

Exploring challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of reading
practices in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani district

by

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DECLARATION

Student number: 30622786

I declare that **Exploring challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of reading practices in the Man'ombe Circuit of the Mopani district** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledge by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

(MISS E MAKHUBELE)

DATE

DEDICATION

THIS STUDY IS DEDICATED TO MY WONDERFUL MOTHER, NW'A-JEKE, WHO IS THE PILLAR OF MY STRENGTH AND THE SOURCE OF MY INSPIRATION.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following people and organizations for their contributions to this study:

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- Above all, I thank the Lord my provider for showering me with wisdom and strength to embark on this study. It was not an easy task.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents a study exploring the challenges faced by grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the primary schools of the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District. The study seeks to investigate the challenges faced by grade 4 teachers in the implementation of reading practices in their classrooms. The aim of the study is to explore the perception of grade 4 teachers about their role in teaching reading to investigate the role of the principals and the heads of department and to recommend strategies that can be implemented to resolve the challenges faced by grade 4 teachers in the teaching of reading.

The mixed method design was adopted for the study. The target population was 20 primary schools in Mano'mbe Circuit. The questionnaires and interview schedules as instruments were used to collect data. Data from the questionnaires was analysed by means of descriptive and inferential statistics. An interview template analysis style was used whereby categories were derived from the research questions. Data was presented in the form of frequency tables, histograms and correlations (structured questionnaires) and themes and subthemes and categories as derived from the research interview questions.

The study revealed various challenges expressed by grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District. Amongst others, overcrowded of classes, lack of parental involvement, and lack of support from the department, principals and head of departments. In addition, half of the respondents cannot develop a reading lesson and a reading rubric so it is not surprising to find that learners are not able to read and more.

The findings of this study will have important implications for the literacy teachers, heads of departments, principals, curriculum advisors and learners. The discovery and revelation of the causes of the challenges faced by the grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices will set in motion a chain of events that can improve teaching and learning in our schools. The study will provide suggestions and a set of principles for teaching about the ideas and practices that promote learners' academic achievement in reading and literacy in general.

KEY WORDS

Key words: reading, instruction, literacy, curriculum, Intermediate Phase, professional development.

ACRONYMS

ANA	–	Annual National Assessment
OBE	–	Outcome-Based Education
DBE	–	Department of Basic Education
FAL	–	First Additional Language
GET	–	General Education and Training
FET	–	Further Education and Training
CAPS	–	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
NCAPS	–	National Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
LOLT	–	Language of Learning and Teaching
SPSS	–	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
NCS	–	National Curriculum Statement
LTSM	–	Learning and Teaching Support Material

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is the challenges experienced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading and writing. Reading and understanding written words are fundamental for literacy development and learning in general (Kumar, Reddy & Kam, 2005). However, since the introduction of curriculum 2005 in South Africa in 1997, reading is a challenge for all South African schools (Department of Education, 2006). Literature also reveals that reading and writing is a global challenge and governments throughout the world are implementing new strategies to improve reading and writing. This phenomenon is discussed as background information from a first world view, then from a developing world view and, finally, through an African lens, in particular, the South African education context.

On the international arena, the picture seems gloomy. For example, in the United States of America reading problems in primary schools have been associated with the fact that English is one of the most difficult languages to learn (Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2006). Furthermore, in an international comparison of performance on reading assessment, United States of America 11th grades performed very close to the bottom, behind students from the Philippines, Indonesia, Brazil and other third world nations, while in Canada researchers estimate that the prevalence of late-emerging reading disability is between 36 and 46%. Meanwhile in Britain a hundred and thirty studies have shown that 88% of below grade-level readers have significant weaknesses in cognitive skills (Lipka, 2006).

Developing countries such as Brazil, India and Chile, also have similar problems in reading. For example, in Brazil the level of reading skills is remaining stagnant (Snow, Bunns & Griffin, 1998). Reading scores of high school students, as reported by the National Assessment of Education Progress, have not improved over the last thirty years (Snow, Bunns & Griffin, 1998). While the Mathematics score has improved, reading remains stubbornly flat (Snow, Bunns & Griffin, 1998). The same studies also show that reading by Grade 12 students recently decreased. However, what caused

this decrease in reading in Grade 12 is related to poor reading in Grade 4. This study seeks to unravel why this is so.

Reading problems are also prevalent in under developed African countries like Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi (Heugh, 2008). According to Heugh (2008), the language policy and education in Southern Africa contribute to poor reading. For example, in Malawi one local language is used as a medium of instruction for only four years of early school (Ogbonnaya & Osiki, 2007). However, political changes in the early 1990s have resulted in a diminished use of African languages for political reasons (Heugh, 2008). Meanwhile, in Zimbabwe poor reading skills have become a reality for an alarming number of people.

With reference to South Africa, several studies and reports have been conducted to uncover the causes of poor reading and writing problems in schools, particularly the reading of English as it is used as the language of teaching and learning in South African schools (Department of Basic Education Report, 2010; Masola A, 2010; Schulze & Steyn, 2007; Setati, 2007; Coleman, 2004; Du Plessis & Naude, 2003). Although the study conducted by Setati (2007) was only concentrating on the poor performance of Mathematics students, it however reveals that poor English proficiency contributes to poor performance in other subjects. This study seeks to explore reading difficulties in selected primary schools in the Man'ombe Circuit, Mopani District of Limpopo Province because of the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading and writing.

Emanating from the above research studies on reading difficulties and reading assessment reports, both internationally and especially in South African primary schools, the problem of reading difficulties is explained in conjunction with the formulation of the statement of the problem for this investigation.

1.2 THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

This study was centred on the challenges encountered by Grade 4 teachers in the teaching of reading and writing in primary schools in Man'ombe Circuit of the Mopani District. This challenge was brought about by the poor reading ability of particular

Intermediate Phase learners in the primary schools. This research was significant because it will aid in the development of theory, knowledge and practice. According to Brinkley and Kelly (2003:06), a reader is regarded as actively constructing meaning and as knowing and applying effective reading strategies. Such readers have positive attitudes towards reading and read for the purposes of information acquisition as well as recreation. Meaning is constructed in the interaction between the reader and what is read, confined to a specific reading experience. Reading in itself entails that learners come along with a repertoire of knowledge, skills, cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies which they apply during reading. Of concern are the findings by the Department of Education in 2014 that the competency of South African learners in reading is far below the set milestones with regard to particular age groups (Department of Basic Education, 2014:05). The results showed that only 14% met the required milestones in language competency, 33% were just meeting the requirement slightly below the norm while 63% constituting the bigger percentage were far below the expected standard set for their age group. The time is now ripe for conducting an investigation which will contribute to the improvement of literacy performance of learners in the primary schools; hence impacting on the overall performance in all subjects and all grades.

This research was also significant for the development of this country. Reading and writing is a key to the prosperity of any country and it is generally acknowledged that reading and literacy assessments indicate the success or failure of a country's education. This study also has important implications for the instructional leaders, learners and literacy teachers. This study will provide suggestive, although not definitive evidence and a set of principles of learning about the ideas and practices that promote students' academic achievement in reading and writing. Another anticipated value of the study is that it aggregates previous relevant studies on the issues and problems surrounding reading and writing and synthesises the findings of previous studies. The study also has the potential to help the national and provincial officials who are responsible for curriculum development to make informed decisions on the implementation of the new curriculum in South Africa.

The findings and recommended strategies of this study therefore could be used to motivate and empower Grade 4 teachers, Intermediate Phase teachers and heads of

department with the best strategies for effective teaching of Literacy. The findings of this study will also enable principals to organize continuous professional development training for Grade 4 teachers and the whole Intermediate Phase in their schools. The professional development training will equip teachers with the necessary skills for promoting effective teaching and learning in their classes.

This research is therefore very important for the schools because it complements the research findings of other studies conducted in this field and also addresses the challenges experienced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading and writing. The findings of this study will also assist the national and provincial curriculum planners and developers in making relevant decisions about the implementation of the new curriculum in South Africa.

1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION

The major problem of this study is centred on the challenges encountered by Grade 4 teachers in the teaching of reading and writing in primary schools in Man'ombe Circuit of the Mopani District. This challenge is brought about by the poor reading ability of particular Intermediate Phase learners in the primary schools. A research conducted by the Department of Education in 2008 reveals that many learners of various ages and grade levels in the primary schools are not able to read and write (Department of Basic Education Report, 2010; Masola, 2010; Department of Education, 2008). The findings of the study revealed that only 14% are competent in reading and writing, 33% are slightly competent while 63% of them who constitute the majority, are completely incompetent in reading and writing. These findings are confirmed by the findings of the Southern and East Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) (2011) which revealed that those primary school children are not able to compete with other children from other countries with regard to their competencies in reading.

This problem undermines all the efforts executed by the Department of Basic Education aimed at enhancing the quality of education in South African schools, for example the training of educators and the implementation of the new CAPS curriculum. There is also a concern by educators that the curriculum is very difficult to implement because the teachers were not adequately capacitated to implement it.

Research conducted by Bot (2005:02) also revealed that educators have challenges in managing classes, adhering to a set pace and also presenting lessons. Another gloomy picture is painted in a newspaper article entitled *Classrooms in South Africa are failing our children* (Masola, 2010) which reported how language becomes a barrier to learning in the classroom. The article further highlighted the shortage of books, overcrowding and low morale of teachers. The article concluded by commenting on the status of reading and asking why South African learners are the worst performing according to the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2006) report. All these findings indicate that the introduction of the new CAPS curriculum in order to improve the quality of education has not been achieved.

Consequently, an intervention strategy, namely the Annual National Assessment (ANA) was developed and implemented to monitor the reading and writing performance of learners (Department of Basic Education, 2012:02). In 2014 the Department of Basic Education conducted a national Annual National Assessment to evaluate the performance of Grades 1 to 6 learners in reading, writing and numeracy. During the week of 16 to 19 September 2014 more than 7.3 million learners in Grades 1 to 6 and Grade 9 wrote the national assessment tests in Numeracy and Literacy (Department of Basic Education, 2014:07). This was the third successful large scale administration of the Annual National Assessment (ANA), a landmark assessment tool that annually measures progress in learner achievement in Literacy and Numeracy, focusing on the government's prioritised goal of improving the quality of education. In the summary below, the average national percentages that learners achieved in languages are indicated:

Table 1.1: Average national percentages of Grade 4 learners achieved in languages

GRADE	HOME LANGUAGE 2012	HOME LANGUAGE 2013	HOME LANGUAGE 2014
1	58	61	63
2	55	57	61
3	52	51	56
4	43	49	57
5	40	46	57
6	43	59	63
9	43	43	48

Overall performance in ANA from 2012 to 2014 shows an upward trend in performance with average percentage scores increasing annually. From the respective tables and figures it can be observed that the highest average mark in Home Language in the Foundation Phase was in Grade 1 (63.2%) and the lowest was in Grade 3 (51%). This pattern of decrease in performance from Grade 1 to Grade 3 was quite similar in three years. The table also reveals an upward trend in Grade 4 from 43% in 2012, 49% in 2013 and 59% in 2014. Grade 5 and 6 also revealed an upward trend from 40% (Grade 5) and 43% (Grade 6) in 2012, to 46% (2013) and 59% (Grade 6) in 2013 and 57 % (Grade 5) and 63% (Grade 6) in 2014. Overall, learner performance of Home Language in the Intermediate Phase and Grade 9 was comparatively lower.

The following National Grade 4 ANA results of 2012 to 2014 indicate that the South African learners still have challenges in reading and writing (Department of Basic Education, 2014):

Table 1.2: National Grade 4 ANA results of 2012 - 2014

Year	First Additional language (English)
2012	34
2013	39
2014	41

The results of 2014 bear witness to the collective commitment of the sector to quality education and improvement of performance. The overall performance in 2014 ANA shows an upward trend. The marks for English First Additional language generally stayed at low levels because it is a foreign language to all African learners. The Department of Basic Education believes that the Annual National Assessment will improve reading and writing competence of learners as well as the general quality of education. The Annual National Assessment will, furthermore, expose educators to best practices in Literacy assessment.

Educators who have gone through the educational transition following the democratisation of the Republic of South Africa have also noticed a steady decline in reading and writing standards of primary school learners (Department of Basic Education, 2008). Consequently, many educators believe that the challenges in the teaching of reading and writing in the primary schools are caused by the implementation of the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) curriculum. In 2003 the Department of Education conducted several brief in-service trainings to familiarize the teachers with the new curriculum, namely the National Curriculum Statement. Teachers received one day of training but heads of department were not trained for their role. A major challenge was that the training was insufficient and the teachers were unsure about the new curriculum. Harley and Wedekind (2004) and Taylor (2006) point out that, during training workshops, teachers (including school management teams) were not familiar with the methods of teaching the curriculum nor were school management teams in possession of specific methods of effective curriculum management. The workshops provided teachers with only a shallow understanding of curriculum principles. Consequently, teachers failed to plan for the new curriculum accordingly. Taylor (2006:08) argues that schools still struggle to teach according to the policy specifications about outcomes-based teaching and integration of learning outcomes within and across learning areas because teachers' understanding of the curriculum is still vague. What happened is that teachers were not adequately trained to implement the new curriculum effectively. Some teachers are still teaching in the 'old ways', that is, following textbooks rather than the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) policy documents for each phase as is expected and stipulated in the overarching curriculum policy.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by the following questions:

1.4.1 Primary question

Which challenges are faced by Grade 4 teachers and how do these challenges influence the implementation of effective reading practices in the Man'ombe Circuit of the Mopani District?

1.4.2 Secondary questions

- What are the experiences of teachers in teaching Grade 4 and their roles and responsibilities in teaching reading skills effectively?
- What is the current training of Grade 4 teachers and are these teachers adequately trained to teach reading skills in their classes successfully?
- What alternative strategies could be identified by teachers for improving practice and the challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of reading skills in the classroom?

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In view of the problem statement and questions of this study the following primary aim of this study is to explore the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers and how these challenges influence the implementation of effective reading practices in the Man'ombe Circuit of the Mopani District.

The study addressed the following specific objectives:

- To explore the experience of teaching Grade 4 and their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of effective reading practices in the classroom;
- To determine whether Grade 4 teachers are adequately trained to implement reading skills in their classes successfully;

- To formulate alternative strategies that could be used to empower teachers for improving practice and challenges faced in the teaching of reading skills in the classroom.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section provides a summary of the research design and methodology that were used in this study. The research design and methodology employed in this research are presented and discussed in detail in chapter three. The research design and methodology includes the following:

1.6.1 Research paradigm

Wahyuni (2012:69) defines research paradigm as a set of beliefs about the world and how it should be understood and studied. There are three types of commonly used paradigms, namely: the (a) positivist (objectivist) paradigm, (b) constructivist (interpretive) paradigm and (c) the pragmatist paradigm. I therefore believe that pragmatism is the suitable paradigm for this study because, according to Wahyuni (2012:71), “It is based on the belief that objectivist and subjectivist perspectives are not mutually exclusive”. Furthermore, I also believe that what was considered the best method in a particular study will also be the best method in understanding this research problem.

1.6.2 Research design

Mouton (2002:107) defines research design as “a set of guidelines and instructions that must be followed in addressing the research problem” while De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2002:271) define research design as “the entire process of research from conceptualizing a problem to writing a narrative”.

In this study an explanatory sequential mixed methods research design was used to explore the challenges experienced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading. In other words, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed in this research (cf. 3.3.1 Research design, Diagram 3.1).

1.6.3 Research methodology

According to Mouton (2002:35), research methodology refers to the use of various methods in a study in order to discover valid knowledge for solving a particular problem. In this study I used both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the challenges experienced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading and writing. Quantitative and qualitative samples to be used in the study were first selected. Then the participants of this study were given questionnaires to complete. Thereafter, the questionnaires were complemented by unstructured interviews. Data collection was followed by the analysis of data in which the research findings were analysed. Lastly, recommendations were provided.

As indicated above, more details on research design and methodology, namely: research paradigm, research design and research methodology are provided in chapter three (*cf. see 3.3.2.2*).

1.7 ETHICAL CLEARANCE

According to Babbie (2001:118) the concept “ethics” is a matter associated with morality. Furthermore, Babbie (2001:118) explains that “ethical guidelines are standards used by researchers to evaluate their conduct”. Ethical standards were also considered in this study. Firstly, before I conducted this research, I applied for ethical clearance from the Ethical Clearance Board of the University of South Africa. Secondly, after receiving the ethical clearance certificate from the university, I made an application to the Mopani District Senior Manager in the Limpopo Province to request permission to conduct the study in the selected schools. Lastly, after getting the permission to conduct the study, I wrote letters to the Circuit Managers and Principals of the selected schools to outline the purpose and procedures of the study and to request permission to conduct the study in their schools. The ethical consideration of the participants is described in chapter three.

1.8 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

In this section the key concepts of the study are presented and defined in order to clarify their relationship to the study.

1.8.1 Reading

According to Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko and Hurwitz (2004:38), “reading is a complex process of problem-solving in which the reader works to make sense of a text not just from the words and sentences on the page but also from the ideas, memories and knowledge evoked by those words and sentences”.

1.8.2 Instruction

Smith (2002:5) defines instruction as the “use of learning aims and objectives, subject materials, equipment, methodology, evaluation mechanisms and facilities in an instructional plan whose presentation enables learners to make progress towards specified educational goals”. Collins Thesaurus of the English Language- Complete and Unabridged Dictionary (2002) defines instruction as “the act of instructing, teaching or education, knowledge or information imparted or an item of such knowledge or information. In this study the concept ‘instruction’ will be used to refer to literacy teaching in the Foundation Phase.

1.8.3 Literacy

The concept literacy refers to the ability to read and write and the inability to read and write is called illiteracy or un-alphabetism (Soanes, 2002:526). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) defines literacy as “the skill to recognise, understand, translate, create, exchange information and compute, use printed word and written materials associated with varying contexts” (UNESCO, 2004). The two definitions imply that Literacy is important in the lives of all people and without it one cannot live a meaningful life.

1.8.4 Curriculum

Literature reveals several definitions of the concept of curriculum. According to Billings and Halstead (2012:78), the term ‘curriculum’ is derived from a Latin word “currere”, which means “to run”. Billings and Halstead (2012:78) explain that the concept has been evolving in stages or phases and over the years it has been interpreted to mean “course of study” (Billings & Halstead, 2012:78). Tanner and Tanner (1975), on the other hand, define curriculum as a “planned instructional programme designed to help learners develop and extend individual capability” while Grundy (1987) defines it as a cultural and social construction. Furthermore, Marsh and Stafford (1984:2) and Ross (2000:8) define curriculum as “a course of study”, “what is to be learned” (Duminy & Songhe, 1980:04). In this study, curriculum will mean a course of study or what is to be learned.

1.8.5 Intermediate Phase

According to Lemmer and Van Wyk (2010:133), “the Intermediate Phase is part of the educational structure of the South African education system”. Lemmer and Van Wyk (2010:133) further explain that the “National Qualification Framework (NQF), established in terms of SAQA Act of 1995, provided for the scaffolding of a national learning system that integrates learning at all levels. In South Africa, the National Qualifications Framework consists of ten learning levels. The ten qualification levels are further divided into three bands, namely:

- General Education and Training Band (GET) (Grades R-9) which consists of three phases, namely; the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3), the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) and the Senior Phase (Grades 7-9).
- Further Education and Training Band (Grades 10-12)
- Higher Education and Training Band (University degrees and diplomas) (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:133).

The various phases offer various subjects; for example, there are three learning programmes in the Foundation Phase, namely Numeracy, Literacy and Life Skills (Department of Education, 2004:28). The main focus of Literacy in the Foundation

Phase is to acquire and develop language. Home Language and a First Additional Language are offered from Grade R. In the Foundation Phase Literacy is also offered in all 11 official languages as both Home Languages and First Additional Languages (Department of Education, 2004:21). Learners are required to learn their Home Language and Additional Language. The advantages of learning two languages are captured by Lemmer and Van Wyk (2010:133) when they assert that “additive multilingualism makes it possible for learners to acquire complex skills such as reading and writing in their strongest language and learners can then transfer these skills to their Additional Language”.

1.8.6 Professional development

According to Trehearn (2010:14), “professional development has been a part of teaching since the early days of formal education and it has evolved throughout time”. Trehearn (2010:14) adds that from the onset of formal public education in the 1970s, teacher training was described by the public as “teacher education” or “in-service” and by the 1980s; it became “staff development”. Trehearn (2010:14) indicates that in the 1990s there was pressure to “professionalize” the teaching careers and this led to the formulation of the concept “professional development”. Various concepts were suggested, for example, Fullan, Hill and Crevola (2006) suggested “professional learning” as a more appropriate concept.

Dall’Alba and Sandberg (2006:384) describe professional development as “the formal courses and programmes in professional education and the formal and informal development of professional skill that occurs in the workplace”. According to Dall’Alba and Sandberg (2006:384), “the formal professional development courses may be directed either towards the people who are inexperienced and seeking to gain entry to a particular profession or toward experienced professionals who seek some form of continuing education outside their usual place of work”. The concept “professional development” is used in this study to refer to the support of educators who are teaching Literacy in the Intermediate Phase in order to improve learner performance in Literacy.

1.9 DEMARCTION OF THE STUDY

This study will be conducted in twenty primary schools in the Man'ombe Circuit in the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province. The participants of the study are forty educators from twenty selected schools. The main aim of the study is to investigate the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the teaching of reading. This study also recommends strategies that can be implemented in the effecting teaching of reading in the intermediate phase.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

I identified the following limitations of the study during the design of the study:

- This study was demarcated to one district of Limpopo Department of Education, namely Mopani District, while there are presently five districts. This demarcation limited the generalisation of the study findings to other districts.
- This study was demarcated to one circuit of the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province, namely the Man'ombe Circuit. The Mopani District consists of 24 circuits. It would have been ideal if the study were extended to more circuits.

However, all the above limitations of the study do not jeopardize the significance of the study to the teachers, learners, curriculum advisors and policy makers.

1.11 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter one

In this chapter the background to the study, problem formulation, research questions, aim and objectives of the study, research design and methodology, ethical considerations, rationale of the study, definition of concepts, demarcation of the study, limitation of the study and chapter outline are presented and described.

Chapter two

The review of literature will focus on the theoretical framework, effective teaching methods, the nature and scope of effective reading, strategies for effective reading and challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading and writing in Grade 4 classes. Various types of national and international literature will be reviewed, namely articles, journals, books, monographs and dissertations.

Chapter three

Chapter three will focus on research design and methodology of the study. In this chapter, research paradigm and design, research approaches, population and sampling, pilot study, sampling, data collection, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations will be discussed.

Chapter four

In chapter four, the thematic data analysis approach will be used to conduct qualitative analysis and interpretation. Charts and tables will be used to present, elucidate, analyse and interpret quantitative data.

Chapter five

Chapter five concludes the research report. In this chapter, the overview of the study, summary of discussion of findings and the recommendation of the study are presented.

1.12 CONCLUSION

Chapter one focussed on the background to the study, problem formulation, research questions, aim and objectives of the study, research design and methodology, ethical considerations, rationale of the study, definition of concepts, demarcation of the study,

limitation of the study and chapter outline. The next chapter will deal with the review of literature related to this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, background of the study, rationale as well as the aims and objectives of the study were formulated. This section of literature review focuses, firstly, on the theoretical framework underpinning the study, with special attention to the teacher efficacy theory, teaching and learning strategies/methods, instructional approaches, and the behavioural approach and constructivist approach. The purpose of the review of the theoretical framework is to explore how various theories will foreground the problem of effective reading at school level for this particular investigation.

Secondly, the literature study explore various research studies conducted so far in respect of the nature, scope and strategies of effective reading, challenges faced by educators in implementing reading strategies and the perception of teachers on learners' reading comprehension and skills. The purpose of this literature study is to determine "knowledge gaps" and try to uncover inconsistencies in as far as research on the concept of "reading" is concerned. Furthermore, reading is contextualised regarding inconsistencies which contribute to poor reading in the classroom, in particular, for Grade 4 learners in the Man'ombe Circuit.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is foregrounded in the social constructivist theory developed by Lev Vygotsky and the social cognitive theory developed by Albert Bandura.

2.2.1 The social constructivist theory (social constructivism)

The social constructivist theory was developed by Lev Vygotsky, who shared many of Piaget's assumptions about how children learn, but he placed more emphasis on the social context of learning. For Vygotsy, culture and social context give the child the cognitive tools needed for development. The constructivist learning theory states that

learning is an active continuous process where learners take information from the environment, construct meaning and make interpretations based on their prior knowledge and experience (Killen, 2000). Since 1997, the South African school curriculum has been based on the constructivist theory (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2011). This theory, sometimes referred to as socio-constructivism, is an eclectic theory, which essentially stems from two older theories, namely experiential theory and behaviourist theory. Constructivist teaching practices help learners “to internalise and reshape, or transform new information” (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

Constructivism is based on the belief that learners should be helped to construct knowledge that is meaningful and useful in their own lives. What is important is not so much what learners learn, but how they learn. The skills they learn are more important than the content (Jacobs et al., 2011). The constructivist approach as stated by Dunham, Well and White (2002) have learning as the key feature to construct meaning. Learning takes place as learners discuss and share problems and solutions in groups or pairs, with authentic tasks given within a meaningful context in order to promote individual learning and encourage learners to be engaged in a task. Learning takes place through collaboration, when learners discuss, share problems and solutions (Dunham, Well & White, 2002; Killen, 2000; Ankiewicz & De Swardt, 2001). The social constructivist theory promotes the learner centred approach to learning while at the same time encourages co-operative teaching. It therefore stands to reason that, through co-operative learning, learners' poor reading can be alleviated. In South Africa, the new curricula promote this approach to learning. Notwithstanding this, it however appears that the problem of poor reading in the Mano'mbe circuit is not related to this. Furthermore, the researcher could not locate studies which support the social constructivist theory, particularly on how co-operative teaching contributes to meaningful learning in the classroom. This is so because learners in these grades under study are still at the stage where it is difficult for each one of them to teach one another.

According to Wearmouth (2004:55), language cannot be separated from society and is the main instrument through which social interaction takes place. A complex set of attitudes is formed which could have an influence on the language in a teaching situation. People form stereotypes about certain language groups that influence the

way in which an individual decodes and interprets information about an individual. Because many teachers form an attitude to language, they may categorise learners as having language disabilities or difficulties, purely because of their accent or pronunciation. Learners feel demotivated because they feel they are underachieving, which may hamper their overall language development. Many experience difficulties in their literacy development, because they come from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

In 1997 the first curriculum of the democratic South Africa, based on Outcomes-Based Education, namely; “Curriculum 2005” was introduced (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:152). The educational philosophy which serves as the foundation for the new national curriculum is known as Outcomes Based Education (OBE). This philosophy is described as an approach in education in which decisions about the curriculum are driven by the outcomes the students should display by the end of the course (Harden, Crosby & Davis, 1999:08). The concept “learning outcomes” is, therefore, described as a statement or description of what (knowledge, skills and values) learners will be able to do, know or demonstrate at the end of the lesson (Department of Education, 2011). In outcomes education, the outcomes agreed for the curriculum guide what is taught and what is assessed. The educational outcomes are clearly specified and decisions about the content and how it is organised, the educational strategies, the teaching methods, the assessment procedures and the educational environment are made in the context of the stated learning outcomes (Harden, Crosby & Davis, 1999:08). The concept “assessment”, on the other hand, is a process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information to assist teachers, parents and other stakeholders in making decisions about the progress of learners (Department of Education, 2011). Assessment standards are, therefore, the criteria that are used to assess whether learners have achieved the learning outcomes.

Jansen (2003:12), tried to explain why many teachers are not able to differentiate between learning outcomes and assessment standards. Jansen indicates that:

Outcomes based education has several problems which contribute to high failure rate in schools. First, the language of innovation associated with outcomes based education is too complex,

confusing and at times contradictory. A teacher attempting to make sense of outcomes based education will not only have to come to terms with more than 50 different concepts and labels but also keep track of the changes in meaning and priorities afforded to these different labels over time.

The following is an example of Grade 4 English Reading learning outcomes and assessment standards:

Learning Objective 3: Reading and Viewing: The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts.

We know this when the learner:

- Understands in a simple way some elements of stories: title, characters, plots, role of pictures.
 - Understands in a simple way, some elements of poetry: rhyme, same sound words and words which imitate their sounds.
 - Reads for information: Reads simple maps and plans, texts, diagrams, charts and graphs, media texts.
 - Reads for information and pleasure: fiction and non-fiction, evaluates books and solves puzzles.
 - Uses reference books and develops vocabulary: dictionary
- (National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grade R-9, 2001).

A careful analysis of the assessment standards reveals that assessment standards are actually the content that should be taught to the learners and assessed.

A few months after implementation of Curriculum 2005, it was appropriately accused of being jargon-ridden and inaccessible in its discourse because its procedures for designing learning programmes were complex and sophisticated. This was partly due to poorly and overhasty introduction of the new curriculum into schools, without teachers being sufficiently prepared for the outcomes-based pedagogy.

The view of the researcher is that if the new curricula (CAPS) could give laissez faire to teachers, particularly on planning, organising and carrying out of activities within the classroom situation, poor reading can be alleviated. It is the fervent belief of the researcher that teachers who are given free roles but within the confines of the curricula can utilise their individual abilities to promote reading. Teachers are confined to plan, organise and carry out teaching within the prescribed parameters of the CAPS. The view of the researcher is that teachers are being handicapped by this confinement to provide meaningful teaching and learning in the classroom. Therefore, it is difficult for teachers to use a combination of various approaches for reading as they rush to complete the pace setter within a specified period, thus making it difficult to assist learners who lag behind in reading.

2.2.2 Social cognitive theory

The social cognitive theory was developed by Albert Bandura in 1986. The social cognitive theory posits that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment and behaviour. The social cognitive theory is based on the construct of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to the level of a person's confidence in his or her ability to successfully perform behaviour. Self-efficacy is unique to social cognitive theory although other theories have added this construct at later dates. Grounded in social cognitive theory, the construct of self-efficacy was originally formulated by Bandura (1977) within the context of self-regulatory processes that affect a person's selection and construction of environments. Self-efficacy beliefs affect one's cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes (Bandura, 1997). Implicit in Bandura's (1997) work is the assumption that efficacy is a situation-specific attitude changing with circumstances and events. Perceived self-efficacy may be developed by such variables as previously experiencing successes in specific tasks and watching others be successful at similar functions. Bandura (1997) argued that "advantageous self-precepts of efficacy which foster active engagement in activities contribute to the growth of competencies in individuals". In essence, perceived self-efficacy plays a major role in the amount of effort a person devotes to the accomplishment of a specific outcome because it is related to a person's inherent beliefs in his or her capabilities to accomplish something, regardless of actual competencies.

Emanating from the self-efficacy perspective, teacher efficacy has emerged as an important construct in teacher education over the past two decades. Wheatley (2005) defined the concept as: “*teachers’ beliefs in their ability to actualize the desired outcomes*” (p. 748). Therefore, teacher efficacy has been linked to teacher effectiveness and appears to influence learners in their academic achievement, attitude and affective growth. Scholars have shown that teacher efficacy has positive effects on *teacher effort and persistence* in the face of difficulties (Dickie 2006; Soodak & Podell 1996), *professional commitment* (Tschanne-Moran & Hoy, 2001), *student motivation* (Wigfield, 1994), and *openness to new methods* in teaching and *positive teacher behaviour* (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999). Moreover, Ghaith and Yaghi (1997) mentioned that, in addition, teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to use student-centred teaching strategies, while low-efficacious teachers tend to use teacher-directed strategies, such as didactic lectures and reading from textbooks (Dickie, 2006). Thus, the importance of teacher efficacy is well established and researched. Teachers’ sense of efficacy and reforms in curriculum has many common points (Goddard, Hoy, Woodfolk & Hoy, 2000). The changes teachers apply to their practices and adaptation to innovations require that they have a high sense of efficacy. Nevertheless, while both the implementation of reform in teacher education and teacher efficacy beliefs have been studied in depth over the years, there have been few research studies completed on the possible connection between the two. Furthermore, teacher efficacy has also been defined as “the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance” (Bernam et al., 1977), or as “teachers belief or conviction that they can influence how well students learn, even those who may be difficult or unmotivated” (Guskey & Passaro, 1994). Bandura (1977) identified teacher efficacy as a type of self-efficacy, a cognitive process in which people construct beliefs about their capacity to perform at a given level of attainment. These beliefs influence how much effort is put forth, how long they will persist in the face of obstacles, how resilient they are in dealing with failures, and how much stress or depression they experience in coping with demanding situations (Bandura, 1997).

In the light of the above definitions of teacher efficacy, it is extremely difficult for the researcher to make a logical judgement on how well prepared are teachers in the Mano’mbe circuit. It is also difficult for the researcher to verify how motivated these

teachers are in respect of implementing the CAPS curriculum. However, with the advent of CAPS, there are some efforts to advocate as far possible for teachers to get used to the objectives of curriculum. Therefore the researcher is motivated by these loopholes or “gaps” to investigate the level of teacher efficacy in respect of poor reading by Grade 4 learners in the Mano’mbe Circuit in relation to the implementation of the new curriculum. However, the efficacy of teachers in Mano’mbe Circuit is beset with a number of challenges as it seems teachers are unable to implement effective reading in primary schools. What causes this inability of the teachers to plan, organise and carry out these activities remains elusive. This study seeks to unravel and explore these challenges.

In the next paragraphs, different teaching strategies and methods are discussed in the context of this study.

2.3 EFFECTIVE TEACHING METHODS OR STRATEGIES

Teaching methods are a key to effective teaching and learning and should therefore be appropriately applied. There are two main groups of teaching methods, namely; teacher-centred methods and learner-centred methods.

(a) Teacher-centred methods

A teacher-centred method is one where activity in the class is centred on the teacher, for example, in the classroom, teacher-centred lessons are generally associated with traditional approaches to language learning, but teacher-centred activity can be useful in a variety of ways in teaching. Teacher-centred learning has the teacher at its centre in an active role and students in a passive, receptive role (Motschnig-Pitrik & Holzinger, 2002). Additionally, in the teacher-centred classroom, teachers are the primary source of knowledge, the focus of learning is to gain information as it is monitored to the student and rote learning or memorisation of teacher notes or lectures was the norm a few decades ago (Estes, 2004). According to Halperin (1994), most activities today in the vast majority of classrooms continue to reflect the older teacher-centred model of education wherein “students sit quietly, passively receiving words of wisdom being professed by the lone instructor in front of the class”.

Moreover, Bowers and Flinders (1990) describe a teacher centred model, teacher as “classroom manager” in which the learning process is likened to industrial production, within which students become “products”, and behaviours are expressions of “exit skills”, “competences”, and “outcomes”. A teacher-directed approach to learning recognises that children require achievable expectations and that the student must have a solid foundation before learning a new concept. For example, in order to learn multiplication properly, a student must understand repeated addition and grouping. This process cannot be discovered by most students without the direction of a teacher (Pedersen & Williams, 2004).

(b) Learner centredness methods

Student-centred learning, also called child-centred learning, is an approach to education focusing on the needs of the students, rather than those of others involved in the educational process, such as teachers and administrators (Student-centred learning-Wikipedia). Student-centred learning is focused on the student's needs, abilities, interest, and learning styles with the teacher as a facilitator of learning. This classroom teaching method acknowledges the student voice as central to the learning experience for every learner (Kember, 2009). Student-centred learning allows students to actively participate in discovery learning processes from an autonomous viewpoint. Students consume the entire class constructing a new understanding of learning without being passive, but rather proactive (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). A variety of hands-on activities are administered in order to promote successful learning. With the use of valuable learning skills, students are capable of achieving lifelong learning goals, which can further enhance student motivation in the classroom (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009).

Learner-centred teaching is related to “participative learning” which is referred to as learner activity, involvement of learners or active participation of learners (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2011). In classrooms where teachers employ a participative teaching approach, the teaching–learning relationships between teachers and learners are dynamic. There are times when the teacher is at the forefront and teacher-talk and teacher-activity predominate, and other times when learners are at forefront

and learner-talk and learner-activity predominate (Jacobs, Vakalisa et al., 2011). Gragg (1981) argues that anyone who is to teach another must see to it that his students listen to him in an attitude of creative receptivity. But the teacher will not succeed in leading his students to receive ideas with a lively and formative spirit unless he, himself, shows towards his students a comparable attitude of being willing to learn from them.

In implementing effective reading practices, the teacher should allow for a combination of instructional approaches. The selection of an approach should be linked to what learning outcomes are to be achieved at any given moment. There is no one best approach, but it depends on how learners' activities are structured and how they will be implemented in the classroom. The view of the researcher is that if all these approaches listed below can be applied, depending on the needs of each individual learner, the problem of poor reading can be alleviated. In South Africa, studies on the best instructional methodology that could ease the problem of reading in schools are scarce. It stands to reason that a study of this nature is necessary if we are to explore the instructional approaches best for enhancing reading in schools.

The teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches are regarded as the two basic approaches to teaching, differing mainly according to what a teacher does, how learners are involved and how the lesson is planned (Killen, 2000). The way teaching is conducted should be such that it allows the learners to learn, therefore, the learning approach should be converted into the teaching approach (Killen, 2000). Instructional approaches also require diversification in order to effectively engage all students. Furthermore, Tomlinson (2001) has written extensively on the subject of differentiated instruction, distinguishing three elements of instruction that can be differentiated, namely; content, process and product. Differentiated instruction is designed to engage all students in learning by altering the process by which students are taught and allowing choices in the content and product (Choate, 2000). Alteration in content allows for learner choice and flexibility in the content being taught and the materials being used (Choate, 2000; Tomlinson, 2001).

Modification in instructional processes allows flexibility in activities that reinforce the learner's understanding of key concepts (Choate, 2000; Tomlinson, 2001). Choice in

the product allows for a multitude of avenues in which learners can demonstrate their knowledge as a result of instruction. Teachers modify their instruction according to the learner's readiness, interest and learning profile (Choate, 2000; Tomlinson, 2001). When provided with choices, learners are able to learn through their strengths and are more likely to then take responsibility for their own learning (Dunn, DeBello, Brennan, Krinsky & Murrain, 1981). If the instruction provided by a school is ineffective or inefficient, a child's progress in learning to read will likely be impeded. Without a thorough understanding of the process involved in reading, it is difficult to design an effective reading curriculum or methods for teaching (Wolfe & Nevills, 2004). There has been little consensus on curriculum or instructional methods, resulting in huge pendulum swings with first one programme and then another promising to make all learners fluent readers (Wolfe & Nevills, 2004). However, it appears that educators are beset with challenges on the exact approach which they should pursue. The introduction of the new curriculum in South Africa with a paradigm shift from a teacher centred to a learner centred approach to teaching and learning remains a challenge to many teachers.

A study conducted by Swart and Nathanson (2011:81), in the primary schools in the Western Cape Primary, on individualised literacy intervention, revealed that there is a range of reading abilities in each grade, as well as large gaps in achievement between the lowest achievers and average readers. Swart and Nathanson (2011:80), advocate individualised instruction for learners who have difficulty with literacy learning because we cannot justify providing all children with the same kind of teaching. Supplementary interventions can relieve teachers of some of the stress of trying to teach large classes of diverse learners, while simultaneously helping individuals who are not making average progress (Swart & Nathanson, 2011:81).

Therefore, it appears that very little is known about how the paradigm shift contributes to the problem of reading in the Mano'mbe Circuit. Swart and Nathanson (2011:81) assert that without the benefit and guidance of a national research base, many South African teachers will continue holding on to over-simplified notions of learning, such as "sounding out", writing is "filling in worksheets" and "some children can't learn". Therefore, a study of this nature is essential if we are to improve reading in our schools, and in particular, Mano'mbe Circuit.

2.4 THE NATURE, SCOPE AND STRATEGIES OF EFFECTIVE READING

2.4.1 The nature of reading

Reading is composed of two main processes: decoding and comprehension. These two processes are independent of one another, but both are necessary for literacy (Wolfe & Nevills, 2004). Decoding involve being able to connect letter strings to the corresponding units of speech that they represent in order to make sense of print. Comprehension involves high-order cognitive and linguistic reasoning, including intelligence, vocabulary and syntax which allow children to gain meaning from what they read (Wolfe & Nevills, 2004). According to a report by the National Association of the Educational Progress (NAEP) (1998), thirty eight percent of fourth graders in the United States cannot read at a basic level. This means they cannot read and understand short paragraphs of the type found in a simple children's book (Lyon, 2002).

Reading in any language poses a challenge, but reading in English is particularly difficult; for example, some language systems, such as Japanese "Katakana", are based on a system where each syllable is represented by a written symbol. When these symbols are learned the child can read with relative ease (Snow, Burns & Griffins, 1998). Grade 4 learners in the Mano'mbe circuit speak Xitsonga/Shangaan. How their home language, as it was with the Japanese, affects their reading of a second language (English) in school remains unknown. This study seeks to find out if poor reading is also influenced by the fact that English is their second language.

2.4.2 The scope of reading

The scope is the subjects of a passage the author has chosen to write about, for example fractal geometry. One should be able to identify the subject of the passage fairly easily from the first paragraph, if not the first sentence, because it's the one thing the author keeps repeating over and over. But scope can be a little bit tricky; it helps about the scope as a stepping stone between the subject and the main idea. Keeping the scope in mind can help you on a number of question types, specifically the inter

broad questions and gist questions. The scope of the passage can help you identify inferences that are too broad or too narrow to be correct. According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Intermediate Phase First Additional Language (FAL) document, the main skills in the FAL curriculum are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The Policy Document for CAPS stipulates the length of text for FAL in Grade 4. In reading the recommended text types are stories, plays, poetry and social text. CAPS also advocate the following for reading and viewing: skimming of main ideas, scanning for supporting details, inferring meaning of unfamiliar words and images by using word attack skills and contextual clues.

2.4.3 Strategies of effective reading

A strategy is a plan to achieve goals. For effective reading to take place, teachers need to use different reading strategies (these reading strategies will be explained below). Reading is important because it develops the mind. The mind is like a muscle and needs exercise (Boucher & Hofman, 2011). Teachers who use cross curricular themes create active readers and writers by engaging students in authentic tasks which are defined as “ones in which reading and writing serve a function for children” and which “involve children in the immediate use of literacy for enjoyment and communication” (Hiebert, 1994:25).

Research on reading strategies indicates that good readers connect and utilize ideas and information from a variety of previous life and literacy experiences (Anderson et al., 1985). Sustained reading of interesting texts improves reading comprehension and enhances enjoyment (Fielding & Pearson, 1994). Over time, the effect is that comprehension improves as students read more (Hartman & Hartman, 1993). Therefore, to increase understanding, students should have experienced reading a variety of texts, including narrative and expository literature as well as real world materials such as broachers, magazines articles, maps and informational signs.

Teacher preparation in the use of evidence-based instruction strategies for reading – including learning strategies, classroom organization and behaviour management, is very crucial for teaching reading and writing. On the other hand, scientifically-based reading instruction is an integral part of the success of students in the general

education classroom (Holdheide & Reschly, 2008). Teacher skilled in scientifically based instruction and class organization and behaviour management have competencies to establish classrooms conducive to learning and improved results in reading (Holdheide & Reschly, 2008). Learners with disabilities struggle with reading (Whitaker et al., 2006). They frequently have difficulty with phonological awareness and phonics. They often read slowly with many errors and lack fluency. They lack strategies for quickly figuring out unknown words. There are various strategies that can promote effective reading, namely, the FISH strategy, shared reading, guided reading and Independent reading.

(a) The FISH strategy

To help learners with these difficulties the FISH strategy was developed (Whitaker et al., 2008). The FISH stands for:

- Find the rhyme (the first vowel and the rest of the word)
- Identify the rime or a word that ends like that.
- Say the rime (the word you know without the first sound)
- Hook the new onset (beginning sound) to the rime.

Learners are ready to be introduced to one particular FISH strategy when they are at the full-alphabetic stage as these strategies move them into the orthographic or consolidated alphabetic stage (Whitaker et al., 2008). The FISH strategy is taught using the same steps that are used to teach any other strategy. The teacher should introduce the strategy, provide guided practice with relatively easy words using a few known rhymes, and then provide more advanced practices using the strategy with more difficult rhymes. The following steps should be followed when using the fish strategy:

Step 1: Pre-test and obtain commitment to learn: Pre-test to determine if the learners know initial consonants, blends and diagraphs and to find out if the learners can do consonants substitution and are therefore ready to learn the strategy.

Step 2: Describe the strategy: Give a few examples of words the learners don't know. Discuss that readers need to be able to figure out new words when they read

new words. Explain that FISH is a way to figure out words that the learner does not know. Show and explain the steps in FISH. Present the mnemonic “We are fishing for new words”.

Step 3: Model the strategy: Teachers take an unknown word and model each step of the FISH strategy using the word. The teacher models the thinking process for each step, and refers to the visual chart of the steps while modelling the process.

Step 4: Verbal practices the strategy: The learners practice saying the steps in the FISH strategy until he or she can easily recite them from memory. The teacher should use various memorization strategies such as the FISH mnemonic, writing the steps, reciting the steps, creating a poster to reinforce learning the steps.

Step 5: Controlled practice and feedback: The teacher should refer frequently to the steps in the strategy and walk the learners through the process with various words gradually reducing scaffolding. The teacher should start by teaching one rhyme at a time and begin with rhymes that are easy, words such as -at, -all, etcetera. Learners should then decode many words in that rhyme family such as *bat, cat, and flat* etcetera. When learners are successful with one rhyme family, another name family should be introduced. Then the teacher should mix rhymes that learners have learned so that the learner has to use the FISH strategy to decode the words.

Step 6: Advanced practice and feedback: When a learner is successful with between 6 and 10 different rhymes, the teacher then moves the learner to using the FISH strategy with harder words, words in context, mixed onsets and rhymes, new rhymes that have not been directly taught.

Step 7: Post-test and commitment: The teacher post-tests the learners on effective use of the FISH strategy with unknown words. The teacher obtains a commitment from learners to use the strategy.

Step 8: Generalization: As the learners read and come to unknown words, the teacher prompts the learners to use the FISH strategy and watches to see that the learners use the strategy when reading without prompting.

If the learner is taught for approximately fifteen to twenty minutes per day, within four weeks most learners will be able to learn the strategy, apply it in words with the rhymes that they have been directly taught, and move to generalizing the strategy and begin to apply it with rhymes they have been directly taught (Whitaker, Harvey, Hassell, Lander & Tutterrow, 2006).

(b) Guided reading

In guided reading, the teacher supports a small group of students as they talk, read, and think their way through a carefully selected text, using, practising, and consolidating effective reading strategies. Guided reading groups usually consist of four to six students who have been taught the same reading strategies (during earlier read aloud and shared reading lessons) and who are able to read texts of a similar level with support. During a guided reading lesson, the teacher helps students consolidate the strategies they have learned, provides opportunities for students to apply the strategies as they read, supports them in applying the strategies correctly, and teaches the strategies again where necessary.

(c) Reading aloud

Reading aloud is a strategy in which a teacher sets aside time to read orally to students on a consistent basis from texts above their independent reading level but at their listening level ((Taberski, 2000:82). Read-aloud provide rich opportunities for literacy development. They also play a significant role in developing a child's love of reading, as the experience of listening to others read well is a highly motivating factor in the pursuit of becoming a good reader. Often, during an initial read-aloud session, the teacher uses a think-aloud process to introduce various reading strategies. It is important that read-aloud occur daily, using a variety of texts that cover a range of subjects, as read-aloud model both the "how" and the "why" of reading.

(d) Independent reading

During an independent reading session, students practise reading texts that are at a "just-right" level, applying reading strategies that have been modelled and taught

(Taberski, 2000:12). According to Taberski (2000:12), the teacher observes and records students' reading behaviour, then uses this information to guide instruction. Independent reading is supported by mini-lessons taught before the reading begins and by students' reflection on and discussion of their reading after the reading session ends. Purposeful and planned independent reading is therefore teacher-supported, while allowing students opportunities to work independently.

(e) Shared reading

Shared reading is an interactive approach to the teaching of reading that promotes the development of new skills and consolidates those previously taught (Hornsby, 2000:29–30). During shared reading, the teacher provides instruction to the whole class by reading a text that all students can see, using an overhead, a big book, a chart, or a poster (Hornsby, 2000:29-30). This implies that the teacher reads the text to the students, inviting them to join in at key instructional moments and the same text can be revisited several times for a variety of instructional purposes.

(f) Reading comprehension

According to Keene and Zimmerman (1997: 22) reading comprehension – the process of making sense of text – is a complex, multifaceted activity that calls on the reader's thinking and problem-solving skills. Keene and Zimmerman (1997:22) indicate that thoughtful readers interact with text by retrieving prior knowledge and experience as they read and by comparing and contrasting what they already know with what they are reading to discover the author's intended message. They monitor their own reading: they know when they understand what they are reading and when they do not, and they recognize why comprehension breaks down.

In South Africa the Department of Basic Education's Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) policy encourages learners to learn more than one language (DoE, 2006). It also encourages them to use the language that they best understand as the language of learning and teaching. The school governing bodies (SGB) must decide on the language of learning and teaching in a school. The language used will depend on the preference of the majority of learners in the school and the ability of the school

to teach in the preferred language (DoE, 1998). In addition, the SGB needs to indicate how it will promote multilingualism in the school (DoE, 2006).

However, evidence in the Status of the Language of Learning and Teaching Report, 2010, shows that teaching learners in their home language, especially in the foundation years, is linked to improved educational outcomes (Department of Basic Education, 2010). The Language Education Policy in South Africa seeks to maintain the use of home languages, especially in the early years of learning, while providing access to additional languages (Department of Basic Education, 2010). The report analyses the patterns and shifts in the status of language in schools: In 2007, for the majority of learners, isiZulu was the home language; isiXhosa was the language at home for 20% of learners and 10% spoke Afrikaans at home and 7%, English. Despite this, the majority of learners (65%) were taught in English in 2006 and the second most common language of learning was Afrikaans (12%). This was followed by isiZulu at 7% and isiXhosa at 6%. This trend, however, does not correlate to the Foundation Phase where the results are more encouraging. The results from these reports were that 23,4% of learners were taught in isiZulu; 21,8% in English; 16,5% in Xhosa; 9,5% in Afrikaans and 8,3% in Sepedi. In reference to the mentioned figures in the report, between 1998 and 2007 the number of Grade 1 learners being taught in English declined, while those learning in Zulu and Afrikaans increased. Grade 2 and 3 are similar but English as the medium of instruction is marginally higher at 23,8% than isiZulu at 21,7%.

The above strategies look good but very little is known if teachers in the Man'ombe Circuit have been exposed to them. This study seeks to explore if these strategies can improve reading in primary schools.

2.5 CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING READING STRATEGIES

There are various challenges faced by teachers in implementing reading strategies. One of the major challenges is lack of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to individual's judgements and perceptions about whether they are capable of doing well and accomplishing a task (Bandura, 1997). Reading self-efficacy refers to individuals'

judgement or self-evaluation about their ability to do well on reading activities such as reading a book, or reading a passage (Schunk & Pajares, 2000). Reading self-efficacy has been found to correlate positively with different measures of reading such as reading comprehension, breadth of reading and amount of reading outside of school (Vesely, 2000).

Teachers felt frustrated in implementing reading strategies because of heavy workloads. As they first had to teach the language and vocabulary for specific content, they found it impossible to complete the syllabus for the year. Also having learners in the class with better English abilities, teachers reported having to teach on diverse language and academic levels (Du Plessis & Naude, 2003). Teachers reported being required to give extra attention to learners who were not keeping up, as well as adequately challenging stronger learners in order to ensure that all learners in their class had equally effective education (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). Large numbers of learners in their classes increased the workload in all teaching areas such as marking and preparation of lessons, leaving teachers feeling over-worked and resentful.

Parents' limited involvement with their children's school work further is another challenge teachers are facing in implementing reading strategies. However, some studies reported that 76% of teachers tried to collaborate with parents of learners. It emerged in the focusing groups that, despite trying to involve parents, few responded (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). Teachers were aware of the benefits of encouraging parents to use their first language when helping children with homework as well as creating opportunities for children to listen and interact in English (Dawber & Jordaan, 1999). Sometimes parents could not assist their children's school work as they themselves did not understand English.

Socio-emotional problems associated with learning in a language that is not their first language meant learners lost their home language and culture, for example, teachers felt that Xitsonga first language learners lost their first language vocabulary by replacing some words with English equivalents. This could be the effect of first additional language learners not using their first language for high level cognition (Morrow, Jordaan & Fridjhon, 2005) or due to the predominant use of English in the media and in urban areas (Vesely, 2000).

Discipline and behaviour problems amongst learners due to large class sizes are another challenge teachers are facing in implementing reading strategies. However, in some studies it is indicated that thirty-four percent of teachers frequently experienced discipline problems with learners with large classes being notable more difficult than small classes, due to limited comprehension skills in learners and cultural mismatches between them and teachers (Du Plessis & Naude, 2003; Pludderman et al., 2000; Schulze & Steyn, 2007).

Lack of support by the Department of Education is another challenge educators are facing in implementing reading strategies. Teachers need a greater availability of support teams (Department of Education, 2001) for learners who need them. These are seen as under-staffed and not always available. Teachers need workshops and training for effective reading. Although they had attended workshops on teaching English as First Additional Language, teachers wanted to observe practical demonstrations on how to implement the strategies with their own learners (Wadle, 1991). Lack of resources also contributes in implementing reading strategies. Fundamentally, teachers need basic resources for their classrooms. Owing to their social circumstances, not many learners have their own stationary and unless educators provided out of their own pockets, they are unable to do creative activities with learners (O'Connor & Geiger, 2005).

The majority of learners in South Africa are bi- or multi-lingual, and attend school in a language that is not their first language (Pan South African Language Board (PANSALAB), 2000). These learners are frequently inappropriately referred for speech-language disorders (Crago Eriks-Brophy, Pesco & McAlpine, 1997). Therefore English second language learners are being pathologised because educators may interpret language differences as deficiencies (Crago et al., 1997). These problems also affect teachers in the Mano'mbe Circuit in implementing reading strategies as learners start using English as medium of instruction in Grade 4, hence mother tongue was the only language used from Grade 1 to Grade 3.

From the above studies looked into concerning the challenges faced by teachers in implementing reading strategies, it has emerged that heavy workload (Du Plessis and Naude, 2003), overcrowding (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009), parents' limited involvement

with their children's school work (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009), not using their first language for high cognition (Morrow, Jordaan & Fridjhon, 2005), discipline and behaviour problems amongst learners (Du Plessis & Naude, 2003; Pludderman, Mati & Mahlahela-Thusi, 2000; Schulze & Steyn, 2007) and lack of support by the Department of Education (Department of Education, 2001) are the main areas of concern.

These challenges have proved to be a thorn among many teachers; however, there are no studies conducted in the Mano'mbe Circuit addressing all of the above challenges. Therefore, how these challenges contribute to inability of teachers to implement reading strategies in the Mano'mbe Circuit, thus impacting on poor reading amongst learners in Grade 4, remains unknown. This study seeks to explore if these challenges have an impact on poor reading in the Circuit. This is part of the problem statement.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Chapter two dealt with the literature review with special attention on the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The purpose of the review of literature was to shed light on various approaches and strategies implemented to improve the problem of reading in primary schools. The review also looked into various studies done so far in respect of the nature, scope and strategies of effective reading, challenges faced by educators in implementing reading strategies and the perception of educators on learners' reading comprehension and skills.

The purpose of this review was to explore inconsistencies in studies done on reading and contextualise how these inconsistencies contribute to poor reading in the classroom. It has emerged from the review that there are some gaps in the studies done pertaining to poor reading.

In the next chapter, the researcher will focus on the empirical investigation to research methodology which will include the research paradigm, research design, data collection instruments, ethical considerations and reliability and validity of the research instruments.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter (02) focussed on the review of the literature on challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading in primary schools. I reviewed various sources in order to learn how other researchers have dealt with the challenges experienced by Grade 4 teachers. This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the research design and methodology that I used to answer the following research questions that guide this study:

- (a) What are the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District?
- (b) What are the perceptions of Grade 4 teachers about their role and responsibilities in teaching reading skills in the classroom?
- (c) What is the current training of Grade 4 teachers regarding teaching effective reading skills in the classroom?
- (d) Which strategies can be implemented as a remedy or to resolve the challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of reading skills in the classroom?

The main aim of this study is to explore the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District. This study is also guided by the following research objectives:

- To explore the experience of teaching Grade 4 and their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of effective reading practices in the classroom;
- To determine the current status of training of Grade 4 teachers regarding teaching effective reading skills in the classroom.
- To recommend strategies that can be implemented to remedy or resolve the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the teaching of reading skills.

In order to realise the aim and objectives of this study, I formulated an action plan which will assist me in the realisation of the goals and objectives of this study. The action plan of this study, which I refer to as research design and methodology, comprises a description on the research paradigm, research questions, research design, sampling, the data collection methods and the methods for data analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Wahyuni (2012:69), a “research paradigm is a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs on how the world is perceived which then serves as a thinking framework that guides the behaviour of the researcher”. In other words, a research paradigm is a set of beliefs about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Morgan (2007:49) adds that the philosophical or epistemological paradigm influences and informs the researcher’s decision in terms of research questions and research objectives, which inform how the research should be conducted. As indicated in section 3.1 above, research questions and objectives give the direction that should be taken by the researcher. In order to have a very clear direction of the study, Creswell and Piano Clark (2007:21), emphasize that the research should be based on a paradigm that clarifies the study. The implication here is that researchers must consider the interaction of the various paradigms before conducting research.

Researchers have discovered that there are three commonly employed paradigms, namely the positivist (objectivist), constructivist (interpretive) and pragmatist paradigms. Neuman (2000:27) indicates that positivism (objectivism) and constructivism (interpretivism) are the two main paradigms utilized in educational research. According to Creswell (2009) positivists believe that different researchers observing the same factual problem will generate a similar result by carefully using statistical tests and applying a similar research process in investigating a large sample. On the other hand, Wahyuni, 2012:71) explains that constructivism or interpretivism is based on the following principles:

- A belief that reality is constructed by social factors and people’s perceptions of it. This implies that in constructivism individuals with their own varied

backgrounds, assumptions and experiences contribute to the construction of reality.

- That constructivism is associated with subjectivity and that social reality may change and can have multiple realities. What it means is that there are many explanations of the causes of a particular problem.
- The purpose of constructivist research is making meaning by engaging the world, while positivist research is concerned with the verification of measurable, objective and factual data.
- That meaning is created by means of a partnership between the researcher and the participants, during the research process.

The research paradigm adopted in this study was “Pragmatism”, which is a combination of constructivism and positivism.

Both positivism and constructivism were used in this study to explore the challenges experienced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading. The third research paradigm used in this research is called ‘pragmatism’. Pragmatism was first used by three American scholars, namely John Dewey, Richard Rorty and Donald Davidson (Maree, 2011:265). According to Wahyuni (2012:71), pragmatism believes that objectivist and subjectivist perspectives are not mutually exclusive because what works best for understanding a particular research problem is considered the best method.

3.3 RESEARCH CONTEXT

This study was conducted in twenty selected primary schools in the Man’ombe Circuit of Mopani District in Limpopo Province. There are twenty nine circuit offices in the Mopani District. Mopani District is one of the five district municipalities and it consists of five municipalities, namely; Greater Letaba, Greater Giyani, Greater Tzaneen, Ba-Phalaborwa and Maruleng Municipalities (Mopani District Municipality, 2013/14). The Head Office of Mopani District Municipality is Giyani. The total area of Mopani District Municipality is 20, 011 Km² with a population of 1,147356. The racial make-up of the population is 98.4% Black Africans, 0.1% Coloured, 0, 2% Asiatic and 1.3% White (Mopani District Municipality, 2013/14). Mopani District has 306 primary schools with 172 914 learners. Almost all English Second language learners in Mopani District of

Limpopo Province are Sepedi and Xitsonga first language speakers. The English Language Proficiency (ELP) of the learners is very limited because they only speak English in the classroom.

A research conducted by the Department of Education in 2010 revealed that many learners of various ages and grade levels in the primary schools are not able to read and write (Department of Basic Education Report, 2010). The findings of the study revealed that only 14% are competent in reading and writing, 33% are slightly competent while 63% of them who constitute the majority, are completely incompetent in reading and writing. The problem is that there is too little sustained and meaningful exposure to English outside the classroom for most of these learners. They play with learners who speak different indigenous African languages at home. Through my experience in teaching English Second language, I have observed that whatever little progress was being made at school was undone at home because learners revert to their mother tongue. These learners speak a few words in English, do not perform well in tasks, tend not to do their homework and do not participate in class activities. The learners also experience difficulties in areas of reading, reading comprehension and spelling. Their English proficiency is not adequate for the purposes of formal learning and, as a result, they do not succeed or perform well.

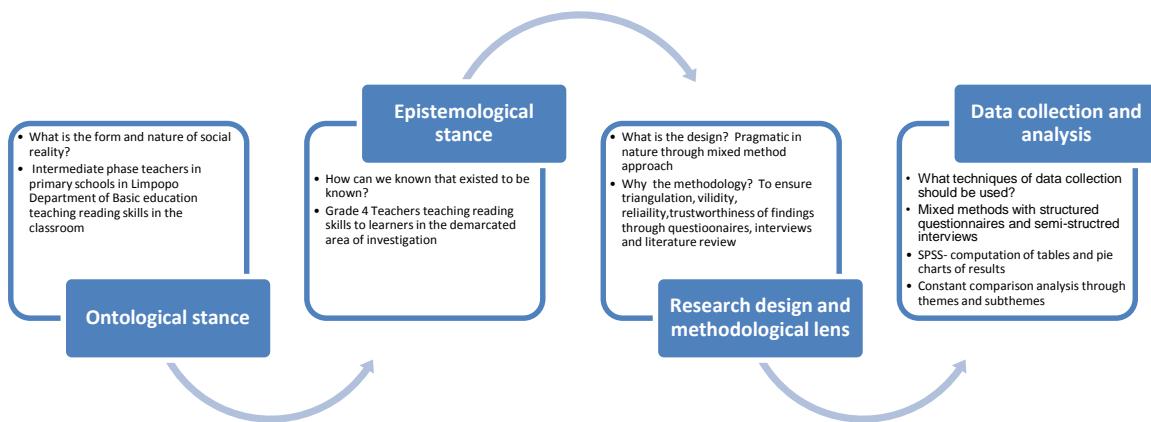
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.4.1 Research design

The concept research design is defined by Mouton (2002:107) as “a set of guidelines and instructions that must be followed in addressing the research problem.” This view is supported by De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2002:271) who define research design as “the entire process of research from conceptualizing a problem to writing a narrative”. Another research expert, Du Plooy (2001:81) indicates that research design indicates the subjects involved, place and time on which the study will be conducted (Du Plooy, 2001:81). The three definitions indicate that a certain plan should be followed in every research and that this plan should be followed throughout the research process. The research design of this study was determined by the research approach of the study (See diagram 3.1).

According to Maree (2011:257), there are three recognized approaches for the procedures for conducting research, namely; quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches. Maree (2011:257) further explains that the quantitative and qualitative approaches are well established in the social and behavioural sciences and mixed methods approaches are growing in prominence. This section will focus on clarifying the two research approaches. In this study I used both the quantitative and qualitative approaches (mixed method) to explore the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading and writing in selected schools of Mano'mbe Circuit in the Mopani District (Diagram 3.1).

Diagram 3.1



3.4.1.1 Quantitative approach

Considering my research paradigm, research questions and aims and objectives of the study, this study is both quantitative and qualitative. There are many definitions of quantitative research. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) describe quantitative research as “a type of approach which is deductive in nature”. Something that is deductive in nature, works from the more general to the more specific. This implies that if something is true of a class of things in general, it is also true for all members of that class. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), the quantitative approach “is generally used by researchers to test theories and hypothesis as well as to examine the

correlation among variables". In other words, we predict what the observations should be if the theory were correct. Furthermore, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) assert that this can be "useful in the establishment of cause and effects as well as the replication and generalization to the population of the study group". In his discussion of the quantitative approach, Van Rensburg (2010:85) describes the quantitative approach as "a formal, objective and systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the phenomenon under investigation". Such an investigation requires the researcher to collect data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data.

The function of quantitative approach is described clearly by Creswell (2003:02). A quantitative approach is used chiefly to test or verify theories or descriptions, select variables to study, explain variables in questions or hypotheses use statistical standards of validity and reliability, and to employ statistical procedures for analysis (Creswell, 2003:02). The quantitative approach makes observations more explicit, easier to aggregate, compare and summarize data, and it opened up the use of statistical analyses ranging from simple averages to complex formulae and mathematical models (Babbie, 2004:27). In this study, I used predetermined quantitative research instruments to obtain numerical data about the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading and writing in the selected schools of Man'ombe Circuit. Statistical data analyses were also used to analyse the numerical data about curriculum guidance and support systems.

3.4.1.2 Qualitative approach

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003:10), the word 'qualitative' implies "an emphasis on the qualities of entities and processes and on meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency". Denzin and Lincoln (2003:10) add that "qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationships between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry." According to Babbie (2004:26), "the distinction between quantitative and qualitative data in social research is the distinction between numerical and non-numerical data; for instance, when you say someone is ugly, you have made a qualitative assertion. When you say he or she is 'a size 9', you

are attempting to quantify your qualitative assessment". Streubert Speziale 7 Carpenter (2003:15-17) identify the following principles of qualitative approach:

- Believing in multiple realities;
- A commitment to identifying an approach to understanding that supports the phenomenon under study;
- Being committed to the participants' viewpoints;
- Conducting the research in a way that limits disruption of the natural context of the phenomenon under study;
- Acknowledgement of the participants in the research process; and
- Reporting data in a literary style rich with participants' commentaries.

Research experts indicate that various research methods are used in qualitative research. For example, Brynard and Hanekom (2005:02) indicate that "qualitative research produces descriptive data – generally people's own written or spoken words". In the qualitative approach, we use literature and theory to understand what is going on in the field and to discover theoretical perspectives and concepts and data collection takes place by means of interviews and observation (Hodkinson, 2000:13). In this study I used the qualitative approach to understand the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading and writing in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District.

3.4.1.3 Mixed method approach

Due to the word "mixed", a mixed method approach is generally defined as an approach which uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This is confirmed by research experts Tashakkori and Cresswell (2007) who contend that "the use of mixed methods entails the employment of both quantitative and qualitative methods and approaches in a study". A mixed method approach was used in this study because both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. Two research approaches were used in this study because many research experts advise researchers not to use one research approach in a study. Cresswell (2008), for example, warns researchers that one type of research approach cannot provide enough answers to a research problem. The mixed method approach is also called the 'blended approach' (Thomas,

2003), the ‘integrative approach’ (Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004), ‘multi-methods research’ (Hunter & Brewer, 2003) and ‘triangulation’ (Sandelowski, 2009). The mixed method approach was preferred in this study because it has several advantages in research. According to Bryman (2007), the mixed method approach produces high quality results while Curry et al. (2009:1442) recommend the use of a mixed method approach because it is capable of increasing the quality of the results. Another advantage of a mixed method approach is that it assists the researcher to look at the research questions from various angles (Cresswell, 2012). Furthermore, Cresswell (2008) adds that the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches enrich research findings. This is confirmed by Wheeldon (2010) who indicates that “mixed methods establish new ways of collaboration while making provision for multiple ways of communicating meaning”. The above definitions and arguments about the mixed method approach convinced me to use the mixed method approach in this study to explore the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading in the Man’ombe Circuit of the Mopani District.

There are various ways of using the mixed method approach in a study. According to Cresswell (2009), using mixed method research “entails the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data and this can be done sequentially or concurrently”. Cresswell (2009) adds that sequential implementation may be explanatory or exploratory. In explanatory sequential research the investigator collects quantitative data and then collects qualitative data to help elaborate on the quantitative results. In exploratory sequential research the investigator gathers qualitative data to expatiate on the relationships found in the qualitative data (Cresswell, 2009). In concurrent research the investigator gathers qualitative and quantitative at the same time and compares data to look for similar findings (Morse, 2003:125). The two concepts, namely, exploratory and concurrent research, indicate that the researcher has several options regarding the priority of the research; for example, the researcher may give the same priority to both methods or could emphasize one method over another. In this study, I will first conduct the quantitative component of the study by using the questionnaires. Starting research by first using the quantitative component of mixed methods is recommended by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:34), who assert that “the initial quantitative research can aid in the identification of items and scales to help develop a qualitative instrument”. Thereafter, a qualitative research was

conducted using interviews. Using interviews has many advantages in research. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:34), “interviews assist the researcher to obtain in-depth data and descriptive data of the participants’ experiences of the problems”.

Another important feature of the mixed method approach is the use of research tools. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007: 40-41), there are two important research tools that are used in mixed method research, namely; a notation system and visual diagrams. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007: 40-41) further explain the use of the abbreviations and signs used in mixed method. QUAN or QUAL are abbreviations used to indicate whether the method is quantitative or qualitative. The notation system makes use of a plus sign (+) to show that data are collected at the same time. The arrow (→) is used to indicate that data are first collected for one project and once this project is complete, data are collected for the second project. Upper case letters (QUAN or QUAL) are used to indicate priority given to a particular method. The secondary method is written in lower case (that is, quan or qual) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007:41). QUAN+QUAL indicate qualitative and quantitative data collected concurrently. QUAN→qual entails that quantitative data are collected first, followed by qualitative data collection. In this study, QUAN→qual notation was used, because the quantitative approach was the dominant one and was the first to be used.

An explanatory sequential mixed method design was used in this study to explore the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading and writing in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District. An explanatory sequential mixed method design is a design in which qualitative data build on the results from quantitative data. This is based on Tashakkori and Creswell's (2007) postulation that the explanatory design could reveal new information which the researcher didn't expect to come from the study. Plano Clark (2010) further explains that it is possible to determine the mixed method approach at the start of the research process if the researcher had initially decided to mix qualitative and quantitative approaches. However, in an emergent design, the research methods emerge during the research process. In this study, I used a fixed method design because I had already decided to use the mixed method approach in order to validate the study. I preferred the fixed method design because

it has a straight forward structure and it allowed me to use the two methods in two separate stages and it also allowed me to collect one type of data at a time.

3.4.2 Research methodology

There are various definitions of research methodology and Wahyuni (2012:71) defines it as “a set of specific procedures, tools and techniques to gather and analyse data within the context of a particular paradigm”. This definition is confirmed by Soanes (2002:565) who defines it as “a system of methods used in a particular field to reach a valid and reliable perception of phenomena, events, processes or issues at many different levels”. In other words, research methodology is a system of methods to be used in a particular field to reach valid and reliable findings about a particular problem. Before collecting data, a sample was selected from the population.

3.4.2.1 Population and sample

All educators who teach Literacy in the Intermediate Phase are the population of this study. A population of a study is defined by Van Rensburg (2010) as “the entire group of persons or set of objects and events the researcher is interested in gaining information and drawing conclusions about”. The sample of the study was selected from the population. A sample is a group of people that I selected from the population to participate in the study and sampling refers to a process of selecting units, for example, subjects, from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they were chosen (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:129).

There are various methods that can be used to select a sample of the study. In this study, I used purposive sampling to select the sample of the study. Purposive sampling is described by Schultze (2002:35) as a method used to select a sample with a specific purpose in mind (Schultze, 2002:35). In this study, I preferred purposive sampling because it allowed me to select the participants on the basis of my judgement about which ones would be the most useful or representative. A total of 40 educators from the Mano'mbe Circuit, who teach in Grade 4 in 20 schools were purposively chosen as a sample for the study.

3.4.2.2 Pilot study

In this study a pilot study was conducted with five teachers from a local primary school. A pilot study is defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:206) as a small scale study in which a small sample of the population is used, but not the same group that will eventually form part of the sample group in the actual research. The function of a pilot study is, therefore, to test logistics and gather information prior to the larger study in order to improve the quality and efficiency of the study. This view is confirmed by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) who indicate that a pilot study is necessary as a check for bias in the procedures, the interview and the questions. At the end of the pilot study, the participants were requested to freely give their comments and criticism about the study.

In this study the pilot study assisted me:

- to record instances where the participants appeared to be uncomfortable and where they did not fully understand the questions;
- by revealing certain deficiencies in the design of the research procedure which I addressed before the research started;
- to establish the face validity of the instruments and to improve questions, format and the scales.

3.4.2.3 Access to the sites

Before conducting the study, it is important to request permission to enter the research sites and to conduct research. This is confirmed by Creswell (2009:148), who asserts that “before a researcher begins with research, it is important to gain access to research or archival sites by seeking the approval of gatekeepers”. In this study I first contacted the head office of the Department of Education in Giyani to give them a detailed explanation about the research and to request permission to conduct the study. Thereafter, I contacted the selected teachers to explain to them in detail about the purpose of the research and also requested them to participate in the study. I was very fortunate that all the selected teachers volunteered to participate in the study.

3.4.2.4 Data collection

The following research methods were used to collect data:

(a) Literature review

In this study I conducted a literature review to shed light on challenges experienced by teachers in teaching reading and writing in Grade 4. In the literature review of this study, I reviewed various writings such as the articles, journals, major books, monographs and dissertations published nationally and internationally.

To supplement the literature review, I conducted a qualitative and quantitative empirical investigation.

(b) Survey method

A survey method of investigation was used in this study to collect data. Van Rensburg (2010) describes the survey method of data collection as “a systematic collection of specific information obtained through asking a sample of respondents the same questions at a particular point in time”. Before conducting the study, I designed two relevant instruments that I used to collect the data, namely; a semi-structured interview schedule and semi-structured questionnaires.

(i) The semi-structured questionnaire

In this study, semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data. Van Rensburg (2010) defines a questionnaire as “a printed document that contains instructions, questions and statements that are compiled to obtain answers from the respondents”. Basit (2010) adds that “questionnaires are also designed mainly to gather numerical data or data that can easily be converted into numerical values”. In this study the QUAN→qual notation was applicable because the quantitative approach was the dominant one and was used first. In this study, I designed and administered semi-structured questionnaires to the selected Grade 4 Literacy teachers. I requested the

respondents to select an answer from among a list provided in the questionnaire and also to respond to some open ended questions.

A questionnaire is a very useful instrument for gathering information in a study as it gives the researcher a chance to collect information from the respondents about their attitudes, personal history, perceptions and many other things (Campbell, MacNamara & Gilroy, 2004:146). In this study, I preferred questionnaires because they:

- were relatively economical in their design and implementation,
- had the same questions for all subjects,
- ensured anonymity,
- were able to produce very rapid turn-out in data collection;
- eliminated my subjective bias, and
- the respondents had adequate time to think through their answers.

(ii) Semi-structured interviews

The second research method used in this study is the semi-structured interview. Brynard and Hanekom (2005:32) define an interview as “*a method of collecting data that allows the researcher to ask questions of the respondents*”. According to Brynard and Hanekom (2005:45), there are two main types of interviews, namely; structured and unstructured interviews. Brynard and Hanekom (2005:45) indicate that “in structured interviews, the questions, order and wording, and their sequence are fixed and identical for every respondent while in unstructured interview; the interviewer does not follow a rigid structure, but covers as much ground on a given topic with the respondent”.

I preferred to use a structured interview in this study because:

- it was able to supply me with additional and more detailed information;
- it enabled me to establish relationships with the participants to obtain richer information to supplement the survey;
- it allowed me to interpret the findings of the study against the insights of the participants.

In this study, I used an interview schedule to conduct the interview. An interview guide or schedule is a list of questions that guide the interviewer through the interview. In this study I preferred a semi-structured interview because it enabled me to define the themes to be discussed and to make comparisons between the various interviewees. With permission from the interviewees, a tape recorder was used to record all the responses of the interviewees. I started the interview by introducing the topic to the interviewee. I asked the participants questions in order to gather information about the participants' experiences, understandings and feelings, followed by intense probing of the participants for deeper meaning and understanding of the responses. The participants answered the questions and they were allowed to speak freely. I also guided the discussion to ensure that all the questions were covered.

3.4.2.5 Validity and reliability of the study

In this study I ensured the validity of the study by, firstly, spending extensive time in the field. I met the participants for several days to discuss the study, clarify what they didn't understand about the study and, in the end, asked them the interview questions. Secondly, the use of the mixed method approach ensured the trustworthiness and credibility of the study and this is called triangulation. Lastly, I ensured trustworthiness and credibility of this study by member checking. The checks relating to the accuracy of the data took place "on the spot" during the interviews and at the end of the interview to check that their words matched what they actually intended. I also allowed each interviewee to listen to the tape recorder and established whether their meanings had been accurately captured.

The reliability of the investigation was also ensured. The term 'reliability' means that measurements made are consistent and if the same experiment is performed under the same conditions, the same measurements will be obtained (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005:41). To calculate the reliability of the items in the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.7$) was used. In this study, reliability of the questionnaire (Section B = 0.789; Section C = 0.802; Section D = 0.798) was achieved by subjecting the instruments to a computed test. The computed results indicated that the questionnaire is $\alpha = 0.796$ reliable. The aim of the pilot study was to determine

possible flaws in terms of ambiguity and the possibility of repetition of questions. At the end of the pilot study, I determined if there was a need to refine some research questions.

3.4.2.6 Data analysis

The last phase of the research process is called “data analysis”. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008:01) data analysis refers to “a process of examining and interpreting data in order to derive meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge”. Furthermore, Baxta and Jack (2008:556) assert that “the collection of data analysis can increase the level of quality in the research findings”. After conducting interviews and administering questionnaires, I started the data analysis and interpretation process with the aim of extracting all the information that was related to the study.

In this study I used a programme called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), to edit code and analyse the quantitative data collected by semi-structured questionnaires. I preferred the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) because it is relevant to my research and it is easy to use. The results were then expressed in statistical terminology and explained through descriptive statistics. Thereafter, I presented the findings in the form of frequency tables (cross-tabulations), histograms and pie charts.

After analysing and interpreting quantitative data, I started with qualitative data analysis using the Tesch method of qualitative data analysis (Cresswell, 2009:186). Firstly, I transcribed all the data collected through the interviews. Secondly, I read through and interpreted all the transcripts several times in order to get a clear understanding. While reading through the transcripts, I jotted down important facts in the margin. Thirdly, I put together similar facts, gave them a topic and then put together similar topics. All the topics of data were converted to codes which I wrote next to the appropriate segments of text. Fourthly, the topics were given the most descriptive name and then converted into themes or categories. Finally, I analysed and interpreted the interrelationships between categories.

3.4.2.7 Adhere to plagiarism requirements: similarity report

It is compulsory that all chapters are run through plagiarism programme as a deterrent measurement to curbed copying of an author's work without acknowledgement. The chapters were run through a plagiarism programme, *Turnitin.com*, to detect possible copying of similar work of authors without any referencing.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Babbie (2001:118), "ethics is a matter associated with morality and ethical guidelines serve as standard which forms the basis for the research to evaluate one's conduct". For the purpose of this study, the researcher complied with the following most important ethical standards of research described by Babbie (2007:118), Bless and Higson-Smith (2010:100) and Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell (2006:201):

- (a) Equitable selection:** All efforts were made to ensure that the research did not discriminate among individuals in the population by using random selection of the participants.
- (b) Informed consent:** I provided complete information about all aspects of the study to all the five participants. All the participants were invited to a meeting where the whole research project was discussed. All the participants were also requested to sign a consent form. I also informed the participants that this study is part of my studies for master's degree at the University of South Africa and that all the findings will be used for academic purposes only.
- (c) Voluntary participation:** In this study, all the teachers were not forced to participate. All the teachers were told of their freedom of participation. The teachers were, therefore, given enough time to decide whether they intend to participate in the study or not. In the end, it was satisfying to note that all the selected teachers decided to participate in the study.

- (d) **Right to privacy (confidentiality):** In this study the privacy of the participants was ensured by not using the names of all the participants and the schools. In addition, the researcher ensured that all the information collected during the interviews was kept in a safe place. All the hard data were stored in a locked cabinet and the data were destroyed after completion of analysis. All electronic data were stored on a computer requiring password access.
- (e) **Minimisation of risk to participants:** I also assured the participants that their participation in this research would not cause them any physical discomfort, humiliation and emotional stress.

I met all the educators who participated in the study to explain my research. In accordance with ethics rules, I explained to them that there was no need for special arrangements during data collection that might interrupt their normal teaching lessons as the questionnaires were to be completed after working hours.

3.6 SUMMARY

Chapter three focused on research design and methodology of the study. In this chapter, research paradigm and design, research approaches, population and sampling, pilot study, sampling, data collection, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations were discussed. Data analysis and interpretation will be presented in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this master's dissertation is to explore the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District. The previous chapter focussed on research design and methodology which includes the description on the research paradigm, research questions, research design, sampling, the data collection methods and data analysis methods. The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyse and interpret the findings of the study and thus put them in context in relation to the research objectives and main research question. According to Terblanche and Durrhem (2002:45), data is the basic material on which a researcher's findings are based.

The data was collected from questionnaires and interviewing of forty fourth grade teachers. Twenty schools were involved in the study; two teachers from each school. This study used a mixed methods approach to explore the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District. Consequently, data analysis and interpretation will be presented in two sections, namely; quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

4.2.1 Section A: Demographic data of participants

This section presents a summary of the statistics and responses gleaned from the questionnaires and it is followed by a detailed analysis. The quantitative data that emanated from the closed-ended questions were edited, coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were then presented descriptively in the form of frequency tables (cross-tabulations), histograms and pie charts.

The analysis and interpretation of the quantitative research results was done by means of measurement frequencies in accordance with the four sections of the questionnaires. The data have been presented in the form of frequency tables, charts and tables encompassing categories of respondents who represented perceptions held by their groups with regard to a particular view.

4.2.1.1 Details on gender representation of respondents

Table 4.1: Gender representation of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	17	41.8
Female	23	58.2
Total	40	100

Table 4.1 above, indicates that 40 teachers from primary schools in the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province participated in the study. The table further indicates that 17 or 41,8% male and 23 or 58.2% female teachers participated in the study. As table 4.1 above indicates, the female participants dominated the study as they were more than the male participants by 6 teachers. Female teachers are usually referred to as "mothers" or "mme" and as mothers they have some knowledge of dealing with young learners since they are parents themselves. Female teachers are known to be passionate, motherly and considerate towards learning and learners feel safe around them. Such a learning environment could be more relaxed and conducive to learning.

4.2.1.2 Age of the respondents

Table 4.2: Age of the respondents

Age in years	Frequency	Percentage
25 and below	1	2.5
26-35	0	0
36-45	17	42.5
46-55	16	40
56 and above	6	15
Total	40	100

Table 4.1 reveals that 40 teachers participated in the study and that most respondents (39 out of 40 teachers or 97.5% of the teachers) are matured adult teachers whose ages range from 36 to 56 years and above. The findings of the study further reveal that no teacher between the age of 26-35 years participated in the study, while 2.5% of teachers were 25 years, 42.5% of teachers were between 36-45 years, 40% of teachers between 46-55 years and 15% of teachers between 56 years and above who participated in the study. The maturity of most respondents increases the validity of the results of this study.

4.2.1.3 Grade 4 teaching experience of the respondents

Table 4.3: The teaching experience of the respondents

Years	Frequency	%
0-5	9	22.5
6-10	12	30
11-15	9	22.5
16-20	6	15
21+	4	10
Total	40	100

Table 4.3 above reveals that the 9 or 22.5% of the respondents have 0-5 years teaching experience, 12 or 30% of the respondents have 6-10 years teaching experience, 9 or 22.5% of the respondents have 11-15 years teaching experience, 6 or 15% of the respondents have 16-20 years teaching experience and 4 or 10% of the respondents have 21 years and above teaching experience. The findings revealed that the less experienced teachers have 2 years' experience, while the most experienced teachers have 30 years' experience. This implies that most of the teachers are very good, interested in their work and productive and could be trusted with teaching reading to learners effectively.

Literature reveals that experience is one of the determinants of good performance. According to Bastien (2006:01), there are several reasons why experienced workers can help maintain a reliable, dedicated work force and provide a significant cost savings for both short-term and long term. Experienced workers are usually dedicated

to their work, efficient and confident, have organisational skills, are proud of their work, always punctual, honest, focused, detail oriented and attentive, good listeners, mature, exemplary, with good communication skills. However, Bastien (2006:02) says that experience can be both an advantage and may also have negative consequences for teachers, such as resistance to implement the new curriculum (NCS and CAPS) in South Africa.

4.2.1.4 Academic framework of the respondents

The quality of education is directly related to the quality of instruction in the classrooms and the quality of instructions is dependent on the qualifications and competence of educators. According to table 4.4 below, the findings of this study reveal that 18 or 45% of the respondents have REQV 13 or M+ 3, 17 or 42.5% of the respondents have REQV 14 or M+ 4 and 5 or 12.5% of the respondents have REQV 15 or M+ 5 and above. This implies that all the participants of this study are well-qualified.

Table 4.4: Academic qualification of the respondents

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
REQV 10 (Matric and below)	0	0
REQV 11 (M+ 1)	0	0
REQV 12 (M+ 2)	0	0
REQV 13 (M+ 3)	18	45
REQV 14 (M+ 4)	17	42.5
REQV 15 (M+ 5) and above	5	12.5
Total	40	100

The above teachers' qualification framework can be explained as follows:

M+ 1: A one year post matric teacher qualification

M + 2: A two (2) year certificate in teacher education qualification

M + 3: Post matric teacher education qualification of three (3) years

M + 4: A four years post matric teachers' qualification

M + 5: A five years post matric teachers' qualification

The findings reveal that all the forty teachers have a teachers' certificate and each had at least three years' training.

4.2.1.5 Professional qualifications

Table 4.5: Professional qualifications of respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching Certificate/Diploma	19	46.5
Post graduate certificate in education (PGCE)	1	2.5
Higher Education Certificate (HED)	3	7.5
University Education Certificate (UED)	6	15.0
Bachelor of Arts/Science/Commerce in Education (BA/BSC. ED)	11	28.8
B.ED Honours	0	0
Master of Education	0	0
Total	40	100

The findings of the study reveal that 46.5% or 19 of the respondents have a teachers' certificate or diploma, 7.5% or 3 of the respondents have a higher education diploma, 15% or 6 of the respondents have a university education diploma and 28.8% or 11 of the respondents have Bachelor of Arts/ Science/Commerce in education. While this is a relatively well qualified group of teachers with 53.5% of them having more than a teaching diploma, it is necessary to explore why their learners under achieved. All teachers in this study have recognised teaching qualifications, which qualifies them as professionals to teach reading in Grade 4. It is, generally accepted, that the academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence, skills of teaching and the commitment of the teacher have an effective impact on the teaching learning process. Given such qualifications they (teachers) are expected to overcome any challenges to teaching reading.

According to Legotlo, Maaga, Sebego, Van Der Westhuizen, Mosoge, Nieuwoudt and Steyn (2002:115), inadequate teacher preparation and general limited academic background to some extent contribute to poor teaching and learning in some schools. Their study also revealed that out-dated teaching practices and lack of basic content knowledge result in poor teaching standards. The poor standards are also

exacerbated by a large number of under-qualified or unqualified teachers who teach in overcrowded and non-equipped classrooms. However, since this sample comprises qualified and experienced teachers, their lack of achievement may lie in their use of out dated methods and their lack of facilities or their lack of experience and understanding of the new curriculum.

4.2.1.6 Details of the positions of the respondents at their work places

Table 4.6 Positions of respondents

Rank	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher	33	82.5
Head of Department	5	12.5
Deputy Principal	1	2.5
Principal	1	2.5
Total	40	100

The data on Table 4.6 above indicates the various positions or ranks of the respondents of this study. Table 4.6 indicates that 82.5% of the respondents are teachers, 12.5% of the respondents are heads of department, 2.5% are deputy principals and 2.5% are principals. This indicates that most respondents who are teaching reading in the Mano'mbe Circuit are not in promotion posts as only 17.5% of respondents in promotion posts are teaching reading.

4.2.1.7 Grade 4 learners per classroom

Table 4.7: Grade 4 learners per classroom

Number of learners	Frequency	Percentage
10-25	0	0
26-30	2	5
31-35	4	10
36-40	3	7.5
More than 41	31	77.5
Total	40	100

The findings of the study reveal that many classes are overcrowded because 77.5% of the classes have more than 41 learners. This has a negative effect on effective teaching and learning. Class size is an on-going issue in education and it is continually expanding in many districts. What was once a normal classroom ratio of 1:35 is now pushing at the seams to about 1:80 learners in a class. In some schools the enrolment is very high at about 250. This is a contextual factor that the department needs to attend to because the classes are too big. This contributes a lot to poor learner performance because teachers cannot perform to their fullest because they do not have time for individual learners. This causes harm and affects the whole school.

Researchers and educators have argued that large classes can have negative effects on student achievement. Stecher, (2001:17), for example, states that “third grade students enrolled in reduced classes performed better on the Standard Achievement Test than did students in regular-size classrooms”. This implies that there is a decrease in student achievement of those in larger classes and an increase in student achievement of those in smaller classes. The problem is that students in larger classes have less one-on-one time with the teacher, which therefore leads to less instruction time and, in turn, lower test scores. Also it is implicated that in larger classes discipline becomes more of an issue because there are more students to attend to. On the contrary, in a smaller class students are given more instructional time and are able to focus more on the curriculum being taught instead of discipline and other issues that are occurring around them.

4.2.1.8 CAPS Training

Table 4.8: CAPS Training

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	87.5
No	5	12.5
Total	40	100

The findings of the study reveal that a huge majority of 87.5% of the respondents received training to implement Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The remaining 12.5% were without training in the implementation of CAPS. Despite the training received by many teachers, the performance of learners remains very poor. The implication is that though training was provided, it was too short to equip the teachers to implement CAPS smoothly. The introduction of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) has also added other challenges to the educators. For example, in the CAPS the educators are introduced to new topics based on the principles of outcomes-based education which describes learning from the perspective of the learner (Department of Education, 2004). This implies that educators are compelled to use new skills in teaching and learning of the subject matter. Some of the skills that are now required in the subject matter include the ability to use learner-centred teaching methods and strategies, such as co-operative teaching and learning method.

4.2.2 SECTION B: IMPLEMENTATION OF EFFECTIVE READING STRATEGIES

4.2.2.1 The NCAPS is helpful in introducing mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6)

Question 2.1 was asked to determine if the introduction of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the Intermediate Phase improves the ability of learners to read. The perspectives of respondents on this question are presented on Figure 4.1 below. The data from Figure 4.1 indicates that a total majority of 63.8% of the respondents (53.2% agree and 10.6% strongly agree), think that the introduction of mother tongue in the Foundation Phase by the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

contributes to improved learner performance, a combined total of 36.2% of respondents disagree and therefore think that the introduction of mother tongue by NCAPS is not helpful.

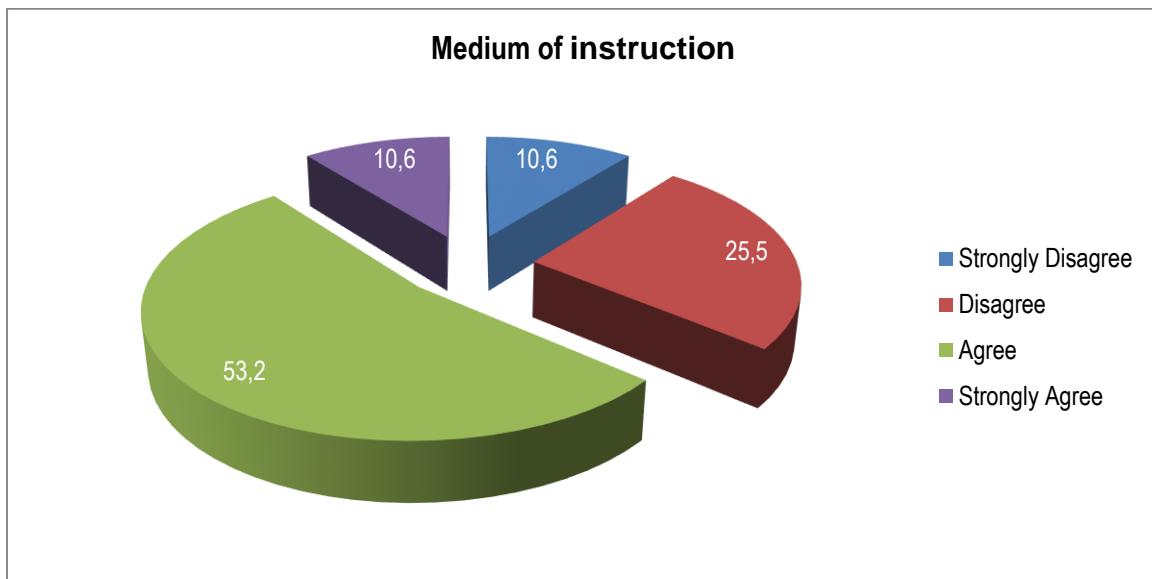


Figure 4.1: Reading challenges in Grade 4

According to the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, learners' home languages should be used for learning and teaching whenever possible and this is particularly important in the Intermediate Phase where children learn to read and write (Department of Education, 2004:20). The perspective of 63.8% of the respondents is supported by many researchers who indicate that mother tongue instruction promotes effective learning. Balfour (1999:106), for example, holds the view that most black African learners in South Africa are disadvantaged by the medium of instruction. This is confirmed by Van Heerden (1996:4) who states that black learners experience problems because they can't learn in their first language. He states that English is the preferred medium of instructions in schools because some indigenous languages do not have the linguistic complexity to enable them to be used in technical and scientific contexts. Moreover, many parents chose English as the language of teaching and learning because they see it has a cultural capital that will ensure jobs for their children. Consequently, most learners who struggle in the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) will in all probability also be under-achievers. These learners are not fluent in English, the tuition medium of their choice. They lack sufficient command of English to succeed at school. This leads to problems

regarding effective comprehension of the content of academic material, analysis of questions and presentation of answers. These learners struggle to communicate in English. As a result, they are at a disadvantage because English is the language used to respond to questions in examinations. Lemmer (1995:94) observed that in an examination or a test, a learner might know the answer but could lack the adequate vocabulary and positive attitude to present his or her answers.

McKay (2012:56) argues that children learn better when they are taught through a language they know well. Hence, she points out that while the Language-in-Education Policy (Department of Education, 1996) grants parents and school governing bodies a significant role in the choice of the language of the school, more needs to be done to make parents aware of the benefits of mother language education. According to Hoadly and Ward (2009:3) the problem is not limited to learners' under performance, especially in literacy, but the management of curriculum change within the new education system has also been a source of continuous challenges. The battery of policy changes has implications on how policy is managed and the kind of guidance that is provided to teachers for them to implement the policy successfully. This is part of the weakness in the system.

4.2.2.2 My Grade 4 learners can read English fluently

Question 2.2 was asked to establish if Grade 4 learners are able to read English fluently. The data on figure 4.2, indicates that many learners (67.7%) of the respondents are not able to read English fluently (39.6% disagree and 28.1% strongly disagree) while a total of 32.3% of the respondents agree. This implies that the learners have reading difficulties. Reading difficulties can be attributed to a number of causes and major among them is reading disability but also including environmental factors such as insufficient reading instruction or lack of exposure to reading materials, impairments such as cognitive, language or hearing, terminal illness and psychological problems (Hamilton, 2012).

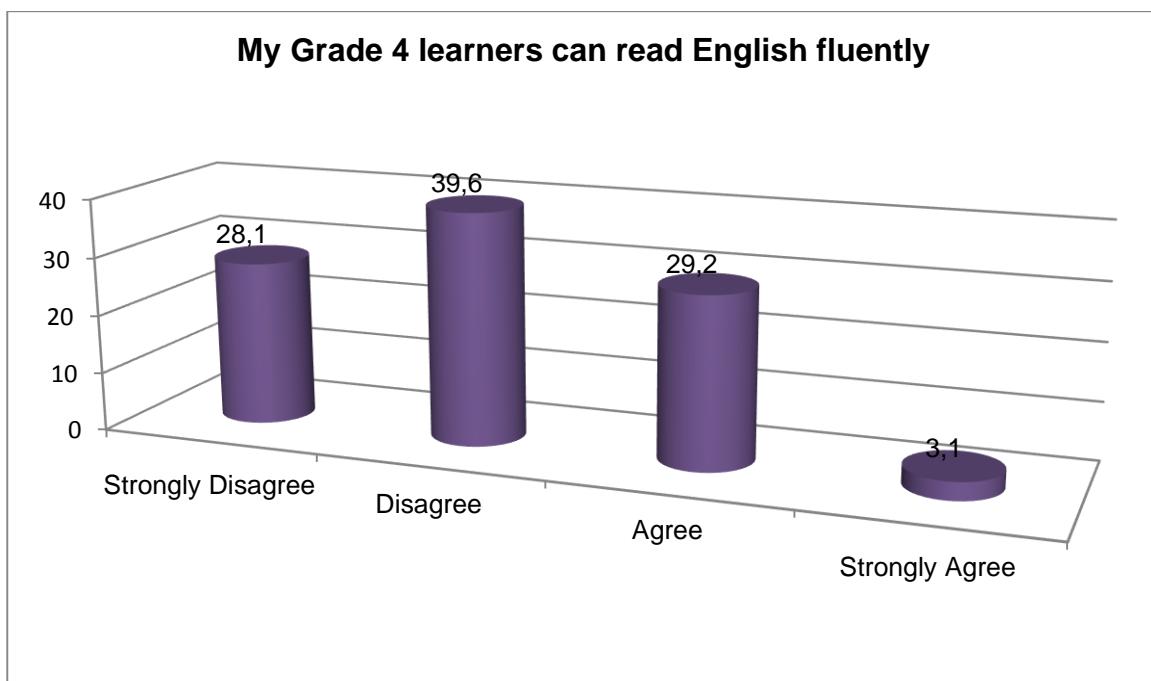


Figure 4.2: Grade 4 learners can read English fluently

This shows that teachers are not able to implement the new curriculum because they have challenges to meet the academic needs of learners who have reading difficulties due to a number of factors such as lack of knowledge and skills to implement the reading methods effectively. This is a major blow to policy makers and educators because literacy is one of the most fundamental academic skills, important in its own right and essential for success in all other academic areas. This finding is, however, not new because educators who have gone through the educational transition following the democratisation of the Republic of South Africa have also noticed a steady decline in reading and writing standards of primary school learners (Department of Education, 2008). Most educators, therefore, believe that the decline in reading and writing capabilities of primary school learners can be ascribed to the dramatic changes in teaching methods emanating from Outcomes-Based Education (OBE).

This concern has resulted in several studies aimed at investigating the extent as well as the reasons behind the decline of reading and writing capacities of learners in primary schools. An audit conducted in 2001 by the South African National Department of Basic Education to determine literacy competencies of learners in South Africa found that only 38% of Grade 3 learners had the requisite competency to read at grade level in their home language (Scheepers, 2008:30). This was in line with studies

conducted by the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) which reported that children in Grades 1 to 6 had reading competencies equivalent to those who were two grades below them in their mother tongue and in English as first additional language (FAL).

Other studies, such as the Progress International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) which was coordinated by the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) at the University of Pretoria, under the administration of the Evaluation for Educational Achievement (IEA), also revealed that South African learners are not performing at their expected levels with regards to literacy (Department of Education, 2006). In this report, the majority of Grade 4 learners obtained a score of 253 while those of Grade 5 obtained a score of 302. Compared to international performance, these scores were far below the international average score of 500 (Howie, Venter & Van Staden, 2006). All these reports seem to echo the same message: 'South African children cannot read, write and count at their expected levels'. The frequency with which this statement repeats itself in most of these research findings has elevated it to what one can equate to a popular song and hence it requires immediate attention. In a multilingual country like South Africa, it is important that learners reach high levels of proficiency in at least two languages and that they are able to communicate in other languages (Department of Education, 2004:20). There is an urgent need for greater intervention to avoid a crisis.

4.2.2.3 I have difficulty in developing learners' skills, values and attitudes

This question was asked to ascertain whether teachers are able to develop the skills, values and attitudes of learners in reading. The data from figure 4.3 indicates that the majority of the respondents (67.4%) have difficulty in developing learners' skills, values and attitudes in reading. The data on figure 4.3 indicates that a total of 67.4% of the respondents agree that they have difficulty in developing learners' skills, values and attitudes, while 32.6% of the respondents disagree.

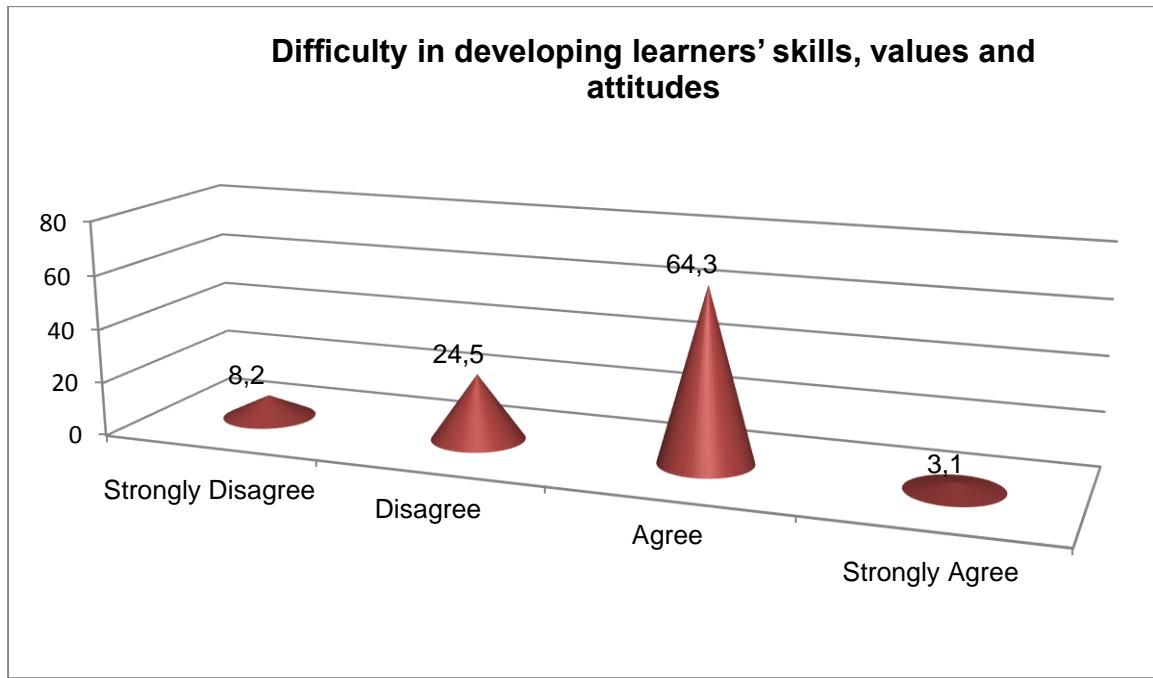


Figure 4.3: Difficulty in developing learners' skills, values and attitudes in reading

The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement envisions teachers who are qualified, competent, dedicated and caring and who will be able to fulfil the various roles of teachers (Department of Education, 2004:09). The importance of reading or literacy has become evident in the 50 years since the United Nations declared it to be a basic human right along with the right to adequate food, health care and housing (Howie, Venter & Van Staden, 2010:02). This is supported by many researchers and educationists. Teale (2003:114), for example, indicates that reading is a fundamental skill that all children need if they are to succeed in life because it builds the foundation for all formal learning in school. Lynnakyla, Malin & Taube (2004) add that reading is, therefore, an important means of functioning effectively in education and of developing as an individual, within and outside school, today and in later life, in further education, at work and in leisure activities. These views indicate that the ability to read and write is not a privilege but a right stated in the international constitution.

The International Reading Association (IRA, 2005:02) stated that “every child deserves excellent reading teachers, because teachers make a difference in children’s reading achievement and motivation to read”. The focus here is on the power of the teacher and not on the programme used. Programmes can help or hinder a teacher’s instruction but exemplary teachers know how to tailor the available programmes to the

unique strengths and needs of their children. Teachers realise how important each minute of each day is in helping children learn to read and write and they also reflect on their practices and learn from mistakes (Gordon & Browne, 2004:32). However, reading problems are endemic in South Africa because many learners are not able to read and write.

4.2.2.4 I have difficulty in differentiating learning outcomes and assessment standards

Question 2.4 was asked in order to establish if Literacy teachers understand the difference between learning outcomes and assessment standards. The data in figure 2.4 reveals that the majority of the respondents understand the difference between learning because a total of 67% of the respondents disagree, while a total of 33% of the respondents agree that they do not understand the difference between learning outcomes and assessment standards.

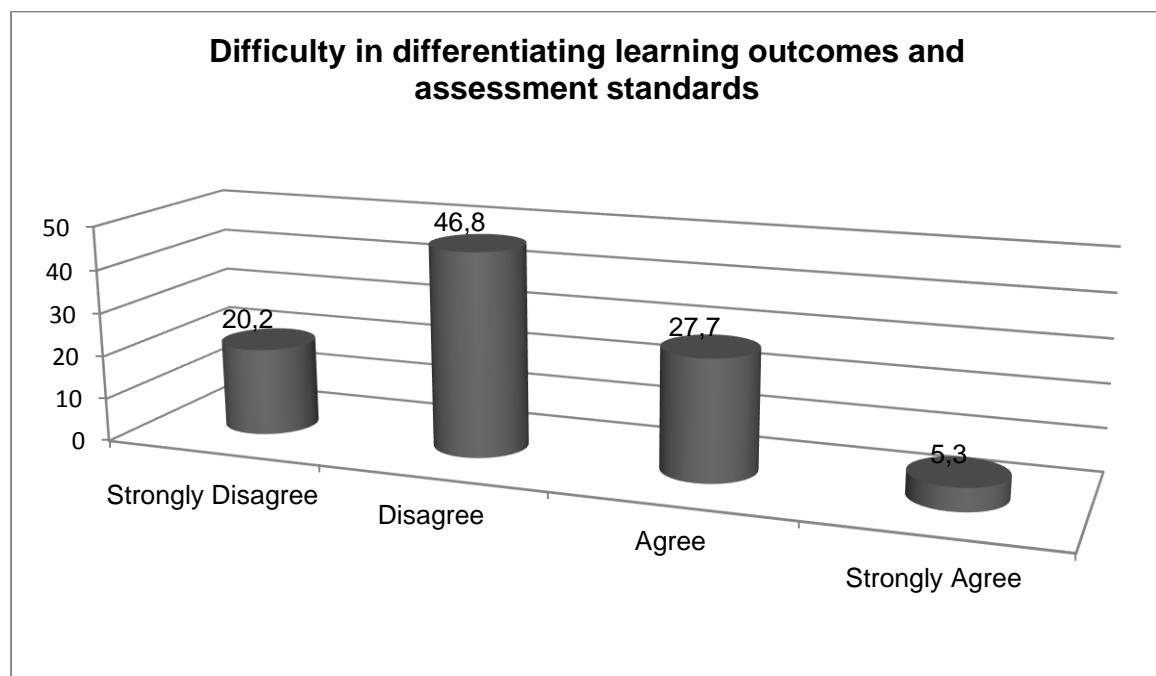


Figure 4.4: Difficulty in differentiating learning outcomes and assessment standards

According to the data pertaining to question 2.4, a total of 67% of the respondents do not have difficulty and a total of 33% of the respondents have difficulty in differentiating learning outcomes and assessment standards. This question is asked because of

some challenges in the implementation of the new curriculum. After the advent of democracy in 1994, the government of the Republic of South Africa was faced with a challenge of developing a curriculum which is relevant for the tremendous cultural diversity of the new era.

4.2.2.5 My Grade 4 learners are struggling to read

Question 2.5 is the key question of this study because the main problem of this investigation relates to the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in primary schools in the Man'ombe Circuit of the Mopani District.

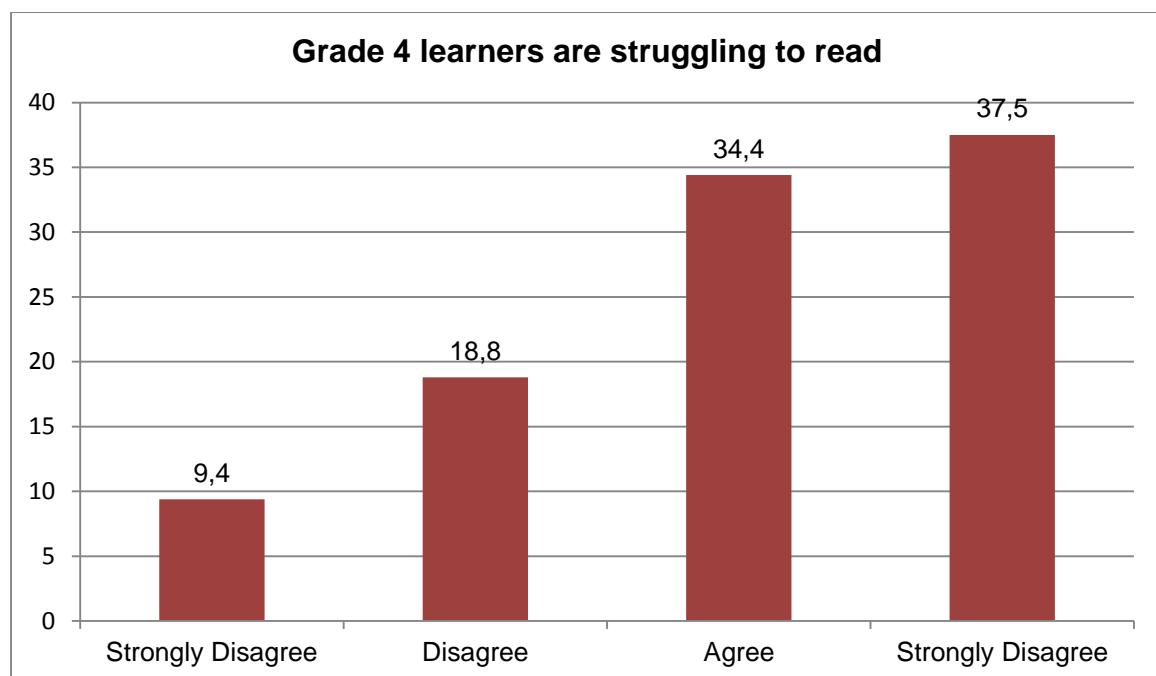


Figure 4.5: Grade 4 learners are struggling to read

This question was asked to discover if Grade 4 learners taught by the respondents are indeed not able to read. The data presented by figure 4.13 confirms the main problem of this investigation because it reveals that a majority of 71.9% of the respondents believe that their learners are not able to read. The data further reveals that 28.1% of the respondents indicate that their learners are able to read. This study will hopefully reveal the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Man'ombe Circuit of the Mopani District, reveal the role Grade

4 teachers, principals and heads of department play a role in teaching reading and writing and recommend strategies that can be implemented to resolve the challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of reading.

4.2.2.6 I find it easy to use the scope of reading provided by the Department of Education in the policy document

This question was asked to establish if the respondents are able to implement the Grade 4 scope of reading outlined in the English Additional Language Policy Statement. According to figure 4.14, most respondents find it very easy to use the scope of reading provided in the Grade 4 English Additional Language Policy Statement. Figure 4.14 reveals that a total 62.9% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that they find it very easy to use the scope of reading provided in the Grade 4 English Additional Language Policy Statement while a total of 37.1% disagree.

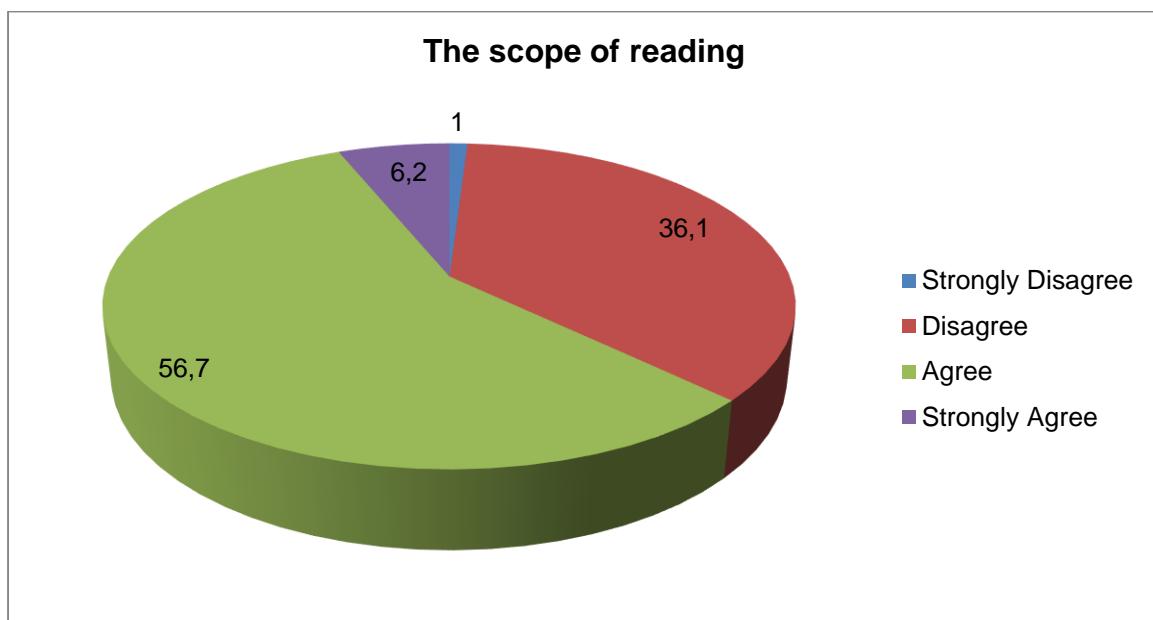


Figure 4.6: Scope of reading

The scope of reading is the amount of work that should be covered by the teacher in that year according to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The problem in South Africa is that many teachers in South Africa have an under-developed understanding of teaching literacy, reading and writing (Department of Education, 2008:08). Many teachers simply don't know how to teach reading. Too

often, teachers know only one method of teaching reading, which may not suit the learning style of all learners. Teachers don't know how to stimulate reading inside and outside the classroom. This is because there has been a misunderstanding about the role of the teacher in teaching reading in Curriculum 2005 and in the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). For years, many teachers believed that they did not have to "teach" reading, but simply had to "facilitate" the process; they believed that learners would teach themselves to read. The expectation that teachers had to develop their own teaching materials and reading programmes further aggravated the situation for teachers; they had no experience in developing materials. In the past, they relied heavily on textbooks – even if the teacher had only one book in the class (Department of Basic Education, 2008:08).

4.2.2.7 I use the policy document for my day to day teaching

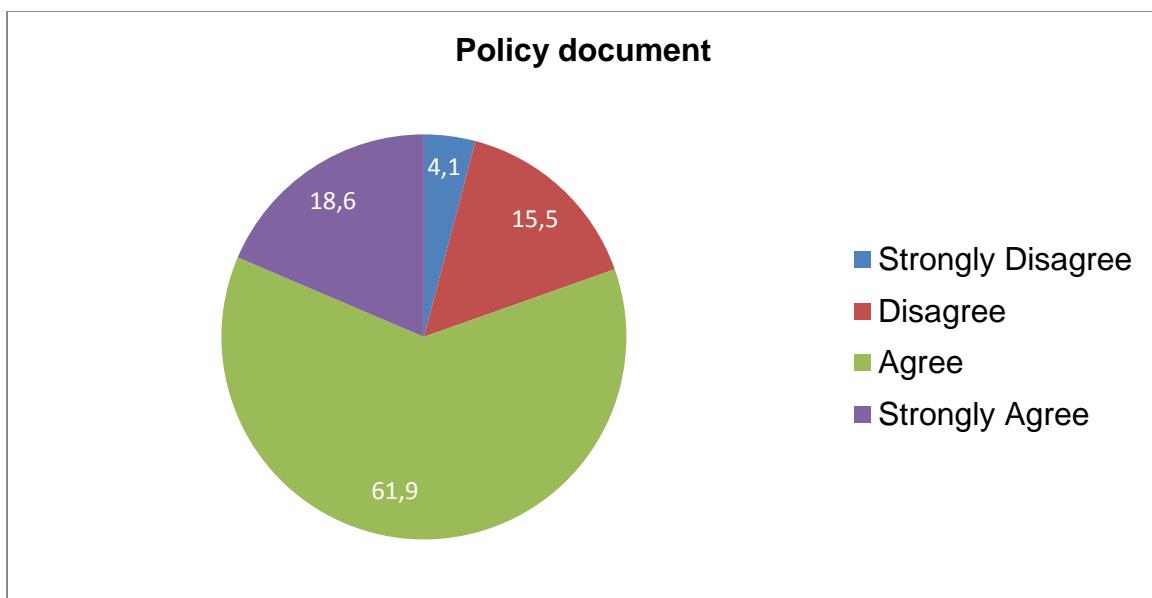


Figure 4.7: Policy document for my day to day teaching

Question 2.7 was asked to find out if the respondents are using the prescribed documents as prescribed by the Grade 4 English Additional Language Policy Statement. Figure 4.15 indicates that a total of 80.5% agree and strongly agree that they use the policy document for their day to day teaching while a total of 19.5% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree. This indicates that many teachers comply with the requirements of the policy document. According to the Grade 4

English Additional Language Policy Statement, a Grade 4 English Additional Language teacher should have the following policy documents:

- A Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Document
- National Language in Education Policy (Department of Basic Education, 2008:20).

The use of these documents is very important because many teachers in South Africa have an under-developed understanding of teaching literacy, reading and writing.

4.2.2.8 I find the time frame for the scope to be realistic

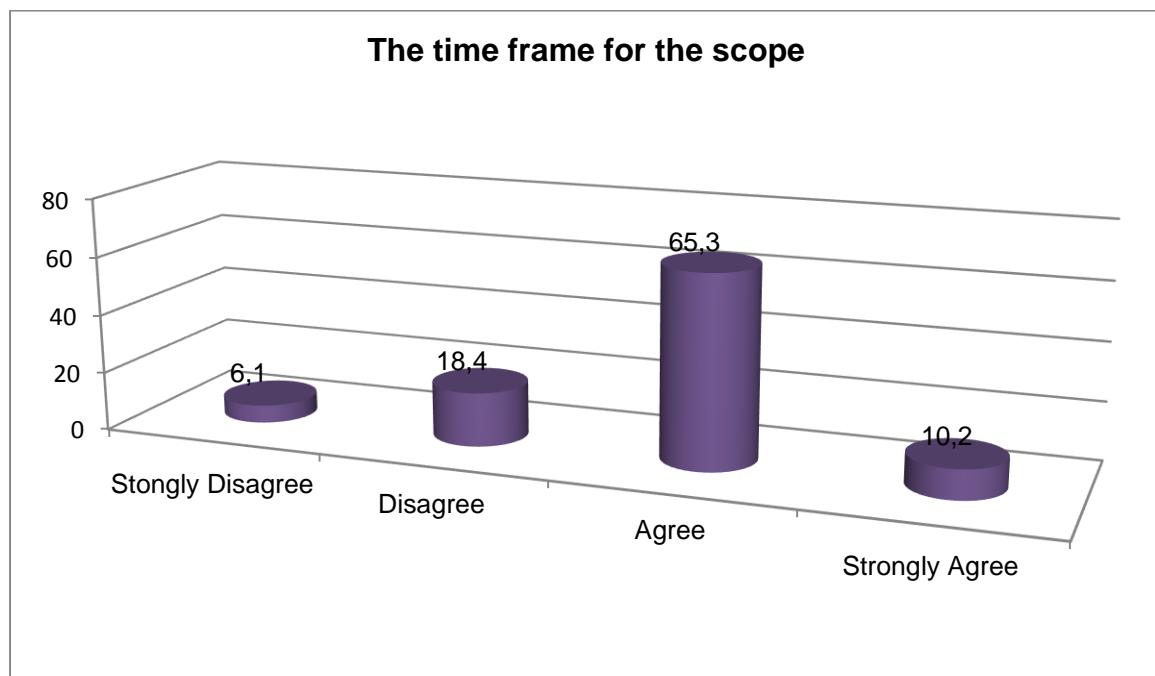


Figure 4.8: Time frame for the scope

Question 2.8 was asked to find out if the respondents find the time frame for the scope of reading in Grade 4 to be realistic. The data reflected in figure 4.16 indicates that a total of 75.5% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that the time frame for the scope of reading in Grade 4 is realistic, while a total of 25.5% of the respondents agree and disagree. This indicates that the majority of the respondents believe that they will be able to complete all the work designed for Grade 4 learners within one year. The problem is that if the scope of work is too extensive to be completed within a year, teachers will not be able to complete the Grade 4 work. The learners will consequently

fail to cope with Grade 5 work in the following year. Teachers will, however, be able to cope with the scope of work for a particular year, if they have been thoroughly trained to implement the new curriculum effectively.

4.2.2.9 The policy document is helpful in assessing reading

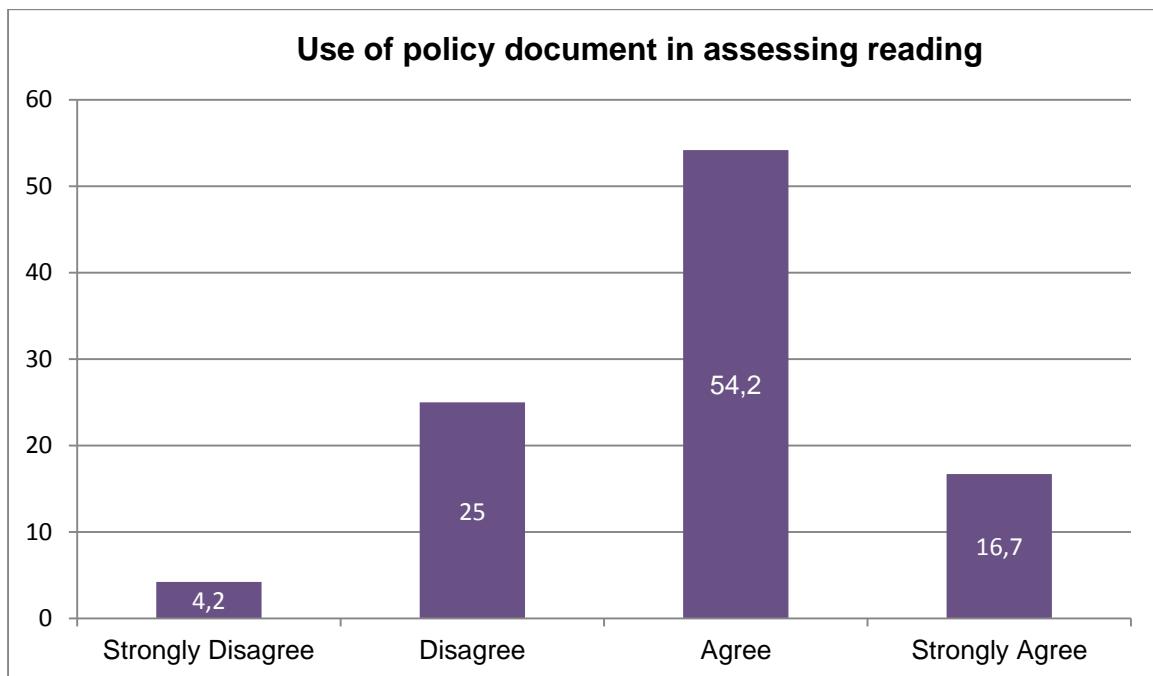


Figure 4.9: Assessing reading

Assessment is a continuous planned process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the performance of learners, using various forms of assessment. Effective assessment is very important strategy in teaching reading and therefore respondents were asked question 2.9 to reflect on whether the policy document is helpful in assessing reading. The views of the respondents are reflected in figure 4.17. The above graph illustrates that 16.7% of the respondents strongly agree and 54.2% of the respondents agree that the policy document is assisting them in teaching reading.

Figure 4.17 also reveal that a total of 29.2% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree that the policy document assists them in teaching reading. This implies that many teachers are using the policy document in the schools effectively because the First Additional Language learners' success depends on regular, informal assessment and feedback from the teacher as they engage with texts and activities.

4.2.2.10 I find the simplified terminology of the policy document easily understandable

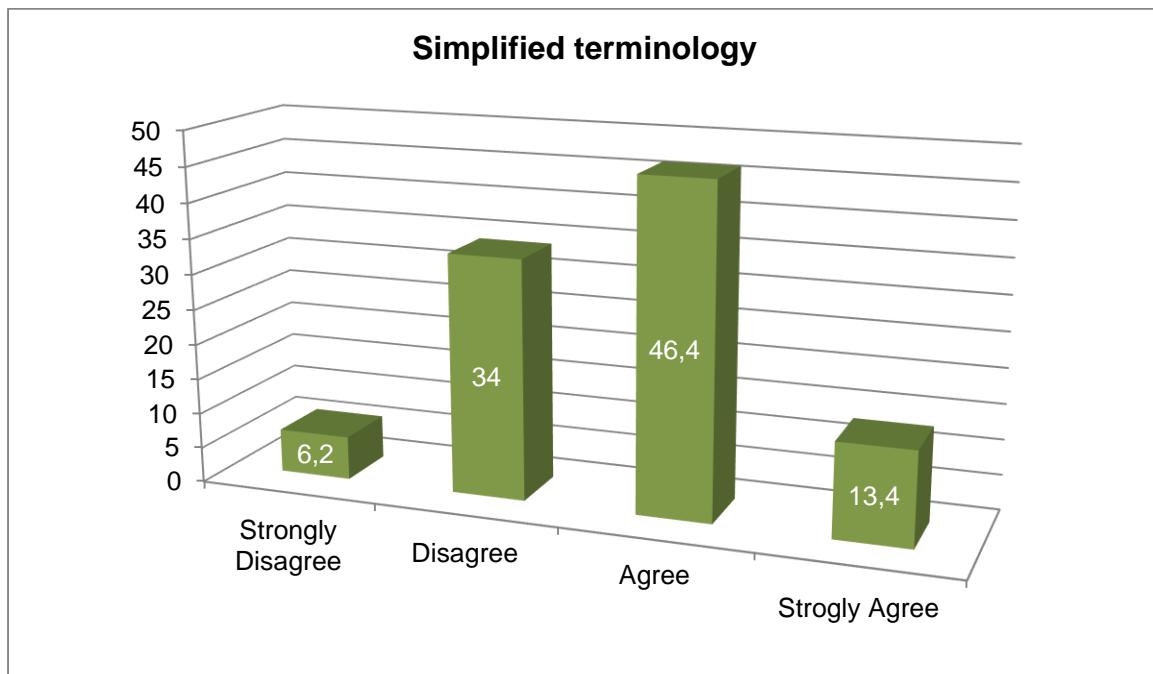


Figure 4.10: Simplified terminology

The terminology used in the curriculum is crucial for its successful implementation. One of the reasons the Curriculum 2005 was not successful was its complex terminology. Question 2.10 was therefore asked to establish if the simplified terminology of the National Curriculum Statement was indeed understandable. According to figure 4.18, a total of 59.8% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they find the simplified terminology understandable while a total of 40.2% disagree or strongly disagree. This finding indicates that the terminology used in the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement is still complex for many Grade 4 teachers. This is the reason the National Curriculum Statement was subjected to a further review in order to simplify its terminology. It is believed that the changing of NCS curriculum to CAPS contributed immensely in simplifying the terminology of Grade 4 English Additional Language.

4.2.2.11 I find the teacher-centredness method easier and applicable in implementing effective reading strategies/methods in my class

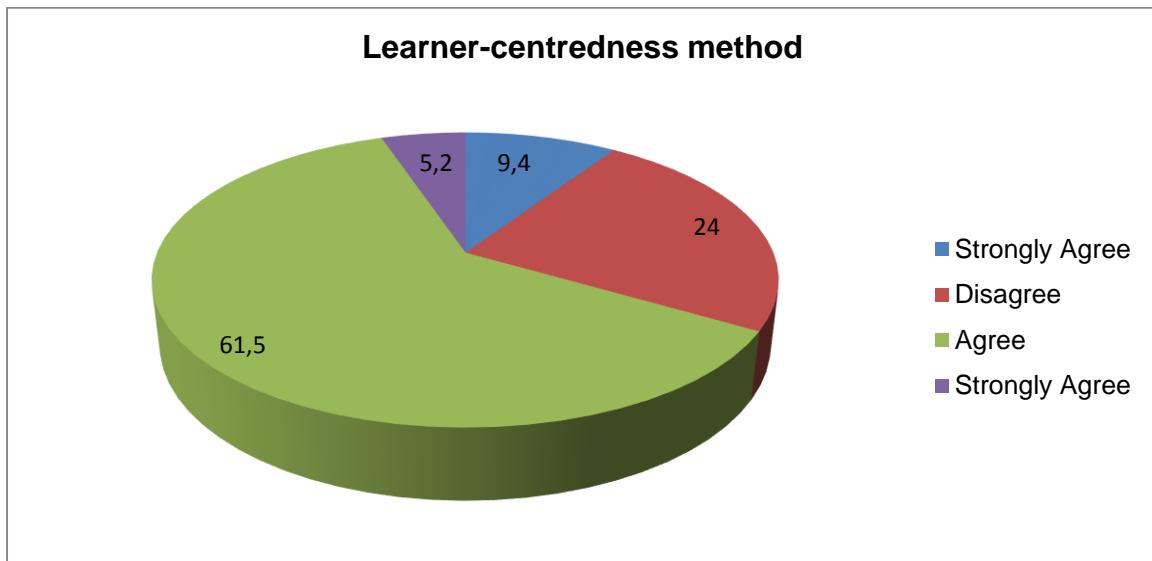


Figure 4.11 Teacher-centredness methods

This question was asked to establish if the respondents find the teacher-centredness methods easier and applicable in implementing effective reading strategies/methods in their classes. The respondents' perceptions are shown on figure 4.19 and they reveal that 66.7% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they find teacher-centredness method easier and applicable in implementing effective reading strategies/methods in their classes. This implies that many respondents are using teacher-centred methods when teaching reading in their classes. Figure 4.19 also reveals that a total of 33.3% of the respondents disagree. These are the respondents who find the new strategies for teaching reading very difficult to implement.

Outcomes based education promotes curricula and assessment based on constructivist methods and discourages traditional education approaches based on direct instruction of facts and standard methods. In traditional education methodologies, teachers direct the learning process and learners assume a receptive role in their education. In the teacher-centred classroom, teachers are the primary source for knowledge. Therefore, the focus of learning is to gain information as it is delivered to the learner and rote learning or memorization of teacher notes or lectures was the norm.

4.2.2.12 I find the learner-centredness method easier and applicable in implementing effective reading strategies/methods in my class

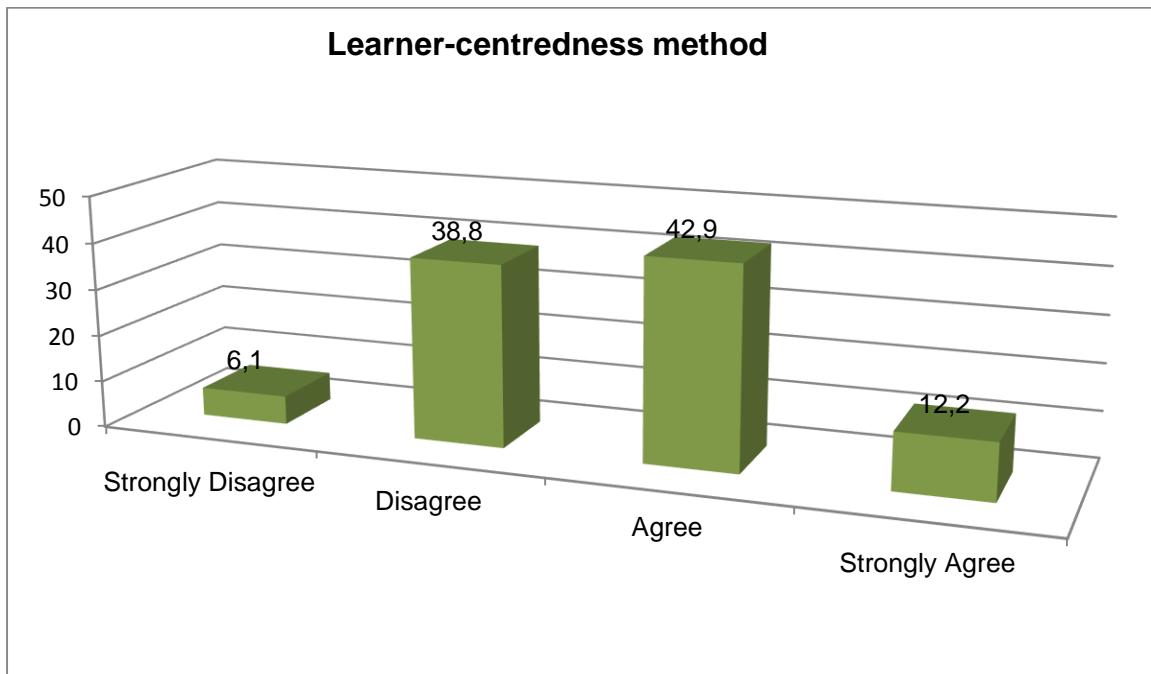


Figure 4.12: Learner-centredness

Another effective teaching strategy in the Outcomes Based Education classroom is the building of rapport with students in order to gauge student growth in a student-centred classroom. Question 2.12 was asked to establish if the respondents find the learner-centredness method easier and applicable in implementing effecting reading strategies/methods in their classes. The data reflected in figure 4.20 above indicates that a total of 55.1% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that the learner-centredness method is easier and applicable in implementing effecting reading strategies/methods in their classes, while a total of 44.9% of the respondents agree and disagree. The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement has largely replaced traditional curriculum approaches with "hands-on" activities and "group work", in which a child determines on their own what they want to do in class. Through effective communication skills, the teacher is able to address student needs, interests, and overall engagement in the learning material, creating a feedback loop that encourages self-discovery and education.

Teachers should encourage peer to peer interaction in an Outcomes Based Education classroom. Through peer-to-peer interaction, collaborative thinking can lead to an

abundance of knowledge. In placing a teacher closer to a peer level, knowledge and learning are enhanced, benefitting the student and classroom overall. The learner-centred teaching methods include methods such as problem-based learning, simulation, role play and fish-bowl observation, tutorials, self-directed learning, experiential learning, laboratory work, fieldwork, peer tutoring, PISER (Peer Instruction and Student Electronic Response) and e-learning.

4.2.2.13 I find combining teacher-centredness and learner-centredness methods as effective in helping my learners achieve reading outcomes in my class

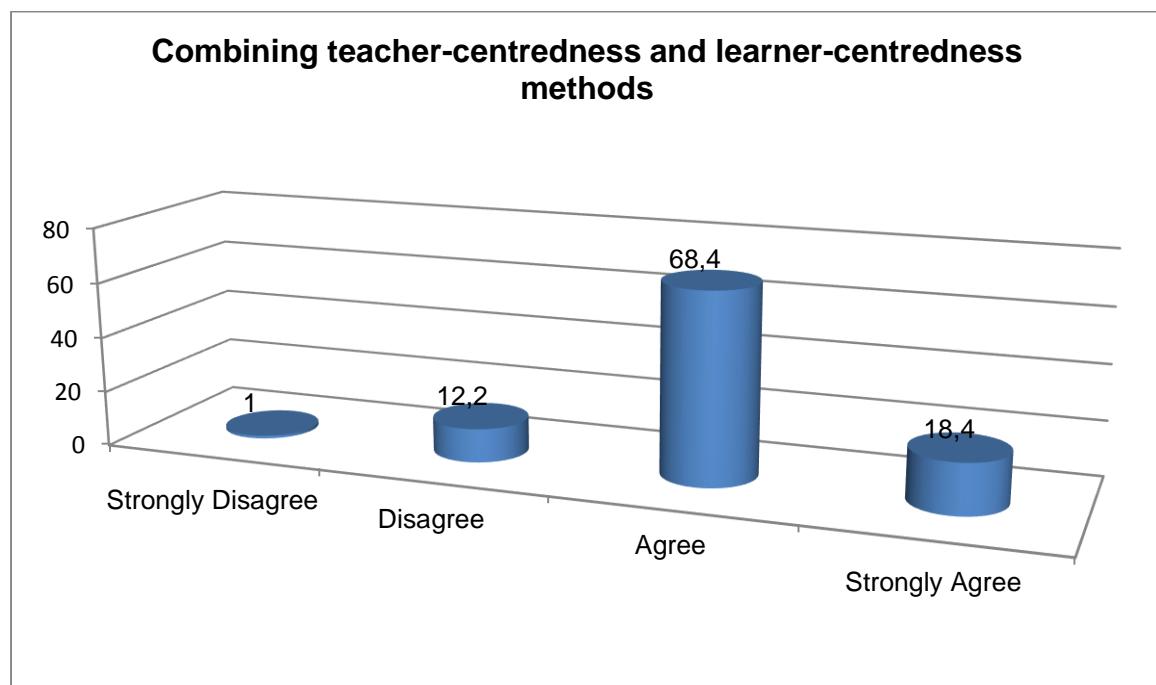


Figure. 4.13 Combining teacher-centredness and learner-centredness

This question is a follow-up of the previous questions 10 and 11 above and the aim of this question is to establish if the respondents find combining teacher-centredness and learner-centredness methods as effective in helping their learners achieve reading outcomes in their classes. The perspectives of the respondents are reflected in figure 4.21. The data in figure 4.21 indicates that a majority of 86.8% of the respondents agrees and strongly agrees, while a minority of 13.2 % of the respondents disagrees and strongly disagrees that combining teacher-centredness and learner-centredness methods is effective in helping their learners by achieving reading outcomes in their classes. The findings indicate that the respondents acknowledge the roles of the both

the teacher and learners in learning. This is appreciated but the new curriculum is strongly based on learner-centred principles.

4.2.2.14 I find the guided reading strategy helpful in achieving reading specific outcomes in my class

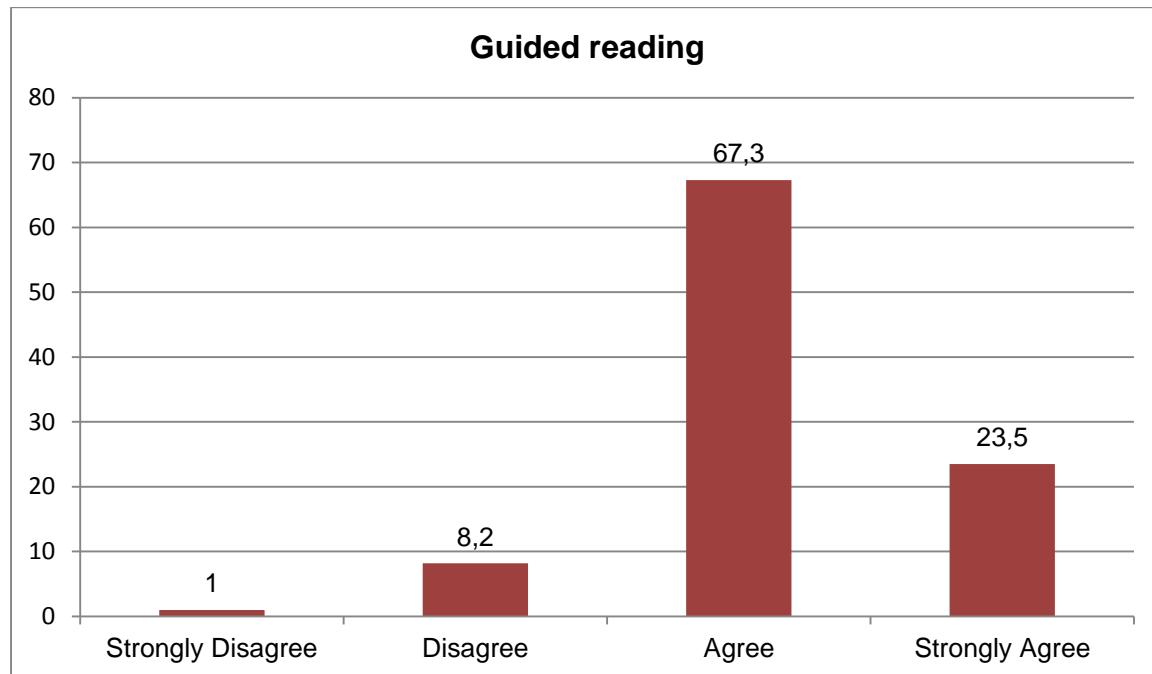


Figure 4.14: Guided reading

This question (2.14) was asked to discover if the guided reading strategy assisted the respondents in teaching reading effectively. The data reflected in figure 2.14 indicates that the majority of the majority of 90.8% agree and strongly agree that they find the guided reading strategy helpful in teaching reading effectively, while a minority of 9.2% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree. This indicates that the guided reading strategy is the most preferred reading strategy in most schools. Guided reading is an instructional approach that involves a teacher working with a small group of learners who demonstrate similar reading behaviour and can all read similar levels of text (Aquia, 2006:414). Guided reading gives learners the chance to apply the strategies they already know to new text. The teacher provides support but the ultimate goal is independent reading.

4.2.2.15 I have difficulty in implementing the guided reading strategy

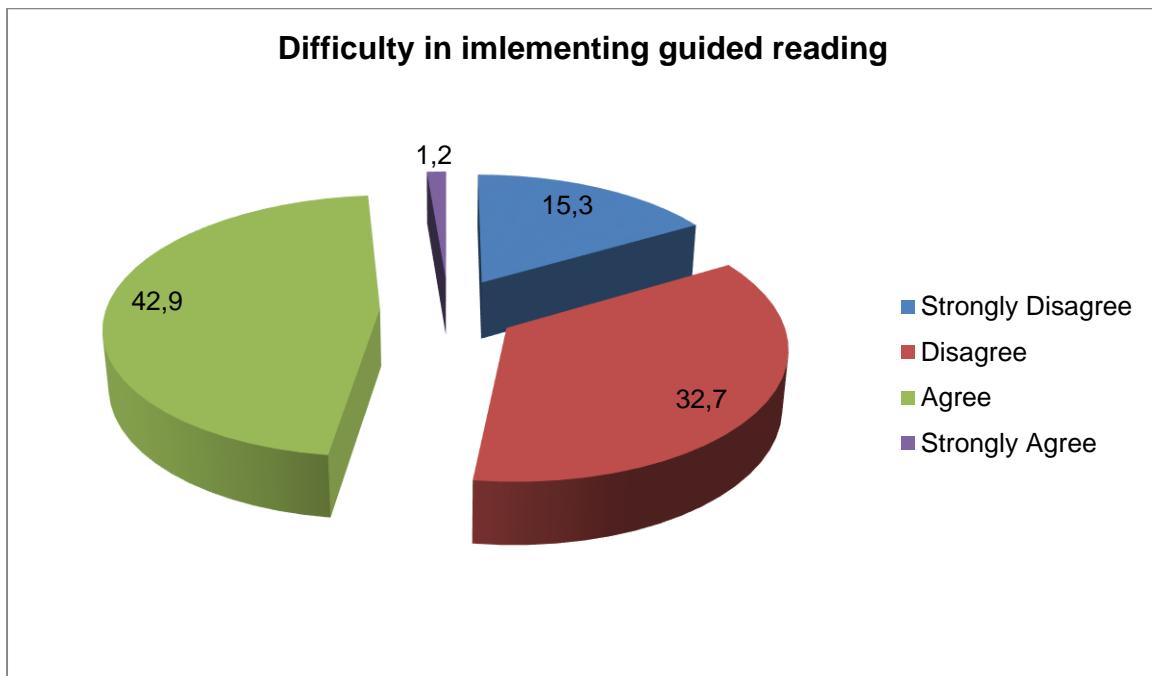


Figure 4.15: Difficulty in implementing guided reading

Question 2.15 is a follow-up to questions 2.13 and 2.14 and it was asked to discover if the respondents experience difficulty in implementing the guided reading strategy. The data on figure 4.23 indicates that a total of 48% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree that it is difficult to implement the guided reading strategy. In other words, they are able to implement guided reading effectively. The data on figure 4.23 also indicates that a total of 42% of the respondents find the guided reading strategy difficult to implement. These data reveals that there so many respondents who are not able to implement guided reading. This is a matter of great concern because guided reading is very important for teaching learners to read.

4.2.2.16 I have received support in the implementation of effective reading strategies in my Grade 4 class

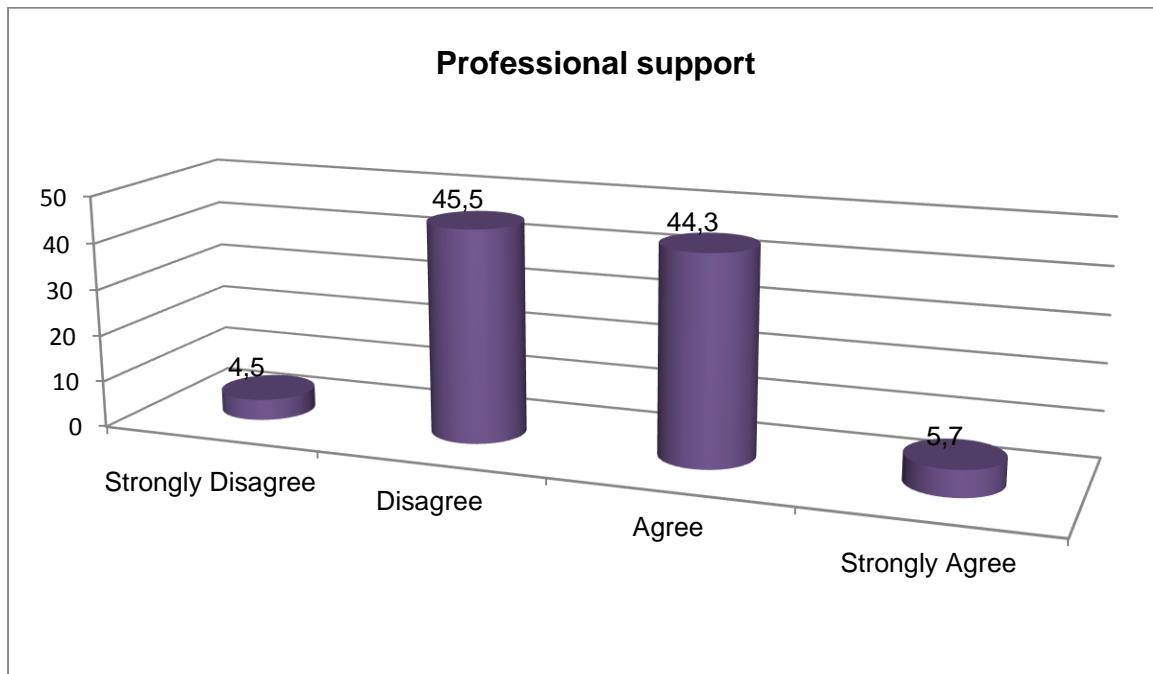


Figure 4.16 Professional support

Question 2.16 was asked to establish whether Literacy teachers receive professional development or support. This question explores the assistance given to the teachers by the instructional leaders to enable them to make independent and adequate instructional decisions. Answers to this question reveal the role played by the instructional leaders, principals and curriculum advisors in guiding and supporting literacy teaching in the Intermediate Phase and how they enact this role. The data illustrated in figure 4.24, indicates that it is 50-50 because a total of 50% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that they have received support in the implementation of effective reading strategies, while the other 50% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree that they received any support in the implementation of effective reading strategies. This indicates that the Department of Education is trying to improve the quality of education in South Africa but it is only half-way to achieving it.

It is very worrying if half of Literacy teachers do not receive professional development. The importance of professional development cannot be over emphasized as there cannot be quality education without professional development. Providing instruction-

related professional development to teachers sets in motion a chain of events that can improve teaching and learning in schools. With improved instruction, learners will develop a positive attitude towards Literacy which will in turn develop a sense of efficacy and confidence about their ability to do well in Literacy. Once students are confident of their ability to attain, they become more occupied and learn more effectively.

Support or guidance is an aspect of educational psychology in which psychological principles are used to bring about positive changes in the teacher, the learner, ways of teaching, the way in which learners are taught, the situation in which learning takes place, the assessment of learning and the curriculum (Alutu, 2012:44) . This definition infers that both teachers and learners receive guidance. Guidance is intended to help the students to acquire the capacity for self-direction or self-guidance and this is performed by the teacher. The teacher is expected to perform some guidance roles while teaching. Teaching can therefore be viewed as guidance aimed at imparting knowledge, practical skills and understanding to the learner. The guidance that is provided to the teachers gives every teacher some knowledge on how to carry out the guidance role while teaching the learners.

4.2.2.17 I have received adequate training in NCS on teaching reading skills in my Grade 4 class

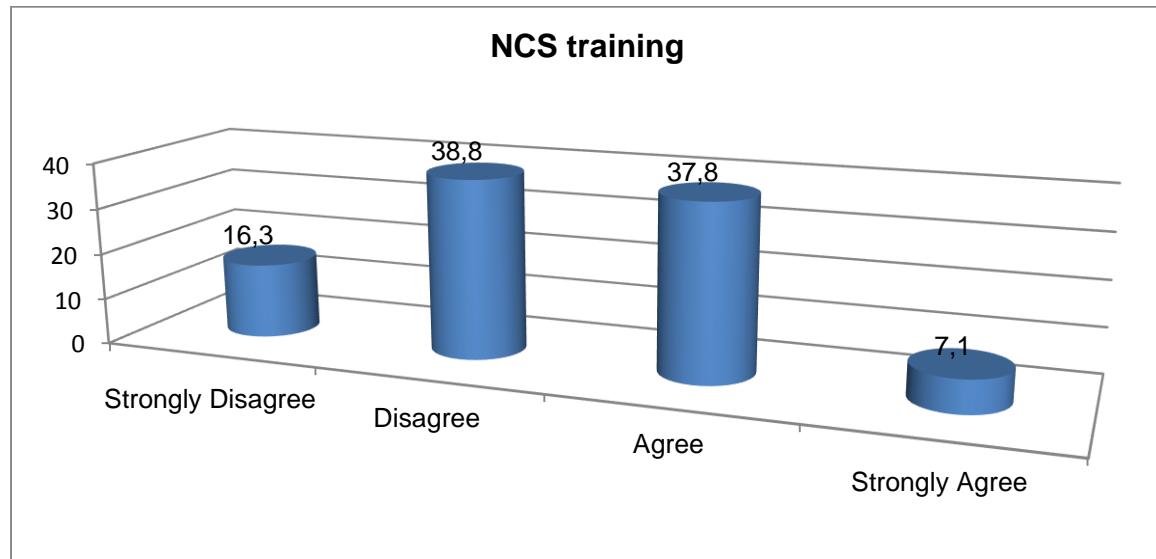


Figure 4.17: NCS training on teaching reading skills

Question 2.16 is therefore asked to ascertain if the teachers have received adequate training in the National Curriculum Statement on teaching reading skills. The perspective of learners is shown by the data in figure 4.25 which indicates that a total of 55.1% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree and a total of 44.9% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that they have received adequate training. This indicates that there are still many educators in the Man'ombe Circuit who have not yet been trained in the implementation of the new curriculum. There is an overwhelming demand for teachers to demonstrate effectiveness in the classrooms because if all learners are to have an opportunity for success, they must have teachers who are well equipped to teach every student to an acceptable high quality standard. Regrettably, most of the teachers are not well equipped with the skills to do this nor are they equipped to confront the challenges and adverse conditions they are likely to face.

4.2.2.18 I need further professional development on implementing reading strategies.

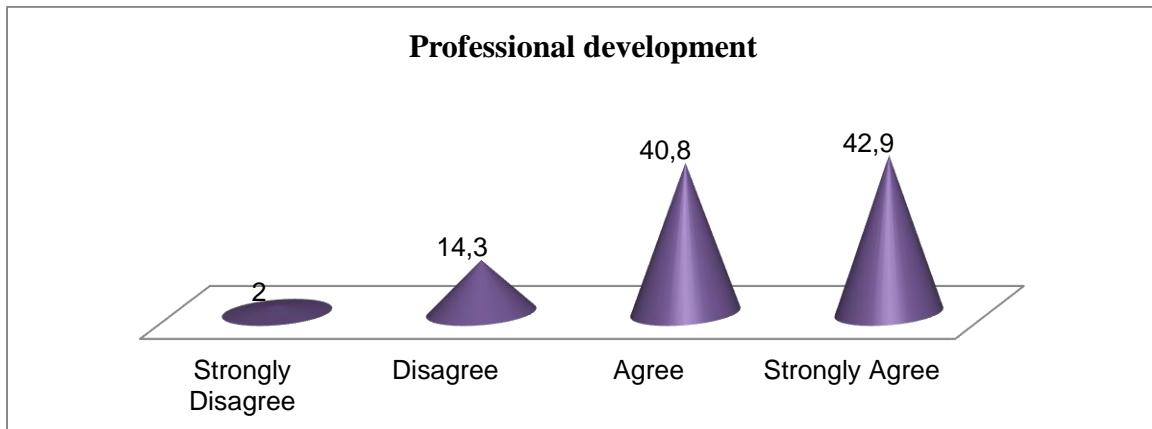


Figure 4.18: Professional development

Question 2.18 was asked to ascertain if the respondents need further professional development on implementing reading strategies. The data reflected in figure 4.26 reveals that a majority of 83.7% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that they need further professional development on implementing reading strategies, while 16,3% disagree and strongly disagree. This is a very strong message to the Department of Education that teachers are not yet satisfied with the training that they

received and that they need to improve their knowledge. Professional development on teaching reading skills is very important because it stimulates teachers to develop in their profession, interact with learners better and improve their knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs related to their teaching practices (Hsu, 2008:265). Hsu (2008:266) adds that the great change in teachers is the expanded breadth of ways of their thinking after training. Professional development also improves their methods of questioning and communicating with learners as well as enhancing their professional ability and performance and even their beliefs.

4.2.2.19 I have been visited and received support by curriculum advisors in my class for monitoring reading competence

Question 2.19 explores the role played by curriculum advisors in improving Literacy instruction. The data displayed in figure 4.27 reveals that a total majority of 71.5% of the respondents disagrees that the curriculum advisors visited their schools and that they received support from curriculum advisors in their classes for monitoring reading competence.

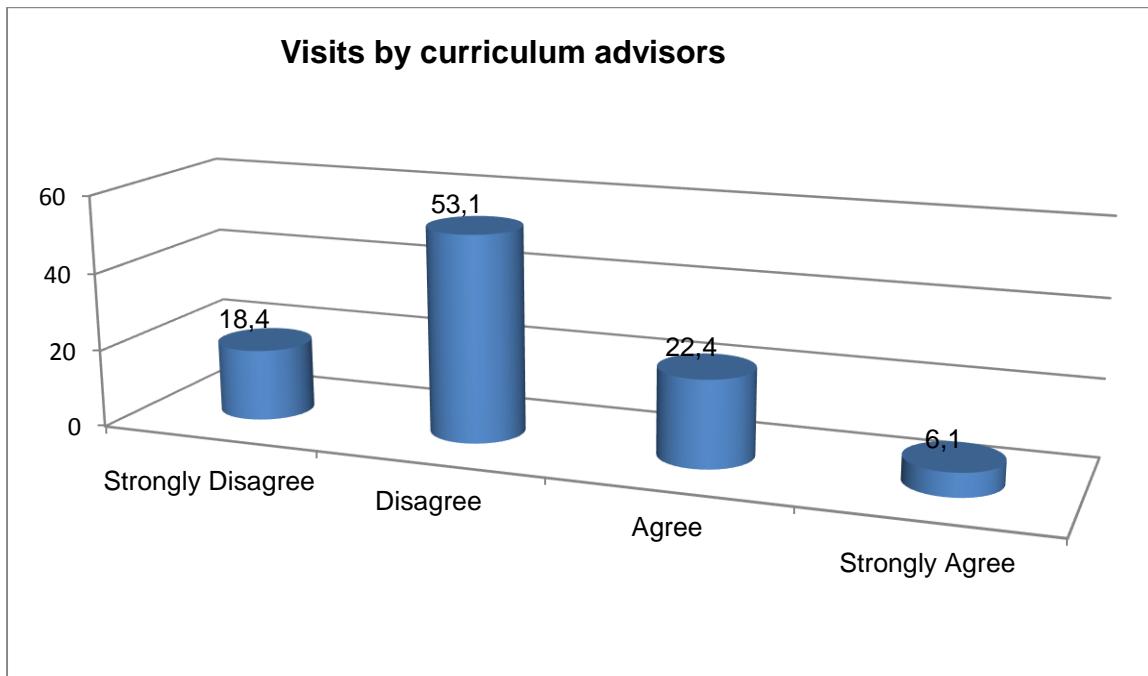


Figure 4.19: Visits by curriculum advisors

The data also reveals that only 28.5% of the respondents were visited and supported by curriculum advisors.

The curriculum advisory service of the Department of Education is an important component in the support of schools. This unit is responsible for:

- Effective leadership that focuses on learner achievement and learning.
- Accountability that develops clear goals that identify how to improve learner achievement and takes responsibility for improving student learning.
- Creating opportunities for meaningful professional development, use of data to make decisions and to guide instructional decisions and allocation of resources.
- Regular monitoring of progress with recognition for successful schools and intervention for struggling schools, managing community partnerships and “buffering schools” against external distractions. (Department of Basic Education, 2009).

Curriculum advisors are responsible for various curriculum issues in schools. They conduct school-based curriculum development sessions for educators in which they train educators about delivering the curriculum in the classroom. They ensure that schools order textbooks and other materials which are distributed on time for use by learners and have retrieval systems for learner teaching and support materials. They support teachers in the implementation of the new curriculum, strengthening their subject content knowledge and in organising relevant co-curricular activities and in effectively delivering the curriculum in the classroom.

Curriculum advisors also make sure that teachers have all the requisite curriculum and assessment documents for the subject and moderate school-based assessment including the Annual National Assessment. Curriculum advisors should, therefore, always visit schools to monitor and support the teachers in the implementation of the curriculum. Educators, therefore, with the assistance of curriculum advisors are expected to join hands and play a leading role in encouraging their colleagues in implementing the system. The teachers who are not visited and supported by curriculum advisors are deprived of important advisory services and professional development provided by the Department of Education.

4.2.2.20 I received learning and teaching support materials for reading (LTSM) for reading (textbooks, storybooks)

Question 2.28 was asked to ascertain if the teachers or schools received teaching and learning support materials such as textbooks and storybooks, for reading.

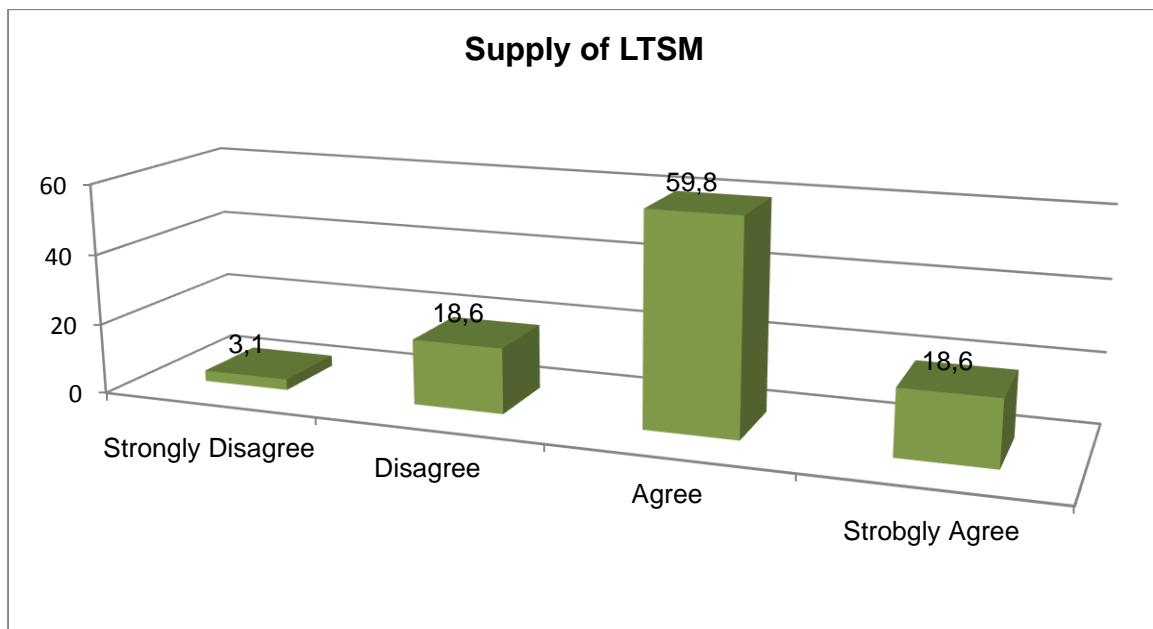


Figure 4.20: Supply of LTSM

The data from question 2.28, presented in figure 4.28, gives an indication that a combined total of 78.4%, who form the majority of the respondents, agree and strongly agree that they received teaching and learning support materials, while a combined total of 21.6%, who form the minority of responses received, strongly disagree or disagree and indicate that they did not receive teaching and learning support materials. The data indicates that Limpopo Province has improved in the delivery of learning support materials in the schools. Learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) are core to ensuring that teachers and learners have maximum support for scaffolding of curriculum coverage. This is confirmed by many researchers and educationists. Bekker, Denerouti, Deboer and Schaufeli (2003:76) indicate that poor and lack of resources preclude actual goal accomplishment, which is likely to cause failure and frustration and may therefore lead to withdrawal from work and reduce commitment. Spaull (2012:2) points to previous studies that have shown that providing access to textbooks delivers significant returns in terms of educational outcomes, and

this is confirmed by the recent analysis. The research shows that only when learners have their own reading textbook, or when they share it with no more than one other person, do they experience performance gains.

The problem of school textbooks in Limpopo Province has a long history. As from 2012 there was media coverage of undelivered text books in the Limpopo Province and this suggests a serious problem with the procurement and delivery of books in the Province which needs to be addressed at provincial and national level. In some schools, many learners do not have all the required books, and sometimes a class of 45 learners is required to share five copies of a textbook. In the schools, the learners depend on the notes provided by the educator. Themane and Mabasa (2002:278) also discovered, some twelve years ago, that many schools did not have an adequate supply of textbooks, nor safe storage places or retrieval systems for textbooks. Teachers depended on the goodwill of learners to return the textbooks at the end of the year. Unfortunately, some learners either steal the books from where they are stored or do not return them at the end of the year as schools do not have retrieval policies. Timely distribution of LTSM remains one of the key challenges in the province. There is a need for a new model to be employed for the supply and retrieval of textbooks.

4.2.2.20 I am not satisfied with the quality of teaching and learning support materials for reading in my class

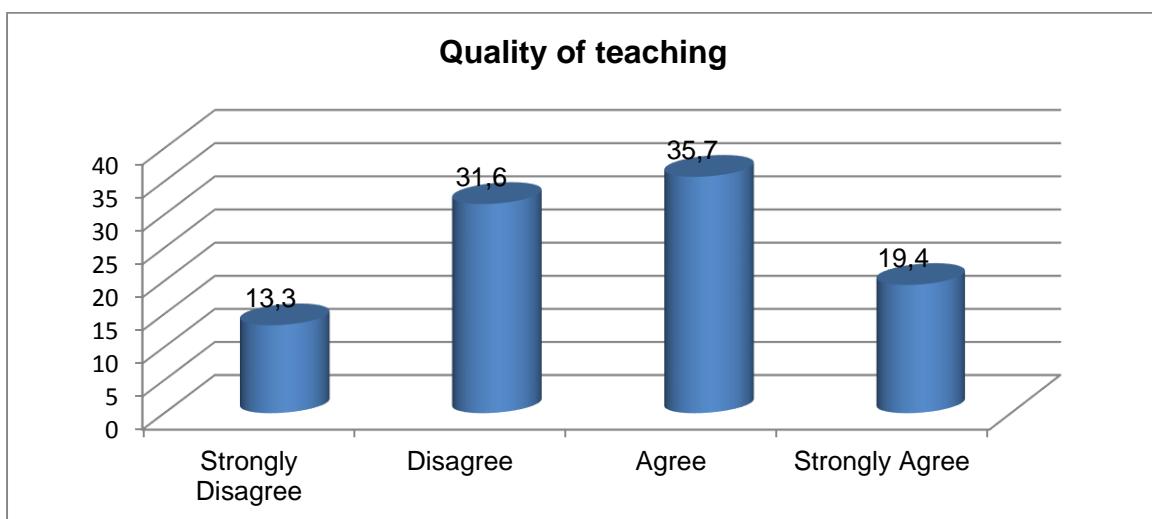


Figure 4.21: Quality teaching

The quality of teaching and learning support materials is very important for effective teaching of reading. Question 2.21 was asked to establish if the respondents are satisfied with the quality of teaching and learning support materials for reading in their classes. The data presented in figure 4.29 reflects the respondents' views about the quality of teaching and learning materials found in their schools. According to the data in figure 4.29, a total of 56.1% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that they are not satisfied with the quality of teaching and learning support materials for reading in their classes, while a total of 45.9% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree. It is, however, very important to understand the meaning of the concept "quality".

There are great competing views of the nature of quality and definitions of the concept "quality". It is sometimes argued that quality is like beauty and it resides in the eyes of the beholder (Mhlanga, 2008). For example, colleagues, friends and family members may have different opinions about the quality of an object. Consequently, the term "quality" is interpreted and defined differently by different people. In this study the definition by Harvey and Green (1993:26) will be adopted. Harvey defines five meanings of quality:

- quality as exceptional (excellence);
- quality as perfection;
- quality as fitness for purpose quality as value for money;
- quality as transformational (Harvey & Green, 1993).

As **excellence** quality is perceived as something distinctive or special, something that cannot be attained by many. As **perfection** quality relates closely with the notion of "zero defect" commonly applied in industrial contexts, where the physical products have to meet the exact specifications of the desired product in its perfect form without any defects (Harvey & Green, 1993). As **fitness for purpose**, quality is conceived in relation to institutional set goals or targets. It allows an institution to demonstrate the achievement of its objectives according to the purpose of its mission. As **value-for-money**, quality is viewed in terms of value on investment (Harvey, 1996). The **value-for-money** conception is client-sensitive, as quality is judged according to the extent to which the client is satisfied with the services offered. As Harvey notes, the growing

accountability of educational institutions to governments, students, parents and sponsors reflects the value-for-money conception of quality. As transformation, quality has pedagogical implications and refers to how the learning process transforms the learner (Harvey, 1996). In this regard quality is defined in terms of value added in the learner and learner assessment seeks to establish the amount of such value added.

The problem of the quality of teaching and learning materials in many schools is that they are not able to comply with all the five meanings of the definitions of quality. In other words, they do not comply with all the criteria of quality.

4.2.2.22 The overcrowding of learners in my class is stressful which influences effective reading strategies in my class

Question 2.22 was asked to establish if the poor performance of learners in reading is caused by overcrowding of learners in classrooms. The data obtained in figure 4.23 indicates that the majority of the respondents have overcrowded classes.

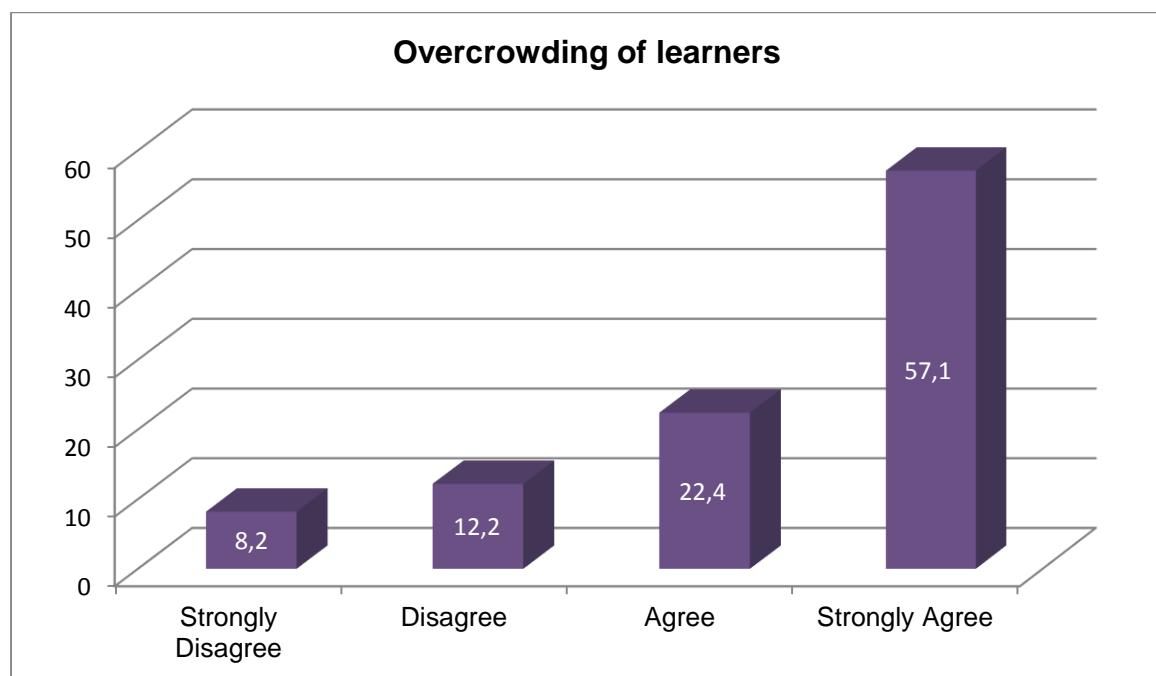


Figure 4.22: Overcrowded classes

A total of 79.6% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that they have overcrowded classes while a total of 20.4% disagree and strongly disagree. Class size is an on-going issue in education and it is continually expanding in many schools.

What was once a normal classroom ratio of 1:35 is now pushing at the seams to about 1:80 learners in a class. This contributes a lot to poor learner performance because teachers cannot perform to their fullest because they do not have time for individual learners. This causes harm and affects the whole school.

Researchers and educators have argued that large classes can have negative effects on student achievement. Stecher (2001:17), for example, states that “third grade students enrolled in reduced classes performed better on the Standard Achievement Test than did students in regular-size classrooms”. Numerous studies indicate that overcrowded classes also contribute to poor learners’ performance. As enrolment numbers climb, the issue of school size becomes relevant to the task of improving student performance (Yaunches, 2002:22). Smaller schools have shown a greater capacity to develop personal connections among students and staff and mitigate violent or antisocial behaviour (Yaunches, 2002:23). Bryk (1994) found that students in smaller learning environments achieved at higher levels than cohorts in larger schools.

A normal classroom is designed to take only 35 learners and generally teachers agree that once the class size rises above 35, it is impossible to maintain discipline, or even an acceptable low noise level in the classroom. Any classroom accommodating more than 40 learners is, therefore, overcrowded and contributes to ineffective teaching and learning.

4.2.2.23 Parents are not involved in the teaching and learning of their children

Parent involvement is the support of parents in school activities in and out of school for the benefit of learners’ academic achievement and school effectiveness. Parental involvement is crucial for academic performance of learners. One way that parents can contribute positively to their children’s education is to assist them with their academic work at home. Question 2.23 was asked to determine whether parents participate in teaching their children to read. The data that is reflected in figure 4.31 below indicates that a total of 76.1% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that parents are not involved in the teaching and learning of their children, while 23.9%

disagree and strongly disagree. This indicates that in many schools parents are indeed not involved in the education of their children.

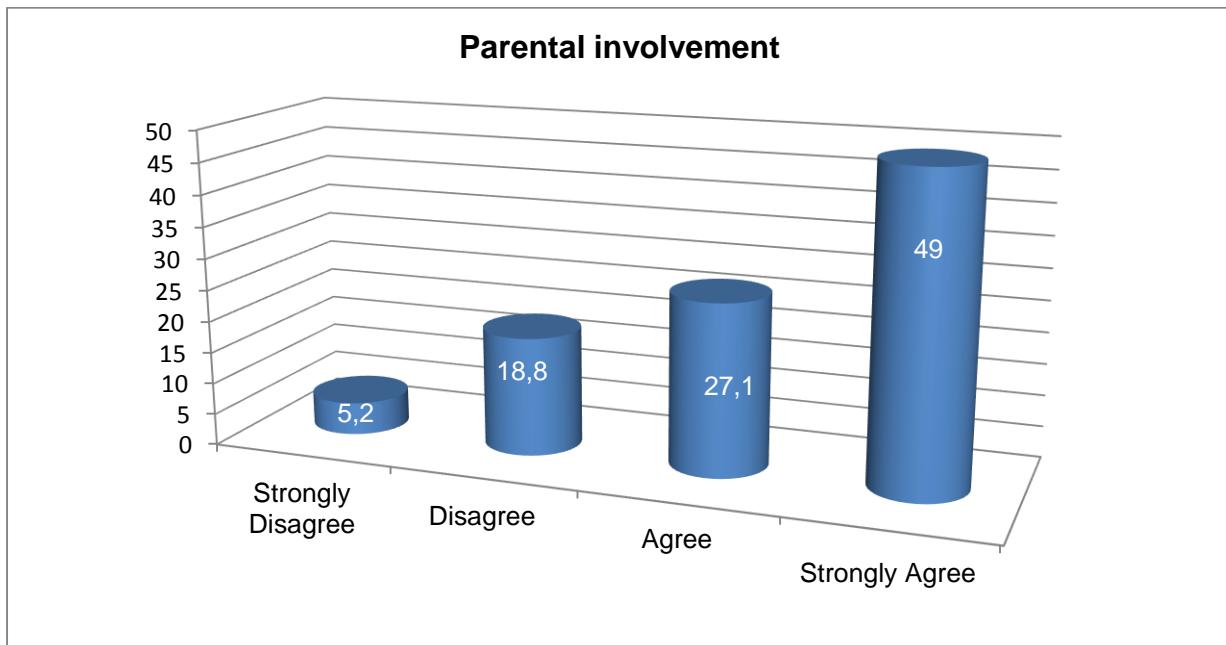


Figure 4.23: Parental involvement

A school is an institution within a society and can only exist through the co-operation of the families constituting the school community. Establishing a good school community relationship is a key ingredient to success in securing mutual participation of parents in decision-making, school activities, problem-solving, providing assistance and offering services to a school (Legotlo, Maaga & Sebego, and 2002:118). Parents who read to their children, assist them with their homework, and provide tutoring using resources provided by teachers tend to do better in school than children whose parents do not assist their children (Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, & Fendrich, 1999). Studies have shown that illiterate parents and caregivers with little or no experience of schooling have little to contribute to the learning of their children. Studies reveal that even some literate parents in the rural areas are reluctant in assisting their children with school work at home. They feel that they lack knowledge and skills of the subject areas and the larger curriculum making it difficult for them to help with reading. Parents fear that they may confuse their children if they try to help them. This negatively affects the learning of the child at home.

4.2.2.24 I have difficulties in developing good reading lessons

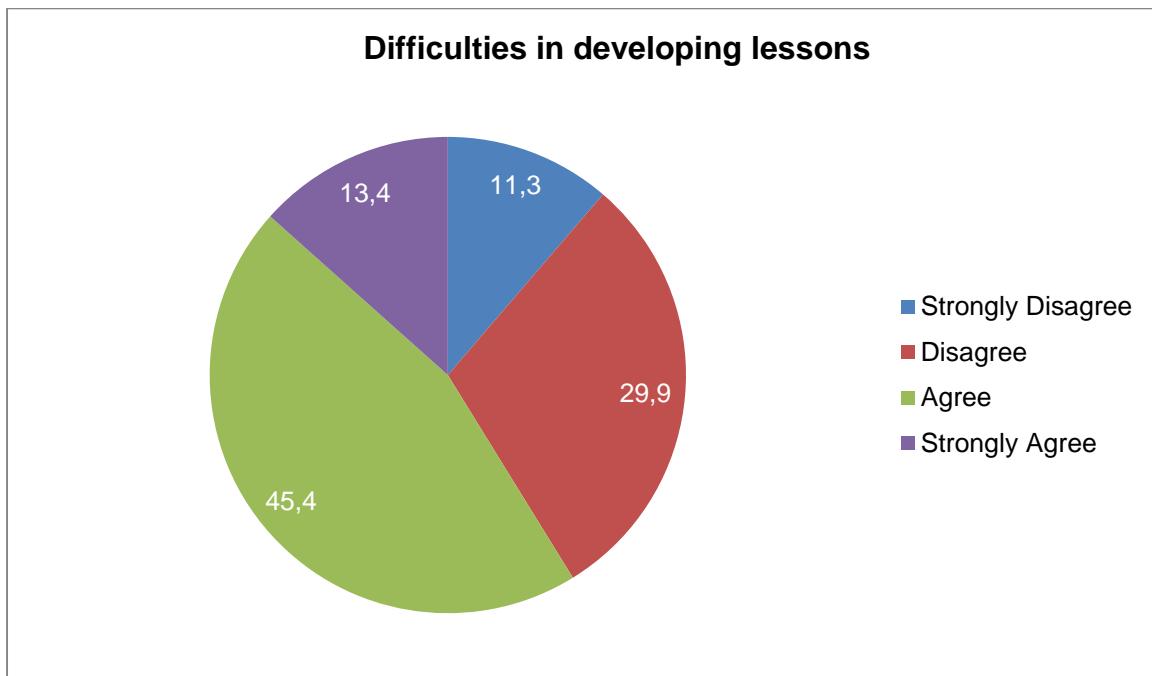


Figure 4.24: Difficulties in developing lessons

Teachers have the prime responsibility for what takes place in their classrooms. Within the classroom the teacher will play a significant role particularly in the planning of lessons and lesson units. Question 2.2.4 was asked in order to find out if the respondents have difficulties in developing good reading lessons. The perceptions of the respondents on the development of lesson plans are reflected in the data in figure 4.32. According to the data in figure 4.32, a total of 58.8% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that they have difficulties in developing good reading lessons. A lesson plan is a plan of what the teacher wants to present in class. This implies that more than half of the respondents have difficulties in the planning and presentation of lessons in class. To be able to design a lesson plan, the teacher must be able to identify and formulate objectives, analyze content, plan learning experience opportunities, consider teaching methods and the sequence of instructional learning events and be able to evaluate them effectively (Carl, 2009:209). In the OBE context, teachers will have to plan lessons based on the learning outcomes of the learning areas and the focus will be on achieving the critical and learning outcomes. In this regard teachers need a thorough knowledge of the relevant curriculum model and the learning area. The responses of teachers to this question indicate that teachers still need thorough training in OBE curriculum development.

4.2.2.25 I find developing a rubric for reading difficult

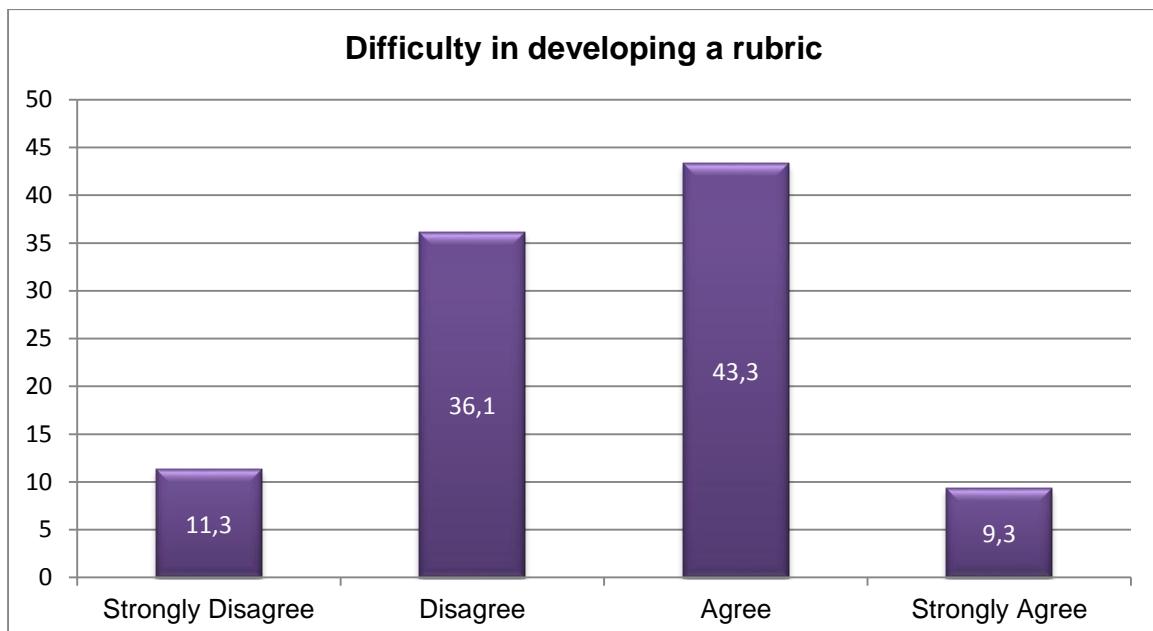


Figure 4.25: Difficulty in developing a rubric

Question 2.2.5 is asked to establish if the respondents are able to use assessment rubrics. A rubric is a coherent set of criteria for students' work that includes descriptions of levels of performance quality on the criteria (Brookhart & Nitco, 2008:201). The main purpose of rubrics is to assess performances. The data in figure 4.33 indicates the views of respondents with regard to the use of rubrics. Figure 4.33 indicates that 47.4% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that they find developing a rubric for reading difficult, while 52% of the respondents disagree. This means that slightly more than half of the respondents are able to use this type of assessment. A rubric is very useful for assessment because it gives diagnostic information to the teacher, gives formative information to the students and it requires less time for scoring (Brookhart & Nitco, 2008:201). It is therefore very important that teachers should be trained to use the rubrics.

4.2.2.26 I find assessing a reading lesson difficult

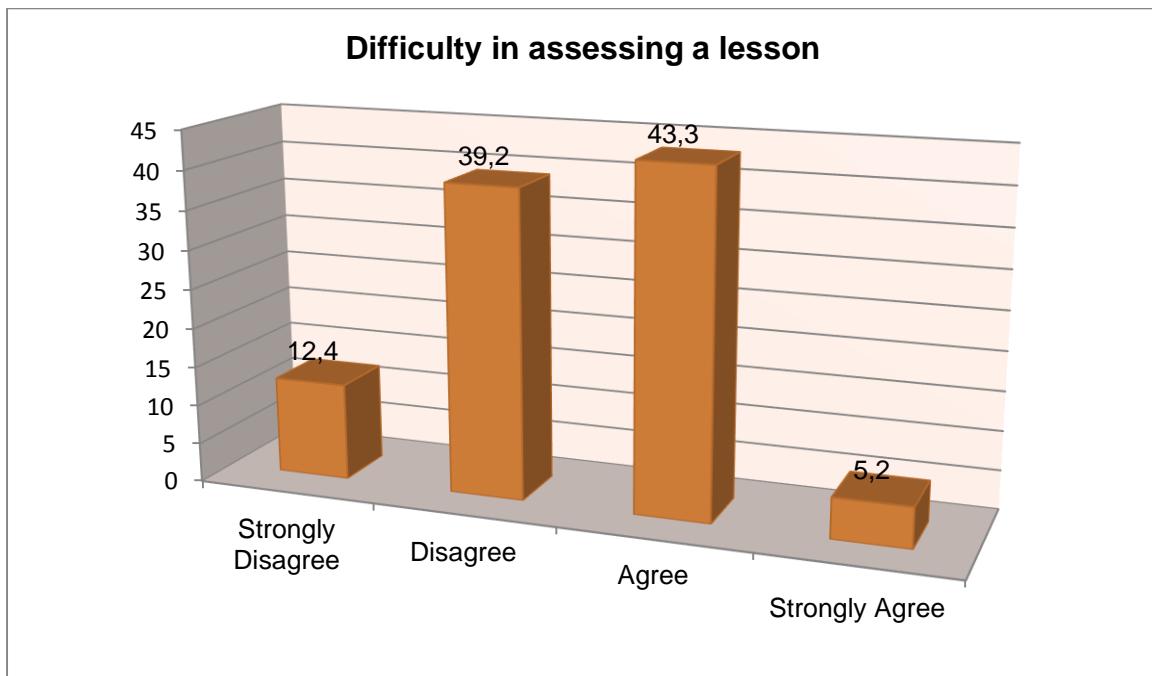


Figure 4.26: Difficulty in assessing a lesson

According to Figure 4.34, a total of 51.6% (12.4% strongly disagree and 39.2% disagree) of the respondents do not have problems in the implementation of the new assessment methods and techniques while a total of 48.5% (5.2% strongly agree and 43.3% agree) have problems. This implies that almost half of the respondents are not able to assess reading and they should be trained because assessment is one of the main principles of NCS and CAPS. The Department of Education distributed NCS and CAPS policy documents to all schools. Educators are expected to read the documents and implement them effectively. Heads of department and principals are responsible for guiding the teachers about all assessment methods and techniques. There are various forms of assessment that can be used by educators. A diagnostic assessment is an assessment which is used to ascertain, prior to instruction, each student's strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills (McMillan, 2000:27). Establishing these capabilities permits the teacher to remediate students and adjust the curriculum to meet each pupil's unique needs. Formal assessments, on the other hand, occur when students are aware that the task they are doing is for assessment purposes, for example, a written examination or test (Wass, Van der Vleuten & Shatzer, 2001).

4.2.3 SECTION C: TEACHER EFFICACY

4.2.3.1 It has a positive effect on teacher effort and persistence in the face of difficulties in teaching effective reading skills

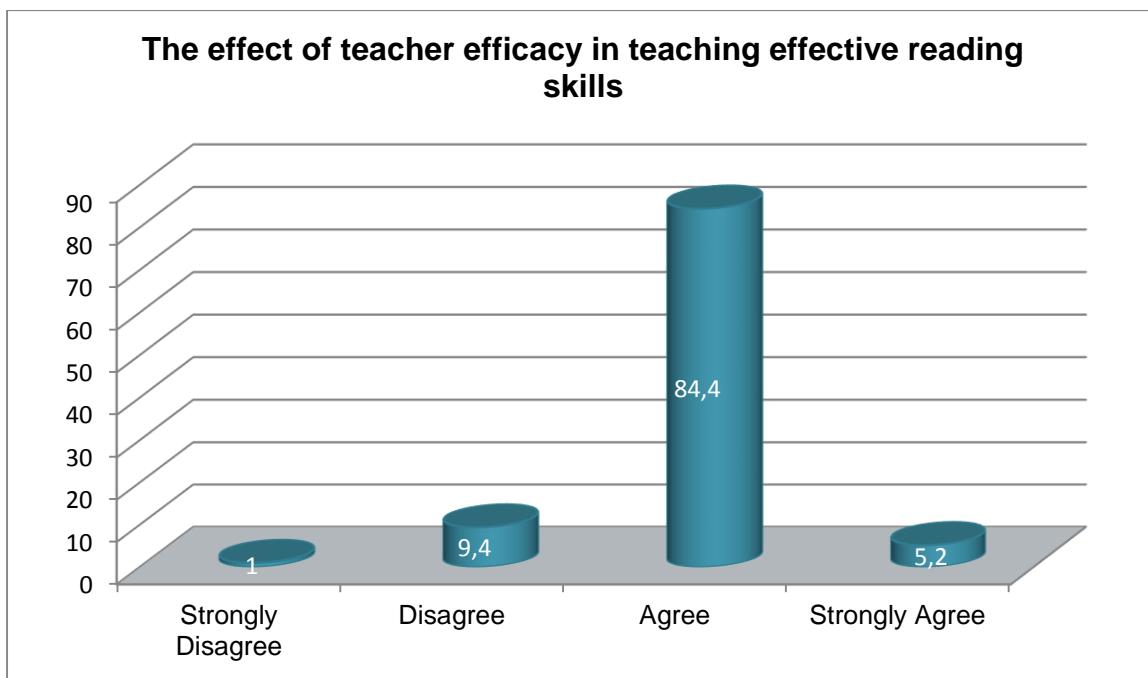


Figure 4.27: The role of experience and teacher efficacy in teaching reading

This question was posed in order to establish the extent to which teacher efficacy and experience contribute to teacher effectiveness in the teaching of reading in Grade 4 classes. The teachers' responses are presented in figure 4.35 which indicates that the majority of 89.6% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that teacher efficacy and experience have a positive effect on teacher effort and persistence in the face of difficulties in teaching effective reading skills. The data further indicates that a minority of 10.4% of the respondents disagrees and strongly disagrees.

The effect of teaching efficacy on teaching performance is emphasized by various researchers and theorists. Bandura (1997), for example, concluded that the evidence across studies is consistent in showing that "perceived self-efficacy" contributes significantly to the level of motivation and performance accomplishments (Magro & Sembrano, 2012:74). Bandura (2006) embraced an integrated perspective for human performance in which social influences operate through psychological influences. This is confirmed by Magno (2005:12) who asserts that "teachers own beliefs and

convictions about their own performance have much influence on their own performance, which also applies to teaching effective reading skills". It was also explained by Gibson and Dembo (2005) that teachers who believe that students can be influenced by effective teaching and who also have confidence in their own teaching abilities, would persist longer, provide a greater academic focus in the classroom and exhibit different types of feedback than teachers who have lower expectations concerning their ability to influence student learning (Magro & Sembrano, 2012:74).

4.2.3.2 It enhances teachers' professional commitment to persevere in teaching and implement reading strategies

Teachers who believe student learning can be influenced by effective teaching and who also have confidence in their own teaching abilities (self-efficacy beliefs) would persist longer, provide a greater academic focus in the classroom, and exhibit different types of feedback than teachers who have lower expectations concerning their ability to influence student learning (Magno, 2005:58). Question 3.2 was therefore asked to ascertain from the teachers if self-efficacy is capable of enhancing their professional commitment to persevere in teaching and implement reading strategies. The responses to this question are provided in figure 4.36.



Figure 4.28: Professional commitment

According to the data provided in figure 4.36, overwhelming majorities of 91.5% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that teacher self-efficacy enhances teachers'

professional commitment to persevere in teaching and implement reading strategies, while a minority of 8.5% disagrees. It is also very interesting to note that there is no respondent who strongly disagrees. This indicates that teacher's own beliefs and convictions about their own performance have much influence on their actual performance.

Research on efficacy of teachers suggests that behaviours such as persistence on a task, risk taking, and use of innovations are related to degrees of efficacy (Ashton, 2005). For example, highly efficacious teachers have been found to be more likely to use inquiry and student-centred teaching strategies, while teachers with a low sense of efficacy are more likely to use teacher-directed strategies, such as lecture and reading from the text (Czerniak, 2000). In classrooms where teachers have high levels of teaching efficacy, high levels of learning occur (Weasmer & Woods, 1998). According to McCombs (2007), the major features of learner-centeredness practices are that:

- the learners are included in the educational decision making process;
- diverse perspectives of learners are encouraged;
- individual differences of the learners are accounted for and respected; and
- learners are co-creators of the teaching and learning process.

4.2.3.3 It supports learners' motivation to do self-reading for enjoyment

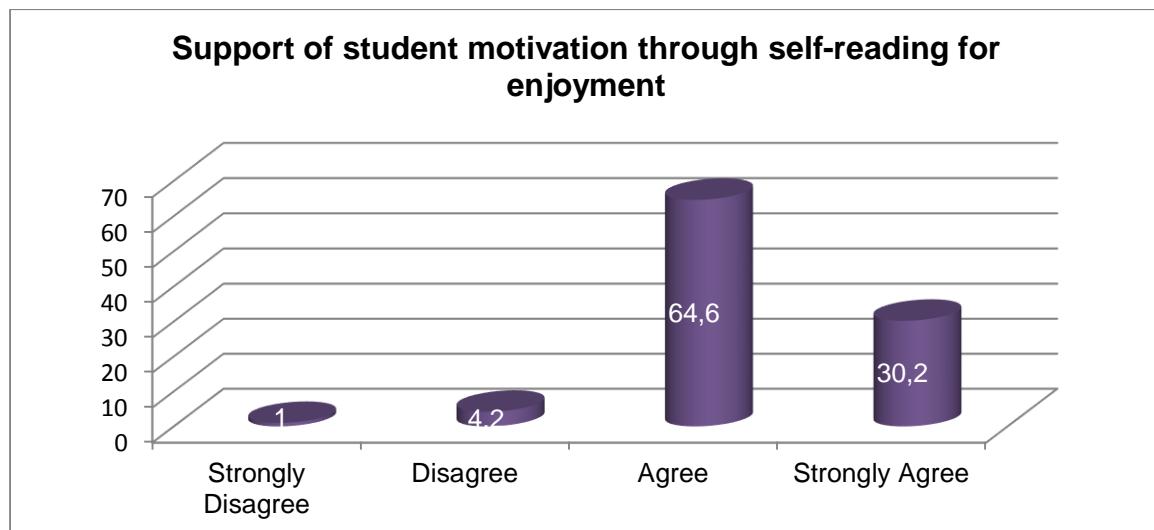


Figure 4.29: Support of learners' motivation through self-reading

Many studies reveal that self-efficacy contributes significantly to the level of motivation and performance accomplishments. Question 3.3 was asked to establish if the respondents agree that self-efficacy supports student motivation to do self-reading for enjoyment. The data in figure 4.37 reveals that a combined majority of 94.8% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that self-efficacy supports student motivation to do self-reading for enjoyment, while a minority of 5.2% disagree and strongly disagree. This implies that many respondents motivate students to read through self-motivation.

According to BBC Skillswise (2014:03), reading for enjoyment means any reading that is primarily for pleasure and it encompasses a wide range of genres and publications and includes both fiction and non-fiction. Reading for pleasure is critical for ensuring that the practice needed to become fluent becomes part of the learners' everyday life, and is not just seen as a classroom-based activity. There are a range of benefits gained from reading for pleasure, namely;

- it increases sense of achievement, confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness;
- it widens horizons;
- you can do it anywhere;
- it develops relationships and promotes inclusion and empathy through sharing opinions and ideas; and
- it prevents boredom and promotes relaxation.

(BBC Skillswise, 2014:03). Reading for pleasure to support the engagement and motivation of learners. London: BBC

4.2.3.4 Provides openness to new methods in teaching

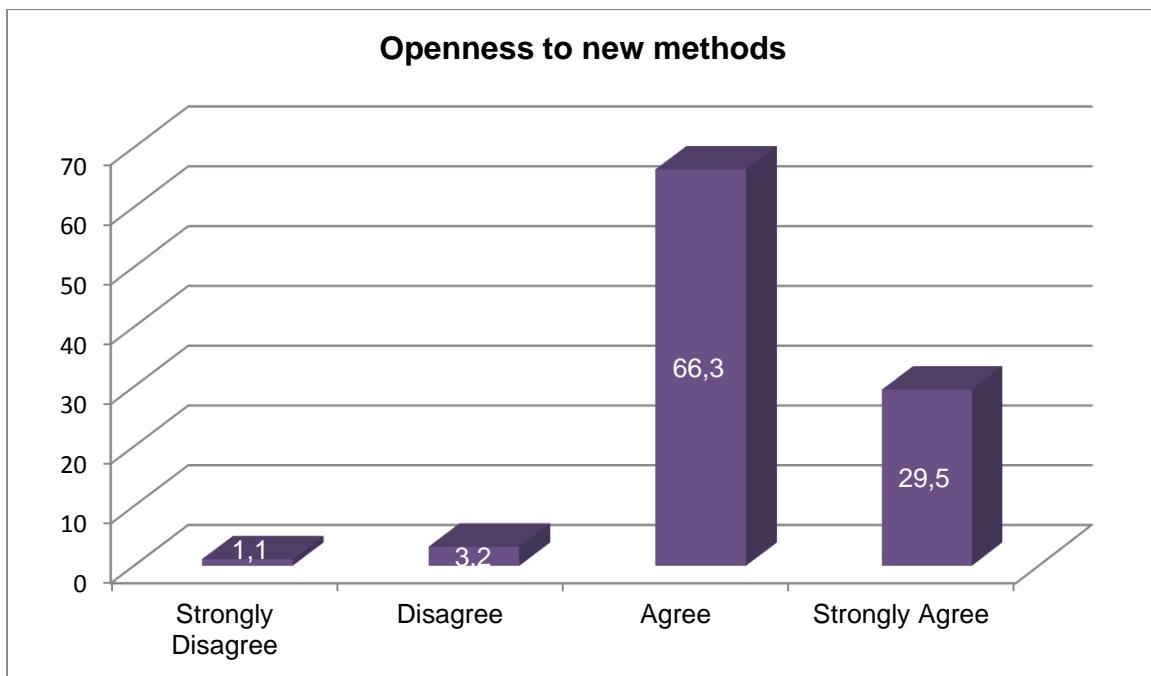


Figure 4.30: Openness to new methods

Effective teaching methods are very important for ensuring that learners are able to read and write. Question 3.4 was asked to ascertain whether efficacy enables teachers to learn new teaching methods. The data provided in figure 4.38 reveals that an overwhelming majority of 95.8% agree and disagree that efficacy enables them to learn new methods of teaching reading, while 5.2% disagree and strongly disagree. Efficacy renders teachers open to various methods and approaches for improving reading. Literacy researchers have revealed that Literacy teachers should teach learners in understanding what they are reading. Kuhn (2003:33), for example, indicates that Literacy teachers should use relevant methods to teach learners to understand what they are reading, such as cooperative learning, question and answer sessions, generating questions around texts, use of pictures, graphs and drawing. Van Renen (2008) also emphasize that the use of pictures in reading also contributes to reading ability of learners. In his article entitled "Explorations through picture books: opportunities for teaching and learning", Van Renen (2008) posits that graphic or illustrated material can make a valuable contribution in reading and viewing with discrimination in all school phases (Van Renen, 2008:07).

4.2.3.5 Increase positive teacher behaviour

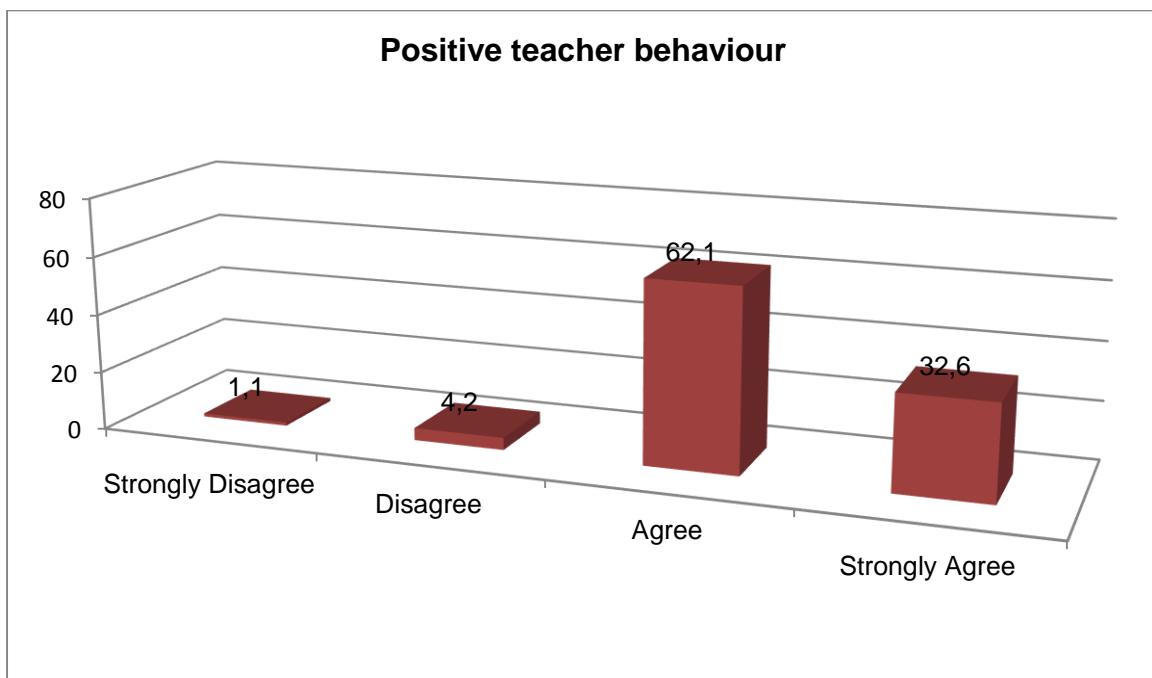


Figure 4.31: Positive teacher behaviour

Personality plays a role in the way teachers are rated on their teaching performance and their being effective in teaching. The behaviour attributed to good teaching coincides with certain personal characteristics such as being friendly, approachable, warm, kind, appreciative, and inspiring (Young & Shaw, 1999). This question was asked to determine if efficacy increased the positive behaviour of teachers. The data displayed in figure 4 indicates that a total majority of 94.8% agreed and strongly agreed that efficacy increases positive teacher behaviour, while a total minority of 5.2% agreed or disagreed. The findings indicate that many respondents have positive behaviour. The positive teacher behaviour allows a teacher to be effective and to be rated highly by their students.

4.2.3.6 Teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to use learner-centred teaching strategies

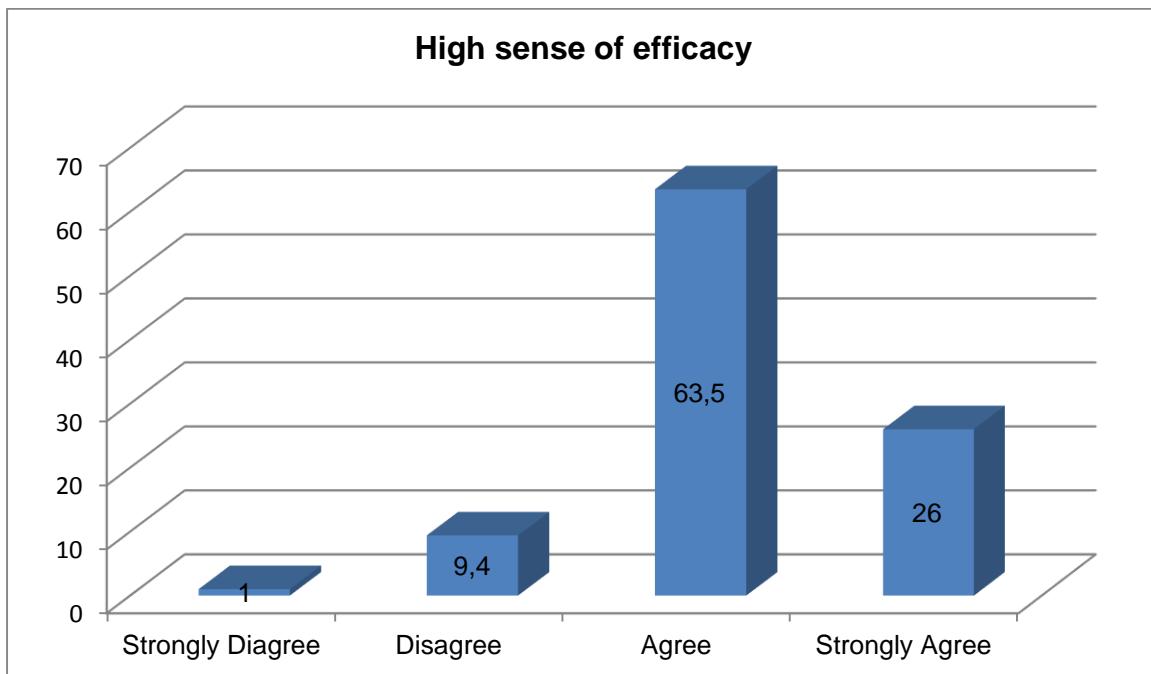


Figure 4.32: High sense of efficacy

Learner-centred practices have gained attention as a way of enhancing the outcomes of teaching and learning among students. Question 3.6 was, therefore, asked to establish if the respondents agree or disagree that teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to use learner-centred teaching strategies. According to the data on figure 4.40, a total of 89.5% of the respondents agree or disagree that teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to use learner-centred teaching strategies, while a total of 10.5% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree. This indicates that the majority of the respondents use learner-centred teaching strategies which are highly recommended for teaching reading (Magno & Sembrano, 2005).

There is a shift from a directive approach in teaching to recognizing more the needs of the learners. There are three interpretations of learner-centred teaching (Swarts, Dahlstrom & Zeichner, 2001:15). The first interpretation focuses on the nature of the selected curriculum content and the degree to which it matches the learners' interest and experience. It emphasizes the need to use learners' existing knowledge and skills and to include learners' everyday experiences in topics to be taught. These everyday

experiences may be used to introduce a topic, or as illustrations after presenting theoretical content. The second interpretation of learner-centred teaching focuses on involving learners in classroom activities (Kasanda, Lubben, Gaoseba, Kandjeo-Marenga, Kapenda, & Campbell, 2005:1808). This strand is exemplified by teaching strategies involving learners in question-and-answer sequences. It also coincides with the tradition of active learning with an emphasis on various forms of group work as desirable learning activities. The third interpretation of learner-centred teaching focuses on allowing learners to share responsibility for their own learning. Here the keyword is empowerment, and the criterion is making meaning (Swarts et al., 2001).

4.2.3.7 The changes teachers apply to their practices and adaptation to innovations require that they have a high sense of efficacy

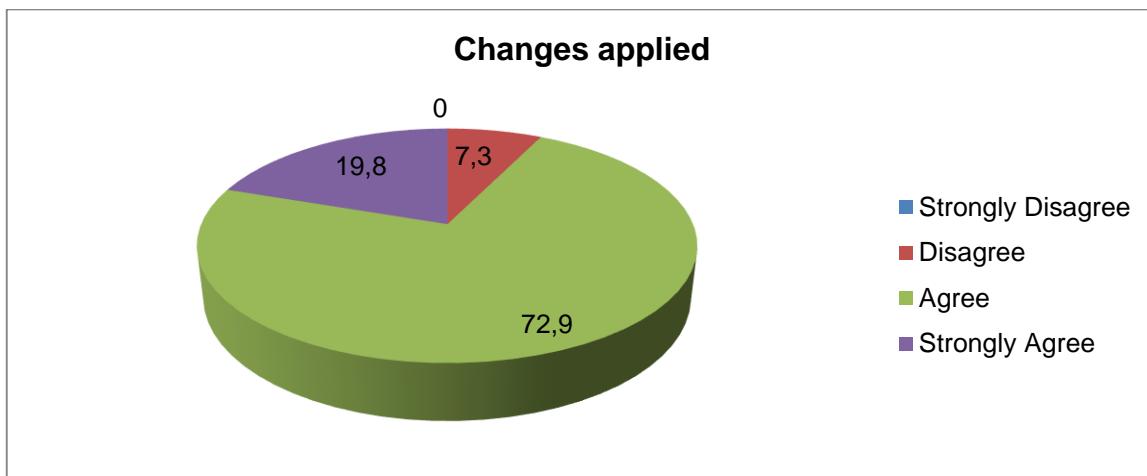


Figure 4.33: Changes applied

Question 3.7 was asked to the respondents to find out if the respondents agree or disagree that the changes they apply to their practices and adaptation to innovations require that they have a high sense of efficacy. The data in figure 4.41 reveals that majorities of 92.9% of the respondents agrees or strongly agree that the changes they apply to their practices and adaptation to innovations require that they have a high sense of efficacy. The data in figure 4.41 also reveals that minorities of 7.1% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree. This view is confirmed by Magno 2005:12), who contends that teachers' own beliefs and convictions about their own performance have much influence on the actual performance. Research on efficacy of teachers also

suggests that behaviors such as persistence on a task, risk taking and use of innovations are related to degrees of efficacy (Magno & Sembrano, 2012:74).

4.2.4 SECTION D: CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT (CAPS) INTERMEDIATE PHASE FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

4.2.4.1 The training received about CAPS with regards to effective reading strategies which was implemented in 2013 was fruitful

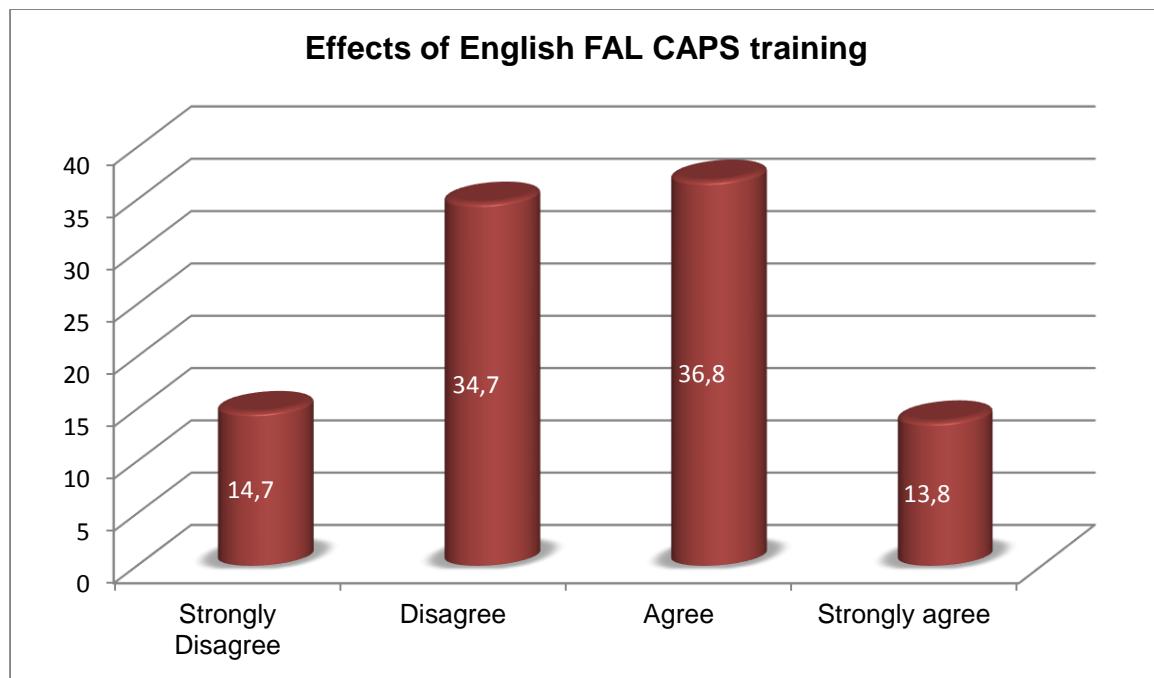


Figure 4.34: Effects of English FAL CAPS training

Question 4.1 focuses on the training that the teachers received with regard to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), and Intermediate Phase First Additional Language (FAL). The respondents reflected on this question and their responses are represented by figure 4.42 where it can be seen that a combined total of 50.6% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the training they received about CAPS with regards to effective reading strategies which was implemented in 2013 was fruitful, while a combined total of 49.4% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree, and therefore believe that the training was not fruitful. This implies that the training received by nearly half of the respondents was ineffective which means that they have not mastered the First Additional Language skills, namely; listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presenting and language structures and conventions.

The ineffective training that they received is the major reason for the inability of the learners to read and write.

In 1997 the Department of Education introduced Outcomes-Based Education to overcome the curricular divisions of the past, but the experience of implementation prompted a review in 2000 (Department of Basic Education, 2011:04). This led to the first curriculum revision which produced the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 and the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 in 2002. From 2012 the two National Curriculum Statements for Grades R-9 and Grades 10-12 were combined in a single document called National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 represents a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools and comprises the following:

- Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for all approved subjects;
- National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12; and
- National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 (Department of Education, 2011:04).

Language learning in the Intermediate Phase includes all the official languages in South Africa which are offered at various levels, namely; the Home Language, First Additional Language and Second Additional Language. These levels refer to the proficiency levels at which the languages are offered and not the native or acquired language.

4.2.4.2 The three days' time allocated for the training was enough for mastering this new curriculum

Question 4.2 probed further on Question 4.1 to establish if the three days' time allocated for the training was enough for mastering this new curriculum. From figure 4.3, it is indicative that a combined total of 86.4% of respondents, who form the majority of responses received, disagree or strongly disagree that the training received

was fruitful, while a combined total of 13.7% of respondents, who form the minority of responses received, strongly agree or agree that the training received was fruitful.

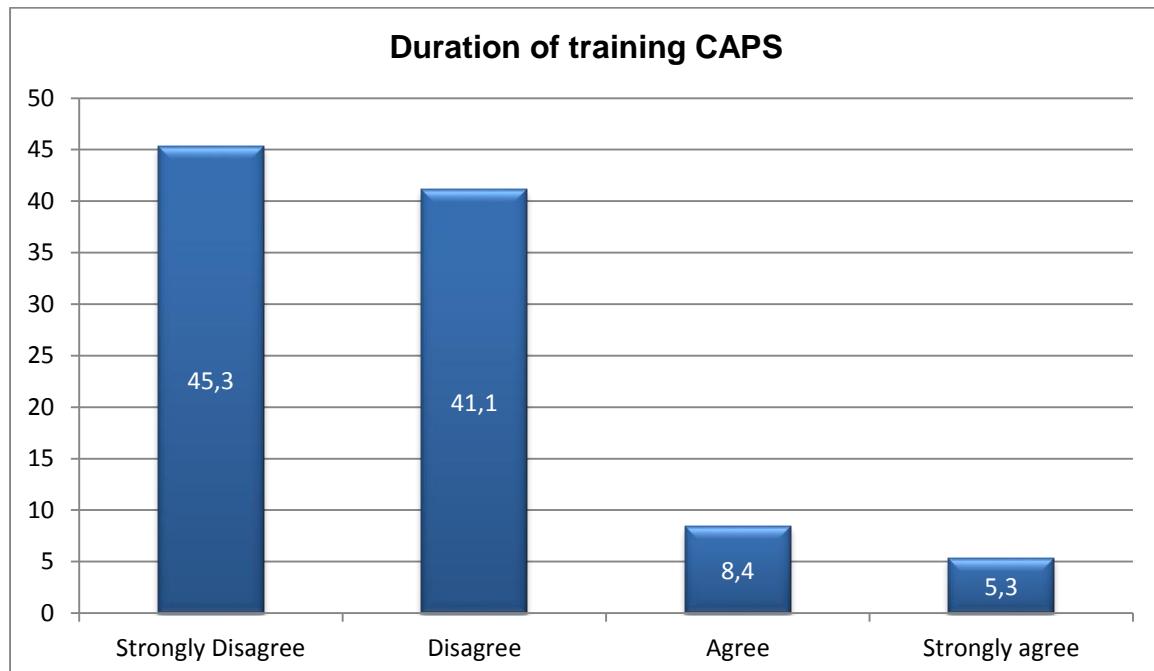


Figure 4.35: Duration of training CAPS

What can be concluded from this data is that the training was not effective because of the short duration of training. Some of the causes are that we also find some trainers who, instead of explaining how certain content should be taught, only tell the trainees what to focus on, namely; outcomes, integration, group work, practical work and regular assessment. There are also some trainers who tell the trainees to go and read for themselves because they are professionals. In such workshops there are no discussions. Most training is conducted by subject advisors and most of them are interested in monitoring only and not training.

4.2.4.3 The terminology used in CAPS is simplified and understandable

The essence of asking question 4.3 was to determine if the respondents understand the terminology used in CAPS. Figure 4.44 indicates the responses obtained from the respondents. Figure 4.3 below shows that a total of 88.4% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the terminology used in CAPS is simplified and understandable. A minority of a total of 11.6% of the respondents disagreed and this indicates that the terminology is still difficult and difficult to understand. This minority

of respondents is supported by Jansen (1999:12) who stated several criticisms of outcomes based education. Jansen indicates that the language of innovation associated with outcomes based education is too complex, confusing and at times contradictory.

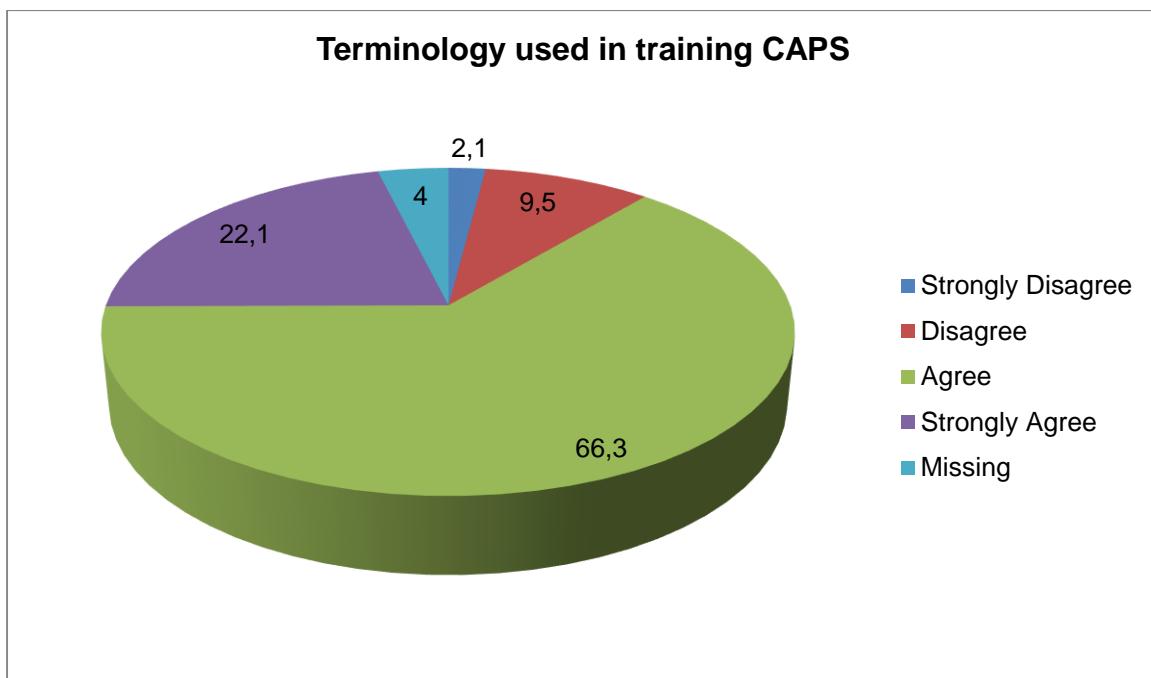


Figure 4.36: Terminology used in training CAPS

A teacher attempting to make sense of Outcomes Based Education will not only have to come to terms with more than 50 different concepts and labels but also keep track of the changes in meaning and priorities afforded to these different labels over time. Ornstein and Hunkins (2004:316) remind us of the “Keep It Short and Simple Theory (KISS)”, which requires that we recognize our innovation for what it is and have a realistic perception of its difficulty level.

4.2.4.4 Teachers will need more CAPS training for effective reading strategies and methods

In order to establish if teachers will need more CAPS training for effective reading strategies and methods, question 4.4 was asked. The responses that respondents gave are presented in figure 4.45. The data from figure 4.45 shows that an overwhelming majority of 96.9% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that they

need further training in CAPS, while a minority of 3.1% disagree and 0% of the respondents strongly disagree that they need further training in CAPS.

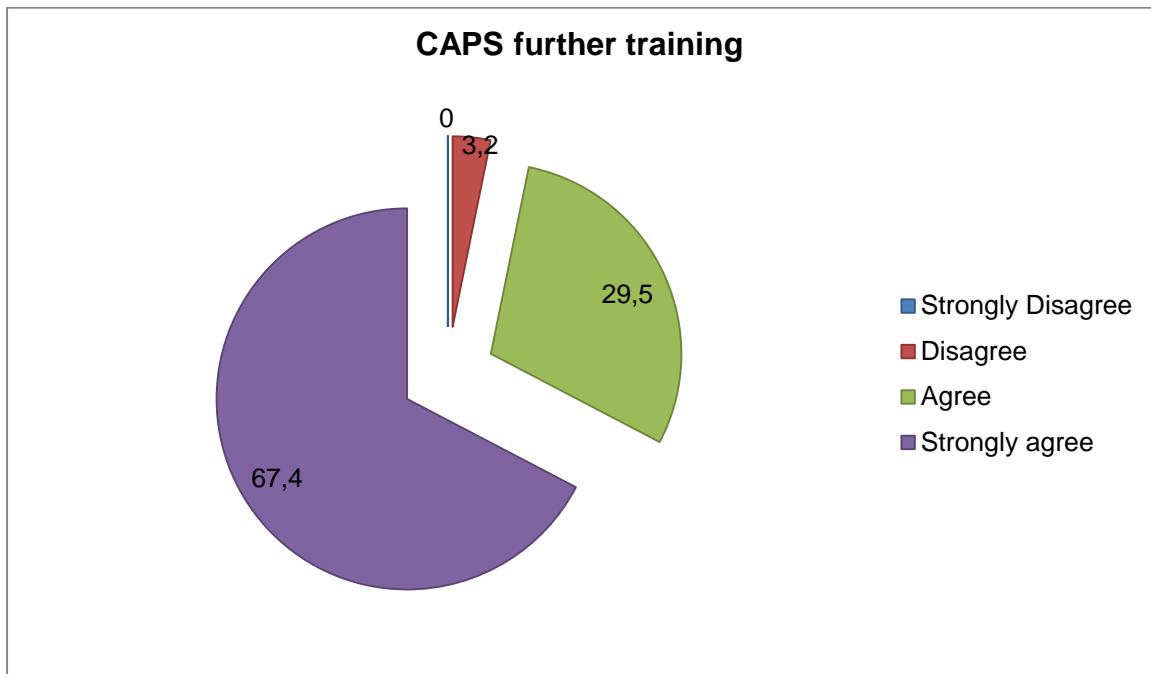


Figure 4.37: CAPS training

This indicates that there are very few teachers who are very confident about their knowledge of CAPS. Further training in CAPS is also supported by various educationists or researchers, for example, Ornstein and Hunkins (2004:303) maintain that curriculum designers need to provide the necessary training and support for their recommended programme modifications in order to facilitate rapid implementation. If this is not done, educators will feel uncomfortable with the new programmes. The initial change was very dramatic in our curriculum change history because major concerns were raised by curriculum implementers, the educators.

4.2.4.5 Developing a good reading lesson in the training was stressful

One of the roles of Literacy teachers is to develop effective reading lessons. The respondents were asked question 4.5 in order to establish if they are capable of developing reading lessons. The data from figure 4.46 shows that a combined total of 60% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that developing a good reading

lesson in the training was stressful, while 40% of the respondents disagree. This indicates that the respondents are not able to practice what they have been trained.

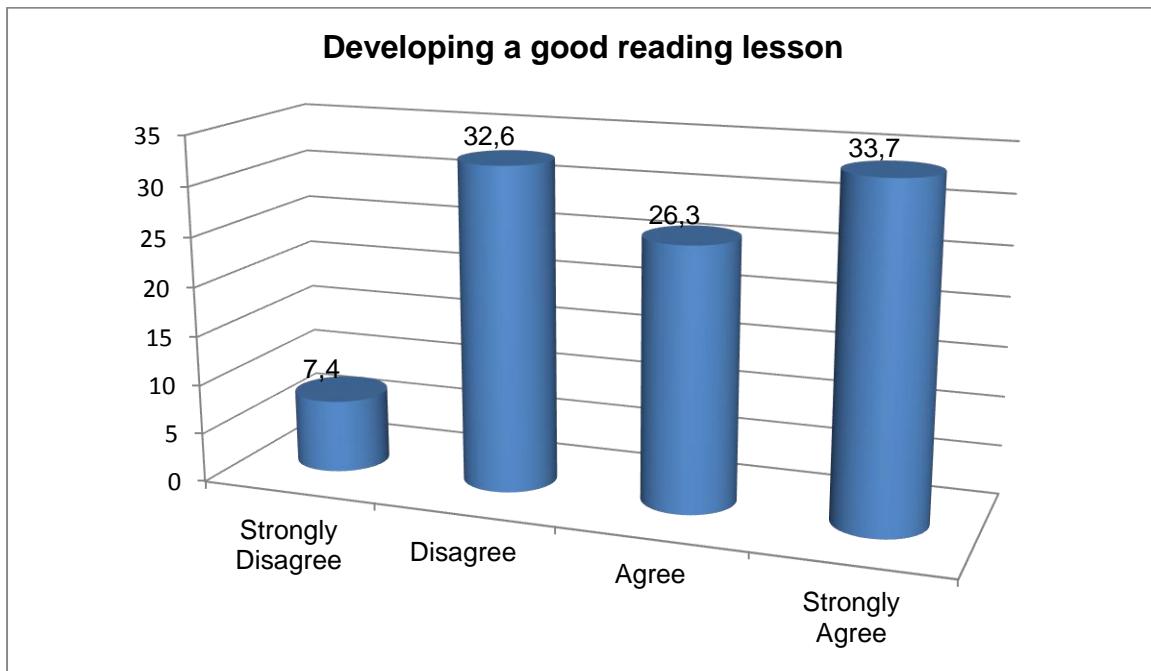


Figure 4.38: Useful Literacy information

According to English FAL and CAPS, well-developed reading and viewing skills are central to successful learning across the curriculum. All reading lessons should consist of the following stages:

- **Pre-reading:** Activating prior knowledge, looking at the source, author and publication date, reading the first and last paragraph of a section and making predictions.
- **Reading:** Pause occasionally to check your comprehension, compare the content to your predictions, visualize what you are reading, use the context to work out the meaning of unknown words, ask someone to help you understand a difficult section.
- **Post-reading:** Draw conclusions, write a summary to help you clarify and recall main ideas.

4.3 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents data collected by means of structured interviews. Twenty (20) Grade 4 teachers from ten (10) schools in the Man'ombe Circuit, Mopani District of the Limpopo Province, were interviewed. The Tesch method of qualitative data analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The eight steps as explained in chapter 3 were eventually reduced to a focus on the following three final steps:

Step 1: Reading

In this step all the transcripts were read and reread to get a sense of the whole. This was followed by selecting participants' responses to find underlying meanings and thoughts of the interview.

Step 2: Listing of topics

After listing all topics from all the responses, similar topics or responses were clustered together. These similar responses were organised into categories in an attempt to answer the research questions.

Step 3: Development of categories

The development of categories progressed on account of the identification of themes adhering to each category.

4.3.1 Tell me about the highlights of your teaching experience

This question was asked to establish the important experiences of the teachers in the teaching profession. The following themes emerged during the data analysis:

Table 4.9: Teaching experience

Participant	School	Theme 1: Levels taught	Theme 2: Teaching experience in years	Theme 3: Evaluation
1	A	Foundation	20	
2	A	Foundation, Intermediate	14	
3	B	Various phases	33	Enjoys being a teacher
4	B		5	
5	C		15	
6	C		10	
7	D	Various phases	18	Enjoying being a teacher
8	D		20	
9	E	Various grades	20	Enjoying being a teacher
10	E		15	
11	F	Different grades	10	Enjoying being a teacher
12	F		20	
13	G	Different grades	25	Enjoying being a teacher
14	G		25	
15	H	Different grades	5	Enjoying being a teacher
16	H		10	
17	I	Different grades	15	Enjoying being a teacher
18	I		15	
19	J	Different grades	15	Enjoying being a teacher
20	J		20	

The findings of this study indicates that the interviewees are highly experienced, teaching various grades and also enjoying the teaching profession. One of the highly experienced teachers from school B for example, said:

I have 33 years teaching experience and I am enjoying being a teacher and teaching various grades.

Studies have shown that experienced teachers share many attributes that distinguish them from novice teachers. Bastick (2002:12), for example, found that experienced teachers were less extrinsically motivated (for example, motivated by salary) and significantly more intrinsically motivated (motivated by the emotional rewards of

working with children), than the novice teachers. Similarly, Bivona (2002) found that teachers with more than 10 years of experience had more positive attitudes than did less experienced educators. A novice teacher is a teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience (Gatbonton, 2008).

This indicates that all the participants of this study are able to implement effective strategies for resolving the challenges in the implementation of effective reading practices, because all the participants have five and more years of teaching experience.

The findings also indicate that the participants have taught various grades and they enjoy teaching children. A study conducted by Martin, Yin and Mayall (2000) indicates that experienced teachers enjoy the teaching profession because they are able to manage their classrooms more effectively than less experienced teachers. The findings of the study also indicate that the least experienced teacher from school H also enjoys being a teacher and remarked as follows:

I have five years teaching experience and I am enjoying being a teacher and teaching different grades.

4.3.2 Explain why your learners are not able to read

This question was asked to establish why learners in their school are not able to read and write. The following themes emerged during thematic data analysis:

Table 4.10: Reasons why learners are not able to read

Participant	School	Theme 1: Constant curriculum changes	Theme 2: Bilingualism	Theme 3: Lack of resources
1	A	Curriculum changes.	African learners learn two languages.	Shortage of textbooks.
2	A	Inadequate training in the new curriculum.	Learners confused by learning two languages.	Late delivery of text books.
3	B	No training in the new curriculum.	Foreign medium of instruction.	Text books not delivered in schools.

4	B	Three days' training	Side-lining of the mother tongue.	No teaching aids and learning aids in schools.
5	C	Lack of professional development.	Bilingualism is too difficult for learners.	Classes overcrowded due to lack of classrooms.
6	C	Teachers do not understand new curriculum.	Multilingualism complicates literacy teaching.	Shortage of stationery.
7	D	Confusion about implementation of the new curriculum.	Learning more than one language confusing.	No teaching aids.
8	D	New curriculum too complex to understand.	Emphasis of English at the expense of mother tongue.	Shortage of teaching and learning materials.
9	E	Lack of support by instructional leaders.	Too much concentration on English.	Shortage of textbooks.
10	E	Complexity of the new curriculum.	Low quality English teaching.	No textbooks and stationery in schools.
11	F	Teachers do not understand new curriculum.	Learners find it difficult to learn two or three languages.	Shortage of staff.
12	F	Passive resistance of the new curriculum.	Lack of well-qualified English teachers.	Shortage of well-qualified language teachers in schools.
13	G	Lack of understanding of the new curriculum.	Lack of well-qualified English teachers.	Shortage of desks.
14	G	One day training of the new curriculum.	Confusion of learning two languages	Shortage of classrooms.
15	H	Refusing to implement new curriculum.	Foreign language of instruction.	Overcrowding in schools.
16	H	Lack of professional development.	Learning of two languages is difficult for learners.	No well-qualified English teachers.
17	I	Teachers are not trained in new curriculum.	Teachers not well-qualified in English.	Late delivery of books.
18	I	Literacy coaches not doing their work.	Learners confused by learning two languages.	There is not sufficient time to teach reading.
19	J	Ineffective training of new curriculum.	Mother tongue is ignored in schools.	Late delivery of books and stationery.
20	J	Many changes of curriculum.	Difficulty of learning two languages.	Many learners have no textbooks.

The findings of this study revealed that there are three main reasons why the learners are not able to read, namely; constant change of curriculum, learning two or three languages and lack of resources. Many respondents believe that the introduction of the new curriculum based on Outcomes-Based Education is responsible for the

decline in the reading capacity of learners in South Africa. Educators argue that before the implementation of the Outcomes-Based Education approach, the standard of reading in primary schools was far better than it is now. One respondent who also believes that OBE is responsible for the poor performance of learners in reading said that:

When the OBE approach was introduced for the first time in South Africa in 2005, I hailed it as the saviour of our educational system which was based on rote memorization of facts. However, when I started to implement OBE, several challenges emerged. I discovered that OBE was problematic because the language associated with OBE was too complex and confusing to be understood. The situation is complicated by the fact that we were not properly capacitated to deal with this transformation in the curriculum.

The respondents also indicated that the learning of a foreign language also contributes to the poor performance of learners in Literacy. Language is central to our lives; we communicate and understand our world through language and it is the means of access to all study materials (Nieman & Monyai, 2011:25). The problem in South Africa is that black African learners are forced to learn English because it has gained more power than other languages. Before Grade 4 learning to read takes place in the children's mother tongue (first language). According to Howley (2003), English as a first language is spoken by less than 10% of the population and is not the most frequently spoken language at home. This is supported by Admiraal, Westhoff & De Bot (2006:13), who emphasize that this language system is one of immersion, where a language that is not the language of the larger society is used as medium of instruction.

The respondents also indicated that poor performance in reading is caused by overcrowding. Inadequate classrooms lead to congestion and discomfort, thus hampering academic activity. Because of overcrowding, there is not much opportunity for individual attention from over-worked educators. Overcrowded classes also increase the workload of the teacher, make class management difficult and inhibit the

interaction between the teacher and the learner. The respondents also indicated that poor learner performance in Literacy and other subjects is also caused by shortage of textbooks. They indicated that in most schools about three pupils share one text book.

4.3.3 Explain the method that you use for teaching reading in your Grade 4 class

This question focuses on the effective teaching methods of reading in Grade 4. The following themes were produced by thematic data analysis:

Table 4.11: The method used for teaching reading in Grade 4 classes

Participant	School	Theme 1: Read-alouds	Theme 2: Shared reading	Theme 3: Guided reading
1	A	My learners read aloud individually.		I guide the whole class while they read.
2	A	Learners learn to read in groups.	My learners learn to read in pairs of older learner and younger learner.	
3	B	Learners read aloud individually.		I teach small groups of learners to pronounce and read.
4	B	I like to teach my learners to read in groups.		I guide them in their groups.
5	C		I use learners who read better to help those who have reading problems.	
6	C			I divide my learners into small groups of learners who are in similar pace in their reading development and assist them to read.
7	D	I always teach my learners to read aloud individually.		
8	D	I guide all learners to read aloud together.		
9	E	I read aloud while the learners follow in their books.	Learners read in pairs of one who is better in reading and one who is struggling.	

10	E	All learners read aloud together.		
11	F	One learner is selected to read aloud for other learners while they follow in their books.		I guide the learners to pronounce words correctly.
12	F	One learner read aloud for other students.		
13	G	Learners read aloud together.		Learners are guided by me to pronounce words correctly.
14	G	Learners are always taught to read aloud.		
15	H	Learners read aloud after a teacher.		
16	H	Learners read aloud in groups.		I guide them to pronounce words correctly.
17	I	Teacher reads aloud to learners.		Learners divided into groups and the teacher shows them how to read.
18	I	Teacher demonstrates reading.		This is reading strategy used to solve the reading problem of learners.
19	J	The teacher models reading.		The teacher shows learners to read difficult sentences.
20	J	Teacher reads aloud to the learners.		This method is used to help children with reading problems.

The findings of this study reveal that reading aloud is the most preferred reading method in many schools. Many respondents use this method to teach reading. Another method mostly used by the respondents is guided reading where the teacher assists learners to read in their groups. The findings also reveal that most respondents do not like to involve older learners to assist younger learners to read or to use able readers to assist learners with reading problems. Research indicates that all three methods of teaching reading are very effective. According to Hornsby (2000:29-30), shared reading is an interactive approach to the teaching of reading that promotes the development of new skills and consolidates those previously taught. This is possible because during shared reading, the teacher provides instruction to the whole class by reading a text that all students can see, using an overhead, a big book, a chart, or a poster. The teacher reads the text to the students, inviting them to join in at key

instructional moments. The same text can be revisited several times for a variety of instructional purposes.

With regard to reading aloud, Taberski (2000:82), asserts that 'read-alouds' provide rich opportunities for literacy development. They also play a significant role in developing a child's love of reading, as the experience of listening to others read well is a highly motivating factor in the pursuit of becoming a good reader. Lastly Hornsby (2000:30) indicates that during a guided reading lesson, the teacher helps students consolidate the strategies they have learned, provides opportunities for students to apply the strategies as they read, supports them in applying the strategies correctly, and teaches the strategies again where necessary.

4.3.4 Explain how the literacy coaches (curriculum advisor, principal, and head of department) support you in teaching reading

According to Toll (2005:04) a literacy coach is one who helps teachers to recognize their knowledge and what they are capable of doing, helps teachers as they concretise their ability to make more effective use of what they know and do and supports teachers as they learn more and do more. The aim of this question was to establish how curriculum advisors, principals and heads of department support teachers in teaching reading. Thematic data analysis resulted in the following three themes:

Table 4.12: Support by the literacy coaches (curriculum advisor, principal, and head of department) in teaching reading

Participant	School	Theme 1: Professional development	Theme 2: Conduct class visits	Theme 3: Provision of resources.
1	A		The principal visited me once this year to assess me only and not support me.	The HOD give textbooks and stationery.
2	A		No one is conducting class visits.	I get textbooks and school equipment from the principal only.

3	B	The curriculum advisor conducts workshop once per year and it is not enough.		The principal supply us with books, teaching equipment and stationery.
4	B		All have never visited my class.	I get textbooks and stationery from the principal and HOD
5	C		The principal conducts class visits once per quarter to assess me and not to support me. HOD is doing nothing.	Principal supply books and teaching aids.
6	C		All the Literacy Coaches have never visited my class.	The Principal and HOD provide me with textbooks and stationery but I don't have enough teaching aids and equipment.
7	D	I don't get any curriculum training from my Literacy coaches.		The head of department gives me textbooks and other LTSM.
8	D		They are all not visiting my class.	I get stationery, teaching aids and textbooks from my principal only
9	E	No one develops me professionally.		I get school equipment, stationery and other LTSM form both my principal and HOD.
10	E	District curriculum advisor trains us in new teaching methods and she came once this year.	I invite the principal and HOD to come to my class to support me but they all don't come.	I get all school requirements from the principal.
11	F	I don't get any professional guidance from my literacy coaches.		We get LTSM from the principal after a long time.
12	F		The head of department visited me twice this to evaluate me only.	I get stationery and textbooks form the head of department.
13	G	They are all not good coaches because they all don't train me to use the new curriculum.		The principal gives us LTSM.
14	G		The principal and HOD visit my class once per year to evaluate me only but they do not train me.	I get teaching equipment and textbooks from my principal.
15	H	My Literacy HOD conducts curriculum training once in January.		We get textbooks, stationery and chalks form the principal.
16	H		The principal visit each teacher once per year to see how we teach.	The principal supply me with LTSM but we don't have enough.

17	I		All of them have never ever visited my class to support me.	I get all LTSM from both the principal and HOD.
18	I		The Literacy HOD visited me twice this year to evaluate me and not to support me.	The principal only provides textbooks and chalks.
19	J	They don't give me any training.	The Literacy curriculum advisor visited my class once this year to support me.	We get textbooks from the principal and stationery from head of department.
20	J		The HOD likes to conduct class visits in my class once per quarter.	I get textbooks and stationery from my head of department.

This question was asked in order to establish how the principals, curriculum advisors and heads of departments assist Literacy teachers in teaching reading. The findings of the study reveal that the principals and heads of department provide Literacy teachers with textbooks, stationery and teaching and learning equipment. The findings also reveal that the professional development of the teachers is undermined by the instructional leaders or literacy coaches. Professional development is very important in the teaching profession. Teachers today are under growing pressure to perform, but most new teachers are not adequately prepared to meet the needs of their students, and many experienced teachers have yet to adapt to new standards of the new curriculum. Just like practitioners in other professions, teachers need to deepen their knowledge and improve their skills over the course of their careers. Unfortunately, the need for quality professional development for practicing educators all too often goes unmet.

The changes and improvements that teachers undergo during professional development stimulate them to grow and help them to develop in their profession, interact with learners better and better and improve their knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs related to their teaching practices (Hsu, 2008:265). Hsu, 2008:266) adds that the great change in teachers is the expanded broadness of their ways of thinking after training. Professional development also improves their methods of questioning and communicating with learners as well as enhancing their professional ability and performance and even their beliefs. They also learn by observing other teachers at work and from teaching presentations as well. Professional development offers teachers the opportunity for active learning, that is, opportunities for teachers to become actively engaged in the meaningful analysis of teaching and learning, for

example, deepening the teachers' content knowledge (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, Kwang Suk & Mirman, 2002:83). One of the participants responded as follows about the value of professional development:

Professional development is according to me the key to quality education. We need to be constantly updated about what we are teaching. We need subject experts to clarify us about the content we are teaching and the various methods that we may use to teach the learners effectively. You can know the content but you may have difficulty in transferring that knowledge to your learners.

The findings of the study also reveal that most respondents are not satisfied about the class visits by literacy coaches. Most respondents indicate that many literacy coaches conduct class visits to assess them and search for mistakes without supporting or assisting them. One of the respondents said:

My principal enjoys visiting my class to search for mistakes. He always comes to assess me and give me an F symbol, but he had never told me how I can improve my teaching or eliminate the mistakes. I don't like his class visits because they don't help me.

4.3.5 How are parents involved in teaching their children to read at home?

Research shows that well-planned partnerships among families, school and community members can make a powerful contribution to greater student success (Simon, 2009). This question was therefore asked to establish how parental involvement assists the teachers in teaching reading in Grade 4. The following three themes emerged from thematic data analysis:

Table 4.13 Parental involvement

Participant	School	Theme 1: Parents teach children to read at home and motivate them	Theme 2: Parents motivate their children to read and listen to them when they read at home	Theme 3: Parents not involved
1	A			Many parents say it is not their work.
2	A	Only two parents of Grade 4 learners are teaching their children to read at home.		
3	B	I always help parents to help their children to read.		
4	B			Parents are not cooperative.
5	C		A few parents motivate their children to read and listen to them when they read at home.	
6	C		There are parents of our learners who get very little time to listen to their children when they read at home but always motivate them to read.	
7	D			Parents refuse to help their children at home because they say they are not teachers.
8	D			Many parents refuse and they say that they are not teachers.
9	E			Parents refuse to be involved in helping their children to read.
10	E		Very few parents of our learners listen to their children when they read during weekends only but motivate them to read.	
11	F	I have few parents who assist their children to read only on Saturday evenings because they don't have time.		
12	F			A lot of parents are not interested in helping their children because it is not their work.

13	G		There are few parents who listen to their children read for short periods once or twice in the evenings and motivate them to read.	
14	G		I have about five parents who always motivate their children to read and listen to them when they read only on Saturday evenings for short time only.	
15	H			No one is interested in assisting his or her children to read at home.
16	H			Many parents never assist their children because they say they don't have time.
17	I			No one is involved.
18	I	I have only three parents who help their children to read only on Sunday evenings because they don't have time.	There are also few parents who listen to their children when they read at home	
19	J			Our parents are never involved in helping their children to read.
20	J	I always ensure that parents assist their children to read at home		

Involving parents in the education of their children is very important for the learners, parents and school because children's attitudes toward school, their achievement, attendance, motivation, self-concept and behaviour are directly influenced by the attitudes of their parents towards learning and the school (Mills, 2004). Question 5 was therefore asked to ascertain whether parents are involved in helping teachers to teach their children to read at home. According to the perceptions of the respondents there are very few parents who assist their children to read at home during the weekends because they are working and always busy. Some of the respondents indicated that the parents always motivate their children to read and always listen to them when they read at home.

It is, however, disappointing to note that there are many parents who are negative and not prepared to assist their children to learn to read at home because of selfish reasons

such as that they are not teachers and that they don't have time. It is therefore the responsibility of the teachers to train, guide and assist parents so that they can coordinate home learning activities with school instruction. The schools offer homework and other activities to assist parents in helping their children succeed.

4.3.6 Which challenges do you experience in teaching reading in Grade 4 class?

The primary question of this study is: What are the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District? This question, which guides the whole study, was asked to establish all the challenges experienced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching reading. The thematic data analysis produced the following three themes:

Table 4.14: Challenges experienced in teaching reading in Grade 4 classes

Participant	School	Theme 1: New curriculum	Theme 2: Shortage of textbooks	Theme 3: Lack of support
1	A	Not trained to use the new strategies	Text books are delivered late at our school.	No support from head of department
2	A	Did not receive proper training in the new teaching strategies.	There is shortage of textbooks.	No professional development at school.
3	B	New teaching methods are confusing me.	We had no English textbooks from last year because learners never returned the books.	Literacy teachers are not assisted by the circuit and district offices.
4	B	New curriculum is confusing me and there is no one to train me at school.	We have shortage of Grade 4 English textbooks.	Curriculum advisor does not visit our school
5	C	English curriculum advisor does not train us.	Textbooks are worn-out and some pages are missing.	Lack of training sessions at circuit level.
6	C	I am still confused by the new terminology of the new curriculum, for example, constructivism.	All Grade 4 learners are sharing English textbooks.	Parents do not assist learners at home

7	D	I am confused by new teaching methods.	Textbooks are delivered late towards the end of the year.	No guidance of Literacy teachers by the head of department.
8	D	The department is not serious about training us in the new curriculum.	Textbooks were delivered during second semester.	Lack of support from the principal
9	E	I am confused by CAPS and I was trained for two hours only.	Many learners have no textbooks.	There are no workshops arranged by the Department of Education.
10	E	Curriculum trainers are not clear about the new curriculum.	Learners are sharing text books.	Principal is not involved in assisting us.
11	F	There is no more learning outcomes and assessment standards in CAPS and I am confused.	Few English textbooks in our school.	There is no instructional leadership from head of department, principal and curriculum advisor.
12	F	They say a teacher must not talk too much in the new curriculum; who must now teach the learners to read.	The Department is not providing English textbooks.	Curriculum advisor never support me.
13	G	Changing curriculum every five years is confusing us.	English textbooks were not provided this year.	There are no training sessions in our circuit.
14	G	We receive insufficient training in the new curriculum.	Three learners share one text books.	Children are not helped to read by parents at home.
15	H	I was trained for one day only in the new curriculum.	We have a challenge of very few textbooks because learners lost them.	No one supporting teachers on how to teach reading.
16	H	We don't understand learner-centred teaching.	We don't have enough English textbooks.	Lack of parental involvement in assisting learners to read at home
17	I	There are so many curriculum changes and we are confused.	We had no English textbooks in the past two years.	Lack of professional development at school.
18	I	We were not trained enough to teach reading according to the new curriculum called CAPS.	We have old English textbooks based on old curriculum.	Schools not supported by the circuit office.
19	J	Teaching methods of CAPS very difficult to implement.	Many learners have lost the textbooks.	There are no workshops at school and circuit levels.
20	J	New curriculum is very difficult to implement.	We have shortage of textbooks and three learners share one textbook.	No professional development at school and circuit levels.

Question 6 was asked to identify the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching reading in Grade 4 classes. The findings of this study reveal that there are many challenges experienced by teachers in teaching reading in Grade 4 classes. According to the respondents, their main challenges in teaching reading are the introduction of

the new curriculum, lack of textbooks and lack of support. The respondents indicated that the decline in reading capabilities of our learners can be ascribed to the dramatic changes in teaching methods as a result of the implementation of the Outcomes-Based Education approach. After several years of the implementation of the new curriculum, major challenges emerged in the South African education system, for example, the literacy levels of South African learners declined. Consequently, an intervention strategy, namely; the Annual National Assessment (ANA) was developed as a critical measure for monitoring progress in learner achievement (Department of Basic Education, 2012:02). The Department of Education believes that the Annual National Assessment will contribute in improving literacy and the general quality of education by exposing teachers to best practices in assessment. The ANA results of 2012/2013 revealed that the South African learners are still struggling in terms of literacy skills (Department of Basic Education, 2013).

The respondents also indicated that lack of textbooks also contributes to the inability of the learners to read and write because in some schools learners have no textbooks while in other schools there is a shortage of textbooks. Sometimes books are delivered late due to late requisition, lack of transport or lack of capacity on the part of suppliers. The respondents also identified lack of support as one of the challenges of teaching reading in the schools. The respondents indicated that they are ignored by all literacy coaches, namely; heads of department, principals and curriculum advisors. Teachers do not receive professional development and they find the new curriculum methods of teaching reading very difficult to implement.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Chapter 4 presented the data emanating from the responses in the questionnaires and interviews. This study used a mixed methods approach to explore the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Man'ombe Circuit of the Mopani District. The data was collected by questionnaires and interviewing of forty Grade 4 teachers. Consequently, data analysis and interpretation were presented in two sections, namely; quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

The first section presented a summary of the statistics and responses gleaned from the questionnaires and were followed by a detailed analysis. The computer programme SPSS (Statistical Products for Service Solutions) was used to analyse the data and transform the scores to make them amenable to statistical analysis. The analysis and interpretation of the quantitative research results was done by means of measurement frequencies and presented in the form of frequency tables, charts and tables. Various figures and tables showing the results of the questionnaires were discussed and they revealed the perceptions of the various respondents of the study.

The following issues were revealed during analysis of the data:

- The respondents answered all the questions in the questionnaire. This indicates that the language used in the questionnaire was understandable to all the respondents and that the questions were deemed relevant and worthy of answering.
- The respondents' responses were widely scattered across the various measuring scales used. Clearly respondents had different views and perspectives on the issues being examined. This suggests, too, that the instrument did not direct their answers towards any particular response.

The second section of chapter 4 presented data collected by means of structured interviews. The Tesch method of qualitative data analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data collected from twenty (20) Grade 4 teachers from ten (10) schools in the Man'ombe Circuit, Mopani District, of the Limpopo Province. All interview transcripts were read, analysed and interpreted. Similar responses were organised into categories and themes in an attempt to answer the research questions. A table was used to summarise all the answers which were relevant to a specific theme. The rest of the questions and answers were dealt with in a similar way. The major findings of the study, recommendations and conclusions are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The summary of the study, discussion of findings, recommendations and conclusions are presented in this chapter. It is also important to begin this chapter by presenting an overview of the key contents of each chapter which lead to this final chapter.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In chapter 1 the background of the problem under investigation was explored. The problem was formulated and the purpose of the study was set out. The concepts that feature in the study were defined and the research methods were also described. This study was conducted to answer the following questions:

- (a) What are the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District?
- (b) What are the perceptions of Grade 4 teachers about their role and responsibilities in teaching reading skills in the classroom?
- (c) What is the current training of Grade 4 teachers regarding teaching effective reading skills in the classroom?
- (d) Which strategies can be implemented as a remedy or to resolve the challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of reading skills in the classroom?

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the literature reviewed on challenges experienced by teachers in teaching reading, the theoretical framework underpinning the study, with special attention to teacher efficacy, teaching and learning strategies/methods, instructional approaches, and the behavioural approach and constructivist approach.

Chapter 3 focussed on research methodology and design. In this chapter research methodology, specific procedures, paradigm, research design, research population and sample, data collection and treatment, instrumentation, data analysis and data interpretation were outlined and described.

In Chapter 4 the findings of the study were presented, analysed and interpreted quantitatively and qualitatively. This chapter (5) focuses on the overview of the findings, recommendations and conclusions in relation to the research questions and objectives.

5.3 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The major findings are discussed in this study and seek to respond to the main and secondary research questions as stated in chapter 1 section 1.3. In the light of the mentioned main and secondary research questions, the following are the major findings and recommendations of this study:

5.3.1 Findings with regard to the main research question and the purpose of the study: *What are the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers and how do these challenges influence in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District?*

This study revealed various challenges experienced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Mano'mbe District of the Limpopo Province.

(a) Overcrowded Grade 4 classrooms

The majority of the respondents (79.6%) agreed that overcrowding is a major problem in teaching reading in Grade 4. In these overcrowded classrooms the teacher struggles to create a positive and enabling learning classroom atmosphere. It was evident through the interview responses that many classes are accommodating more than forty learners. Inadequate classrooms lead to congestion and discomfort, thus

hampering academic activity. These obstacles faced by Grade 4 teachers create a sense of teacher inefficiency and they feel that they are not properly trained to cope with these barriers to learning. Numerous studies indicate that overcrowded classes also contribute to poor learners' performance. According to Le Roux (1993:36), a normal classroom is designed to take only 35 learners. Any classroom accommodating more than 40 learners is overcrowded (Le Roux, 1993:36). Overcrowding is found in many formerly DET and homeland schools, particularly in rural areas. There is usually a shortage of desks if classes are overcrowded. There is not much opportunity for individual attention from over-worked educators in overcrowded classes. Overcrowded classes increase the workload of the teacher; make class management difficult and inhibit the interaction between the teacher and the learner (Le Roux, 993:37).

(b) Lack of parental involvement

Parental involvement is another challenges in many schools in the Mano'mbe Circuit as the majority of the respondents (76.1%) indicated that parents are not involved in the education of their children. Research demonstrates that parent involvement in children's learning is positively related to achievement and that the most effective forms of parent involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities in the home (Cotton & Wiklund, 2002:04). Paul Colditz, CEO of the Federation of Governing Bodies of South African schools, supports this statement, saying that the starting point of a good quality education is parental support at home, not just assistance with homework, but also as role models who show dedication (Davids, 2010:1). He said learners need parental involvement, especially when they come from backgrounds where their parents have not matriculated and who cannot support them with their schooling (Davids, 2010:01). In my view, as a teacher, on a daily bases we experienced the lack of parental involvement in the education of their children. This is very huge challenge for most schools in South Africa. Another factor is the high illiteracy rate in South Africa amongst a large number of parents who are unable to participate in their children's learning. Furthermore, respondents mentioned that some parents are just not committed to the education of their children. These parents have adopted the "I don't care type of an attitude" irrespective of how much time they have at their disposal to participate in the activities of the school.

According to the interviewees, these parents are of the view that their responsibility ends when they send their children to school. According to Nyama (2010:30) "... parents frequently feel that they have nothing to give to their children that will be of educational value; as a result, they do not participate in their children's formal education". It is this type of parents who make it highly difficult for the schools to implement policies for they cannot do so without a buy-in from all stakeholders as per the prescripts of the South African Schools' Act (Act 84 of 1996). This finding was also identified by Lemmer and van Wyk (2009:271) when they posit that working parents who are hard pressed for time, are less concerned about policy issues and are primarily interested in their own child's progress.

Most parents in South Africa are however, not able to become involved in the education of their children and this contributes to poor performance of learners. Some parents in South Africa are not concerned when their children absent themselves from school while others do not even know the child's grade and subjects (Davids, 2010:02). Moreover, Mamwenda (1995:312) posits that often parents are unable to control their children, who transfer their way of relating at home to the school situation. There are also parents who have little regard for education and their children do not see any reason why they should do school work (Mphahlele, 1989:13). All this collectively contributes to poor performance of the learners in South Africa.

(c) Inadequate CAPS training on reading and writing skills for Intermediate Phase teachers

It is clear from the participants' responses that they were not properly capacitated to implement Outcomes Based Education. The findings of this study revealed that a combined total of 86.4% of respondents indicated that the training received was inadequate and not fruitful. Due to the inadequate CAPS training, Grade 4 teachers have not mastered the First Additional Language teaching skills, namely; listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presenting and language structures, development of a rubric for reading and conventions. According to Brookhart and Nitco, (2008:201), a rubric is very useful for assessment because it gives diagnostic information to the teacher, gives formative information to the students and it requires less time for scoring. The study also reveals that due to the inadequate training, more

than half of the respondents (58.8%) find it difficult to develop good reading lessons. This is a serious challenge because development of any lesson is a key to effective teaching and learning. The findings also reveal that the assessment of reading lessons is also a challenge for nearly half of the respondents (48.5%). One of the major functions of any curriculum is to develop learners' skills, values and attitudes in a particular subject. The findings of this study, however, reveal that due to inadequate training, many respondents are not able to develop learners' skills, values and attitudes in reading. Skills, values and attitudes refer to the breadth and depth of the content of the curriculum. They relate to what should be taught or learned and that is the content, topics and learning experiences to be taught to the learners. The content of any curriculum must include both the knowledge domain and the affective (values and attitudes) skills, and, where appropriate, psychomotor skills (motor). When the outcomes-based approach was put into practice in South African schools in 1995, several challenges of using Outcomes-Based Education as a teaching approach emerged. During the implementation of the OBE approach NCS curriculum, factors such as lack of in-service training, challenges to interpret and implement the NCS curriculum, overcrowding and insufficient LSTM resources impeded the successful implementation process. Many teachers complained that the language associated with OBE is too complex, confusing and contradictory to be understood. The teachers also complained that the management of OBE has multiplied the administrative burdens placed on them. After changing to a more refined and new curriculum, CAPS, the situation still remains critical at this stage. Currently, the situation is complicated by the fact that the teachers are not properly capacitated to deal with this transformation in the CAPS curriculum. Most teachers do not get accustomed to teaching according to the new curriculum. They still teach the traditional teacher centred way and are not employing a problem-based teaching approach as stipulated in the CAPS curriculum. The effectiveness of teachers is regarded as crucial to the success of the CAPS curriculum reform in South Africa.

(d) Shortage of reading books (LTSM)

The findings of this study reveal that shortage of reading books or lack of reading books is still a challenge in many schools in the Man'ombe Circuit. The findings reveal that 21.6% of the respondents did not receive teaching and learning support materials. This challenge is confirmed by many researchers and educationists such as Themane and Mabasa (2002:278) who discovered, some twelve years ago, that many schools did not have an adequate supply of textbooks and reading books, nor safe storage places or retrieval systems for textbooks and reading books. Themane and Mabasa (2002:278) also indicate that in some schools, many learners do not have all the required books, and sometimes a class of 45 learners is required to share five copies of textbook and reading books. In the schools, the learners depend on the notes provided by the educator.

This challenge is a serious concern because learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) are core to ensuring that teachers and learners have maximum support for scaffolding of curriculum coverage. Bekker, Denerouti, Deboer and Schaufeli (2003:76) indicate that poor and lack of resources preclude actual goal accomplishment, which is likely to cause failure and frustration and may, therefore, lead to withdrawal from work and reduce commitment. Spaull (2012:02) indicates that providing access to textbooks and reading books delivers significant returns in terms of educational outcomes. Research by Spaull (2012:02) shows that only when learners have their own reading textbooks, or when they share with no more than one other person, do they experience performance gains.

(e) Inadequate school infrastructure and equipment

Inadequate school infrastructure and other equipment is also a challenge in the teaching of Literacy in Grade 4 classes in the Man'ombe Circuit. Literature reveals that the physical condition of schools can influence learner achievement. The legacy of apartheid left schools with different levels of school infrastructure. Many of these inequalities still exist. The National Education Infrastructure Management report, (NEIMS) (2011) on school infrastructure in South Africa found that of all public schools:

- About 500 schools are built out of totally unsafe structures. These are the mud schools. They are mainly in the Eastern Cape.
- 3 544 have no electricity supply.
- 2 402 have no water supply.
- 11 450 still use pit-latrine toilets.
- 95% of public schools have no stocked and functioning laboratories.

The South African Schools Act gives the Minister of Education the power to create regulations (norms and standards) for school infrastructure, in order to define and regulate all the physical resources that schools need to run properly. These norms and standards need to be put in place because school infrastructure impacts on how well teachers are able to teach and learners are able to learn. Learners attending schools with better infrastructure tend to perform better than learners who come from schools with no access to water, electricity or toilets. According to Lyon (2002:10), learning is a complex activity that puts students' motivation and physical conditions to the test. A study conducted by Cash (1993:29) in the US, found that air conditioning, absence of graffiti, condition of science laboratories, locker accommodation, condition of classroom furniture, wall colour and acoustic levels correlated with student achievement at a significant level when controlling for socio-economic status of students.

A similar study conducted by Chan (1996:36) found student achievement to be the highest in modern learning environments and lowest in obsolete learning environments. Another study conducted by Bowers and Burkett (1989:27) studied differences in achievement between high school students in two buildings built in 1939 and 1983. All other building variables were consistent between the two schools. Their study revealed that the students in the modern building scored significantly higher in mathematics, language and reading than their counterparts in the older building. The problem of inadequate buildings is very serious in Limpopo Province, especially in Man'ombe Circuit. Thousands of schools still have poor physical infrastructure and many are dilapidated, dangerous, and unfit for human habitation and there is no water or sanitation (Ralena, 2003:22). Hartshorne (1991:42) indicates that a serious shortage of classrooms, water, roads and electricity also contribute to the poor performance of learners. Without water and electricity, it is difficult to learn effectively.

If there are no proper roads that lead to the school, classes become disrupted during rainy seasons because it is generally difficult for both learners and educators to reach the schools.

(f) Lack of provincial and district support for Grade 4 teachers

The findings of this study reveal that 50% of the participants do not receive any support in the implementation of effective reading strategies. According to the findings of this study Grade 4 teachers do not receive any support from heads of department, deputy principals, principals and curriculum advisors. The findings also reveal that many schools are not visited by the curriculum advisor and Literacy teachers are not assisted by the circuit and district offices. Furthermore, the findings reveal that there is lack of professional development at school, circuit and provincial level, while there are no workshops arranged by the Department of Basic Education. There are no training sessions in this circuit and children are not helped to read by parents at home.

The findings indicate that the Department of Education and schools have serious challenges as half of the teaching corps is ineffective due to lack of support. It is very worrying if half of the Literacy teachers do not receive professional development. According to Bot (2005:02), teachers still have problems in managing classes, pacing and delivering lessons and some teachers claim that they are still teaching in the 'old ways', that is, following textbooks rather than learning area policy documents for each phase as is expected and stipulated in the curriculum policy. In the training workshops, these issues were not properly addressed by the curriculum advisors who also exhibited gaps of knowledge in the new system. A study conducted by Mdutshane (2007:39) revealed that most teachers plan their lessons without the policy documents that guide them. The study also revealed that teachers fail to cover curriculum topics planned for the year because curriculum leaders lack curriculum knowledge. This implies that the managerial roles of the school managers and school management teams are not performed effectively. A traditional management approach predominates in many schools and appears to obstruct practices such as collaboration and teamwork. This restricts teachers and some school management team members from initiating programmes that aim to develop teachers and improve their teaching of the curriculum and, in turn, this impacts negatively on teachers' attitudes towards their

work. In this regard Taylor (2006:08) asserts that some management team members are still confused by the ideology that underpins the curriculum due to poor quality training provided by the Department of Basic Education. The new curriculum is a challenge to many schools as the principals and school management teams are experiencing problems in curriculum management.

(g) Lack of training in Annual National Assessment (ANA) policy to assess Grade 4 reading skills

The improvement of the quality of basic education has been identified as the top priority of the South African Government on which the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has to deliver (Department of Basic Education, 2014:02). Within this context, the Annual National Assessment (ANA) was designed as a critical measure for monitoring progress in learner achievement. The choice of subjects to prioritise for monitoring has been informed by the recognition worldwide of Literacy and Numeracy as the key foundational skills that predispose learners to effective learning in all fields of knowledge (Department of Basic Education, 2014:02). The specific purposes of ANA include:

- Exposing teachers to best practices in assessment;
 - Targeting interventions to schools that need them most;
 - Giving schools the opportunity to pride themselves in their own improvement; and
 - Giving parents better information on the education of their children.
- (Department of Basic Education, 2014:04)

Following on from the ANA 2012 results, the Department of Basic Education developed a diagnostic report on the areas of weakness identified in Literacy and Numeracy at the Grades 3, 6 and 9 levels and a guideline on the use of ANA results, which is a step-by-step guide on how the ANA results could be used at school level by teachers (Department of Basic Education, 2014:08). Extensive discussions were held at different levels of the system with the emphasis to conduct district-, school-, and class-level diagnoses and to develop teaching and learning plans to address the

shortcomings in learner performance. This led to the following intervention programmes:

- Workshops on teacher development aimed at improving the skills levels of subject advisors, district personnel, lead teachers, mathematics and English teachers.
- Additional training measures for teachers that focused on providing more opportunities to schools for learners to practice their essay writing skills.
- Sample language lesson plans which provided scripted lesson plan plans that were developed by teachers. (Department of Basic Education, 2012:09)

A serious challenge in this regard is the lack of training in Annual National Assessment (ANA) policy to assess Grade 4 reading skills. Many teachers complain that they were not trained in the implementation of ANA results and therefore the whole project is rendered ineffective. The teachers reveal that only one Grade 1 teacher attended a two hour workshop which was ineffective. The challenges now is that teachers are not able to utilize ANA results to assess Grade 4 reading skills as they were not trained.

(h) Shortage of qualified Intermediation Phase teachers

One of the major factors that contribute to poor performance in Literacy in Grade 4 classes is the shortage of teachers. Teacher shortages are commonplace, especially in rural areas. Teachers are facilitators of learning, providing each student with the information and tools they need to master a subject. Teachers are also evaluators of students' abilities through formal and informal assessments. Despite such a positive role of the teachers, many of them are leaving their schools and the profession every year, particularly in poorer, lower-performing schools (Issue Brief, 2008).

At the end of every year, a school bell rings to mark the end of another academic year. Students and teachers leave to enjoy their summer vacations, but for too many teachers the beginning of the following year does not mark a return to the classrooms in which they taught last year. Every school day, nearly a thousand teachers leave the field of teaching, while others change schools to pursue better working conditions (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005:01). The attrition rate is affected by deaths,

resignations, retirement, dismissals and temporary exits out of the profession. The exit of teachers from the profession and the movement of teachers to better schools are costly phenomena for the students who lose the value of being taught by an experienced teacher. Since the advent of democracy in 1994, South Africa has been faced with many educational challenges and one of them is higher teacher attrition. Some teachers retire, others leave for personal reasons, for example, to care for family or children, and a relatively small number are dismissed from their jobs and encouraged to leave the profession. Nearly half of all teachers who enter the field leave it within a mere five years and the best and brightest teachers are often the first to leave (Issue Brief, 2005).

In 2014 there were almost 19 000 vacant teacher posts in South Africa, mostly in the Eastern Cape (Department of Basic Education, 2014:01). According to the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshega, last year 6641 schools had fewer than six teachers and more than 20 000 teachers were forced to practice multi-grade teaching, in some cases teaching as many as four grades in one class (Department of Basic Education, 2014:01). Consequently, teacher attrition disrupts the quality of school cohesion and performance in South Africa and anywhere around the world. It is therefore necessary to conduct an investigation to shed more light on the causes, consequences and management of teacher attrition in South Africa.

In summation, findings such as lack of in-service training, challenges to interpret and implement the NCAPS curriculum, overcrowding, insufficient LSTM resources and lack of sufficient training in applying the Annual National Assessment (ANA) policy to assess Grade 4 reading skills impeded the successful implementation of effective reading practices in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District.

Recommendations

In view of the numerous challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Mano'mbe Circuit of the Mopani District, the following recommendations are made:

(a) Provincial and district in-service training in CAPS on reading and writing skills for Intermediate Phase teachers

Any curriculum change requires teachers to understand how curriculum is designed from education policy. If teachers do not have such understanding, there will be a gap between the institutional policy and practice. Instructional leaders should be involved in professional development of teachers. Jacobs et al. (2011) indicates that training remains the most viable option for informing teachers of the developments in the curriculum. It is therefore recommended that the introduction of the new curriculum (CAPS) should be accompanied by extensive training for all officials, subject advisors and teachers. The effective preparation of educators is a key to effective implementation of the new curriculum. Schools need curriculum advisors for organising workshops, courses and seminars for teachers' professional development. Jacobs et al. (2011) maintain that curriculum implementers need to be prepared for and supported in the successful execution of their task. They add that it will be unfair to expect educators to implement a written curriculum successfully if they have not been properly prepared to do so.

The importance of professional development cannot be over-emphasized as there cannot be quality education without professional development. Providing instruction-related professional development to teachers sets in motion a chain of events that can improve teaching and learning in schools. With improved instruction, learners will develop a positive attitude towards Literacy which will, in turn, develop a sense of efficacy and confidence about their ability to do well in Literacy. Once students are confident of their ability to attain, they become more occupied and learn more effectively.

Support or guidance is an aspect of educational psychology in which psychological principles are used to bring about positive changes in the teacher, the learner, ways of teaching, the way in which learners are taught, the situation in which learning takes place, the assessment of learning and the curriculum (Alutu, 2012:44) . This definition infers that both teachers and learners receive guidance. Guidance is intended to help the students to acquire the capacity for self-direction or self-guidance and this is performed by the teacher. The teacher is expected to perform some guidance roles

while teaching. Teaching can, therefore, be viewed as guidance aimed at imparting knowledge, practical skills and understanding to the learner. The guidance that is provided to the teachers gives every teacher some knowledge on how to carry out the guidance role while teaching the learners.

Professional development offers teachers the opportunity for active learning, that is, opportunities for teachers to become actively engaged in the meaningful analysis of teaching and learning, for example, deepening the teachers' content knowledge. (Desimone, 2002:83). Clearly as the following table shows, teachers receive little or no support from their subject advisors.

(b) Increase parental involvement in classroom curricula activities

Research demonstrates that parent involvement in children's learning is positively related to achievement and that the most effective forms of parent involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities in the home (Cotton & Wiklund, 2002:04). Paul Colditz, CEO of the Federation of Governing Bodies of South African schools, supports this statement, saying that the starting point of a good quality education is parental support at home, not just assistance with homework, but also as role models who show dedication (Davids, 2010:01). He said learners need parental involvement, especially when they come from backgrounds where their parents have not matriculated and who cannot support them with their schooling (Davids, 2010:01).

The teachers should ensure that parents are involved in curriculum-related activities occurring at home, for example, assisting with homework, discussing books with their children, brainstorming ideas for school projects. These important activities are sometimes called "the curriculum of the home" (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2009:83). Each school should design a greater variety of activities to assist illiterate and poorly educated parents to help learning at home. Schools can enhance the curriculum at home by providing information and ideas about how to help children with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2009:83).

It is the responsibility of the Grade 4 teachers (Intermediate Phase) to empower, train, guide and assist parents so that they can coordinate homework learning activities outside the classroom with school instruction. The schools should assist parents in helping their children to succeed. It is therefore essential that a school should design a greater variety of activities to assist illiterate and poorly educated parents to help learning at home. Schools can enhance the curriculum at home by providing information and ideas about how to help children at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2009:83). Learning at home can have many faces (Jayanthi, Patton & Polloway, 2001:229). It can deal with very specific student problems, but is also effective for on-going tasks such as homework. Homework provides a discernable link between home and school and offers parents an opportunity to exert influence over and offer help to the school (Jayanthi et al., 2002:229). For families with issues of time and availability, homework is often the primary way in which they can connect with their children's school experience (Jayanthi et al., 2002). The teachers should ensure that all parents are aware of the homework policy of a particular grade, that they know when homework is given, when it should be submitted and when tests are scheduled. The teachers should then give the parents some guidelines on how they could support learning at home and the relationship between good homework habits and well-disciplined learners (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2009:146).

It is also recommended that Grade 4 teachers and parents should work closely to improve their interpersonal relations for the betterment of education in the schools. Both teachers and parents need to work in partnership with each other as opposed to working against each other to improve the culture of teaching and learning in classrooms. It is of no value to give each other a negative attitude. Too many teachers and parents are working in isolation, without access to a parental support network. Teamwork therefore becomes an essential component for addressing the issue of parental involvement because it builds trust, improves communication and develops interdependence. School managers and teachers need to create a climate where parents are welcome to participate in the activities of the school. According to Woodhead and McGrath (1988:319), such a climate could be established by, amongst others, consulting the parents when planning the child's learning, adopting a friendly, courteous and welcoming system all the time, presenting to the parents once a year a

written report or profile on each child, establishing a parents-teachers' association, keeping the parents informed by means of publications, establishing a home visiting system for exceptional circumstances and allowing parents to see at any reasonable time all official records of their children.

(c) Appointment of more of Grade 4 teachers

It recommended that the Department of Education should prevent the attrition of teachers by improvement of the working conditions of teachers. The South African education system is facing two major challenges. The first major challenge is that of attracting new educators into the teaching profession and the second one is to be able to retain those already in the system. At present the country is not able to produce enough teachers to balance the effects of annual attrition. People may be attracted into the teaching profession by the working conditions which include market related salaries, eliminating overcrowding, violence, high work load, nepotism and favouritism.

(d) Ordering and delivery of sufficient LTSM

It is clear that the lack of text books needs to be addressed. It is recommended that sufficient textbooks and other teaching and learning materials should be ordered and delivered on time by the Department of Education. Pressure needs to be put on the provincial department by relevant stakeholders to supply textbooks and other teaching and learning materials. However, care also needs to be taken by all teachers to ensure the return of textbooks so that they can be re-used in the following years. Schools need to develop good book retrieval systems so that the books retained can be used in the subsequent years. The media coverage of textbook dumping and undelivered text book supplies being discovered in the past two years suggests a serious problem with the procurement and delivery of books in the province which needs to be addressed at provincial and national level and should never be repeated.

(e) On-going support of provincial and district for Grade 4 teachers

It is clear from the findings of the study that the majority of the participants are not properly capacitated to implement OBE. This study, therefore, recommends that the introduction of the CAPS should be accompanied by extensive training for all Grade 4 teachers. It is the role of the subject specialists and curriculum advisors from the provincial and district levels to conduct effective workshops for all Grade 4 teachers in order to improve the performance of learners in reading?. It is also argued that even experienced teachers need to be motivated and updated on new methods and trends in their subjects, particularly when the curriculum has changed frequently in the preceding years. The constant change in the curriculum and the recent introduction of CAPS requires that even experienced teachers should be trained in the new curriculum and its requirements. Schools need curriculum advisors to ensure that schools have all the requisite curriculum and assessment documents for the subjects, for supporting teachers in effectively delivering the curriculum in the classroom, for supporting the teachers to strengthen their subject content knowledge and organising relevant co-curricular activities, for moderating school based assessments and for organising workshops, courses and seminars for teachers' professional development.

(f) Training in Annual National Assessment (ANA) policy to assess Grade 4 reading skills

The Annual National Assessment (ANA) is an essential initiative at the heart of the Education Sector Plan, *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025* (Department of Basic Education, 2012:04). The key thrust and long-term focus of the Sector Plan is to improve the quality of basic education. It is therefore recommended that the Department of Basic Education at Provincial, District and Circuit levels should capacitate all Grade 4 teachers to understand the Annual National Assessment (ANA) policy. According to the ANA policy, the specific purposes of ANA include:

- (i) ANA exposes teachers to best practices in assessment.** Where ANA is effectively implemented, it changes teacher practices for the better. ANA exposes all teachers across the country to what national experts consider best

practice in assessments. This will give all teachers a clearer idea of how to proceed when they develop their own assessments at critical points in the school year.

- (ii) **ANA targets interventions to the schools that need them most.** With ANA, districts have a standard source of information to determine which schools are most urgently in need of support. Information from ANA will be used to direct teachers towards particular kinds of teacher development programmes and to engage seriously with school principals on the specific subject-based challenges confronting his/her school.
- (iii) **ANA gives schools the opportunity to pride themselves on their own improvement.** ANA makes it possible for primary schools to do what secondary schools have been able to do for many years with the Grade 12 results. The Grade 12 results are used as a common yardstick to measure improvement over the years. This will allow schools to take pride in knowing that the efforts to improve the teaching and learning in the school are producing the desired outcomes.
- (iv) **Giving parents better information on the education of their children.** Parents have a right to know how well the schools they send their children to perform. If the results in the school are below what it should be, then ANA provides a good basis for parents to ask the school questions about what is wrong and to become involved in putting together a plan for the school that will improve the situation (Department of Basic Education, 2012:05).

According to ANA policy, responsible use of the results will enhance the impact of the assessments on achievement in the schools and also inform continuous improvements in the design and methodology of the assessment (Department of Basic Education, 2012:06). Due to the challenges experienced in teaching reading in primary schools, Grade 4 teachers should be properly trained in ANA policy to assess Grade 4 reading skills.

5.3.2 Findings with regard to the first research question and the purpose of the study: *What is the perception of Grade 4 teachers about their role in teaching reading and writing?*

The Grade 4 teachers in this study believe that it is their role in teaching reading and writing to teach reading skills to the learners. They believe that it is their duty to first attend the workshops convened by subject specialists in order to understand how they should teach reading skills to Grade 4 learners. They also believe that it is their role to read and understand the policy document of English FAL learning area statement in order to understand how they should teach reading skills to Grade 4 learners. Reading the English FAL policy will enable them to use effective learner-centred methods of teaching reading such as guided reading, shared reading, independent reading and reading aloud. It is also their role to involve the parents in assisting their children to read home. The teachers should also learn how to effectively assess Grade 4 learners in reading in order to improve their reading skills. The teachers should also ensure that all the learners have the necessary learning materials on time. It is also their responsibility to attend professional development sessions in order to gain more knowledge about teaching reading skills to Grade 4 learners. All these imply that Grade 4 teachers should develop learners' skills, values and attitudes in reading,

Recommendations

The role of the teachers in teaching reading and writing effectively is based on three principles (DoE, 2004:06):

Principle One

The first principle is that reading instruction should be based on the evidence of sound research that has been verified by classroom practice. This implies that teachers should not use common sense when teaching literacy, but should use instructional methods which have been produced by authentic research.

Principle two

The second principle is that early success in reading is critical for children. This implies that learners should be able to read and write in the Intermediate Phase.

Principle three

The third principle relates to the teacher as a key to a child's success to read. This principle dispels the myth by some teachers that the "New Curriculum" is responsible for the inability of the learners to read and write in our schools in South Africa. In order to succeed in the classroom, teachers need the co-operation and support of instructional leaders who value and provide on-going professional development. Instructional leadership is a key to teaching reading and writing. The major role of teachers in improving reading and writing is therefore to improve the reading competence of learners.

Another role of Grade 4 teachers is to be trained to implement the National Reading Strategy which involves effective teaching of reading and writing to Grade 4 learners. According to the CAPS policy (Department of Education, 2011:9-10) learning a second additional language (English) should enable Grade 4 learners to acquire the following skills:

- Acquire the language skills necessary to communicate appropriately in the target language at a basic level.
- Listen, speak, read/view and write the language with growing confidence and enjoyment. These skills and attitudes form the basis for life-long learning.
- Express themselves, orally and in writing, and emotions in order to become comfortable in the language.
- Use language and their imagination to find out more about themselves and the different cultures and the world around them. This will enable them to express their experiences and findings about the world orally and in writing.
- Use language to access and manage communication in other contexts. Information literacy is vital in the information age and forms the basis of life-long learning.

- Use language as a means of expressing information on familiar topics, for interacting with a familiar range of texts and for reading texts for enjoyment, basic information and communication.
- In Grades 4-6 it is important that there should be a strong focus on listening and speaking. There should also be a continued development of vocabulary, sentence and paragraph construction and grammar in context and learners should work with a variety of texts, including visual texts. These texts increase in difficulty as they move through the grades.
- The Second Additional Language curriculum for Grade 4 learners is packaged according to the following skills:

1	Listening and Speaking
2	Reading and Viewing
3	Writing and Presenting
4	Language Structures and Conventions

To be successful Grade 4 teachers first must be empowered and train through on-going in-service workshops. District subject specialists will show them how to use this strategy in the classroom and let them practice in their cluster groupings in the districts.

The successful implementation of the National Reading Strategy is based on six pillars (DoE, 2004:07). Grade 4 teachers must first get resources which will assist Grade 4 learners to learn how to read and write effectively. A good learning and text-rich environment provided by the teacher will encourage Grade 4 children to perform better. The Department has mounted a “Drop All and Read” campaign in which Grade R and Grade 1 learners are provided with personal story books and bags. They can take these books home to read, enjoy and experience the pleasure of possessing their own books. Good Grade 4 readers need access to good reading material. Grade 4 learners need access to appropriate reading books throughout the school year, and they should be able to take books home in order to practise reading. Magazines and other materials can also enrich the reading experience, and encourage the whole family to engage in reading. It is very difficult if not impossible to expect Grade 4 learners to be good readers if they don’t have relevant resources such as textbooks

and learning aids. Grade 4 teachers also require adequate resources such as policy documents and a conducive environment. They also need sufficient time to enable them to support the learners to learn how to read and write (Department of Basic Education, 2008:20). From 2012 the two National Curriculum Statements for *Grades R-9* and *Grades 10-12* respectively have been combined in a single document and are simply known as the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12*. The *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* represents a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools and comprises the following:

- Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for all approved subjects listed in this document;
- National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12; and
- National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12.

The second pillar of the National Reading Strategy is for Grade 4 teachers to learn how to teach the learners using appropriate learner-centred methods. Grade 4 teachers should realise that the assertion that children learn in the same way is a myth and this needs to be addressed by the way in which they mediate learning, plan activities and assess learner performance. The third strategy, namely; attending workshops is a key pillar of the National Reading Strategy. Instructional leadership, guidance and support are essential for assisting Grade 4 teachers for effective teaching of reading and writing. The fourth pillar of the National Reading Strategy is for the Grade 4 teachers to monitor and assess the Grade 4 learners. The main function of the teacher is to enable learners to read fluently and with comprehension. Grade 4 teachers will be successful only when they are regularly monitored by instructional leaders, who are usually principals and heads of departments. Curriculum advisors should also monitor the implementation of all the teacher activities. The fifth pillar of the strategy is the management of the teaching of reading by the principal. Principals, who are instructional leaders, are responsible for planning, organising, leading and controlling of all teaching activities in the school. The last pillar of the strategy is research, partnership and advocacy which may be achieved as follows:

(a) Research

In all these reading projects and plans, the Department will ensure that its strategies, pedagogy and support materials are modern and at the cutting edge (Department of Basic Education, 2008:18). Although the Department does conduct some of its own research, it relies heavily on universities and other specialist reading organizations to assist. The success of effective teaching of reading depends on the implementation of proven teaching methods and teachers should always conduct action research to improve their teaching of Literacy.

(b) Partnership

The Department of Education is working hard to promote these reading campaigns with all its teachers, principals, district officials and parent communities (Department of Basic Education, 2008:18). However, it is difficult to turn the tide in reading achievement in the country, and sustain improvement and we need the on-going support of non-profit organizations, the higher education community, the business community, and the broader community. The Department welcomes partners in these campaigns to improve reading. Preferably, all interventions by partners – in training, or the provision of resources – will be aligned to the National Reading Strategy and be approved by the national, provincial or district office (Department of Basic Education, 2008:18).

(c) Advocacy

Furthermore, the Department of Education publicises successes in this campaign, as well as ways in which learners can be supported (Department of Basic Education, 2008:18). The success of the implementation will be measurable in terms of learner performance. A national communication drive is also conducted to ensure that reading is “everybody’s business”. Direct communication systems have been set up with school principals and teachers to share expectations, experiences and best practice. In the longer term, the Department will introduce book clubs to support reading for enjoyment. As part of the campaign, an International Literacy Week, World Book Day

and International Library Week, both at school level and in the media are celebrated (Department of Basic Education, 2008:18).

5.3.3 Findings with regard to the second research question and the purpose of the study:

What is the current training of Grade 4 teachers and are these teachers adequately trained to teach reading skills in their classes successfully?

The findings of this study revealed that most respondents are academically and professionally well qualified for teaching Grade 4 learners or teaching in the primary schools. According to the findings of this study 18 or 45% of the respondents have REQV 13 or M+ 3, 17 or 42.5% of the respondents have REQV 14 or M+ 4 and 5 or 12.5% of the respondents have REQV 15 or M+ 5 and above. The findings of the study also revealed that 46.5% or 19 of the respondents have a teachers'; certificate or diploma, 7.5% or 3 of the respondents have higher education diplomas, 15% or 6 of the respondents have university education diplomas and 28.8% or 11 of the respondents have a Bachelor of Arts/ Science/Commerce in education (cf. 4.2.1.4). This study further revealed that about half of the respondents (49.4%) received inadequate training in the new CAPS curriculum with regard to effective reading strategies and this implies that the training received was insufficient. This is a very serious omission as training in the new curriculum can never be replaced by any strategy and teaching and learning will remain ineffective. The study also revealed that the duration of training which was provided (three days) was very inadequate. A combined total of 86.4% of respondents, who form the majority of responses received, indicated that the training received with regard to CAPS was inadequate and therefore ineffective. However, the majority of the respondents (88.4%) revealed that the terminology used in CAPS is simplified and understandable. This was obviously in comparison with the previous curricula, namely; the Curriculum 2005 and National Curriculum Statement. (cf. 4.2.4.4; 4.2.4.5; figure 4.34; figure 4.37).

Regrettably, most of the teachers are currently not well equipped with the skills to do this nor are they equipped to confront the challenges and adverse conditions they are

likely to face. It is, however, not easy to implement the professional development plans because many teachers are resistant to change and therefore are resistant to professional development activities (Richards, 2002:45). According to Richards (2002:27), teachers are resistant to change for several reasons, for example, lack of support, increased burdens on the teacher, lack of ownership, fear of loss of control, lack of perceived benefits and scepticism. In the first ten years of South Africa's democracy we have seen dramatic new policies being implemented across the board to accelerate equity, access, quality and democracy in education. However, these efforts never bore fruit as the quality of education in South Africa is never improving. It does not require anyone to conduct research to see that primary school learners are not able to read and write fluently and calculate. It is the researcher's view that the Department of Education in South Africa has neglected teacher professional development, especially in Literacy.

One of the reasons for introducing CAPS was to simplify the terminology used in the curriculum. Despite the simplified terminology, the respondents agreed that teachers will need more CAPS training for effective reading strategies and methods. The respondents also revealed that more CAPS training is required to enable teachers to develop good reading lessons because they find it difficult to develop good reading lessons. A study by Hayes and Purifoy (2004:03) revealed that quality teachers are the single greatest determinant of student achievement. This implies that knowing the subject matter, understanding how students learn, and exercising methods of teaching which produce intended results translate into greater learner attainment (cf. 4.2.4.1; 4.2.4.2; 4.2.4.4; figure 4.34; figure 4.35).

Recommendations

Currently there is an overwhelming demand for teachers to demonstrate effectiveness in the classrooms because if all students are to have an opportunity for success, they must have teachers who are well trained to teach every student to an acceptable high standard. It is recommended that all Grade 4 teachers should attend professional development sessions. The training sessions should focus on the various learner centred strategies for teaching reading to Grade 4 learners such as guided reading, shared reading, reading aloud, phonics instruction, phonemic awareness and the

formation of words. The changes and improvements that teachers undergo during professional development stimulate them to grow and help them to develop in their profession, interact with learners better and improve their knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs related to their teaching practices (Hsu, 2008:265). Hsu, 2008:266) adds that the great change in teachers is the expanded broadness of ways of their thinking after training. In the Man'ombe Circuit, and other circuits, there is not even a Literacy curriculum advisor. Most learners in the primary schools are not able to read and write and this has created a negative attitude against learning in general. An urgent intervention is required in Man'ombe Circuit to improve teacher professional development which will in turn improve the teaching of Literacy and the overall quality of education. It is recommended that one week workshops to be attended by Grade 4 English teachers be organised in Man'ombe Circuit. The workshops should focus on the various learner-centred strategies for teaching reading in Grade 4, for example, guided reading, shared reading, independent reading and comprehension. The workshops should be held from 08h00 to 16h00, Monday to Friday. The Department of Education is seriously urged to take the professional development of educators seriously. It is unwise to conduct a workshop of the new CAPS curriculum within three days. Workshops should be conducted for the whole week and Grade 4 teachers should attend the workshop the whole week. It is therefore recommended that 2015 should be declared the "Year of Professional Guidance of the Grade 4 Teacher" in order to resolve this crisis. It is better for Grade 4 teachers to be absent from class for one week or two weeks for the sake of professional development because teachers will be able to close that gap.

5.3.4 Findings with regard to the third research question and the purpose of the study

What alternative strategies could be identified by teachers for improving practice and challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of reading skills in the classroom?

It is evident from the findings (questionnaire and interviews) and literature review that teachers face challenges in teaching reading skills. Grade 4 teachers have identified the following challenges, namely;

- overcrowding of Grade 4 learners in classes,
- lack of parental involvement in the learning of their children,
- difficulty in developing good reading lessons,
- development of a rubric for reading,
- differentiating between learning objectives, and
- the inability of the learners to read and write (cf. 4.2.2.15; 4.2.2.22; 4.2.2.25; Table 4.14).

The findings of this study reveal that reading aloud is the most preferred reading method in many schools. Many respondents use this method to teach reading. Another method mostly used by the respondents is guided reading where the teacher assists learners to read in their groups. The findings also reveal that a majority of 90.8% strongly agree that they find the guided reading strategy helpful in teaching reading effectively. In other words they are able to implement guided reading effectively. However, the findings also reveal that most respondents do not like to involve older learners to assist younger learners to read or to use able readers to assist learners with reading problems. Guided reading is an instructional approach that involves a teacher working with a small group of learners who demonstrate similar reading behaviour and can all read similar levels of text (Aquinta, 2006:414).

Recommendations

Various strategies or methods should be implemented to resolve the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the teaching reading skills in the classroom. Teaching methods such as group work, peer-to-peer learning, cooperative learning and problem-solving are a key to effective learner-centred teaching and should therefore be appropriately applied in Grade 4 classes. The problem-based education approach promotes curricula and assessment based on constructivist methods and discourages traditional education approaches based on direct instruction of facts and standard methods. In traditional education methodologies, teachers direct the learning process and learners assume a receptive role in their education. Grade 4 teachers are advised to encourage peer to peer interaction in a problem-based education classroom because problem-based approach is here to stay. Practically, it involves placing strong learners with a

weaker learner during reading time in the classroom. Through peer-to-peer interaction, collaborative thinking can lead to an abundance of knowledge. The teachers must guide the Grade 4 learners and provide support but the ultimate goal should be to allow independent reading.

Research findings also indicate that mentoring programmes boost student reading levels of Grade 4 learners. This is not common in South Africa as learners rely on their educators and sometimes parents to assist them. According to Dessooff (2007: 54), a mentor is an advocate, a nurturer, a positive role model, who also promises to come back and check on them the following week. After a successful research in 2008, Franke, Hand, Caverly and Radcliffe (2008:398) recommend a cross-curricular approach for improving the reading ability of learners. The proponents of the cross-curricular approach emphasize that teaching learners how to read effectively should not be confined to languages only, but should be taught in all school subjects. This study revealed that teaching reading in other subjects like content subjects, improves the reading levels of the learners.

Language experts also developed the following strategies for improving reading:

(a) Phonics instruction

Phonics instruction is any approach in which the teacher says or does something in order to assist Grade 4 learners to learn how to decode words (Stahl, 2004:35). In other words, the main function of phonics instruction is to teach Grade 4 learners that there is a relationship between the letters of written language and the individual sounds of spoken language, which are called phonemes. A Grade 4 learner must be able to see the relationship between written words and spoken sounds. This will assist the Grade 4 learners to accurately recognize familiar words accurately and automatically. There are two approaches to the phonics method, namely; the synthetic and analytic approaches (Stahl, 2004:35). The synthetic approach focuses on learning letter/sound relationships and blending them to create words, for example, c+o+w = cow, c+h+u+r+c+h=church, l+i+t+e+r+a+c+y = literacy. The analytic approach, on the other hand, commences with words and then consists of taking the words apart, for example, cow = c+o+w, church = c+h+u+r+c+h, literacy = l+i+t+e+r+a+c+y.

(b) Fluency instruction

Fluency instruction is also recommended as one of the best methods of teaching reading to Grade 4 learners. Morrow (2005:23) described fluency as the ability to read orally with speed, accuracy and proper expression. Many studies of fluency instruction were conducted by literacy researchers. McEwan (2002:89), for example, conducted a qualitative study to explore fluency and its relationship with a good sight word vocabulary. McEwan (2002:89) defined sight words as words that have been phonetically decoded by the reader but that have been read so many times that they are now read fluently. Sight words should be taught to Grade 4 learners in order to improve their vocabulary. McEwan concluded in his study that fluency can best be improved by enlarging the learner's sight word vocabulary and this can be achieved by creating a language-rich environment and exposing the learner to new words regularly. Grade 4 learners should also be trained in word recognition and comprehension. According to Morrow fluency provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension and can be achieved through continuous reading aloud with teachers, peers or parents (2005:23). It is also crucial to use flash cards when teaching Grade 4 learners about fluency. McEwan (2002:89) recommends the use of flash cards involving the repetition of a word for teaching learners fluency.

(c) Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness refers to hearing and understanding the different sounds and patterns of spoken language and includes the different ways of breaking down oral language into different parts (Ma & Croker, 2007:57, Knobelauch, 2008:03) or the ability to focus on and manipulate the individual sounds (National Reading Panel, 2000:02). In other words, it is the decoding of a word by breaking it down into units, which are syllables and letters. A Grade 4 teacher should know the various strategies for teaching phonological awareness to Grade 4 learners. The Grade 4 learners should understand that the smallest parts of sounds in a spoken word are called phonemes; for example, in the sound *fat*, the letter *f* represents the sound *f*. Instruction in phonemic awareness involves teaching students to hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes in syllables and words. This means that through instruction and practice, a

student can, for example, identify that both *shoe* and *go* consist of two phonemes (although the words are composed of a different number of letters), or identify the three phonemes in the word *dog* and be able to manipulate these sounds to produce new words such as *log* or *jog*. Literacy teachers should support the learners to become aware and understand the beginning and ending sounds in words.

(d) Vocabulary instruction

The concept ‘vocabulary’ refers to the collection of words that one needs in order to communicate effectively. In other words, vocabulary is the totality of words and their meanings that one possesses. This is very important method of teaching literacy because people cannot use words that they don’t understand. Words which are in one’s vocabulary are also words which one can be able to pronounce. An important question is how literacy teachers can teach vocabulary. Raphael, Pardo and Highfields (2002:107) assert that learners gather vocabulary during reading. When learners read words, they must make sense of the words they see. This implies that learners should not read a word and pass without enquiring the meaning of the word. Learners also gather their vocabulary incidentally by reading stories. The story line usually assists learners to predict the meaning of words and in this way their vocabulary is expanded. This means that a Literacy teacher cannot get into the class and tell learners that “today I want to teach you vocabulary”.

(e) Making of a word

A major function of the Literacy teacher is to teach the learners how to make words. One of the best methods recommended by Allington (2002:84), Stahl, Duffy-Hester and Stahl (1998:12) and Cunningham, Hall and Defee, 1998:25) is the use of magnetic or letter cards. Firstly, the teacher must give the learners the cards with letters such as *p*, *a*, *s*, *b*, *i* and *t*. The teacher must then put together, for example, the cards with letters *i* and *t* to make *it* and *b*, *i* and *t* to make *bit*. The teacher may then ask the learners to make new words by replacing the given letters. The teacher may begin by making two letter words and then three, four and five letter words. Another method recommended by Cunningham and Cunningham (1992:12) is the use of a set of

squares of paper or card stock on which individual letters are written. Learners manipulate their letter squares to form words of varying lengths.

(f) Text comprehension

Comprehension means understanding and people read books in order to understand what they are reading. No one can continue reading without comprehending what he or she is reading. Literacy researchers have revealed that Literacy teachers should teach learners to understand what they are reading. Kuhn (2003:33), for example, indicates that Literacy teachers should use relevant methods to teach learners to understand what they are reading, such as cooperative learning question and answer sessions, generating questions around texts, and use of pictures, graphs and drawing (Calhoun, 1999:23). Van Renen (2008) emphasizes that the use of pictures in reading also contributes to the reading ability of learners. In his article entitled "Explorations through picture books: opportunities for teaching and learning", Van Renen (2008) posits that graphic or illustrated material can make a valuable contribution in reading and viewing with discrimination in all school phases (Van Renen, 2008:07). It provides examples of how picture books can add another dimension to learning, particularly in the field of language. According to Van Renen (2008), the value of pictures is their demand for close observation on the part of the reader and that young readers can make up their own verbal text by commenting on the action conveyed only by the pictures. When readers bring their own experience of life to bear upon what they read or see in verbal and/or visual texts, they bring a unique and personal element into their reception of the text (Jalilehvand, 2012). When a learner reads a story in the form of a text which is accompanied by pictures, the pictures convey a great amount of detail about the nature and attitudes of some of the characters in the story that is not supplied by the words (Brookshire, Scharff, & Moses, 2002:24).

(g) Learning of mother tongue

The effective learning of mother tongue also improves the ability of learners to read. This is confirmed by many language researchers such as Jim Cummins and Stephen Krashen, 1991 who warn that the poor performance in literacy and other subjects is

perpetuated by undermining our home languages (Nieman & Monyai, 2011:29; Orekan, 2011:27; McKay, 2012:56; Van Heerden, 1996:04). According to these researchers, the learners' home language is very important and should be recognized and developed thoroughly because competence in a learner's home language lays the basis for the acquisition of an additional language. The crux of the matter is that if a learner has built up a multitude of concepts, skills and perceptions in his home language, it does not mean that he or she has to acquire these concepts again in the language of teaching and learning. It is therefore recommended that all schools should never undermine the teaching and learning of African languages, such as Xitsonga and Sepedi. Teachers should ensure that a high standard in the quality of teaching and learning should be maintained because all learners and all people in the universe think in their mother tongue. Good knowledge of mother tongue contributes to understanding any foreign language.

(h) Educational support from the Department of Education to implement effective reading strategies

The findings reveal that the professional development of the teachers is undermined by the instructional leaders or literacy coaches. This finding leaves much to be desired because it indicates that most teachers did not receive adequate training in NCS (cf. 4.2.2.17). This implies that most teachers still need further professional development on implementing reading strategies. The situation is worsened by the failure of the curriculum advisors to monitor the reading competence of learners. Curriculum advisors do not visit their classes for monitoring reading competence (cf. 4.2.2.19).

According to Toll (2005:04) a curriculum advisor is a literacy coach who helps teachers to recognize what they know and can do, assists teachers as they strengthen their ability to make more effective use of what they know and do, and supports teachers as they learn more and do more. In other words, literacy coaches provide planned support, guiding teachers to progress in their professional learning to build their own capacity (cf. Department of Basic Education, 2009, Waddle, 1991). To build teacher capacity, coaches require strong disciplinary and pedagogical content knowledge of effective planning, assessment and instruction strategies (Toll, 2009:05) (cf. Alutu, 2012:44; 4.2.2.18: Hsu, 2008:265).

5.4 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study focussed on the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in the Man'ombe Circuit of the Mopani District. I have already planned to do a doctoral study after completion of my Maters' Degree. Since this study was mainly focussed on the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the Man'ombe Circuit only, I intend to conduct further research on "*The instructional guidance for literacy teaching in the Province of Limpopo*". The study will focus on exploring instructional leaders' views on the teaching of Literacy in the Intermediate Phase, the skills and tasks required to support practices of instructional leadership in Literacy, how Intermediate Phase teachers construct their classroom literacy instruction, various factors that influence literacy teachers' interpretation and practices and the role played by instructional leaders and curriculum advisors in guiding and supporting Literacy teaching in the Intermediate Phase.

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter an overview of the key contents of each chapter was presented. The major findings of this study seek to respond to the main and secondary research questions as stated in chapter 1 section 1.3 were also presented and described. Three major findings and their recommendations are presented in this chapter. The *first* major finding is the challenges experienced by Grade 4 teachers in teaching English Second Language. Seven challenges were presented and described, namely; overcrowding, lack of parental involvement, inadequate CAPS and ANA policy training, shortage of textbooks, inadequate infrastructure and lack of support for teachers. The *second* major finding is the current status of training of Grade 4 teachers regarding teaching effective reading skills in the classroom. The findings reveal that all educators are academically and professionally well-qualified to teach Grade 4 classes but the major challenge is the lack of training in the new curriculum (CAPS). The third major finding is the strategies that can be implemented to resolve the challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of reading skills in the classroom, namely; phonics instruction, fluency instruction, phonological awareness, vocabulary instruction, making of a word, text comprehension, learning of mother tongue and

educational support from the Department of Basic Education to implement effective reading strategies.

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ANNEXURE A

LETTER TO THE DISTRICT MANAGER ASKING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Enquiries: Makhubele E

Cell: 083 485 0981/082 837 9436

P O BOX 489

MASINGITA

0832

02 August 2013

The District Manager

Mopani District

P/Bag x 578

Giyani, 0826

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MAN'OMBE CIRCUIT

1. I am requesting permission to conduct research in Man'ombe Circuit schools.
2. The research is part of my Master's Degree in Curriculum Studies at the University of South Africa.
3. The topic of my research is "**Exploring challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in primary schools of Man'ombe Circuit of Mopani District**".
4. Twenty schools will be involved in the study and six Grade 4 teachers from each school will be selected as the sample of the study. The research will be conducted from 10th August 2013 to February 2014 as from 13h30 to 14h30.

Yours faithfully

.....
Makhubele E.

ANNEXURE B

A LETTER TO THE PRINCIPALS REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOLS

P O BOX 489

MASINGITA

0832

02 August 2013

The Circuit Manager
Department of Education
Mano'mbe Circuit
Giyani
0826

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MAN'OMBE CIRCUIT SCHOOLS

The Principal

.....

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

1. The above matter bears reference.
2. I am Master's Degree student at the University of South Africa.
5. The title of my dissertation is: "**Exploring challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in primary schools of Man'ombe Circuit of Mopani District**".
3. 6 teachers from your school will be selected as the sample of the study.
6. I have planned to conduct my research from the 10th August 2013 to February 2014 as from 13h30 to 14h30.

7. All the participants will be interviewed and they will also complete the questionnaires,
4. I hope to receive your positive response in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

.....
Makhubele E

ANNEXURE C
A LETTER TO THE PARTICIPANTS (TEACHERS)

P O BOX 489
MASINGITA
0832
02 August 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

.....

RE: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I hereby request you to voluntarily participate in a one day academic research which I will conduct at your school. I am a Master's degree student working on a dissertation with the title: "**Exploring challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in primary schools of Man'ombe Circuit of Mopani District**".

You have been selected because of your commitment and hard work in Literacy. I would like you to share your views, opinions and experiences. The results of the research will help learners and teachers to improve performance in Literacy. There is no payment for participating in the interview but each participant will enjoy a soft drink during the interview. The interview will be held in the strictest confidentiality and your name will not appear in any document. The interview will be held in private and will last for approximately 45 minutes, and with your permission will be audio recorded for the verification of the findings. You are also free to withdraw from the interview if you are inconvenienced without any penalty. At the end of the research you will be given the findings of the research. You are also informed that the University of South Africa gave the ethics approval for this research. If you have any questions, you are free to contact me telephonically at 073 900 6998 or visit me at Giyani Primary School between 08h00 and 14h00, from Monday to Friday.

If you are willing to take part in this study, please complete the attached consent form.
I will appreciate your time taken to participate in this study.

Thanking you in advance

Yours faithfully

.....
Makhubele E

ANNEXURE D
CONSENT FORM (Teachers)

- I hereby give free and informed consent to participate in the abovementioned research study.
- I understand what the study is about, why I am participating and what the risks and benefits are.
- I give permission to be taped.
- I also give the researcher permission to make use of the data gathered from my participation, subject to the stipulations he/she has indicated in the above letter.

Signature of the teacher:

Name and signature of the researcher:

Date:

ANNEXURE E
TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Exploring challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in the implementation of effective reading practices in primary schools of Man'ombe Circuit of Mopani District", Limpopo Province.

1. This questionnaire is on Grade 4 educators' challenges in implementing effective reading practices in primary schools in the Man'ombe Circuit of the Mopani District.
2. You are kindly requested to respond to all the items in the questionnaire.
3. Information obtained will be treated as confidential.

SECTION A

PERSONAL PARTICULARS

Please cross (**X**) in the appropriate space or box provided.

1. Gender

1	2
Male	Female

2. Age in years

1	2	3	4	5
25 and below	26-35	36-45	46-55	56 and above

3. Teaching experience in years

1	2	3	4	5
0-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	16-20 yrs	More than 20yrs

4. Highest academic qualifications

1		REQV 10 (Matric and below)
2		REQV 11 (M + 1)
3		REQV 12 (M + 2)
4		REQV 13 (M + 3)
5		REQV 14 (M + 4)
6		REQV 5 (M + 5) and above

5. Highest professional qualifications

Teaching Certificate/Diploma		
PGCE		
HED		
UED		
BA. ED/BSC. ED/ B.COM		
B. ED (HONOURS)		
M. ED		

6. Rank

1	2	3	4
Educator	Head of Department	Deputy Principal	Principal

7. Grade 4 Learners per classroom

1	2	3	4	5
10-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	More than 41

Training

NCS	YES	NO
CAPS	YES	NO

SECTION B: IMPLEMENTATION OF EFFECTIVE READING STRATEGIES

Below are statements concerning your experience in implementing effective reading strategies in Grade 4 in your classroom. Please make a cross (**X**) through the letter that best describes your position. Use the following scale to indicate your choice.

4 = Strongly Agree (SA)

3= Agree (A)

2= Disagree (D)

1= Strongly Disagree (SD)

1. To what extent are your learners experiencing reading challenges in Grade 4 in your class?	SD	D	A	SA
1.1 The NCS is helpful in introducing mother-tongue as a medium of instruction in the Foundation Phase.	1	2	3	4
1.2 My Grade 4 learners can read English fluently.	1	2	3	4
1.3 I have difficulty in developing learners' skills, values and attitude in reading.	1	2	3	4
1.4 I have difficulty in differentiating between learning outcomes and assessments standards.	1	2	3	4
1.5 My Grade 4 learners are struggling to read.	1	2	3	4
2. The nature and scope of reading in Grade 4	SD	D	A	SA
2.1 I find it easy to use the scope of reading provided by the Department of Basic Education in the policy document of English (FAL) Learning area statement.	1	2	3	4
2.2 I use the NCS learning area statement policy document for my day to day teaching Grade 4 learners in my classes	1	2	3	4
2.3 I find the time frame for the scope to be realistic.	1	2	3	4
2.4 The policy document is helpful in assessing reading.	1	2	3	4
2.5 I find the simplified terminology of the NCS policy document easily understandable.	1	2	3	4

3. Learning and teaching methods/strategies	SD	D	A	SA
3.1 I find the teacher-centredness method easier and applicable in implementing effective reading strategies/methods in my class.	1	2	3	4
3.2 I find the learner-centredness method easier and applicable in implementing effective reading strategies/methods in my class.	1	2	3	4
3.3 I find combining teacher-centredness and learner-centredness methods as effective helping my learners to achieve reading outcomes in my class.	1	2	3	4
3.4 I find guided reading strategies helpful in achieving reading specific outcomes in my class.	1	2	3	4
3.5 I have difficulty in implementing guided reading as the teaching methods/strategies.	1	2	3	4
4. Educational support from Department to implement effective reading strategies/methods	SD	D	A	SA
4.1 I have received support in the implementation of effective reading strategies in my Grade 4 class.	1	2	3	4
4.2 I have received adequate training in NCS on teaching reading skills in my Grade 4 class.	1	2	3	4
4.3 I need further professional development on implementing reading strategies.	1	2	3	4
4.4 I have been visited and received support by curriculum advisors in my class for monitoring reading competence.	1	2	3	4
4.5 I received teaching and learning support material for reading (LTSM and textbooks/story books).	1	2	3	4
4.6 I am not satisfied with the quality of teaching and learning support material for reading in my class.	1	2	3	4

5. The challenges faced by educators in implementing effective reading strategies	SD	D	A	SA
5.1 The overcrowding of learners in my class is stressful which influences teaching effective reading strategies in my class.	1	2	3	4
5.2 Parents are not involved in the teaching and learning of their children.	1	2	3	4
5.3 I have difficulty in developing a good reading lesson.	1	2	3	4
5.4 I find developing a rubric for reading difficult.	1	2	3	4
5.5 I find assessing a reading lesson difficult.	1	2	3	4

SECTION C TEACHER EFFICACY

Below are statements concerning your experience in implementing effective reading strategies in Grade 4 in your classroom. Please make a cross (**X**) through the letter that best describes your position. Use the following scale to indicate your choice:

4 = Strongly Agree (SA)

3 = Agree (A)

2 = Disagree (D)

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

To what extent have the following factors contributed to teacher effectiveness and appear to influence learners in their academic achievement, attitude and affective growth?	SD	D	A	SA
1 It has a positive effect on teacher effort and persistence in the face of difficulties in teaching effective reading skills	1	2	3	4
2 It enhance teachers' professional commitment to persevere in teaching and implement reading strategies	1	2	3	4
3 It supports student motivation to do self reading for enjoyment	1	2	3	4

4. Provides openness to new methods in teaching	1	2	3	4
5 Increases positive teacher behaviour	1	2	3	4
6 Teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to use student-centred teaching strategies	1	2	3	4
7 The changes teachers apply to their practices and adaptation to innovations require that they have a high sense of efficacy.	1	2	3	4

**SECTION D: CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT (CAPS)
INTERMEDIATE PHASE FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (FAL)**

Below are statements concerning the training you received with regards to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Please make a cross (X) through the letter that best describes your position. Use the following scale to indicate your choice:

4 = Strongly Agree (SA)

3 = Agree (A)

2 = Disagree (D)

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

1. The training received with regards to curriculum and assessment policy statement (CAPS)	SD	D	A	SA
1.1 The training received about CAPS with regards to effective reading strategies which will be implemented in 2013 was fruitful.	1	2	3	4
1.2 The three days allocated for the training was enough for mastering this new curriculum.	1	2	3	4
1.3 The terminology used in CAPS is simplified and understandable.	1	2	3	4
1.4 Educators will need more CAPS training for effective reading strategies and methods.	1	2	3	4
1.5 Developing a good reading lesson in the training was stressful.	1	2	3	4

ANNEXURE F
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Tell me about the highlights of your teaching experience
2. Explain why your learners are not able to read.
3. Explain the method that you use for teaching reading in your Grade 4 class.
4. Explain how the literacy coaches (curriculum advisor, principal, and head of department) support you in teaching reading?
5. How are parents involved in teaching their children to read at home?
6. Which challenges do you experience in teaching reading in Grade 4 class.