

Investigating Grade one teacher perceptions of reception year learner readiness

by

SIBONGILE JOHANNAH MAHAN

submitted in accordance with the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION - WITH SPECIALISATION IN CURRICULUM STUDIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF A DICKER

FEBRUARY 2015

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the perception of Grade One teachers regarding the school readiness of Reception Year learners in relation to the new national Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS). The study also provides recommendations on how to implement CAPS in Grade R so that teachers, learners and parents experience the easiest possible transition to Grade One.

The research took the form of a case study, building on current trends related to the subject of Reception Year CAPS curriculum implementation, and using the Interpretive approach as its essential, functional paradigm, which focuses on experiences of the world based on the culture and previous experiences of each individual, with an emphasis on mutual understanding. By using this strategy to explore Grade One teacher perceptions regarding the school readiness of the Reception Year learners, this project was centred on an in-depth and detailed analysis of a person, group or situation as a sample of the whole, and involved a systematic collection of data and analysis. This led to a conclusions-based report on the findings, all the while focusing on five Grade One teachers and their Head of Department at a public primary school in Pretoria, Gauteng.

Preliminary findings suggested that learners coming into Grade One could in fact be adequately prepared during Grade R for successful assimilation in the CAPS curriculum material, if all stakeholders overcome the challenges they face during this important phase of academic development.

This study has shown that varying amounts and levels of training amongst the teachers is a hindrance to proper CAPS curriculum implementation and therefore, the Head of Department, the school and ultimately the Department of Education has to ensure parity in the area of teacher training in terms of CAPS curriculum implementation.

The study has shown that, due to the different sites where learners did their Reception Year,

the school and the Grade One teachers faced learners who came into their classrooms with differing levels of exposure to the formal schooling system. Some learners may have no CAPS curriculum exposure at all. This means that, if the Department of Education is to succeed in implementing the CAPS curriculum in Grade R, then it needs to assist schools more in the form of providing funds for primary schools to build and add space for the Grade R classrooms.

Finally, the study showed that a language backlog remains one of the main challenges learners have to face. Historically, Early Childhood Development Centres were never required to use English as a medium of instruction. In fact, teaching in the preschool classroom, which includes Grade R, is still mostly done in one of many mother tongue languages, depending on the location of the centre. With the move to make Grade R part of formal schooling and moving the Reception Year class to a primary school, CAPS requires careful curriculum implementation from Grade R to Grade Three, although instruction in English is only required from Grade One.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Page	Page I
Abstract	Page II
Table of Contents	Page IV
Acknowledgements	Page VII
Declaration	Page VIII
List of Acronyms and Key Terms	Page IX
List of Tables	Page XI

Chapter One - Subject Overview and Problem Statement

I.I Introduction	Page 01
I.II Awareness of Problem	Page 05
I.III Rationale for the Study	Page 09
I.IV Research Questions	Page 10
I.V Aims of the Study	Page 11
I.VI Significance of the Study	Page 11
I.VII Delimitations of the Study	Page 12
I.VIII Research Methodology	Page 13
I.IX Plan of Study	Page 14

Chapter Two - Literature Review and Project Orientation

II.I Introduction	Page 15
II.II Section One – Challenges for Teachers	Page 18
II.III Section 2 – Challenges for Schools	Page 21

II.IV Section 3 – Challenges for Learners	Page 24
II.V Conclusion	Page 27

Chapter Three - Research Design and Methodology

III.I Introduction	Page 29
III.II The Research Purpose	Page 29
III.III The Objectives	Page 30
III.IV The Research Questions	Page 30
III.V Research Overview	Page 31
III.VI Research Methodology	Page 31
III.VII Research Paradigm	Page 31
III.VIII Research Design	Page 32
III.IX Site Selection	Page 32
III.X Participants	Page 33
III.XI Sample Selection	Page 33
III.XII Data Collection	Page 34
III.XIII Data Collection Strategies	Page 34
III.XIV Limitations during Data Collection	Page 36
III.XV Data Analysis	Page 36
III.XVI Credibility and Trustworthiness	Page 36
III.XVII Ethical Considerations	Page 37
III.XVIII Conclusion	Page 37

Chapter Four - Data Analysis and Findings

IV.I Introduction	Page 39
IV.II Research Participants	Page 40

IV.III Challenges for Teachers	Page 42
IV.IV Challenges for Schools	Page 44
IV.V Challenges for Learners	Page 48
IV.VI Summary of Findings	Page 66
IV.VII Conclusion	Page 68

Chapter Five - Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

V.I Introduction	Page 70
V.II Summary of the Study	Page 70
V.III Findings	Page 73
V.IV Conclusions and Implications	Page 76
V.V Future Research	Page 78
V.VI Summary and Conclusion	Page 79

References

VI.I Bibliography	Page 91
VI.II Appendix 1 – Department Letter	Page 96
VI.III Appendix 2 – Departmental Consent	Page 97
VI.IV Appendix 3 – Principal Letter of Consent	Page 99
VI.V Appendix 4 – Teacher Letter of Consent	Page 100
VI.VI Appendix 5 – Research Questionnaire	Page 101
VI.VII Appendix 6 – Participant Responses	Page 108

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people, and acknowledge their generous contribution toward the completion of this study:

AM Dicker

Without the help of my academic advisor, I would not have identified such a compelling subject to research, nor would I have grown in my capacity as an educator.

DJ Mahan

Without the support of my loving husband, I would not have found the will to run this race, nor the persistence required to finish.

NB van Graan

Without the understanding of my professional supervisor, I would not have been granted the permission to engage with this study, nor the time to write down my findings.

DECLARATION

Student Number: 42689813

I declare that:

Investigating Grade one teacher perceptions of reception year learner readiness

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



Signature

Date

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND KEY TERMS

- *CAPS* - A national Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement is a single, comprehensive and concise policy document, which represents a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools
- CPD – Continuous Professional Development
- *DAP*- Developmentally Appropriate Practices, a theory that promotes children’s engagement in active, self-initiated activities, supported by responsive adults
- DoE- Department of Education
- DoBE- Department of Basic Education
- *ECC* - Early Childhood Centres
- *ECD* - Early Childhood Development applies to the processes by which children from birth to at least 9 years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially
- ECE – Early Childhood Education
- FP- Foundation Phase
- *GRADE ONE* - First year of formal schooling
- ITE – Initial Teacher Education
- NAEYC – National Association for the Education of Young Children

- *NRCS* - National Revised Curriculum Statements-a revised outcomes-based education curriculum
- *OBE* – Outcomes Based Education, a curriculum introduced to overcome the curricular divisions of the past
- *RECEPTION YEAR* - The Reception Year in South Africa forms the first year of *schooling* within the Early Childhood Development phase of life up to the end of the Foundation Phase. It is a continuation of the developmentally appropriate practice children should experience during the early years, from birth
- *SACE*- South African Council of Teachers
- *SASA*- South African Schools Act
- *SCHOOL READINESS* - The state of early development that enables an individual child to engage in and benefit from first grade learning experiences.

LIST OF TABLES

• Table 4.1	Page 52
• Table 4.2	Page 56
• Table 4.3	Page 60
• Table 4.4	Page 61
• Table 4.5	Page 62
• Table 4.6	Page 63
• Table 4.7	Page 64
• Table 4.8	Page 65
• Table 4.9	Page 66
• Table 4.10	Page 67
• Table 4.11	Page 68
• Table 4.12	Page 69
• Table 4.13	Page 70
• Table 4.14	Page 71
• Table 4.15	Page 72
• Table 4.16	Page 73
• Table 4.17	Page 74
• Table 4.18	Page 75

CHAPTER ONE

Subject Overview and Problem Statement

1.1 Introduction

“A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination, but when you add to that a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special.”

Dr Nelson Mandela

Curriculum change has been drastic in post-apartheid South Africa because an urgent alternative to apartheid education was required (Jansen & Christie: 1999). Outcomes Based Education (OBE), was therefore introduced and later, in 2001, the Department of Education commenced the phased-in implementation of the Reception Year programmes. The application of OBE to the Reception Year experience meant that it became part of the formal schooling system. Hence, the majority of Reception Year classes and learners have gradually been relocated to primary schools (Department of Education: 2011).

Historically, in terms of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in South Africa, there was no official curriculum for Grade R. In fact, there was a major distinction between preschool and primary school education. Preschool was informal and the “emergent” curriculum was play-based, learner-centred and flexible (Faber & Van Staden: 1997). The practitioners were following the broad principles of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), defined as an approach to education that guides teachers in their everyday interaction with learners of any given age (NAEYC: 1997). It supports experiential, play-based curricula with effective

opportunities for individualised learning, parental involvement and positive transitions to school (Charlesworth & Buchholz: 2003).

However, being able to apply this approach required a well-trained ECE teacher who possessed a sophisticated level of knowledge and skills. What's more, because it was informal and play-based, there were no tools in place to monitor if the practitioners were following the approach in the correct manner. Therefore, concerning the education of a pre-schooler, practitioners were basically left to their own devices (researcher observation).

Given these terms and conditions, in theory, a Reception Year practitioner should have been able to identify any problem areas that may hinder a learner's performance in the first year of formal school, which is Grade One. At the end of the year, the practitioner should inform the Grade One teacher, in writing, of any particular child experiencing possible barriers to learning, so that the teacher is aware of this before the child enters their classroom, and can give special attention to these issues (Davin & van Staden: 2005).

For the Reception Year practitioner to identify such barriers, he or she needs to understand what is meant by school readiness. Typically, learners are determined to be school ready when they possess sufficient social and emotional maturity, as well as the ability to meet the formal demands of school. However, true school readiness is a much more dynamic concept, one which also includes the linguistic, physical, creative and moral development of the child as a complete human being, focusing less on the knowledge learners must acquire and more on the inherent possibilities of the learners themselves (Davin: 2013).

Nevertheless, with the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2004, Reception Year practitioners were guided away from their informal, play-based approach to teaching, and toward a formal curriculum-based approach. This happened around the same time as the integration of Grade R into primary schools, which now form part of the Foundation Phase (PF). Sadly, some teachers rejected this strategic shift, and failed to implement those policy changes set out by the NCS (Clasquin-Johnson: 2011).

More recently, all South African public schools were instructed to implement the new Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS) at the commencement of the 2012 school year. Although, there was supposed to be another prescribed course of action in the previous

year to train teachers in the Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3). Most teachers felt the implementation of CAPS would pose no serious problems, at least in theory. But as they soon found out, it was less simple in practice (DoE: 2011).

For example, schools were supposed to send their teachers from the Foundation Phase for these orientation and exposure experiences. However, many chose not to include their Grade R practitioners, as their position with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) was still not clear. As a result, the practitioners only received, by way of input, a copy of the CAPS documentation. Many were told to read through it and then to implement the related curriculum in their classrooms, which could hardly be deemed adequate preparation for teachers at such a critical phase in the process (researcher observation).

It should be noted that CAPS did not replace the NCS, but supposedly gave clear guidelines as to what content has to be taught in a particular year and subject. For example, in keeping with the CAPS requirements, schools were compelled to teach English as an additional language from Grade One. This, as the Minister of Basic education, Angie Motshekga claimed, will improve learner performance, which will eventually affect matric results (Makhanya: 2012).

As an amendment to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Grades R-12, therefore, CAPS was intended to make an existing curriculum more accessible to teachers. The aim is that every subject in each grade will have a single, comprehensive and concise Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) that will provide details on what content teachers ought to teach and assess on a grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject basis. There is a clear delineation of topics for each subject and a recommendation on the number and type of assessments per term. *Outcomes* and *Assessment* standards were changed. They were now supposed to be called *Topics* and *Themes*, and learning areas became known as Subjects (DoE: 2011).

Given these well-intended, yet complex evolutions of the curriculum in South Africa, as driven by policy-makers within the Department of Education, the process of adaptation within the Reception Years classroom has not been easy. The subsequent obstacles to implementation have been evident not only in 1) the context of the schools themselves, but

also 2) the public arena, as well as 3) the area of educator training and employment equity (DoE: 2011).

THE CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOLS

In 2011, six-million Grade R to Grade 6 learners were meant to be provided with literacy and numeracy workbooks for teaching and assessment by the Department of Education. Each workbook is made up of 128 easy-to-follow worksheets to improve listening, reading, writing and numeracy skills. According to Minister Motshekga, the department received positive feedback from teachers about the workbooks. "Workbooks will assist teachers in pacing and sequencing their work. In the past teachers had to decide on their own what to teach in class and when. But with workbooks in place you have some structure to follow." (Faranaaz: 2013). Yet, not all schools were able to benefit from the use of these workbooks because they were not delivered timeously, especially to schools in rural areas.

THE PUBLIC ARENA

In the public arena, the issue of implementation has also become the topic of an open, often heated debate. Three years ago, for example, a group of teachers marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria and handed over a memorandum of their grievances to President Jacob Zuma (Ngudle: 2011).

Among other complaints, they asserted that, after numerous curriculum modifications, their learners were treated like adults in the classroom, instead of learning through play and interacting with age-appropriate material. As one Desree Noah (Ngudle: 2011) of the SA Congress for Early Childhood Development in the Tshwane Region put it, "We don't know why the government spends so much money on the Grade R system when its curriculum robs the children of their childhood."

While professional teachers have questioned not only the old tradition of teaching the Reception Year curriculum in an Early Childhood Development site, but also the new trend

toward teaching the same in a primary school setting (Clasquin-Johnson: 2011), one common assumption has emerged from both sides of this debate within the public arena, namely, that any new curriculum must be age appropriate, and that CAPS has seemingly failed in this regard.

THE AREA OF EDUCATOR TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Teachers in the Reception Year class are typically referred to as *Practitioners* because, very often, they are not qualified teachers. Many have either earned a one-year certificate in teaching, or as is the case in many preschools, they simply have experience working with children.

Hence, the Department of Higher Education and Training recently released a notice on the minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications. The qualification for Grade R teaching section states, “The qualification for Grade R teaching is treated separately from teaching qualifications for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD), as it has a specialised purpose and its focus is on one specific grade in the Foundation Phase” (DoE: 2011).

Yet, even as capacity building standards for practitioners are raised, the divide between this position and those held by teachers still leads to a number of problems in the formal schooling environment, where the former are not afforded the same respect, nor offered the same salary as the latter. They are allocated, rather, a stipend from the Department of Education, which in some cases is augmented by the School Governing Body. A Reception Year practitioner may earn, for instance, between R5000 and R8000, depending on where the school is located (ELRU: 2012).

In summary, if the various logistical challenges faced by schools, the debates taking place within the public arena, and the unique status of academic practitioners are considered all together, it has become clear that a great degree of uncertainty and inconsistency still surrounds the Reception Year experience of most teachers and learners today. Before the content of a curriculum such as CAPS can be implemented with any degree of excellence or

success, these contextual matters must be settled, and consensus must be reached regarding the way forward. We must arrive at a place where we are empowered to appoint the right people, in the right places with the right materials with which to teach. Children in South African schools deserve nothing less, and the future of our nation may very well hang in the balance.

1.II Awareness of Problem

No discussion regarding the contextual considerations for implementing the Reception Year curriculum, as per the CAPS document, would be complete without examining the impact the subsequent decisions will have on 1) Reception Year practitioners, who are faced with the challenge of determining curriculum outcomes, either with or without direct access to Grade One teachers who have to deal with the formal schooling readiness of the incoming Reception Year learners, 2) the Reception Year learners, who are faced with the challenge of transitioning from a more relationally familiar and less academically formal environment to one that is less relationally familiar and more academically formal, and 3) parents, who are not only concerned about the practical implications of sending their children to any given school, but also how prepared or unprepared those children will be for Grade One once their Reception Year is complete.

TEACHERS

Teachers at preschools face the challenge of determining curriculum outcomes, often without direct contact with Grade One teachers, and without a working familiarity with the expectations these teachers may have. Grade R Teachers at primary schools are more aware of how to prepare their learners for Grade One because they work closely with these

Foundation Phase teachers. The pressure to perform is increased, in spite of everyone being ill prepared for CAPS implementation (researcher observation).

For example, Professor W. A. Olivier (2013) of the South African Mathematics Foundation (SAMF) wrote a report on the training of teachers for CAPS. These are some of his findings:

- Some districts, generally, have reportedly received no, or very little, CAPS training. In the majority of cases, teachers reported that only two days were spent covering the new topics and changes linked to the new curriculum; most of the teachers agreed that not enough time was being spent during training to assimilate new content information.
- In a few cases, it was reported that untrained teachers were asked to do CAPS training. Evidence from teachers' accounts suggest that subject advisors were not knowledgeable or competent enough to do justice to the intended training (Olivier: 2013). Booklets and pamphlets were distributed during some sessions, and as a result, many teachers expressed uncertainty about how to implement the expected CAPS amendments in the classroom.

In May 2012, Ms Alena Coetzee, a Senior Educational Specialist from the Gauteng Department of Education, addressed the UNISA staff members from the College of Education about the progression from Curriculum 2005 (C2005), the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), as well as the current move from the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). She reiterated that CAPS is not a new curriculum, but an amendment to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Grades R-12, so that the curriculum is more accessible to teachers (Coetzee: 2012).

Yet during this address, it was evident that student teachers and recently graduated teachers hoping to teach Grade R learners struggled to apply their training because they were not taught the CAPS way, and their training does not always correspond with the curriculum in schools. In fact, some final-year student teachers have been so concerned with the move to CAPS that they have asked the College of Education to recommend places

to get CAPS training. The student teachers also question the reasoning behind the Department of Education's decision to implement a new curriculum before the universities have started teaching according to that new curriculum (Coetzee: 2012).

LEARNERS

To begin with, Grade R learners in preschools benefit from daily interaction with a core group of trusted friends in classes that are typically smaller in number than those found in primary schools. However, the transition to less social security and greater personal anonymity occurs in Grade One, when learners face these psycho-relational realities (Walsh & Gardner: 2005). Furthermore, Grade R learners in primary schools have to cope with occupying the lowest position in the age hierarchy of their new campus. Their ability to apply themselves to their studies could be hampered by two forces working in consort, namely, the presence of more people around them throughout the day, and the fact that these people are all older than the Grade R learners (Walsh & Gardner: 2005).

Furthermore, because of CAPS implementation, children that enter Grade R must adjust to prescribed lessons and assessments which adhere to standard learning outcomes. This policy document suggests teachers base their lessons on principles of integration and their assessments on teacher observation. Often an untrained person standing in front of the Grade R classroom commonly leads to a general, assignment oriented approach to the teaching and learning process, with less emphasis on tailoring it to the needs of each individual child (DoE: 2011).

PARENTS

Parents are, of course, concerned with the practicalities of sending their children to school, questioning whether it is better for them to send their Grade R learners to a preschool, which is often privately owned and therefore more expensive, or to a public primary school, which is often less expensive. What's more, at a preschool, learning is mostly play-based, and might therefore lack in CAPS implementation. Whereas at a primary school,

practitioners have to work with Grade One teachers and they are under immense pressure to implement CAPS, and thus often forgo other, more age-appropriate activities. The hours of operation and the distance from home weigh in as important factors for parents in choosing the right institution for their family, even before matters of curriculum are added in and balance is sought (Inforeporter: 2012).

Another issue parents must address is their own level of involvement regarding what their Reception Year child is taught in class. In a study conducted at Rhodes University (Mnene: 2011), parents were asked how they viewed their role in their child's education. It was discovered that their perceived role in providing for their child's developmental needs were separate to the perceived role of the Grade R practitioners. Parents feel their role is to help their children develop social and emotional competencies, and that the Grade R practitioners were there to provide literacy and numeracy teaching to their children. In contrast, the three Grade R practitioners who participated in the study believed that parents were also responsible for promoting literacy and numeracy, as well as life skills (Lemmer & van Wyk: 2004).

1.III Rationale for the Study

As stated above, the curriculum change has been drastic in post-apartheid South Africa, as an urgent alternative to Bantu education was required (Jansen, in Jansen & Christie: 1999). With the much needed introduction and implementation of CAPS in the Reception Year classrooms, practitioners have been forced to accept and attempt to solve problems which subsequently arose in the areas of training, implementation and a general lack of necessary resources.

Given all these challenges, the extent to which Reception Year practitioners will be able to implement the CAPS curriculum, such that it is possible for Grade One teachers to build on their foundation is yet to be determined. It is this gap in educational research that the present project hopes to fill (DoE: 2011).

I.IV Research Questions

Before this primary goal of the research proposed can be reached, namely, investigating the Reception Year CAPS implementation in Early Childhood Development centres and Primary schools, a number of preliminary questions must be addressed.

MAIN QUESTION

- What is the Grade One teacher's perceptions of Grade R learner readiness for the Grade One CAPS curriculum?

SUBQUESTIONS

- How has the implementation of the Reception Year CAPS curriculum positioned learners for success in achieving the learning outcomes associated with the Grade One CAPS curriculum?
- What are the differing levels of learners' preparedness from privately owned preschools compared to Grade R classrooms that are linked to primary schools?
- How is this policy evolution informed by the differing level of performance observed in Grade One learners that come from either preschools or primary schools?

I.V Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are to thoroughly and fairly address the research questions posed in the previous section. By collecting data from a local primary school, reflecting on the experience of its Grade One teaching team, and considering the limited success enjoyed by the Department of Education in integrating the relevant curriculum within the various settings where Grade R is now taught, this study proposes to:

- Review current literature on Grade R teaching and Grade R school readiness.
- Determine teacher's perceptions regarding Grade One learner readiness for school, in relation to CAPS implementation in Grade R.
- Ultimately provide recommendations on how CAPS can be implemented in Grade R so that teachers, learners and parents may experience the easiest possible transition to Grade One.

I.VI Significance of the Study

Although the implementation of CAPS got underway in 2012, very little research has been conducted to find out how Reception Year practitioners are responding to the change and how the implementation is progressing. Moreover, even less research has been conducted to find out where Grade One learners are at in terms of school readiness, in relationship to the context of their Grade R experience. During the past ten years, a large number of studies have been conducted on official implementation of the new curriculum in primary, as well as secondary schools in South Africa (Hoadley & Jansen: 2009). However, those studies were looking at the implementation from Grades 1 to 12, and not from Grade R.

Even with the introduction and implementation of Curriculum 2005 (C2005), National Curriculum Statement (NCS), as well as the Revised National Curriculum Statement (NRCS),

pre-primary schools, where Grade R has typically been taught, were often overlooked when it came to monitoring the implementation of the official curriculum. Now with the gradual move to integrate Grade R into formal schooling in the Foundation Phase, the spotlight is on the practitioners to implement the CAPS curriculum properly (DoE: 2011).

As explained, Grade R practitioners are often under-qualified, under-resourced and under-trained to handle the rigors of curriculum adaptation on this scale, as it includes a prescriptive approach to lesson planning, assessment and outcome setting to which most of them are not accustomed (Olivier: 2013). This study, therefore, proposes to investigate their success or failures in overcoming such challenges, based on how Grade One teachers are responding to the school readiness of Reception Year learners coming from both a primary school and pre-primary school background. For example, information related to various outcomes in three learning areas will be collected, then evaluated based on where those same learners attended Grade R.

1.VII Delimitations of the Study

This is a small scale study, that is, Masters in Education, with a dissertation of a limited scope working with one school, focusing on the Foundation Phase and five Grade One classes. This small sample means prescriptions for South African schools in general cannot be extrapolated from the findings, but they can serve as a basis for suggestions to improve teaching and learning for practitioners and teachers, as well as parents of the Reception Year learners who are in the process of being prepared for Grade One.

Any recommendations made will be directly relevant to the five Grade One classes in the case study school, and should not be generalised to a larger population because the sample group is small and the respondents are not chosen randomly (Hancock: 2005).

I.VIII Research Methodology

Qualitative research seeks to understand a social situation from the perspective of the participants (Macmillan & Schumacher: 2006). For this reason, a case study will be conducted. To start with, a literature review on current trends related to the subject of Reception Year CAPS curriculum implementation is required. Following that, data on where current Grade One learners did their Reception Year learning will be collected from the admission documents at the school under investigation. Finally, informal interviews will be held with all five Grade One teachers and their Head of Department.

SITE SELECTION

According to Macmillan & Schumacher (2006), choosing a site is a negotiation process to obtain freedom of access to a site that is suitable for the research problems and feasible for the researcher's time, mobility and skills. Based on this, a site has been chosen and formal contact has been established. The site is a former Model C primary school that currently has four Reception Year classes and five Grade One classes.

PARTICIPANTS

To achieve relevant results, five Grade One teachers as well as their Head of Department will be selected. The school Principal will also be included as a secondary participant.

DATA COLLECTION

In considering data collection approaches, the researcher is seeking to find an economical but accurate way to obtain data to fit the conceptual framework underlying the study (Hendrick, Bickman and Rog: 1993). Multiple procedures of data collection will be used for this study, including questionnaires, interviews and document sourcing, which will help in presenting descriptive and detailed data on all the Grade One teachers, who are the primary sources in the study.

DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

These data collection strategies, namely questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document sourcing, were chosen in order to focus on in the perspective of the participants, in addition to their opinions and experiences with regard to the impact of where Grade One learners did their Reception Year class.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

As mentioned above, informal conversation interviews and one-on-one interviews will be conducted with Grade One teachers and their Head of Department, using questions prepared in advance.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Official Documents from the site, like admission records for current Grade One learners, which includes information on where they attended Grade R, will be used to analyse and corroborate data. Information available from the internet, journal articles, books, as well as media and newspaper reports will be collected and compared with the data obtained directly from the school. When all the data has been integrated, reviewed and collated, this stage of the research project will be concluded.

I.IX Plan of Study

- Chapter 1 provides a subject overview and articulates the problem statement.
- Chapter 2 deals with a literature review and the project orientation.
- Chapter 3 discusses the research design and methodology.
- Chapter 4 includes the analysis of collected data and the related findings.
- Chapter 5 advances a summary of the project, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review and Project Orientation

II.1 Introduction

The following literature review will focus on the current state of affairs regarding major curriculum and policy changes related to the education of the Reception Year learners from early childhood development centres and public primary schools. However, an initial exploration of what is meant by the concepts of curriculum and policy would be in order, before any changes thereto can be appropriately considered.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is a single, comprehensive and concise document; an improvement on the previous policy, as presented in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). CAPS' aims are to give expression to the knowledge, skills and values worth learning in South Africa. It also aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful in their own lives. In this regard, the curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts, while being sensitive to global imperatives (DoE: 2011).

That being said, Grade R CAPS curriculum is based on the principle of integration and play-based learning. The teacher is a proactive mediator, rather than a facilitator. The Grade R classroom does not have a timetable, but a daily programme that is divided into teacher-guided, child-initiated and free-play activities.

Assessment practices in Grade R should be informal and children should not be subjected to a *test* situation. For this reason Assessment Activities have not been included in the Grade R CAPS document. Each activity used for assessment should be carefully planned so that it integrates a variety of skills. In Grade R, most of the assessment takes place through

observation with the teacher recording the results of the activity using a checklist. Thus, as the year progresses a full picture of each child complete with challenges and strengths is gradually built. This allows for challenges to be addressed and strengths to be maximised (DoE: 2011).

Hence, CAPS curriculum language outcomes in Grade R include, among others, listening to longer stories and showing an understanding by answering questions related to the story. Learners also begin to recognise that words are made up of sounds such as the beginning letters of their names and the ability to copy short sentences or words written by the teacher. For mathematics, CAPS curriculum outcomes in Grade R include counting forwards and backwards in ones from 1 to 10, developing an awareness of South African coins and bank notes, copying and extending simple patterns using physical objects and drawings, such as colours and shapes. CAPS curriculum Life Skills outcomes in Grade R include walking and running in different directions without bumping into each other, drawing and painting using the weekly topic, in addition to developing craft skills and fine motor control such as tying or wrapping (DoE: 2011).

Over and above these outcomes, a child is ultimately considered to be ready for school when he or she is able to cope with the formal intellectual, emotional, perceptual and conceptual demands of the schooling environment (Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani & Merali: 2007). Within the South African context, this happens in the year they turn seven, and enter the Grade One classroom.

Now, as far as changes to the national curriculum are concerned, at the commencement of the 2012 school year, all South African public schools were instructed to implement the new Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS), for which teachers in the Foundation Phase (Grades R to Three) were supposed to be trained the previous year. Most teachers felt the implementation of CAPS would pose no serious problems, at least in theory, but as they soon found out, it was less simple in practice (DoE: 2011).

This move came on the heels of the government's roll out plan of gradually moving the Grade R classroom from preschools or early childhood centres to primary schools, over a period of five years, with the projected universal coverage by 2010/2011 (DoE: 1996). The universal coverage date was extended to 2014, and then to 2015, by President Jacob Zuma

in his State of the Nation address on 3 June 2009 (DoE: 2011). The challenge, therefore, is to create a universal Reception Year classroom experience for all primary school learners throughout South Africa.

These changes have serious implications for Grade One teachers as they deal with classes composed of learners coming from both types of Reception Year facilitation sites. For example, South African schools were supposed to send Foundation Phase teachers (Grades R to Three) for training in the implementation of the CAPS curriculum. However, only some schools chose to include their Grade R practitioners, as the position of these teachers was still unclear with the DBE (researcher observation).

Reception Year practitioners still operating from early childhood development centres were overlooked altogether. As a result, a copy of the CAPS documentation was all that most practitioners received in terms of training. Many were told to read through it and then to implement the related curriculum, which could hardly be called adequate preparation for teachers at such a critical phase in the process (researcher observation).

As far as curriculum outcomes are concerned, such disparities between preschools and primary schools makes it difficult for Grade One teachers to set expectations for learners in their classes. Simply put, depending on where they completed Grade R, the children going to Grade One may all be on different academic levels, and the chances are high that most of them are somewhat behind the academic curve (researcher observation).

Given the broad changes in curriculum for South African schools in general, combined with the major policy shift regarding the availability of Reception Year classes, it comes as no surprise that a host of problems now plague the transition from Grade R to Grade One. The above mentioned issue regarding the availability of teacher training is but one example among many. It is necessary to consider and reflect upon current trends in academic or popular publications related to the field of education, as they pertain to the challenges faced by 1) teachers, 2) learners and 3) schools. It is only in looking at the problems related to the Grade R to Grade One transition from the perspective of these various stake holders that any meaningful, lasting solutions will be found.

II.II Section One – Challenges for Teachers

INSUFFICIENT TRAINING

One challenge teachers face is that of insufficient training in the CAPS curriculum which they are required to implement. In 2012, Foundation Phase (Grades R to Grade Three) teachers across South Africa began to implement CAPS, even though they themselves were unsure of what was expected of them in terms of the curriculum changes due to lack of in-depth training and the uncertainty of planners and trainers (Burger: 2010). If teachers do not comprehend what the curriculum theoretical framework is all about, so how could they be expected to implement the curriculum successfully? (Erden: 2010)

It goes without saying, teachers require training in order to implement the curriculum effectively. Recent investigations of curriculum implementation in rural Foundation Phase primary schools around the region has revealed that teachers experience numerous challenges regarding teaching and learner achievement (Fleisch: 2008; Moalosi & Molwane: 2010). These challenges emanate from a lack of effective teaching and learning of mathematics and English in the foundation phase which in turn stems from insufficient or lack of trained teachers before implementing the CAPS curriculum.

According to the World Economic Forum, South Africa came last out of 148 countries surveyed on the quality of mathematics and science education (SAPA: 2014). To ensure the effective implementation of the curriculum, teachers need to be well-equipped, highly motivated, dedicated and professionally competent (Mohd Meerah, Halim, Rahman, Abdullah, Hassan & Ismail: 2010). A study conducted by Moalosi & Molwane (2010) on teacher training, indicates that participants (teachers) received little training when the curriculum was introduced. This also implies that, Grade R teachers, most of whom did not even get what little training was available because their schools did not send them, are worse off than their Grade One to Three counterparts (researcher observation).

The implications for the Grade One teachers, who have to work with learners coming from Reception Year classrooms, are both alarming and far reaching. Any expectations they may have regarding the abilities of these boys and girls to perform at the intended levels of proficiency in various learning areas would have to be revised, if the Grade R teachers responsible for fostering such abilities in them were either unaware of, or ill prepared to reach those goals.

LACK OF COMMUNICATION

A Reception Year practitioner should be able, in theory, to identify any problem areas that may hinder the performance of a learner in the first year of formal schooling, namely Grade One. At the end of the year, the practitioner should inform the Grade One teacher, in writing, of any possible barriers to learning experienced by a particular child, so that the teacher is aware of this before the child enters his or her classroom, and can give special attention to these issues (Davin & van Staden: 2005).

In an ideal world, the above scenario would prevail in the South African educational system, but in reality it does not. Usually, preschool and primary school teachers work in isolation from one another. They train separately, plan separately, and seldom communicate regarding the history of a particular child (Myers: 1997).

In consequence, a Grade One teacher with a mixed group of children, some with and some without Reception Year CAPS experience, might unintentionally push the children with CAPS experience aside, ignoring them until the others have caught up, and are performing on par with their peers (Myers: 1997).

INADEQUATE EDUCATION

In 1995, a proposal for the implementation of a new policy regarding Grade R was made in the *Action Taken by Government* report. Initially, the policy focused on five-year-old children, and the phasing-in of Reception Year opportunities at public schools (DoE: 1995). The policy was adopted in 1996, as the Interim Early Childhood Development Policy of the

Department of Education was set up to implement a National Reception Year Pilot Project. In 2004, the National Department of Education introduced the official curriculum, the National Curriculum Statement, or NCS, into Grade R classes. About R125 million was set aside for the project. 2730 Early Childhood Development sites, approximately 66000 Reception Year learners, and thousands more Reception Year practitioners took part in the project, which had a duration period of three years (DoE: 2005).

The then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, announced that they were not going to hire new teachers for this project, but that practitioners and teachers already in the system were going to be utilised. These teachers were to be trained and equipped in the implementation of the Grade R curriculum, which forms part of the National Curriculum Statement - Foundation Phase Curriculum (DoE: 2001).

Historically there had been no formal qualifications for those Grade R practitioners already in the system, a situation the national Department of Education attempted to resolve by enlisting the services of trainers who had no classroom experience and were, by all accounts, ill-prepared to provide practitioners the skills they required. Despite this shortfall in capacity building, the Department pressed on and introduced the National Curriculum Statement into Grade R classes in 2004, essentially requiring Grade R practitioners to fend for themselves (Clasquin-Johnson: 2011).

To make matters worse, all South African public schools were instructed to implement the new Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2012, even though teachers in the Foundation Phase (Grades R to Three) were supposed to be trained the previous year, many of them being the same teachers who were absorbed into the system when the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) was introduced in 2004. So it came as no surprise, assuming these teachers underperformed in the tasks set before them (Hoadley & Jansen: 2009).

The Department of Higher Education and Training recently released a notice on the minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications. The qualification for Grade R teaching section states, "The qualification for Grade R teaching is treated separately from teaching qualifications for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD), as it has a specialised purpose and its focus is on one specific grade in the Foundation Phase." (DoE: 2011) The notice goes on to state that Grade R practitioners

will only gain fully qualified Foundation Phase status through the completion of the Bachelor of Education degree, which ultimately requires the completion of a four-year programme (DoE: 2011).

Thus the disparity which arises when comparing the qualifications of Grade One teachers with those of Grade R teachers is one which must be addressed before these two groups of teachers, the very people that stand before classes in schools across the country day in and day out, have any hope of working in consort. If Grade R practitioners did in fact become Grade R teachers by securing a proper academic degree, then the levels of learner readiness anticipated by Grade One teachers could be forthcoming with greater consistency, and Grade One classrooms would be positioned for greater success.

II.III Section 2 – Challenges for Schools

RESOURCES INAVAILABILITY

The first major challenge faced by public schools is the utter lack of resources at their disposal. As mentioned previously, six million Grade R to Grade 6 learners were meant to receive literacy and numeracy workbooks for teaching and assessment by the national Department of Education in 2011. Each one of these workbooks was made up of 128 easy-to-follow worksheets meant to improve listening, reading, writing and numeracy skills. According to Minister Angie Motshekga, the department had received ample, positive feedback from numerous teachers about these new materials. “Workbooks will assist teachers in pacing and sequencing their work. In the past teachers had to decide on their own what to teach in class and when, but with workbooks in place you have some structure to follow,” she said (Makhanya: 2012).

Although by 2012, most schools had not yet received these textbooks and workbooks, making it impossible for them to benefit from the CAPS compliant lessons there contained. In Limpopo, the so-called resources were found collecting dust at various warehouses around the province, even though the Department of Education was tasked with delivering these materials the year before. Some textbooks and workbooks were even found dumped beside rivers (Faranaaz: 2013). Since 2012, a civil society organisation called Section 27 has taken the Department of Education to court regarding the Limpopo textbook saga (SAPA: 2014).

Given such problems with prescribed resources being unavailable, because of logistical issues as simple as product delivery, Grade One teachers are faced with the double burden of presenting lessons for which they themselves are ill equipped, and doing so in a room full of learners that have been ineffectively prepared, assuming that their Grade R teachers also did not receive the much needed textbooks and workbooks promised by the Department.

SCARCITY OF SPACE

As mentioned above, a proposal for the implementation of a new policy regarding Grade R was made in the *Action Taken by Government* report back in 1995. The policy initially focused on five-year-old children, and the phasing in of Reception Year opportunities at all public schools (DoE: 1995). It was adopted in 1996, when the Interim Early Childhood Development Policy of the Department of Education was set up, which was to provide for the implementation of a National Reception Year Pilot Project (DoE: 1996).

The proposal maintained that Reception Year should be made compulsory for admission into Grade One. Its provision was to be phased in over a 5-year period, with the roll out or universal coverage by 2010 / 2011. This meant that a combination of Reception Year classes should be offered at primary schools and community-based sites on a short-term basis, and comprehensively at primary schools in the long term (DoE: 2001).

However, the report on the National Reception Year Pilot Project data showed that, although it was cost effective for parents to send their children to primary schools because the government funds them, the addition of Reception Year was not a simple matter.

Among other obstacles encountered, there were no extra classrooms or the classrooms were not ideal. The classes were far from toilets, which the whole school shared, including senior students. What is more, 26 percent of primary schools were in poor condition on the whole, putting further constraints on the development of Grade Rs in those same public institutions. Principals struggling to sufficiently maintain existing facilities on very tight budgets would be hard pressed to then expand those facilities and make more room for possibly hundreds of additional learners with extra ordinary spatial requirements (Fleisch: 2008).

MONITORING SHORTFALLS

It goes without saying that in the recipe for systematic disaster, one main ingredient is the absence of an effective system to monitor and truly evaluate the quality of services rendered, in the educational arena and beyond. As Davin & van Staden (2005) duly point out, “The reception year can play an important role in the development of the young learner, but only if the teacher knows exactly what the purpose of this year is, namely learning through play. The reception year teacher needs to be able to understand the teaching process and be able to plan in detail what he or she aims to teach.”

It has become evident that a more rigorous teacher monitoring process should take place in South African schools. Compared with the Piloting Phase, there are some changes in the way that Grade R is being implemented at its full scale. The focus has shifted from services being largely community-based, to provisions in the schooling system exclusively. Hence, the requirements for assessment and planning for the National Curriculum Statement are far more demanding than they previously were. Locating the process of implementation in the formal schooling system was justified on the basis that requirements could be more easily met there, as well as the fact that Curriculum for Grade R forms part of the National Curriculum Statement for the Foundation Phase (DoE: 2001, Biersteker: 2010.)

However, with some of the Reception Year classes still running at private, Early Childhood Development sites, the practitioners are not closely monitored. In primary schools, the position of the Reception Year educator has not been completely clarified at the

departmental level, therefore, the average Grade One educator cannot be sure how ready the learners are entering her classroom for the Grade One curriculum, because the standards of evaluation against which their previous teachers were held varied greatly (researcher observation).

II.IV Section 3 – Challenges for Learners

LANGUAGE BACKLOG

One of the primary challenges learners face is that of a language backlog. Historically, in South Africa, learners in the early grades, that is Grades One to Grade Two, were taught in the vernacular language used at home, and only started with English instruction from Grade Three onwards. Currently, in keeping with the CAPS mandate, primary schools are required to offer four subjects, one of them being English, from Grade One to Grade Three (DoE: 2011).

As stated in a City Press article some two years back, “Dramatic changes await learners of inland schools who go back to school this coming week. Learners of coastal schools, which opened this past week, already found changes which include that all public primary schools are required to offer four subjects to Grade One through Grade Three learners: a home language, first additional language, numeracy and life skills. It is compulsory for learners who will use English as the medium of learning from Grade Four onwards to take it as a subject from Grade One. Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga gave the assurance that English would not replace home languages in the earliest of grades but would have to be an additional language for learners who would continue using it as a medium of learning.” (Makhanya: 2012)

This move still leaves the Reception Year learner, not even mentioned in the article, out in the cold, as it were. It also means that Grade One teachers' battles start right at the beginning of the year as they attempt to close the gaps in the language aptitude of the learners before any effective instruction can take place. As any seasoned educator will confirm, getting a learner with faltering linguistic skills to a place where he or she can comprehend lessons delivered in English is a time consuming, laborious process which only detracts from the freedom enjoyed by the teacher to engage the needs of the entire class.

DIFFERING LEVELS OF EXPOSURE

The apartheid state, it can be argued, took very little responsibility for early childhood development. It is for this reason that community groups, parents and welfare organisations have been the main providers at early childhood development centres and preschools. There was limited support from different educational departments for pre-primary schools, with higher subsidies going to those attended by white children. There was also a split, at least conceptually, between pre-primary schools and nursery schools, the latter being more like day care centres or crèches, which focused on safe child care for working and mostly poor mothers (Biersteker: 2010).

For some time in the 1980s, the Department of Education and Training introduced a bridging programme to facilitate school readiness as part of Grade One because of concerns about the poor performance of what the apartheid government called *African* children. But overall, there was no recognition of the importance of the early years of life, or the need for an integrated approach to meet all the developmental needs of the child, even though non-government organisations have lobbied for an approach that combines education and care since the late 1970s (Biersteker: 2010).

Since the change to a democratic government in 1994, early childhood development service provision has become acknowledged as a priority for social advancement. This came about through a commitment to uphold the rights of all children and recognition that early childhood education is a key area for human resource development. Until recently the main efforts have been on helping prepare children for primary school and this has been done by

introducing the Reception Year as part of the education system. The intention is for all children to have access to Grade R by 2014 (DoE: 2001).

Even with these more equitable systems in place, Reception Year is still not compulsory, or at least it is not a prerequisite for entry into Grade One. In fact, recent studies have shown that many children, especially from rural and poor areas, only enter the classroom for the first time in Grade One (Biersteker: 2010). So Grade One teachers in those locations are responsible for learners who have little to no exposure to the classroom environment. They have to start from scratch and help the learner become confident and at ease, able to interact with other adults and children, willing to take on new tasks and persist with them, prepared to understand language and communicate, to follow instructions and pay attention (Biersteker: 2010). In light of this monumental task, teachers have to sacrifice precious time and energy that would otherwise be spent in pursuit of the learning outcomes recommended by CAPS.

LACK OF INVOLVEMENT FROM THE DOMESTIC ARENA

Although parental involvement is linked to school success, schools frequently fail to establish strong links between the home and the classroom. Parent participation is not significant in many schools even when parents are invited to contribute in some meaningful way (Chrispeels: 1992). In many countries, including South Africa, one of the strongest trends in education reform has been to give parents, and in some cases community members, an increased role in governing schools. This pattern of reform, however, often fails to bring about the range of expected outcomes, because most parents are reluctant to become actively involved. Even when they do, it persists not much longer than the first few years that their children are in school (Levin: 1997).

Given this lack of parental involvement, intentionally or unintentionally, neither the Grade R nor the Grade One teachers can count on much, if any support from the parents of their learners, in as far as the teaching process is concerned. In many respects, these teachers occupy contrasting positions in the greater scheme of South African education, but when it

comes to the relationship between the home and the classroom, their challenges are comparatively similar.

II.V Conclusion

In this chapter, the current state of affairs regarding the education of the Reception Year learners at both early childhood development centres and primary schools has been outlined, in as far as CAPS implementation is concerned.

We have looked at the history and nature of the Reception Year in South Africa, based on the many changes in curriculum over the last two decades, as well as how those changes in curriculum have affected the education of the Reception Year learner, in theory and in practice.

This chapter has also highlighted the implications for the Grade One teachers as they deal with classes composed of learners coming from two types of Reception Year curriculum facilitation sites, as identified above.

Teachers, in particular, were the first stakeholders faced with many challenges when this process of policy and curriculum implementation took effect. The insufficiency educator training in the CAPS curriculum was one such challenge. Another challenge is the lack of communication between the Reception Year practitioners and primary school teachers. And lastly, most practitioners were, historically, absorbed into the formal schooling system when the national Department of Education set in motion a plan to establish Reception Year classrooms at all primary schools, yet they remain under qualified to this day.

Schools, in general, were the second stakeholders that faced challenges when this process of policy and curriculum implementation took effect. The unavailability of resources such as late or no delivery of textbooks and workbooks meant that schools could not realistically

pursue CAPS learning targets. Another challenge the schools faced was the lack of extra classrooms in which to house the Reception Year learners, and finally, the absence of an effective monitoring system to ensure that implementation was taking place with any reasonable amount of quality assurance further exacerbated the problem.

Learners themselves were the third stakeholders faced with challenges when this process of policy and curriculum implementation took effect. Firstly, the problem of language backlog arose, as Reception Year learners, who were taught in their mother tongue, were suddenly confronted with having to learn in English when they entered Grade One. Next came the lack of learner exposure to the formal schooling environment. Even though Reception Year is in the process of being integrated as the first year of formal schooling, it is still not a prerequisite and studies have shown that some learners from rural and poor areas only enter the classroom for the first time in Grade One. Lastly, parents seemed to perceive their involvement in the education of their Reception Year child as limited and largely removed from any significant source of additional value.

Against this background, the next chapter will discuss the paradigm, methodology and, most importantly, the results of the research performed in one case study related to the topic at hand, namely Grade One teacher perception regarding the school readiness of Grade R learners.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Methodology

III.I Introduction

In the previous chapter, the current state of affairs regarding major curriculum and policy changes related to the education of the Reception Year learners at both early childhood development centres and primary schools was reviewed.

In this chapter, the methodology used in gathering the information required in the present study will be explained. To begin with, the research purpose will be restated and then the paradigm under which the study is conducted will be defined. The researcher will give the rationale for choosing a case study as a method, and will also describe its basic components. Then the research methods employed in gathering data and their limitations will be explained. A short reflection on research ethics shall conclude this section, but it will begin with a fresh assertion of the purpose, objectives and research questions at play.

III.II The Research Purpose

Grade One teacher perceptions regarding the readiness of the Grade R learners, as the CAPS curriculum implementation is concerned, is the problem statement which defines this study. Its purpose, therefore, is to assess ways in which the quality of the Reception Year experience can be improved generally for all parties involved, as well as provide recommendations on how CAPS can be implemented in Grade R so that teachers, learners

and parents experience the easiest possible transition to Grade One.

III.III The Objectives

The aims of this study are to thoroughly and fairly address the research questions posed in the section below. This will be done by collecting data from a local primary school and reflecting on the experience of its Grade One teaching team, and by considering the limited success enjoyed by the Department of Education in integrating the relevant curriculum within the various settings where Grade R is now taught.

III.IV The Research Questions

Given that the research questions should flow from the objectives and assist in meeting the purpose of the study, they are defined as:

MAIN QUESTION

- What is the Grade One teacher's perception of Grade R learner readiness for the Grade One CAPS curriculum?

SUBQUESTIONS

- How has the implementation of the Reception Year CAPS curriculum positioned learners for success in achieving the learning outcomes associated with the Grade One CAPS curriculum?
- What are the differing levels of learners' preparedness from privately owned preschools compared to Grade R classrooms that are linked to primary schools?

- How is this policy evolution informed by the differing level of performance observed in Grade One learners that come from either preschools or primary schools?

III.V Research Overview

The methodology, paradigm and design sections include the selected site or social network, the research role, purposeful sampling strategies, data collection strategies, data analysis, and design limitations (Macmillan & Schumacher: 2006). In the sections to follow, I describe how I employed the above in conducting my research.

III.VI Research Methodology

Qualitative research seeks to understand a social situation from the perspective of the participants (Macmillan & Schumacher: 2006). For this reason, I chose to conduct a case study, building on the literature review I performed in Chapter Two on current trends related to the subject of Reception Year CAPS curriculum implementation.

III.VII Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a term derived from the history of science, where it was used to describe a cluster of beliefs and dictates that, for scientists in a particular discipline, influence what

should be studied, how research should be done and how results should be interpreted (Bryman: 2008). For the purposes of this research, I have chosen to use the Interpretive approach as my essential, functional paradigm, which focuses on experiences of the world based on the culture and previous experiences of each individual, with an emphasis on mutual understanding (Bhengu: 2005).

III.VIII Research Design

The term *Research Design* refers to structuring a research project in order to define a set of questions (Trochim: 2006). It refers to the strategy used to integrate the different components of a research project in a cohesive and coherent way. The overall research design for this investigation is that of a case study.

By using the case study strategy to explore Grade One teachers' perceptions regarding the school readiness of the Reception Year learners, my research will centre around an in depth and detailed analysis of a person, group or situation as a sample of the whole, and will involve a systematic collection of data and analysis that may lead to a modest, conclusions based report on the findings (Hancock: 2005). My case study focuses on five Grade One teachers and their Head of Department at a public primary school in Pretoria, Gauteng.

III.IX Site Selection

According to Macmillan & Schumacher (2006), choosing a site is a negotiation process to obtain freedom of access to a site that is suitable for the research problems and feasible for the researcher's resources of time, mobility and skills. Based on these recommendations, I

chose the primary school where I also teach Grade Two as a research site. This school currently has four Reception Year classes and five Grade One classes.

III.X Participants

Qualitative research depends to a great extent on the interpersonal skills of the inquirer, such as building trust, keeping good relations, being non-judgemental and respecting the norms of the situation (Macmillan & Schumacher: 2006). It is for this reason, and for the sake of achieving more relevant results, that the five Grade One teachers and their Head of Department mentioned above were identified and approached. The fact that they happen to be personal colleagues helped, because we already have a relationship of trust and respect.

III.XI Sample Selection

As a dissertation of limited scope, this project is small in scale and, therefore, I used sampling that suited a qualitative case study approach. The sampling is both purposive and convenient (Cohen, Manion & Morrison: 2000) The purpose of this study is to assess ways in which the quality of the Reception Year experience can be improved generally for all parties involved as well as provide recommendations on how CAPS can be implemented in Grade R so that the parties may experience the easiest possible transition to Grade One. The sampling is convenient, as I also happen to work daily at the research site.

III.XII Data Collection

In considering data collection approaches, the researcher sought to find an economical but accurate way of obtaining data to fit the conceptual framework underlying the study (Hedrick et al.: 1993). Multiple procedures of data collection will be used for this study, including questionnaires, interviews and document sourcing, each an aid in presenting descriptive and detailed data on all the Grade One teachers, the primary sources of the study.

III.XIII Data Collection Strategies

These data collection strategies, namely semi-structured interviews, document sourcing and questionnaires, were chosen in order to focus on in the participants' perspectives, in addition to their opinions and experiences with regard to the impact on the school readiness of Grade One learners, depending on where they completed their Reception Year.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

According to Anderson (2002), the interview is a prime source of case study data. It is a communication between two or more persons used for purposes such as diagnosis, education or obtaining information. An interview is intentional, and goes beyond mere conversation. For the present study, prepared questions will be finalised before speaking to the participants.

DOCUMENT SOURCING

- **Official Documents**

Official Documents from the site, such as admission records for the current Grade One learners, including information regarding where they attended Grade R, will be used to analyse and corroborate the data. Information available from the internet, journal articles, books, the media and newspaper reports will be collected and compared to what was obtained directly from the school.

- **Questionnaires**

A questionnaire is the most widely used technique for obtaining information from subjects. It is relatively economical, has the same question for all subjects and can ensure anonymity (Bryman: 2008).

Questionnaires containing a combination of questions and a survey that has the five Grade One class lists attached will be issued to the teachers to rate the learners' school readiness on a scale of one to ten. According to the CAPS curriculum outcomes, there are three learning areas, namely Home Language, Mathematics and Life Skills. The specific learning outcomes were taken from the CAPS Policy Documents (*DoE: 2011*).

When all the data has been integrated, reviewed and collated, this stage of the research project will be concluded.

III.XIV Limitations During Data Collection

As mentioned previously, I teach Grade Two at the research site and therefore I know all about time constraints that the teacher participants might be under. Both the participants and I would have to use our free or administration periods to conduct the semi-structured interviews, even though our free periods are at different times of the school day. I would probably have to make prior arrangements to meet the participants after school to ensure that it is not on the afternoons that they have extracurricular activities or meetings.

III.XV Data Analysis

Data analysis is an on-going, cyclical process that is integrated into all phases of qualitative research. It is a relatively systematic process of coding, categorising and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest (Creswell: 2002). Thus, I will start analysing the data during the data collection process, so I can keep track of the changes in collection strategies and evolving ideas (Macmillan & Schumacher: 2006). The crystallisation method will be used, as I combine segmenting, categorizing and pattern seeking into an extensive period of intuition-rich immersion in the data (Macmillan & Schumacher: 2006).

III.XVI Credibility and Trustworthiness

To ensure the reliability and validity of my research findings, I will not only use the

crystallisation method, but will attempt to eliminate bias by being conscious of my personal attitudes, opinions and expectations, not seeking answers simply to support my preconceived notions (Cohen et al.: 2000). It is for this reason that I consciously selected participants from a different grade to the one I teach, in the hopes that it will help me avoid subjective interpretation and the selective analysis of data (Cohen et al.: 2000).

III.XVII Ethical Considerations

According to Cohen et al. (2000), informed consent constitutes the foundation of ethical procedures. Prior to data collection, a letter to request permission to conduct research will be sent to the principal of the school chosen as a research site. I will also send the request form to conduct my research to the Gauteng Department of Education. Furthermore, I will apply for ethics clearance from UNISA itself before commencing with the data collection phase. The participants, that is, the five Grade One teachers as well as their Head of Department will also receive letters asking them to take part in the study, after consent is granted by the school principal. I will explain to the participants the purpose of the study and that participation is voluntary. They may withdraw from the study at any time. I will assure participants of their rights to privacy and confidentiality by using pseudonyms.

III.XVIII Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with justification of the methodology to be used to achieve the purpose of the research, and with the research design to guide the study. The data collection and analysis procedures to be used were also described, as were strategies to ensure credibility and trustworthiness, not to mention the related ethical considerations.

With the conceptual groundwork so prepared, the focus of this research project will now turn to the more practical facts and figures to be harvested from the research site, and a preliminary synthesis of the data as it is compiled and compared.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis and Findings

IV.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the methodology used in gathering the information required in this study was explained. In this chapter, I present and discuss my findings of the five participating teachers, referred to as Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, Teacher D, Teacher E and Teacher F for the sake of anonymity, who form part of the Grade One teaching team at the school I chose as a case study site. Their perceptions regarding the school readiness of the Grade R learners coming into their classrooms will also be discussed.

As the aim of this study is to thoroughly and fairly address the research question and sub-questions posed in Chapter One, the discussion to follow will address findings in answer to both, preceded by a reminder of the overall purpose of this study.

As stated in the previous chapter, the issue at hand is Grade One teacher's perceptions regarding the readiness of the Grade R learners in as far as the CAPS curriculum implementation is concerned. The purpose of this study therefore is to assess ways in which the quality of the Reception Year experience can be improved generally for all parties involved as well as to provide recommendations on how CAPS can be implemented in Grade R so that these teachers, learners and parents may experience the easiest possible transition to Grade One.

The main research question that guided the investigation was "What is the Grade One teacher perception of Grade R learner readiness for the Grade One CAPS curriculum?" In addition to the main research question, the sub-questions were:

- How has the implementation of the Reception Year CAPS curriculum positioned learners for success in achieving the learning outcomes associated with the Grade One CAPS curriculum?
- What are the differing levels of preparedness of learners from privately owned preschools and Grade R linked to primary schools?
- How is this policy evolution informed by the differing level of performance observed in Grade One learners that come from either preschools or primary schools?

The above questions were addressed by using the data collection tools mentioned in Chapter Three. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the five Grade One teachers and their Head of Department, questionnaires that the same teachers had to fill in as well as documents sourced from the school's enrolment records.

IV.II Research Participants

Below is a table that provides the profiles of the 6 research participants, namely the five Grade One teachers as well as their Head of Department. The table lists their pseudonym, gender, age, qualification, teaching experience and other grades they have taught previously.

Name	Gender	Age	Qualification	Experience	Grades Taught
Teacher A	Female	41 Years old	BaEd, BEd in Educational Psychology, Advanced Certificate in Early Childhood Development	10 years	Grade R and Grade 1

Teacher B	Female	33 Years old	Post Graduate Certificate in Education	6 years	Grade 2, Grades 4-7 and Grade 1
Teacher C	Female	27 Years old	BEd VKO Special Needs, Reading Therapist	3 years	Grade 1
Teacher D	Female	28 years old	BEd Early Childhood Education, BEd Honours in Learning Support	3 years	Grade R and Grade 1
Teacher E	Female	37 Years old	Higher Diploma in Junior Primary Education	10 years	Grades R to Grade 7
Teacher F Head of Department	Female	49 Years old	Higher Diploma in Education	25 years	Grade R, Grades 2-9, Student Teaching

Table 4.1 | Teachers' Qualifications and Experience

The five teachers are all currently teaching Grade One at the same public school, which also has Reception Year classes. The sixth participant, namely the HOD in the Foundation Phase, has taught both Reception Year and Grade One at the school. They all hold a tertiary qualification in Education, and the average time they have spent teaching in the classroom is close to ten years, thus each of their six perspectives will be considered in the same manner and given the same analytical weight.

In the following section, I hope to put forward and examine challenges that teacher participants faced regarding their varying qualifications and teaching experiences, as it pertains to their ability to assess the school readiness of the Grade One learners, who were

supposed to have been taught, in Grade R, according to the requirements of the CAPS curriculum. This is done in the form of their responses in the semi-structured interview questions asked, as well as their answers from the questionnaire.

IV.III Challenges for Teachers

Looking at the facts stated regarding the experience, training and education of the participants above, it is necessary to consider what are the challenges for the teachers in the Grade One classroom.

The first challenge the teachers face is the varying qualifications as well as the level of training or lack thereof in the CAPS implementation. According to the information gathered, only two of the five Grade One teachers, in addition to the HOD, received training in the implementation of CAPS. This begs one important question, namely how well could the Grade One teachers themselves be equipped to pick up on issues of preparedness of the Reception Year learner coming into their classrooms, and how does that help or hinder curriculum implementation?

The second challenge the teachers face is that of support from both the local level, such as the school itself, in addition to higher up the chain of authority, namely the Department of Education. The interview schedule posed the following questions concerning this issue:

- *What administrative assistance does your school offer its teachers?*
- *What extra support does your school offer its learners?*
- *What support, in general, does the Department of Education offer your school?*
- *What support does the Department offer as far as CAPS curriculum implementation is concerned?*

- *Did you receive training regarding the implementation of CAPS?*
- *Did the Grade R teachers at your school receive any CAPS Training?*

Based on trends within the participants' responses to these questions, as found in Appendix 6, it is clear that the teachers and learners receive more support at the local level, that is, within the school, than they do from the Department of Education, the same department that instructs the teachers to implement the CAPS curriculum. For example, in answering the question, *What support does the Department of Education offer your school?*, Teacher A said, "Workshops". While the provision of workshops is important, they are no replacement for the more foundational experience of a proper training session. With the limited support from the Department, that which the school offers the teachers and learners is diminished and therefore hinders effective curriculum implementation.

The responses also indicate that more Reception Year teachers at the participant school received CAPS training than their counterparts in Grade One. That leaves the Grade One teachers and HOD with the challenge to ensure that the assessment of the school readiness of the Reception Year learner coming into their Grade One classrooms is done similarly across the Grade. In other words, the entire team needs to sit and discuss what it is that they should be looking for in their assessments.

The third challenge that teachers faced is class demographics. Looking at the numbers in the five classes showed that each class has an average of 29 learners, which is good for a public school. The male / female split also seems within normal averages, though some classes have 3 to 4 more boys than girls and others 3 to 4 more girls than boys. The interview schedule posed the following questions concerning these issues:

- *What is the racial background of your learners?*
- *What is the linguistic background of your learners?*

- *What is the general economic background of your learners?*

In response, the teachers explained that their classes are very diverse. The learners speak a variety of South African and other foreign languages. For example, in answering the question, *What is the linguistic background of your learners?*, Teacher C said, “Zulu, Sotho, Indian, Arabic, English, Afrikaans and Xhosa”. It can therefore be deduced that the majority of learners in their classrooms only speak English as a second language, even though English is the language of instruction at the school, hence, the need for the school to have numerous support systems in place for the learners.

However, it should be pointed out that not all the support systems mentioned by the teachers in the previous section are free of charge. In fact, most of the services are rendered by private entities and the parents need to pay extra for their children to receive support, which relates to the issue of the economic background. All the teachers responded by saying their learners are from middle to lower income families, thus affecting the ability of the parents to pay for their children to get the extra support, especially in the medium of instruction. If learners do not have the vocabulary in the medium of instruction, the teachers face a challenge in assessing and, therefore, determining the school readiness of such learners, which in turn hinders proper implementation of the curriculum.

IV.IV Challenges for Schools

While the school as a whole faces many challenges in connection with CAPS implementation, matters of registration and enrolment top the list. The school has to accept learners coming into Grade One, their only priorities being that the learner is from the feeder area and that they are the right age, which is six turning seven years-old. When it comes to a Grade One classroom, there are three types of learners to be found, learners that completed their Reception Year at a preschool, learners that completed their Reception

Year at a Grade R school, and learners that completed their Reception Year at a primary school. Below is a table which represents the numbers of students, according to their class teacher, who come from each of the various Grade R backgrounds.

Teacher Name	Learners Who did Grade R at preschool	Learners who did Grade R at Grade R only centres	Learners who did Grade R at primary school	Total number of learners per class
Teacher A	10	2	16	28
Teacher B	13	4	11	28
Teacher C	10	6	14	30
Teacher D	12	4	13	29
Teacher E	12	3	14	29
<i>Total number of learners as per Grade R background</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>144</i>

Table 4.2 | Distribution of Types of Grade R Sites

The first challenge the school faces, according to the Grade One teachers, is contending with Grade One learners who completed their Reception Year at a preschool. The interview schedule posed the following questions concerning this issue:

- *What problems do you experience with Grade One learners from Grade R classes at preschools?*
- *What suggestions do you have for developing better communication between schools and preschools?*

In response, the teachers cited one issue or another with regards to these learners, the most common being a lack of maturity and general school readiness, a shared opinion backed up by the information in Table 4.2. All five teachers indicated that half of the learners in their classes completed their Grade R at a preschool. For example, in answering the question, *What problems do you experience with Grade One learners from Grade R classes at preschools?*, Teacher B said, “Learners can lack self-discipline, sometimes (they) are not school ready in terms of maturity and understanding”. The teachers felt that enhanced personal interaction with these preschool teachers could be one way to resolve these issues before they become stumbling blocks in the Grade One classroom.

The second challenge schools faced is dealing with learners who completed their Reception Year at private schools that cater specifically for Grade R. Table 4.2 shows that the five Grade One teachers have between two and six learners that completed their Reception Year at a Grade R-only school. The interview schedule posed the following questions concerning this issue:

- *What areas of preparedness for Grade One are covered sufficiently by their Grade R teachers?*
- *What would you recommend to Grade R teachers regarding learner preparation for Grade One?*

In response, the teachers pointed out that the learners who did their Reception Year at Grade R-only schools seem to do slightly better than those that did it at a preschool. For example, in answering the question, *What areas of preparedness for Grade One are covered sufficiently by their Grade R teachers?*, Teacher C said, “Discipline and routine, learner confidence, and most perceptual skills”. As mentioned previously, in Chapter Two, it is important to point out the measurable differences between the technical definition of learner readiness, and the perceived readiness of the learner according to the teachers

being surveyed. In this instance, it appears that the teachers believed these particular learners arrived with the necessary social and behavioural skills to succeed in Grade One.

The third challenge the schools face is contending with learners who completed their Reception Year at the primary school. Table 2 shows that all five Grade One classes have about half the number of learners who did their Grade R at the primary school. The interview schedule posed the following questions concerning this issue:

- *What problems do you experience with Grade One learners from Grade R classes at primary schools?*
- *Do you want more communication between you and these teachers? What would be the benefit for you and for them?*

In response, the teachers indicated that learners who did their Reception Year at the primary school generally cope better in Grade One than those coming from either preschools or Grade R schools. For example, in answering the question, *Do you want more communication between you and these teachers?*, Teacher D said, “There is enough communication in this school, in my opinion”. They also felt that, while communicating with Reception Year teachers on site is more easily accomplished, this interaction has to be both intentional and consistent, especially in the fourth term when learners are preparing their transition from one grade to another.

Looking at the feedback from questions related to the challenges Grade One teachers face, it can be inferred that no matter where these Grade One learners completed their Reception Year, there are gaps and problem areas that need to be addressed, before the school readiness of the Grade R learner can be determined. It should also be noted that three out of the five Grade One teachers felt that learners who completed their Reception Year at the primary school seem to cope better in Grade One. Perhaps this is because the

Grade R teachers at the primary school had CAPS training, as pointed out in Section One, and therefore better implemented the CAPS curriculum into their classrooms.

Challenges for teachers and schools have been examined thus far. The following section will try to determine what challenges the implementation of the CAPS curriculum in the Reception Year classroom presents to the school readiness of the learner themselves as they prepare to enter the Grade One classroom.

IV.V Challenges for Learners

As pointed out in the previous section, we will now turn our attention to certain learning outcomes in the three learning areas determined by the CAPS curriculum - Language, Mathematics and Life Skills - which Grade R learners were expected to have mastered before entering the Grade One classroom. The research participants were issued a survey with their class lists attached, and were asked to rate each learner, on a scale of 1 to 10. The scores were then added up, the three scores for each outcome combined and then averaged out. This is in line with the CAPS assessment policy, which states that marks or scores for the different outcomes in the three learning areas must be combined into one final mark. The learners were also divided according to where they did their Grade R, whether at a preschool, Grade R-only school or primary school. See the tables below.

Learners from Preschools									
LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3 (COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3 (CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT
1	8	2	4	4	3	6	5	4	6
2	8	8	5	7	5	5	6	8	4
6	8	6	4	6	5	6	6	9	10
7	3	1	1	1	1	2	4	6	3
8	8	6	6	8	7	7	5	8	8
13	8	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	4
16	8	6	6	5	4	4	6	7	7
18	6	6	6	7	7	6	8	8	7
21	3	1	1	1	1	2	8	7	8
27	8	6	5	5	4	6	5	6	7
	Overall Average - 5.0			Overall Average - 4.5			Overall Average - 6.5		

Table 4.3 | Teacher A – Learner Outcomes as per Preschools

Learners from Primary Schools									
LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3(COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3(CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT
3	8	10	10	10	8	8	8	7	10
4	9	7	6	10	9	9	8	6	8
5	9	9	8	7	7	8	10	10	9
9	7	5	5	5	4	4	5	7	5
10	8	7	7	8	7	8	8	10	10
11	10	10	7	4	5	5	7	5	4
12	10	9	8	7	6	7	5	6	5
14	10	10	10	9	8	9	10	8	6
15	8	5	5	5	4	5	5	8	8
17	7	3	3	4	3	5	6	6	6
19	9	9	9	6	5	6	3	6	8
20	9	7	6	6	6	5	6	8	8
22	10	9	9	8	8	8	6	10	8
23	9	8	7	8	7	6	9	10	10
24	8	5	4	5	4	5	8	10	7
28	8	6	5	6	5	7	8	8	8
	Overall Average -7.5			Overall Average - 6.5			Overall Average -7.5		

Table 4.5 | Teacher A – Learner Outcomes as per Primary Schools

Learners from Preschools									
LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3 (COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3 (CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT
4	5	4	4	4	5	4	7	7	8
9	7	4	5	5	6	6	9	9	7
10	8	5	6	6	6	7	9	9	8
13	8	5	5	5	5	7	9	9	5
19	6	6	6	8	7	8	7	8	9
21	6	5	5	6	7	7	5	7	9
22	6	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6
23	6	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6
24	7	7	7	8	7	8	8	9	8
25	8	8	7	8	7	8	9	9	6
26	6	7	7	7	6	8	7	7	7
27	4	6	6	6	6	7	5	6	8
28	7	5	6	5	5	6	8	9	7
	Overall Average - 6.0			Overall Average - 6.0			Overall Average - 7.5		

Table 4.6 | Teacher B – Learner Outcomes as per Preschools

Learners from Grade R Schools										
LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3 (COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3 (CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT	
6	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	
14	5	4	4	4	4	4	6	6	7	
15	5	4	4	4	3	4	5	5	7	
16	4	3	3	2	3	4	3	5	7	
	Overall Average - 4.0			Overall Average - 3.5			Overall Average - 5.0			

Table 4.7 | Teacher B – Learner Outcomes as per Grade R Schools

Learners from Primary Schools									
LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3(COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2(PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3(CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT
1	5	6	5	5	5	6	4	5	7
2	7	5	5	5	5	5	8	8	6
3	5	6	5	5	5	4	6	6	8
5	6	4	4	3	4	5	8	8	3
7	4	5	5	6	5	6	5	5	4
8	7	6	6	6	7	7	9	9	7
11	8	9	8	8	8	8	9	9	8
12	6	4	5	5	6	5	9	9	6
17	6	6	5	5	6	6	6	7	7
18	7	6	6	6	6	8	9	9	8
20	6	6	7	8	8	8	7	8	9
	Overall Average -6.0			Overall Average -6.0			Overall Average -7.0		

Table 4.8 | Teacher B – Learner Outcomes as per Primary Schools

Learners from Preschools									
LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3 (COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3 (CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT
1	7	8	6	10	8	8	6	3	7
4	4	8	4	5	8	5	8	2	4
5	8	7	6	6	6	6	6	5	5
6	2	2	2	4	4	2	4	2	4
11	8	8	8	10	8	10	10	10	7
13	6	6	6	7	6	7	3	7	6
15	4	4	2	2	4	3	6	2	2
16	8	10	8	10	10	10	10	7	7
18	8	10	9	8	8	10	10	10	10
20	10	8	7	8	8	9	10	7	7
27	8	10	9	8	8	10	10	10	7
29	6	8	8	10	10	10	7	7	6
	Overall Average - 6.0			Overall Average - 7.0			Overall Average - 6.0		

Table 4.9 | Teacher C – Learner Outcomes as per Preschools

Learners from Grade R Schools									
LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3 (COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3 (CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT
7	2	2	2	4	4	2	4	2	4
8	8	8	7	10	8	10	10	3	3
17	3	9	8	9	9	9	10	10	10
21	3	7	4	7	4	7	7	3	6
23	10	7	7	7	5	7	10	10	6
30	2	7	6	8	7	6	8	7	3
	Overall Average - 6.0			Overall Average - 7.0			Overall Average - 6.5		

Table 4.10 | Teacher C – Learner Outcomes as per Grade R Schools

Learners from Primary Schools									
LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3(COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3(CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT
2	8	10	8	10	9	9	10	4	3
3	7	7	6	8	6	7	10	10	8
9	8	10	8	8	8	8	10	10	8
10	5	5	6	5	4	4	10	10	7
12	8	8	7	7	6	7	8	7	10
14	8	7	6	7	6	6	7	8	7
19	10	10	10	8	8	10	10	10	9
22	5	6	5	5	7	7	8	7	6
24	7	7	8	8	7	7	10	10	8
25	6	4	5	10	8	10	10	6	3
	Overall Average - 7.0			Overall Average - 7.5			Overall Average -8.0		

Table 4.11 | Teacher C – Learner Outcomes as per Primary Schools

Learners from Preschools									
LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3 (COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3 (CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT
1	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
2	7	5	5	6	4	5	8	6	8
3	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
5	9	9	9	10	10	10	10	10	10
7	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
12	5	3	2	6	5	4	3	4	4
13	5	2	1	4	1	1	2	3	1
14	6	4	4	5	4	3	4	4	5
15	7	5	5	6	5	4	6	6	5
19	9	9	7	7	5	4	6	7	9
22	5	5	6	5	5	5	4	4	7
27	7	6	5	5	6	7	5	6	4
	Overall Average - 6.5			Overall Average - 6.5			Overall Average - 7.0		

Table 4.12 | Teacher D – Learner Outcomes as per Preschools

Learners from Grade R Schools											
		LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3 (CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3 (COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LEARNER NUMBER
	2	9	9	10	9	9	8	9	9	8	18
	9	9	9	9	9	9	8	9	9	9	23
	8	7	7	7	4	3	7	5	8	8	26
	Overall Average - 7.0	Overall Average - 6.0	Overall Average - 7.0								4

Table 4.13 | Teacher D – Learner Outcomes as per Grade R Schools

Learners from Primary Schools									
LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3(COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3(CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT
6	5	4	4	6	7	7	8	8	7
8	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
9	7	6	5	3	5	5	6	7	7
10	10	10	8	9	9	9	9	10	9
11	10	8	8	8	9	7	9	8	8
16	7	6	6	5	7	7	4	5	7
17	8	10	9	9	10	8	9	9	10
20	9	9	8	6	6	7	8	8	8
21	7	7	4	7	7	6	5	6	6
24	8	8	9	8	7	8	9	9	10
25	9	9	9	10	10	9	8	9	9
28	10	9	9	9	9	8	7	8	9
29	4	4	4	6	4	5	8	5	8
	Overall Average - 7.5			Overall Average - 7.5			Overall Average - 8.0		

Table 4.14 | Teacher D – Learner Outcomes as per Primary Schools

Learners from Preschools									
LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3 (COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3 (CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT
2	4	5	4	5	5	5	2	3	3
4	5	7	4	7	5	8	4	4	4
8	5	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	3
12	7	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5
13	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	2
14	8	8	7	8	8	8	5	4	5
16	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
19	6	7	4	5	4	5	3	3	3
21	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	2
23	7	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	4
25	7	6	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
28	7	3	3	5	4	4	4	4	4
	Overall Average - 5.0			Overall Average - 4.5			Overall Average - 3.5		

Table 4.15 | Teacher E – Learner Outcomes as per Preschools

Learners from Grade R Schools										
	LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3 (COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3 (CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT
	1	7	8	6	8	8	8	3	3	2
	26	5	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	3
	29	5	4	4	6	5	6	3	4	4
		Overall Average - 5.0			Overall Average - 5.5			Overall Average - 3.0		

Table 4.16 | Teacher E – Learner Outcomes as per Grade R Schools

Learners from Primary Schools									
LEARNER NUMBER	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 1 (LISTENS TO STORY WITH INTEREST) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 2 (READS PHONIC WORDS IN SENTENCES AND OTHER TEXTS) SURVEY RESULT	LANGUAGE OUTCOME 3 (WRITES ONE SENTENCE OF OWN USING NEWS OR SHARED WRITING) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 1 (COUNTS RELIABLY BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS TO 50) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 2 (RECOGNISES AND IDENTIFIES SOUTH AFRICAN COINS) SURVEY RESULT	MATHEMATICS OUTCOME 3(COPY AND EXTENDS PATTERNS) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 1 (HAS CORRECT PENCIL GRIP) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 2 (PAINTS DRAWING OF SELF WITH DETAIL) SURVEY RESULT	LIFE SKILLS OUTCOME 3(CAN RUN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO OTHERS) SURVEY RESULT
3	5	5	4	5	4	5	3	4	4
5	4	4	4	4	4	5	3	3	3
6	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	3	4
7	5	6	5	8	7	8	4	4	5
9	8	8	7	8	7	8	4	8	7
10	8	8	8	8	8	9	3	8	7
11	8	8	7	8	8	8	4	7	7
15	7	7	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
17	7	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5
18	7	8	7	8	8	8	4	4	4
20	6	5	4	4	4	5	4	3	3
22	7	8	8	8	8	8	4	4	4
24	8	7	5	5	5	6	5	5	5
27	9	8	7	7	7	7	6	7	7
	Overall Average - 6.0			Overall Average - 6.5			Overall Average - 4.5		

Table 4.17 | Teacher E – Learner Outcomes as per Primary Schools

	Preschool			Grade R School			Primary School		
	L	M	LS	L	M	LS	L	M	LS
Teacher A	5.0	4.5	6.5	7.0	5.0	7.5	7.5	6.5	7.5
Teacher B	6.0	6.0	7.5	4.0	3.5	5.0	6.0	6.0	7.0
Teacher C	6.0	7.0	6.0	6.0	7.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0
Teacher D	6.5	6.5	7.0	7.0	6.0	7.0	7.5	7.5	8.0
Teacher E	5.0	4.5	3.5	5.0	5.5	3.0	6.0	6.5	4.5

Table 4.18 | Compilation of Results

LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN THE CAPS LANGUAGE LEARNING AREA

According to the CAPS curriculum, learners in Grade One are supposed to work toward, among other outcomes in the Language learning area, the following:

1. Listens to stories with interest.
2. Reads phonic words in sentences and other texts.
3. Writes one sentence of own news or shared writing.

By the second term of Grade One, the consolidated score in Language, as an average of all five teachers responses related to all three learning outcomes for Grade One learners that did their Reception Year at **Preschool** is 5.5 out of 10.

By the second term of Grade One, the consolidated score in Language, as an average of all five teachers responses related to all three learning outcomes for Grade One learners that did their Reception Year at a **Grade R School** is 6.0 out of 10.

By the second term of Grade One, the consolidated score in Language, as an average of all five teachers responses related to all three learning outcomes for Grade One learners that did their Reception Year at a **Primary School** is 6.5 out of 10.

It seems, according to the scores above, that learners from primary schools adapt to the outcomes for Language slightly better than the other two sites.

LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN THE CAPS MATHEMATICS LEARNING AREA

According to the CAPS curriculum, learners in Grade One are supposed to work toward, among other outcomes in the Mathematics learning area, the following:

1. Counts reliably backwards and forwards to 50.
2. Recognises and identifies South African coins.
3. Copy and extends patterns.

By the second term of Grade One, the consolidated score in Mathematics, as an average of all five teachers responses related to all three learning outcomes for Grade One learners that did their Reception Year at a **Preschool** is 5.0 out of 10.

By the second term of Grade One, the consolidated score in Mathematics, as an average of all five teachers responses related to all three learning outcomes for Grade One learners that did their Reception Year at a **Grade R School** is 5.5 out of 10.

By the second term of Grade One, the consolidated score in Mathematics, as an average of all five teachers responses related to all three learning outcomes for Grade One learners that did their Reception Year at a **Primary School** is 7.0 out of 10.

Once again, it would appear that learners from primary schools adapt to the outcomes for Mathematics slightly better than the other two sites.

LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN THE CAPS LIFE SKILLS LEARNING AREA

According to the CAPS curriculum, learners in Grade One are supposed to work toward, among other outcomes in the Life Skills learning area, the following:

1. Has correct pencil grip.

2. Paints drawing of self with detail.
3. Can run in different directions without bumping into others.

By the second term of Grade One, the consolidated score in Life Skills, as an average of all five teachers responses related to all three learning outcomes for Grade One learners that did their Reception Year at a **Preschool** is 6.0 out of 10.

By the second term of Grade One, the consolidated score in Life Skills, as an average of all five teachers responses related to all three learning outcomes for Grade One learners that did their Reception Year at a **Grade R School** is 6.0 out of 10.

By the second term of Grade One, the consolidated score in Life Skills, as an average of all five teachers responses related to all three learning outcomes for Grade One learners that did their Reception Year at a **Primary School** is 7.0 out of 10.

Finally, learners from primary schools adapt to the outcomes for Life Skills slightly better than the other two sites as well.

SYNTHESIS OF LEARNER PERFORMANCE

Given the above scores, it appears that learners who did their Reception Year at a primary school are often more school-ready than those that did it at a preschool, as the Grade One teachers stated in previous sections. The results also show that learners who did their Reception Year at Grade R school did slightly better than those who did it at a preschool, but are still below those who did it at a primary school. This corresponds with the data from the participant interviews.

IV.VI Summary of Findings in Terms of the Research Methodology

By way of a summary and reminder, I conducted the research in five Grade One classes, with the teachers being the research participants, as well as their Head of Department. This was

done at a public primary school where I also work as a Grade Two teacher, which made entry into the research site easy. Firstly, I approached the school principal and informed him of my intention to conduct research at the school. He asked me for an official letter of request to conduct research at the school, he also advised me to apply for permission from the Gauteng Department of Education.

Both applications to the Gauteng Department of Education and the primary school were successful. The principal then informed the Grade One Head of Department, in my presence, of the research to be conducted with her Grade One team of teachers, as well as herself. Then I approached the five Grade One teachers and informed them that I was in need of their time in the weeks to come, in order to conduct the semi-structured interviews and get them to fill out the questionnaires and surveys. This was to be done during their free or administration periods.

Given my involvement at the school, I had an inclination of the difficulties I would encounter in getting the teachers to set their free time aside to answer my questions, as I myself use my free periods to catch up on administrative duties. Fortunately, two of the five teachers had student teachers who could teach for them while I conducted the interviews and the Head of Department does not have a class to teach. I had to make arrangements to talk to the other three teachers after school and over the weekends. When it came to some questions from the questionnaire and the survey, I had to leave those with the teachers to fill at their earliest convenience, as there was not enough time during the school day.

I also found that I had to go back to some of the teachers to seek clarity on some of the answers to questions asked in the questionnaire. Two of the teachers did not complete the learner survey properly. They left out scores for a learner or two, which meant I had to go back to them and ask that they fill in the scores. After all the data had been collected, I found that it was a lot more difficult to analyse than I had anticipated, especially the scores that the teachers had filled in on the learner readiness survey. I had to add up and collate all the numbers and average them out per class, divide them according to where the learners did their Reception Year. After that I had to calculate the averages for all five classes and consolidate the marks into new, more relevant tables.

IV.VII Conclusion

With the surveys complete, the records gathered and the data processed, a few essential observations can now be made relating to the research herewith under discussion, namely Grade One teacher perceptions of Grade R learners school readiness in relation to the most recent national Curriculum and Policy Statement.

Firstly, of the six participants, that is, the five Grade One teachers and their Head of Department, only two of the teachers and the HOD had received training in CAPS curriculum and implementation.

Secondly, more Reception Year teachers at the participant school received CAPS training than their counterparts in Grade One. That leaves the Grade One teachers and HOD with the challenge of ensuring that the assessment of the school readiness of the Reception Year learner coming into their Grade One classrooms is consistent across the grade, independently of adequate policy awareness.

Thirdly, it is clear that the teachers and learners receive more support at the local level, namely within the school, than they do from the Department of Education, the same department that instructs the teachers to implement the CAPS curriculum. With the limited support from the Department, the support that the school offers the teachers and learners is diminished and therefore hinders effective curriculum implementation.

Fourthly, all the five Grade One classes are very diverse. The learners speak a variety of South African and other foreign languages. From the teachers' responses one can deduce that most of the learners in their classrooms only speak English as a second language, even though English is the medium of instruction at the school.

Fifthly, looking at the responses to the challenges Grade One teachers face, it can be deduced that no matter where these Grade One learners completed their Reception Year, there are gaps and problem areas that need to be addressed before the school readiness of the Grade R learner could be determined. It should also be noted that three out of the five

Grade One teachers' responses show that the learners that completed their Reception Year at the primary school seem to cope better in Grade One.

In this chapter, I have summarised the information collected from five Grade One teachers at the primary school where the study took place, and which deals with the purpose and objectives and research questions. In the final chapter, I discuss the findings of this research, make some tentative conclusions and set out recommendations developed from both.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

V.I Introduction

The purpose of this study was to establish the perception of Grade One teachers regarding the school readiness of Reception Year learners in relation to the new national Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS), as well as to provide recommendations on how CAPS can be implemented in Grade R so that these teachers, learners and parents may experience the easiest possible transition into Grade One.

In this chapter, I present and discuss my findings of how the five Grade One teacher participants at the research site perceive the school readiness of the Reception Year learners coming into their classrooms. I will also discuss said findings in connection with a review of current literature on this subject, and finally make various recommendations on how to overcome some of the challenges inherent in curriculum changes such as those represented by the recent implementation of CAPS.

V.II Summary of the Study

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, public schools have been faced with a series of changes to the standard curriculum used across the grades, the most recent coming at the commencement of the 2012 school year, when all schools were instructed to implement

the new Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS), for which teachers in the Foundation Phase were supposed to be duly trained. Most teachers felt the implementation of CAPS would not pose any serious problems. But as they soon found out, it was less simple in practice (DoE: 2011).

This policy move came on the heels of the government rolling out a plan of gradually moving the Grade R classroom from preschools or early childhood centres to primary schools, over a period of five years, with the projected universal coverage by 2010/2011. The universal coverage date was then extended to 2014, and then to 2015, by President Jacob Zuma in his State of the Nation address on June 3, 2009 (DoE: 1996). The challenges, therefore, in creating a universal Reception Year classroom experience for primary school learners are not faced by just a few schools, but indeed by all the schools, as the roll out is to be universal.

These changes have serious implications for Grade One teachers as they deal with classes composed of learners coming from both types of Reception Year facilitation sites. For example, South African schools were supposed to send their Foundation Phase teachers for training in the implementation of the CAPS curriculum, and even though the position of Grade R teachers was still not clear with the Department of Basic Education, many ensured their Grade R teachers would be included (DoE: 2011).

On the other hand, Reception Year practitioners still operating from early childhood development centres were overlooked altogether. As a result, all the practitioners got by way of input was a copy of the CAPS documentation. Many were told to read through it and then to implement the related curriculum in their classrooms, which could hardly be called adequate preparation for teachers at such a critical phase in the process (researcher observation).

Such disparities between preschools and primary schools make it difficult for Grade One teachers to set expectations for learners in their classes, in so far as curriculum outcomes are concerned. The children they must teach are starting from different levels of knowledge, depending upon where they completed Grade R, and the chances are high that most of them are somewhat behind the academic curve.

Given the broad changes in curriculum for South African schools in general, combined with the major policy shift regarding the availability of Reception Year classes, it comes as no surprise that a host of problems now plague the transition from Grade R to Grade One. The above mentioned issue regarding the availability of training being is but one example among many. It was necessary, as a result, to consider and reflect upon current trends in academic or popular publications related to the field of education, as they pertain to the challenges faced by 1) Reception Year practitioners, who must determine curriculum outcomes, either with or without direct access to Grade One teachers that have to deal with the formal schooling readiness of the incoming Reception Year learners, 2) Reception Year learners, who must transition from a more relationally familiar and less academically formal environment to one that is less relationally familiar and more academically formal, and finally 3) Reception Year parents, who must contend with practical implications of sending their children to any given school, but also with how prepared or unprepared those children will be for Grade One once their Reception Year is complete.

The main question that guided the investigation was, “What is the Grade One teacher’s perception of Grade R learner readiness for the Grade One CAPS curriculum?” In addition to the main question, the research sub-questions were:

- How has the implementation of the Reception Year CAPS curriculum positioned learners for success in achieving the learning outcomes associated with the Grade One CAPS curriculum?
- What are the differing levels of preparedness of learners from privately owned preschools and Grade R linked to primary schools?
- How is this policy evolution informed by the differing levels of performance observed in Grade One learners that come from either preschools or primary schools?

The study focused on the five Grade One teachers and their Head of Department at the public primary school I chose as my research site. The findings to follow are, therefore,

based on their responses to questions in the semi-structured interviews, questionnaires as well as surveys.

V.III Findings

The five teachers that participated in the study are all currently teaching Grade One at the same public school, which also have Reception Year classes. The sixth participant, an HOD in the Foundation Phase has taught both Reception Year and Grade One at the school. Given the nature of my research topic and questions, I presented the profiles of these six research participants by listing their pseudonym, gender, age, qualifications, teaching experience, other grades they have taught previously, and their level of CAPS training in Table 4.1. Following are the results of my profiling.

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

- Teacher A has ten years teaching experience, an Advanced Certificate in Education, taught Reception Year previously and did not receive any training in the implementation of CAPS.
- Teacher B has six years teaching experience, a Post Graduate Certificate in Education, she also has taught Reception Year before, and has no training in CAPS curriculum implementation.
- Teacher C has three years teaching experience, a Bachelor of Education (VKO), has never taught Reception Year before but she received training in CAPS implementation.
- Teacher D also has three years teaching experience, she possesses a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education, has taught Reception Year previously, but has had no training in the implementation of CAPS.
- Teacher E has ten years teaching experience, a Higher Diploma in Junior Primary

Education, she has taught Reception Year and also received training in the implementation of CAPS.

- Teacher F is the Head of Department in the Foundation Phase, has twenty-five years of teaching experience, a Higher Diploma in Education and not only did she receive CAPS training. as she was one of the training facilitators.

Following my profiling of the Grade One teachers and the HOD, I gathered information and analysed challenges the participants faced, with regards to their varying qualifications and teaching experiences, as it pertains to their ability to assess the school readiness of the Grade One learners, who were supposed to have been taught, in Grade R, according to the requirements of the CAPS curriculum. I also examined challenges that learners faced, and those experienced within the context of the school as a site. This was done through the semi-structured interview questions asked, as well as their answers from the questionnaire.

CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS

The first challenge participants faced was the varying level of experience and training, that is, only two of the five Grade One teachers, plus the HOD received training in the implementation of CAPS. This raises an important question, namely how well could the Grade One teachers themselves be equipped to pick up on issues of preparedness of the Reception Year learner coming into their classrooms and how does that help or hinder curriculum implementation?

The second challenge participants faced was that of support from the authorities, both the school itself and the Gauteng Department of Education, the body tasked with ensuring that all teachers are trained to implement the CAPS curriculum. The responses from the participants indicated that teachers and learners receive more support at the local level, that is, within the school, than they do from the Department of Education. With the limited support from the Department, that offered by the school is diminished, and therefore effective curriculum implementation is hindered.

Another interesting discovery found in the responses is that more Reception Year teachers at the participant school received CAPS training than their counterparts in Grade One, which

leaves the Grade One teachers and HOD with the difficulty of ensuring that the assessment of the school readiness of the Reception Year learner coming into their Grade One classrooms is done similarly across their Grade. In other words, the entire team has to be intentional about taking the time to discuss what it is that they should be looking for in their assessments as a team, which would make further demands upon their already tight schedules.

The third challenge participants faced pertained to issues of class demographics such as race, linguistic background and general economic status of the learners. Looking at the enrolment documents and class lists, it was clear that all the classes taught by the participants are very diverse on each of these three levels. For instance, the learners speak a variety of South African and other foreign languages. From the teacher responses one could deduce that most of the learners in their classrooms only speak English as a second language, even though English is the medium of instruction at the school, hence the need for the school to have numerous support systems in place for the learners.

CHALLENGES FOR SCHOOLS

While the school as a whole faces many challenges in connection with CAPS implementation, matters of registration and enrolment top the list. The school has to accept learners that apply for Grade One admission, the only priority being that the learner is from the feeder area and they are the right age, six turning seven years of age. Where they attended school during their Reception Year, and whether or not that school effectively used the CAPS material does not factor into the enrolment requirements at all. For these reasons, it comes as no surprise that three out of the five Grade One teachers' responses reflect the learners that completed their Reception Year at the primary school seem to cope better in Grade One.

CHALLENGES FOR LEARNERS

Finally, closer to the end of the previous chapter, I considered what challenges the implementation of the CAPS curriculum in the Reception Year presented to the school

readiness of the learners themselves as they prepared to enter the Grade One classroom. A research instrument that allowed me to collect a combination of questions and a survey data was issued to the teachers so they could, among other forms of response, rate the learners' school readiness on a scale of one to ten, and according to the CAPS curriculum outcomes in the three learning areas, namely Home Language, Mathematics and Life Skills. The specific learning outcomes were taken from the CAPS Policy Documents (CAPS: 2011a, b, c).

The results yielded by the scores, showed that learners who did their Reception Year at a primary school were more school ready than those that did it at a preschool, as mentioned above. The results also showed that learners who did their Reception Year at Grade R school did slightly better than those who did it at a preschool, but still performed below those who did it at a primary school.

V.IV Conclusions and Implications

The aim of this study was to thoroughly and fairly address the research questions. Through collecting data, analysing it and reflecting on the experiences of a specific Grade One teaching team, as well as by considering the limited success enjoyed by the Department of Education in integrating the relevant curriculum within the various settings where Grade R is now taught, I hoped to:

- Assess ways in which the quality of the Reception Year experience can be improved generally for all parties involved.
- Ultimately, provide recommendations on how CAPS can be implemented in Grade R so that teachers, learners and parents may experience the easiest possible transition to Grade One.

Based on my findings, I am happy to report that it is clear that learners coming into Grade One can in fact be adequately prepared during Grade R for successful assimilation of the CAPS Grade One curriculum material, once all stake holders overcome the challenges they face during this important phase of academic development.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TEACHERS

Firstly, this study has shown that varying amounts and levels of training amongst the teachers is a hindrance to proper CAPS curriculum implementation and therefore, the Head of Department, the school and ultimately the Department of Education has to ensure parity in the area of teacher training in terms of CAPS curriculum implementation.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SCHOOLS

Secondly, the study has shown that, due to the different sites where learners did their Reception Year, the school and ultimately the Grade One teachers were faced with learners who came into their classrooms with differing levels of exposure to the formal schooling system and with some possibly not having any CAPS curriculum exposure at all. This means that, if the Department of Education is to succeed in implementing the CAPS curriculum in Grade R, then it needs to assist schools more in the area of providing funds for primary schools to build and add space for the Grade R classrooms. In the meantime, while the universal roll out programme of eventually moving all Grade R classes to primary schools, the Department of Education could link all the Grade R classes still operating from ECD sites to primary schools for better, more efficient accountability and monitoring purposes (DoE: 1996).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LEARNERS

Finally, the study showed that one of the main challenges the learners face is a language backlog. Historically, Early Childhood Development Centres were never required to use English as a medium of instruction (DoE: 2001). In fact, teaching in the preschool classroom, which included Grade R was and is still mostly done in one of many mother tongue

languages, depending on the location of the centre. With the move to make Grade R part of formal schooling and moving the Reception Year classes to primary schools, CAPS requires careful curriculum implementation from Grade R to Grade Three, but instruction in English starts only in Grade One (*DoE: 2011*). The Department of Education therefore, needs to issue a clear mandate, instructing Grade R teachers to use English as their teaching medium, then design and roll out a monitoring system to ensure such a mandate is respected.

V.V Future Research

In South Africa, very limited research has been undertaken to inform policies regarding curriculum, especially as far as Reception Year is concerned. I would therefore like to make the following suggestions for further enquiry:

- To begin with, research is needed in the area of curriculum implementation, as it is experienced across the public and private sector divide. Surely the obstacles the public schools faced are at once similar to, yet different from those faced by private schools. Hence, I believe an investigation into this socio-economic reality would only benefit the future of CAPS in South Africa.
- In addition, research is needed in the area of curriculum implementation, as it is experienced in both the rural and urban settings. The rural schools' problems should be compared and contrasted with the urban schools' problems, in the hopes that CAPS can be tailored to fit within the limitations of teachers, schools and learners from both areas.

V.VI Summary and Conclusion

Having discussed the purposes and findings of my research, which was to assess ways in which the quality of the Reception Year experience can be improved generally for all parties involved, as well as provide recommendations on how CAPS can be implemented in Grade R so that teachers, learners and parents may experience the easiest possible transition to Grade One, I feel confident claiming that, if more support in the areas of 1) training, 2) finance and 3) monitoring is offered by policy makers from the Department of Education, there is every reason to believe that boys and girls can be set up for success in South Africa, at a time when their academic careers are just beginning.

REFERENCES

Bibliography and Appendices

VI.1 Bibliography

- Anderson, G.J. (2002). *Fundamentals of educational research*. Philadelphia: Routledge Falmer.
- Arnold, C., Bartlett, K., Gowani, S. & Merali, R (2007). *Is everybody ready? Readiness, transition and continuity*. Paris, EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO.
- Bhengu, T.T. (2005) *Principals as Professional Leaders: Implications for Management of Rural Secondary Schools during Transition*. Doctoral Thesis (Unpublished). Pietermaritzburg. School of Education, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.
- Biersteker, L. (2010). *Children's Rights to Early Childhood Development*.
- Biersteker, L. *Scaling-Up on ECD in South Africa: Introducing a Reception Year for Children Aged Five Years as the First Year of Schooling*.
www.brookings.edu/.../04_child_development_south_africa_biersteker.aspx. 2010, Accessed May 2014.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burger, D. (2010). *Pocket Guide to South African Government Communication and Information System*.
- Charlesworth, R. (2003). *Understanding Child Development*. Thomson / Delmar Learning, USA.
- Chrispeels, J. (1992). *Using an effective schools framework to build home-school partnerships for student success*. Occasional paper prepared for the National Centre for Effective Schools Wisconsin Centre for Education Research, University of Wisconsin, Madison.
- Clasquin-Johnson, M.J. (2011). *Responses of Early Childhood Teachers to Curriculum Change in South Africa*. PhD in Education Policy Studies, University of Pretoria.

- Coetzee, A., (2012). *The South African school's curriculum: from NCS to CAPS*. News and Events, College of Education, UNISA, Available from <http://www.unisa.ac.za/cedu/news/index.php/2012/06/the-south-african-schools-curriculum-from-ncs-to-caps/> (accessed May 2013).
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. (5th Ed.). London: Routledge Falmer
- Creswell, J.W. (2002). *Educational Research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice-Hall.
- Davin, R. (2013) *Handbook for Grade R Teaching*. Pinelands, Cape Town: Pearson.
- Davin, R.J. & van Staden, C.J.S. (2005). *The Reception Year: Learning Through Play*, 2nd Edition. Heinemann Publishers.
- Department of Education (DoE), 1995. Education White Paper 1 on Education and Training. [www.policy.go.za/policy/govdoc/white paper/educ1.html](http://www.policy.go.za/policy/govdoc/white%20paper/educ1.html). Accessed 24 May 2011.
- Department of Education (DoE), 1996. Interim Policy for Early Childhood Development - [www.info.gov.za.otherdocs/1996/childdev.htm](http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/1996/childdev.htm).
- Department of Education (DoE), 2001. Education White Paper 5 on *Early Childhood Education: Meeting the Challenge of Early Childhood Development in South Africa*. www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=4dPdpYsZrVQ%3D. Department of Education (DoE), 2003. *The RNCS Foundation Phase Learning Programme Policy Guidelines*. Pretoria.
- Department of Education (DoE), 2005. *The National Protocol on Assessment for Schools in the General and Further Education and Training Band (Grade R-12)*. Pretoria, Government Printers.
- Department of Education (DoE), 2009. *Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of National Curriculum Statement: Final Report*. Pretoria: Government printer.
- Department of Education (DoE), 2011. *National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)*, Pretoria, South Africa.
- Early learning Resource Unit (ELRU). 2012. Retrieved on 12 June 2014 from info@elru.co.za

- Erden, E. 2010. Problems that preschool teachers face in the curriculum implementation. Dissertation-M.Ed. Middle East: Middle East Technical University.
- Faber, R., van Staden, C., (1997). *The Year Before School: A Year of Learning*. Heinemann, Johannesburg.
- Faranaaz, V. (2013) *Limpopo Textbook Crisis*. City Press. 12 March 2013.
- Final Report of the National Early Childhood Development (ECD) *Pilot Project*. www.capecgateway.gov.za/Text/...national_report_ecd_pilot_2001.pdf. Accessed 30 April 2014.
- Fleisch, B. 2008. *Primary Education in Crisis: Why South African Schools' Children Underachieve in Reading and in Mathematics*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Foundation Phase Learning Programme Policy Guideline: *Strengthening Policy-in-Action*. Department of Education, Pretoria. 2002.
- Hancock, D.R. (2005). *Doing case study research: a practical guide for beginning researchers*. New York: Teacher College Press
- Hedrick, T.E., Bickman, L. & Rog, D. J. (1993) *Applied Research Design: A Practical Guide, Applied Social Research Methods Series*. Volume 32, Sage Publications, California.
- Hoadley, U. & Jansen, J. (2009) *Curriculum: Organising Knowledge for the Classroom*, 2nd Edition. Oxford University Press: Southern Africa.
- Inforeporter (2012). *The Rights and Responsibilities of Parents, Learners and Public Schools*.
- Jansen, J. & Christie P. (1999). *Changing Curriculum: Studies on Outcomes Based Education in South Africa*. Kenwyn: Juta.
- Lemmer & van Wyk, N. (2004). *Home-school communications in South African Primary Schools*. South African Journal of Education. Vol 23 (8). pp183-188. Retrieved on 12 June 2014 from [http://www.ajol.info/index.php/article /view/24986/20669](http://www.ajol.info/index.php/article/view/24986/20669)
- Levin, B. (1997) *The lessons of international education reform*. Journal of Education Policy, 12 (4): 253-266.
- MacMillan, J.H. & Schumacher S. (2006) *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*, 6th Edition. Boston: Pearson.
- Makhanya M. 2012. *Dramatic Changes for Learners*. City Press. <http://www.citypress.co.za/news/dramatic-changes-for-learners>.

- Mnene, M. (2011). *Investigating Teaching and Learning within Three Eastern Cape Reception Year Classrooms*.
- Moalosi, R. & Molwane, O.B. 2010. *Challenges facing teachers in teaching of design and technology in Botswana Primary schools: Design and Technology Education*. An international Journal, 13 (3).
- Mohd Meerah, T.S., Halim, L., Rahman, S., Abdullah, R.T., Hassan, A., & Ismail, A. 2010. *Teaching Marginalized Children: Primary Science Teacher's Professional Development through Collaboration Action Research: Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*, 2 (2011): 49-60.
- Myers, R. 1989. *Preparing children for school and schools for children. The Coordinators' Notebook* 8 (September): 1-35.
- Myers, R.G. (1997). *Removing Roadblocks to Success: Transitions and Linkages between Home, Preschool and Primary School*.
- NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children). 1997. The Core of DAP. Retrieved on 17 June 2014 from <http://www.naeyc.org/dap/core>.
- Ngudle, A. (2011) *Preschool Teachers Take Grievances to Zuma. Pretoria News*. 3 June 2011.
- Revised National Curriculum Statement, *Grades R-9 Schools Policy Overview, English*. Department of Education, Pretoria. 2002.
- Olivier, W.A. 2013. *Reflection on the training of Teachers for the CAPS Mathematics Curriculum - A Brief Report*. http://www.samf.ac.za/documents/CAPS_mathematics_curriculum.pdf
- SAPA: *Limpopo Education Department Back in Court After Failure to Deliver Textbooks, Again* . Mail & Guardian. 31 March 2014.
- Trochim, W.M.K. (2006). *Nonprobability Sampling*. Retrieved from the Research Methods Knowledge Base, Cornell University on 10 September 2011 from <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/sampon.php>
- Walsh, G. & Gardner, J. (2005). *Assessing the Quality of Early Years Learning Environments*. Early Childhood Research Practice, Ireland.

VI.II Appendix 1 – Department Letter



To: Gauteng Department of Education

From: SJ Mahan

Re: Research Consent

I am a student at the University of South Africa, where at present I am enrolled for a research module, as part of my Masters in Education. To fulfil the requirements for the module, I need to become acquainted with various aspects of the cognitive development of children and youth. This means that I have to do research in the area of Curriculum Studies, which will require the cooperation of Grade One teachers, as my research sample, in an attempt to address the primary question guiding this project, namely what is the Grade One teacher perception of CAPS curriculum implementation in Grade R?

I hope to conduct a portion of my research at a public institution, where I also happen to be employed in the city of Pretoria, and would like to herewith request your permission to do so. The participants mentioned above will be required to commit no more than one hour per week for no longer than a three month period. This time can be taken both during and after the school day, depending upon their individual scheduling constraints and the allowances made by the school administration.

Thank you very much for helping me to reach my goal. It is valuable for me as an educator to take responsibility for my own professional development, and to contribute to the cognitive life of the many learners in South African schools.

You are welcome to contact my supervisor, Professor A Dicker (012 429 4630), if you would like more information about the goals and outcomes of my degree programme.

Sibongile J Mahan

UNISA Student Number: 42689813

VI.III Appendix 2 – Departmental Consent



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference no: D2015 / 156

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	19 June 2014
Validity of Research Approval:	19 June 2014 to 3 October 2014
Name of Researcher:	Mahan S.J.
Address of Researcher:	P.O. Box 74160 Lynnwoodridge 0040
Telephone Number:	082 636 2140; 012 344 2502
Email address:	sibongilemahan@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Tried and tested: Grade 1 teacher perceptions regarding Grade R school readiness
Number and type of schools:	ONE Primary School
District/s/HO	Tshwane South

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

Wellcap
2014/06/19

1

Making education a societal priority

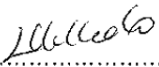
Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Dr David Makhado
 Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 2014/06/19

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
 P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
 Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
 Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

VI.IV Appendix 3 – Principal Letter of Consent



September 2014

To Mr Van Graan and LRPS Leadership,

I am a student at the University of South Africa, where at present I am enrolled for a research module, as part of my Masters in Education degree. To fulfill the requirements for the module, I need to become acquainted with various aspects of the cognitive development of children and youth. This means that I have to do research in the area of Curriculum Studies, which will require the cooperation of Grade One educators, as my research sample, in an attempt to address the primary question guiding this project, namely what is the Grade One teacher perception of CAPS curriculum implementation in Grade R?

I hope to conduct a portion of my research at a public institution, where I also happen to be employed around the city of Pretoria, namely Lynnwood Ridge Primary School, and would like to herewith request your permission to do so. The participants mentioned above will be required to commit no more than one hour per week for no longer than a three month period. This time can be taken both during and after the school day, depending upon their individual scheduling constraints and the allowances made by the school administration. In terms of the relevant ethical considerations, I will explain to the participants the purpose of the study, that participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time. I will also assure participants of their rights to privacy and confidentiality by using pseudonyms.

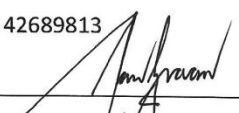
Thank you very much for helping me to reach my goal. It is valuable for me as an educator to take responsibility for my own professional development, and to contribute to the cognitive life of the many learners in South African schools. You are welcome to contact my supervisor, Professor A Dicker (012 429 4630), if you would like more information about the goals and outcomes of my degree program.

Sibongile J Mahan

UNISA Student Number: 42689813

Principal Signature: _____

School Stamp:


LYNNWOOD RIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL
PO BOX 74075
LYNNWOOD RIDGE
0040

VI.V Appendix 4 – Teacher Letter of Consent



Investigating Grade One Teacher Perceptions Regarding Grade R School Readiness

Dear Sir/Madam

You are invited to participate in a research project aimed at investigating Grade One teacher perception regarding Grade R school readiness.

Your participation in the research project is voluntary and confidential. You will not be asked to review any information that will allow your identity to be established. For the purpose of the study you, as a teacher in the South African public school system, will be requested to participate in answering questions in a questionnaire, which will require no more than one hour a week over a three month period. The findings of the research will be used in the completion of my MEd programme at UNISA, and could inform future research projects related to curriculum development across the country.

Though you are under no personal or professional obligation to do so, if you are in fact willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as 1) a declaration of your consent, 2) that you participate in this project willingly and 3) that you understand you may withdraw at any time. Under no circumstance will your, or any other participants' identity be made known to others.

Yours sincerely,

Sibongile J Mahan

082 636 2140

sibongilemahan@gmail.com

Researcher _____

Date: _____

Participant _____

Date: _____

VI.VI Appendix 5 – Research Questionnaire / Survey / Interview

Interviewer: Sibongile Mahan

Institution: UNISA

Mandate: Qualitative Research for Masters of Education Program in Curriculum Studies

Advisors: Professor A Dicker

Focus: Investigating Grade One Teacher Perceptions Regarding Grade R School Readiness

Section One – Teacher Information

1. What are your teaching qualifications?

2. How long have you worked in education?

3. Are you in fact currently teaching Grade One?

4. What other grades have you taught, if any?

Section Two – Institution Information

1. Is your school a public or private institution?

2. Is your school a preschool, primary school or a combination of both?

3. What administrative assistance does your school offer its teachers?

4. What extra support opportunities does your school offer its learners?

5. What support, in general, does the Department of Education offer your school?

Section Three – Class Demographics

1. How many learners do you have in your class?

2. How many boys, and how many girls?

3. What are their racial and linguistic backgrounds?

4. What is the general economic background of your students?

5. What are your feeder areas?

6. What is the age range of your learners?

Section Four – Curriculum Implementation

1. What support does the Department offer as far as CAPS curriculum implementation is concerned?

2. Did you receive training regarding the implementation of CAPS?

3. Did the Grade R teachers at your school receive any CAPS training?

4. What problems do you experience with Grade One learners from:

- Grade R classes at preschools?

- Grade R classes at primary schools?

5. What areas of preparedness for Grade One are covered sufficiently by their Grade R teachers?

6. Do you want to have more communication between you and these teachers? What would be the benefit for you and for them?

7. What suggestions do you have for developing better communication between schools and preschools?

8. What would you recommend to Grade R teachers regarding learner preparation for Grade One?

Section Five – Learner Readiness

Please take a moment to express your opinion regarding how well each student in your class was prepared for engaging with the CAPS Grade One curriculum by completing the following table. It provides you with the space to rate them on a scale of 1 to 10 regarding certain learning outcomes determined by the CAPS curriculum which Grade R learners were expected to have mastered before

Consent and Release

I hereby grant Sibongile Mahan, as an affiliate of the University of South Africa, permission to use all information obtained through, and contained in the above recorded interview for any academic purpose she sees fit, with no expectation of compensation or remuneration.

Name: _____

Sign: _____

Date: _____

Place: _____

VI.VII Appendix 6 – Participant Interview Schedule Responses

- **What administrative assistance does your school offer its teachers?**
 - Teacher A: “An assistant that helps with administrative tasks”.
 - Teacher B: “Grade assistants”.
 - Teacher C: “Every grade has a grade assistant five times a week”.
 - Teacher D: “We have an assistant for the grade that helps us with extra admin”.
 - Teacher E: “Grade one has one assistant that helps us with administrative work”.
 - Teacher F: “Admin staff and assistants”.

- **What extra support does your school offer its learners?**
 - Teacher A: “Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy and Educational Psychologists based at the school. Teachers that work with smaller groups, providing curriculum support, as well as School Based Support Teams”.
 - Teacher B: “Learners who are not coping could attend a variety of support classes such as Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Counselling, curriculum support classes, NILD classes and Miki Maths, all on school grounds”.
 - Teacher C: “Extracurricular support in English and Maths, retention support, NILD therapy, reading support, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy and basic remedial”.
 - Teacher D: “Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, extra support from remedial teachers”.
 - Teacher E: “Our learners are given support through Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapists and extra reading given by remedial teachers”.
 - Teacher F: “Occupational therapy, Speech Therapy, remedial teachers and reading support teachers”.

- **What support, in general, does the department of Education offer your school?**

- Teacher A: “Workshops”.
 - Teacher B: *This teacher did not have an answer to the question.*
 - Teacher C: “Departmental Workbooks and Naptosa Training”.
 - Teacher D: “Naptosa Courses”.
 - Teacher E: “Department books for the learners and training for the teachers”.
 - Teacher F: *The head had no response to this question.*
- **What support does the Department offer as far as CAPS curriculum implementation is concerned?**
 - Teacher A: “Workshops”.
 - Teacher B: “Department books for Mathematics, English and Life Skills for learners and courses for teachers”.
 - Teacher C: *No response from this teacher.*
 - Teacher D: “They offer training on a regular basis and we have policy documents”.
 - Teacher E: “We were given training. We have learner workbooks, we have the policy documents and we have the weekly prep file”.
 - Teacher F: *No response from the HOD.*
- **Did you receive training regarding the implementation of CAPS?**
 - Teacher A: “No”.
 - Teacher B: “Some. I was teaching in the Intersen Phase when CAPS was first introduced in the Foundation Phase”.
 - Teacher C: “Yes”.
 - Teacher D: “They offer training often, I am waiting for a date”.
 - Teacher E: “Yes”.
 - Teacher F: “Yes”.
- **Did the Grade R teachers at your school receive any CAPS? Training?**
 - Teacher A: “Yes”.
 - Teacher B: “Yes”.
 - Teacher C: “3 out of the 4 received training”.

- Teacher D: “Yes”.
 - Teacher E: “Yes”.
 - Teacher F: “Yes”.
- **What is the racial background of your learners?**
 - Teacher A: “Black students from a variety of South African cultures as well as an Ethiopian boy, some children come from Zimbabwe and two White students, one south African and the other American”.
 - Teacher B: “Majority are black learners”.
 - Teacher C: “Zulu, Sotho, Indian, Arabic, English, Afrikaans and Xhosa”.
 - Teacher D: “African Languages (Sotho, Zulu, SePedi, etc.)”.
 - Teacher E: “I have a multicultural class”.
 - Teacher F: *The head goes and helps out in all the classes.*
- **What is the linguistic background of your learners?**
 - Teacher A: “The majority of learners (two-thirds) speak English as a second or third language”.
 - Teacher B: “Majority have English as a second language”.
 - Teacher C: “Zulu, Sotho, Indian, Arabic, English, Afrikaans and Xhosa”.
 - Teacher D: “African Languages (Sotho, Zulu, SePedi, Afrikaans), English is their second language”.
 - Teacher E: “The learners speak a variety of African languages, English and Afrikaans”.
 - Teacher F: “Mixed”.
- **What is the general economic background of your learners?**
 - Teacher A: “Middle class”.
 - Teacher B: “Generally learners are from middle income backgrounds”.
 - Teacher C: “Average to below average”.
 - Teacher D: “Generally middle class to lower class”.
 - Teacher E: “The majority of learners are middle class”.

- Teacher F: “Middle class”.
- **What problems do you experience with Grade One learners from Grade R classes at preschools?**
 - Teacher A: “Gross motor and visual perceptual problems”.
 - Teacher B: “Learners lack self-discipline and discipline in general, can still be very playful, sometimes are not school ready in terms of maturity and understanding of own body in space, laterality etc. They struggle to make the transition from Grade R routine to Grade One routine. They have poor listening skills”.
 - Teacher C: “Not school ready and no support in place”.
 - Teacher D: “Children often come to primary schools with a backlog”.
 - Teacher E: “Occupational and Speech Therapies not tested, pencil grips not corrected. Letters and sounds taught incorrectly”.
 - Teacher F: “Poor gross and fine motor skills”.
- **What suggestions do you have for developing better communication between schools and preschools?**
 - Teacher A: “Grade One teachers visiting preschools and Gr R teachers visiting Grade One classes. Meetings/Conferences where we get together and discuss what we do in class”.
 - Teacher B: “More detailed report comments in the third and fourth terms”.
 - Teacher C: “Very good admin skills, completed profiles and end of year meetings with Grade R teachers”.
 - Teacher D: “Interviews and information forms should be detailed and tell you all you need to know about the learner”.
 - Teacher E: “Have workshops where Grade R and Grade One interact and train together”.
 - Teacher F: “Meetings, emails”.

- **What areas of preparedness for Grade One are covered sufficiently by their Grade R teachers?**

- Teacher A: "Listening to stories with interest".
- Teacher B: "Laterality, self-awareness, generally good routine and discipline, can write own name, good listening skills, can follow instructions, can count to ten and higher, has understanding of 1 to 1 correspondence, understands concepts of more or less, knows position in space, correct pencil grip, etc."
- Teacher C: "Discipline and routine, learner confidence, holding pencil correctly and sitting postures and most perceptual skills".
- Teacher D: "Colouring in, cutting, pencil grip, ABC foundation, basic skills".
- Teacher E: "Counting numbers up to 5, shapes, colours, some perceptual programmes are being followed".
- Teacher F: "Pre-reading skills".

- ***What would you recommend to Grade R teachers regarding learner preparation for Grade One?***

- Teacher A: "More structured play including fantasy (writing/reading area) and construction. Big, thick paint brushes, pencils and crayons that promotes pencil grip. Exposure to playing with South African coins.
- Teacher B: "Focus a lot on developing listening skills and perceptual skills! Encourage routine and maintain good discipline in the classroom. Plenty of practical play, encourage concept development".
- Teacher C: "Perceptual skills should be in place, good routine and discipline, as well as CAPS training".
- Teacher D: "To set a good foundation for formal learning, then we can begin earlier with the required work and do just a short section on revision".
- Teacher E: "Introduce formal classwork towards the end of Grade R so that learners get used to the idea of longer periods of work".
- Teacher F: "Focus on the all-round development of the learners".

- **What problems do you experience with Grade One learners from Grade R classes at primary schools?**
 - Teacher A: “Visual perceptual skills, pre-reading and pre-writing skills and pencil grip”.
 - Teacher B: “Generally, these learners fit better into Grade One routine and are less overwhelmed. Sometimes young, bright learners are sent to Grade One but they are emotionally not ready”.
 - Teacher C: “Discipline, routine and support are in place, formal teaching time”.
 - Teacher D: “Often children cope better in Grade One”.
 - Teacher E: “A few pencil grips incorrect”.
 - Teacher F: “Poor gross motor”.

- **Do you want more communication between you and these teachers? What would be the benefit for you and for them?**
 - Teacher A: “Yes. I sometimes feel that the Grade R teachers approach teaching too formally with children having to sit at tables and do worksheets rather than learn through play. I think if we communicated more, we could work together to help learners get the best possible education”.
 - Teacher B: “Some schools provide detailed fourth term reports which helps, some Grade R teachers already look out for learners requiring support and will start the process of Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, etc. This is very helpful”.
 - Teacher C: “Communication and admin is in place already”.
 - Teacher D: “There is enough communication in this school, in my opinion”.
 - Teacher E: “Yes. We would be able to communicate our expectations to the Grade R teachers and we would be able to discuss the importance of starting Occupational or Speech Therapy earlier”.
 - Teacher F: “Yes”.