reading strategy: Attentive reading*] (Week 2, page 1)** **Aandagtige lees" [*Attentive reading*] (Week 4, page 1)**	**Week 2; 1** **Week 4; 1**		